

## **BULGARIA**

### **VET in Europe – Country Report**

**2011**

This country report is part of a series of reports on vocational education and training produced for each EU Member State plus Norway and Iceland by members of ReferNet, a network established by Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training).

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Therefore, the reader may encounter repetitions in content.

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## 1. GENERAL CONTEXT – FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIETY OF KNOWLEDGE

### 1.1. Political and social-economic context

Bulgaria is a parliamentary republic. The legislative power is embodied by the National Assembly /the Parliament/.

The executive power is a prerogative of the Council of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister.

Bulgaria is divided into 28 districts (NUTS3), which consist of 264 municipalities in total (LAU1). At level NUTS2 the country is divided into 6 statistical regions<sup>1</sup>.

The municipality is one of the main administrative territorial units, where local policy at level LAU 1 is implemented. The socio-political statute of the municipality, as defined by law, encompasses three basic aspects – political, territorial and juristic. With regards to education, municipality's most important attribute is its status as legal entity, which allows it to have its own budget to finance municipal kindergartens, municipal schools of general and vocational education, etc.

#### Republic of Bulgaria

- Population: 7,504,868 (as of 31.12.2010);
  - Location: Southeastern Europe;
  - Capital: Sofia;
  - Area: 111,000 km<sup>2</sup>;
  - Official language: Bulgarian;
  - Main religion: Orthodox Christianity;
  - Life expectancy:
    - men: 70 years
    - women: 77 years
- Source: NSI, 2008-2010*
- Monetary unit: Lev
  - International currency acronym: BGN
  - Currency exchange rate to Euro: BGN1 = €1.9558;
  - Main economic sectors: industry, finance, tourism, textile, pharmacy, food

### 1.2. Population and Demographics

The territory of Bulgaria is 111,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Bulgaria is situated in the Eastern part of Balkan peninsula with population density of 68.2 people per square kilometer.

The permanent population of Bulgaria as of 01.01.2011 is 7,504,868 people, of whom women account for 51.6%. For one year only, as a result of the negative population growth and the negative external migration balance, the population in Bulgaria has declined by 58.8 thousand people (0.8%). This tendency started back in 1990.

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<sup>1</sup> North-West (Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Pleven, Lovech), North Central (Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo, Ruse, Razgrad, Silistra), North-East (Varna, Dobrich, Shumen, Targovishte), South-East (Burgas, Sliven, Yambol, Stara Zagora), South-West (Sofia-capital city, Sofia, Blagoevgrad, Pernik, Kyustendil), and South Central (Plovdiv, Haskovo).

<b>TABLE 1: POPULATION IN BULGARIA/EU</b>				
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>European Union<sup>1</sup></b>	486,647,831	493,226,936	499,723,520(p)	501,105,661(p)
<b>Bulgaria<sup>2</sup></b>	7,845,841	7,718,750	7,606,551	7,504,868
<b>BG/EU %</b>	1,6%	1,6%	1,5%	1,5%

Source: Eurostat (Demographic Statistics), date of extraction 19 May 2011, (p) - provisional;

Source: National Statistic Institute, Demographic statistics, 2011

The current trend is marked by slower reduction of population, a certain growth of birth rate, increase of the average life expectancy and decrease of the influence of external migration on the total number of the permanent residents. Nevertheless, the high mortality rate, the continuing aging of society, the reduction of the share of the population at pupils' age and the negative balance of the external migration process, remain problematic.

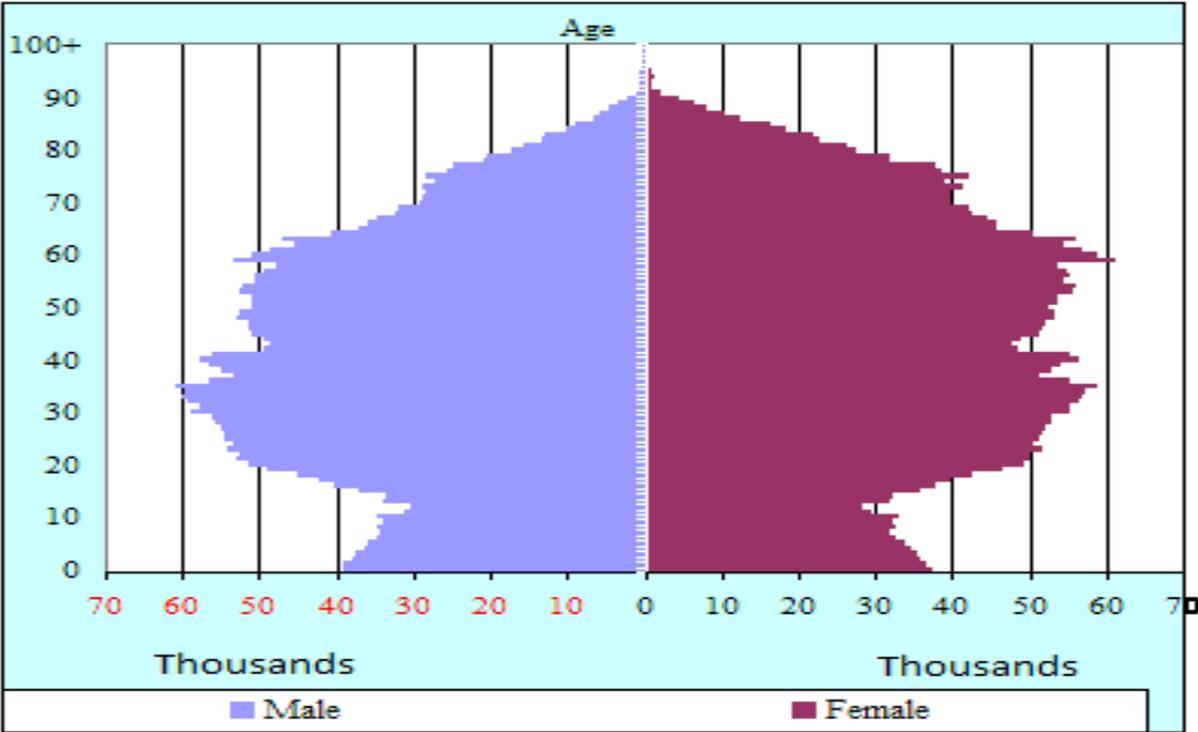
The aging process is evaluated by various indicators, most common of which are the decrease in the share of young age groups and the increase of the share of mature people (Table 2). The information below indicates a tendency of decrease of the share of young population (age 0-24 yrs) from 29.0% in 2001 to 25.6% in 2010. Simultaneously the relative share of the adults at the age of 65 and over increases; from 16.9% in 2001 it reached 17.7% in 2010.

<b>TABLE 2: POPULATION BREAKDOWN PER AGE GROUP</b>							
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>0-24 years</b>		<b>25-64 years</b>		<b>65+ years</b>	
<b>2001</b>	7,891,095	2,284,664	29,0%	4,270,916	54,1%	1,335,515	16,9%
<b>2003</b>	7,801,273	2,182,895	28,0%	4,284,648	54,9%	1,333,730	17,1%
<b>2005</b>	7,718,750	2,094,361	27,1%	4,295,910	55,7%	1,328,479	17,2%
<b>2007</b>	7,640,238	2,021,827	26,5%	4,295,223	56,2%	1,323,188	17,3%
<b>2009</b>	7,563,710	1,959,234	25,9%	4,278,585	56,6%	1,325,891	17,5%
<b>2010</b>	7,504,868	1,924,254	25,6%	4,249,243	56,6%	1,331,371	17,7%

Source: National Statistic Institute, Demographic statistics, 2011

The aging of the population in Bulgaria is more obvious amongst women than amongst men. This is due to the higher mortality rate amongst men and their lower average life expectancy.

Figure 1: Age/Gender Structure



Source: National Statistic Institute, Demographic statistics, 2011

Another important indicator of the population aging process is the so called old-age dependency rate. It is calculated as a proportion of the population at the age of 65 and more and the population at the age of 15-64 years in 2011 (as of 01.01.2011); for Bulgaria it is 25.89%. The forecast data provided by Eurostat in Table 3 below indicate that in 2060 Bulgaria will be one of the most affected countries, with a coefficient of 63.54%. This means that at present 4 people at active age account for one person over 65 years old, whilst in 2060 1.6 people at active age will account for one person over 65 years old.

TABLE 3: PROJECTED OLD-AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO, 2010-2060							
	2010	2015	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
European Union	25.9	28.26	31.05	38.04	45.36	50.42	53.47
Bulgaria	25.29	28.17	31.1	36.28	43.58	55.44	63.54

Source of Data: Eurostat (EUROPOP2008 - Convergence scenario, national level (proj\_08c))

In 2010 birth rate in Bulgaria has declined, compared to 2009; this was the first decrease for the last 15 years. In 2010 75,513 born alive infants were registered in the country, which is a decrease by 5 443 compared to 2009, and by 2 199 compared to 2008. The birth rate is 10‰ and it steadily approaches the one from 2007, when it was 9.8‰.

<b>TABLE 4: BIRTH RATE, POPULATION NATURAL GROWTH AND FERTILITY COEFFICIENT IN BULGARIA</b>			
<b>Years</b>	<b>Birth rate – ‰</b>	<b>Natural growth rate - ‰</b>	<b>Fertility Coefficient*</b>
<b>2001</b>	8.6	-5.6	1.24
<b>2003</b>	8.6	-5.7	1.23
<b>2005</b>	9.2	-5.4	1.31
<b>2007</b>	9.8	-5.0	1.42
<b>2009</b>	10.7	-3.5	1.57
<b>2010</b>	10.0	-4.6	1.49

*\*Average number of infants born alive to one woman at the age of fertility*

*Source: Author according to data National Statistic Institute, Demographic statistics, 2011*

There exists a substantial difference between the levels of birth rate in the various administrative regions in Bulgaria<sup>2</sup>.

The birth rate in 2010 reached 54.1%%.

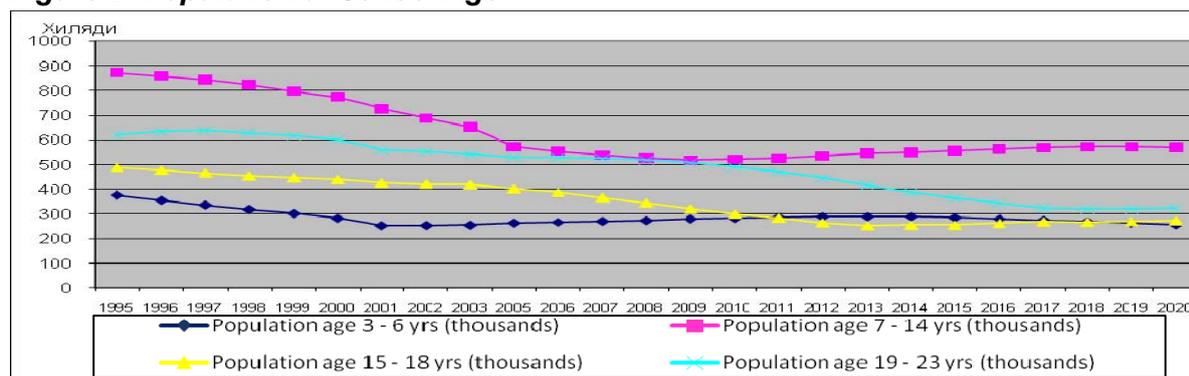
### **Population at school age**

The number of children entering the education system in Bulgaria is directly linked to the birth rate dynamics in the past and the external migration process. In the last three years there has been an increase in the number and the relative share of children at pre-school age (3 - 6 years) - Figure 2.

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<sup>2</sup> In Sliven it is 12.4‰, in Sofia (capital) - 11.9‰, in Varna - 11.5‰, in Burgas - 10.7‰ and in Kirdzhali - 10.4‰; these are among the regions with the highest birth rate. The birth rate in the districts of Kyustendil and Vidin are among the lowest, 7.6 and 7.8‰.

**Figure 2: Population at School Age**



Source: National Statistic Institute, Demographic statistics, 2011

The number of children at the age of 3-6 years will most probably reach 290,000 in 2012, after which it will gradually decrease and will reach 257,000 in 2020. In the next ten years gradual growth of the population at the age of 7 – 14 years is expected, which from 519,000 in 2010 will reach 571,000 in 2020. The group of people at the age of 15-18 years will decrease from 298,000 in 2010 to about 252,000 in 2013 (a reduction by 27.4%), after which it will grow up again, but very slowly and will reach 273,000 in 2020. The biggest and most severe reduction is expected amongst the population of 19 -23 years, and from 488,000 in 2009 it is expected to reduce to 322,000 in 2020 or by 63.4%. After 2020 the total number of population in Bulgaria, as well as students is expected to increase.

The demographic tendencies described above will most probably incite a policy change in the education sector in Bulgaria, including re-evaluation of resources – in terms of personnel, finances, information, etc.

**TABLE 5: BREAKDOWN OF POPULATION PER AGE GROUPS**

	2000	2006	2009	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
<b>Population at the age of 3 - 6 years – thousand</b>	283,000	267,000	281,000	287,000	286,000	257,000	228,000	209,000
<b>Relative share of the entire population - %</b>	3,5	3,5	3,7	3,8	3,9	3,6	3,3	3,1

TABLE 5: BREAKDOWN OF POPULATION PER AGE GROUPS								
	2000	2006	2009	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
<b>Population at the age of 7 - 14 years – thousand</b>	775,000	555,000	519,000	519,000	558,000	571,000	527,000	469,000
<b>Relative share of the entire population - %</b>	9,5	7,2	6,9	6,9	7,6	8	7,6	9
<b>Population at the age of 15 - 18 years – thousand</b>	439,000	389,000	321,000	298,000	254,000	273,000	291,000	270,000
<b>Relative share of the entire population - %</b>	9,5	7,2	6,9	6,9	7,6	8	7,6	7
<b>Population at the age of 19 - 23 years – thousand</b>	602,000	528,000	508,000	488,000	366,000	322,000	347,000	363,000
<b>Relative share of the entire population - %</b>	7,4	6,9	6,7	6,5	5,0	4,5	5,0	5,4

Source: NSI, Demographic statistics, 2011

### 1.3. Economy and labor market indicators

In 2010 some positive changes in the economy started up which resulted in the reversal of the tendency of growth of the GDP from negative to positive. According to the preliminary data of the NSI the GDP for 2010 added up to 36 032.9 million Euro, and 4786.8 Euro corresponded to a person from the population.

- **Employment per economic sectors**

The number of people in employment has reduced in all economic sectors.

In 2010 people employed in the service sector continue to have the highest share in the structure of employment per economic sectors – they represent 59,9% of all people in employment. The relative share of the employed in the manufacturing sector is 20,9%, and in construction – 8,8%. The share of those employed in agriculture, primary sector and utilities is 10,4%, of whom those employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing represent 6,8%, those in the primary sector – 1,1%, those in the production and distribution of electric and heating energy and gas fuels” – 1,4% and in supply of waters; sewerage services, waste management and reinstatement” – 1,1%.

**TABLE 6: EMPLOYED PERSONS AGED 15+ BY ECONOMIC SECTOR OF ACTIVITY  
(IN THOUSANDS AND AS % OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT), 2010**

	primary sector and utilities		manufacturing		construction		distribution and transport		business and other services		non marketed services	
	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%	persons	%
<b>EU 27</b>	15175.8	7,00	33992.7	15,7	16573.2	7,7	57099.0	26,4	38733.1	17,9	53694.1	24,8
<b>BG</b>	317.4	10,4	637.4	20,9	268.5	8,8	938.4	30,7	319.9	10,5	570.0	18,7

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey); Extracted on: 30-04-2010; Last update: 26-04-2010

The decrease in the employment rate for all age groups, which began in 2009, continued in 2010. A similar tendency was also observed for EU-27.

There are substantial differences in the level of employment in the different age groups. In 2010 the highest employment rate continued to be observed among people at the age between 35-44 - 79.4% (with 82.6% in 2009), followed by the age group 45-54 - 75.8% (79.0% in 2009) and the age group 25-34 - 70.7% (75.1% in 2009). The employment rate among the group of 55 to 64 - 43.5% was significantly lower (46.1% in 2009).

With regard to the education structure of employed people, the trend for those with higher educational attainment to have higher levels of employment was preserved. In 2010 people with higher education had the highest employment rate - 83,3%, followed by those with secondary education - 66%. The employment rate for people with lower secondary education was 30,5%.

Those with primary or no education at all had the lowest employment rate – 17,8%. The unemployment amongst people in 2010 with university degree has decreased by 2,6%, which is by 2% higher than in 2009 and was due to the growth of the unemployment rate amongst this group - by 0,6%.

With regard to the educational structure, in 2010 the level of unemployment grew up most significantly amongst the people with lower secondary and lower education – by 15,3% in relation to the preceding year, reaching level of unemployment of 43,1%. The level of unemployment grew up also amongst the remaining groups, though with smaller rates, reaching 19.6% for the persons with lower secondary education, 9.7% - for the persons with secondary education and 4.4% - for the persons with higher education. These data show that the economic and financial crisis accompanied by the reduction of the expenditures and dismissal of personnel affects both the persons with low level of education or without education and qualification and the qualified personnel.

**TABLE 7: EMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2003, 2006 AND 2010**

	ISCED / AGE	2003			2006			2010		
		15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU 27	0-2	25,1(i)	66,1(i)	41,9 (i)	24,8	66,9	43,5	21,5	62,8	43,1
	3-4	47,2 (i)	79,1 (i)	54,9 (i)	48,1	80,5	57,9	45	79,7	59,6
	5-6	62,0 (i)	88,0 (i)	72,4 (i)	60,5	88,5	74,2	57,1	87,4	74,5
	No a.	14,9 (i)	72,6 (i)	39,1 (i)	5,1	76	5,6	5,2	72,8	62,2
	Total	36,0 (i)	77,4 (i)	51,5 (i)	36,6	79,1	54,4	34,1	78,1	56,7
BG	0-2	7,4	45,9	28,5	6,5	49,6	32,4	5,1	47,7	33,1
	3-4	37,6	74,5	50,8	42,6	80,3	56,3	37,5	79,4	55,2
	5-6	61,9	85,1	61,2	63,8	89,7	67	63,5	89,1	71,4
	No a.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	Total	21,3	70,5	43,5	23,2	76,5	50,3	22,2	76,2	52,5

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey); Extracted on: 30-04-2010; Last update: 26-04-2010

**TABLE 8: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2003, 2006 AND 2010**

	ISCED / AGE	2003			2006			2010		
		15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU 27	0-2	20.2 (i)	11.6 (i)	7.2 (i)	21.2	11.2	7.15	27.4	16.3	10.2
	3-4	17.7 (i)	8.4 (i)	7.7 (i)	15.4	7.3	6.9	18.1	8.2	6.7
	5-6	12.0 (i)	4.8 (i)	3.7 (i)	13.4	4.3	3.6	16.2	5.3	3.6
	No a.	13.9 (i)	7.8 (i)	7.4 (i)	20.1	:	:		8.2	:
	Total	18.0 (i)	8.3 (i)	6.6 (i)	17.2	7.3	6.3	20.8	8.9	6.9
BG	0-2	41.4	26.7	18.7	37.8	20.5	14.9	39.5	23.0	19.2
	3-4	23.0	11.3	10.9	15.3	6.8	6.8	21.2	8.4	8.1
	5-6	:	6.7	5.6 (u)	:	3.7	4.2 (u)	:	4.3	4.3
	No a.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	
	Total	27.1	12.8	11.9	19.5	8.0	8.1	23.2	9.2	9.2

Source: Eurostat (LFS); Extracted on: 19-05-2011; Last update: 12-05-2011

- **Public expenditure on education**

In the last few years (2006-2008) public expenditure on secondary education and vocational education after secondary education (levels 2-4 of ISCED) and the percentage of the GDP have remained at relatively the same level – at about 1,9% (table 9). This particular indicator demonstrates that Bulgaria is amongst the EU countries with the lowest expenditure on education at level 2-4 of ISCED.

As a percentage of the public expenditure on education in general, the public expenditure on education level 2-4 of ISCED in 2008 is 38,3%.

<b>TABLE 9: TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS % OF GDP, AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION (ISCED 2-4), 2002-2008</b>							
	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>EU27</b>	2.32 (s)	2.35 (s)	2.29 (s)	2.25 (s)	2.23 (s)	2.20 (s)	:
<b>BG</b>	1.77	1.89	2.07	2.08	1.90	1.84	1.96

Source: Eurostat (UOE); extracted on: 19-05-2011; Last update: 12-04-2011

#### **1.4. Education attainment of the population in Bulgaria**

The educational attainment of the population in active labor age (25 - 64 years of age) in Bulgaria continues to be improved. For the last ten years there has been an obvious tendency of increase in the number and the share of the population with higher and secondary education and at the same time a decrease in the number and the share of people with primary and initial education. In 2010 the share of people with higher education reached 23.2%, with secondary education – 56.2%, and with primary and initial education – 20.6% - Table 10. Out of a total of 2,312,800 people with secondary education, 1,524,000 or 65.9% possess some vocational qualification. The fact that there are illiterate people in the country, predominantly from the Roma ethnic group, should not, however, be ignored. According to data from the previous census of the population in 2001, the number of illiterate people amongst the population at the age of 25 - 64 years added up to about 50 thousand.. The higher education provides for considerably higher possibilities for personal and professional development and this further motivates young people to strive for graduating with a higher degree of education.

The education attainment of the population is evaluated through the breakdown of adult population per highest degree of completed education.

<b>TABLE 10: EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION AT THE AGE OF 25 – 64 YEARS FOR THE PERIOD 2000 – 2010 (PER CENT)</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Lower secondary and lower (ISCED 2 and lower)</b>	<b>Secondary (ISCED 3+4)</b>	<b>Higher (ISCED 5+6 )</b>
<b>2000</b>	32.9	48.7	18.4
<b>2002</b>	28.5	50.3	21.1
<b>2005</b>	27.6	50.8	21.6
<b>2007</b>	22.6	55.1	22.4
<b>2008</b>	22.5	54.8	22.8
<b>2009</b>	22.1	54.9	23.0
<b>2010</b>	20.6	56.2	23.2

Source of the data about Bulgaria: NSI, Labor force survey – LFS [www.nsi.bg](http://www.nsi.bg)

- **Persons who have untimely suspended their education – (percentage of young people aged 18-24 with only lower secondary education, not in further education and training)**

This indicator is of important significance for the education system in Bulgaria, but not solely because of the fact that it evaluates one of the key objectives of the strategy Europe 2020. The values above are formed as a result of several factors, the most significant of which is the drop-out from the compulsory in Bulgaria primary and secondary education, as well as the comparatively low level of participation of young individuals with primary education in the various formats of non-formal education. The permanent decrease of this indicator in the last few years has shown that there is certain progress with regard to the prevention from leaving school and the motivation among young individuals to complete a higher education – (Table 10). The approved by the state administration and the business requirements for participation in formal and non-formal education and training render positive effect as well. This indicator has substantially decreased in the last nine years - from 20.7% for 2002 to 13.9% for 2010. Slower change in this indicator is expected for the next 10 years, most of all because of the expected ethnic restructuring of the population at students' age. It is probably due to this that the value of 11 % has been input as national goal under the strategy Europe 2020. After the publication of the results from the census of the population carried out at the beginning of 2011, there would be greater clarity with regard to the influence of the various factors over the value of this indicator.

The level of education attainment among young individuals (20-24 years) in Bulgaria has increased in the last few years – [Table 11](#). The share of the individuals who have completed at least secondary education grew from 77.4% in 2002 up to 84.4% in 2010. The variations due to the gender have been preserved and for women this share remained lower (83.6% in 2010) as compared to men (85.0%). The main reasons for this positive tendency are both the motivation of young individuals to attain higher education and the requirements for participation in formal education and training improved by the state. On the other hand, judging by the result from international tests (for instance PISA) and the results from the external evaluation, a conclusion may be drawn that the quality of secondary education in Bulgaria does not completely correspond to the state-of-the-art criteria and requirements. This means that there is a need to undertake some measures for the provision of full adequacy between the degree of education and the acquired knowledge, skills and competencies.

As far as the participation of population in active employment age (25-64) in lifelong learning is concerned, the level of attainment measured 4 weeks prior to the observation, was amongst the lowest in the EU in 2010 - 1.2 %.

	2002			2005			2009		
	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M
<b>EU 27</b>	76.7	79.3	74.0	77.5	80.2	74.8	78.6	81.4	75.9
<b>BG</b>	77.4	79.5	75.2	76.5	77.1	75.9	83.7	82.5	84.8
	2010								
	T	F	M						
<b>BG</b>	84.4	83.6	85.0						

Source: Eurostat (LFS); Extracted: 19-05-2011; Last update: 01-04-2011

Description: Youth education attainment level - Percentage of the population aged 20 to 24 having completed at least upper secondary education.

Eurostat original label: *lfsi\_edu\_a-Youth education, lifelong learning, early school leavers - Annual data*

Link to data: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsi\\_edu\\_a&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsi_edu_a&lang=en)

Link to data for 2010:

<http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=51&a1=2038&a2=2044&a3=2049#cont>

## 1.5. Definitions

The terms and explanations are from the Bulgarian legislation or are definitions given in effective national strategic documents. Most of the terms are conformed to key terms from the legislation and the practice of the countries from the EU based on the Glossary of Terms of CEDEFOP.

### 1.5.1. Alternance training

There is no definition in the Bulgarian legislation.

### 1.5.2. Apprenticeship

There does not exactly exist such term in the Bulgarian legislation but it is implicitly included in some provisions.

Training of a person hired for a specific workplace by another worker or employee (mentor). The Employer has to pay labour remuneration to the person hired for the apprenticeship, and social security contributions at the expense of the employer for the time period during which this person was at work, but for not more than 12 months. (*[The Employment Promotion Act](#)*)

Training at the workplace – Training in real working environment under the management of a qualified trainer for application in practice of preliminarily acquired habits and skills. It may be conducted in full in the workplace or it may be combined with training outside the workplace. (*Definition from the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2008-2013*)

### 1.5.3. Competences

A competence shows the ability of one person to implement certain labour activity. (*In conformity with the Frame Requirements for Development of State Educational Requirements for Acquisition of Qualification per Profession adopted by the Managing Board of the [National Agency for Vocational Education and Training](#) by Protocol No 07 / 18.07.2007*).

Competence – a combination of knowledge, skills and attitude, owned by one person. This is the ability to use in practice knowledge, skills and experience, defined in the job description, as well as personal attitude of the person towards the implementation of activities within the framework of the occupied position or at the workplace in a manner that must guarantee safety. A competence may be acquired through education, experience and specialised training. (*Source: Glossary of Key Terms in the Field of Vocational Education and Training Compliant with CEDEFOP Terminology*), developed within the framework of PHARE Program Project “Development of a system for analysis of the needs of vocational education and training and strategy for training of elderly individuals” EuropeAid/120163/D/SV/BG, November 2006).

Vocational competences are qualities of one person formed on the grounds of acquired knowledge and skills, which contribute to the demonstration of self-initiative, in team work and demonstrating quality standard for certain profession in conformity with the state education requirements for acquisition of qualification per profession. (*Vocational Education and Training Act*).

Professional competences – A combination of knowledge, skills and attitude with regard to the mastering and practice of a specific profession. (*Definition from the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2008-2013*).

#### **1.5.4. Continuing (vocational) education and training**

Continuing vocational training – Training of individuals over 16 years old on acquisition, expansion and improvement of their vocational qualification, aimed at the improvement of the suitability for employment, providing assistance to their professional and individual development. (*Definition from the National Strategy for Continuing Vocational Education and Training 2005-2010*)

Continuous vocational training – improvement of the acquired qualification per profession or per part of a profession (*Under the Vocational Education and Training Act*)

#### **1.5.5. First stage of higher education (ISCED 5)**

The purpose of higher education is the training of highly qualified specialists after secondary education and the development of science and culture in general. Higher education is acquired in higher schools, which have obtained accreditation. The higher schools are universities, specialised higher schools and independent colleges, implementing their activities on the principle of academic autonomy.

The higher education system could be entered after completing secondary education and consists of the following degrees: "Bachelor" (period of training not shorter than three years), "Professional bachelor in ..." – (period of training not shorter than 4 years) and "Master". The training in acquiring the bachelor degree provides the student with some broad preparation for or specialised vocational training in different professional aspects. The training in the master degree provides the student with profound fundamental training combined with obtaining proficiency in certain professional area. (*Under the Higher Education Act*)

#### **1.5.6. Formal learning**

Formal learning – training, which is acquired within the framework of the institutions for vocational training defined in the [Vocational Education and Training Act](#), and is characterised by the acquisition of a nationally recognised certificate for the acquired qualification. (*Definition from the National Strategy for Continuing Vocational Education and Training 2005-2010*)

Formal learning/training/education - training, which is performed in organised and structured milieu (in secondary/higher school, vocational training centre, etc.) and is explicitly designated as learning with regard to objectives, time or resources. Formal learning is a conscious process from the trainee's point of view. It results in the obtaining of an officially recognised document (diploma, testimonial, certificate). (*Definition from the National Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2008-2013*)

### **1.5.7. General education**

General education is acquired through studying subjects, grouped in the following cultural-educational areas: Bulgarian language and literature; foreign languages; mathematics, informatics and information technologies; social sciences, civil education and religion; natural sciences and ecology; arts; lifestyle and technologies; physical culture and sports. Obtaining the general education minimum forms the basis of general education. It includes acquiring compulsory level of knowledge and skills required for the successful entering of students in the next degree of education. *(Under the Degree of Education, the General Education Minimum and the Curriculum Act)*

### **1.5.8. Initial education and training**

There is no definition in Bulgarian legislation.

### **1.5.9. Initial vocational education and training**

Initial vocational training – acquisition of initial qualification per profession or per part of profession *(Under the Vocational Education and Training Act )*

### **1.5.10. Lower secondary education (ISCED 2)**

The lower secondary education is organised in two stages: initial – from first to fourth grade, and lower secondary – from fifth to eighth grade. Those who complete the initial stage of the initial education obtain a certificate for completed fourth grade. The acquisition of initial education is certified with a final certificate for completed initial education. A certificate for lower secondary education is obtained after completing eighth grade and entitles the student to continuation of education or vocational training. *(Under the Public Education Act)*

### **1.5.11. Non-formal learning**

Non-formal learning – training, performed within the framework of each organised activity outside the formal education system. *(Definition from the National Strategy for continuing education and training 2005-2010)*

Non-formal training/learning - training, conducted within the framework of organised activity inside and outside the official education institutions. It may include programs for improving adults' literacy skills, professional skills and general knowledge, etc. The non-formal learning is intentional from the point of view of the trainee, but it does not result in providing an official document. The results of the training may be validated and certified. *(Definition from the National Lifelong Learning Strategy for the time period 2008-2013)*

### **1.5.12. Post-secondary non-tertiary education**

Vocational training after completed secondary education is provided by vocational colleges after completed secondary education – with a duration of the training of up to two years. *(Under the Public Education Act)*

### **1.5.13. Pre-vocational or pre-technical education**

There is no definition in the Bulgarian legislation.

### **1.5.14. Profession**

A profession is a sort of labour activity, for which vocational education and training must be provided. *(Under the Vocational Education and Training Act)*

Profession – a group of jobs with similar basic functions and tasks. Position – a group of functions and tasks, which one person performs at his workplace, in his capacity of employer or self-employed person. *(In conformity with the Methodological Notes of the National Classification of the Professions and the Positions, 2011)*

### **1.5.15. Qualification**

In Bulgaria a vocational qualification has very often the meaning of qualification.

Qualification is obtained when a competent authority validates knowledge, skills and competencies, acquired by the individual as a result of various forms of learning or professional experience. Usually the competent authority issues a certificate validating the qualification. The qualification provides the person with possibility for successfully entering on the labour market and for further training. *(In conformity with Frame Requirements for Development of State Educational Requirements for acquisition of qualification in a profession adopted by the Managing Board of the [National Agency for Vocational Education and Training](#) by Written Statement No 07 / 18.07.2007).*

Qualification – a combination of knowledge, skills, /competences/, (certified with a legitimate document), required for practising labour activities in a certain vocational area. *(Source: Glossary of Key Terms in the Field of Vocational Education and Training Compliant with CEDEFOP Terminology), developed within the framework of PHARE Program Project “Development of a system for analysis of the needs of vocational education and training and strategy for training of adults” EuropeAid/120163/D/SV/BG, November 2006).*

Vocational qualification – professional qualification or a part of certain profession, which includes the combination of professional competences, general knowledge and skills. *(Under the Vocational Education and Training Act)*

### **1.5.16. Skills**

There is no definition in the Bulgarian legislation.

### **1.5.17. Upper secondary education (ISCED 3)**

Upper secondary education is acquired after successfully completing twelfth grade and successfully passing state school-leaving exams in different subjects or a cycle of subjects, studied during this stage of upper secondary education, and is certified by a Diploma for completed secondary education. It is required that two state exams for vocational qualification are passed in order to obtain vocational education that is additional to the state school-leaving examinations in compliance with the state education requirements under the Public Education Act and entitle the student to continuation of education or vocational training. *(Under the Public Education Act)*

### **1.5.18. Vocational education**

Vocational education allows mastering the general education minimum for secondary education and the acquisition of qualification in a profession. (*Under the Vocational Education and Training Act*).

Vocational training –vocational training provides for the acquisition of qualification in a profession or in a part of a profession, as well as improving ones professional skills. It also provides for completion of lower secondary education or grades from upper secondary education. Vocational training includes: initial vocational training – acquisition of one initial qualification in certain profession or part of it; continuous vocational training – improvement of acquired professional qualification or part of it. (*Under the Vocational Education and Training Act*)

### **1.5.19. School-based programs**

There is no definition in the Bulgarian legislation.

## 2. MODERNIZING VET TO SUPPORT LLL, INTERNATIONALIZATION, AND MOBILITY

### 2.1. VET policy developments and priorities in supporting LLL

One of the key policy documents in Bulgaria, issued in 2010, is the [National Reform Programme 2010-2013](#) in implementation of “Europe 2020” Strategy. It announces the political decision for the general improvement of the level of knowledge and skills of manpower in Bulgaria through activities directly associated with lifelong learning. Young individuals who form the heart of the future labour force are one of the main target groups of this policy. Therefore, the most important aims in the field of education and training are as follows:

- Reduction of the number of early leaving school students - should be below 11% up to 2020 (14.7% in 2009);
- Increase in the share of individuals with higher education at the age 30-34 – should be 36% in 2020 (27.9% in 2009);

The reform in the education and training system in Bulgaria, which is addressing obstacles to growth, will contribute to improving the skills of the workforce, the civil competencies of individuals, the qualification of low-qualified workers, and will ensure greater suitability of workers to modern social development, employers’ requirements and the needs of the labour market.

<b>TABLE 1: OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME “HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT”, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROCEDURE FOR DIRECT PROVISION OF GRANTS UNDER THE SCHEME “EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR STUDENTS”</b>		
	<b>Measures:</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Adopting Law on School Education and introducing new educational structure</b>	1.1 The new Law on School Education will aim to outline the new educational environment where the child and the pupil are the focus. (Draft version is published on the web site of Ministry of Education, Youth and Science)
		1.2 Introduction of a new education structure; restrained intra-system mobility; ineffective implementation of the constitutional provision for compulsory education up to the age of 16; and lack of provisions for formal leave from the system at the age of 16 and for developing the skills of each child, while taking into account individual interests, needs and abilities.
		1.3 Modernising the vocational education, including by providing information about the existing opportunities for education and training at the national education portal and by building a network of career centres.

		1.4 Introduction of a new educational structure and a system for evaluation and quality control of education
2	<b>Developing and introducing quality management system of education at different levels</b>	The system encourages the participation and the assumption of responsibility, which are directly related to the social inclusion and the reduction of social isolation
3	<b>Increasing the number of children included in pre-school preparation</b>	Introduction of a compulsory preschool preparation for children at the age of 5
4	<b>Legislative changes in the higher education.</b>	Reforming the system in order to provide for adequacy and transparency, enhancing the competitiveness and the motivation, equal access to education, improving the link and the adequacy between higher education and the labour market
5	<b>Development of an efficient system for qualification and career development of teachers and lecturers</b>	5.1 Development of compulsory qualification of teachers
		5.2 Development of a new system for assessing the quality of work of teachers
		5.3 Increasing competencies of lecturers in key areas such as language skills, skills for using ICT in the process of education and acquiring specific professional knowledge and competencies related to the contemporary curricula.
6	<b>Implementing Students Loan Programme</b>	Creating conditions for increasing the inflow of public and private resources to the higher education

7	<b>Implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2010–2020</b>	<p>The analysis and forecasting of the labour market trends, development of tools for specific support to young people in line with their needs and interests will allow for improving the quality of professional and career orientation, greater professional mobility. This will contribute to overcoming of the mismatch between labour demand and supply by creating “new skills for new jobs”, in accordance with - the objectives of Flagship Initiative “Youth on the move”.</p>
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Source: Authors

The other political document in the field of lifelong learning (LLL) is the [National Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2008- 2013](#) (its main goal is to provide an opportunity for each citizen to develop his/her soft skills and professional knowledge.

[The Action Plan for 2010 - 2011 for the implementation of Lifelong Learning Strategy](#) was adopted by the Council of Ministers in October 2010. Its two most important aims are as follows: improvement of the possibilities for access to lifelong learning and provision of quality and efficiency of lifelong learning. These two directions comprise of various activities related to the vocational education and training of students and adults. There is a focus on the activities aimed at motivating employers to participate actively in programs for practical training of students and other individuals, such as trainees and “apprentices”. Various information and communication campaigns have been planned with respect to the participation of business representatives.

Another significant part of the Action Plan is dedicated to the planned programs for vocational training of young individuals – early school leavers. Their main aim is social inclusion and improvement of unemployed young individuals’s opportunity to enter the labour market (those who leave school prior to completing their compulsory education).

One of the most important documents in VET in Bulgaria is the [updated strategy for employment 2008-2015](#), which envisages actions for improving the access to and the quality of education and training, corresponding to the needs of the labour market and the aim to encourage more individuals to participate in lifelong learning. As a result of this, by the end of 2015, the level of participation in lifelong learning of individuals aged 25-64 should increase up to 7% (1,5% in 2007) and the share of individuals at the age of 22, who have completed upper secondary education should increase up to 87% (85,1% in 2007).

The public debate over the development of education in Bulgaria is continuous and is within the scope of public attention. The development of a national qualification framework has already started and it envisages introducing changes in the way education degrees are defined, as well as research activities on the introduction of transfer of credits in vocational education.

Two basic documents give account of the main activities in the education sector in Bulgaria in 2010:

[Decision No 665 of 15 September 2010 for Updating National Programs for Development of the Secondary Education](#)

[Decision No 106 of 1 March 2010 for Acceptance of National Programs for Development of the Secondary Education](#)

The programs planned with the first Decision are focused on:

- Optimising the school network, as well as an update of vocational education in Bulgaria, which would also mean greater autonomy of vocational schools.;
- Improvement of the teachers' skills to report their career development, which would result in the improvement of their competences ;

A teachers' qualification would complete the following main objectives:

1. Undertaking specific actions to prepare the system for the introducing the new structure in secondary education (in stages);
2. Creating opportunities for introducing entrepreneurship at school, from the earliest age;
3. Creating opportunities for improvement of the capacity of teachers per priority directions;
4. Creating opportunities for popularisation and exchange of innovative pedagogical practices;
5. Improvement of the quality of the educational – instructive process;
6. Introduction of [information and communication technologies \(ICT\) at school aimed at the increase of the attractiveness of vocational education](#). The main objectives for 2010 are to provide national support connection, internet access and maintenance of a national control centre for communications management, as well as to provide computer equipment as prize for achievement of talented students and teachers in the field of information technologies;
7. Encouraging students to participate in professional competitions and international Olympiads in the field of mathematics, informatics, natural sciences, native language and foreign languages, formation of transferable skills, aimed at the organisation of vocational education and training with vision for its internationalisation. In 2010 there were 19 national and 18 international Olympiads organised and conducted in various general education subjects, as well as technical drawing.

A total of 21 national professional competitions were organised depending on the specifics of the profession, with the participation of 880 students from 206 schools at local, regional and national level in two different formats:

- *Direct demonstration and evaluation of acquired professional skills and competences in professions*
- *Evaluation of ready-made articles and products, written/made by students in the process of their theory and practice training*

There were 400 competitors in 18 various professions, who took part in the second Panorama of the vocational education and training in Bulgaria (22 and 23 April 2010 in Plovdiv).

There were 700 students from 34 vocational secondary schools, who took part in the International Fair of the educational training companies „TF FEST BULGARIA”.

An international students' competition „Skills@work challenge - Entrepreneurship for the Young Entrepreneur” was held in partnership with the British Council and Junior Achievement. This was the first time Bulgaria participated in the competitions „Euro skills 2010”.

The leading topics on which work has started in 2010 are as follows:

- Development of a system for evaluation and control of the quality in education, including vocational education;
- Approval of remote training forms;
- Introduction of integrated modules in entrepreneurship in the training programs for general education subjects;
- Improvement of the quality of the vocational education in Bulgaria and provision of the opportunities for a more effective relationship with the business;
- Development of a system for the provision of practical training in enterprises to improve vocational education;

## **2.2. Implementation of European tools and principles**

The launching of a national qualification framework began in 2010.

There are nine levels defined in the Draft version of the National Qualification Framework - from level 0 to level 8, as some of these levels are divided in sublevels. Each level is defined by the learning outcomes (individual and professional knowledge, skills and competences.

The knowledge is defined as theoretical and/or factological. The skills are described as such that bring knowledge and practical. The competences are described with regard to the degree of undertaking responsibility and independence and include independence and responsibility, competence for learning, communication and social competences, professional competences.

Each level corresponds to the relevant level of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). The levels referring to the higher education are linked to the **FRAMEWORK** for **QUALIFICATIONS** of the **EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA** (FQEHEA).

**TABLE 2: NQF COMPRISES ALL THE KINDS AND DEGREES OF EDUCATION**

Bulgarian levels		Educational levels	EQF levels	ISCED levels
	Sub-levels			
Level 0		Preparatory level, refers to pre-school education		ISCED 0
Level 1		Initial stage in general education, i.e. from first to fourth grade	Level 1	ISCED 1
Level 2		Lower secondary education in general education and to the first degree of vocational qualification	Level 2	ISCED 2A/ISCED 2C
Level 3		Second degree of vocational qualification	Level 3	ISCED 3C or ISCED 2
Level 4		Upper secondary education in general education and to the third degree of vocational qualification	Level 4	ISCED 3A and ISCED 3C
Level 5		Fourth degree of vocational qualification	Level 5	ISCED 4
Level 6				
	Sub-level 6A	Professional Bachelor (180 credits under ECTS)	Level 6	ISCED 5B
	Sub-level 6B	Bachelor (240 credits under ECTS)	Level 6 (first cycle of FQEHEA)	ISCED 5A
Level 7				
	Sub-level 7A	Master after „Professional Bachelor in ...” from the same vocational field of study (120 credits under ECTS)	Level 7 (second cycle of FQEHEA)	ISCED 5A
	Sub-level 7B	Master after Bachelor in the same field of study (60 credits under ECTS)	Level 7 (second cycle of FQEHEA)	ISCED 5A
	Sub-level 7C	Master after Bachelor in a different field of study (120 credits under ECTS)	Level 7 (second cycle of FQEHEA)	ISCED 5A
	Sub-level 7D	Master in fields of study, where training is foreseen solely in this degree (300 credits under ECTS)	Level 7 (second cycle of FQEHEA)	ISCED 5A
Level 8		Doctor of Science (without any credits under ECTS)	Level 8	ISCED 6

Source: Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, 2011

### **2.2.1. Strategy and/or initiatives for implementing a unit-based credit system in VET system**

The activities planned for the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in higher and vocational education are still in their initial phase and in process of discussion.

There is still no system for transfer of credits introduced in vocational education and training in Bulgaria.

National Agency for VET continues the work on improving the methodology for development of [State Educational Requirements per Professions](#) with regard to a System for Transfer of Credits in vocational education and training. The deadline, set in the Lifelong Learning Strategy (LLL), is 2013

### **2.2.2. Quality assurance and the role of quality assurance mechanisms/provisions in implementing the National Qualification Frameworks and introducing a unit-based credit system**

Within the framework of the [Operational Program „Development of Human Resources“ 2007 – 2013](#) the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science launched a procedure for direct provision of free of charge financial assistance under several projects on the improvement of the quality of vocational education and training. The aim of the Project „Improvement of the quality and introduction of European instruments and practices in the system of vocational education and training“ is to improve the quality of vocational education and training. This would include the development and introduction of methodological and methodical prerequisites for introducing effective European tools, based on the results from the implementation of the Lifelong Learning programme. The Project will be implemented with the financial support of the EU via the European Social Fund.

### **2.2.3. State of play in the implementation and use of the five Europass documents.**

Bulgaria has already joined the EUROPASS initiative since 2007. Its main objective for Bulgaria is to increase the mobility culture, to motivate the communication between employers and applicants for work, between educational institutions and trainees and to support the integration of Bulgarian employees in Europe.

At the moment the use of Europass in Bulgaria is not compulsory.

The Europass CV is the most broadly used of all five Europass documents. It was introduced as compulsory in order to be able to apply for various European Programmes – all sector programmes under the Lifelong Learning Programme, projects under the ESF (the European Social Fund) programmes, etc. In the last few years part of the state administration in Bulgaria has been also using the Europass CV and the Europass language passport.

The use of the Europass language passport is becoming more and more popular. The secondary schools with intensive studying of foreign languages, as well as higher schools offering training in various types of philology, have demonstrated interest in this tool.

Some vocational training centres licensed by the [National Agency for Vocational Education and Training](#) (NAVET), issue the Europass certificate supplement for vocational qualification and the certificate for vocational training. For the time being there are still very few vocational secondary schools that issue the Europass certificate supplement. The Human Resource Development Centre in Bulgaria has organised training sessions for directors of vocational training centres and vocational schools, who have shown great interest in this initiative.

The new way of defining “vocational qualifications” as “results of learning”, which is already applied by the NAVET, in the development of new and updating the existing [State Educational Requirements](#) will assist the certifying institutions in Bulgaria, that are willing to issue the EUROPASS certificate supplement.

The Europass mobility document is normally issued to students from vocational secondary schools and students participating in projects under the Leonardo da Vinci sector programme during the summer period and after completing a work placement abroad. The document gives information about the knowledge and skills acquired during their stay with the receiving institution.

#### **2.2.4. The main “strategic” countries for international cooperation in VET**

There are various education programmes for cooperation launched and agreements signed between the Bulgarian Ministry of Education, Youth and Science and other countries but these are not specifically in the field vocational education and training. Most often they are with Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain and Russia aiming to assist with improving the level of language training of Bulgarian students, teachers and lecturers in the relevant foreign language, as well as declaring mutual awareness about the education systems, programmes and methods of training.

In 2010 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS), with the active assistance (financial and expert) of Germany, successfully completed a project on the improvement of the practical training quality. There is another project being implemented at the moment on the development and approbation of a system for credits transfer in the chemical industry. The leading principles of this cooperation are the German good practice in the field vocational education and training and the traditionally good relationship between the two countries..

- ***Measures addressing legal and administrative obstacles that prevent transnational mobility in VET.***

No concrete measures which address legal and administrative obstacles that prevent transnational mobility in VET are available

In the legislative programme of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science it is planned that changes of the regulations in the Vocational Education and Training Act should be adopted. It is anticipated that as a result of these changes, a legal basis for introducing a system for career guidance, as well as for validation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired in the process of lifelong learning and mobility activities, would be laid.

Ensuring that there are ways of validation of skills will allow the implementation of mobility with specific learning outcomes, which would result in the acquisition of qualification. Opportunities would be created for validation of voluntary work.

Another future change is the introduction of the credit system in the field of vocational education and training. The guarantee that the credits acquired abroad would be officially recognised would increase young individuals’s interest and motivation to take part in a transnational mobility. A prototype system for transfer of credits in vocational education and training is being developed at the moment and will be tested in the near future.

Transnational mobility is mainly an attribute of the Mobility Action of the Leonardo da Vinci sector programme. This type of action is very popular, both, because of the professional experience acquired and the fact that the programme covers most costs. Therefore, possible financial obstacles for the implementation of the mobility are avoided. Pilot individual mobility projects under Comenius programme have been launched this year and would also provide an opportunity for many young individuals to acquire knowledge, skills and competences.

### **2.3. Transnational mobility programs and schemes in VET**

The main transnational mobility scheme in VET in Bulgaria is offered by the HRDC within the Leonardo da Vinci sectoral programme. The main trait of this scheme is that it offers limited number of mobilities to the respective company, depending on the content of the National call for proposals for the respective selection year. In most of the cases one company is allowed to send up to 10 employees on a placement abroad.

The history of the scheme in Bulgaria shows several important tendencies:

- most companies chose to send their employees on short term mobilities up to 4 weeks;
- the mobility includes combination of training and placement;
- the placements abroad are usually in one country.

The other target group that is gradually increasing is "People on the labour market", which includes both employed and unemployed persons.

In most cases the stay abroad of IVET students encompasses both aspects – training and work placement. The most popular hosting institutions are training institutes with a network of affiliates from the business community who offer placements in the respective field. As for the proportions of this "training/working" environment, it can be pointed out on average that 1/3 of the placement period is dedicated to vocational training.

The main source of financing of transnational mobility in VET in Bulgaria is coming from Leonardo da Vinci sectoral programme. All interested institutions submit project proposals to the National Agency, i.e. HRDC. The funding is rendered in accordance with several criteria – hosting country, duration of mobility and type of target group. In principle, the funding for the maximum duration of mobility of one person cannot exceed 5000 EUR.

HRDC introduced as a national requirement the issuing of Europass mobility document for all placements that were carried out abroad within the Leonardo da Vinci sectoral programme. The main goal of this action is to ensure transparency of the skills acquired by Bulgarian citizens. The document is usually issued in both English and Bulgarian languages.

#### **2.3.1. Arrangements to secure work placements for transnational mobility in VET**

HRDC is the main source of funding for transnational mobility in VET for Bulgarian companies and in this capacity implements long term and extensive policy on campaigning for mobility within the business community. Starting from 2007 several approaches were tested in order to find the most effective promotion solution. At the very beginning the main tool was to organise thematic seminars on national level for presenting the benefits of transnational mobility. Later on thematic publications were issued such as "Opportunities for the business" and "Practical guides for application."

The culmination of outlined efforts was the decision to introduce additional points in the National call for proposals for proposals submitted by the representatives of the business, i.e. the branch organisations.

It should be noted that the business reaction was not very enthusiastic due to the fact that majority of companies in Bulgaria are SMEs and they cannot afford the absence of 1-2 members of their staff for a long period. However, in long term perspective their interest is becoming more stable.

There are no specific frameworks for recognition of work placements abroad. However, it should be noted that these placements especially of students at VET schools are recognised as the minimum obligatory placements necessary for their successful graduation.

The transnational mobility in VET is mainly targeted to students in VET schools. There is no provision of work places for students in apprenticeship system.

There is no specific national or formal registry of companies participating in transnational mobility projects in VET. However, on the website of HRDC in the section "Leonardo da Vinci – Results" the list of approved sending companies can be found grouped per years (2007, 2008, 2009).

#### Arrangements to secure work placements for transnational mobility in VET

There are no statistical data about the transnational mobility, as well as for apprenticeship system. No financial and other stimuli anticipated for the encouragement of the enterprises to participate in the cross-border mobility in the sphere of the vocational education and training as a host or a sending organization. There are no legislative documents with regard to the recognition of completed vocational training or a part of it to persons beyond the school system. No data of companies participating in transnational mobility projects in VET is available.

TABLE 3. - OVERVIEW OF VET TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY PROGRAMS AND SCHEMES									
Title of program/scheme and geographical coverage	Managing authority	Sources of funding <sup>3</sup> and corresponding level of funding for the programming period	Start – end date (programming period)	Target groups <sup>4</sup>	Average duration of mobility per target group (in months)	Number of participants <sup>5</sup>	Implementation mechanisms <sup>6</sup>	Practices to recognize the KSC acquired abroad	Sources of information (including evaluation reports)
EU programs									
1. Leonardo da Vinci/Action “Mobility”	HRDC	EU programs	2007-2013	Students, teachers, people labour market	IVET Students* 4 weeks Apprentices** 6 weeks	IVET Students* - 851 Apprentices* -	The grant award decision it’s based solely on the criteria for exclusion, eligibility, selection		HRDC

<sup>3</sup> EU programs, EU Structural Funds (e.g. ESF), National budget, Employer contribution, Individuals’ funds/savings, etc

<sup>4</sup> E.g. students, apprentices, VET professionals, etc

<sup>5</sup> The number of students who have spent a period abroad in one single year (please specify year). In case statistics are collected differently, please specify.

<sup>6</sup> Please briefly present the application procedure & the eligibility requirements for the applicants. In case of EU programs, please indicate if standard procedure is applied. In case of exceptions, please briefly describe

					VET -Professionals*** 2 weeks  Others (please specify) 4 weeks	NA  VET Professionals** * - 16.  Others (please specify) - 66	and award pre-announced in the Lifelong Learning Programme Guide and the relevant Call for proposals.		
2.Study visits	HRDC	EU programs		VET professionals, employers, business representatives	3-5 days	66 people	The grant award decision it's based solely on the criteria for exclusion, eligibility, selection and award pre-announced in the Lifelong Learning Programme Guide and the relevant Call for proposals.		HRDC
3. Comenius	HRDC	EU programs	2007-2013	Teachers	5 days	136 people	The grant award decision it's based solely on the criteria for exclusion, eligibility, selection		HRDC

							and award pre-announced in the Lifelong Learning Programme Guide and the relevant Call for proposals.		
4. Grundvig	HRDC	EU programs	2007-2013	Adults	n/a	253	The grant award decision it's based solely on the criteria for exclusion, eligibility, selection and award pre-announced in the Lifelong Learning Programme Guide and the relevant Call for proposals.		HRDC

\*IVET STUDENTS IN SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS;  
TRAINERS

\*\* IVET STUDENTS IN APPRENTICESHIP

\*\*\* TEACHERS, AND

### 3. VET TO SUPPORT RECOVERY FROM THE CRISIS

#### 3.1. Overview

The vocational education and training renders assistance to overcoming the crisis.

The reinstatement of economic crises started during the second quarter of 2010, but it was not before the end of the year when some economic sectors were recovered. This is why the annual results – growth barely by 0.2%, does not guarantee the overcoming of the crisis because of the non-sustainable development of some sectors and branches.

According to the data provided by the [National statistical Institute \(NS\)](#) on the Gross Added Value in Bulgaria, the construction sector is the most affected by the crisis. In previous years the production of this sector grew up annually by over 10%, but in 2009 the added value of the sector dropped down by 11.7%. The annual result for 2010 is still positive - growth by 0.9%, attained after hesitant positive changes during the year.

At the beginning of 2010 the industry sector was the first to start overcoming the crisis and reversed the trend from decrease to growth. For one year /2010/ the added value of the industry increased by 2.3%.

The agriculture sector, though, with a low share in the GAV was also affected by the crisis and the decrease reached 6.1% in 2009. In 2010 however its added value marked the highest growth among the remaining sectors (3.9%).

TABLE 1: LONG TERM AFFECTED SECTORS BY THE CRISES IN 2010		
N	Sectors	Drop out of
1	Trade, repair of cars and household equipment	2.5% to 1.8%
2	Hotels, hostels and catering	2.5 to 1.8%
3	Transport and communications	2.5% to 1.8%
4	State Government; Education; Health; other services and activities of non-governmental organizations	by 1.5% and 2.7%

Source: Authors

Only the „Finances, credit and insurances; Operations with real estate property, business services“ sector remained unaffected by the crisis in 2009, with annual growth of the added value at 1.5%. The growth in the sector continued also in 2010 (1.3%).

Young individuals, those with less qualifications and elderly workers and employees turned out to be the worst affected by the crisis

<b>TABLE 2: UNEMPLOYMENT GROUPS AFFECTED BY THE CRISES IN 2010</b>		
No	Unemployment groups	Unemployment (%)
1	young people at the age of 15-24	from 24.8% in 2009 to 22.2%
2	youth unemployment substantially grew up by 7 percentage	respectively from 16.2% to 23.2%.
3	elderly people at the age of 55 and more	grew up from 5.9% to 8.9%.
4a	low qualified personnel of the small- and medium-sized enterprises	grew up for one year by 38.1 thousand and reached 222.3 thousand
4b	discouraged person, who did not look for employment	grew up for one year by 38.1 thousand and reached 222.3 thousand

Source: Authors

### **3.2. Effects of the crisis on VET and corresponding measures**

#### **3.2.1. Trends in learners' behavior**

The crisis from 2009 did not have any impact on the proportion of students taking part in vocational programmes and general education programmes in 2010. According to official data provided by the NSI, the relative share of the students in initial vocational education and training in degree ISCED 3 has remained stable in the last three years - 50.8% for 2008 and 51.5% for 2009 and 2010. This information indicates that the crisis did not provoke an outflow from vocational to general education. The crisis probably influenced the preferences of the students for different professions, which were not affected by the crisis.

**TABLE 3: STUDENTS AFTER VIII GRADE FOR ATTAINMENT OF A FIRST LEVEL  
(PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION)**

	<b>Narrow fields of education</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
1	<b>Total</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>691</b>
2	Engineering and engineering trades	126	113	18	76
3	Manufacturing and processing	448	355	411	254
4	Architecture and building	43	12	-	-
5	Agriculture, forestry and fishery	111	106	78	79
6	Personal services	198	231	278	256
7	Not known	-	-	-	26

Source: Authors

**TABLE 4: STUDENTS FIELDS OF EDUCATION IN PROGRAMMES FOR ATTAINMENT OF  
A II LEVEL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION**

	<b>Narrow fields of education</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
1	<b>Total</b>	<b>39624</b>	<b>42183</b>	<b>44430</b>	<b>43225</b>
2	Arts	17	7	47	102
3	Business and administration	4504	6227	8027	7611
4	Physical and chemical sciences	-	20	19	19
5	Computing	443	866	1058	1194
6	Engineering and engineering trades	14022	14100	13824	13369
7	Manufacturing and processing	6606	6227	5604	4648

8	Architecture and building	2412	2169	1888	1530
9	Agriculture, forestry and fishery	4244	4946	6045	6844
10	Social services	104	-	81	-
11	Personal services	7272	7621	7837	7908
12	Transport services	-	-	-	-

Source: Authors

**TABLE 5: STUDENTS BY FIELDS OF EDUCATION IN PROGRAMMES FOR ATTAINMENT OF A III LEVEL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION**

	Narrow fields of education	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
1	<b>Total</b>	<b>133093</b>	<b>119501</b>	<b>112821</b>	<b>112266</b>
2	Arts	5547	5552	5836	6109
3	Humanities	526	475	383	360
4	Business and administration	25258	22239	20019	18896
5	Physical and chemical sciences	41	17	-	..
6	Computing	4036	3982	4066	5405
7	Engineering and engineering trades	47105	40935	38088	37096
8	Manufacturing and processing	15070	11868	10391	8813
9	Architecture and building	9007	8957	8968	9367
19	Agriculture, forestry and fishery	9476	8396	7533	7270
11	Veterinary	2074	1709	1485	1504
12	Social services	26	-	-	87

13	Personal services	11772	12550	13216	14701
14	Transport services	1782	1684	1730	1558
15	Environmental protection	1338	1112	1079	1056
16	Security services	16	25	27	20
17	Not known and unspecified	19	-	-	..

Source: NSI (Education and training Statistics); Extracted: 13-07-2011; Last update: 01-04-2011

Description: Individuals 16 and over years enrolled in vocational training programmes for obtaining level of vocational qualification

Link to data: [http://www.nsi.bg/ORPDOCS/Edu\\_8.2\\_en.xls](http://www.nsi.bg/ORPDOCS/Edu_8.2_en.xls)

The education and training of adults in Vocational Training Centres /VTC/ in the last three years has been strongly impacted by the crisis, judging by the number of trainees per programmes for obtaining a degree for vocational qualification. Even though the number of VTC implementing such programs goes up every year (218 for 2008, 295 for 2009 and 350 for 2010), the year of the crisis was marked by substantial decrease of the number of the trainees – from 16.0 thousand in 2008 to 12.9 thousand in 2009. In 2010 along with the signs economy growth, this type of education and training of adults is reported to be recovering quickly . The number of participants in these programmes sharply increased - from 12910 in 2009 to 17589 in 2010 or by 36.2%. The highest increase is registered for trainees with low qualification who wish to obtain a certificate for the first /the lowest/ degree of vocational qualification – 81.1%. This growth in the field of continuous vocational education and training of adults is also due to the economic crisis, i.e. dismissal of the low qualified personnel in the industry, construction, transport and other branches.

### 3.2.2. Trends in enterprises' behavior

The crisis in Bulgaria affected both the public and the private sector. There is no complete and precise information about the number of the enterprises which suspended their activities, and it may be assumed that part of these enterprises or part of their activities have been moved the “grey sector” of the economy in Bulgaria.. According to data provided by the branch organisations on the impact of the crisis, over 1000 construction companies or 28 % suspended their activities. According to general expert evaluation, in times of economic crisis, most enterprises were forced to reduce their expenditures, including expenditures for production, innovations, staff and salaries. The decline in innovative activity of the enterprises also results in reducing training of personnel related to innovations. Another, smaller part of the enterprises found opportunities to apply active measures for counteraction and escaping the crisis, through change of structure for their production and services, through mastering new or improving existing products and services, accompanied by relevant training of personnel.

According to a research conducted by the agency for the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises: approximately one fifth of the enterprises provided training to their personnel related to innovations. It is noted in the same report /page 99/, that the continuous training of personnel is applied more and more broadly and in 2010 37% of the enterprises conducted internal corporate trainings and 17% - external specialised trainings in their own field of work. Further to that, 11% of the enterprises conducted external specialised management and sales training.

### 3.2.3. Measures taken at national, regional and local level by public authorities and social partners to address the negative effects of the crisis

In order to restrain the negative consequences from the crisis on the labour market, in 2010 the Bulgarian government undertook actions directed mainly at the preservation of workplaces, provision of subsidised employment of the unemployed and development of the labour force quality. The specific measures taken to reduce unemployment are: introduction of schemes for part-time work; provision of special packages for intermediate services for employment of recently dismissed individuals; additional opportunities for training of unemployed and employed individuals through the provision of vouchers for training; subsidised employment. The Government provided 75 million BGN in total for implementing these active measures on the labour market in 2010.

### 3.2.4. Measures at national level

The second plan with anti-crisis measures dates from – from 1 April 2010, adopted by decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, It consists of actions for support of the households income, the labour market, the social security systems and the fiscal stability.

The applied active policy in the labour market is aimed at protecting individuals affected by the crisis and reinstatement of the economic growth. The efforts are predominantly directed at providing measures and implementing programmes for preservation or provision of employment, including improvement of individuals' employability.

The main tool for the implementation of the employment policy in Bulgaria is the National Employment Plan, which is developed on an annual basis by the inter-institutional working group, with the participation of the social partners and is approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria. It is aimed at quickly overcoming the crisis and the main aims of the actions financed in 2010 were:

- Enhancement of the quality of the labour force through acquisition of new qualifications, enhancement of the qualification and skills of the employed and unemployed individuals;
- Preservation of the existing and creation of new workplaces;
- Expansion of the access to employment;
- Enabling social dialogue.

The dismissed individuals and those employed part-time due to the decrease of production levels were included in the target group. There were actions applied for the attainment of lasting integration of these groups. These were taking into consideration individual action plans of the target group and comprised of various actions such as: advice, vocational orientation, improvement the level of literacy, vocational training, practice sessions, apprenticeship schemes, subsidised employment as well as providing assistance for starting up an independent business and encouragement of mobility.

The implementation of the measures for the preservation of employment and fast reintegration of dismissed individuals financed by the national budget with a (Decree of the Council of Ministers No 44 of 2009) for the payment of compensations to workers and employees who started part-time work in “Industry” and “Services” is ongoing. Thus, individuals in active employment were provided with a certain extend of flexibility to keep their workplaces. On the other hand opportunities were created for employers to keep their personnel. As a result of the implementation of these measures, over 20 000 workers and employees and about 500 employers were provided with assistance.

A package of services including information, advice, referral to available vacant workplaces, training and subsidised employment up to 6 months is be provided for individuals made redundant as a result of the economic crisis.

The role of active mediation on the labour market for decreasing the number of unemployed is becoming more and more important. The effective mediation services for employment provide more opportunities for match between supply and demand and increase of employment rate. 36 Job Centres in Bulgaria (out of 105), have introduced the „service at one counter”, in 2010. Labour exchange markets have become more and more popular and serve as an instrument for fast and effective mediation between supply and demand. Individuals looking for a job and employers offering employment get together and agree conditions of employment within one day only. From the 105 labour exchange markets organised in Bulgaria, 38 are specialised in some field and the rest are general. 10 are targeting one of the most vulnerable groups on the labour market – the Roma community; 6 are in the field of tourism, hotel and restaurant keeping and young individuals (one is funded by EURES); 5 in the field of agriculture and forestry; 2 in the field of construction and tobacco industry; 1 in the shoemaking industry; and 1 in the wine industry.

In 2010 actions were undertaken to increase the opportunities to stimulate employment. A new measure called „green workplaces” was introduced in the [Employment Promotion Act](#). In this way new opportunities are provided for employment in activities related to the production of goods and provision of services providing assistance to the preservation of environment.

In 2010 the social partners initiated and participated actively in the implementation of projects for young individuals who have been dropped out of school related to vocational orientation and apprenticeship for acquisition of craftsmen’s skills; training of unemployed young individuals for the acquisition of key skills for employment; organising practice sessions for young individuals who have completed their vocational education in tourism.

Improving employability of the labour force during the crisis is of exceptional importance in order to provide workers with the required knowledge and skills for the newly created workplaces. In 2009-2010, in times of crisis, the active policy on the labour market, including training, received less funding from the national budget. Therefore this policy is complemented by the implementation of schemes under Operational Program “Human Resource Development” (OP “HRD”) co-financed by the European Social Fund.

In 2010 the funding released for overcoming the negatives of the crisis, spent under Operational Program “Human Resource Development” (OP “HRD”), added up to over 34 million BGN (over 17 million Euro). This considerable resource serves for the creation of employment, encouragement of the mobility of the labour force, support for workers and employees, who started part-time work, training for unemployed and employed persons.

**TABLE 6: SCHEMES UNDER “OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME “DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES (OP “DHR”)**

No	Basic Schemes	Target groups	Measures	Number of beneficiaries	Added value
1	Adaptability workers and employees	who started part-time work, have the possibility to be trained up to 6 months during the time when they are not at work	Vouchers for training and during the training the persons shall receive monthly scholarship and funds for transport from and to the training center.	114 038 persons  Vouchers for inclusion in training were presented to 52 171 persons, and a predominant part of the vouchers – 43 597 were presented to employed persons, and 8 574 – to unemployed persons	Update and enhance their vocational qualification, as well as to supplement their income.
2	Development	for the persons, dismissed from work because of restructuring or closure down of the enterprise, decrease of the volume of work or closing down of a part of the production as a result of the economic and financial crisis.	unemployed persons may be trained for acquisition or enhancement of the vocational qualification and the persons who have successfully completed their training will be included in employment for not less than 9 months		employment

3	Encouragement of the start-up of projects for the development of independent economic activities	Work force for independent economic activities	Training in entrepreneurship, managerial and business skills provided, as well as consultations for the start-up of independent business.		Independent business
4	Qualification services and encouragement of the employment	unemployed persons	for vocational training		employment
	At Work Again	unemployed persons	for taking care of children at the age from 1 to 3		employment
5	I Can	employed persons	for acquisition of vocational qualification and/or key competences		Career development
6	Paid practices will be provided for under the scheme within real working environment(at th end of 2010)	13 500 unemployed young people at the age of up to 29 aimed at the provision of subsequent employment	The monthly remuneration and all the social security and health insurance expenditures due on the part of the Employer shall be financed.	13 500 unemployed young people up to 29	subsequent employment

Source: Authors

## 4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

### 4.1. Historical Background

The first law on vocational education and training in Bulgaria was the “**Structure of the Training Craftsmen’s Workshop Act**” in the Principality of Bulgaria, which was adopted in 1883. The **Vocational School Act dates back to 1907**, which is known to be the first special law, on the grounds of which the first technical schools were formed. In 1921 the overall regulation of vocational education was introduced by the “**Individuals’s Education Act**”. In 1948 [the Public Education Act \(1948\)](#) was adopted. Four types of vocational schools were mentioned in this document (VTS – Vocational Technical Schools, VTSS – Vocational Technical Secondary Schools, technical schools and technical schools after secondary education).

In 1999 was adopted a [Vocational Education and Training Act \(VETA\)](#) Opportunities were created for the acquisition of educational degree and the acquisition of vocational qualification, both by students and by adult individuals, providing them with an option to choose forms of preparation and training.

The vocational education and training institutions in Bulgaria are: vocational secondary schools, art schools, vocational colleges, vocational training centres, including sports schools.

The vocational education has been and still remains very popular in the Bulgaria. 161 536 students<sup>7</sup> participated in it during the school year of 2010/2011 according to data provided by the NSI. 146 948 students<sup>8</sup> participated in the upper secondary school stage of the general education schools.

### 4.2. Legislative framework for IVET

There are no special laws for regulation of Initial Vocational Education and Training

The laws which regulate the vocational education and training, including the initial vocational education and training are:

- [Vocational Education and Training Act: - VETA \(1999\)](#) – provides for the legislation of the initial vocational education and the continuing vocational education;
- [Public Education Act - PEA \(1991\)](#) provides for the basic legislation of the education: regulates the right of the citizens continuously to enhance their education and qualification;
- **The Degree of Education, the General Education Minimum and the Curriculum Act (1999)** – regulates the State Educational Requirements for the degree of education, the general education minimum and the curriculum with the system of the public education.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=23&a1=42&a2=43&a3=681#cont>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=23&a1=42&a2=43&a3=679#cont>

[The State Educational Requirements \(SER\)](#) refer to: 1. Pre-school education and training; 2. The degree of education, the general education minimum and the curriculum; 3. The training contents; 4. The mastering of the literary Bulgarian language; 5. The evaluation system; 6. The vocational education and training; 7. The acquisition of qualification per professions; 8. The training of children and students with special educational needs and/or with chronic diseases; 9. The textbooks and the training tools; 10. The documents for the public education system; 11. The extracurricular and out-of-school activities; 12. The teacher's legal capacity and qualification; 13. The schools' property; 14. The health care service; 15. The safe conditions of education, training and labour; 16. The scientific, information and library service; 17. The one-year support of children and students in the state and municipal kindergartens, schools and servicing units; 18. The standardization and the remuneration within the public education system, and 19. Inspection of the public education system.

- [The Crafts Act \(2001\)](#) regulates the rules and requirements for crafts training, including delivery of the training by a master at a specific workplace in a craftsmen's enterprise;
- **The Recognition of the Vocational Qualifications Act** dates back in 2008. It regulates the requirements and the procedure for recognition of vocational qualifications acquired in other member-states and in third countries, aimed at access to and opportunity to practise a regulated professions in the Republic of Bulgaria.

### **Collective agreements**

A new two-year general sector agreement on education in Bulgaria was signed in June 2010. The agreement is with national scope and refers to all the state and municipal institutions within the public education system. The social partners actively participated in its development. Arrangements were included with regard to various social issues which are not subject of [the Labour Code](#) or other legal acts related to it. The general sector employment agreement is one of the ways to enable social dialogue. It is an efficient mechanism for the prevention and settlement of various conflicts.

There is no special general agreement for initial vocational education and training. Each public education institution which provides initial vocational education and training is entitled to sign its own agreement, in which no conditions that are less beneficial than those already agreed, may be accepted.

The private institutions within the system of the vocational education and training have also the right to sign general agreements, but they are not obliged to conform to the already signed general agreement.

### 4.3. Institutional framework for IVET and organigram

- 4.3.1. [The National Assembly](#) – implements legislative acts in the field of education and in particular of vocational education. A commission in education, science and issues related to children, youth and sports is established as part of the Parliament.
- 4.3.2. [The Council of Ministers - \(CoM\)](#) defines the state policy in the field of education, including vocational education and training, employment and the labour market.
- 4.3.3. [The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science](#) – manages, coordinates and controls the implementation of the state policy in the field of vocational education and training; it regulates and methodically manages the continuing vocational training. The Minister of Education and Science ratifies the [State Educational Requirements \(SER\)](#) for the acquisition of professional qualification, ratifies the List of vocational education and training professions. The Minister also provides the necessary conditions for the implementation of the [State Educational Requirements \(SER\)](#) within the system of vocational education and training, ratifies programs for qualification in the system of vocational education and training
- 4.3.4. [Ministry of Culture](#) – implements the state policy in art schools.
- 4.3.5. [Ministry of Health \(MH\)](#) – participate in the coordination of the List of Vocational Education and Training Professions; it defines “chronic diseases”, the physical and sensor disabilities and inappropriate professions from the List of the vocational education and training professions.
- 4.3.6. [The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training \(NAVET\)](#) is a specialised authority of the Council of Ministers. The Agency develops the State Educational Requirements for the vocational education and training system and the List of the Vocational Education and Training Professions.
- 4.3.7. [Human Resource Development Centre](#) – National Agency, which coordinates the management and administration of the Lifelong Learning Programme. It is the only one institution in Bulgaria, which support the development of mobility activities within the initial vocational training and continuing training.

Representative organisations of the employers and the syndicates participate at national level in the development, coordination and updating of the legal norms and standards, strategic and conceptual documents through establishing social partnership and social dialogue

***The responsible authorities for the vocational education and training (VET) system at regional level are:***

**District administration** – it participates in the implementation at regional level of the state policy for employment and the acquisition of vocational qualification for the labour market.

**Directorates “District service for employment”** – they organise the implementation of the state policy for the training of adults in acquisition of vocational qualification – unemployed and employed under certain conditions. The Directorates also propose measures and projects for the delivery of training;

**The regional education inspectorates** (territorial administration units of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, situated in the 28 district centres) implement the state policy in the field of vocational education and training at regional level, implement projects, **programmes** and strategies for development, functioning and improvement of vocational education and training at district level.

**At local level:**

**The municipalities** – they participate in the establishment of the policy in the field of vocational education and training within their area.

The participation of students and their parents in decision making within the various vocational education and training structures is not regulated at this stage. There are non-governmental organisations which bring together parents. They are invited to participate in discussions on drafting of statutory documents, provide their opinion and different proposals.

In the documents prepared Ministry of Education, Youth and Science in 2010, with regard to changes in the education system, it is anticipated that the participation of students in decision making should be implemented via various specific mechanisms, forms and initiatives at all levels school life; including the forms of self-organisation during out-of-school time: advices with students, the right to participate in the work of the School Public Board and other forms of students' self-government, initiated by the students and assisted by the school management and team.

The idea that parents (the guardians) should be partners with school teachers in the process of education and upbringing of the students has also been discussed. It is anticipated representatives of the parents' community and the local self-government structures would also participate in the management of the school. A substantial step forward would be made towards the establishment of functioning communities in the vocational school based on the principles of democracy through offsetting up a Public Board, which would be formed on the basis of legitimate representation of stakeholders and would consist of parents and municipality and business representatives.

The executive bodies within the system of the vocational education and training are the vocational schools, the vocational secondary schools, the vocational colleges, the vocational training centres, the information centres and vocational orientation.

<b>TABLE 1: THE EXECUTIVE BODIES WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b>		
<b>N</b>	<b>schools</b>	<b>provide</b>
1	Vocational schools	Initial vocational training and the acquisition of the first and second degree (връзка към обясненията)of vocational qualification and a partial professional qualification. Students who have successfully completed sixth grade are admitted in these schools.
2	Vocational secondary schools	Vocational education and the acquisition of the second and third degree of vocational qualification. The vocational secondary schools may also conduct vocational training and the acquisition of the first, second and third degree of vocational qualification and a partial professional qualification.

		Students with completed lower secondary education are admitted in these schools.
3	Art schools	Vocational education and acquisition of the third degree of vocational qualification. Students spend up to four years there after the lower secondary education.
4	Vocational colleges	Vocational education and acquisition of the fourth degree of vocational qualification for individuals with completed secondary education.
5	Vocational training centres	Vocational education to individuals who have at least 16 years old.
6	Information and Vocational Orientation Centres	Service of vocational orientation for students and other individuals.

Source: Authors

The various executive bodies could be state, municipal or private, national with foreign input and foreign.

<b>TABLE 2: ORGANIGRAM</b>				
Functions level	Decision making	Executive	Advisory	Partners
National level	National Assembly	Council of Ministers, Ministry of Education, Youth and Science Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	National Agency for Vocational Education and Training	National Tripartite Cooperation Council National representative organisations of the employers and organisations of the workers and employees
Regional level		District administrations Regional employment services Regional education inspectorates	Permanent and temporary employment commissions at regional level	

Local level	Municipalities	Vocational schools Vocational secondary schools Art schools Vocational colleges Vocational training centres	School Boards School Boards of Trustees	
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Source: Authors

A total of 484 vocational schools and secondary schools of which 60 private function according to data of the NSI during the school year of 2010/2011 within the public education system, which offer training for initial vocational education and training<sup>9</sup>.

<b>TABLE 3 VOCATIONAL AND SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS</b>	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Total	503	487	487	484
Art schools	21	21	21	21
Vocational secondary schools	449	433	422	422
Vocational colleges	28	28	39	36
Vocational schools	5	5	5	5
From the total number of private schools	56	53	63	60

Source: Authors

According to data of the NSI the total number of the effective licensed vocational training centers in 2010 added up to 350, of which private 320<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup>NSI : <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=23>

<sup>10</sup> NSI: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=23&a1=2226&a2=2227#cont>

#### 4.4. Legislative framework for CVET

The main regulations on continuing vocational education in Bulgaria are:

**The Labour Code** (1986 with latest amendments in 2011) (LC) is the main legislative document of the labour legislation in Bulgaria, which regulates the different options for vocational education and training of employed individuals: the agreement for acquisition of qualification, the agreement for studying, the agreement for improvement of qualification and re-qualification

**The Employment Promotion Act** (2001 with latest amendments in 2011) regulates public relations concerning professional orientation and training of adults. The training of adults includes literacy training, training for acquiring vocational qualification, training for acquiring and perfection of key competencies, motivation training. EPA regulates different measures, encouraging employers to organise the training of employed and unemployed persons, offering practices for acquiring certain practical skills, apprenticeships with a mentor, etc. The Act also regulates possibilities for co-financed training of different social groups at risk of social exclusion and exclusion from the labour market i.e.: unemployed young individuals under the age of 29, disabled people, unemployed mothers with children at the age of 3 to 5, unemployed people who served time in prison, people who have acquired the right of early retirement on a professional pension and who are not working, etc.

In compliance with the Act, it is the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy's, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, responsibility to develop and coordinate the state policy on training of adults; to establish rules and procedures for the assessment and recognition of knowledge, skills and competencies of adults; to study, analyse and make forecasts; to identify adults' needs.

**The Employment Promotion Act** provides possibilities for co-funding of the enhancement of the quality of training, including the assessment of the training institutions' capacity to implement training of adults; training of teachers of adults; designing and printing of innovative training materials

**The Vocational Education and Training Act** (1999 with the latest amendments in 2010)(VETA) regulates the organisation, the work of the institutions, the management and the financing of vocational education and training in Bulgaria, **including continuing vocational education**. The act regulates the continuing vocational training within the vocational education and training system – improvement of the acquired qualification in a profession or part of profession, as well as the initial vocational training – the acquisition of initial qualification in a profession or part of profession. By means of the forms of continuing vocational training VETA provides options for every individual over the age of 16 to acquire vocational qualification, to update or extend the acquired vocational qualification or to re-qualify with the objective to improve their employability. etc. Art. 40 of VETA provides the possibility to those who wish to certify their knowledge and skills acquired in the process of practicing a profession and to obtain a nationally recognised document.

**The Crafts Act** (2001 with the latest amendments in 2011) – regulates the rules and requirements for crafts training, including the delivery of training by a master at a specific workplace in a craftsmen's enterprise;

**The Community Centres Act** (1996 with the latest amendments in 2010) regulates opportunities for informal training of children and adults.

#### 4.5. Institutional framework for CVET and organigram

The institutional framework of vocational education and training is identical with the one presented above. The following should be also taken into consideration:

##### **At national level:**

The Employment Agency together with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy –implements the state policy for encouragement of employment, protection of the labour market, vocational awareness and advice.

The Economic and Social Council, established in 2004, is a national advisory body for social dialogue, which discusses and makes proposals for important education issues, including continuing vocational education and training within the context of lifelong learning.

The National Tripartite Cooperation Council – national authority for administrative and social partnership which discusses and provides standpoints for draft laws on employment and vocational qualification and thus participates, though indirectly, in the formulation of the policy in the field of vocational education and training. The Council was established on a tripartite principle with a special unit in it.

The National Vocational Qualification Council coordinates the development of national policy and strategies for vocational training and acquisition of vocational qualification from unemployed and employed individuals. It also creates prerequisite for interaction between the employers representative organisations and workers and the employees organisations at national level in regard to lifelong learning. The Council agrees the training needs for acquisition of vocational qualification of unemployed individuals.

The National Employment Support Council together with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy is also established on a tripartite principle. Its functions are to discuss and provide standpoints for the development and the implementation of the policy for employment and the National Employment Action Plan.

##### **At local level:**

The permanent and temporary employment commissions in cooperation with the district councils for regional development implement and coordinate the national employment policy at national and local level.

The “Regional Employment Service” directorates – organise the implementation of the state policy for the acquisition of vocational qualification; they propose measures and project ideas in the field of vocational training.

The cooperation works mainly through the advisory bodies. Their members are representatives of the official institutions and the social partners. Further to that, the practice to include representatives of the three parties in the preparation of various documents in the field of vocational education and training has been ratified for many years now.

## 5. INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The school education in Bulgaria in depending on the obtained degree is lower and upper secondary, and depending on the training contents could be general and vocational. General education enables mastering of the general education minimum and, when possible, could entail specialised training in compliance with the State Educational Requirements. Vocational education facilitates mastering of the general education minimum and the acquisition of professional qualification in compliance with the State Educational Requirements. Vocational training facilitates the acquisition of qualification in compliance with the state educational requirements. Generally speaking, it is divided into initial and continuing

### 5.1. Background of the initial vocational education and training system and diagram of the education and training system

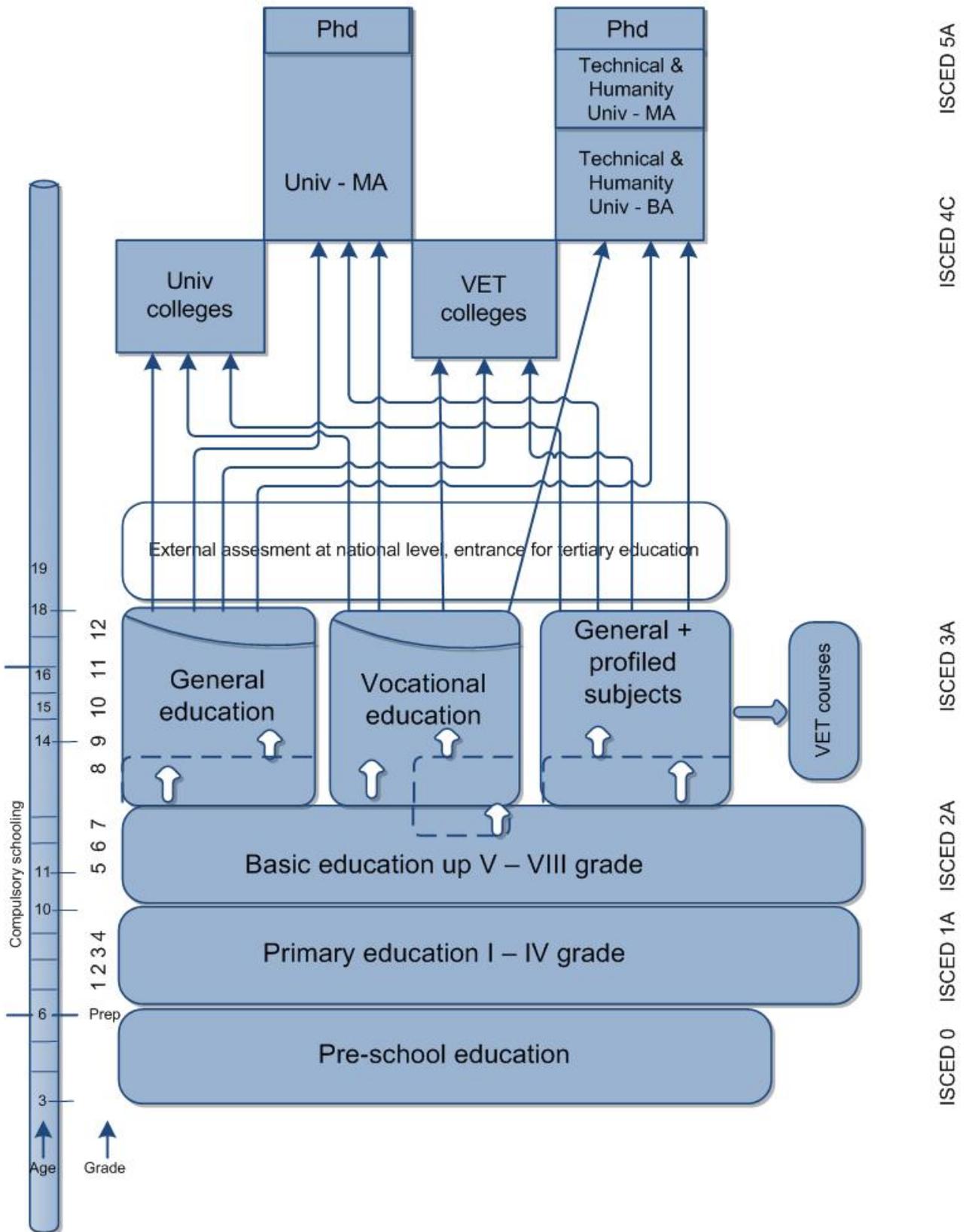
The structure of the Bulgarian education system includes different types and levels of education providing diverse education paths. [See Education System](#)

The initial vocational education and training system is part of the national education system and offers opportunities for acquiring vocational qualification and its continuous improvement. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria compulsory education in Bulgaria is up to 16 years.

The paths for acquiring vocational education and training could be:

- within primary education, in parallel with attaining basic education level – after 6th grade;
- within upper secondary education, in parallel with attaining secondary education level (after 7th - 8th grade);
- within university education;
- acquiring a certificate for vocational qualification, without attainment of a specific level of education within the system of formal and non-formal education.

# Bulgarian Education System



The Bulgarian system of vocational education and training comprises of three basic components – vocational guidance, vocational training and vocational education. Initial vocational education and training (IVET) comprises two components all together: vocational training and vocational education (cf. 1.5)

<b>TABLE 1 VET LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM</b>						
Level	Equivalent in ISCED	National level of vocational qualification	Minimum duration	Maximum duration	Average duration	Typical starting age of pupils
<b>INITIAL VET AND VET AT POST SECONDARY AND TERTIARY LEVEL</b>						
Lower secondary (after 6 Grade)	2A	1	3years	3 years	Not applicable	13-14
Lower secondary (after 7 Grade)	2A	1	2years	2years	Not applicable	13-14
Upper secondary	3C	1	1year	1year	Not applicable	15
Upper secondary	3A	2	4 years	4 years	Not applicable	15
Upper secondary	3A	3	5 years	5 years	Not applicable	14
Upper secondary	3A	3	4 years	4 years	Not applicable	15
Post secondary	4C	4	2	2	Not applicable	19-20
Higher education	5b	-	3years	3years	Not applicable	19-20
<b>FORMAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR ADULTS</b>						
Lower secondary	2C	1	100 hours(after 6 Grade)	-	n.a.	16+
Upper secondary	3C	2	660 hours	-	n.a.	17+
Post secondary	4C	3	960 hours	-	n.a.	19+
Post secondary	4C	4	960 hours	-	n.a.	19+

Source: compiled by the authors

According to the VET Act from 1999 the main objective of initial vocational education and training is acquiring a professional qualification and general education. This process is in compliance with several framework programmes approved by the Minister of Education and Science. These programmes specify the age, entry and exit education and qualification level of candidates, as well as the content, the duration and the opportunities for upgrading vocational education and training.

<b>TABLE 2 FRAMEWORK PROGRAMS (5)</b>				
<b>1. Programme “A” for initial vocational education</b>				
<b>Target group</b>	<b>Entry requirements</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Level of vocational qualification</b>	<b>Educational level of attainment (Certificates/diplomas)</b>
For students – age 11-14 (15)	completed at least 6th grade	duration of up to 3 years;	Level 1	Certificate for Voc. Qualification and diploma for basic education(lower secondary education)
<b>2. Programmes “B” for initial vocational education</b>				
For students Age 15-18	completed primary education or a grade from the secondary education	duration of up to 4 years;	Level 2	Certificate for Voc. Qualification and diploma for secondary education
<b>3. Programmes “C” for vocational education</b>				
For students Age 15 -18 Or 15-19	completed primary education or with completed 7th grade;	duration of up to 4 years; duration of 5 years	Level 2 or Level 3	Certificate for Voc. Qualification and diploma for secondary education
<b>4. Programmes “D” for vocational education</b>				
Only for people aged 16+				

<b>5. Programmes “E” for initial vocational training for acquiring qualification in part of a vocational</b>				
For students Age 15	Completed basic education or a grade from the upper secondary education	duration of up to 1 years;	Level 1	Certificate for Voc. Qualification
<b>6. Programmes G</b>				
Only for people aged 16+				

Source: compiled by the authors on the base of VET ACT

The framework programmes, elaborated for every profession on the List of Professions for VET ([LPVET](#)) are intended for development of curricula and training programmes for the institutions authorised to provide training for acquiring a vocational qualification.

The List includes all contemporary and perspective professions on the labour market which have been suggested by employers, the trade unions, education and training providers, state institutions, non-government organisations, vocational unions and professionals in various fields.

Both vocational education and vocational training are delivered taking into consideration existing professions and specialties, regulated with the LPVET. The List is made by the National Agency for VET (NAVET) (see 4.3) in cooperation with social partners and is approved by the minister for education and science in coordination with the minister for labour and social policy, the relevant line ministers, the national representative employer worker and employee organisations.

The [List of the Professions for Vocational Education and Training](#) includes existing and prospective professions and specialties on the labour market, proposed by employers, syndicates, education and training institutions, state institutions, non-government organisations, professional associations and experts in different fields. The list is developed in compliance with the International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 97, and the professions and the specialties are grouped into professional areas corresponding to the fields of education in the International Classification of the Fields of Education and Training, which ensures the comparability between professions and the acquired vocational qualifications.

According to the Vocational Education and Training Act, the list of the professions for vocational education and training is developed by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and is approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science, after the approval by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, as well as the relevant sector ministers and the representative organisations of the employers, workers and employees at national level. The list is being annually updated in compliance with the changing demands of the labour market. In 2010 the list included 230 professions and 11 proposals were made that year for including new professions and specialties.

TABLE 3: LIST OF PROFESSIONS		
	Type of professions	Degree
1.	Professions which include routine activities carried out under permanent conditions	<i>first degree</i>
2.	Professions that include activities of complex nature carried out under changing conditions	<i>second degree</i>
3.	Professions with competences concerned with the ability to assume responsibility for the work of other persons	<i>third degree</i>
4.	Professions which include a wide range of activities of complex nature carried out under changing conditions, as well as assuming managerial responsibilities for the work of other persons and for the allocation of resources.	<i>fourth level</i>

Source: compiled by the authors

The [State Education Requirement \(SER\)](#) for acquiring professional qualification is established in cooperation with employers for every profession placed on the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training. The State Education Requirement includes: requirements for the minimum entry qualification and education level; description of work activities, responsibilities, personal qualities, working conditions specifics, equipment and tools; opportunities to continue vocational training; opportunities for vocational realisation according to Bulgarian law; objectives of training; learning outcomes – competences, knowledge, skills; requirements for the material resources for theoretical and practical training; requirements for learners. Since 2007, the SER for acquiring professional qualification is included as a major structure element of the Learning Outcomes section.

Learning outcomes are defined by means of knowledge, skills and personal qualities, which are acquired in the course of vocational education, vocational training or through professional experience and are tangible. The establishment of SER for acquiring professional qualification is applied per every profession by the NAVET3 and is approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science. The **development of the curriculum** and the vocational training programmes within the school system is a responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. The content of vocational training, the breakdown per types of training and the development of curricula and training programmes are based on the State Educational Requirements ([SERs](#)) for acquiring professional qualification.

An open vocational education, regardless of individuals' age and vocational training for acquiring first degree of vocational education by students at school is provided for on the basis of curricula approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science. The curricula cover three types of subjects – *compulsory subjects which are general and vocational for each profession*, obligatory foreign language studies related to the profession and optional studies - mandatory and optional.

<b>TABLE 4: CURRICULA</b>			
<b>N</b>	<b>Type of subjects</b>	<b>Relevant to:</b>	<b>Certificate</b>
1.	Compulsory general subjects	General education minimum	State-recognized documents certifying attainment of secondary education level.
3.	Compulsory vocational subjects	Acquiring qualification in a profession or a speciality	Certificate with degree of vocational qualification.
4.	Compulsory selective subjects and optional selective subjects	Cover compulsory general subjects and the compulsory vocational subjects; optional selective subjects may be in fields outside those of compulsory general and vocational training	Optional selective subjects are not obligatory for students

Source: compiled by the authors

The structure of the vocational education programmes includes general education training, compulsory vocational training - general, sector and specific training per profession, compulsory foreign language studies related to the profession and optional studies - mandatory and optional. According to [VET Act](#), compulsory vocational subjects are general, sector, and profession-specific.

Compulsory general studies provide students with the general education minimum required for entry into secondary education. They are determined on the basis of the Level of Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum Act. (1991)

The compulsory general studies for lower secondary education: (up to VIII grade) are: Bulgarian Language and Literature, Foreign Language, Mathematics, Information Technology, History and Civilisation, Geography and Economics, Biology, Health Education Physics and Astronomy, Chemistry and Environmental Protection, Music, Arts, Physical Education and Sports .

The compulsory general studies for upper-secondary education are: Bulgarian Language and Literature, Foreign Language – first and second, Computers Information Technology, Psychology and Logic, Ethics and Law, Philosophy, World and Personality, Biology and Health Education, Physics and Astronomy, Chemistry and Environmental Protection, Music, Arts, Physical Education and Sports .

The general compulsory vocational subjects include training in health and safety at work, economics, entrepreneurship and business communications. They build up key competences for lifelong learning and focus mainly on building and developing entrepreneurial skills.

The compulsory sector vocational subjects are unified for all professions in a professional sector placed on the [LPVET](#), while taking into account the specifics of every profession. Compulsory sector subjects provide broad knowledge of different professions and create opportunities for flexibility in mastering professions in the same sector.

The profession-specific vocational subjects build specific competences required for practicing particular specialties in a profession.

The curricula and training programs for compulsory vocational training for the attainment of vocational education by students and individuals aged 16+ are developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science under the requirements of [Framework Program “C”](#) and are approved by the Minister.

The curricula and training programs for the vocational training of individuals aged 16+, regardless of the institution providing such training, are designed by the institution that delivers the training or by the one that has asked for the training.

TABLE 5: IVET AT SECONDARY LEVEL					
Schools	Framework Programmes	Type of Training	Level of Qualification	Entry requirements	Attainment level
Vocational schools	<a href="#">Framework programmes “A” and “B”</a>	initial vocational training	first and second degree and/or qualification in a section of a profession	lower secondary education level	complete grade/grades of the upper secondary level
Vocational secondary schools	<a href="#">Framework programme “C”</a>	vocational education	second and/or third degree of vocational qualification	lower secondary education level -	upper secondary level
Schools of arts	<a href="#">Framework programme “C”</a>	vocational education	third degree	lower secondary education level	acquire upper secondary level
Vocational colleges	<a href="#">Framework programme “D”</a>	vocational training	fourth degree	individuals have completed their secondary education	degree of vocational qualification
Vocational training centers	<a href="#">Framework programme “E”</a>	vocational training	aged 16+ in professions requiring first, second and third degree of vocational qualification	Certificate	degree of vocational qualification

Source: compiled by the authors

## IVET PROVIDERS

Bulgarian IVET institutions are public and private. Their breakdown per types is presented in Table 6 and Table 7. The information shows that the number of vocational high schools is decreasing, due to the general population decrease in Bulgaria, but at the same time more vocational colleges are being opened, which demonstrates that professions requiring fourth degree of vocational qualification are popular on the labour market. The analysis of the slowdown in the licensing of new vocational education centres and specialities in the existing training centres, observed in 2010, shows that the established institutions are in a position to expand the scope of their activities.

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS BY THE POPULATION DECREASE								
VET institutions	2006/2007		2007/2008		2008/2009		2009/2010	
	public	private	public	private	public	private	public	private
Vocational schools	5	-	5	-	5	-	5	-
Vocational high schools	438	29	428	28	412	27	401	26
Schools of arts	20		21		21		21	

Source: Data on schools and colleges are from the National Statistical Institute

TABLE 7: LICENCED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CENTRES					
Vocational education centers	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
New licenses	90	132	161	130	70
Amended licenses	40	38	47	59	42

Source: Data on vocational education centers are from the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, 2011

Vocational training in vocational training centres is monitored by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training. The art schools are under the authority of the Minister of Culture. The assessment of outcomes and the organisation of examinations are specified in accordance with the State Educational Requirement for the assessment system. With regard to the organisation of state examinations for acquiring a degree of vocational qualification, the Minister of Education approves national examination programme, which regulate the criteria for assessment of outcomes.

The State Educational Requirement for the assessment system introduces a model of external and internal assessment, and an decree of the Minister of Education, Youth and Science introduces, from June 2009 onwards, criteria and indicators for assessment of the outcomes from vocational preparation in school-based vocational education and training. The same decree introduces also a model of self-assessment in vocational high schools. The analysis of the results during the first year of implementation of the quality assurance system elements introduced in VET is still pending. Vocational training centres are building their own quality systems in accordance with the licensing procedure.

## 5.2. IVET at Lower Secondary Level

The initial vocational training at the lowest level of education is provided within the [Framework Program “A”](#) for students in lower secondary education and for individuals aged 16+, who have successfully completed the primary stage of lower secondary education or a literacy course.

The Programme has **seven** versions, depending on the required minimum entry education level and the attainment of a specified exit education and qualification level.

The entry education level at school age can be successfully completed from 6th, 7th or 8th grade onwards and the course of study could be respectively three, two or one year. The normal school age at which initial vocational education at lower secondary stage of the lower secondary education level is delivered is 13 – 16 years. The exit educational and qualification level to be attained at the end of training is lower secondary education or completed 9th grade and first degree of vocational qualification. Paths for vocational education of disabled children and children with problematic social behaviour are provided based on the so called module training.

The duration of vocational education for individuals aged 16+ who have successfully completed the primary phase of the lower secondary education level or a literacy course, in compliance with the provisions of [the Employment Promotion Act](#), is up to one year or 300 class hours. The entry and exit education level are the same and the exit qualification level is acquired first degree of vocational qualification. The training process organisation does not include study of general education subjects and the number of class hours for practical training is not less than the number of class hours for theoretical training.

An outline of the completion and certification of vocational training under the program is given in 5.1.

The preliminary analysis of the learning outcomes formulated in the [SER](#) for acquisition of professional qualification requiring first degree shows that vocational competences, knowledge and skills included therein correspond to level 2 of the European Qualifications Framework.

TABLE 7 INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING LINKED TO THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTAINMENT OF BASIC AND LOWER EDUCATION LEVEL						
Type of f educationa program	Main economic sectors	Corresp onding ISCED level and orientat ion	Balance between general and vocational subjects	Balance between school based and work-based training	Average duration of studies	Transfer to other pathways

<b>Vocational training after 6th grade</b>	production technologies; Technical professions; social care services, agriculture and fishing architecture and construction	2A	85:15	23:77	3	To Framework Programs “B”, “C”, “D”, “E” or secondary general education and labor market
<b>Vocational training after 7th grade</b>	the above	2A	80:20	41:59	2	To Framework Programs “B”, “C”, “D”, “E” or secondary general education and labor market
<b>Vocational training after 8th grade</b>	the above	3C	75:25	41:59	1	To Framework Programs “B”, “C”, “D”, “E” or secondary general education and labor market
<b>Vocational training for individuals aged 16+</b>	the above	2C	No requirement to study general education subjects to acquire vocational qualification	Not less than 40% of the number of class hours are for practical training but every institution distributes them alone through curricula for the provision of training	300	To Framework Programs B, C, D, E and labor market

Source: compiled by the authors

**TABLE 8: STUNEDNS ENROL IN SECONDARY EDUCATION BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION, 2009**

GEO	TOTAL ISCED2	ISCED2GEN (NUM)	ISCE2 GEN (%)	ISCED2PV (NUM)	ISCE2PV (%)	ISCED2VOC (NUM)	ISCED2 VOC (%)
EU 27	22064045	21484802	97.4	335599	1.5	243644	1.1
BG	241014	233111	96.7	:	:	7903	3.3

Source: Eurostat (UOE); Extracted on: 19-05-2011; Last update: 13-05-2011

Description: Students at ISCED level 2 by programme orientation (values and share of the total)

Source of data: Eurostat (Unesco-Eurostat-OECD Data collection on education and training systems)

Eurostat original label: educ\_enr1ad-Students by ISCED level, study intensity (full-time, part-time) and sex

Link to data: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ\\_enr1ad&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_enr1ad&lang=en)

Further selections: Full time/part time=total, sex=total, isced level = isced2gen, isced 2 prevocational, isced 2 vocational

Link to metadata: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_SDDS/EN/educ\\_esms.htm](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/educ_esms.htm)

Additional notes: Totals and Percentages are Cedefop's calculations

FT\_PT = Total; INDICATORS = OBS\_FLAG; SEX = Total

### 5.3. IVET at Upper Secondary Level

The preliminary analysis of the learning outcomes formulated in SER for acquiring professional qualification requiring second degree shows that vocational competences, knowledge and skills laid down therein correspond to level 3 of the European Qualifications Framework

**TABLE 9 INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL**

	<a href="#">Type of program</a>	Type of education and training	Qualification acquired	Target groups	Admission criteria	completion and certification
1	<b>“B” Programs</b>	initial vocational training	second degree of vocational qualification;	students and one for individuals aged 16+. (13 – 18 years)	successfully completed 8th grade	four years studies( compulsory general, compulsory vocational, compulsory selective and optional selective training
2	<b>“B” Programs</b>	initial vocational	second degree of vocational	(13 – 18 years)	The exit education and qualification	Completion and certification of vocational

		training	qualification;		level to be attained at the end of the training is second degree of vocational qualification and completed 10th or 11th grade.	training under the program is given in 5.1
3.	<b>“C” Programs</b>	vocational education	second or third degree of vocational qualification;	five variants of <b>Framework Program “C”</b> , three for students and two for individuals aged 16+.	third and second level of vocational qualification is four years after completion of basic education (lower secondary).	The exit education and qualification level to be attained at the end of training in the professions with third degree of vocational qualification is acquired rights to take state matriculation examinations for completion of secondary education or completed secondary education and third degree of vocational qualification.
4	<b>“D” Programs</b>	for initial vocational training	qualification in a section of a profession.	qualification in a section of a profession by students and individuals aged 16+ through initial vocational training	There are two variants of the “D” Program (for students and for adults) which are elaborated for every profession and are intended for	The lowest age at which training under this student training program can start is 13 years and the entry education level is completed basic education (lower

					development of curricula and training programs for the institutions which have the right to provide training for acquiring vocational qualification	secondary). The course of study is up to one year.
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Source: compiled by the authors

### FRAMEWORK PROGRAM “B”:

There are two options for training under Framework program “B”:

- For students who have completed primary education or one grade from the secondary education, with duration of up to 4 years. The completed vocational training is certified by:
  - Diploma for completed secondary education;
  - Certificate for vocational qualification.
- For individuals who have completed one grade from secondary education or secondary education, with duration of 1 year; the completed vocational training is certified by a certificate for vocational qualification.

Framework program “B” is for vocational training for acquisition of second degree of qualification.

### FRAMEWORK PROGRAM “C”

Training under Framework Program “C” is the most common in Bulgarian vocational education and training system. The objective of Framework Program “C” is to regulate the terms and procedures for simultaneous acquisition of general secondary education and second or third degree of vocational qualification.

There **are five options** of FRAMEWORK PROGRAM “C”, three for students from IVET and two for individuals aged 16+. The options for students from IVET are:

- after completed primary education with duration of 4 or 5 years;
- after completed 7th grade with duration 6 years;
- in art schools - up to 4 years after primary education or a completed secondary education grade;

The course of study for acquisition of both third and second level of vocational qualification is four years after completion of lower secondary education (lower secondary) and applies to the first option.

The fifth path, which is only for students, provides professional training and acquiring third degree of vocational qualification after completion of 7th grade.

The option after completed 7th grade with third level of qualification is quite popular in Bulgaria due to the intensive studying of a foreign language in parallel with compulsory general subjects. In their first year of training students do not study vocational subjects; they only study general subjects and languages. This approach is typical only for option two.

School-based vocational education is organised in successive grades and the common age of students receiving initial vocational education in the upper secondary phase of the secondary education level is 13 – 19 years.

Training of adults, under the programme, is of equal duration, both for acquiring vocational qualification and for acquiring vocational education in professions with third degree of vocational qualification.

In order to attain exit education and qualification level at the end of the training for professions with third degree of vocational qualification, it is required to take the final state exam for completion of secondary education or completed secondary education and third degree of vocational qualification.

The exit education and qualification level to be attained at the end of training in professions with second degree is: a completed 10th or 11th grade, acquired rights to take final state exams for completion of secondary education; completed secondary education and third degree of vocational qualification.

An outline of the acquisition of vocational education and its certification are given in 5.2

The preliminary analysis of the learning outcomes specified in SER for acquiring qualification in professions with third degree shows that the knowledge, skills and vocational competences laid down therein correspond to level 4 of the European Qualifications Framework.

#### FRAMEWORK PROGRAM “D”

The objective of Framework Program “D” is to regulate the terms and procedure for acquiring qualification in a certain professional sector by students and individuals aged 16+ through initial vocational training.

The exit qualification level to be attained at end of the training under the programme is acquisition of qualification in a certain professional sector.

An outline of the completion of vocational training and its certification are given in ??

<b>TABLE 10: ACQUISITION OF INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE UPPER SECONDARY PHASE (<a href="#">FRAMEWORK PROGRAM “B”</a> AND <a href="#">FRAMEWORK PROGRAM “C”</a>)</b>						
Type of educational programme	Main economic sectors	Corresponding ISCED level/orientation	Balance between general and vocational subjects	Balance between school-based and work-based training	Average duration of studies	Transfer to other pathway
Vocational training with entry after completion of 7th grade for acquiring of third degree of vocational qualification – for	technica science and technical	3A	58:42	60:40	5	To Framework Programs “G” “D” and labor

students	professions; economic services and administrative services					market
Vocational training with entry after completion of 8th grade for acquiring of third degree of vocational qualification – for students	the above sectors	3A	58:42	60:40	4	To Framework Programs “G” “D” and labor market
Vocational education with entry after completion of 8th grade for acquiring of second degree of vocational qualification – for students	the above sectors	3A	52:48	55:45	4	To Framework Programs “G” “D”, “E” and labor market
Vocational education with entry after completion of 8th grade for acquiring of third degree of vocational qualification – for individuals aged 16+	the above sectors	4C	53:47	60:40	4	To Framework Programs “G” “D” and labor market
Vocational education with entry after completion of 8th grade for acquiring of second degree of vocational qualification – for individuals aged 16+	the above sectors	3C	53:47	60:40	4	To Framework Programs “G” “D”, “E” and labor market

Source: compiled by the authors

TABLE 11: STUNEDNS ENROL IN UPPER - SECONDARY EDUCATION BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION, 2009							
GEO	TOTAL ISCED3	ISCED3GEN (NUM)	ISCE3 GEN (%)	ISCED3PV (NUM)	ISCE3PV (%)	ISCED3VOC (NUM)	ISCED3 VOC (%)
EU 27	20633767	10946188	53.0	:	:	9687579	47.0
BG	326254	157312	48.2	:	:	168942	51.8

Source: Eurostat (UOE); Extracted on: 19-05-2011; Last update: 13-05-2011

Description: Students at ISCED level 3 by programme orientation (values and share of the total)

Eurostat original label: educ\_enr11ad-Students by ISCED level, study intensity (full-time, part-time) and sex

Link to data: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ\\_enr11ad&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_enr11ad&lang=en)

Further selections: Full time/part time=total, sex=total, isced level = isced3gen, isced 3 prevocational, isced 3 vocational

#### 5.4. Apprenticeship Training

Within the system of initial vocational education and training, practical training is part of the overall vocational preparation for all professions on the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training. Compulsory, compulsory with an option to choose from many options and optional training include theoretical training and practical training. In compliance with the requirements of the Law on Vocational Education and Training the number of class hours for practical training is not less than the number of class hours for theoretical training.

In general, vocational education and training of students is provided in school environment. The theoretical training is provided entirely in vocational schools and the practical training is usually a combination of training at school and in an enterprise.

*Practical training can be delivered in:*

- Training and production facilities in school environment;
- Training and production facilities of similar schools or vocational training centres in Bulgaria and abroad;
- Private companies;
- Training and production facilities of enterprises

Practical training is organised as practical training activities and practice.

Practical training activities ensure the building up of the necessary practical skills to practise a certain profession.

Practice (apprenticeship) is an element of the general vocational preparation and part of the practical training. It is this part of practical professional training where students are placed in real working environment. This practice (apprenticeship) can be delivered both at school and in an enterprise.

Practice is provided during different stages of the training in accordance with what is set out in the curricula. For school-based vocational education and training it is usually outside school hours for the respective school year and vocational training mandatorily ends with work practice which provides mastering of competences related to the specific vocational preparation. Usually apprentices are between 17 – 18 years, for professions with second and third degree of vocational qualification, and for professions with first degree of vocational qualification they are 15 -16 years.

To organise practice in real working environment, each school is required to enter into an agreement with the respective enterprise.

According to SER for acquiring qualification in professions and the curricula and training programmes, students acquiring initial vocational education and training automatically undertake practical training.

Practical training in real working environment is supported within the grant scheme “Development of practice training mechanisms for students” under OP Human Resource Development. Projects are implemented on the public-private partnership principle with enterprises providing, in partnership with the educational institutions, an opportunity for learners to improve their practical skills through apprenticeships in different companies.

Building up of practical skills is also regulated in [The National Program for Modernisation of Vocational Education and Training](#). In 2010, twenty-two partnerships were financed and 1348 students were provided with an opportunity for practical training in enterprises.

### 5.5. Programmes and alternative pathways for young people

The programme that helps to identify the requirements for updating or expanding vocational qualifications and for acquiring first, second and third degree of vocational qualification is Framework Program E. It is a prerequisite for development of continuing vocational training within the lifelong learning policy. It determines rules and requirements for the validation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired during past individual experience. The entry and exit education and qualification requirements for acquiring degrees of vocational qualification are the same as those set out for [Framework Programs “A”, “B”, and “C”](#). The documents certifying the acquired degree of vocational qualification are also the same – a certificate of vocational qualification and a certificate of competence issued per professions, including practicing regulated professions.

A specific aspect of the program is that it sets the requirements for upgrading vocational qualifications and that initial vocational training is not allowed under this programme (i.e. minimum admission age is 16 +). To be included within the training for acquiring first degree of vocational qualification, one must have acquired vocational training in a similar profession or at least in a certain sector of a profession. The programme is targeting individuals aged 16+. It regulates the minimum number of class hours for acquiring third degree of vocational qualification – 960 class hours.

### 5.6. Vocational Education and Training at Post Secondary (Non-Tertiary) Level

Post-secondary non-tertiary vocational training is organised in vocational colleges and is intended for acquiring the highest, fourth degree of vocational qualification. Training is provided under Framework Program “G”. The objective of the programme is to define the terms and procedure for acquiring fourth degree of vocational qualification by individuals aged 16+ and those who have completed their secondary education. The **duration of studies is up to two years** and includes compulsory vocational training and selective vocational training. The amount of compulsory vocational training is not less than 1260 class hours and includes theoretical as well as practical training. The training in class for compulsory vocational training is provided under curricula and training programs approved by the Minister of Education and Science. The learning content for acquiring fourth degree of vocational qualification is regulated in the [SER](#) for acquiring qualification in professions and the format of training is specified by the training provider.

Preliminary analysis of the learning outcomes formulated in [SER](#) for acquiring vocational qualification in professions with fourth degree shows that some of the knowledge, skills and vocational competences correspond to level 5 of the EQF.

TABLE 12 ACQUIRING POST-SECONDARY VOCATIONAL TRAINING NON-TERTIARY LEVEL						
Type of educational programme	Main economic sectors	Corresponding ISCED level/orientation	Balance between general and vocational subjects	Balance between school-based and work-based training	Average duration of studies	Transfer to other pathways
Post-secondary vocational training	technical science and technical professions; social services; economic services and administration services	4C	No mandatory requirement for studying general education subjects	50:50	Up to 2 years (1260 class hours)	Framework D and labor market

Source: compiled by the authors

TABLE 13: STUDENTS ENROL IN POST – SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) EDUCATION BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION, 2009					
GEO	TOTAL ISCED4	ISCED4GEN (NUM)	ISCE4 GEN (%)	ISCED4VOC (NUM)	ISCED4 (%)
EU 27	1501995	173928	11.6	1328067 (s)	88.4
BG	7976	:	0.0	7976	100.0

Source: Eurostat (UOE); Extracted on: 19-05-2011; Last update: 13-05-2011;

Description: Students at ISCED level 4 by programme orientation (values and share of the total)

Eurostat original label: educ\_enr1ad-Students by ISCED level, study intensity (full-time, part-time) and sex

Link to data: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ\\_enr1ad&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_enr1ad&lang=en)

Further selections: Full time/part time=total, sex=total, isced level = isced4gen, isced 4 prevocational, Isced 4 vocational

Link to metadata: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_SDDS/EN/educ\\_esms.htm](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/educ_esms.htm)

## 5.7. Vocational Education and Training at Tertiary Level

Tertiary-level vocational education and training is provided only in colleges (independent and within the structure of universities). Colleges are structures providing specialised vocational training in professional sectors and specialities. They offer 3-year post-secondary training programs and award the education and qualification degree of “professional bachelor” (according to ISCED 97). College graduates can only continue their education in the bachelor programmes or two-year master programmes in the same professional sector (under the scheme 3+2+3).

Students are trained in specialities within professional sectors. Since 1995, a three-degree structure has been officially introduced in Bulgaria. It currently comprises of the following degrees:

- “bachelor” (“professional bachelor” – not less than 180 credits and a period of study not less than 3 years; “bachelor” – not less than 240 credits and a period of study not less than 4 years)
- “master”
- educational and qualification degree of “doctor”, which is in compliance with the Framework for Qualifications of EHEA.

The college graduates who have acquired the degree of “professional bachelor in” undertake: theoretical training providing basic knowledge of the respective professional sector; specialised vocational training relevant to the specialities taught in the college; practical training per professional sectors and specialities, computer training for practicing the speciality. The curriculum also includes acquiring general knowledge, skills and competences. Those who complete successfully the course of study must have earned not less than 180 credits, including 10 credits for successfully taking the state final examination or to have successfully defended a thesis.

The higher education programmes for obtaining professional bachelor degree are not defined by the legislation as VET programmes, but because of their practical nature and the common attitude in other European countries, they might be correlated to the VET programmes.

Fees are paid for acquiring vocational education after completed secondary education in compliance with the rules and procedures defined by a decree of the Minister of Education, Youth and Science.

## 5.8. Language Training within the System of Initial Vocational Education in Bulgaria

Language training in Bulgaria is provided within the systems of general and vocational education, in compliance with the rules and requirements defined in the national curriculum with regard to initial vocational education. General education in Bulgaria, in its part dedicated to learning a “foreign language”, includes the following subjects: “First foreign language” and “Second Foreign language”. Language training in vocational schools is provided in compliance with comprehensive schools’ syllabus, which means that there are no special language training programs designed to address the needs of vocational schools. The process of learning a “First foreign language” continues during the last year in secondary vocational education (12<sup>th</sup> grade), under a subject called “Vocational foreign language”, which is an aspect within the “Compulsory vocational training” section of the vocational education curricula for acquiring a second and third level of vocational qualification.

The vocational education curriculum, for certain professions and areas of expertise in the field of economics, includes a subject called “Business communications with a foreign language”, which is incorporated into the “Learning practice” part from the section on compulsory vocational education. There are vocational secondary schools of tourism and hospitality management, where bilingual training is provided and some subjects for acquiring a vocational qualification are taught in French.

In accordance with the existing regulations, language training is provided in compliance with certain state rules and requirements on language training, where the level of language proficiency, corresponding to the first five levels within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), is defined. Acquiring level 6 of the EQF, which certifies a level of proficiency very similar to that of a native speaker, is not among the objectives of Bulgarian secondary schools.

In accordance with state education requirements, there are three different levels of language proficiency that could be acquired within the system of secondary education:

- First Level – acquired after successfully completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade in a comprehensive or vocational school where students are usually admitted after 6<sup>th</sup> grade;
- Second Level – acquired after successfully completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade in a vocational school that provides intensive language training to students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade;
- Third Level – acquired after successfully completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade in a specialised school that provides intensive language training to students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Vocational secondary schools in Bulgaria provide language training in: English, Spanish, Italian, German, French and Japanese.

The acquired level of language skills is evaluated in compliance with the school education evaluation system and the final marks are included in the final certificate for completed secondary education. At the request of the interested student, acquired language skills could be also validated by a foreign educational institution, represented in Bulgaria.

New state education requirements on language training (also known as “standards”) are being set up at the moment. This would contribute to establish a correspondence between language training provided at different stages and levels of school education in Bulgaria and the levels defined within the EQF.

## 6. CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

### 6.1. General background

The National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2008-2013 determines adults training as one of the priorities of the policy and the actions will be mainly directed at the improvement of the access to learning and providing quality and efficiency of training.

#### *Legislation*

Continuing vocational education and training is regulated by a number of legislation acts, the most important being the Labour Code, the Vocational Education and Training Act, the Employment Promotion Act, etc. (връзка с т. 4.4

### 6.2. Main characteristics of formal continuing vocational training

#### *Framework training programmes for acquisition of vocational qualification*

The acquisition of vocational qualification in the system of vocational education and training is regulated by six framework programmes, approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science. The framework programmes may be applied to the lower secondary and to the continuing vocational education and training and they determine the rules and procedures for the acquisition of different degrees of vocational qualification.

The framework programmes determine the requirements for the candidates (different for students and people over the age of 16) for training under the programme, including the requirement for minimum age, for initial educational level, possibilities for realisation and for enhancement of the vocational qualification, organisation of the process of learning – forms of training, organisation of school classes for theoretical and practical training, completion and certification of vocational training. The framework programmes are the regulatory and methodical basis for the development of the curriculum and the syllabuses.

The training programmes for individuals over the age of 16 are the following:

<b>TABLE 1: FRAMEWORK VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR PERSONS OVER THE AGE OF 16</b>			
1. Programme A			
Initial requirements	Duration of training	Type of vocational qualification	Document, certifying the completed training
Completed lower secondary educational level or successfully completed literacy course, under the procedure of the Employment Promotion Act	Up to 1 year	First degree of vocational qualification	Certificate for vocational qualification

2. Program B			
Completed grade of the upper secondary education or completed upper secondary education	1 year	Second degree of vocational qualification	Certificate for vocational qualification
3. Programme C			
Completed lower secondary education	4 years	Second or third degree of vocational qualification	Certificate for vocational qualification
4. Programme D			
Completed upper secondary education	Up to 2 years	Fourth degree of vocational qualification	Certificate for vocational qualification
5. Programme E			
	Determined by the specific documentation for vocational training	Qualification in a part of a profession	Certificate for vocational training
6. Programme F			
<p>For First Degree – completed VI grade;</p> <p>For Second Degree – completed lower secondary education;</p> <p>For Third Degree – completed upper secondary education or acquired right to sit for state school-leaving examinations.</p> <p>For updating or broadening the acquired vocational qualification – depending on the requirements to the relevant class</p>	Determined by the specific documentation for vocational training	<p>Updating or broadening the acquired vocational qualification, or</p> <p>acquisition of First, Second or Third degree of vocational qualification</p>	<p>Certificate for vocational training, or</p> <p>Certificate for vocational qualification</p>

Source: compiled by the authors

The programmes A, B, C and D are defined for each profession from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training. On this basis the curricula and the syllabuses are elaborated. The programmes E and F are defined in the documentation for vocational training – curriculums and syllabuses. The documentation is prepared by the training provider or the vocational trainee.

When acquiring a certain level of vocational qualification, the documentation is prepared in compliance with the state educational requirements for the acquisition of qualification in professions.

The vocational training form applicable to persons over the age of 16 is the qualification course. The forms of training, the school hours and the number of the trainees in the course are determined by the training provider. These may be coordinated with the applicant for vocational training.

The completion of vocational training is validated through officially recognised documents: a certificate for vocational training (for completed vocational training for qualification in a part of a profession, for updating or broadening of vocational qualification) and a certificate for vocational qualification (for completed vocational training with acquisition of class of vocational qualification).

**Degrees of vocational qualification and their correspondence to the ISCED**

According to VETA there are first, second, third and fourth degree of vocational qualification..

<b>TABLE 2: LEVELS OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH ISCED</b>				
<b>Level of qualification</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>School hours/credits</b>	<b>Requirement to the completed level of education for people at age 16+</b>	<b>Equivalent in ISCED</b>
<b>First</b>	acquisition of professional competencies for the practicing of professions including routine activities performed under non-changing conditions.	At least 300	At least first stage of the basic education or successfully completed a literacy course under the Employment Promotion Act	1 or 2C
<b>Second</b>	acquisition of professional competencies for the practicing of professions including activities of a complex nature under changing conditions	At least 660	10 Grade	3C
<b>Third</b>	acquisition of professional competencies for the practicing of professions including activities of a complex nature under changing conditions, as well as responsibility for the work of other persons	At least 990	Secondary education	4C

<b>Fourth</b>	acquisition of professional competencies for the practicing of professions including a broad range of activities of a complex nature performed under changing conditions, as well as managing responsibilities for the work of other persons and the distribution of resources.	At least 1260	Secondary education	4C
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Source: compiled by the authors

According to data of the Annual Report of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, 5 093 qualification courses were conducted in 2009 for the training of persons over the age of 16. 11 062 persons were trained with acquisition of a degree of vocational qualification, and 55 125 persons – in the qualification courses for training in a part of a profession.

*State education requirements (standards) for the acquisition of vocational qualifications*

[The state education requirements \(SER\)](#) for the acquisition of qualification in professions determine the obligatory professional competencies which should be mastered during the practice training. The SER are defined per professions from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training. They are obligatory for all training institutions authorised to organise vocational training.

<b>TABLE:3 THE STATE EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS PER PROFESSIONS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS</b>
Requirements on the minimum qualification and admission level
Description of the profession – labour activities, responsibilities, personal characteristics, specific working conditions, equipment and instruments
Possibilities for continuing vocational training
Possibilities for professional realisation in compliance with the National Classification of Professions and Positions
Training objectives – general compulsory vocational training for all professional areas; sector compulsory vocational training for all professions from the professional area; compulsory special professional vocational training

Source: compiled by the authors

The State Education Requirements(SER) are developed and updated by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and are approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science. The development of SER is the responsibility of operative teams, including experts from key institutions and organisations: the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, sector ministries, syndicates, employers, training institutions in the system of vocational education and training and in the higher education system.

In 2010 the activities related to the development of SER are in two main directions:

- Implementation of projects of new SER for professions from the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training
- Updating of existing SER, due to changes in the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training, the regulatory basis, the technologies, the requirements of employers, etc.

This year the SERs are 116, and there were 42 project applications for new SERs submitted to the Minister of Education, Youth and Science. The updated SERs are 11.

- *Curriculums and syllabuses*

The curriculums and the syllabuses are developed in compliance with the state education requirements for the acquisition of qualification in the relevant profession. When there is no valid SER for the acquisition of qualification in the relevant profession, the framework programmes are applied.

<b>TABLE 4: THE CURRICULUMS FOR THE TRAINING OF ADULTS INCLUDE COMPULSORY VOCATIONAL TRAINING</b>
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General vocational training – for all professional sectors;
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Sector vocational training – for all professions from the sector;
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Specific vocational training – for specific professions or specialties.
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*Source: compiled by the authors*

All three types of compulsory vocational training consist of theoretical and practical training. The number of school hours for practical training is not less than the number of school hours for theoretical training.

The module approach is widely applied in the syllabuses for the training of adults and this is the main requirement for the training providers. The use of the module approach in the training of adults provides the possibility for an upgrade of each educational module and level. The attainment of the next level is achieved by upgrading knowledge and practical skills acquired at previous level. Each module is a group of themes and tasks for mastering and acquiring of knowledge, skills and professional competencies, combining theoretical knowledge and practical skills required for the implementation of the relevant activities.

- *Training institutions for continuing vocational training*

According to the Vocational Education and Training Act training for the acquisition of vocational qualification for persons over the age of 16 may be delivered by vocational schools, vocational secondary schools, vocational colleges and certified vocational training centres. The Employment Promotion Act expands the range of institutions that may provide vocational training for adults by including the higher education schools.

The vocational schools and the vocational secondary schools may perform both initial vocational education and training and continuing vocational training. The certified institutions in the system of vocational training are the Vocational Training Centres and the Centres for Information and Vocational Guidance, which have acquired the relevant license. The institution issuing licenses for vocational training and guidance, is the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, which monitors the activities of the certified institutions.

In 2010 70 new Vocational Training Centres and Centres for Information and Vocational Guidance were opened, against 132 in 2007, 161 in 2008 and 130 in 2009. In the school year 2010/2011 the number of vocational secondary schools, vocational schools and vocational colleges was 463, the number of licensed centres with programmes for acquisition of vocational qualification was 350.

- *Quality assurance of the training of adults*

The control over the activities of the licensed Vocational Training Centres is carried out by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training. Since the licenses for implementing vocational training are issued for an indefinite period of time, it is required that quality assurance and management of performed vocational training are constantly supervised by the authorities. Therefore, a Monitoring System is applied. The Method and Procedure of Exercising Administrative Control on the Vocational Training Centres is also an important monitoring tool. In 2010 167 inspections of Vocational Training Centres were performed (more than 4 times than in 2009). As a result 51 licenses have been revoked due to suspension of the operation of the centres for more than 12 months; 4 licenses were revoked due to the company being erased from the Commercial Register; the licenses of 31 centres were revoked for a period of 6 months due to non-submission of annual information for 2009..

In order to provide high quality and efficiency of the proposed training of adults, organised and financed by the Employment Agency, the Method for Assessment of the Proposals for Vocational Guidance and Training of Adults is applied when choosing the training institution. The three main aspect of training are evaluated (syllabus, trainers and equipment). The evaluation of the proposals submitted by the centres is assigned to external experts nominated by the social partners.

Since the beginning of 2010 a Quality Assurance Mechanism and Control of the Training of Adults has been applied by the Employment Agency. The mechanism is applied by the Employment Agency and financed by the national budget for active policy under the Operational Program "Human Resource Development".

For the period January – September 2010 the number of trainings organised for adults by the Employment Agency was 6710, for which 28 438 inspections were performed. The inspections took place at the start, during and after the training. When the training courses last for more than a month, more than one inspection takes place during the process.

The quality control of the training is applied during state examinations for the acquisition of vocational qualification. The results from the inspections show that there are still irregularities in the way studies are organised, in the provision of school toolkits, in the delivery of practical lessons, in the conduct of the examinations for the acquisition of vocational qualification.

- *Participation of individuals at the age of 25-64 in formal education and training*

Individuals in active age - 25 - 64 years old, compared to young people at school and university age - 7 – 24, participate in formal education and training much less frequently. In 2007 only 2,7% of the adults were registered as learners in the education system (school, college or university).

<b>TABLE 5: PARTICIPATION RATE IN FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PER HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2007</b>				
ISCED97/ GEO	0-2	3-4	5-6	TOTAL
EU 27	2.7	6	12.7	6.6
BG	0.2	2.5	6	2.7

Source: Eurostat (AES); Extracted on: 24-05-2011; Last update: 30-03-2011

According to their employment status – individuals not in active employment age take more active role in formal education and training – 4,6% in 2007, while the employed and the unemployed people participate less actively – 2,5% and 1,3% in 2007.

<b>TABLE 6: PARTICIPATION RATE IN FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PER LABOUR STATUS (%), 2007</b>				
WSTATUS / GEO	Employment	Inactive population	Total	Unemployment
EU 27	6.6	6.3	6.6	7.1
BG	2.5	4.6	2.7	1.3

Source: Eurostat (AES); Extracted on: 24-05-2011; Last update: 13-04-2011

### 6.3. Non-formal vocational training

Non-formal training is most often provided by enterprises and it includes training of their own staff.

Between July and October 2010 a survey was conducted amongst enterprises <sup>11</sup> in Bulgaria. Its aim was to identify the current situation, problems, expectations, needs and requirements, vocational and educational qualification level of the labour force in Bulgaria.

In times of economic crisis, when the main objective for most companies is to survive on the market, the survey showed that the dismissal of personnel is not a key priority for the studied enterprises. There is, however, a tendency to appreciate the fact that competitiveness depends to a great extent on employing people with high professional skills. About half of the enterprises in the research mentioned the preservation in employment of key specialists as their key priority (46.02%), or at least as of an exceptional importance (32.54%).

According to the survey most of the company training is delivered to satisfy the need to apply certain regulatory requirements, as a result of inspections and instructions of control bodies, to apply requirements for safety at work, protection of the environment, requirements for compliance with standards, etc. About 56% of the enterprises decide to start training when they have to develop specific technical competencies of their personnel, modify technologies, modernise equipment, implement quality assurance systems and marketing programmes. Only 30% of the questioned managers mention that they use a monitoring system to analyse and assess the shortage in knowledge and labour efficiency of their staff and they organise training in order to overcome this issue. The other enterprises use subjective approaches and methods to assess staff capacity and to identify their training needs.

Non-formal continuing vocational training is offered by the community centres as well. These are traditional Bulgarian local institutions for education and culture, which play the role of centres for community development with well-structured intermediary functions in the dialogue between local authorities, business, social groups. They also have good knowledge of traditions, way of life, expectations and attitudes of local population. According to the register of the Ministry of Culture the total number of the community centres operating in Bulgaria is 3472 on the territory of the whole country.

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11 The survey was conducted by the Bulgarian Industrial Association with the partner participation of the two nationally representative syndicates – the Confederation of the Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria and the Labour Confederation “Podkrepa” within the framework of the project Development and Implementation of Information System for the Assessment of the Competencies of the Labour Force by Branches and Regions, financed under a scheme of the Operational Program „Human Resource Development” for the introduction of information systems to the labour market and the increase of the efficiency of the labour force on the labour market. The survey included 1380 enterprises, 175 of which with more than 50% foreign participation. More than ¾ of the enterprises are small and medium size enterprises. The greatest number of the surveyed enterprises are in the production sector, followed by services, trade and agriculture.

The community centres are very flexible in choosing the form, the contents and the means of delivery of non-formal vocational training<sup>12</sup>. The workshops are preferred as well as the short-term training courses, the lectures, the club studies, the advices. Their contents are extremely varied – submission of new information about alternative employment forms, motivation courses, acquisition of basic computer literacy skills, work with Internet, use of different software products, foreign language training, alternative agricultural productions (for instance, bee-keeping, vine-growing), etc.. Training courses for people at active age are most popular, i.e.: courses for unemployed, persons with low or without vocational qualification, disadvantaged social groups. Generally, training is in compliance with the natural conditions of the area, the perspectives for the development of the region and the specific way and means of living of the population.

Non-formal vocational training is also provided by ministries, municipalities, organisations of employers, organisations of workers and employees, non-government organisations.

#### **6.4. Recognition of knowledge and skills acquired by non-formal and informal training**

The Vocational Education and Training Act (Art. 40) provides the legislative possibility to people who have acquired professional skills practicing a certain profession or undertaking practical training, to validate the acquired professional skills and to obtain an official document to certify this. The condition is that these individuals should have at least 6 months work experience or should have undertaken practical training with duration determined by the training institution. These individuals sign an agreement with the training institution for taking examinations for the acquisition of a degree of vocational qualification (exams in theory and practice in the profession), and if needed – for undertaking practical training.

In 2008 within the framework of the Bulgarian – German project „Promotion of Vocational Training of Adults and Employment”, a pilot system for validation of knowledge and skills, acquired by non-formal or informal training has been established. Representatives of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Employment Agency, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, employers' organisations and syndicates took part in the development of the validation model. Methods and instruments for validation were developed, sample documents, organisational, information and school materials, analytic and assessment materials, as well as proposals for the legal regulation of the process of validation of knowledge and skills.

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12 The project “Civil development and participation by the community centres network” (1997 – 2004) of the Ministry of Culture and the UN Development Program aims at stimulation of the process of turning the community centres into modern centres by structuring their institutional capacity and testing the new trends, models and practices in their development.

**Participation of the population at the age of 25-64 in non-formal education and training<sup>13</sup>  
(no data is available for 2010)**

In 2007 every third (35,2%) person in Bulgaria at the age of 25-64 has participated in non-formal training (Table 16a). Most often the non-formal training was work-related (for 96,3% of the participants). For 89.5% of the participants the non-formal training was delivered only or mainly during work hours.

Every second person (50.0%) in Bulgaria at the age of 25 – 64 with higher education level has taken part in some form of non-formal training for a period of 12 months. The level of participation in non-formal training is considerably lower - 38.2% for persons with upper secondary education and 15.0% for persons with lower secondary or lower education.

<b>TABLE 7: PARTICIPATION RATE IN NON FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PER HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2007</b>				
ISCED97/ GEO	0-2	3-4	5-6	TOTAL
EU 27	15.6	31.4	51.5	31.3
BG	15	38.2	50	35.2

Source: Eurostat (AES); Extracted on: 24-05-2011; Last update: 30-03-2011

Almost half of the employed individuals (49.3%) have participated in at least one form of non-formal training (Table 16b), while for unemployed and economically non-active people the participation rate is rather low - 6.3% and 4.2%. The high participation level of people in employment in non-formal training is due to the capacity of the employers to organise and finance the training and the higher financial capacity of the employees to pay for their own training.

<b>TABLE 8: PARTICIPATION RATE IN NON FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PER LABOUR STATUS (%), 2007</b>				
WSTATUS / GEO	Employment	Inactive population	Total	Unemployment
EU 27	38.8	12.4	31.3	19.5
BG	49.3	4.2	35.2	6.3

Source: Eurostat (AES); Extracted on: 24-05-2011; Last update: 13-04-2011

<sup>13</sup> By data of the Survey of education and training of adults (persons at the age of 25 - 64), conducted by the National Statistical Institute in the period February 2007 - October 2008 within the framework of the pilot project of Eurostat financed under the multinational program PHARE 2005.

Within 12 months almost 3/4 (72.0%) of the participants in non-formal training have taken part only in one training course, (19.7%) – in two training courses, 3.1% - in three training courses and 2.4% - in four or more training courses.

The place of residence of people affects the level of participation in non-formal training. Individuals who live in towns or cities are more active and have more opportunities for participation in non-formal training (38.1%) than those who live in small villages - 27.2%.

#### *Informal learning*<sup>14</sup>

The results of the survey show that almost 1/3 or 28.0% of the population at the age of 25 – 64 has taken part in informal learning. Women are more active in the participation than men - 29.7% and 26.2%. Each third person at the age of 25-34 has participated in some form of informal learning (34.8%), while the elder ones participate less actively - 28.9% of the persons at the age of 35-54 and 18.6% of the persons at the age of 55-64. The education degree has a significant effect on the participation rate; the more educated a person is, the higher the probability of informal learning. More than half of the persons with higher education (54.9%) have participated in some kind of informal training while the share of those with lower education is only 10.1%. The employment status is also very important - each third employee has taken part in this form of training, while the share of the unemployed and non-active is twice lower. People who live in bigger towns have more frequently participated in some form of informal training - 31.1%, while for the village inhabitants this percentage adds up to 19.1%.

The most popular method of informal learning is the use of printed materials (books, textbooks, professional magazines, instructions, etc.), and this method is applied by 2/3 of the people participating in some form of informal learning or 18.3% of the population at the age of 25 - 64. Next comes the use of computers (Internet) – for 63.6% of the informal learners, and this method is most often used by the youngest age group.

### **6.5. Measures and programmes for supporting people looking for jobs and disadvantaged individuals on the labour market**

- ***Training of adults, organised by the Employment Agency***

In compliance with the Employment Promotion Act, the annually approved National Employment Action Plan and the schemes, implemented under the Operational Program “Human Resource Development”, different types of services and funding opportunities for training of adults are provided (for persons over the age of 16, who are not trained for the acquisition of lower secondary or upper secondary education in the system of public education, or for the acquisition of a higher education degree). The training possibilities include literacy training, training for the acquisition of vocational qualification, training for the acquisition and improvement of key competencies, motivation training. Opportunities are being offered for training at the workplace, in the form of apprenticeship or practice.

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<sup>14</sup> By data from the Survey on the Education and Training of Adults (persons of the age of 25 - 64), conducted by the National Statistical Institute in the period February 2007 – October 2008 within the framework of a pilot project of Eurostat financed by the multinational PHARE 2005 Program.

A person who has acquired in the last 24 months a professional qualification or in part of the profession, required for the job position, and who does not have any work experience may be provided with an opportunity for an internship/work placement. During this time the person acquires practical skills and experience. A person with lower secondary or lower education may be hired as an apprentice. During the apprenticeship period training is provided by another staff member (mentor). When starting their own business, as a result of an approved business plan, the Employment Promotion Act offers unemployed people opportunities for training for vocational qualification in the field of their main activity.

In 2010 acquiring skills, vocational qualifications and key competencies was performed mainly within the framework of the Operational Program “Human Resource Development”. According to administrative statistics provided by the Employment Agency 20,556 unemployed people were involved in training in 2010, and 17,168 of those were trained under schemes of the Operational Program “Human Resource Development”, and 3,388 – under programmes and measures financed by the national budget. The number of employed persons, involved in training under the schemes of the Operational Program “Human Resource Development” was 59,546.

- **Training of unemployed persons**

According to the Employment Agency in 2010 the unemployed individuals involved in training were 20,556.

<b>TABLE 9: OPERATIONAL PROGRAM “HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT” - 2010</b>			
	Schemes	Targets	Number of unemployed persons
1	Development	to equip unemployed persons with and improve their existing vocational qualification. It also targets individuals who have become unemployed as a result of re-structuring or closing down of the enterprise, reduction in the scope of operation or closure of part of the production.	8,574 (Registered unemployed individuals over the age of 50 (43,8%), unemployed young individuals under the age of 29 (17,7%), unemployed for more than 12 months are also involved in training activities)
	Qualification Services and Employment Support	reducing the unemployment rate in Bulgaria and the improvement of employability through training for acquiring or enhancement of the vocational qualification	248 persons were included in training for acquiring or enhancement of the vocational qualification and 152 completed their training successfully.
	Enhancement of Young Individuals' Employability	training in information and communication technologies and intensive training in foreign languages	5,574 young individuals were involved in training under this scheme and 5,047 have completed their training successfully.

Source: compiled by the authors

In 2010 the process of implementation of programmes and measures for training funded from the national budget for active policy on the labour market has been strongly restricted. The number of unemployed people involved in training under programmes and measures for training, funded from the national budget was only 2,180, most of them (1,208) were involved in training courses for vocational qualification with no real work placement, conducted by Bulgarian – German centres<sup>15</sup> of vocational training (in the towns of Stara Zagora, Pleven, Pazardzhik, Tsarevo and Smolyan). Training was organised in 30 specialties, most of them in computer skills, followed by repair works, operating machines and systems with digital program control, electrical installations, food production, small and medium-size business, operational accounting, water and sewerage networks, agricultural mechanization, business administration, cashiers, etc.

In 2010 motivation training was delivered to 2,083 unemployed people, with the objective of provoking active behaviour on the labour market and adequate participation in training and employment promotion programmes and measures.

The professional guidance sessions, delivered by the Job Centres, offer to job-seekers (unemployed, employed, studying) systematic and comprehensible information about specific professions or groups of specialties, guidance for involvement in suitable programmes and employment promotion measures and/or training. According to information provided by the Employment Agency in 2010 individual vocational guidance was delivered to 64,818 unemployed persons. 33,630 job-seekers took part in group activities of vocational guidance and formation of active behaviour on the labour market. 3,441 job-seekers informed themselves through the specialised information materials in the job centres.

- ***Training of employed persons***

In 2010, most of the operating schemes, under the Operational Programme “Human Resource Development”, were focused on providing training to employed persons for development of their knowledge and skills to improve their employability and preserve their current job. In 2010, 865 people were involved in training under the scheme for acquiring or enhancement of vocational qualification and key competencies.

2,010 successfully completed the training (some of them started training in the previous year). In 2010 18,838 persons were involved in the scheme for acquisition or enhancement of their vocational qualification. The individuals who have successfully completed the training were 16,599.

In 2010 39,051 persons were included in training through vouchers and 18,509 have successfully completed the training.

The “Adaptability” scheme is focused on workers and employees from enterprises, who due to economic reasons have switched to part-time jobs. These people may take part in vocational training within the framework of the scheme, which is delivered in their free time.

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<sup>15</sup> Training was organised in 30 specialties, most of them in computer skills, followed by repair works, operating machines and systems with digital program control, electrical installations, food production, small and medium-size business, operational accounting, water and sewerage networks, agricultural mechanization, business administration, cashiers, etc.

These individuals receive training vouchers for the acquisition of qualification in a profession or in part of a profession, a monthly grant and subsistence for transport to and from the training centre in cases when training is delivered in a settlement different from where they normally work. These people get the opportunity to update and develop their professional knowledge and skills and/or to acquire new ones, with the objective to keep their current job or to find another job in the future. In 2010, 792 people were included in training under the scheme.

- ***Measures and programmes for disadvantaged groups on the labour market***

In order to provide social and economic inclusion for the disadvantaged unemployed persons, various activities are focussed on to the application of an integrated approach for the implementation of the social protection and inclusion policy on the labour market. To support the transition from unemployment to employment under, during the economic crisis, amendments have been made in the Labour Code as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010. The maximum value of the unemployment benefit has been removed through amendments in the Social Insurance Code, in force to the end of the year.

In 2010, amendments were adopted in the Employment Promotion Act, which provide an opportunity for improvement of employability of the unemployed specialists. For this purpose, employers in the public sector are obliged to announce free job positions to the Employment Agency. The latter obtains and disposes of regularly this updated information about job opportunities in the public sector and may direct unemployed specialists registered in the job centres to these positions.

Different programmes and measures have been implemented in 2010, in order to reduce the level of unemployment among disadvantaged people on the labour market and to facilitate their access to the labour market.

- ***Unemployed young persons under the age of 29***

*The inclusion of the unemployed young individuals on the labour market is of a key importance for overcoming their lack of required knowledge, skills and experience and for increasing their employability. Young individuals were one of the key target groups of the active policy on the labour market in 2010. The unemployed young individuals under the age of 29 were involved, with priority, in a number of measures and programmes in order to facilitate their access to the labour market:*

**TABLE 10: MEASURES AND PROGRAMMES**

N	Programmes	targets	groups	Results in 2010
1	<i>Start of a Career</i>	facilitate the transition from education to employment.	young individuals with higher education and with no work experience to find jobs in the state administration (ministries, agencies, regional administrations, municipal administrations), and for young individuals with upper secondary vocational education – to find a suitable job in private companies	669 young individuals were involved under this programme, 639 of them were with higher education and 30 – with vocational education.
2	<i>New Employment – Key Skills for Employment</i>	to support the adaptation of young individuals, who have completed higher education, on the labour market under in times of economic crisis, by providing them with training for the acquisition of professional skills and opportunities for career development.	Regional decisions it covers 9 regions -	995 persons were involved in it.
3	<i>This Is My Chance to Find Myself</i>	opportunities to young individuals under the age of 29 with lower secondary or lower education to overcome the lack of qualification by providing them with the opportunity to participate in an apprenticeship scheme for the acquisition of craftsmen's skills.	vocational guidance to unemployed young individuals towards crafts and professions matching their interests and motivation and currently in demand on the labour market.	70 people were involved in the project.

4	<i>From School to Employment in Tourism</i>	opportunities for career development of young individuals, who have completed their vocational education in tourism, to meet the demand of the tourism sector in Bulgaria for professionally trained staff and to reduce the unemployment rate among young individuals	work placements in professions in the field of hotel-keeping, restaurants & catering, and travel & tourism.	32 young persons
5	<i>Improvement of the Employability of Young Individuals through Continuous Participation in the Labour Market</i>	increasing competitiveness and employability of unemployed young individuals under the age of 29, by providing them with motivation training, foreign language training, training in information and communication technologies and intermediary services in employment, including the development of individual action plans.	foreign language; training in information and communication technologies	6,225 young individuals undertook motivation training, 2,327 completed successfully training in a certain foreign language, and 2,720 completed successfully training in information and communication technologies. After the training, 3,296 persons were provided with intermediary services and 1,104 young individuals were employed as a result of that.
6	<i>called Increasing the Rate of Employment of Young Individuals through Providing them with Work Placements</i>	aims to assist unemployed young individuals with completed upper secondary or higher education to find their first job	induction training and a work placement	27 young persons were involved in the scheme.

Source: compiled by the authors

- **Individuals with disabilities**

The *individuals with disabilities* experience serious problems on the labour market and in times of economic crisis are among the most affected and vulnerable social groups. They were targeted by the active policy on the labour market in 2010. The main prerequisite for the inclusion of individuals with disabilities and the improvement of their quality of living is their active participation in the labour market.

**TABLE 11: PROGRAMMES**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>National Programme for Employment and Vocational Training of People with Permanent Disabilities</i> provides training and employment in integrated environment of unemployed persons with permanent disabilities and persons who have completed successfully medical treatment for drug addiction. In 2010, 2,230 people, on average, were working for one month under the Programme and another 122 unemployed persons were involved to replace people excluded from the Programme.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The objective of the <i>Programme Free of Interest Loan Provided to Individuals with Disabilities</i> is to support persons with disabilities to start their own business. The Programme co finances the aspirations of individuals with disabilities, who have received a loan under the Microcredit Guarantee Fund. In 2010, the interest rate of the approved under this project loans were reimbursed for 168 persons with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the initiative to stimulate employers to create jobs <i>for unemployed persons with permanent disabilities</i>, 1,381 people were involved in employment in 2010 and 803 per month have already been working.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The individuals with permanent disabilities or with reduced working capacity are involved in training and employment under various schemes of the Operational Programme "Human Resource Development". In 2010, 365 unemployed persons and employed people with disabilities were involved in training under those schemes. 66 unemployed persons with permanent disabilities or reduced working capacity were employed after completing successfully a training course.</li> </ul>

Source: compiled by the authors

- **Unemployed individuals over the age of 50**

The *unemployed individuals over the age of 50* have equal access to all training and employment programmes and projects. At the same time, in order to reduce the unemployment rate among adults, measures and programmes have been specifically designed and implemented for them:

TABLE 12: UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS OVER THE AGE OF 50			
	programmes	targets	outcomes
1	<i>National Programme Retirement Assistance</i>	employment opportunities or assistance to retire for unemployed persons at pre-retiring age	848 unemployed persons at pre-retiring age, on average per month.
2	<i>National Programme for Support of Parenthood</i>	, people, who have already retired, may be employed to assist in childcare in family environment	405 retired people were working under this Programme;
3	Stimulating employers	to create jobs <i>for unemployed persons over the age of 50 and for individuals at the age 50-64 in receipt of professional pension for early retirement.</i> In, 2010, around 912 persons per month were working under these measures	around 912 persons per month were working under these measures. The support measure of employing people at the age of 50-64 also provides opportunities for these individuals to receive training for the acquisition of vocational qualification.
4	<i>Development</i>	aiming at providing vocational training and further employment to unemployed persons.	3,758 persons over the age of 50 were involved in vocational training under this scheme and they have the highest participation rate (43,8%) within the total number of persons included in training under the same scheme. The share of people over the age of 50, employed after the training, is 51,5%;
5	<i>At Work Again</i>	the unemployed persons are trained in key competencies, focused on taking care of children and may be further employed to look after children at the age of 1 to 3, which enables the parents to continue work actively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the unemployed people over the age of 55 involved in training under this scheme, were 354 or 45,8% of all people involved in training. Employment is provided to 356 unemployed individuals over the age of 55, which is 49,9% of all people involved in the employment scheme.</li> </ul>

Source: compiled by the authors

- **Other vulnerable social groups on the labour market**

The unemployed people in receipt of social benefits are involved in the *National Programme From Social Benefits to Employment*. In 2010, the Programme remains the largest programme, funded from the national budget, providing employment to the largest number of people. The Programme provides employment and social inclusion to unemployed people in receipt of social benefits and to those for whom working under the Programme provides them with their only income.

According to data provided from the Employment Agency in 2010 the Programme involved 39,125 unemployed persons, half of them (50,9%) women, 37,7% unemployed over the age of 50 and 27,6% - permanently unemployed. The individuals working under the Programme were engaged in social activities such as reconstruction of children's playgrounds, construction and assembly works in public buildings, etc.

80 regional employment programmes, provide access for disadvantaged unemployed persons to the labour market, by solving specific local problems. In 2010, 723 persons, on average per month, were working under these programmes and the newly involved in employment were 1,288.

- ***The individuals in active imprisonment, single parents and mothers with children under the age of 3 or 3 to 5 are disadvantaged on the labour market.***

The implementation of the Project "Social inclusion of people in active imprisonment through acquiring vocational qualification and training" enhances the opportunities for active behaviour on the labour market and supports the process of re-integration of the imprisoned, by involving them in literacy courses, vocational training and acquisition of key competencies. Persons sentenced to imprisonment, whose release is forthcoming, may participate in this project. In 2010, 917 imprisoned persons were involved in the project, of whom 101 - in literacy courses, 349 – in vocational training for qualification, 108 – in training for acquisition of key competencies and 359 – in motivation training.

The Employment Promotion Act stimulates employers to hire unemployed persons – single parents (adoptive fathers and/or mothers) with children under the age of 3, as well as unemployed mothers with children at the age of 3 to 5. In 2010, the measure for single parents and/or mothers with children under the age of 3 involved 166 persons and 409 unemployed people had been working on average per month. Under the measure for mothers (adoptive mothers) with children at the age of 3 to 5, 263 persons had worked on average per month.

## 7. VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

### 7.1. Priorities of the vocational education of teachers and trainers

#### 7.1.1. Regulations concerning the start and development of teachers' and trainers' career

In order to be able to be a teacher in a vocational school it is required to have completed the following education level – qualification degree Bachelor or Master in the relevant professional field and acquired professional qualification of "Teacher". The qualification "Teacher" may be acquired in the course of studying for Bachelor or Master in higher school or after graduation. Those who wish to work as teachers and who have no professional qualification may acquire one after the completion of their higher education after participating in a specialised university course. This specialised training forms part of the formal requirements for being a teacher and is regulated by one of the special decrees of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, in effect since 1997. This decree outlines the general state requirements for the acquisition of the professional qualification "Teacher". The training is one year long and comprises of school subjects in the field of pedagogy, psychology, audio-visual information and communication technologies in education and methods of teaching of the subject related to the basic specialty of the teacher. Practical training is also integrated, as well as observations of class work at schools. Except for the teachers in foreign languages, the training in foreign languages is not a compulsory component of the training for the qualification "Teacher".

The study of foreign languages is optional for the students or may be non-formal for the teachers. If the qualification is acquired after graduation, it is paid for by the applicant to become a teacher, and if it is part of the bachelor or master degree, it is integrated as part of university education and is not paid for.

The introduction of a new career development system for teachers has started at the end of 2009 and it is as a result of the introduction of changes in the way schools are funded and teachers' remuneration formed. In their professional development, teachers may occupy five different positions – „*junior teacher*“, „*teacher*“, „*senior teacher*“, „*head teacher*“, „*specialist in education methodology*“.

The transition to a higher position could only happen after an assessment conducted by a special committee against specified criteria, such as achieved results during work with students, use of interactive methods and information and communication technologies in training, work with students who have won competitions, work within school projects, support of students at risk of exclusion, work on methodology and assistance to newly appointed teachers, etc. The novelties, introduced in teachers' career development, aim at stimulating teachers to participate in lifelong learning and improve their qualification by applying modern approaches to teaching and updating their knowledge. Moreover, the idea is to praise teachers, who achieve good results in their work.

#### 7.1.2. Education reforms and new approaches to teaching and assessment

In the last years the contents of the compulsory study materials for teachers has not been changed. There are possibilities for including optional subjects, which could be changed every year. These optional subjects (a minimum of 4) would match the professional profile of teachers to be and the innovations in the relevant scientific field. At present, courses that develop teachers' competency to manage aggressive and antisocial behaviour of students at school are quite popular in Bulgaria, as well as development of the ability to use information and communication technologies during the education process. A new tendency within the university delivering training for teachers is the implementation of e-learning programmes. In all major universities, specialised centres for e-learning were set up last year where the teachers to be can master the integration of new technologies while teaching different school subjects. Parallel to that possibilities are discussed for the introduction of a distant form of training of teachers. The final regulation of the distant training in university is still to be adopted.

#### 7.1.3. Special regulations and guidelines for the training of students with special education needs and other vulnerable groups.

The regulations and the guidelines for the training of students with special education needs in vocational schools are in compliance with the [National Plan for the Inclusion of Children with Special Education Needs within the Education System in Bulgaria](#). This plan is being updated at the end of each school year and reflects the current issues of the national policy for inclusion of children with different types of disabilities. The document outlines the main principles for the design of suitable environment at school, which would guarantee that the most appropriate training would be provided to students with special needs. The specific regulation requirements for the training of children with special education needs are included in a special decree of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (Regulation No 1/23.01.2009) on the training of children and students with special education needs and /or chronic diseases. According to this Regulation the integrated training at school is implemented in cooperation with specialists from the Resource centre for support of the integration of students with special needs. When admitting a student with special needs to school, teachers are organised in teams in order to assess the student.

This practice operates regionally, and results in providing recommendations and guidelines for the future training of the student at school depending on his/her individual development. During the school year teachers from vocational schools are instructed to work in a team with pedagogic experts, resource teachers, psychologists, rehabilitators, according to the specifics of each student, so that the best training environment could be provided to the student in relevance to his/her special needs.

The use of special school and technical toolkits by teachers is also anticipated, as well as didactic materials and specialised software for the enhancement of the training. The Regulation mentions, that the team which would support the training of the children and students with special education needs, is appointed not later than 1<sup>st</sup> September by an ordinance of the school principle for the period of one school year, with members regulated by the Public Education Act. The team operates throughout the whole year against a schedule approved by the Pedagogic committee of the school and its operation is focused on monitoring the development of the student and potential changes in the programme of his education. If needed, the specialists from the team may consult teachers on the implementation of the integrated training in class. The teams may decide to design an individual programme for certain students with special needs. For students with impaired hearing or vision, syllabuses are being developed, including special school subjects for enhancing their hearing or speaking rehabilitation and quality of life. Within specialised schools or schools for mentally retarded children, it is possible that class groups are formed where training for a profession or part of a profession or for the acquisition of first degree professional qualification, by students who have completed the 8th grade in these schools, is provided. The regional education inspectorates are responsible for providing short-term specialised practical training of teachers from the schools where integrated education and training are implemented, as well as for sector teachers.

## 7.2. Initial vocational education and training of teachers and trainers

### 7.2.1. Teachers and trainers in IVET

It is reported that 13,841 teachers and trainers have been working in the system of initial vocational education and training in the last year. Table 1 shows the number of teachers for the different types of vocational schools. In comparison to previous years, a certain decrease in the number of teachers is observed ([see Table 2](#)).

<b>TABLE 1. TEACHING STAFF IN VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2010/2011 <sup>1</sup></b>	
Teaching staff in vocational schools	2010/2011
In total	13,841
In art schools (III degree of professional qualification)	1,018
In vocational secondary schools (III degree of professional qualification)	10,625
In vocational colleges with admission after upper secondary education (IV degree of professional qualification)	517
In vocational secondary schools and schools (II degree of professional qualification)	1,580
In vocational schools with admission after the VI and VII grade (I degree of professional qualification)	61
In vocational schools with admission after the VIII grade (I class of professional qualification)	40
In private schools from the total number	901

Source: National Statistical Institute – Republic of Bulgaria

<sup>1</sup>: teachers principals and assistants to the principles with teaching responsibilities, not including supervisors.

**TABLE 2. TEACHING STAFF IN VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS – (2008 – 2011)**

Teachers	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
In total	15,445	14,557	13,841
In art schools (III degree of professional qualification)	1,033	1,020	1,018
In vocational secondary schools (III degree of professional qualification)	11,894	1,116 <sup>2</sup>	1,625
In vocational colleges with admission after upper secondary education (IV degree of professional qualification)	482	551	517
In vocational secondary schools and schools (II degree of professional qualification)	1,943	1,708	1,580
In vocational schools with admission after the VI and VII grade (I degree of professional qualification)	49	54	61
In vocational schools with admission after the VIII grade (I degree of professional qualification)	47	60	40
In private schools from the total number	890	986	901

<sup>2</sup> Including teachers in inter - school centres.

Source: National Statistical Institute – Republic of Bulgaria

**TABLE 3. BREAKDOWN OF TEACHING STAFF IN VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS PER COMPLETED LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND GENDER FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2010/11**

Teaching personnel in the vocational schools	2010/11 <sup>2</sup>
In total	13,841
Higher – Bachelor and Master	12,824
Higher – Professional Bachelor	907
Upper secondary	110
Men	3,708
Higher – Bachelor and Master	3,049
Higher – Professional Bachelor	594
Upper secondary	65
Women	10,133
Higher – Bachelor and Master	9,775
Higher – Professional Bachelor	313
Upper secondary	45

Source: National Statistical Institute – Republic of Bulgaria

<sup>1</sup> Including principles and assistants to the principles with teaching functions

<sup>2</sup> Including teachers in inter-school centres.

At national level, training activities to become a teacher are regulated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. The Ministry approves the professional fields and the number of students to be trained in each of them, as well as the state subsidy for the training of university students. The curriculums and the contents of the training are determined by the higher schools, which are autonomous in defining the format of training of the teachers, in compliance with the regulation documents. The Academic Council within each University approves the curriculums for the Bachelor and Master degrees, whereas the different faculties providing training for teachers design the syllabuses and control the quality of their implementation. If there is a need to introduce new content, the faculty councils introduce changes in the training content in compliance with the minimum compulsory requirements defined in the Regulation on the acquisition of the qualification “Teacher”. The quality of training monitoring within universities is conducted through specially regulated by the state procedures of accreditation of higher schools, implemented by the National Agency for Assessment and Accreditation.

## 7.2.2. Pre-service and in-service training of IVET teachers and trainers

### 7.2.2.1. Initial training

The initial training of teachers is implemented by the universities. For the Bachelor’s degree it has a duration of four years and for the Master’s degree after completing Bachelor’s degree in the same field – it is one year. According to the contents and the professional orientation, the qualification may be divided into the following main groups:

- for *teachers in general subjects in vocational secondary schools* – for instance, Bulgarian language, mathematics, physics, history, philosophy, chemistry, biology, sports. The teachers in general subjects are trained at the universities of Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Shumen, Veliko Turnovo, Burgas. The teachers in sports are trained in the National Sports Academy in Sofia and at the Plovdiv University, as well as in private universities and colleges – New Bulgarian University, Burgas Free University, Varna Free University.
- for *teachers in arts vocational schools* – in the National Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia and the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv.
- for *teachers in special subjects according to the profile of the vocational secondary school* – for instance, engineer sciences, economics, transport, construction, agriculture, tourism, arts, etc. This qualification is acquired in the polytechnic universities and the Chemical Technological University in Sofia, Ruse, Burgas and in the economic universities and the University of Architecture, Construction and Geodesy in Sofia.

The *initial training of trainers and lecturers under different programmes for professional qualification* in Vocational Education Centres also starts at university, but is carried out more intensively as part of the continuing education. A recommended requirement is for trainers to have teacher’s qualification. Their competency and legitimacy are assessed in the process of certification on behalf of the relevant educational institution (Vocational Education Centre) interested to offer professional qualification courses. The certification is provided in compliance with a specified by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training procedure.

The requirements for the admission to universities which provide training for teachers and trainers in the field of vocational education are regulated by the universities. In 2010 most of them only took into consideration a successful passing of the final state examination for completion of upper secondary education as an entrance level to university. For some specialties of general training and the humanitarian studies, there is an entrance examination, which is most often in Bulgarian language or history. In order to be admitted to study for a teacher in foreign languages, one has to sit for an examination in the relevant language.

For trainers in engineer and technical specialties the entrance examination is most often in mathematics (or chemistry – according to the profile). The entrance examination is written. The assessment of candidates for training in teacher's specialties is conducted by committees within universities.

#### **7.2.2.2. Continuing education – post-graduate qualification of teachers**

*The post-graduate qualification of teachers, as a part of the system of vocational education, is provided at university – in specially established units – Departments for Information and In-service Training of Teachers. Three such Departments are operating at present in Bulgaria – in Sofia, Stara Zagora and Varna. They offer qualification programmes to teachers from vocational schools in compliance with Ordinance No 5 of the Ministry of Education from 1996, regulating five vocational qualification degrees:*

- *Fifth* vocational qualification degree – obtained after successfully taken oral exam based on questionnaire;

- *Fourth* vocational qualification degree – obtained after successfully taken written exam based on questionnaire;

- *Third* vocational qualification degree – obtained after the successful completion of one year of vocational training - specialisation;

- *Second* vocational qualification degree– obtained after the successful argument of a written thesis, based on analysis of an attached by the candidates' diagnostic procedure;

- *First* vocational qualification degree – obtained after the successful argument of a written research or innovative thesis.

The Faculties of Pedagogy at the universities of Sofia, Plovdiv, Blagoevgrad and Veliko Turnovo may also organise training for the acquisition of the above-mentioned vocational qualification degrees, based on the level of competency and the practical experience of teachers.

Teachers in Bulgaria are also interested in the different forms of continuing education. According to a report called TALIS provided by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, teachers in Bulgaria spend on average 31 days per year for their professional development, which is a positive indicator, compared to the other 23 states covered by the survey. Most of the teachers are involved in explicitly organised Vocational Development Courses, funded from the school budget. Besides, there is an existing practice for teachers to pay for their own qualification courses, offered by training institutions and non-government organisations.

The most popular forms of continuing education are the short-term qualification courses (with a duration of one or two days) and the participation in conferences and seminars. As for the subjects, some of the most preferred courses are those concerning interactive methods of training, managing a class, and subjects that are dealing with specific problems with regard to vocational training. Teachers in Bulgaria have acknowledged the fact that they need to be provided with integrated training and the need to obtain certain qualification in order to work with children with special education needs and . Another aspect of professional development, popular among teachers, is the application of the information and communication technologies in education.

The continuing education of teachers is also implemented by the National Institute for Training and Qualification in the System of Education to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. First known as n Institute for Training of Principals in Education, the institute will be re-structured and will expand its activity, offering qualifications to teachers as well.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science organises courses for continuing education of teachers within the framework of the National Programme Qualification, where the main focus is on foreign language training of teachers and overcoming the shortage of teachers in foreign languages. Training of teachers for development of enterprise competency was delivered last year under this programme.

In 2011 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science initiated the implementation of a project called Improvement of the Quality and Implementation of European Instruments and Practices within the System of Vocational Education and Training, which is aimed at the improvement of the quality in vocational education and training through the development and implementation of methodological and systematic prerequisites for the introduction of efficient European instruments, based on the results from the lifelong learning programme. The development of new framework programmes for the acquisition of professional qualification and providing horizontal and vertical mobility within vocational education is also anticipated. The project is implemented with the financial support of the EU, through the European Social Fund.

### **7.3. Categories of teachers and trainers in CVET**

#### **7.3.1. Teachers, trainers and training facilitators in CVET**

The teachers and trainers in the field of vocational education most frequently work in Vocational Education Centres to vocational schools, companies or non-government organisations and agencies for training of adults. The activities of the Vocational Education Centres are regulated by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training which issues the licenses and carries out the monitoring of the training process.

#### **7.3.2. Pre-service and in-service training of CVET teachers and trainers**

The training of teachers and trainers within the institutions for continuing vocational education is performed at university, under the same mechanism as the one valid for the training of teachers to meet the requirements of initial vocational training. The training of trainers is concentrated mainly in the Master's programmes. In some universities there are pedagogical faculties which offer programmes specifically oriented towards trainers. Within the Faculty of Pedagogy at the University of Sofia, for instance, there are two specialised Master programmes for training of teachers and trainers: 1/ Modern education technologies, where, the qualification "Teacher" may be acquired after while studying for the Bachelor degree, and 2/ Management of adults training – for teachers and experts who would like to work as trainers of adults. The participation of the trainers in some forms of continuing education is voluntary and is not strictly regulated. Some professional organisations and associations and sector organisations offer short-term courses for the enhancement of the qualification of lecturers and trainers, such as, the Bulgarian Association for Management and Development of Human Resources and the Association of Psychologists in the Republic of Bulgaria, which develop and offer qualification programmes for trainers in the field of management and social abilities.

Workshops are also organised by non-governmental organisations for the enhancement of the qualification of trainers. These are funded under various European programmes.

## 8. ENSURING RELEVANCE BETWEEN THE PROVISION OF VET IN BULGARIA AND THE NEEDS OF THE LABOUR MARKET

### 8.1. Implemented Systems and mechanisms to identify the current requirements for skills and knowledge (in different sectors, occupations, education level)

Regular and systematic investigation, analysis and forecast of the requirements for knowledge and skills are needed for the development of efficient policies in education, training and employment and for achieving better relevance between supply and demand of skills.

The Employment Agency, through its territorial units, annually conducts a survey on the needs of employers, which is then used to update the List of professions and specialties.

Targeted surveys on the demand for labour force with specific qualifications are being conducted for the purpose of education and training and labour market policy. In 2004, a national sociological survey on the needs of employers was conducted for the first time. Between February and June 2007, by a commission of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, a national survey was conducted on the demand of the labour force with specific qualifications, which also included an intermediary forecast of the demand of labour force in the period 2008-2010.

*Actions for building up a national system of investigation and forecast of the demands for labour force with specific qualifications in Bulgaria*

A better relevance between the supply and demand of labour force with specific qualifications is of a significant importance with view to the current structural changes within the economics and the labour market in Bulgaria – development of certain sectors, some professions threatened of extinction, introduction of production lines with low carbon emissions, use of renewable energy sources, creating more „green” and „white” working environments, etc. In this context, matching the knowledge and skills with the labour market demands is recognised as one of the main priorities in the National Reform Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria 2010-2013.

An interdepartmental panel is working on the development of a National System for Investigation and Analysis of the Demands for Labour Force with Specific Qualifications in Bulgaria. It comprises of representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, sector ministries, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, the national representative organisations of social partners, the Bulgarian Academy of Science. A Concept is developed on the structuring and the institutional establishment of the system of investigation and forecasting of the demands for labour force with certain qualifications in Bulgaria.

At the beginning of 2010 the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy initiated the project New Skills for New Places of Work in the New Economics – Forecast and Policy Formation, co-funded by the European Commission. The development of a pilot model for medium-term forecast of the development of the labour market and the demand of knowledge and skills in Bulgaria is anticipated within the framework of the project. The model will be incorporated in the system of investigation and prognostication of the demands of labour force with specific qualification.

The Enhancement of the Flexibility and Efficiency of the Labour Market scheme is implemented within the framework of the Operational Program “Human Resource Development through the active work of social partners”. The implementation is assigned to the national representative organisations of the social partners.

In 2010, under the project, funded under the above scheme, called „Development and Implementation of an Information System for the Assessment of the Competencies of the Labour Force per Sectors and Regions”, a survey and an analysis were conducted on: the current state, the problems, the systems and the instruments used for the assessment of the competency of the labour force in Bulgaria. A study was also conducted on the experience and the best practices in the EU and the developed countries in the field of applied information systems, instruments and partners’ networks for the assessment of the competency of the labour force. An analysis of the current state and future perspectives of the development of the economy, the labour market and the labour force in Bulgaria was made. In relation to the development of an information system for the assessment of the labour force competency, the following documents were developed:

- A concept on the establishment of National Referent Network in Bulgaria (with 20 sector referent units and 10 regional centres for assessment of competencies), acting as an organisational infrastructure of the information system for the assessment of the competencies;
- A package of proposals for regulatory amendments for the development and implementation of policies aiming to overcome the shortage of labour force;
- A method for the assessment of competencies at company level and at sector (regional) level and a classification of the instruments for assessment of competencies;
- A method for the definition of competencies and the establishment of a competency model at company, sector or regional level.

The establishment of a unified national system will provide for the regular and systematic investigation, analysis and forecasting (in short- and medium-term plan) with regard to the demands of employers for labour force with specific knowledge and skills. The information and forecasting will be used for determining the requirements for admission to different specialties in upper secondary and higher schools, which will have an impact on the general characteristics of the labour force and the training of adults for.

## **8.2. Ensuring relevance between the provision of VET in Bulgaria and the needs of the labour market**

Representatives from the national representatives organisations of employers, workers and employees participate in the management board and the expert committees of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training. As a result of the above, these representatives directly participate in:

- the composition, the updating and the coordination of the List of professions for vocational education and training;
- the composition, the coordination and the updating of the state education requirements for the acquisition of qualification in professions;
- the establishment of procedures for certification of centres for vocational education and training and centres for information and vocational guidance.

Representatives of the employers’ organisations and sector syndicates participate in the organisation and the conduct of the exams for the acquisition of vocational qualification and nominate members of the examination board

## 9. LIFELONG GUIDANCE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

### 9.1. Strategy and provision

The vocational guidance as a part of the national lifelong learning strategy

The vocational guidance in Bulgaria is regulated by two main regulations:

1. Vocational Education and Training Act
2. National Lifelong Learning Strategy (2008 – 2013)

According to the *Vocational Education and Training Act* the system for vocational guidance is ratified as part of the vocational education system. It is stated that: „Vocational guidance is the act of providing advice and advice to students and other persons with regard to the choice of profession and career development” (Art. 5). The main tasks defined by the law are:

- Providing assistance to trainees in their free choice of education, training and vocational qualification for the acquisition of the required knowledge and skills, corresponding to the requirements of the labour market;
- Providing assistance to adults – workers and unemployed persons – to make decisions for the enhancement of their own education level, vocational qualification, re-qualification, commencement of work or change of workplace.

*The national lifelong learning strategy* includes the policies for the development of the idea for lifelong learning. The objective of the strategy is to form general culture and motivation for learning, which should be attained through the development of lifelong learning vocational guidance and advice in schools, at universities and at the workplace. The provision of accessible and high- quality services for vocational guidance to all students in Bulgaria, is defined as the key priority for the period up to 2013. The national strategy aims to assist/enable individuals in/to better plan and manage their own career path and skills, to further develop their knowledge and skills, and to improve their employability. According to this strategy, no later than 2013, a unified national lifelong guidance system should be implemented. It is also required to develop programmes for education and qualification of the personnel engaged with vocational guidance related services. These activities are anticipated to be accompanied by changes in the legislative regulation with regard to the existing opportunities to receive vocational guidance and the launch of different forums to popularise good practices in lifelong learning guidance.

According to the National Lifelong Learning Strategy and the current state of vocational guidance in Bulgaria, the following key challenges could be identified:

- Lack of one national system for lifelong learning guidance;
- The need to ensure better access to and high-quality of the different types of education services;
- Lack of enough coordination between the official institutions, providers of and those in need of vocational guidance. Development of coordinated policies and programmes to cover different sectors of education and employment, in line with the requirements of the labour market.

The design of the policies on the provision of vocational guidance services is more and more in line with the tendencies of the labour market and the specific requests of the employers. A national survey was conducted at the end of 2010 on the employability of young individuals in Bulgaria, which covered 119 employers and 1023 young individuals. The survey is part of the project called „Research on employability of young people in Bulgaria”, financed by the National Centre for European Youth Programmes and Initiatives.

The objective is to establish what are the most important skills required for the successful realisation on the labour market and to what extent young individuals in Bulgaria possess such skills. According to the results from this survey, the vocational knowledge and skills, the willingness to learn new things and the leadership skills play key role for the successful realisation of young individuals. Employers are more critical of their employees' performance at work, in contradiction to how employees themselves assess their own skills and competences. More detailed research is still required to attain better harmonisation of the initiatives and the measures at sector and national level with regard to vocational guidance.

*Institutions within the education and employment sectors responsible for the provision of vocational guidance and advice services*

The vocational guidance services in *secondary education* are being provided by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the Education Inspectorates and by the schools themselves.

The *Euroguidance* Centre functions within the Human Resource Development Centre of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science and provides information and services for career guidance in the field of education.

The National Programme "Youth Information Centres" within the National Centre for European Youth Programmes and Initiatives of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science was implemented between 2007 – 2010. There were 37 career centres created under this programme, all over the country, and there are more than one in bigger towns such as Sofia, Plovdiv, Burgas and Varna (<http://www.mikc.bg/node/430>). The objective is to build up a sustainable network of units, which should provide high-quality vocational guidance services in line with the needs of young individuals. The programme is targeting children and young individuals at the age from 14 to 35 and aims to enhance their motivation for vocational development and lifelong learning. The advices provided by the Centres are free of charge and may be organised at the request of young individuals.

The establishment of a Career Guidance System in school education was started in 2011, under Operational Program „Development of Human Resources” of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. *The establishment of 28 regional centres for career development is anticipated under this Project.* Another priority of this Project is the enhancement of the administrative capacity through the establishment of specialised units for career guidance in school education at national, regional and school level. It is expected 150 career advisers will be hired, who shall provide career guidance services to students and parents. Further to that, it is also planned to launch a new module within the National Portal for Vocational Education and Training ([www.vet-bg.com](http://www.vet-bg.com)) and to upgrade the portal with new information about opportunities for vocational training and realisation of young individuals. The activities under the Project shall be implemented by 2013 and as a result of that, 466,000 students from general education are expected to be involved in programmes for vocational guidance and career development.

In the field of *higher education* the services for career guidance are provided by the career centres of the universities. There are 36 career centres built up in the country as at this time (<http://careercentres.staj.bg/?mode=all>). Services are provided both for students and employers, aimed at the attainment of better match between the expectations of the business and the training level of the trainees.

Increasing interest in the activity of universities career centres has been observed in the last two year. As a result it is now quite popular to open local career centres within the different faculties so that students' specific needs could be better satisfied. Another 4 career centres function at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", despite the fact that there is one main university centre, established within the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics, the Faculty of Philosophy, the Economic Faculty and the Faculty of Pedagogy. In most cases, their establishment is at the initiative of the students themselves and of their lecturers, to facilitate the communication and to optimise the connections with employers.

Career services to young individuals and the adults outside the education system are provided by the Employment Agency within the Ministry of Labour Social Policy and its regional services in all major towns in Bulgaria, the Job Centres, which are regional structures of the Employment Agency. Labour intermediaries, who provide information and advice functions, also work in the Job Centres,.

At this stage there are *some attempts and initiatives in support of the cooperation between the various industry sectors and the employment sector*, but is still too early to talk about a unified system for vocational lifelong learning guidance. A road map called "Development of career guidance in Bulgaria 2009 – 2013" was created and aims to facilitate the interaction between the different sectors. This is a national document, which identifies the main objectives and key priorities for the development of the policies and the practices in the field of vocational guidance and career development in Bulgaria for a time period of 5 years. The idea of the road map is to render assistance to the building up and the development of a national system for career guidance within the perspective of lifelong learning. The document was developed by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) after advices with experts and career advisers.

Aimed at the facilitation of the cooperation between the sectors during the building up of the National Vocational Guidance System under the project EUROGUIDANCE, the Human Resource Development Centre within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science started a campaign called "Career Education at School – Guarantee for Sustainable Economic Development", which includes a sequence of discussions throughout the country. The campaign aims to hear and sum up the opinion of representatives from various institutions – educational, intermediary, advice, business organisations, as well as of the local authorities and the academic circles – with regard to one more active presence of career education at school. Partners in the campaign are two non-governmental organisations – Foundation of the business for education and Junior Achievement – Bulgaria.

## 9.2. Target groups and models for the provision of vocational guidance services

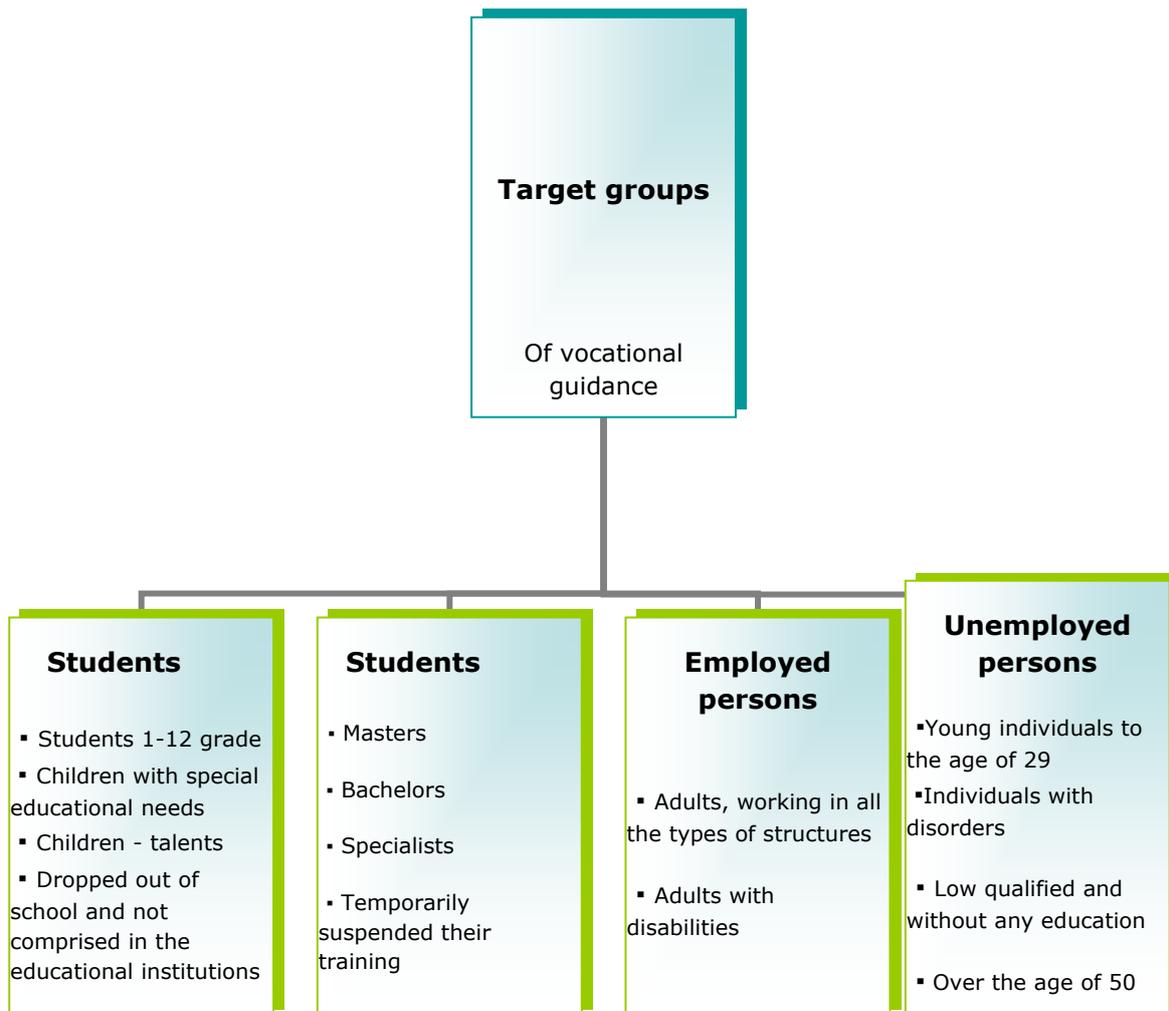


Figure 1. Vocational guidance and advice target groups

Specific approaches are applied for providing information and advice to individuals with special needs such as immigrants, individuals with training difficulties, unemployed, elderly individuals, individuals with low level of skills. Some of these are defined most frequently within the framework of projects of non-government organisations. An example of such project is the [„WBS – Web based support to find a job”](#). The project aims at building up a connection between two of the most vulnerable social groups in Europe – the poorly educated young individuals and elderly immigrants. Within the framework of the Project, the poorly educated young individuals will be trained how to work in a team with elderly immigrants and to conduct interviews with them, to find out more about their professional and general experience and simultaneously to master the model of the Europass CV. Along with that, a multimedia library will be created, with methodical materials suitable for vulnerable groups and advisers who work with them.

Practice shows that there is no ratified national mechanism for the provision of quality of the places where services for vocational guidance are delivered. Quality standards and indicators for evaluation of the quality of the services should be established.

### 9.3. General methods for provision of vocational orientation and services

A traditional and most frequently used method for vocational guidance and provision of career services is the method of direct advice „face to face” through visits in career centres or other specialised advice offices. At school vocational guidance is provided via individual advice sessions or discussions, demonstrations and visits on behalf of professionals, who tell the students about their job. Within universities direct advice is provided in the career centres by career advisers amongst whom there are students and volunteers as well. There are also private advice centres or advice offices, which also provide paid vocational guidance services. The “coaching” service becomes more and more popular for individuals who wish to develop their soft skills in order to be better in their profession.

During the last year, increased interest has been registered in web-based services for vocational guidance and advice. Two new specialised websites for career development were established in 2011 and receive their financing from European projects. These websites suggest various methodologies and instruments for assessment of skills, as well as an option for self-assessment of individual skills required for the chosen profession. A quite efficient form of vocational guidance for students and applicants to study at university are the forums and expositions providing information about the possibilities for training and career development in Bulgaria and other countries. In 2011, educational institutions have organised expositions in major towns in Bulgaria, where information and direct advice is provided by foreign experts and Bulgarian educational advisers.

The independent vocational guidance is complimented mainly by making use of specialised literature – books, manuals, reference books and brochures containing to information about the process of career development. Practical information is most widely in demand. There is still not enough literature published on the subject.

**TABLE 1: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE METHODS AND THE APPROACHES APPLICABLE TO VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE SERVICES**

Methods and approaches	Examples	Means of realisation
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<p style="text-align: center;">Direct vocational guidance</p> <p>(„face to face” sessions; visits to advice centres, public forums and expositions)</p>	<p>Vocational guidance and advice at schools</p> <p>Career centres within universities</p> <p>Private organisations for career advice:  “Selfinvest” - <a href="http://selfinvest.eu">http://selfinvest.eu</a>  «Zaedno» LTD - <a href="http://www.zaedno-bg.com/bg">http://www.zaedno-bg.com/bg</a></p> <p>„Manpower Bulgaria” LTD  <a href="https://www.manpower.bg">https://www.manpower.bg</a></p> <p>“Development Zone” Ltd.  <a href="http://development-zone.net">http://development-zone.net</a></p> <p>Expositions, forums for career orientation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National career days „Successful Career, Successful Life” – March 2011 – Sofia, Varna, Veliko Turnovo, Ruse, Burgas</li> <li>• Career Days – June 2011 – Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics – Sofia University „St. Kl. Ohridski”</li> <li>• International exposition „Education without boundaries” (2011) – Sofia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposition „Global education” – February 2011 – Sofia, Plovdiv, organised by the career and educational advisers of Integral Company</li> <li>• Exposition „Private School” (2011) – Sofia</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lifelong Learning Festivals – Sofia, Plovdiv, Ruse</li> </ul>	<p>In class and out-of-class forms provided by pedagogy advisers</p> <p>Sessions for direct advice; provision of information about employers, practices and vacant job positions; assistance when applying for work.</p> <p>Individual advisory sessions to choose a profession and on career development; Information workshops at schools providing career guidance.</p> <p>Delivery of training for the development of vocational skills.</p> <p>Intermediation in finding work; training in working environment;</p> <p>Coaching and assessment centre</p> <p>Presentation of employers and employer brands;</p> <p>Workshops, run by career advisers and HR specialists</p> <p>Presentation of companies looking of employees; guidelines to students for the expectations of employers.</p> <p>Meetings with representatives of universities from other European countries and the USA.</p> <p>Option to choose a profession and information about universities, providing suitable training. Information about the requirements for admission and training; possibilities for specialisation.</p> <p>Presentations of private vocational schools in Bulgaria</p> <p>Project implemented by the Business Foundation for Education and the Human Resource Development Centre – presentation of various vocations and requirements delivered in an innovative way by practitioners</p>
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<p>on-line information and advice (ICT (Information and Communications Technology)-based services)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.zakarierata.com">http://www.zakarierata.com</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.kakvidastanem.bg">http://www.kakvidastanem.bg</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.vet.bg.com">www.vet.bg.com</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.mappbg.com">http://www.mappbg.com</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.jobtiger.bg">www.jobtiger.bg</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.staj.bg">www.staj.bg</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.karieri.bg">www.karieri.bg</a></p>	<p>Innovative web-site for on-line career guidance, which has been functioning since 2011. It contains exercises, useful tips and instruments for self-assessment of those looking for a job or those choosing a profession.</p> <p>Information on how to choose the right profession; career guidance toolkits; links to career centres</p> <p>National portal for vocational education and training</p> <p>On-line test MAPP for vocational motivation and self-assessment</p> <p>„Adviser” rubric– how to write a CV and a motivation letter; how to behave during an interview for a job; what to do when I get a job offer and other useful tips</p> <p>Advice for students, in search of practice training for vocational development. Information about employers.</p> <p>Site for job vacancies, training and advice – vacant positions, useful tips, documents, interviews with specialists, analysis.</p>
<p>Informal (use of reference and specialised literature)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide to a successful career – T. Terziyska (2010) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts and practices for career development (2010)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Merdzhanova, Ya., Vocational Advice Manual. S., 2001. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merdzhanova, Ya., S. Tsvetanska, B. Gospodinov. Institutions and subjects on the labour market. S., UPH, 2004.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Merdzhanova, Ya. Genealogical parallel Advice</li> <li>• Reference Book for university applicants (2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brochure for vocational guidance of students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual for career advisers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual with diagnostic methodologies in assistance to advisers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Monography on the vocational development and the interaction amongst institutions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pocket manual of the adviser</li> <li>• Reference information about the vocational directions and specialties in universities in Bulgaria</li> </ul>

#### 9.4. Specialists providing guidance and advice

At schools, vocational guidance is provided by pedagogy advisers. The minimum requirement for occupying the position of „pedagogy adviser” is a Bachelor’s degree in psychology, pedagogy or social pedagogy. In the field of employment, the career advisers and labour intermediaries may be with Bachelor’s or Master’s degree in social works. Those who have completed their higher education with humanitarian studies, with no restrictions of the profile, most frequently work as specialists in vocational guidance. An additional qualification, which is directly relevant to career advice is an advantage. A Master’s programme in “Qualification and pre-qualification of the labour force” has been on offer for three years at Sofia University “Saint Kliment Ohridski”, where career advisers are trained in the basic specialty “social works”.

Short-term courses in specific topics on providing personal advice are offered for the enhancement of the qualification of specialists in vocational guidance in the context of continuing education. The idea to validate career advisers’ skills has become quite popular in the last two years. The option for post-graduate qualification of career advisers leading to certification in the Global Career Development Facilitator Programme (GCDF) – an international programme for training of career advisers designed in the USA by the National Board of Certified Advisers (NBCC), which is applied for advisers in more than 40 countries throughout the world, has been introduced in Bulgaria as well. Applicants to take part in the programme should:

- Complete successfully a course in specialised training with a duration of 120 hours in compliance with a syllabus, which comprises of enumerated number of competence areas from the GCDF and is approved by the Certification and Education Centre.
- Have completed a higher education level, with a minimum degree of “Bachelor”.

In Bulgaria the training under the programme for obtaining a certificate is provided by the Sofia University “Saint Kliment Ohridski” and by Job Tiger, and the procedure for the issuance of a certificate is administered by the Foundation “Business for Education”. Over 1000 career and pedagogy advisers have been trained under this program.

### 10. FINANCING OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

#### 10.1. Financing policy for vocational education and training

According to the [Constitution of Bulgaria](#) (Art. 53b), the lower and upper secondary education in state and municipal schools is free of charge. Under conditions stipulated by the law, the education in higher state schools is also free of charge. The State encourages education, by establishing and financing schools, supports capable students, creates opportunities for vocational training and re-qualification. It also monitors all the schools in Bulgaria. The fundamental principles of financing of education on the basis of required funding for the support of one student in state and municipal schools are defined in the Public Education Act. This amount of funding is defined on an annual basis by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science in coordination with the Ministry of Finance, in compliance with the state educational requirement. The so called delegated budgets have been introduced, which is a variation of the standard for the support of one student. The funding to support and develop school facilities is provided from the national budget, from the budgets of the municipalities, from other sources and since 2002 also from own income, which is collected from: rental of public and municipal property; rental of school machines; agricultural land and forests; encashment of registered compensatory bonds and notes; conversion of production and services from practical training; qualification and creative activity, education and other services, defined by an Ordinance of the Minister of Education, Youth and Science; donations, testaments, fees and other sources.

The state vocational schools and vocational secondary schools are funded from the national budget, through ministries' budgets. The ministries themselves play the role of primary administrators with budget credits (PABC) with regard to schools. Most vocational schools and vocational secondary schools (over 90%) are state-owned and are financed as follows:

- 264 of them are funded from the budget of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science;
- 95 of them are funded from the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food;
- 23 of them are funded from the budget of the Ministry of Culture;
- 1 of them is funded from the budget of the Ministry of Physical Education and Sports.

The municipal vocational schools and vocational secondary schools are 41 in total and are funded from the national budget through the budgets of the municipalities.

Private schools are not funded from the national budget and are supported mainly through collecting fees for training.

The process of decentralisation in secondary education started in 2003 with the establishment of standards for financing – separately for the number of the personnel, for salaries and social security contributions and for the support of one student. Up until 2006, the standards were applied solely for the municipal schools, and from 1 January 2006 - for the state-owned schools as well, which include most vocational schools and vocational secondary schools. The unified expenditure standards (UES) for the support of one student were introduced on 1 January 2007. The UES were established on the basis of the levels of expenditure reached by the schools in 2006. They comprise of expenditure for salaries, social security contributions, support of schools, and are updated on an annual basis. They were have not changed for the time period 2009 – 2011 because of the limited financial capacity of the budget.

The standard for the annual support of children and students is different for the different types of kindergartens, schools and servicing units and depends on the way their activity organised. They are as [follows](#):

1. Standard for the support of one child in state and municipal kindergartens – it provides funding for creating an environment for upbringing, education and training of the child in this type of kindergartens, including for the children with special educational needs;
2. Standard for the support of one student in state and municipal general education schools – it provides funding for the creation of conditions for training of the student and as well as for self-training;
3. Standards for the support of one student in state and municipal vocational schools, vocational secondary schools and vocational classes in secondary school of general education – they provide funding for the creation of conditions for training of the student and for providing training and production practice in vocational fields and forms of training;
4. Standard for the support of one student in state and municipal sports schools – it provides funding for the creation of conditions for training of the student and for sports equipment, medicaments and food in and outside class milieu;
5. Standard for the support of one student in state and municipal art schools – it provides funding for the delivery of training to the student and for training and production practice in vocational fields;
6. Standard for the support of one student in a hostel – it provides funding for the creation of conditions for self-training and night accommodation of the student;

7. Standards for the support of one student in special schools:

a) Standard for support of one student at a semi-boarding school for mentally retarded students– it provides funding for the creation of conditions for training of the student and for self-training;

b) Standard for the support of one student in need of medical treatment – it provides funding for the creation of conditions for training of the student, for self-training, night accommodation and free of charge food during school hours;

c) Standard for the support of one student in a boarding school for mentally retarded students, school for students with impaired vision and/or hearing – it provides funding for the creation of conditions for training of the student, for self-training, night accommodation and free of charge food during school hours.

d) Standard for the support of one student in a correctional boarding school – it provides funding for the creation of conditions for training of the student, for self-training, night accommodation, clothes, medicaments, textbooks and training materials and free of charge food;

e) Standard for the support of one student in a social-pedagogical boarding school – it provides funding for the creation of conditions for training of the student, for self-training, night accommodation, clothes, medicaments, textbooks and training materials and free of charge food during class hours;

f) Standard for the support of one student in a hospital school – it provides funding for the creation of conditions for training;

8. Standard for the support of one child accommodated in an institution for providing childcare and education to children deprived of parental care (HUECDPC) – it provides funding for creation of conditions for night accommodation, recreation, clothes, medicaments, textbooks and training materials, for free of charge food;

9. Standard for the support of one child in a preparatory group / preparatory grade in kindergarten or school – it provides funding for the creation of conditions for preparation for school prior to first grade, which includes funding for training materials;

10. Standard for the support of one child in special kindergartens for mentally retarded children, those with impaired vision or/and hearing, speech disorders and in need of medical treatment – it provides funds for the creation of conditions for upbringing, night accommodation, free of charge food, education and training.

The financing of vocational state and municipal schools and secondary schools is provided on the basis of a Uniform Standard for Maintenance Costs for one student.

The Uniform Standard for Maintenance Costs(библиография) for the vocational schools and the vocational secondary schools varies depending on the vocational field, and its value is the highest for specialties from the musical, stage, fine and applied arts. The amount of the Uniform Standard for Maintenance Costs for the specialties from the economic management and administration and social services is the lowest. For 2010/2011 the Uniform Standards for Maintenance Costs for financing of vocational schools and vocational secondary schools are as follows:

- For vocational field „Transport” - 1,924 BGN<sup>16</sup> per student;
- For vocational field „Agriculture, forestry, fishing and veterinary medicine” - 1,852 BGN per student;
- For vocational fields „Physical sciences, informatics, technology, health care, preservation of environment, production and processing, architecture and construction” - 1,491 BGN per student;
- For vocational field „Social services” - 1,365 BGN per person
- For vocational fields „Economic management and administration and social services” - 1,230 BGN.
- For vocational fields „Fine arts, design, art crafts” - 2,146 BGN per student;
- For vocational fields „Music and stage arts” - 2,993 BGN per student;
- For vocational dire fields „Fine and applied arts” - 2,261 BGN per student;
- For art schools - 2,146 BGN per student.

The Uniform Standards for Maintenance Costs are equal for vocational schools and vocational secondary schools providing training in the relevant vocational fields regardless of the form of ownership and the manner of financing.

The funds under the uniform standards for maintenance costs are distributed in conformity with the primary administrators of budget credits (municipalities and ministries) on the basis of the number of students.

The primary administrators distribute the funds amongst schools via special principle coordinated with the directors of educational institutions. The main components of each principle are the uniform standard for maintenance costs and the number of the students in the schools. General geographic and demographic factors, which determine the differences for the incurred cost for one student or indicators reflecting the national and the municipal educational policy, may be also used for the design of the principle.

Before the 28<sup>th</sup> of February each year, each PABC – Municipality or Ministry determines its principle for the distribution of funds under the uniform standard for maintenance cost, which is a result of discussions between school principals, who are secondary administrators with budget credits for the relevant PABC and general factors and conditions.

Since 1 January 2008, all state and municipal schools within the system of public education, including vocational ones, have applied the system of delegated budgets. It is at the same time a form of decentralisation of management and means of financing.

The system of delegated budgets introduced in 2008 provided good possibilities for the optimisation of the internal structure of the schools – number and employability of personnel, number of classes and students in one class, as well as more effective and efficient management of the resources – financial, human and material.

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<sup>16</sup> 1 EUR = 1.955 BGN

The school principals are independent administrators with budget credits and have the right to manage the budget on their own, to make compensated changes in the plan of income and expenditure, realisation of own income, determination of the number of personnel and teachers' work load, determination of the number of classes and the students in them, realisation of transitional balance.

During the three-year period of the application of the system of delegated budgets, the school principals acquired a lot of practical managerial experience.

The impact of the two-year period of application of the system of delegated budgets 2008 – 2009 was evaluated in a sociological survey conducted in 2010, financed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS). It reported on the general opinion of those employed in the schools, experts from the municipalities and the regional inspectorates for education with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, and parents. There is general approval of the introduced system, as a requirement for effective management of the resources and for the creation of conditions for increase in the quality of education.

The further development of the system of delegated budgets is linked to the enhancement of principals and management teams' skills to manage the budgets, the creation of optimal institutional environment (state – municipalities / institutions - schools)/, increase of the public control over the spending of the funds and the management of the schools, the inclusion of kindergartens.

## **10.2. Financing of initial vocational education**

During the school year 2010-2011 initial vocational education and training was provided in 21 art schools, 422 vocational secondary schools, 5 vocational schools and 36 vocational schools with admission after secondary education.

Compared to 2009-2010, the number of vocational schools, providing secondary education, remained unchanged and the number of vocational colleges was reduced by 3, or 7,7%. This insignificant reduction confirms the tendency from the last few years for sustainability of the network of the training institutions.

The number of private vocational schools is 60 or 12,4% of the total number of the vocational schools and there are 4,044 students studying in them or 2,5%.

The number of trainees in vocational education and training for the school year 2010-2011 was 161,500, which is by 3,300 less, compared to school year 2009-2010. However, the decrease in the number of those involved in the system of vocational education and training still exists.

The number of teachers employed in vocational schools during the school year 2010-2011 was 13,800, and 92% of them were with academic-qualification degree of „Bachelor” and „Master”.

The relative share of the trainees studying specialties in the field of “Technical Sciences and Technical Vocations” is the highest, about 33%, enrolled in programmes for the acquisition of third degree of qualification and about 31% - in programmes for the acquisition of second degree of qualification. The trainees studying economic studies are the second highest – 16,8% for first degree and 17,6% for second degree.

For the third consecutive year, the state financing of the system of vocational schools is provided through uniform standards for maintenance cost (USMC) for the support of 1 trainee. In this connection, the continuing tendency for reduction of the number of trainees, under equal other conditions, exerts adverse impact over the financial status of the schools.

The possibility to have their own income is of great help to schools, but the main financial resource is provided through USMC for the support of one trainee.

A possible solution of the problem could be a better binding of vocational education and training with the requirements of the labour market and the business. The attraction of the business as a partner in the process of the preparation of personnel would revive the interest in vocational education and would provide additional funds. The increase of the number of trainees, obtaining vocational education, would result in the relevant increase of the provided by the state financial resource and in the improvement of the material – technical facilities, staff competence.

Most vocational schools in Bulgaria are financed from the budgets of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Physical Education and Sports.

The changeover for most vocational schools to financing from municipalities' budgets would help for the creation of better relationship with the business, as well as commitment on behalf of local governments and local communities with regard to problems concerning vocational education, which up until now were mainly a responsibility of the state.

From 2007 onwards additional funds were provided for vocational schools and secondary schools from project funding under national programmes for development of secondary education,. These programmes provide the schools with the possibility to apply project ideas and to receive financing for the implementation of certain activities, where the state financial support is insufficient. For the time between 2007-2011 similar opportunities were provided under the National Programmes „Optimisation of the school network”, „Modernisation of school facilities”, „Energy efficient reorganisation of school buildings”, Information and communication technologies (ICT) at school” and National Programme „Co-financing by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science for municipal investment plans, directed at the improvement of the school facilities”.

A special national programme was implemented in 2008, aiming to develop of vocational education – „Modernisation of the system of the vocational education”, which through investment of funds from the state budget and co-financing on the part of the business contributed to the renovation of special equipment, laboratories and workshops in vocational schools and secondary schools, as well as for the provision of opportunities for delivery of practical training in real working environment.

In 2011 vocational schools and vocational secondary schools received the opportunity to apply for and receive funds for optimisation of the school network, modernisation of the system of vocational education, the development of the information and communication technologies at school with a total budget of 16 million BGN. 2 projects at the value of 500,000 BGN were approved for financing under the National Programme „Optimisation of the school network and 26 projects at a total value of 2,205,000 BGN will be financed under the National Programme „Modernisation of the Vocational Education System”.

The financing of vocational education outside the state educational requirements, as well as of the practical training, organised in the state-owned and the municipal schools and vocational education training, is provided by legal entities and individuals .

### 10.3. Financing of continuing vocational education and training

Along with the budget funds, The continuing vocational education is financed by the budget funds and from the European Social Fund, through Operational Program „Development of Human Resources” with Managing Authority the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Activities are financed under priority development 2 in the field of continuing training and re-qualification (both of employed and of unemployed persons) for improvement of the productivity of the labour force, the competitiveness of the employed people and the efficiency on the labour market in general. The objective is to ratify the practice of lifelong learning, which should provide for higher quality of the labour force in compliance with the tendencies on the labour market.

### 10.4. Financing of the training of unemployed persons

The training of unemployed persons, organised by the Employment Agency, is financed from the national budget for active policy on the labour market and with funds under Operational Program “Human Resources Development”, co-financed by the European Social Fund.

In 2010, 97,354.9 thousand BGN were spent in total on labour policy on the labour market. Funds from the national budget are 63,281.5 thousand BGN and 34.073.3 thousand BGN have been provided through different schemes of the Human Resources Development Operational Program. Compared to 2009, the spent funding is by 37,5% or by 58,321,6 thousand less than in 2010.

According to data provided from the Employment Agency, the funding spent in 2010 under programmes, measures and schemes, targeting unemployed persons are as follows:

<b>TABLE 2: FUNDING SPENT IN 2010 UNDER PROGRAMMES, MEASURES AND SCHEMES, TARGETING UNEMPLOYED PERSONS</b>			
Programme / measure / scheme	Funds spent in thousand BGN	Funds spent in thousand Euro	Source of financing
<b>Unemployed young individuals up to the age of 29</b>			
National Programme „Start a Career”	1251,2	639,7	National budget
Project “New Job – key skills for employment”	438,2	224,0	National budget
Project “This is my chance to find myself”	38,0	19,4	National budget
Project „From school to employment in tourism”	16,6	8,5	National budget
Measure for opening workplaces and practicing	329,6	168,5	National budget
Scheme "Enhancement of employability of young individuals through their permanent inclusion in the labour market in Bulgaria"	3295,8	1685,1	Human Resources Development operational Programme

Scheme „Creation of employment for the young individuals through provision of possibility for practicing”.	11,9	6,1	Human Resources Development operational Programme”
Persons with disabilities			
National programme for employment and vocational training of individuals with permanent disabilities	8021,6	4101,4	National budget
Program „Free of interest credit for individuals with disabilities”.	237,5	121,4	National budget
Measures for opening workplaces	689,2	352,4	National budget
Unemployed individuals at the age of over 50			
The National Programme „Assistance for Retirement”	3720,6	1902,3	National budget
National Programme „In Support of Maternity”	3273,8	1673,9	National budget
Measures for opening workplaces	343,8	175,8	National budget
Other vulnerable groups on the labour market			
National Programme „From social benefits to the provision of employment”	27326,4	13971,8	National budget
Regional programmes for employment	2540,8	1299,1	National budget
National programme „Motivation of inactive persons”.	325,1	166,2	National budget
Apprenticeship schemes	380,7	194,6	National budget
Project “Re-socialisation of people in imprisonment through vocational qualification and training”	357,2	182,6	National budget
Measures for opening workplaces for hiring unemployed individuals – single parents (adoptive parents) and/or mothers (adoptive mothers) with children up to the age of 3, as well as of unemployed mothers with children at the age 3 to 5	374,2	191,3	National budget

Schemes for training and employment of unemployed persons			
Scheme "Development"	2050,2	1048,3	Human Resources Development Operational Programme
Scheme „At Work Again”	928,7	474,8	Human Resources Development Operational Programme
Scheme „Qualification services and support for employment”	128,9	65,9	Human Resources Development Operational Programme
Scheme „Support for the implementation of projects to start a business”	251,9	128,8	Human Resources Development Operational Programme

Social partners take an active role in the training of unemployed persons. A number of projects and programmes from the National Employment Action Plan were initiated and are implemented by the social partners. In 2010 these were: Project "New Employment – Key Skills for Employment" of Labour Trade Unions „Podkrepa", aimed at the provision of training for the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills and opportunities for the realization of unemployed young individuals, who have completed higher education; Project "This is My Chance to Find Myself" of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria and the National Craftsmen's Chamber, targeting unemployed young individuals up to the age of 29 with lower secondary and lower education for apprenticeship for the acquisition of craftsmen's skills: project "From School to Employment in Tourism" of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria for providing young individuals studying tourism with practical experience.

In October 2009, training vouchers were introduced to improve the access and the participation of people in training as a new financial instrument for financing the training of adults. The training of unemployed and employed persons for the acquisition of qualification per profession and the training for the acquisition of key competences within the framework of schemes under the Human Resources Development Operational Program is financed with vouchers. The training vouchers in Bulgaria are reimbursed in full by the Human Resources Development Operational Programme and there is no requirement for co-financing from individuals or employers. In 2010 the use of training vouchers is less popular among unemployed persons (only within the scheme „Development"). According to data provided from the Employment Agency out of a total of 52,171 vouchers provided in 2010, only 8,574 were provided to unemployed persons and the predominant part – 43,597 – to employed persons. In times of economic crisis, the training vouchers are predominantly used for training motivation of employed persons, aimed at the enhancement of their level of employability and the ability to preserve their current job. The unemployed persons participate predominantly under traditional measures, programmes and projects for training, financed through funds from the state budget and under the Human Resources Development Operational Program.

## 11. AUTHORS, SOURCES OF INFORMATION, BIBLIOGRAPHY, ABBREVIATIONS USED

### 11.1. Authors

THEME	SUB-THEME	AUTHOR
<b>THEME 1: GENERAL CONTEXT – FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY</b>	1.1 Political and socio-economic context 1.2 Population and demographics 1.3 Economy and Labour Market Indicators 1.4. Educational attainment of population 1.5 Definitions	Stoyan Baev  Iskra Petrova – Trifonova  Stoyan Baev  Iskra Petrova - Trifonova
<b>THEME 2 MODERNIZING VET TO SUPPORT LLL, INTERNATIONALIZATION, AND MOBILITY</b>	2.1 VET policy developments and priorities in supporting LL  2.2 Implementation of European tools and principles	Dr. Natalia Kalendarova Penka Ganova  Dr. Natalia Kalendarova Penka Ganova
	2.3.1 Policy framework for internationalization and transnational mobility in VET  2.3.2 Transnational mobility programmes and schemes in VET  2.3.3 Table – Overview of transnational mobility programmes and schemes in VET  2.3.4 Arrangments to secure work placements for transnational mobility in VET	Penka Ganova  Lachezar Afrikanov  Stela Yordanova  Lachezar Afrikanov

<p><b>THEME 3: VET TO SUPPORT RECOVERY FROM THE CRISIS</b></p>	<p>3.1 Overview</p> <p>3.2.1 Trends in learners' behaviour</p> <p>3.2.2 Trends in enterprises' behaviour</p> <p>3.2.3. Measures taken at national, regional and local level by public authorities and social partners to address the negative effects of the crisis</p> <p>3.2.4.</p>	<p>Stoyan Baev</p> <p>Stoyan Baev</p> <p>Stoyan Baev</p> <p>Iskra Petrova - Trifonova</p>
<p><b>THEME 4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK</b></p>	<p>Historical Background Historical Background, Legislative and Institutional framework</p>	<p>Dr.Natalia Kalandarova</p> <p>Penka Ganova</p>
<p><b>THEMA 5; INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b></p>	<p>5.1 Background to the initial vocational education and training system and diagram of the education and training system</p> <p>5.2. IVET at lower secondary level</p> <p>5.3 IVET at upper secondary level</p> <p>5.4 Alternance training</p> <p>5.5 Programmes and alternative pathways for yong people</p> <p>5.6 VET at non tertiary level</p> <p>5.7 VET at tertiary level</p> <p>5.8 Language learning in IVET</p>	<p>Dr.Natalia Kalandarova</p> <p>Emyliana Dimitrova</p> <p>Emyliana Dimitrova</p> <p>Emyliana Dimitrova</p>
<p><b>THEME 6: CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b></p>	<p>6.1 General background</p> <p>6.2 Formal learning in CVET</p> <p>6.3 Non-formal learning in CVET</p> <p>6.4 Language learning in CVET</p> <p>6.5 Training programmes to help job-seekers and individuals vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market</p>	<p>Iskra Petrova - Trifonova</p>

<b>THEME: 7 TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS</b>	Priorities in training VET teachers and trainers Teachers and trainers in IVET Types of teachers and trainers	Prof. Silvia Tzvetanska (assoc)
<b>THEME 8: MACHING VET PROVISION WITH LABOUR MAEKET NEEDS(JOBS)</b>	8.1. Systems and mechanisms for anticipation of skill needs (in sectors, occupations, education level)	Iskra Petrova - Trifonova
<b>THEME: LIFELONG GUIDANCE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYEMENT</b>	Strategy and provision Target groups and modes of delivery Gudance and counseling personel	Prof. Silvia Tzvetanska (assoc)
<b>THEME 10: FINANCING OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b>	10.1 Vet financing policy 10.2 Funding of IVET  10.3 Funding for continuing vocational education and training, anf adult learning  10.4 Funding for training for the unemployed	Kamen Yordanov Kamen Yordanov Kamen Yordanov  Kamen Yordanov   Iskra Petrova - Trifonova

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36. Project “Challenges facing education and training in Bulgaria <http://www.mlsp.government.bg/en/integration/euro/chapter-13/euro/index.htm>
37. Project “WBS – Web based support to find a job” - <http://www.jobsearchsupport.net>
38. Асоциация за кариерно ориентиране и развитие във висшето образование, Association for Career Guidance and Development in Higher Education (ACGDHE)
39. Кариерен център и научна лаборатория за експериментално и професионално образование в СУ ”Климент Охридски”, Career Centre and Scientific Laboratory of Experimental and Vocational Education in the “St. Kliment Ohridski” Sofia University
40. Career guidance - a guide for policy makers; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2004
41. Framework for State Education Requirements for vocational qualification <http://www.navet.government.bg/>Рамкови изисквания за разработване на Държавни образователни изисквания за придобиване на квалификация по професия /актуализиран вариант/
42. Level of Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum Act. (1991)
43. National Classification of Fields of Study in Tertiary Education and Professional Fields, approved with Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 125/2002
44. The Public Education Act, the Rules of Application of the Public Education and Regulation No.5 dated December 29<sup>th</sup> 1996 on the requirements for participation of the teaching staff in advanced training in the public education system IREDA for acquisition of vocational qualification;

### 11.3. List of useful websites of information/organisations referenced in the overview.

- <a href="http://www.government.bg/">http://www.government.bg/</a>	- Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria
- <a href="http://www.minedu.government.bg/">http://www.minedu.government.bg/</a>	- Ministry of Education, Youth and Science
- <a href="http://www.mlsp.government.bg/">http://www.mlsp.government.bg/</a>	- Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
- <a href="http://www.nsi.bg/">http://www.nsi.bg/</a>	- National Statistical Institute
- <a href="http://www.navet.government.bg/">http://www.navet.government.bg/</a>	- National Agency for Vocational Education and Training
- <a href="http://www.az.government.bg/">http://www.az.government.bg/</a>	- Employment Agency
- <a href="http://www.esc.bg/">http://www.esc.bg/</a>	- Economic and Social Council
- <a href="http://www.bia-bg.com/">http://www.bia-bg.com/</a>	- Bulgarian Industrial Association
- <a href="http://www.vitosha-research.com/">http://www.vitosha-research.com/</a>	- Vitosha Research Sociological Agency
- <a href="http://politiki.bg/">http://politiki.bg/</a>	- Open Society Institute
- <a href="http://www.esc.bg/">http://www.esc.bg/</a>	- Economic and Social Council
- <a href="http://www.runicentre.com">http://www.runicentre.com</a>	- Runi Training Centre

### 11.4. List of acronyms and abbreviations

**EA** – Employment Agency, Агенция по заетостта  
**PEA** - Public Education Act, Закон за народната просвета  
**HEA** – Higher Education Act, Закон за висшето образование  
**ICT** – Information and Communication Technologies, Информационни и комуникационни технологии  
**IT** – integrated training, интегрирано обучение  
**LC** – Labour Code, Кодекс на труда  
**CM** – Council of Ministers, Министерски съвет  
**NAVET** – National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, национална агенция за професионално образование и обучение  
**NEAP** – National Employment Action Plan, национален план за действията по заетостта  
**NSI** – National Statistical Institute, Национален статистически институт  
**NCO** - National Classification of Professions, национална класификация на професиите  
**NGO** – Non-governmental Organizations, Неправителствени организации  
**OP”HRD”** – Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”, оперативна програма “Човешки ресурси”  
**VET** – Vocational education and training, Професионално образование и обучение  
**CVT** – Continuing vocational training, Продължаващо професионално обучение  
**RAPEA** – Rules of application of the Public Education Act, Правилник за прилагане на закона за народната просвета

**DCM** – Decree of the Council of Ministers, Решение на Министерски съвет  
**SEN** – Special educational needs, Специални образователни нужди  
**LLL** – Lifelong learning, Учене през целия живот  
**CoM** – Council of Ministers, Министерски съвет  
**MEYS** – Ministry of Education, Youth and Science  
**MLSP** – Ministry of Labor and Social Policy  
**MEET** – Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism  
**MF** – Ministry of Finance  
**MRDPW** – Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works  
**MC** – Ministry of Culture  
**RIE** – Regional Inspectorate of Education  
**OP HRD** – Operational Program “Human Resources Development”  
**ESC** – Economic and Social Council  
**NQF** – National Qualifications Framework, Национална квалификационна рамка  
**EQF** – European Qualifications Framework, Европейска квалификационна рамка

### 11.5. Internet sites

[www.mlsp.government.bg](http://www.mlsp.government.bg) – Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

[www.navet.government.bg](http://www.navet.government.bg) – National Agency for Vocational Education and Training

[www.az.government.bg](http://www.az.government.bg) – Employment Agency

[www.nsi.bg](http://www.nsi.bg) – National Statistical Institute

<http://ophrd.government.bg> – Operational Program “Human Resource Development”

### 11.6. List of the abbreviations used

CB – Collective Bargaining (Agreement)
CIVG – Centre for Information and Vocational Guidance
CVT – Continuing Vocational Training
EA – Employment Agency
EPA – Employment Promotion Act
ESC – Economic and Social Council
LC – Labour Code
MEYS - Ministry of Education, Youth and Science
MLSP - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
NACVTLF – National Advisory Council for Vocational Training of Labour Force
NAVET – National Agency for Vocational Education and Training
NEAP – National Employment Action Plan
NEAP – National Employment Action Plan
NEPC – National Employment Promotion (Support) Council
SER – State Education Requirement
SER – State Education Requirement
VET – Vocational Education and Training
VETA – Vocational Education and Training Act
VTC - Vocational Training Centre