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Table of contents

CHAPTER 1	5
1. External factors influencing VET	5
1.1 Population and demographic trends	5
1.2 Situation on the labour market	5
1.2.1 Economic activity.....	5
1.2.2 Employment	6
1.2.3 Supply and demand on the labour market	7
1.2.4 Labour force demand	8
1.2.5 Implementation of the active policy on the labour market	8
CHAPTER 2	10
2. Providing vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective	10
2.1 Diagram of the national education and training system	11
2.2 Government-regulated VET provision ⁰	12
2.2.1 Access/admission requirements in VET or from VET to other elements of the education and training system, including development opportunities	13
2.2.2 Requirements to candidates	14
2.2.3 Programmes for students at secondary education	15
2.2.4 Programmes for individuals aged 16 years	15
2.2.5 The institutional framework of the VET system.....	15
2.2.6 VET providers.....	18
2.2.7 Inclusion in education and training	19
2.2.8 VET target groups	21
2.2.9 Teachers and trainers (qualification, role and responsibilities)	21
2.2.10 Quality assurance of the VET system	22
2.2.11 Financing of VET	23
2.3 Other forms of training	24

CHAPTER 3	25
3. Shaping VET qualifications	25
3.1 Legislative framework, ensuring relevance between VET and the labour market.....	25
3.2 List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training (LPVET).....	25
3.3 State Educational Requirements (SER) for the acquisition of a vocational qualification .	27
3.4 Training curricula and programmes	28
3.5 Certifications for VET Completion.....	28
3.6 National Qualification Framework (NQF).....	30
3.7 Validation of non-formal and informal learning, when it leads to qualification (complete or part of a profession)	30
3.7.1 Legislative framework	30
3.7.2 Methodological framework and access to validation services	31
3.7.3 Practices in validation.....	31
CHAPTER 4	32
4. Promoting participation in vocational education and training	32
Sources, references and websites.....	33
List of acronyms	35
Annex A: Tables.....	36
Annex B: Additional clarifications.....	50

CHAPTER 1

1. External factors influencing VET

1.1 Population and demographic trends

According to data from the Census in Bulgaria in 2011, the total number of the population is 7.364.570 people. Of them, 51.3% are women and 48.7% men. The population is distributed in 255 cities and 5.047 villages. 72.5% of the population live in cities and 27.5% in rural areas. The Bulgarian ethnic group comprises 84.8% of the population, who have voluntarily declared their ethnic identity. The Turkish ethnic group is the second largest - 8.8%. The Roma ethnic group traditionally ranks third with a share of 4.9%. 0.7% identified themselves as belonging to other ethnic groups (Russian, Armenian, Vlach, Greek, Jewish, Karakachan, Macedonian, Romanian, Ukrainian and others). The Bulgarian language is the mother tongue of 85.2% of the population, Turkish of about 9.1% and Roma of 4.2%. The age structure of the population in Bulgaria (Annex A to the report, Table 1) is characterised by demographic ageing, resulting in a reduction in the absolute number and proportion of population below 15 years of age and increase of the share of the population aged 65 and older. According to the Census data, the educational structure of the population of 7 years and over (Annex A to the report, Table 2) improved significantly in 2011 compared with the previous year, following the trend of increase in the number and proportion of population with tertiary and secondary education, and a decrease in the number of people with primary or lower education.

1.2 Situation on the labour market

1.2.1 Economic activity

According to the National Statistical Institute (NSI) in 2011 the economically active persons aged 15-64 were 3.279.100 (Annex A to the report, Table 3). The economic activity rate in 2011 calculated as the number of economically active people of the total population in the age group 15 to 64 years old is 66% (Annex A to the report, Table 4), and in comparison with 2010 decreased by 0.5 percentage points (pp).

In the first and second quarters of 2012, according to data from the Labour Force Survey of NSI the number of economically active people aged 15-64 years is about 3.259.400. Compared to the same period in 2011 economically active persons increased by six thousand while the economic activity rate increased by 0.6 pp and reached an average of 66% for the period.

1.2.2 Employment

According to the NSI, the total number of employees in 2011 (Annex A to the report, Table 5) was 2.949.600 of which 2.908.300 were 15-64 years of age. Compared to 2010 this number decreased by 3.4%. The average employment rate of people over 15 years for 2011 was 45.6%, and decreased by 1.1 pp compared to 2010. The employment rate in the age range 15 to 64 years (Annex A to the report, Table 6) was also observed, allowing comparability of data for Bulgaria and the EU (Annex A to the report, Table 7). Employed persons decreased in all age groups in absolute terms. Most of the employed are in the group age of 35-44 (905.300) and 45-54 (816.200 people), while the least employed are in the age range above 65 years (41.300).

Data on the educational structure of the employed showed a decrease in employment in all categories while preserving the correlation between levels of education and the magnitude of the employment rate. The difference between the employment rates of people with higher education (68.8% compared to 70.1% in 2010) and those with primary or lower education (8.1% from 8.5% in 2010) remains high - 60.7 pp to 61.6 in 2010. Since 2009 the largest decrease is among those with secondary education. In 2011 it reached 2.0 pp as compared to 3.9 in 2010. Next come the employees with primary education (a decrease of 1.6 pp compared to 3.2 in 2010) and higher education (by 1.3 pp compared to 2.6 in 2010). The employment rate of persons with primary or lower education decreased by 0.4 pp to 2.7 in 2010.

The crisis also affects the structure of employment by employment status. The total number of employees under labour contract in 2011 is 2.088.138 or 154.469 fewer than in 2010 – 565.212 in the public sector and 1.522.926 in the private. The decrease is mainly on behalf of the private sector – 153.909 people. In the public sector the number of employees decreased by 560. There is a decrease of 0.5 pp of the share of self-employed persons to 7.5% and for the employers by 0.1 pp to 3.7%.

Employment in the first six months of 2012¹ continued to decrease but at a slower rate than the one observed in the same period last year. In the first half of 2012 the average number of employed persons aged 20-64 years is 2.836.600. The employment rate of the population for the same age is 61.9% or decreased by 1.1 pp compared to the same period in 2011. During the first six months of 2012 compared to the same period last year, the average number of employed young people aged 15-24 decreased by 3.200, while the employment rate of young people increased by 1.2 pp and reached an average of 20.3% for the first and second quarter of 2012. During this period the average number of employees in the age group 55-64 increased by 51.000 while the employment rate for the same age group increased by 1.1 pp and equals an average of 45% for the first six months of 2012.

¹ Source: Framework of the main priorities of the National Action Plan for Employment 2013. MLSP. The data from the Labour Force Survey of the National Statistical Institute is calculated on average for the half of the year.

1.2.3 Supply and demand on the labour market

According to the NSI, since 2009 the number of unemployed people has increased significantly after a long decrease in the unemployment rate in the years before the crisis, including 2008 (Annex A to the report, Table 8). In 2011 the unemployment rate in the country increased by 1.0% or 5.790 as compared to the previous year, reaching 11.2% (Annex A to the report, Table 9). Long-term unemployed (one year or more) are 56.2% of all unemployed. The number of inactive increased by 12.400 - from 224.600 in 2010 to 237.000 in 2011.

According to the data from the National Employment Agency (NEA)² similar trends are observed with regard to the registered unemployed. In 2008 the average number of unemployed was 233.719. In the following years 2009 and 2010, the absolute number was increasing. In 2011 there was an opposite trend (Annex A to the report, Table 10) and the average number of unemployed persons registered at the Labour Offices (LOs) was 332.601 which compared to the previous year is 18.344 or 5.2% less unemployed.

In 2012³ the number of unemployed remains high due to the on-going release of staff. Among the reasons for higher unemployment in the first half of 2012 compared to the same period for the previous year is the growth of persons who have completed temporary or seasonal jobs, more people looking for their first job, and an increase in dismissals. According to data from the Labour Force Survey of the National Statistical Institute in the first half of 2012 unemployment in the country averaged 415.500 and the unemployment rate reached an average of 12.6% for the latter period. Compared to the same period in 2011, the number of unemployed people increased by 32.800 and the unemployment rate by 1 pp.

Youth unemployment remains high – on average for the first and second quarter of 2012 the number of unemployed young people (15-24) was 71.300 (63.700 for the same period of 2011), and the youth unemployment rate is 29.9 %. According to seasonally adjusted Eurostat data the rate of youth unemployment in Bulgaria in July 2012 was 29.4% compared to the EU27 average of 22.5%. The registered unemployment rate in the first half of 2012 also increased. The Administrative Statistics of the Employment Agency reported 367.868 unemployed on average per month for the first half of 2012; this number is 6.7% higher than the one of the same period in 2011. The unemployed without qualifications and specialty are 205.413 people on average per month for the first six months (an increase of 4.7% compared to the same period in 2011); they were 55.8% of all unemployed. In August 2012 their number was 195.066 or 55.5% of all unemployed. Long-term unemployed are on average 122.484 for the first half (0.8% increase compared to the same period in 2011); they were 33.3% of all unemployed. In August 2012 the number was 115.099. or 32.7% of all unemployed.

² Source: Yearbook 2011. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Agency.

³ Source: Framework of the main priorities of the National Action Plan for Employment 2013. MLSP. The data from the Labour Force Survey of the National Statistical Institute is calculated on average for the half of the year.

People with disabilities registered in labour offices during the first half of 2012 averaged 15.451 people; they are 4.2% of all unemployed. In August 2012 they were 14.969 or 4.3% of all unemployed.

During the first half of 2012 inactive people aged 15-64 who are part of the economically inactive people are 241.300 – 1.600 less than in the same period in 2011.

1.2.4 Labour force demand

According to the Employment Agency⁴ the demand for labour in the Labour Offices in 2011 increased as compared to the previous year. In 2012 a better filling of vacancies in the real economy was achieved. A total of 158.608 positions have been occupied. Compared to the previous year the increase is 3.2%. This increase was backed by the larger number of announced job vacancies under schemes of the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" (ESF programme in Bulgaria). The occupied positions in the primary sectors are 90.572 (6.3% less than in 2011). Analysis with regard to vocational characteristics of employees shows an increase in the number and proportion of unskilled labour occupations by 4.322 - or a 3.5% increase from the previous year. There is a slight increase in occupations for workers to 742 and a minor reduction in places for specialists by 274.

According to preliminary data of the NSI employees under labour contracts at the end of June 2012 increased by 47.500 or by 2.3% compared to March 2012 reaching 2.150.000. Compared to the first quarter of 2012, the largest increase in employees was observed in economic seasonal activities: accommodation and food services by 37.3%, agriculture, forestry and fishing by 7.2%, and in real estate and other activities by 6.3%. A significant decrease of employees is registered in education by 3.0%. Within sectors, the highest proportion of employees is in the manufacturing and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles sectors - respectively 22.1 and 17.9%.

1.2.5 Implementation of active policy on the labour market

Active employment policy funded by the state budget is supplemented and enhanced by the Human Resources Development Operational Programme (HRD OP) implemented with funds from the European Social Fund (ESF). The allocation ratio of the funds spent on various active labour market policy initiatives in the recent years shows a sustained growth of ESF funding – its share in 2011 was 57.5% of all funds for active policy during the year⁵.

The total number of unemployed and employed covered by training and employment (under programmes and promotion measures funded by the state budget, including training for

⁴ Source: Yearbook 2011. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Agency.

⁵ Source: Yearbook 2011. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Agency.

qualifications and training under the schemes of the HRD OP with ESF as funding source) in 2011 was 141.740 of which:

- 89.709 unemployed were covered by training and employment (under the Employment Promotion Act / EPA programmes and promotional measures and under the HRD OP);
- 52.031 employed persons were covered by training for acquisition of vocational qualification and/or key competences under the HRD OP schemes.

Programmes and measures as the EPA were implemented to integrate into society unemployed with disabilities, one of the most vulnerable groups in the labour market, securing employment specifically for persons from this particular target group. During 2012 unemployed with disabilities covered 13.5% of all persons working under programmes and measures. This share, compared to the share of disabled unemployed in the total number of unemployed (4.1% in 2011) showed over-proportional participation of disabled unemployed in the active policy initiatives implemented with state budget funds.

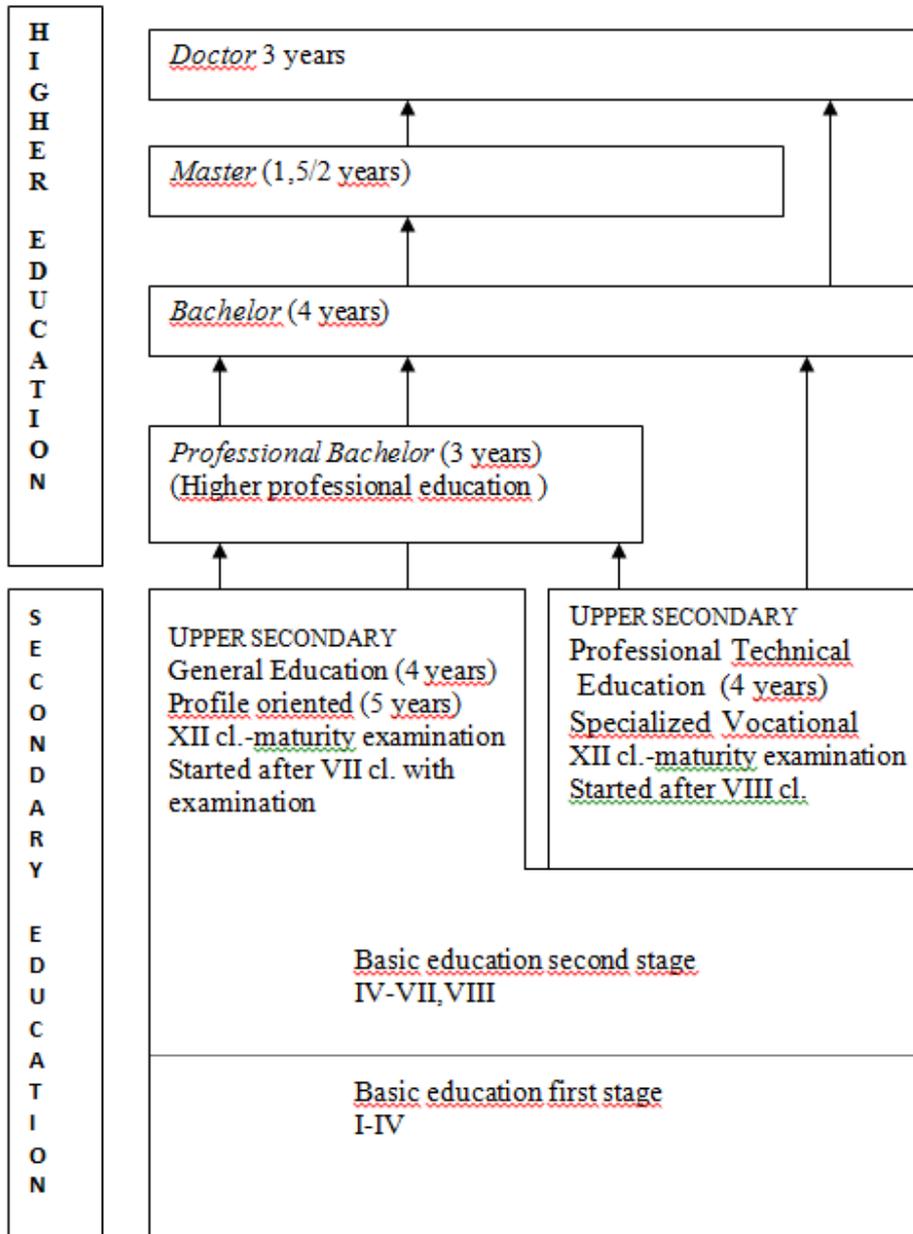
CHAPTER 2

2. Providing vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective

The following educational institutions operate currently in the country:

- kindergartens
- schools (I - XII grade), which are divided into:
 - primary (I - IV grade),
 - basic (I - VIII grade),
 - lower secondary (V - VIII grade),
 - upper secondary (IX - XII or VIII - XII grade),
 - general secondary (I - XII grade),
- vocational (art schools, vocational schools providing training programmes for the acquisition of third and second level of vocational qualification, incl., religious schools, vocational schools with programmes for first and second degree of vocational qualifications with admission after 8th grade, vocational schools with programmes for the first level of vocational qualification with admission after 6th and 7th grade),
- vocational colleges and vocational schools, conducting programmes for post-secondary education,
- higher education institutions: colleges, universities and specialized high schools.

2.1 Diagram of the national education and training system



Note: Compliance with the degrees of education with the NQF, EQF and ISCED is presented in an Annex B to this report within the presentation of NQF levels.

2.2 Government-regulated VET provision

The regulations on different aspects of vocational education and training in Bulgaria are:

- the Vocational Education and Training Act (VETA), adopted in 1999 with the latest amendments in 2010, regulates initial and continuing vocational education. The act regulates the organisation, the work of the institutions, the management and the financing of vocational education and training system;
- the Public Education Act (PEA), adopted in 1991 with latest amendments in 2011, provides the basic legal framework of education, and regulates the right of citizens to constantly enhance their education and training;
- the Act on the Level of Education, Minimal General Educational Requirements and the Curriculum, adopted in 1999 with latest amendments in 2009, regulates state educational requirements for the degree of education, general education minimum and curriculum in the public education system;
- the Labour Code (LC), adopted in 1986 with latest amendments in 2011, the main law that regulates various possibilities in VET for employees. The Code regulates the collective labour agreement, which is an essential tool for the realization of social partnership;
- the Employment Promotion Act (EPA), adopted in 2001 with latest amendments in 2011, regulates promotion of vocational guidance and training for adults;
- the Law on Crafts, adopted in 2001 with latest amendments in 2011, regulates the conditions and rules for training crafts, including training by master at a specific work place in the craft enterprise;
- the People's Community Centres Act (PCCA), adopted in 1996 with latest amendments in 2010, regulates the informal training opportunities for children and adults;
- the Recognition of the Vocational Qualifications Act (RVQA), adopted in 2008 with latest amendments in 2011 in response to the requirements of the European Union for full adjustment of the Bulgarian legislation related to the recognition of professional qualifications of citizens of countries that are members of European Union and third countries.

The system of vocational education and training includes vocational guidance, vocational training and vocational education. Vocational guidance provides information, advice and counselling to students and other people in their choice of profession and career. Vocational training includes:

- initial vocational training - acquisition of initial vocational qualification in a profession or part of the profession;

- continuing professional education - improvement of the acquired qualification in a profession or part of the profession.

The degrees of vocational qualifications which can be acquired in the VET system are first, second, third and fourth, as requirements for each degree of qualification are as follows:

- for the first degree - acquired professional competences for practicing professions, which include routine activities carried out under stable conditions;
- for the second degree - acquired professional competences for practicing professions that include activities of complex nature carried out under changing conditions;
- for the third degree - acquired professional competences for practicing professions that include complex activities carried out under changing conditions, and responsibilities for the work of others;
- for fourth degree - acquired professional competences for practicing professions that include a broad range of complex activities carried out under changing conditions and assuming management responsibilities for the work of others and allocation of resources.

2.2.1 Access/admission requirements in VET or from VET to other elements of the education and training system, including development opportunities

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, all citizens have the right to education and can constantly enhance their education and qualifications level, without restrictions or privileges based on race, sex, ethnic or social origin, religion or social status.

The acquisition of a vocational qualification in the system of vocational education and training is regulated by the Framework Programmes approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science. These Framework Programmes determine the age and educational and qualification entry level of the candidates, and the content and duration of vocational education and training. There are six Programmes:

- Framework Programmes “A” for initial vocational training with acquisition of the first level of vocational qualification;
- Framework Programmes “B” for initial vocational training for acquiring the second level of vocational qualification;
- Framework Programme “C” for vocational training for acquiring the second or third level of vocational qualification;
- Framework Programmes “D” for vocational training for acquiring the fourth level of vocational qualification;
- Framework Programmes “E” for initial vocational training with acquiring a qualification as part of a profession;

- Framework Programmes “F” for continuing vocational training for updating or broadening of professional qualifications and the acquisition of the first, second and third-level vocational qualification.

The main structural elements of the Framework Programmes are:

- general provisions, including regulatory basis, aim and purpose of the programme;
- requirements for applicants in the training programmes. These are different for young students and for adults (people over 16 years of age), with regard to the minimum age requirement, medical condition, entry level of education, career opportunities and options for increasing vocational qualification, as well as organisation of learning (form of training and organisational types);
- curriculum - structure and content – is different for young students and for persons aged over 16 years;
- training content – the learning content for each school subject (module) for theoretical and practical training is developed by topic and classes in separate curricula for young students and persons over 16 years.
- completion of vocational education or vocational training;
- verification of the completion of vocational education or vocational training.

2.2.2 Requirements for candidates

Requirements for candidates wishing to participate in the programmes for vocational education and training relate to minimum age, health status, entry educational level and entry qualification level. The minimum age of the candidate in the year of application is 13 years for schools and 16 years of age when the training is carried out in another educational institution. The health status of the applicant is certified by a medical certificate assuring that the selected profession is not contraindicated for the candidate. Health requirements shall be determined by the Minister of Health after consultation with the Minister of Education, Youth and Science. The entry educational level of the candidate can be a completed grade of primary or secondary education, a completed degree or a successfully completed literacy course under the Employment Promotion Act, necessary to obtain the relevant level of vocational qualification. The entry degree of qualification of the applicant is the acquired level of vocational qualification required for inclusion in the programme “F”.

2.2.3 VET Programmes for students at secondary education

There are four programmes for training students:

- Framework Programmes “A” with duration up to three years for students who have completed at least 6th grade of primary education;
- Framework Programmes “B” lasting up to four years for students who have completed primary education or finished a grade of secondary education;
- Framework Programmes “C” with a duration of four years for students who have completed primary education or five years for students who have completed 7th grade, and up to four years after primary education or secondary education grade in the art and sports schools;
- Framework Programmes “E” lasting up to one year for students who finished primary education or with completed secondary education grade.

2.2.4 VET Programmes for individuals aged 16 years and over

There are six programmes for training people aged 16 years and over:

- Framework Programmes “A” lasting up to one year for persons who have completed at least the initial stage of primary education or have successfully completed a literacy course under the Employment Promotion Act (duration of at least 300 hours);
- Framework Programmes “B” lasting one year for people with a completed grade of secondary education or completed secondary education (duration of at least 660 hours);
- Framework Programmes “C” with duration of four years for people with primary education (duration of at least 960 hours);
- Framework Programmes “D” with duration of up to two years for people with completed secondary education;
- Framework Programmes “E” with duration determined by the specific vocational training documentation;
- Framework Programmes “F” with duration determined by the specific vocational training documentation.

2.2.5 The institutional framework of the VET system

At **national level** the following actors are responsible for VET:

- the National Assembly implements legislative acts in the field of education and in particular of vocational education. A special commission for education, science and issues related to children, youth and sports is established;

- the Council of Ministers sets out the government policy in the field of vocational education and training;
- 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;
- the Ministry of Culture implements the state policy in art schools;
- the Ministry of Physical Education and Sports implements the state policy in sports schools;
- the Ministry of Health participates in the coordination of the List of Vocational Education and Training Professions; it defines the chronic diseases, physical and sensory disabilities and inappropriate professions from the List of the Vocational Education and Training Professions;
- the Sectoral Ministries are involved in the development, coordination and updating of the State Educational Requirements for acquiring a qualification in a profession; in the development, coordination and updating of the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training; in the coordination of the state plan for admission in schools funded by them, in distributing funds for vocational education and vocational training as approved by their budget and in monitoring their use;
- representative organisations of employers and national organisations of workers and employees participate in the development, coordination and updating of the State Educational Requirements for acquiring a qualification in a profession; in the development, coordination and updating of the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training; in organising and conducting the examinations for the acquisition of a vocational qualification; in the development, coordination and updating of the legislative framework and other strategic and conceptual documents;
- the Economic and Social Council, established in 2004 as a national advisory body for social dialogue discusses and makes proposals on important issues related to education (including adult education), continuing vocational education and training in the context of lifelong learning;
- the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation - national authority for administrative and social partnership, which discusses and gives opinions on draft legislation on employment and vocational training and thus participates in the formulation of policy in VET. The Council is composed on the tripartite principle; there is a separate section dedicated to it;
- the National Council for Vocational Qualification at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which coordinates the development of national policies and strategies for training for acquisition of a professional qualification for unemployed and employed;
- the National Council for Promotion of Employment at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which is also constituted on the tripartite principle. Its role is to discuss and give

opinions on the development and implementation of employment policy and the National Action Plan for Employment;

- the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training is a specialized body within the Council of Ministers. The Agency develops the State Educational Requirements for the acquisition of a qualification in a profession, maintains a list of occupations for vocational education and training according to the needs of the labour market, licenses and exercises further control over the activities of vocational training institutions for people over 16 years of age and over the activities of vocational guidance providers;
- the Employment Agency implements the state policy on promoting employment and supporting the labour market; provides career information, counselling and training for employed and unemployed;
- the Human Resource Development Centre – National Agency, coordinates the management and administration of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme.

At **regional level**, the following actors are responsible for VET:

- the regional administration participates in the implementation of the government policy for employment and acquirement of vocational qualification at regional level;
- the Regional Employment Service Departments organise the implementation of the government policy for training of unemployed and employed adults for acquiring of vocational qualification; offer training measures and projects; provide coordination and support in the sphere of vocational training; offer consulting and guidance for the local employment offices;
- the Regional Inspectorates of Education (regional administrative units of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, situated in the 28 district centres) execute the state policy in the field of vocational education and training at regional level by implementing projects, programmes and strategies for development, provision and improvement of vocational education and training at district level;
- the permanent and temporary employment committees to the Regional Councils for regional development identify, organise and control the implementation of state policy on the promotion of employment and training for acquiring vocational qualification at regional level.

At **local level** the following actors are responsible for VET:

- Municipalities participate in the formation of policy in the field of vocational education and training within their territories regarding the need for staff; the vocational guidance and training of students, the unemployed and others; the development of necessary equipment of schools, vocational training centres and centres for information and guidance through funds from the municipal budget;

- the Labour Offices of the Employment Agency provide career services; offer career information, advice and guidance for inclusion in the appropriate program/measure for employment and training; organize vocational education for employed and unemployed;
- the Cooperation Councils at the Labour Office Directorates monitor the implementation of programs and measures included in the National Action Plan for Employment; supervise compliance with the provisions for selection of the relevant programs and measures;
- the vocational education and training institutions participate in planning, organisation and delivery of vocational education and training for students, unemployed and employed in accordance with the state standards.

The cooperation mechanism is provided mainly through advisory bodies, composed by representatives of the responsible institutions and the social partners. Moreover, there is an established practice for years for the development of various documents for VET by working groups that include representatives of the three parties.

The participation of students and their parents in the decision-making process is not yet regulated. There are NGOs that involve parents of students. They are invited to participate in discussions of draft legal documents, give opinions and suggestions.

Increased autonomy of schools is one of the fundamental principles of government set out in the Programme for the Development of Education, Science and Youth Policy in Bulgaria 2009-2013 of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science.

2.2.6 VET providers

The main institutions, functioning as VET providers, are vocational schools; vocational secondary schools; art schools; sports schools; vocational colleges; vocational training centres.

VET institutions also include Centres for Information and Vocational Guidance (CIVG), which provide vocational guidance to students and others.

Vocational schools carry out initial training for acquiring the first and second degree of a vocational qualification and for qualifications acquired as part of a profession with duration up to four years. They accept students who have completed at least 6th grade. They may carry out vocational education based on an ordinance of the Minister of Education, Youth and Science if they meet the conditions set by the State Educational Requirements (SER). They can organise training of individuals aged up to 16 years.

Vocational secondary schools provide vocational education to the acquisition of the second degree of professional qualification (four years duration) or the third degree of vocational qualification (lasting four or five years). They accept students who completed primary education or completed 7th grade. They provide vocational training for the acquisition of the first, second and third degree of vocational qualification and for qualifications acquired as a part of a

profession. They also carry out training for acquiring the fourth level of qualification based on an Ordinance of the Minister of Education, Youth and Science if they meet the conditions set by the State Educational Requirements. They can organise training of persons aged up to 16 years.

Art schools provide vocational education for acquiring the third degree of vocational qualification with duration up to four years after completion of primary education.

Sports schools provide vocational education for acquiring the third degree of vocational qualification with duration up to four years after completion of primary education.

Vocational colleges provide vocational training for the acquisition of the fourth degree of vocational qualification (duration up to two years, depending on the possessed degree of vocational qualification). They accept individuals who completed secondary education.

Vocational training centres (VTCs) provide vocational training for the acquisition of the first, second and third degree of vocational qualification or qualifications acquired as part of a profession for individuals over 16 years of age.

Vocational schools, vocational secondary schools and vocational colleges are state, municipal or private, Bulgarian with foreign participation or foreign and could be restructured and closed down following the procedure provided in the Public Education Act. VTCs and CIVGs are state, municipal or private, Bulgarian with foreign participation or foreign. Bulgarian VTCs and CIVGs with foreign participation could be established by registered associations between Bulgarian and foreign individuals and/or legal entities holding licenses for vocational training or guidance. Foreign VTCs and CIVGs could be established by foreign entities that operate in the Republic of Bulgaria in accordance with international agreements and are licensed for vocational training or guidance.

The license for vocational training or guidance is issued by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). NAVET follows up and controls the activities of VTCs and CIVGs.

Continuing vocational training (CVT) is carried out by institutions operating in the formal education and training institutions carrying out informal learning. The main institutions which provide CVT are vocational schools, vocational secondary schools, vocational colleges and vocational training centres.

2.2.7 Inclusion in education and training

According to NSI data, in the last four years the total number of educational institutions decreased by 277 (Annex A to the report, Table 11). In the academic year 2011/2012 the decline was the lowest - 42 institutions. For this period, the greatest decrease is for kindergartens (26), followed by general and special schools (9). During the academic year 2011/2012 a total of 477 vocational schools, general secondary schools and colleges are operating in the education system; including 58 private schools which offer initial vocational

education and training, 22 art schools, 414 vocational secondary schools, 5 vocational schools and 36 vocational colleges for post-secondary education. Compared with the previous year the number of vocational schools has decreased by 8. and the number of art schools has increased by 1. The number of private vocational schools is 58 or 2 less than the academic 2010/2011 year due to a decrease in the number of vocational secondary schools.

Training institutions are represented mainly by licensed vocational training centres (VTCs) which provide training for people over the age of 16 (employed and unemployed). Training is focused on acquiring, updating and improving vocational qualification or requalification in a profession or part of profession with a first, second and third degree of vocational qualification. Vocational training for adults (level I, II and III) is provided also by vocational secondary schools. Vocational colleges offer vocational training after secondary school graduation with the acquisition of a fourth degree of vocational qualification.

The number of active VTCs (Annex A to the report, Table 12) is constantly growing and at the end of 2011 they were 840 - 26 more than in 2010. In 2011 there were a total of 100.481 trained persons (13.995 more than in 2010), who received one of the following types of documents:

- Certificate for Vocational Training (to be issued upon successful completion of a training course as a part of a profession, focused on acquiring, updating, and improving professional knowledge, skills and competences) - 56.149 certificates;
- Certificate for Vocational Qualification (document for acquiring a level of vocational qualification in a particular profession and specialty) - 19.731 certificates;
- Competence Certificate (a document that is issued for jobs requiring licenses) – 24.601 certificates.

Trainees in courses that offer training as a part of a profession represent more than half of all persons trained in VTCs. This trend started in 2008 and is confirmed also in 2011.

Inclusion in vocational training provided by VTCs is the only opportunity for equal participation in the labour market for a large number of unemployed people, especially from disadvantaged groups, and for employees to retain their jobs. In 2011, as in 2010, there was a clearly expressed prevalence of training courses funded through the schemes of active labour market policy (56.5% of them are funded by EU programs, mainly through the ESF Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" and the Employment Agency). This resulted in a reduction in the number of training financed by trainees or employers. In 2011 there is however an increase in the proportion of qualification courses funded by employers (by 5.2 pp) compared to 2010.

In 2011 and 2012 there are 7 licensed CIVG in Bulgaria.

Over the past four years the total number of trainees enrolled in all education levels of the International Classification of Education (ISCED 97) decreased by 28.991 people (Annex to the

report, Table 13). In the academic year 2011/2012 compared to 2010/2011, this number is lower by 13.744 people. The decrease was mainly in primary education (ISCED -1) - 2.714 less than in 2010 and in secondary education (ISCED - 3A, 3C) - 20.863 less. At the same time, there is an increase in the number of people over 16 years enrolled in vocational training for the first degree of vocational qualification (ISCED - 2C) - 2.816 more in 2011 than in 2010; and for the third and fourth degree of qualification (ISCED - 4C) – 2.303 more in 2011.

2.2.8 VET target groups

The social and economic inclusion of young people is a challenge for all EU Member States, especially in cities and urban centres. To ensure access to vocational education and training the VET Act specifically regulates the relations connected to vocational education and vocational training for students with special educational needs and/or chronic diseases; for students from institutions taking care of children deprived of parental care; and for individuals with deviant behaviour. Through various forms of continuing vocational training VETA allows anyone over the age of 16 interested in acquiring vocational training to update his or her professional skills. The organisational form of training is a training course.

VET policies themselves are not sufficient to address socio-economic challenges and to make mobility and lifelong learning a reality. Comprehensive approaches are needed to connect VET with other policies, especially employment and social policy.

2.2.9 Teachers and trainers (qualification, role and responsibilities)

During the 2011/2012 school year the total number of teachers in all levels of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED - 97) is 102.925 (Annex A to the report, Table 14). According to data collected by the National Statistical Institute the teaching staff in vocational schools, vocational secondary schools and vocational colleges is 13.056 (Annex A to the report, Table 15). According to NAVET data the number of staff employed in VTCs is over 5.000. Most of them work under civil contracts. Their basic employment contract is with vocational schools or companies in the respective industrial branch.

The national policy regarding teacher education is provided in a concentrated form in the regulations governing teacher qualifications, employment and career development. The basic rules and regulations addressing the initial teacher training are common for the whole country and are included in the uniform state requirements for the acquisition of the "teacher" qualification, adopted by the Council of Ministers in 1997. The first prerequisite for the acquisition of this qualification is to obtain the degree of "Professional Bachelor", "Bachelor" and "Master". In addition, teachers must have a teacher's certificate, which requires a compulsory minimum of theoretical and practical training in pedagogy, psychology, audio-visual and information technology in teaching and methodology of teaching. This teacher training certificate may be acquired simultaneously with the primary specialty training or after graduation.

The possession of a teaching certificate, as previously described, is however mandatory only for teachers in general subjects (including foreign languages), but not for teachers of vocational training in the VET system. The Public Education Act and its Implementation Rules specifically allow that "the position of "teacher" in subjects of vocational training can be occupied by persons with a higher education diploma/ degree in the relevant specialty." This fact could be interpreted as an underestimation of the importance of specific pedagogical knowledge and skills related to the effectiveness of teaching/learning in vocational education and training. On the other hand it serves as a legal prerequisite to enable short-term involvement of professionals from the manufacturing sector into educational activities. This should be encouraged with a view to closer alignment of vocational education and training with industry.

It is notable that while the initial teacher training is carried out by numerous higher education institutions, the postgraduate qualification that is directly related to career development is acquired only in three schools in the country (and for teachers in vocational training only in Sofia), i.e. it is highly centralised.

2.2.10 Quality assurance of the VET system

A national approach to quality assurance has been developed. The implementation of the national approach is related to the establishment of a national system of quality management in vocational education and training that includes and combines quality management of VET providers, national quality management in VET and the management of external evaluation of VET. An *Analysis of the System of Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training in Bulgaria* (February 2011) was conducted on the basis of terms of reference provided by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS). According to the findings, laws and regulations relevant to VET issues are numerous and include partial or lacking provisions related to the quality of VET. These provisions, when measured in terms of the European Parliament recommendation on quality assurance in VET are insufficient, inaccurate, and inconsistent. There is lack of some important and fundamental elements of systems for quality assurance in VET:

- the quality cycle is not regulated regarding planning, implementation, assessment, or revision;
- there are no criteria set for quality in VET both at system level and VET providers' level (VETA even mixes the two levels by regulating the possibility of ministries to conduct VET);
- there is no regulated system of indicators to assess the quality both at system level and VET provider's level;
- there is no regulation of professional standards and the related qualification standards;

- there is no awareness and understanding at national level of the need for the development and improvement of the quality of VET.

More specifically, these findings are confirmed by a series of facts. The Special Act (VETA) has changed many times (18 times) for the last 11 years, which itself testifies to the lack of relevance between the model set out in its 1999 and the reality of the VET system. None of the changes put emphasis on quality in VET. Instead, constant changes create an atmosphere of uncertainty that dramatically reduces the ability to provide quality VET at system level and at the level of training providers. In response to the need to introduce mechanisms for ensuring the quality of VET, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science has developed a model for observation and monitoring of the vocational secondary schools according to the established common criteria and indicators for quality of VET. The main task is to create an approach for tracking training processes in vocational schools, to draw conclusions about the quality of training of graduates, to analyse problems and identify areas for improvement. This new model helps monitoring trends in vocational education and training and allows for timely and adequate response.

2.2.11 Financing of VET

The Public Education Act defines the basic principles of financing of education, including vocational education. The cost per year per student in state and municipal schools is determined by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, in coordination with the Ministry of Finance, in accordance with state standards. The so-called delegated budgets are introduced to schools and are determined as a function of the standard for cost per student and the number of students.

The financial resources to support and develop school facilities are provided from the national budget, from municipalities' budgets, from other sources and since 2002 also from own income. The latest may be derived from rental of public and municipal property; rental of school machines; exploitation of agricultural land and forests; encashment of registered compensatory bonds and notes; conversion of production and services from practical training; provision of qualifications and creative activities, education and other services defined by an Ordinance of the Minister of Education, Youth and Science; donations, testaments, fees and other sources.

Financing of vocational education organised for people who completed secondary education is provided by individuals under terms and conditions set by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science.

During the period between 1991 and 2011 numerous legislation changes lead to changes in regulations relevant to VET financing. The sources of funding of vocational training are:

- self-financing by trainees;
- financing from employers;

- funding by the state budget for active policy on the labour market measures implemented by the Employment Agency;
- funding under EU programmes, mainly through the ESF Operational Programme "Human Resources Development".

Table 12 in Annex A to the report provides specific information on the financing of Vocational Training Centres.

2.3 Other forms of training

Training for the acquisition of a professional qualification may be carried out by ministries, municipalities, employers' organisations, organisations of employees and individual employers. Enterprises may perform informal continuing vocational training to train their own employees. Forms of training may include vocational training courses, in-service trainings, seminars, conferences and more.

According to the Employment Promotion Act vocational training for unemployed people could be organised by the employers themselves under certain conditions.

Various non-governmental organisations and enterprises offer informal training. The Community Centres have also potential for such training. These traditional cultural and educational organisations can perform a number of activities to enrich people's knowledge and their integration to science, art and culture, including the importance of professional development. In smaller towns and villages, these Centres are often the only organisations that provide access to a library, Internet, and other information.

CHAPTER 3

3. Shaping VET qualifications

3.1 Legislative framework, ensuring relevance between VET and the labour market

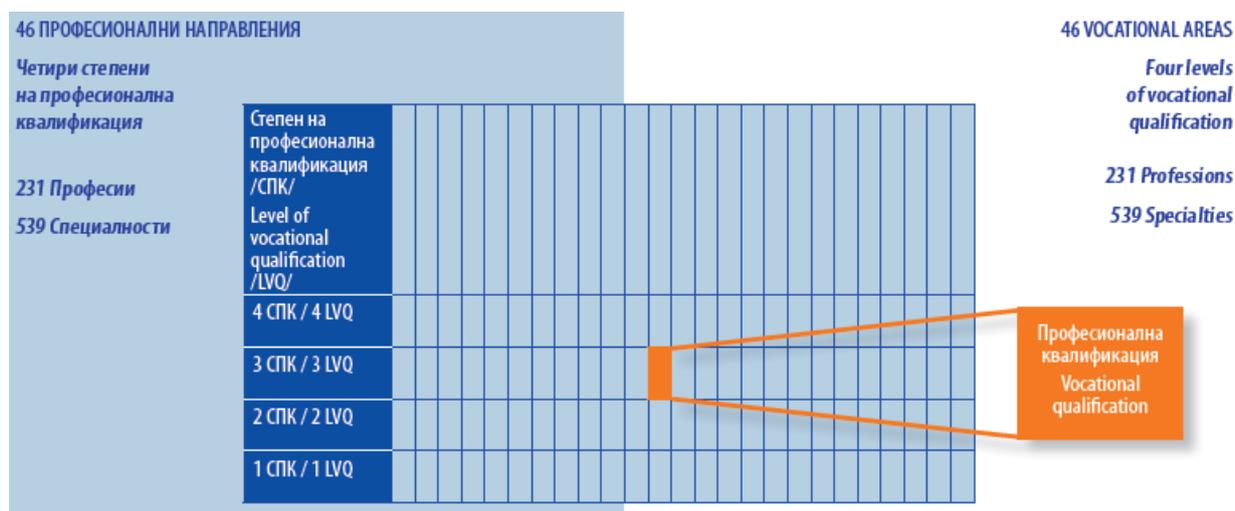
The relevance of VET to the requirements of the labour market is regulated by the following two main documents that are valid both for the school education system and for vocational training for adults:

- List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training;
- State Educational Requirements for Acquisition of Qualification on Professions.

3.2 List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training (LPVET)

In accordance with Vocational Education and Training Act (VETA) professions and specialties are classified in vocational fields by the level of education and the level of qualification. According to the VET Act vocational guidance, vocational training and vocational education are provided for professions and specialties included in LPVET, graphically represented in Figure 1:

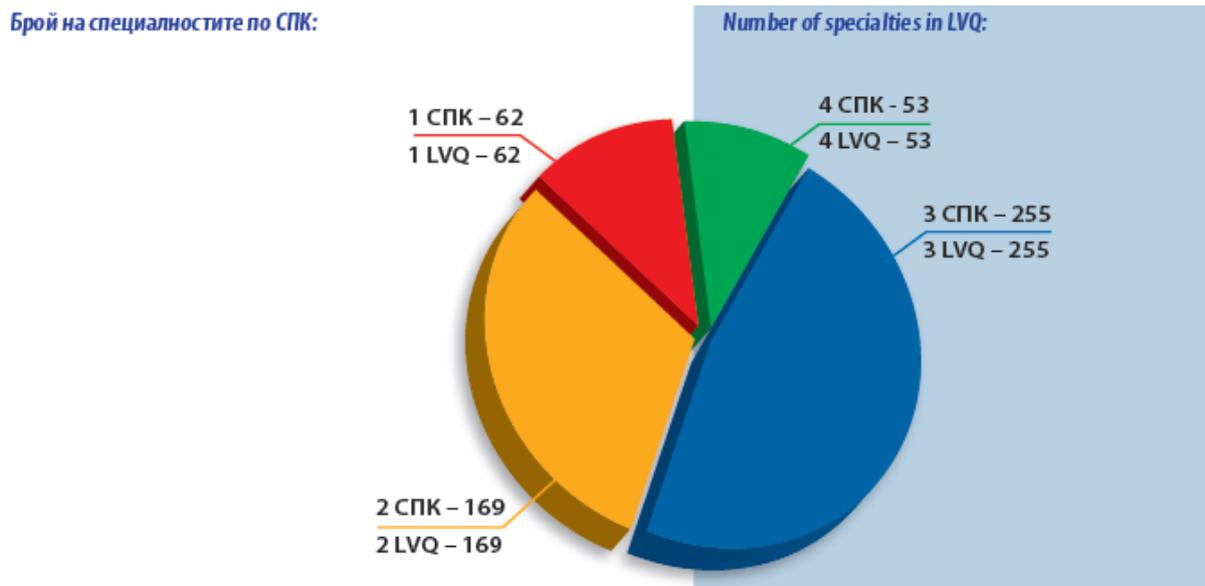
Figure 1. Structure of LPVET



LPVET is a classification of professions and specialties under the first, second, third and fourth degree of vocational qualification (DVQ). Vocational education and adult education that is provided for this List of Professions results in the acquisition of a nationally acknowledged certificate for vocational qualification on a profession or part of a profession.

The number of specialties in DVQ is presented in Figure 2:

Figure 2. Number of specialties in LPVET by degrees of vocational qualification (DVQ)



LPVET was developed in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Education - ISCED-97 and the International Standard Classification of Occupations - ISCO-88.

According to VETA, NAVET organises and coordinates the development and update of LPVET. The list is an open system. In order to ensure compliance with the needs of the labour market, the list is updated regularly on the basis of proposals by employers, syndicates, government, education and training institutions, non-governmental organisations, professional associations and professionals in various fields.

In accordance with the established procedure for maintaining and updating LPVET, stakeholders' proposals are considered by the expert committee on professional fields and are approved by the Governing Board of the National Agency. Expert committees and the Board are tripartite bodies with equal representation of the state and national employers' and employees' organisations.

3.3 State Educational Requirements (SER) for the acquisition of a vocational qualification

According to the Public Education Act the acquisition of a vocational qualification is regulated by SER which is adopted by the Minister of Education and Science in coordination with the relevant ministries and departments. According to VETA the SERs for acquiring a vocational qualification are proposed for approval to the Minister of Education and Science by NAVET. SER is a mandatory document for all institutions entitled to conduct vocational education and training leading to the acquisition of a nationally recognised qualification document for a profession or part of a profession for people over the age of 16. They are developed on the basis of methodological instruments developed by NAVET (methodological guidelines for the development of standards for acquiring qualification on professions); rules and procedures for the development of standards for acquiring a qualification in a profession; framework requirements for the development of standards for acquisition of vocational qualifications; List of Professions for VET; the National Classification of Occupations (NCO); Framework Programmes for the acquisition of a professional qualification; acts and regulations relating to the respective professional field; reports, analyses and guidelines on the status and development perspectives of the sector.

The structure of the SERs for acquiring a qualification is graphically presented in Figure 3:

Figure 3. Structure of the SER for the acquisition of vocational qualification



3.4 Training curricula and programmes

Curricula and programmes are developed based on the SER for acquiring a vocational qualification for a profession and the Framework Training Programmes.

The Minister of Education and Science annually approves new or updated curricula for different occupations, primarily designed for school based vocational education. VTC develop curricula that are evaluated by NAVET experts within the licensing procedure.

These curricula include schedule of training; distribution of subjects and classes, (respectively Section A for general education and Section B for compulsory vocational training); requirements for graduation and certification of vocational education; explanatory notes on some additional requirements or clarifications.

VETA regulates the structure of the curricula for vocational education, which should include general studies; compulsory vocational training - general, sectoral and specific for each profession; compulsory foreign language training related to the profession; and optional training courses.

Compulsory general studies provide trainees 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.

General compulsory vocational training follows a common approach for all professional fields, taking into account their specific characteristics. It includes theoretical education and practical training (educational practice).

Sector-compulsory vocational training follows a common approach for all vocations in a professional field, taking into account the specific characteristics of each profession. It includes theoretical education and practical training (educational practice and apprenticeship).

The profession-specific compulsory vocational training includes theoretical training and practical training (educational practice and apprenticeship).

Compulsory vocational training, compulsory foreign language training in the profession and optional training are determined according to the State Educational Requirements for acquiring qualification on professions.

3.5 Certifications for VET completion

According to the VET Act the vocational education and training is completed by:

- state matriculation exams for the completion of secondary education in accordance with the Level of Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum Act;
- state exams on theory and practice of the profession for the acquisition of a vocational qualification.

Training for acquiring a vocational qualification is completed by state exams on theory and practice of the profession in national examination programmes in accordance with State Educational Requirements for acquiring a qualification in a profession. The national examination programmes are approved by the Minister of Education and Science; for art schools by the Minister of Culture and for sports schools by the Minister of Physical Education and Sports. The programmes are common for the school system and adult education. The examinations for acquiring a qualification acquired as a part of a profession and for updating or broadening the professional qualification are conducted within a framework set by the training institution, upon consultation with representatives of employers and workers.

The organisation of examinations is determined in accordance with the State Educational Requirements for the assessment system, and their content is determined according to the State Educational Requirements for acquiring a qualification in a profession. The examinations for the acquisition of a professional qualification are conducted by committees appointed by the Head of the educational institution. Members of the committee include representatives of educational institutions, employers and employees (for art schools representatives of the art universities; for schools for sports representatives of the National Sports Academy and licensed sports organisations with equal quotas).

According to the VET Act completion of vocational education is validated through:

- a diploma for completed secondary education;
- a certificate for a vocational qualification;
- a certificate of competence issued for practicing certain professions – including regulated professions.

According to the VET Act completion of vocational training and acquirement of a professional qualification is certified by:

- a certificate for completing primary education or a grade from the primary or secondary education; or completing secondary education;
- a certificate for a vocational qualification;
- a certificate of competence issued for practicing certain professions – including regulated professions.

In both cases, the contents of the documents shall be determined according to SER for the public education system and for the acquisition of a professional qualification. Completed training for acquiring a qualification as a part of a profession, and for updating or broadening a professional qualification is validated through a certificate for vocational training.

VETA also provides the legal framework for the certification of vocational qualifications of individuals trained outside the system of vocational education and training. These individuals must have at least six months of work experience in the profession, conducted practical training

for duration determined by an educational institution, and also completed education or grade necessary to obtain the relevant level of qualification. These individuals sign a contract with an educational institution for examination, and if necessary for receiving practical training.

3.6 National Qualification Framework (NQF)

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was adopted by the Government on February 1st 2012. It was developed following the recommendations of the European Parliament and of the Council for establishing a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for Lifelong Learning. The NQF covers the entire education system and all its qualifications. It defines nine levels, including preparatory level (level zero). Levels from the first to the 4th match the stages of training and qualifications in the system of general and vocational education and training. Level 5 includes college training as post-secondary education for acquiring the fourth level of vocational qualification. Levels from sixth to eighth relate to qualifications obtained in higher education - degrees "bachelor", "master" and "doctor". Each level corresponds to the relevant level of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Levels referring to the higher education are linked to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQEHEA). Levels according to the NQF are shown in the Annex B to this report.

3.7 Validation of non-formal and informal learning, when it leads to qualification (complete or part of a profession)

In accordance with the common European policies and principles, validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired in an informal and non-formal way is an integral part of national strategic documents related to lifelong learning. Currently, the main applicable documents are:

- the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2008-2013;
- the Updated Employment Strategy 2008-2015.

3.7.1 Legislative framework

There is no specific act in Bulgaria related to validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning. However, the existing legal framework provides the necessary basis for the successful implementation of the validation activities of professional qualifications acquired in an informal and non-formal way. The VET Act specifies the requirements for the procedure for recognition and certification of professional knowledge, skills and competences. Article 40 refers to unemployed and employed persons over the age of 16 with at least 6 months work experience in the profession or practical training with a duration determined by the educational institution.

3.7.2 Methodological framework and access to validation services

The LPVET and standards for vocational qualifications (SER for the acquisition of a professional qualification) are structured in learning outcomes and act as a reliable methodological tool for the identification, evaluation, recognition and certification of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired in informal and non-formal learning. Methods for assessing the results of informal and non-formal learning are essentially identical to the methods for assessing knowledge, skills and competences applied in formal education and training. Therefore, vocational education and training institutions that are licensed to issue formal qualification documents have reliable tools to assess also the results of non-formal and informal learning. The use of these validation tools requires adapting, combining and implementing them in a way that takes into account the non-standardised nature of informal learning. The country network of vocational education and training providers can ensure access to the recognition and certification of professional qualifications in all regions and cities of the country.

3.7.3 Practices in validation

The validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences is still very limited. Data relating to the application of Article 40 of the VET Act, the main tool for validation by the vocational training centres (VTCs) of professional qualifications obtained informally, support this conclusion (Annex to the Report - Table 16).

According to NAVET data, as a result of successful validation procedures, in the last three years VTCs issued a total of 5.842 professional qualifications, of which 2.365 were certificates for vocational qualification and 3.477 certificates for vocational training as part of a profession. Their share in the total number of issued documents is still low.

According to research and discussions conducted by the National Agency, the reasons for this can be summarised in three main directions:

- lack of methodological guidelines for legitimately conducting the validation procedure, which limits the activity of the vocational education and training institutions;
- lack of systematic and targeted actions to promote validation in society, among employers and potential candidates;
- limited supply of services for professional and career guidance in the context of lifelong learning.

CHAPTER 4

4. Promoting participation in vocational education and training

Information and communication campaigns are used to encourage involvement in VET. The traditional Panorama of Vocational Education and Training initiated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science could be seen as a good practice. National rounds of competitions in 21 professions were held in 2010 during the Second Panorama of Vocational Education and Training. In 2011 competitions were held in 20 professions within the 3rd Panorama of Vocational Education and Training, and the number of participants has increased significantly compared to previous years. The national team participated for the first time in the Second European Competition EuroSkills 2010 in Lisbon for skills in tourism - cooking and serving.

The implementation of interactive teaching methods has increased recently. The National Education Portal provides access to learning resources in digital form; it extends the self-study capabilities of the students and teachers by providing information anytime, anywhere. Through these portal functionalities every student and teacher in all levels of secondary education, across all subjects, VET included, has access to interactive lessons, multimedia content and new digital educational resources (lessons, tests, etc.). The portal also gives the opportunity for participation in discussion forums or workshops and provides information about news in education both at regional and national level. The registered users of the Portal are 42.148 (students: 3.487, teachers: 38.125, other users: 536), but it should be taken into account that as the use of the lessons does not require registration, over 90% of the users have not registered. For the period between September 2010 and August 2011 the Portal was visited by 185.947 users.

Sources, bibliography, acronyms and abbreviations

Sources, references and websites

Framework of the main priorities of the National Action Plan for Employment 2013. MLSP	<i>(Still in consultation process; Draft version available on line at: http://www.bia-bg.com/uploads/files/events/NPDZ-2013%20%2022%2011.pdf)</i>
Labour Market Statistics	<i>(National Statistical Institute; available on line at: http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=51)</i>
National Agency for Vocational Education and Training - Informational System	<i>(Data of Licenced VET training centres, State Educational Requirements, List of Professions available at: https://is.navet.government.bg)</i>
National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, Annual reports	<i>(Reports are available at: http://www.navet.government.bg/bg/docs_all/navet_docs)</i>
National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, Statistics	<i>(Annual Bulletin of NAVET; available at: http://www.navet.government.bg/bg/docs_all/navet_docs)</i>
National Employment Promotion Action Plan 2012	<i>(Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; available on line at: http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/docs/npdz-2012.pdf)</i>
National Employment Promotion Strategy 2008-2015	<i>(Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; available on line at: http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/docs/Labour_Market_Strategy_2008-2015.pdf)</i>
National LLL Strategy 2008-2013	<i>(Ministry of Education, Youth and Science; available online at: http://www.mon.bg/opencms/export/sites/mon/left_menu/documents/strategies/LLL_strategy_01-10-2008.pdf)</i>
National Qualification Framework	<i>(Ministry of Education, Youth and Science; available on line at: http://www.mon.bg/opencms/export/sites/mon/left_menu/documents/NQF_bg.pdf)</i>

Population Statistics	<i>(National Statistical Institute; available online at: http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=53)</i>
Quality Assurance System in VET	<i>(Ministry of Education, Youth and Science; criteria available on line at: http://www.mon.bg/top_menu/vocational/)</i>
Statistics on Education and Lifelong Learning	<i>(National Statistical Institute; available online at:http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=36)</i>
Statistical Office of European Union data (EUROSTAT)	<i>(EUROSTAT; Education and Training database available online at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/database)</i>
VET resources (training institutions; legislative rules)	<i>(National VET Portal - http://www.vet-bg.com/)</i>
Yearbook 2011. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Agency	<i>(Employment Agency Statistics and Analyses, available online at: http://www.az.government.bg/internal.asp?CatID=25&BM=0)</i>

List of acronyms

CIVG	Centres for Information and Vocational Guidance
DVQ	Degree of Vocational Qualification
EPA	Employment Promotion Act
EQF	European Qualification Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
FQEHEA	Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area
ISCED	International Classification of Education
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
LC	Labour Code
LOs	Labour Offices
LPVET	List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Science
NAVET	National Agency for Vocational Education and Training
NCO	National Classification of Occupations
NEA	National Employment Agency
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NSI	National Statistical Institute
OP HRD	Operational Programme "Human Resources Development"
PCCA	People's Community Centres Act
PEA	Public Education Act
pp	percentage points
RVQA	Recognition of the Vocational Qualifications Act
SER	State Educational Requirements
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETA	Vocational Education and Training Act
VTCs	Vocational training centres

Annex A: Tables

Table 1. Population to 31-12-2011

Age	Total	Male	Female	Share of urban population in total population
	Number			-%
Total	7364570	3586571	3777999	72.5
0 - 4	343163	176483	166680	73.8
5 - 9	316643	163076	153567	72.0
10 - 14	315466	162159	153307	72.0
15 - 19	377585	194099	183486	72.8
20 - 24	488807	251720	237087	77.9
25 - 29	491088	255616	235472	77.7
30 - 34	533945	276726	257219	78.4
35 - 39	545332	281170	264162	78.0
40 - 44	513814	263969	249845	76.0
45 - 49	495672	251056	244616	74.6
50 - 54	516851	256509	260342	74.2
55 - 59	523827	251297	272530	73.2
60 - 64	540980	248710	292270	69.8
65 - 69	415431	182565	232866	64.3
70 - 74	345327	143726	201601	61.3
75 - 79	301851	119774	182077	60.0
80 - 84	191309	71526	119783	61.9
85 - 89	86822	29824	56998	61.5
90 - 94	17341	5581	11760	61.6
95 - 99	3078	905	2173	61.9
100 and more	238	80	158	63.0

Source: NSI

Table 2. Population aged 7 years or more in 01-02-2011 by completed level of education and place of residence

Education	Total	Towns	Villages
Total	6891177	4990698	1900479
Higher	1348650	1238037	110613
Secondary	2990424	2335030	655394
Primary	1591348	872221	719127
Elementary	536686	279683	257003
Uncompleted Primary	328803	216582	112221
Never attended school	80963	39070	41893
Child up to 7 years who have not attend school yet	14303	10075	4228

Source: NSI

Table 3. Labour force (in thousands)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	3492.8	3560.4	3491.6	3400.9	3321.9
By place of residence					
Towns	2672.6	2713.6	2681.7	2624.2	2561.4
Villages	820.2	846.8	809.9	776.6	760.6
By gender					
Male	1852.2	1896.8	1862.4	1804.7	1752.0
Female	1640.6	1663.6	1629.2	1596.2	1569.9
By age					
15-64	3447.9	3504.7	3441.5	3356.3	3279.1
15-24	294.3	300.8	286.2	269.9	244.0
25-34	783.1	781.6	742.2	699.8	676.6
35-44	1006.3	1009.3	1021.8	1018.8	995.6
45-54	920.2	933.4	908.9	903.6	899.9
55-64	444.1	479.6	482.3	464.2	463.0
65 and more	45.0	55.7	50.1	44.5	42.8
By level of education					
Higher	849.6	877.0	884.6	869.9	858.7
Secondary	2071.4	2097.2	2051.1	2035.1	2002.5
including vocational qualification	1426.9	1420.2	1388.7	1354.3	1323.6
Elementary and Primary	571.8	586.2	556.0	495.9	460.6

Source: NSI

Table 4. Economic activity rates (15-64 years old)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	66.3	67.8	67.2	66.5	66.0
By place of residence					
Towns	68.5	70.0	69.6	69.0	68.3
Villages	60.0	61.5	60.1	59.2	59.2
By gender					
Male	70.6	72.5	72.0	70.8	69.6
Female	62.1	63.1	62.5	62.3	62.4
By age					
15-24	28.9	30.1	29.5	28.9	27.4
25-34	81.7	82.9	80.7	79.8	78.7
35-44	87.9	88.4	87.5	86.3	85.1
45-54	83.3	84.8	83.8	83.1	82.6
55-64	45.7	48.7	49.2	47.9	48.3

Source: NSI

Table 5. Employed (in thousands)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	3252.6	3360.7	3253.6	3052.8	2949.6
By place of residence					
Towns	2524.1	2591.0	2526.1	2390.8	2307.6
Villages	728.5	769.7	727.5	662.0	641.9
By gender					
Male	1731.5	1792.9	1732.3	1608.3	1536.3
Female	1521.1	1567.8	1521.3	1444.5	1413.3
By age					
15-64	3208.8	3306.2	3204.8	3010.4	2908.3
15-24	249.8	262.6	240.0	207.4	179.1
25-34	730.7	737.3	691.0	620.2	587.1
35-44	948.5	965.9	965.2	936.7	905.3
45-54	865.9	887.4	856.6	824.9	816.2
55-64	413.8	453.1	452.0	421.2	420.6
65 and more	43.9	54.5	48.8	42.4	41.3
By level of education					
Higher	828.9	856.9	858.9	831.2	816.2
Secondary	1952.1	2002.5	1924.7	1838.4	1795.2
including vocational qualification	1346.9	1358.6	1303.7	1226.5	1188.8
Elementary and Primary	471.6	501.2	469.9	383.3	338.2
By employment status					
Employers	131.8	122.9	113.4	115.1	108.3
Self-employed without employees	234.0	259.9	259.4	242.7	221.7
Employed in private secto	2010.1	2156.1	2078.4	1933.4	1873.5
Employed in public sector	838.8	787.7	769.1	729.3	715.7
Unpaid family workers	37.9	34.0	33.3	32.2	30.4

Source: NSI

Table 6. Employment rate (15-64 years old)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	61.7	64.0	62.6	59.7	58.5
By place of residence					
Towns	64.7	66.8	65.6	62.9	61.5
Villages	53.1	55.7	53.9	50.4	49.9
By gender					
Male	66.0	68.5	66.9	63.0	60.9
Female	57.6	59.5	58.3	56.4	56.2
By age					
15-24	24.5	26.3	24.8	22.2	20.1
25-34	76.2	78.2	75.1	70.7	68.3
35-44	82.8	84.6	82.6	79.4	77.4
45-54	78.4	80.6	79.0	75.8	74.9
55-64	42.6	46.0	46.1	43.5	43.9

Source: NSI

Table 7. Employment rate (15-64 years old) in Bulgaria and EU

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Bulgaria	61.7	64.0	62.6	59.7	58.5
EU	65.4	65.9	64.6	64.1	64.3

Source: Yearbook 2011. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Agency

Table 8. Unemployed (in thousands)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	240.2	199.7	238.0	348.0	372.3
By place of residence					
Towns	148.5	122.6	155.6	233.4	253.7
Villages	91.8	77.1	82.4	114.6	118.6
By gender					
Male	120.7	103.9	130.1	196.3	215.7
Female	119.5	95.8	107.9	151.7	156.6
By age					
15-64	239.1	198.5	236.7	345.9	370.8
15-24	44.5	38.3	46.2	62.5	64.9
25-34	52.3	44.4	51.2	79.7	89.5
35-44	57.8	43.4	56.6	82.1	90.3
45-54	54.3	46.0	52.3	78.7	83.7
55 and more	31.4	27.7	31.7	45.1	43.9
By level of education					
Higher	20.6	20.1	25.7	38.7	42.5
Secondary	119.3	94.7	126.3	196.7	207.4
including vocational qualification	80.0	61.6	85.1	127.7	134.8
Elementary and Primary	100.3	85.0	86.0	112.6	122.4
By duration of unemployment					
Up to 5 months	63.5	66.7	91.0	112.9	97.8
6-11 months	35.1	29.7	43.5	73.4	65.2
12-23 months	37.8	32.2	39.9	74.9	86.9
2 or more years	103.7	71.1	63.5	86.8	122.4
Unemployed registered in labour offices 31- 12-2011	255.9	232.3	338.1	342.4	342.4

Source: NSI

Table 9. Unemployment rate

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	6.9	5.6	6.8	10.2	11.2
By place of residence					
Towns	5.6	4.5	5.8	8.9	9.9
Villages	11.2	9.1	10.2	14.8	15.6
By gender					
Male	6.5	5.5	7.0	10.9	12.3
Female	7.3	5.8	6.6	9.5	10.0
By age					
15-64	6.9	5.7	6.9	10.3	11.3
15-24	15.1	12.7	16.2	23.2	26.6
25-34	6.7	5.7	6.9	11.4	13.2
35-44	5.7	4.3	5.5	8.1	9.1
45-54	5.9	4.9	5.8	8.7	9.3
55 and more	6.4	5.2	5.9	8.9	8.7
Ratio of long-term unemployment	4.1	2.9	3.0	4.8	6.3

Source: NSI

Table 10. Average number and structure of registered unemployed by gender, age, education and specialty

Indicators	2010 r.		2011 r.	
	Annual average number	%	Annual average number	%
Total	350944	100.0	332601	100.0
Unemployed persons by gender				
Male	159260	45.4	150697	45.3
Female	191684	54.6	181904	54.7
Unemployed persons by age				
Up to 19 years	5754	1.6	5448	1.6
From 20 to 24 years	24414	7.0	24349	7.3
From 25 to 29 years	33332	9.5	33893	10.2
From 30 to 34 years	37502	10.7	37302	11.2
From 35 to 39 years	37561	10.7	36770	11.1
From 40 to 44 years	37781	10.8	36204	10.9
From 45 to 49 years	42714	12.2	38685	11.6
From 50 to 54 years	50722	14.5	45632	13.7
Over 55 years	81165	23.1	74318	22.3
Unemployed persons by education level				
Higher	31736	9.0	33735	10.1
Secondary vocational	109942	31.3	100110	30.1
General secondary	34167	9.7	32952	9.9
Elementary and Primary	175099	49.9	165804	49.9
Primary	75823	43.3	67462	40.7
Elementary	99276	56.7	98342	59.3
Unemployed persons by profession				
Workers	82058	23.4	73667	22.1
Specialists	70945	20.2	69159	20.8
- with higher education degree	31736	44.7	33735	48.8
- without a specialization	197941	56.4	189775	57.1
- with primary and lower education	169865	85.8	162614	85.7

Source: Yearbook 2011. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Agency

Table 11. Educational institutions by type and ownership

	2008/2009		2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012	
	total	of them private						
Total	5085	177	5003	193	4850	193	4808	193
Kindergartens	2291	42	2262	48	2138	49	2112	50
General and vocational	2254	66	2201	66	2175	68	2166	69
Elementary schools	169	3	156	3	156	5	156	7
Primary schools	1487	27	1453	29	1429	29	1431	28
Middle schools	16	3	14	2	13	2	12	2
Secondary schools	167	29	165	29	166	28	161	27
Secondary general schools	415	4	413	3	411	4	406	5
Vocational	487	53	487	63	484	60	477	58
Art schools	21	1	21	1	21	1	22	1
Vocational secondary schools	433	26	422	25	422	25	414	23
Vocational colleges	28	26	39	37	36	34	36	34
Vocational training schools	5	-	5	-	5	-	5	-
Higher Education Institutions	53	16	53	16	53	16	53	16
Universities and specialized high schools	43	7	43	7	44	8	45	9
- Of them Colleges within the structure of the universities	28	-	23	-	22	-	21	-
Separate Colleges	10	9	10	9	9	8	8	7

Source: NSI

Table 12. Vocational training centers

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Number of active vocational training centers				
	678	808	814	840
Total number of courses conducted				
	6199	5092	9861	6960
Profession competences courses				
	4482	3984	7265	4713
Courses for acquiring degree of vocational qualification				
	1717	1108	2596	2247
Issued professional qualifications				
Total	79329	89498	86486	100481
- Certificates of Vocational Training	50915	55125	54709	56149
- Certificates for professional qualification	11759	11074	13665	19731
- Licences	16655	23299	18112	24601
Financing (%)				
- trainees	31.4	31.1	20.2	20.5
- employers	49.6	49.0	17.8	23.0
- Employment Agency	14.1	14.1	24.4	14.5
- EU funding*	4.9	5.8	37.6	42.0

* Funding by projects from various European programs, mainly through the ESF by Operational Programme "Human Resources Development".

Source: National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, Annual reports

Table 13. Pupils and students by level of International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 97)

	2008/2009		2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012	
	total	of them Private						
Total	1322952	85323	1314836	86963	1307705	84263	1293961	83145
Preschool education (ISCED - 0)	212454	1620	217804	1777	223186	1784	227971	1821
Elementary education (ISCED - 1)	261007	1925	260340	1991	255086	1882	252372	1905
Lower secondary education (ISCED 2A)	235022	1242	225055	1326	219980	1464	221274	1517
Vocational training for adults - first degree professional qualification (ISCED - 2C)*	5992	5394	4640	3925	8403	7359	11219	10389
Secondary education (ISCED - 3A, 3C)	319813	4589	306925	4299	303375	3829	282512	3673
Vocational training for adults - second degree professional qualification (ISCED - 3C)*	6441	5963	4620	3943	4737	4160	4062	3420
Vocational training after secondary education (ISCED - 4C)*	4368	3931	4716	4245	3224	3048	2804	2461
Vocational training for adults - III and IV level vocational qualifications (ISCED - 4C)*	3608	2279	3650	2420	4449	3393	6752	5230
Higher education (ISCED - 5B, 5A, 6)	274247	58380	287086	63037	285265	57344	284995	52729
Degree "Professional Bachelor" (ISCED- 5B)	27724	19273	28947	20113	25511	16962	16210**	7727

Degree "Bachelor" and "Master" (ISCED-5A)	242574	39052	254289	42863	255659	40342	264082	44859
Educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (ISCED - 6)	3949	55	3850	61	4095	40	4703	143

* Includes trainees for vocational training in vocational schools, colleges and CVT.

Source: NSI

Table 14. Teachers by grades of International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-97) in the school year 2011/2012

Teachers*	2011/2012
Preschool education (ISCED - 0)	19 729
Elementary education (ISCED - 1)	14 666
Lower secondary education (ISCED 2A)	19 504
Secondary education (ISCED - 3A, 3C)	25 539
Vocational training after secondary education (ISCED - 4C)*	532
Higher education (ISCED - 5B, 5A, 6)	22 955
Degree "Professional Bachelor" (ISCED-5B)	1 079
Degree "Bachelor" and "Master" (ISCED-5A)	21 876
- Of which private	
Preschool education (ISCED - 0)	284
Elementary education (ISCED - 1)	269
Lower secondary education (ISCED 2A)	440
Secondary education (ISCED - 3A, 3C)	1054
Vocational training after secondary education (ISCED - 4C)	498
Higher education (ISCED - 5B, 5A, 6)	2 659
Degree "Professional Bachelor" (ISCED-5B)	353
Degree "Bachelor" and "Master" (ISCED-5A)	2 306

* Including teachers in interschool centres.

Source: NSI

Table 15. Teachers in vocational schools, high schools and professional colleges in the school year 2011/2012

Teachers*	2011/2012
In art schools (III level professional qualification)	1 063
In vocational schools (III level professional qualification)	9 780
In vocational colleges after secondary education (IV level professional qualification)	532
In vocational high schools (II level professional qualification)	1 579
In professional schools after VI and VII grade (I level professional qualification)	48
In professional schools after grade VIII (I level professional qualification)	54
- Of which private in total	924

Source: NSI

Table 16. Documents issued by VTC for professional qualification as a result of the validation of non-formal and informal learning (Art. 40 of VETA)

Indicators by years	2009		2010		2011	
	SPC	CVT	SPC	CVT	SPC	CVT
Total	11074	55125	13665	54709	45077	95167
Art. 40 of VETA	691	1537	502	798	1172	1142
Rel. Share in %	6.2	2.9	3.6	1.5	2.6	1.2

SPC - Certificate for professional qualification
CVT - Certificate of Vocational Training

Source: NAVET Statistics

Annex B: Additional clarifications

National Qualifications Framework

DESCRIPTION

The Minister of Education and Science is designated as the competent authority for maintaining and updating the NQF by government's decision. NQF is published on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science at:

http://www.mon.bg/opencms/export/sites/mon/left_menu/strategies/documents/NQF_bg.pdf

NQF Level 0 labelled as a preparatory level refers to pre-primary education. This level corresponds to ISCED 0.

NQF Level 1 refers to the initial stage of basic general education, i.e. from Class I to IV. This level corresponds to the EQF level 1 and ISCED 1.

NQF Level 2 applies to primary education in general education and for the First degree of qualification. This level corresponds to the EQF level 2 and ISCED 2A / ISCED 2C.

NQF Level 3 refers to the Second level of proficiency. This level corresponds to the EQF level 3 and ISCED 3C or ISCED 2.

NQF Level 4 applies to secondary education in general education and III-th level of proficiency. This level corresponds to the EQF level 4 and ISCED 3A and ISCED 3C.

NQF Level 5 refers to the 4th level of proficiency. This level corresponds to level 5 of the EQF and ISCED 4.

Level 6 of the NQF is divided into two levels:

- **Sublevel 6A** applies to professional bachelor (180 credit ECTS). This subsection corresponds to level 6 of the EQF and ISCED 5B.
- **Sublevel 6B** applies to bachelor (240 credit ECTS). This subsection corresponds to level 6 of the EQF and ISCED 5A.

Level 7 NQF is divided into four sub-levels:

- **Sublevel 7A** applies to Master after "Professional Bachelor in ..." in the same professional field (120 credit ECTS). This subsection corresponds to the EQF level 7 and ISCED 5A.
- **Sublevel 7B** refers to the Master after Bachelor degree (60 credit ECTS). This subsection corresponds to the EQF level 7 and ISCED 5A.

- **Sublevel 7C** refers to Master after Bachelor in different field (120 credit ECTS). This subsection corresponds to the EQF level 7 and ISCED 5A.

- **Sublevel 7D** refers to Master's degree, which provides specific training only in that field (300 credit ECTS). This subsection corresponds to the EQF level 7 and ISCED 5A.

Level 8 of the NQF refers to Doctor's degree (without credits ECTS). This level corresponds to level 8 of the EQF and ISCED 6.