

BULGARIA

VET in Europe – Country Report

2010

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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Abstract:

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

1. General context – framework for the knowledge society
2. Policy development – objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities
3. Vet in time of crises
4. Historical background, Legislative and Institutional framework
5. Initial vocational education and training
6. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
7. Training VET teachers and trainers
8. Matching VET provision (skills) with labour market needs (jobs)
9. Guidance and counseling for learning, career and employment
10. Financing - investment in human resources
11. National VET statistics – allocation of programmes

This overview has been prepared in 2010 and its reference year is 2009. Similar overviews of previous years can be viewed at:

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/

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

Keywords:

General education; pre-vocational education; vocational education and training (VET) systems; initial vocational training; continuing vocational training; lifelong learning; VET policy development; financial crisis and VET policies; VET legislative and institutional frameworks; validation of non-formal and informal education; teachers and trainers; anticipation of skill needs; vocational guidance and counseling; VET financing mechanisms; allocation of national VET programmes; national and international qualification systems.

Geographic term:

Bulgaria

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1.1 POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Full name: Bulgaria

Population: 7 563 710 (2009)

Capital: Sofia

Area: 111 000 km

Major language: Bulgarian

Major religion: Christianity

Life expectancy: 67 years (men), 74 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: 1 lev = 1, 95033 Euro

Main sectors: tourism, textile, pharmacy, food production, tobacco production, construction,

Bulgaria is a parliamentary republic and **the legislative power** is embodied by the National Assembly (the parliament). **The executive power** is a prerogative of the Council of Ministers which is headed by a Prime Minister.

The main administrative and territorial units are the municipalities and the regions. The region is an administrative and territorial unit for pursuing regional policy directly through government and for combining state and local interests. Every region consists of one or several neighboring municipalities the territories whereof make up the territory of the region.

Bulgaria is divided into 28 regions comprising total 264 municipalities. The territorial division of the country is into six statistical regions ¹

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SPECIFICITIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON EDUCATION

In 2009, Bulgaria began to feel the effect of the global economic crisis. The gross domestic product growth slowed down and gradually turned into negative growth, there was sharp decline in foreign direct investment, and unemployment took an upward trend. The financial system remained stable owing to the strict rules established by the Bulgarian National Bank. Preserved was also the stability of the currency board introduced in Bulgaria in 1997. During the planning of the 2010 budget in 2009, the public funds for education were cut down by 20%; the funds under a number of national programs for the second education sector were also significantly reduced. It is important to note that in spite of the crisis and taking into account the priority role of education in social development, the government made efforts to preserve the amount of the per student cost standard in the secondary education.

¹ North-West (Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Plevna, 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).

1.2 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Bulgaria is situated in the eastern part of the Balkan peninsula with 111 000 km². The population density is 68.2 people per km².

The population of Bulgaria is 7 563 710 people, women accounting for a share of 51.6%. At end of 2009, 5 401 214 people or 71.4% of country's population were living in the town and 2 162 496 people or 28.6% in the villages.

Currently, the national demographic situation is characterized by slowdown of population decline, some increase of the birth rate, increased average life expectancy and lower rates of external migration (0.6% per year). However, high mortality, continuing population ageing, decreasing share of school-age population and the negative external migration balance continue to raise concerns.

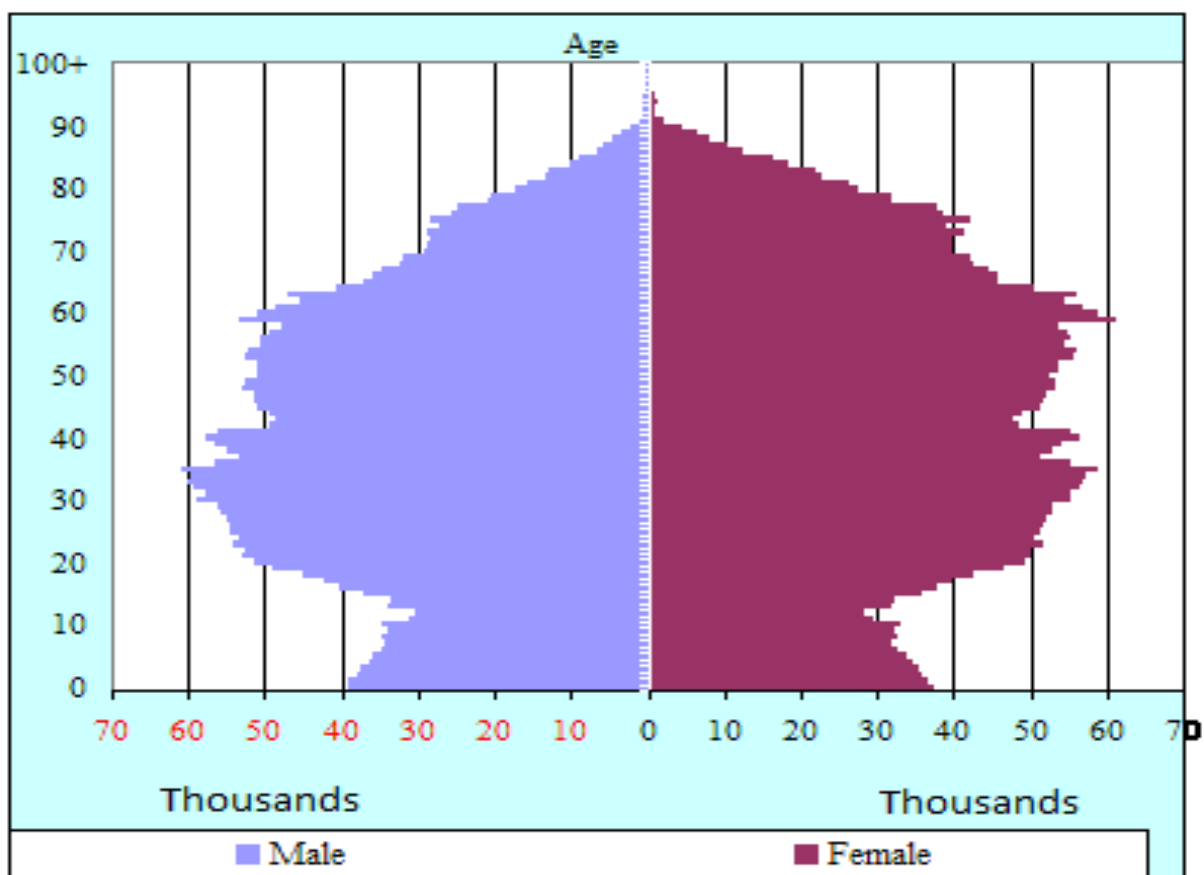


Fig.1. Age-sex structure of the population as of 31.12.2009

The pyramid outlines the changes in the birth rate and the emigration effects for the population in the age group 11-20 and the impact of the 1996-1997 crisis in Bulgaria. As the expanding base of the pyramid shows, after the '96-'97 crisis, owing to the more favorable living conditions, the number of children in the small age groups (0 – 11 years) increases.

On the other hand, the national population ageing continues due to decreasing share of younger age cohorts and increasing higher age cohorts (Table 1A). In Bulgaria, the ageing process is more pronounced among women than among men.

TABLE 1 POPULATION AS OF 31.12. BY AGE GROUPS				
YEAR	TOTAL	0-24	25-64	65+
2001	7 891 095	2284664	4270916	1335515
2005	7 718 750	2094361	4295910	1328479
2008	7 606 551	1990626	4292086	1323839
2009	7 563 710	1959234	4278585	1325891
STRUCTURE - %				
2001	100	29,0	54,1	16,9
2005	100	27,1	55,7	17,2
2008	100	26,2	56,4	17,4
2009	100	25,9	56,6	17,5

Source of Data: Eurostat

The population ageing is characterized also by increased average age of the population. Data show that the average age increases from 40.4 years in 2001 to 41.7 years at end of 2008 and 41.8 years in 2009. The population ageing process is much more expressed in villages than in towns. In villages, the average age of the population (45.5 years) is by 5.2 years higher compared to towns (40.3 years).

Another important indicator of the population ageing process is the so called old-age dependency ratio. It is defined as the ratio between the people aged 65+ and the population aged 15-64 and for Bulgaria it is 25.44% in 2009 (as of 31.12.2009). Eurostat projections in Table 2 below show that in the 2060 horizon Bulgaria will be among the countries most affected by the population ageing process, with a ration of 63.54%. This means that currently there are four people in working age per one person aged 65+ and in 2060, under the chosen scenario, there will be only three people in working age per two old persons.

TABLE 2 PROJECTED OLD-AGE DEPENDENCY RATIO IN THE EU COUNTRIES							
GEO\TIME	2010	2015	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
EU 27	25.9	28.26	31.05	38.04	45.36	50.42	53.47
BG	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)

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tsdde511>

In the past few years, **the birth rate** in Bulgaria has increased. In 2009, there were 81 572 children born in the country of which 80 956 live births (99.2%). Compared to 2008, the number of borne children increased with 3 244 and with 13 thousand children compared to 2001. The birth rate is 10.7‰. The number of live births registered in 2009 has been the biggest in the past 15 years and the birth rate reached its 1992 level.

The increased birth rate in the past few years is directly related to the increased fertility rate of the maternal contingents. According to the national statistics, in 2001 the average number of life births per woman (total fertility rate) is 1.24 children, in 2008 it is 1.48, and in 2009 - 1.57 children. This is the highest fertility value since 1991 when the fertility rate was 1.65 children. On this indicator, Bulgaria is steady close to the EU (27) average which in 2008 is 1.57 children.

In 2009, there are 960 live-born girls per 1000 live-born boys

TABLE 3 BIRTH RATES, NATURAL INCREASE OF THE POPULATION AND TOTAL FERTILITY RATE			
YEARS	BIRTH RATE - ‰	NATURAL INCREASE - ‰	AVERAGE LIVE BIRTHS PER WOMAN IN FERTILITY AGE
2001	8.6	-5.6	1.24
2005	9.2	-5.4	1.31
2008	10.2	-4.3	1.48
2009	10.7	-3.5	1.57

Sources: Population density. Population and demographic processes, National Statistical Institute, Demographic statistics, <http://www.nsi.bg/EPDOCS/Population09.pdf>, Demographic processes data and demographic projections, National Statistical Institute, Demographic statistics, <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=53>

SCHOOL-AGE POPULATION

TABLE 4 SCHOOL- AGE POPULATION AS OF 31.12.								
	2000	2006	2007	2009	2015	2020	2025	2030
POPULATION AGED 3- 6 YEARS -THOUSANDS	283	267	271	281	286	257	228	209
RELATIVE SHARE IN TOTAL POPULATION - %	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.7	3.9	3.6	3.3	3.1
POPULATION AGED 7- 14 YEARS - THOUSANDS	775	555	538	519	558	571	527	469
RELATIVE SHARE IN TOTAL POPULATION - %	9.5	7.2	7.0	6.9	7.6	8.0	7.6	7.0
POPULATION AGED 15- 18 YEARS - THOUSANDS	439	389	367	321	254	273	291	270
RELATIVE SHARE IN TOTAL POPULATION - %	5.4	5.1	4.8	4.2	3.5	3.8	4.2	4.0
POPULATION AGED 19- 23 YEARS - THOUSANDS	602	528	524	508	366	322	347	363
RELATIVE SHARE IN TOTAL POPULATION - %	7.4	6.9	6.9	6.7	5.0	4.5	5.0	5.4

Sources: *Population density. Population and demographic processes*,
<http://www.nsi.bg/EPDOCS/Population09.pdf>,

Demographic processes data and demographic projections,
<http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=53>

The lower birth rates in Bulgaria during the economic crisis (1996-1997) and a couple of years thereafter will result in significant decrease by 2015 of the number of young people in the typical secondary school age 15-18 years. This, as well as other factors will bring about decreased number of students in general upper-secondary as well in upper-secondary vocational education.

1.3 ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

In 2009, the deepening economic crisis in Bulgaria determined the negative trends on the labor market. While the first signs of economic crisis in the country associated with

deteriorated economic conjuncture and slowdown of economic growth appeared at the end of 2008 and deepened in the first months of 2009, the labor market preserved till April 2009 more favorable values of indicators compared to the same period of 2008. In the following months of 2009, the negative trends became obvious also in employment and unemployment and in the fourth quarter of the year employed persons registered sharp decline compared to the same period of 2008, by 191,9 thousand people.

In 2009, the average annual number of employed persons decreased by 107,1 thousand people against 2008, to 3253,6 thousand people. The employment coefficient also decreases to 49,4% in 2009, or 1,4% down as compared to 2008.

In 2009, the number of employed persons decreases in all economic sectors. The highest decrease is registered by the sectors most affected by the crisis – Manufacturing and Construction. In Manufacturing, top decrease of employed persons is seen in the production of textile and clothes, food and drinks, machines and equipment, basic metals, articles of rubber, plastic and other non-metal raw materials. Services register the lowest decrease by 9 thousand people, attributed to sectors like Transport and Communications, Hotels and Restaurants, and since mid 2009 employment in Trade has also decreased. In 2009, increase of employed persons was registered in Human Health and Social Work, Financial and Insurance Activities, and Professional Activities and Research.

Employed persons in Services account again for the highest share of employment by economic sectors – they represent 57,6% of total employed persons. The relative share of employed persons in Manufacturing is 21,9% and in Construction – 9,9%. The share of employed persons in the primary sector and utilities is 10,5%, while the persons employed in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries account for 7,1% of total employment, in Mining and Quarrying – 1%, in Electricity, Thermal Energy and Gas Fuel Supply – 1,3%, and Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management and Recovery – 1,1%.

TABLE 5 EMPLOYED PERSONS AGED 15+ BY ECONOMIC SECTOR OF ACTIVITY (IN THOUSANDS AND AS % OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT), 2009

GEO	PRIMARY SECTOR AND UTILITIES		MANUFACTURING		CONSTRUCTION		DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSPORT		BUSINESS AND OTHER SERVICES		NON MARKETED SERVICES	
	PERS ONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%	PERSONS	%
EU 27	1519 2.8	7.0	35068.2	16.1	17290. 9	7.9	57470.5	26.4	38557.9	17.7	53201.2	24.4
BG	340. 8	10.5	713.9	21.9	322.5	9.9	955	29.4	330.2	10.1	590.4	18.1

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

In 2009, the upward trend of employment observed in the previous years in all age groups has been reversed. The employment coefficient decreased in all age groups except for the 55-64 age bracket, which registered some, although negligible, increase by 0,1% as compared to 2008. Similar trends are observed also in the EU -27. The employment coefficient decrease is most pronounced for the young people between 25-29 years of age –

down 4,0% on 2008, and is the smallest for the adults in the 50-54 age group – down 0,8% on 2008.

Considering the education structure of employed persons, the trend for people with higher educational attainment to have higher employment levels is preserved. In 2009, the employment coefficient of people with tertiary education is 85,5%, for persons with secondary and post-secondary education – 70,0%, and for persons with primary and lower education – 32,3%. Compared to 2008, the employment coefficient decreases for all groups, most notably for the persons with secondary education where it is down by 2,7%. Employment of people with tertiary education decreased by 0,6%.

TABLE 6 EMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2003, 2006 AND 2009

GEO	TIME ISCED / AGE	2003			2006			2009		
		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	22.8	64.1	43.3
	3-4	47.2 (i)	79.1 (i)	54.9 (i)	48.1	80.5	57.9	46.3	80.5	59.5
	5-6	62.0 (i)	88.0 (i)	72.4 (i)	60.5	88.5	74.2	58.4	88.2	74.5
	NO A.	14.9 (i)	72.6 (i)	39.1 (i)	5.1	76.0	5.6	5.5	75.6	63.9
	TOTAL	36.0 (i)	77.4 (i)	51.5 (i)	36.6	79.1	54.4	35.2	78.8	56.5
BG	0-2	7.4	45.9	28.5	6.5	49.6	32.4	6.2	54.4	36.4
	3-4	37.6	74.5	50.8	42.6	80.3	56.3	42.2	83.2	58.9
	5-6	61.9	85.1	61.2	63.8	89.7	67.0	75.4	90.8	74.3
	NO A.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	TOTAL	21.3	70.5	43.5	23.2	76.5	50.3	24.8	79.7	55.6

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

The economic crisis is manifested in the first place in the growth of unemployment. In 2009, the number of unemployed persons increases by about 20% against 2008, to 238 000 people but is still 2,8 times lower compared to 2001 – the year of the highest unemployment registered. In the period 2001-2008, the unemployment coefficient is on a steady downward trend, the bottom level of 5,7% registered in 2008. In 2009, the unemployment coefficient in the 15-64 age group increases to 2007 levels at 6,9%, but remains significantly lower compared to 2001(20%).

In 2009, unemployment increases in all age groups, remaining excessively high, at 16,2%, in the 15-24 age group. Lower educational attainment and qualification, as well as lack of work experience are a major reason for the high unemployment of young people, which at times of

crises notably cuts down their chances to find work and increases the risk of long-term unemployment. Young people with primary and lower education account for the highest share of unemployment – 31,9%.

In terms of educational structure, people with primary and lower education account for the highest share of unemployment. In 2009, unemployment increases in all groups, to 15,8% for people with primary and lower education, 6,2% for those with secondary education and 2,9% for people with tertiary education.

TABLE 7 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS AND HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2003, 2006 AND 2009										
	TIME	2003			2006			2009		
GEO	ISCED / AGE	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	7.5	25.9	14.8	9.1
	3-4	17.7 (i)	8.4 (i)	7.7 (i)	15.4	7.3	6.9	16.9	7.5	6.2
	5-6	12.0 (i)	4.8 (i)	3.7 (i)	13.4	4.3	3.6	15.4	4.8	3.4
	NO A.	13.9 (i)	7.8 (i)	7.4 (i)	20.1	:	:	22.0	7.5	:
	TOTAL	18.0 (i)	8.3 (i)	6.6 (i)	17.2	7.3	6.3	19.7	8.2	6.3
BG	0-2	41.4	26.7	18.7	37.8	20.5	14.9	31.9	15.5	12.2
	3-4	23.0	11.3	10.9	15.3	6.8	6.8	14.1	5.2	5.5
	5-6	:	6.7	5.6 (u)	:	3.7	4.2 (u)	:	3.0	2.6 (u)
	NO A.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	TOTAL	27.1	12.8	11.9	19.5	8.0	8.1	16.2	6.0	6.1

Source: Eurostat (LFS); Extracted on: 30-04-2010; Last update: 23-04-2010

Public expenditure on lower and upper secondary education and post-secondary vocational training (ISCED levels 2-4) decreased as a percentage of GDP (table 9), accounting in 2007 for 1,8% of GDP, which is close to 2002 levels. Expressed as a percentage of total public expenditure, public expenditure on education (ISCED levels 2-4) makes up 4,4. Only 32% was allocated for vocational programs.

TABLE 8 TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION, AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION, 2007									
GEO	ALL PROGRAMMES (ISCED 2-4)			GENERAL PROGRAMMES (ISCED 2-4)			VOCATIONAL AND PREVOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (ISC 2-4)		
	ALL PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	GEN. PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	PV-VOC. PROG.	% OF GDP	% OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE
EU27	200368.4	2.2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
BG	1324	1.8	4.4	894.5	1.2	3	429.5	0.6	1.4

Source: National Statistic Institute, Census 2007

TABLE 9 TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION AS % OF GDP, AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION (ISCED 2-4), 2001-2006						
GEO	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
EU27	2.27 (s)	2.32 (s)	2.35 (s)	2.29 (s)	2.25 (s)	2.23 (s)
BG	1.59	1.77	1.89	2.07	2.08	1.90

Source: Eurostat (LFS); Extracted on: 30-04-2010; Last update: 23-04-2010

1.4 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

In the period 2000 – 2009, the educational structure of the population in the age group 25 – 64 improved gradually and took a clear upward trend of the number and share of population with tertiary and secondary education with parallel downward trend of the number and share of people with primary and lower education. According to data from the latest census, the number of illiterate people in the age group 25 - 64 was about 50000

TABLE 10 EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE POULATION IN THE 25 - 64 AGE GROUP (PERCENT)			
SITUATION BY YEAR	PRIMARY AND LOWER	SECONDARY	TERTIARY
	EDUCATION	EDUCATION	EDUCATION
BULGARIA (2000)	32.9	48.7	18.4
BULGARIA (2005) ¹	27.6	50.8	21.6
BULGARIA (2008) ¹	22.5	54.8	22.8
BULGARIA (2009) ¹	22.1	54.9	23.0

Source: *Education at a Glance OECD indicators, OECD, 2009; ISBN: 9789264024755; Publication 8/9/2009; Source of data for Bulgaria: NSI, LFS*

The share of people with tertiary education has an ascending trend (Table 1j), whereas the share of young people (age 18-24), who are early school leavers and have not completed the secondary education level and are not involved in education or training has a negative trend (Table 1k). The value of the latter indicator has decreased significantly by 6 percentage points in the past eight years from 20.7% in 2002 to 14.7% in 2009. The upward trend of the educational attainment level of young people (age 20-24) is confirmed directly also by the data in Table 12. The share of young people with at least secondary level of education attained has embarked on a steady upward trend in the past years, going up from 77.4% in 2002 to 83.7% in 2009. Young women again show a little higher educational attainment level (84.8%- 2009) compared to men (82.5%). Major factors of this achievement are both the motivation of young people to attain higher education level and the improved conditions for formal and informal education provided by the state and the business. According to the data from the National Statistical Institute, in the past 5 years alone the number of licensed and actively operational educational institutions for vocational training of adults called Vocational Training Centers increased from 114 in 2005 to 295 in 2009.

TABLE 11 EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS (%), 2002-2008, 2009 (BG ONLY)								
GEO/TIME	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU 27	17.0	16.6 (b)	16.1	15.8	15.5	15.1	14.9	
BG	20.7	21.9	21.4	20.4	17.3	14.9	14.8	14.7

Source of data Eurostat (LFS); Extracted: 30-04-2010; Last update 26-04-2010

Link to data

http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsi_edu_a&lang=en

TABLE 12 YOUTH EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVEL BY SEX (%), 2002, 2005, 2008, (2009 BG ONLY)									
TIME	2002			2005			2008		
GEO	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M
EU 27	76.7	79.3	74.0	77.5	80.2	74.8	78.5	81.3	75.6
BG	77.4	79.5	75.2	76.5	77.1	75.9	83.7	83.4	84.0
TIME	2009								
GEO	T	F	M						
BG	83.7	84.8	82.5						

Source of data Eurostat (LFS); Extracted: 30-04-2010; Last update 26-04-2010

TABLE 13 GRADUATES AT ISCED LEVEL 3 AND LEVEL 4 BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, PROGRAMME ORIENTATION AND SEX (NUMBERS), 2005 AND 2007, (2009 -BG ONLY)

YEAR		2005						2007					
GEO	S	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC
EU 27*	F	1015169	108171	984823	22749	0	215435	1298881	98757	1176169	25386	0	212113
	M	743694	157951	1157304	22432	0	189312	965600	134924	1374844	23488	0	177657
	T	1758863	266122	2142128	45182	0	404747	2264481	233681	2551014	48874	0	389770
BG	F	25552	:	14073	:	:	508	26554	:	13940	:	:	1423
	M	20026	:	21221	:	:	339	21275	:	19610	:	:	1479
	T	45578	:	35294	:	:	847	47829	:	33550	:	:	2902
YEAR		2009											
BG	F	21256	:	13389	:	:	994						
	M	14597	:	20060	:	:	657						
	T	35853	:	33449	:	:	1651						

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection); Extracted: 01-05-2010; Last update: 13-01-2010;
Source of BG-2009 data - National Statistical Institute, Education and training statistics

* Available total - calculated by Cedefop;

S= sex; M=males; F=females; T= total; GEN=general; PV=pre-vocational; VOC=vocational

Link to data: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_grad2&lang=en

Further selections: Level=ISCED 3 general, ISCED 3 prevocational, ISCED 3 vocational, ISCED 4 general, ISCED 4 prevocational, ISCED4 vocational, sex =Total, male, female, age =total

Link to metadata: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/educ_esms.htm

2009 data source –NSI, Education and training statistics

According to labor force survey results, the participation of Bulgaria's population aged 25 – 64 in education and training is among the EU lowest with values of 1.3-1.4% against and EU average of 9.5%. On the other hand, participation in non-formal education alone for a period of one year prior to the interview, as measured by the adult education survey (AES- 2007), is with 2, 5 above the EU-27 average (Table 1n).

TABLE 14 LIFELONG LEARNING-ADULT PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY SEX (%), 2002, 2005, 2008, 2009 (BG ONLY)									
TIME	2002			2005			2008		
GEO	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M
EU 27	7.2	7.8	6.6	9.8	10.5	9.0	9.5	10.4	8.7
BG	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.3
TIME	2009								
GEO	T	F	M						
BG	1.4	1.5	1.3						

Source: Eurostat (UOE Data collection); Extracted: 01-05-2010; Last update: 13-01-2010;
Source of BG-2009 data - National Statistical Institute, Education and training statistics

* Available total - calculated by Cedefop;

S= sex; M=males; F=females; T= total; GEN=general; PV=pre-vocational; VOC=vocational

Link to data: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_grad2&lang=en

Further selections: Level=ISCED 3 general, ISCED 3 prevocational, ISCED 3 vocational, ISCED 4 general, ISCED 4 prevocational, ISCED4 vocational, sex =Total, male, female, age =total

Link to metadata: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/educ_esms.htm

2009 data source –NSI, Education and training statistics

TABLE 15 PARTICIPATION RATE IN NON FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2007				
ISCED97/ GEO	0-2	3-4	5-6	TOTAL
EU 27	16.3	33.3	52.8	32.7
BG	15	38.2	50	35.2

Source of data: Eurostat (AES); Extracted on: 03-05-2010; Last update: 13-01-2010

Description: The indicator represents the share of people (aged 25-64) that participated in non formal education and training in the 12 months prior to the survey. Specific rates are calculated by highest level of education attained

Link to data:

http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng_aes_102&lang=en

Further selections: typetra=non formal, ISCED=0-2, 3-5, 5-6, total

PARTICIPATION RATES IN VET MOBILITY PROGRAMMES

IVT - INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING ISCED 3 - 4, 8-12 CLASSES, 15+

TABLE 16 LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME - INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY SEX 2007, 2008, 2009 (BG ONLY)									
TIME	2007			2008			2009		
GEO	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M
BG *	179566	NA	NA	168780	NA	NA	164839	NA	NA
BG	757	374	383	451	208	243	580	242	338

Source: compiled by the authors

*total number of people in Bulgaria falling within the target group

PLM - PEOPLE ON LABOUR MARKET

TABLE 17 LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME -PEOPLE ON LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY SEX 2007, 2008, 2009 (BG ONLY)									
TIME	2007			2008			2009		
GEO	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M
BG *	3208800	1508200	1700500	3306200	1550800	1655500	3204800	1506100	1698700
BG	140	70	70	106	41	65	29	13	16

Source: compiled by the authors

*total number of people in Bulgaria falling within the target group

VETPRO - VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONAL

TABLE 18 LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY SEX 2007, 2008, 2009 (BG ONLY)									
TIME	2007			2008			2009		
GEO	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M
BG *	17389	12610	4779	15445	11172	4273	14557	10657	3900
BG	308	196	112	414	290	124	144	111	33

Source: compiled by the authors

*total number of people in Bulgaria falling within the target group

TABLE 19 NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN VET MOBILITY PROGRAMMES BY AGE GROUP, 2007 AND 2008, 2009 (BG ONLY)													
YEAR		2007						2008					
AGE	A	15-20	21-25	26-35	36-45	46 +	TOTAL	15-20	21-25	26-35	36-45	46 +	TOTAL
BG	IVT	748	9	-	-	-	757	449	2	-	-	-	551
	PLM	38	43	52	3	4	140	11	39	36	15	5	106
	VETPRO	-	8	44	80	176	308	-	5	72	126	211	414
YEAR		2009											
AGE	A	15-20	21-25	26-35	36-45	46 +	TOTAL						
BG	IVT	578	2	-	-	-	580						
	PLM	-	-	17	7	5	29						
	VETPRO	-	-	20	44	80	144						

Source of data: Eurostat (AES); Extracted on: 03-05-2010; Last update: 13-01-2010

Description: The indicator represents the share of people (aged 25-64) that participated in non formal education and training in the 12 months prior to the survey. Specific rates are calculated by highest level of education attained

Link to data:

http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng_aes_102&lang=en

Further selections: typetra=non formal, ISCED=0-2, 3-5, 5-6, total

1.5 DEFINITIONS

The definitions and explanations below are from the Bulgarian regulations or are definitions given in existing national strategic documents. Most definitions are aligned with key terms from the legislation and practice of EU Member States based on the CEDEFOP glossary of terms.

- **general education - Общобразователна подготовка**

General education (Общобразователна подготовка) is provided by studying school subjects grouped in the following culture and education fields: 1. Bulgarian language and literature; 2. Foreign languages; 3. Mathematics, informatics and information technologies; 4. Social sciences, civic education and religion; 5. Natural sciences and ecology; 6. Arts; 7. Way of life and technologies; 8. Physical culture and sports. The general education minimum is the basis for general education. It includes compulsory knowledge and skills necessary for the successful progression of students in the next educational level. *(Based on the Law on level of education, general education minimum and curriculum)*

- **pre-vocational education;**

No definition in the Bulgarian legislation.

- **vocational education - Професионално образование, Професионално обучение**

Vocational education - Професионално образование ensures mastering of the minimum general education foreseen at the level of secondary education and acquiring a qualification in a profession. *(Based on the Law on vocational education and training)*

Vocational training - Професионално обучение – ensures acquiring of a qualification in a profession or a section of a profession and improvement thereof. It ensures also completion of primary education or grades of secondary education. Vocational training includes: 1. Initial vocational training – acquiring an initial qualification in a profession or a section of a profession; 2. Continuous vocational training – improvement of the acquired qualification in a profession or a section of a profession. *(Based on the Law on vocational education and training)*

- **technical education;**

The same as vocational education.

- **tertiary education;**

The same as higher education (висше образование).

- **higher education - Висше образование**

The objective of higher education is to prepare highly qualified specialists after secondary education and to develop science and culture. Higher education is attained in accredited higher education schools. Higher education schools include universities, special higher education schools and independent colleges operating on basis of the academic autonomy principle.

The system of higher education organizes studies after completed secondary education and consists of the following degrees: "professional bachelor" (duration of studies not less than three years) and "bachelor" (duration of studies not less than 4 years); and educational and qualification degree "master". The higher education programmes for obtaining professional bachelor degree are not defined by the legislation as VET programme, but because of their practical purposes and accepted view of the nature in the other European countries, they may be allocated to the VET programmes

Studies for bachelor's degree provide broad-profile preparation or special professional preparation by professional fields and specialties. Studies for master's degree provide profound fundamental preparation training combined with profiling in a given specialty. Studies for the educational and scientific degree of doctor are provided according to scientific specialties. *(Based on the Higher Education Act)*

- **further education;**

No definition in the Bulgarian education.

- **post-secondary non-tertiary education - Професионално обучение след завършено средно образование, но не висше**

Post-secondary non-tertiary education is provided by vocational colleges after secondary education. Duration of studies is up to two years. *(Based on the Public Education Act)*

- **Training - Обучение**

Training (Обучение) - A process of delivery of knowledge and skills intended for a given professional, social and personal sphere.

(Source: Glossary of Key Terms in the Field of Vocational Education and Training Compliant with CEDEFOP Terminology, developed within PHARE Project Technical Assistance for Development of a system for studying, identifying and monitoring of the employers' and employees' needs for vocational training" EuropeAid/120163/D/SV/BG, November 2006)

- **initial vocational education and training - Начално (професионално) образование и обучение**

Initial vocational training (Начално професионално обучение) – acquiring an initial qualification in a profession or a section of a profession *(Based on the Law on vocational education and training)*

- **continuing vocational education and training - Продължаващо (професионално) образование и обучение**

Continuing (vocational) education and training (Продължаващо (професионално) образование и обучение) – Training of persons above 16 years of age for acquiring, expanding and improving their professional qualification, with a view to improve their employability, support their professional career and individual development. *(Definition in the National Strategy for Continuing Vocational Education and training 2005-2010)*

Continuing vocational training (Непрекъснато професионално обучение) – improving the acquired qualification in a profession or a section of a profession. *(Based on the Law on vocational education and training)*

- **school-based programmes;**

No such definition exists in the Bulgarian regulations.

- **alternance training;**

No such definition exists in the Bulgarian regulations.

- **Apprenticeship - Чиракуване**

There is not an equivalent term in the Bulgarian regulations, but it is implicitly contained in some provisions.

Training of an employee at the work place by another worker or employee (instructor). The employer pays a salary to the person employed on apprenticeship basis, as well as social security contributions for the time of employment of the person, but not more than 12 months. *(Based on the Employment Promotion Act)*

Workplace training - Обучение на работното място – training in a real work environment under the guidance of a qualified trainer for practical implementation of previously acquired knowledge and skills. *(Definition in the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2008-2013)*

- **Curriculum - Учебна програма, Програма за обучение**

A document reflecting the learning content intended to be studied within a given branch of science, module or short-term course, logically structured into learning units (modules, sections, topics or problems) within a specified number of teaching hours for each learning unit. The curriculum also contains information about the required methods, means and aid materials to be employed in the teaching and learning of the specific learning content, as well as forms and methods of assessment of the school performance of students. *(Source Glossary of Key Terms in the Field of Vocational Education and Training Compliant with CEDEFOP Terminology, developed within PHARE Project “Development of a system for analysis of the needs for vocational education and training and a strategy for adult learning” EuropeAid/120163/D/SV/BG, November 2006)*

- **Qualification - Квалификация**

In the Bulgarian practice, qualification is often understood as vocational qualification.

Qualification is acquired when a competent authority validates knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the individual as a result of different types of learning or professional experience. The competent authority usually issues a certificate attesting the qualification. The qualification enables the person to find fulfillment at the labor market and to engage in further training. *(Based on Framework requirements to the development of State educational requirements for acquiring qualification in a profession, approved by the Management Board of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training with Protocol No. 07 / 18.07.2007)*

Qualification – a set of knowledge, skills, /competences, (attested with a legitimate document), required for performing work activities in a given professional field. *(Source: Glossary of Key Terms in the Field of Vocational Education and Training Compliant with CEDEFOP Terminology), PHARE Project “Development of a system for analysis of the*

needs for vocational education and training and a strategy for adult learning” EuropeAid/120163/D/SV/BG, November 2006)

Vocational qualification – qualification in a profession or a section of a profession, which includes the set of vocational competences and the general knowledge and skills necessary to build such competences. *(Based on the Law on vocational education and training)*

- **Skills - Умения**

No definition is available in the Bulgarian legislation.

- **Competences - Компетентности, компетенции**

Competences show individual’s ability to perform a specified work activity. *(Based on Framework requirements to the development of State educational requirements for acquiring qualification in a profession, approved by the Management Board of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training with Protocol No. 07 / 18.07.2007)*

Competence – A body of knowledge, skills and attitudes possessed by an individual. This is the ability to apply the knowledge, skills and experience specified in the job descriptions, as well as individual’s personal disposition to perform activities within the position held or at the workplace in a manner guaranteeing safety. Competence can be built through education, experience and special training. *(Source: Glossary of Key Terms in the Field of Vocational Education and Training Compliant with CEDEFOP Terminology, developed within PHARE Project “Development of a system for analysis of the needs for vocational education and training and a strategy for adult learning” EuropeAid/120163/D/SV/BG, November 2006)*

Vocational competences are personal qualities formed on the basis of acquired knowledge and skills, which are conducive of taking initiative, team work and quality practicing of a profession according to the state educational requirements for acquiring qualification in a profession. *(Based on the Law on vocational education and training)*

Vocational competences – A body of knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the mastering and practicing of a profession. *(Definition in the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2008-2013)*

2 POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

2.1 OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES OF THE NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT AREAS OF VET

In 2009, after the June parliamentary elections, a new government came into ruling.

The Program for development of education, science and youth policies in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2009 – 2013 formulates the major government priority in the education sector such as improvement of quality and ensuring the equity of school education.(2)

The most important actions towards this priority, which directly relate to vocational education and training, include:

- Improve the regulatory framework by eliminating the internal conflicts between individual normative acts and align the framework with the best educational practices;
- Approve a new School Education Act;
- Optimize the network of vocational schools;
- Efficient interaction with the business;
- Update learning content towards a practical focus;
- Improve the reliability of external assessment;
- Mandatory continuous training of teachers.

The Program for development of education, science and youth policies in the Republic of Bulgaria during this government's mandate, which was presented in September 2009, formulates the following priorities:

- Achieve high quality of education;
- Ensure the equity of education;
- Put in place conditions and an environment for application of the Lifelong Learning (LLL) concept of education;
- Encourage the involvement of young people in sector policy development and implementation;
- In a mid-term perspective, develop Bulgaria into a country with a knowledge and innovation driven economy.

The program specifies the measures necessary to implement the strategic priorities in the period 2009 -2013.

NATIONAL LLL STRATEGY

The objective of the National LLL Strategy, 2008- 2013, is to put in place conditions enabling every citizen to develop his or her personal and professional knowledge, skills and abilities towards improving his/her own welfare and the competitiveness of the national economy, through:

- Enhancing the adaptability of every individual to economic and social changes;
- Encouraging participation in all lifelong learning forms towards professional and personal development.

The actions outlined in the strategy aim to:

- Develop an effective lifelong learning system;
- Clearly formulate responsibilities, optimize and coordinate the activity of LLL process participants at different levels;

- Improve the regulatory basis;
- Develop LLL quality assurance systems;
- Implement a credit transfer and accumulation system aiming to guarantee the mobility of students and employed persons;
- Foster a learning culture and learning motivation;
- Develop mechanisms for validation and certification of non-formal, informal and experience-based learning outcomes;
- Encourage research and improve the methods of collection of statistical information for LLL;
- Build a funding system as a tool to guarantee shared and balanced responsibility of the State, employers and students.

The aim is by 2013 Bulgaria to achieve in the lifelong learning sector:

- participation of the population aged 25- 64 in LLL at 5 %;
- share of early school leavers at 12 %;
- share of individuals aged 20-24 with completed secondary education at 85%.

2.1.1 POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE MAIN VET POLICY AREAS

The national programs funded from the state budget and administered by Ministry of Education, Youth and Science are initiatives that were planned in 2009. The projects thereof are targeted at vocational education:

- **Optimization of the School Network** with a project for vocational schools–“Rationalization of the Vocational School Network”. The objective of the project is to restructure the network of vocational schools and high schools.

- **Modernizing the Vocational Education System**

The objective of the project is to provide vocational schools with modern material resources, with funding from the state budget and **co-financing from employers**.

Beneficiaries include 40 vocational high schools across the country.

- **Guidance and counseling;**

In the past 15 years, vocational guidance and counseling of students is provided by the pedagogical counselors at schools. As not all schools have pedagogical counselors and, where there is one, he or she does not have reliable information resources, a conclusion can be made that presently the guidance and counseling of students is inefficient and formal. In 2009 we cannot report any notable developments in the field of vocational guidance and counseling of students.

- **Teacher and trainer training**

In 2009, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (29)(MEYS) announced the national program **Training of Directors and Teachers** with two projects. The **Teacher Training** project includes training of teachers to work in a multiethnic environment and with students with special education needs (SEN). The capacity is 1570 people.

Under implementation are projects within the program for support of students with SEN, announced in 2009 with a budget of BGN 10 million and financed from Operational Program Human Resource Development (OP HRD). Project implementation deadline is end of 2011. 500 teachers and specialists with pedagogical functions are expected to receive training for work with children and students with SEN.

- **Curriculum reform and innovative approaches to teaching and assessment;**

Reform of the vocational training section of the curriculum and introduction of a module approach is pending. Given the accumulated experience in the field, module training could be introduced in all institutions providing vocational education and training.

To date, training under module-based curricula only exists in certain vocational schools but it is an established practice in the vocational training centers.

The approach of organization of integrated training for students with special educational needs is innovative.

- **Skills needs strategy;**

The Action Plan for implementation of the National LLL Strategy includes as a priority action development of a skill needs study and forecast system. The system will make it possible to reduce qualified labor demand and supply imbalances and to improve labor force quality and mobility, hence the opportunities for employment and career fulfillment. The decision makers from the education, employment, economic and finance sectors as well social partners are engaged in the system development. Not available information for 2009.

- **Validation of non-formal and informal learning.**

In 2009, Ministry of Education Youth and Science (MEYS) completed the project “Promotion of Adult Vocational Training and Employment” implemented with financial and organizational assistance from the Republic of Germany. One of the project activities included development and testing of a **model system for validation of competences** acquired through non-formal and informal learning in the process of lifelong learning. Social partners were actively involved in project implementation.

2.1.2 CURRENT DEBATES

Opportunities to delegate greater governance power at local level have been actively discussed in the past few years. To date, actual steps along these lines have not been taken yet. Delegation of financial rights to schools was actively applied in 2009. The new school funding system was built upon Management of Schools by increasing the level of financial delegation to schools. Its key aspects are funding and the delegation of financial responsibility to schools to maintain them. The delegation of financial rights to the schools was according to the individual needs and abilities of each school in the country (4).

Currently a particularly hot issue is that of the relation between vocational education and the business in the context of improved quality of vocational education and training. According to the business, introduction of practice-oriented training and education process decentralization will contribute to successful partnerships on branch or regional basis between vocational schools and high schools on the one part and companies on the other.

2.2 THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EUROPEAN TOOLS

Work on development of a national qualifications framework started in 2009 and should be completed by the end of 2010.

The document will reflect the result of the joint efforts of all partners and stakeholders in the field of human resources development.

The specifics of the Bulgarian education and training system are reflected in the draft NQF currently under elaboration. The objective is to facilitate knowledge and skills transfer and to improve labor force mobility. The State Educational Requirements (SER) with a new structure, which are currently being developed, will contribute for assuring the quality of VET. According to these requirements professions must be described in units of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences). Upon introduction of the credit system in VET, the weight of each unit of learning outcomes will be specified and procedures for transfer and accumulation of “units of outcomes” will be introduced.

The national policy is directed towards the implementation of the main European tools in accordance with the national rules in order to achieve transparency and comparability of Bulgarian qualifications and ensure maximum mobility for the citizens.

Following the implementation of the Communication Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the accession to the EC, in 2007 a consultation process took place in our country, related to the elaboration and implementation of a National Qualification Framework. Seminars with the participation of representatives from the education sector, local authorities, social partners and non-government organizations were organized. There are ongoing analysis and discussions on the comparability of the key elements of the future EQF- qualification levels from the national VET system, regulated by the Law on VET and their referent descriptors in the EQF. There is high level of comparability between the Bulgarian vocational qualification levels and the relevant levels of the EQF.

The basis for the elaboration of NQF are the List of professions for vocational education and training and the new Methodological Framework for the SER for the acquisition of a qualification in a professions, directed towards the learning outcomes. The approach related to the learning outcomes is a prerequisite for linking successfully the vocational qualification levels from the national VET system with the referent levels of the EQF. The new Framework for the SER comprises the following components: entry requirements; description of the profession; objectives of training; learning outcomes; requirements for facilities; requirements for trainees (34)

In that respect one of the greatest challenges before the implementation of the common NQF, which would cover all educational qualification levels in Bulgaria is to compare successfully the knowledge and skills, acquired in the general education system. At national level efforts are directed towards keeping the deadline /till 2010/ for the linking of national qualification levels with the EQF.

The Law on the Validation of Vocational Qualifications was adopted in 2008 – it defines and regulates the conditions for the validation of vocational qualification, acquired in other EU and non- EU member countries in order to practice the latter professions in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Currently, within the VET system it is not possible to transfer the learning outcomes acquired. The credit system is not implemented and the available regulations do not support the process.

STRATEGY AND/OR INITIATIVES FOR IMPLEMENTING A UNIT-BASED CREDIT SYSTEM IN BG VET

The credit system has been long introduced in the tertiary education system. Planned amendments to VET envisage its introduction also in the VET system.

Experts from Ministry of Education and Science develop in cooperation with **InWent** (Germany) and other countries from south-eastern Europe a project for “Implementation of the European Qualifications Framework in Technical VET.

Another important project is “Development and Approval of a Credit Transfer System to Improve Chemical Industry Mobility” (CREDCHEM) under the management of the Federal Vocational Training Institute BIBB – Germany

Both projects are scheduled for completion in 2011 r.

GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY IN VET

Since 2008 Europass Mobility document is used as evidence for the conduct of quality practices of beneficiary in various programs for vocational education and training.

TABLE 1 NUMBER OF EUROPASS MOBILITY DOCUMENTS BY DESTINATION COUNTRY 2009										
AT	BE	BG	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI
3	12		30	30	180	50			80	4
FR	HU	IE	IS	IT	LI	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL
9		5	40	70					3	50
NO	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	TR	UK	TOTAL	
	20			2		20		200	808	

Source: compiled by the authors

3 VET IN TIMES OF CRISES

3.1 OVERVIEW

In 2009, the financial crisis had a direct impact on the economy of Bulgaria and the sectors which were most influenced by it are: construction, machine building, textile, chemical and production of metals. One of the first manifestations of the economic crisis in Bulgaria was the mass layoff of staff with a view to cutting down expenses by maintaining low employment levels. The new situation on the labor market placed people in a plight – to find and keep their job and be adequate to the labor market.

According to National Statistical Institute (NSI) data, in the first quarter of 2009 the groups hit most by the economic crisis are young people aged 15 – 24, where unemployment is 9,6 %, at the end of 2009 the results are: unemployment of young people - 23% , people with low level of education attained – 47,5 %, against a country average of 10,20 %.

The crisis and layoffs motivated many people to study again in order to enhance their educational attainment, improve their qualification. On the other hand, some companies introduced, based on an effective social dialogue, flexible working hour schemes, which enable workers to work and study.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science supported this process, opening up wider opportunities for acquiring of vocational qualification through increased number of classes and groups of vocational subjects to be studied in evening and part-time forms of study. Thus, while in school year 2002/2003 only three new classes were opened in the country as a whole, in the school year 2009/2010 they are 198.

Accelerated anti-crisis measures, has been announced in the Action Plan to the National LLL Strategy, The most important including:

- Structural reform of all governing structures in the education and science sector;
- Structural reform of the Bulgarian Academy of Science;
- Approval of a Law on Academic Staff;
- Development of a science research strategy;
- Approval of a new higher (tertiary) education act.

3.2 EFFECTS OF THE CRISIS ON VET AND CORRESPONDING MEASURES

3.2.1 TRENDS IN LEARNERS' BEHAVIOR

In order to overcome the situation as a result of economic crises the education system, incl. vocational schools adopted measures such as reducing budget, reducing staff , freezing the salaries, postponing the purchase of library books, postponing maintenance of the practical workshops and etc.

The number of students in vocational high schools also decreases but remains at higher levels compared to general schools. In order not to lose students and be competitive, most vocational high schools offer training in professions combined with intensive foreign language study as in the past few years parents with medium and higher income strive to ensure better opportunities for their children by encouraging them to enroll in special high schools with intensive foreign language study. Knowledge of a foreign language is an asset when applying for a job, for studying or working abroad, etc.

TABLE 1 NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS						
IX - XIII GRADE	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010
GENERAL	170482	170462	167988	163050	156978	148627
Vocational	207395	200945	194705	179566	168780	164839

Source: compiled by the authors

The highest number of students in vocational schools and high schools study professions in the group “Technical sciences and technical professions” - 33,76 % of all students, followed by “Economic sciences and administrations” – 17,74 %,” and “Services for the individual” - 11,71 %. The smallest number of students study professions in the group “Security and safety” – 0,02 %.

The number of drop-outs continues on an upward trend. The reasons for dropouts can be grouped in several main categories –

- socio-economic - The poor quality of life of some social groups puts strong barriers to the education of children;
- educational - Organization of the learning process Students encounter significant difficulties in mastering the learning content and this makes them unwilling to attend school;
- student’s ethno-cultural environment – Roma children have high dropout rates

The draft new educational structure provides – more passable, with higher opportunities to re-enter the educational system and acquire vocational qualification and, is responsive to this serious challenge.

New steps for acquiring vocational qualification are proposed in the existing VET framework programs .The steps refer to Framework “B” for students and for persons 16+ who completed basic education and the training are with duration of 4 years (5) (cf. 5.3)

PARTICIPATION RATES IN CVET

The updated Employment Strategy 2008-2015 sets a target by the year of 2015 to improve significantly the investments in the human capital by improving the access and the quality of the education and training, to commit to the needs of the labour market, to develop the types of education and to encourage the participation of the population in lifelong learning. As a result, until the end of 2015, the participation rate of the population aged 25-64 in lifelong learning should increase to 7% (compared to 2007, when it was 1.5%), the participation rate of the population, who drop out of school before completion of primary education, should reduce to 10% (compared to 2007, when it was 16.6%) and the participation rate of the persons aged 22, who have completed secondary education, should increase to 87% (compared to 2007, when it was 85.1%).

According to Employment Agency (EA) data, in the past year interest towards labor office services for enrolment in vocational training courses persists. EA in its capacity of an intermediate body of Operational Programme Human Resource Development (HRD) organizes trainings for vocational qualification acquisition and upgrading and for key

competences for the labor market. Motivation training aiming to foster active behavior of jobless individuals in the labor market is also organized.

EA provides via the Labor Offices vocational guidance (informing and counseling) of job seekers. Individual counseling is provided to unemployed persons and job seekers are covered by group vocational guidance exercises.

According to EA14 data, in 2009, vocational informing and counseling was provided to 81 286 people. Individual vocational guidance received 52 270 people. 29 016 unemployed persons and students were covered by group forms of vocational guidance and proactive behavior in the labor market.

3.2.2 TRENDS IN ENTERPRISES' BEHAVIOR

Insufficient information is available

3.2.3 MEASURES TAKEN AT GOVERNANCE LEVELS (NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL)

In 2009, in the conditions of the economic and financial crisis and increasing unemployment, anti-crisis measures and programmes were introduced to address the negative impact on the labour market. Special focus was given on redundant persons and on the persons employed part-time as a result of cut down or terminated production and provision of services.

Implementation of a measure to preserve employment started in February 2009. Workers and employees passed to part-time working from the sectors of Industry and Services are paid compensations in pursuance with the Decree No. 44/2009 of the Council of Ministers.

National Programme "New Employment Opportunities" was launched in the beginning of 2009 to support the persons redundant in consequence of the economic crisis. The unemployed persons included in the programme get access to a package of services to support and guide them to new employment on the labour market. The package of services includes provision of vocational guidance, psychological support, elaboration of individual action plans, provision of information, consultation, targeting to appropriate vocational training, targeting to job vacancies, inclusion in subsidized employment. Over the period January – December 2009, the programme provided training to 740 persons and 1412 persons were included in employment, spending amounted to BGN 2.598 thousand (1.328 thousand EURO).

The different adult training opportunities existed within the active labour market policy provided support for enhancing the employability of labour force :

- vocational training of employed and unemployed persons for acquisition of vocational knowledge and skills meeting labour market needs;
- literacy training for unemployed persons without education and qualification, and their subsequent inclusion in vocational training;
- acquiring practical experience through practical training in enterprises – for unemployed persons who have acquired vocational qualification in a profession but do not have working experience in it;
- workplace training in the form of apprenticeship under the supervision of a coach;
- training for acquiring key competences;

² Employment Agency

- motivation training for acquiring of skills for job interview and presentation skills, drafting a CV and a motivation letter, etc.;
- vocational guidance of unemployed and employed persons for choosing appropriate training, appropriate work, preserving employment, career development.

Given the limited state budget resources for implementation of active labour market policy in 2009, the OP HRD co-funded from the European Social Fund played an active role with regards to the development of national labour force. Two priority axes of OP HRD are with direct focus on financing labour force (employed and unemployed) training projects. They are Priority Axis 1: Promotion of economic activity and development of inclusive labour market and Priority Axis 2: Raising the productivity and adaptability of the employed persons. As part of these priority axes, the following schemes were implemented / launched in 2009:

- The “Qualification Services and Trainings for Employed Persons” scheme was implemented in 2009. It was focused on training of employed persons for acquiring or upgrading of their vocational qualification or on training for key competences.
- The scheme "Encouragement of launching projects for development of own business" was implemented in 2009. It is targeted to provision of funds, training and consultation services on entrepreneurship to unemployed people, who wish to start their own business.
- Four new training schemes for employed and unemployed persons were launched in the end of 2009 in order to enhance the employability of labour force:
- The “I Can” scheme focuses on training for vocational qualification and/or key competences for persons employed on open-ended labour contracts. Including the persons into training of their choice will enable them to improve their employability and adaptability to labour market requirements. The duration of the scheme is until 2012;
- The “Adaptability” scheme is targeted to workers and employees from enterprises passed to part-time working due to economic reasons. Within the scheme, employed persons on part time employment will be able to receive vocational training which will be provided within the free time. Thus they will be able to upgrade and develop their vocational knowledge and skills or acquire new ones with a view to preserve their present job or find a new one in the future. The scheme will be opened until 2012.
- The “Development” scheme is targeted to persons who are redundant due to restructuring or closing down of the enterprise, reduced volume of work or closing down of a section of the production in consequence of the economic and financial crisis. The persons will receive training for development or acquiring of new vocational qualification with a view to their subsequent inclusion in employment. The scheme will be opened until 2012.
- The “Back to Work” scheme focuses on training of unemployed persons for provision of child care services and their subsequent hiring to care for children aged 1 – 3 in families where both parents are employed on labour contracts. The scheme will give priority to persons of pre-retirement age who cannot find employment and persons redundant from the system of healthcare, education and the social sphere. The scheme will be opened until 2012.

Towards development of vocational education and training (VET), in March 2009, the three major institutions in the VET sector – the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the National Agency for VET and the nationally representative employers organizations signed a Framework Agreement for cooperation in VET. The objective is to take joint actions to modernize vocational education and training. In the period until 2015 employers representatives at all levels will carry out activities for modernization and optimization of VET on regional and sectoral basis and in accordance with national economic development priorities and labour force dynamics in order to ensure provision of qualitative VET.

In order to enhance the quality of adult training a mechanism for assuring of quality and control of the adult training, organized by the Employment Agency with public funding, was developed in 2009 in cooperation with the social partners. The mechanism covers the whole training process – organization, provision, and certification and assessment of learning outcomes.

Towards increasing individuals' access to and the level of participation in training, in October 2009 a new adult training funding instrument – training vouchers – was introduced with a Decree of the Council of Ministers. Vouchers will be used to finance trainings of unemployed and employed persons for acquiring qualification in a profession and key competencies within the OP HRD. Enabling people to choose alone the type and duration of training and the training institution creates preconditions for increasing the correspondence between the training offered and the training needs. Training vouchers were used under three new schemes under the Op HRD – the “I Can” scheme, the “Adaptability” scheme, the “Development” scheme.

An important role in encouraging participation in different lifelong learning forms plays validation (assessment and verification) of knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning. A validation model developed in 2008 within the Bulgarian-German project “Promoting Adult Vocational Training and Employment” was pilot-tested in 2009.(29) As a result the validation model was improved and proposals for normative regulation of the knowledge and skills validation process were developed.

3.3 LONGER TERM CONSEQUENCES AND FUTURE RESPONSES

The consequences of the crisis are felt mainly by the middle class that began to shape in Bulgaria not until recently, as well as by the socially vulnerable groups.

Direct after effects include increasing unemployment, decreasing real incomes, limited social expenditure. Many companies now shorten working hours, dismiss workers to cut down personnel costs, make workers take unpaid leave, etc. In the current year, unemployment is expected to go up to 11.4 %. Trade unions, however, project an increase at 14 – 15 %. This means that the social cost of the economic crisis will increase, in particular for the poorer groups of Bulgarians. This in turn will lead to lower demand of education and training for vocational qualification by these groups and lower quality potential of the labor force.

The Action Plan for implementation of the National LLL Strategy envisages different measures to improve skill needs identification(4).

Implementation of projects under OP HRD works towards skills improvement at all levels through training of dropouts, continuing training and vocational training of young people, special training and retraining programs for young unemployed persons, development of lifelong learning programs, training for key competences.

Government policy priorities appropriated for in the state budget for 2010 include social security, education, ecology, and road infrastructure.

The Action Plan to the National LLL Strategy envisages:

- Enabling more people to receive training for acquiring of post-primary vocational qualification, with special focus on ethnic minority children, migrant and refugee children;
- Implementing within the Human Resources Development Program the project “Security through law, flexibility through the collective employment agreement” under which in 2010-2011 500 employed persons should receive training and acquire vocational qualification in the profession “Industrial Relations Management Assistant”. Within this program again, implement the project “Support for Decent Work” to be

developed by Confederation of Labor Podkrepa for the period 2011-2013. The expected ultimate output is a developed electronic distance learning

- Improving the employability of early vocational school leavers by including them in vocational training programs.

4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bulgaria has traditions in the vocational education and training. The first craft school was established in 1883. That same year, a **Law on the Structure of Training Craft Store in Principality Bulgaria** was passed. In **1907**, the first special **Law on the Vocational School** was passed and the first technical schools were established, and in **1921** the **Public Education Act** introduces comprehensive regulation of vocational education. **The Public Education Act of 1948** regulated the four groups of vocational schools existing at that time (VTS – vocational-technical schools, SVTS – secondary vocational-technical schools, technicums and post-secondary technicums). A **Law on Vocational Education and Training** is in effect since **1999**.

4.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR IVET

MAIN ACTS WHICH REGULATE IVET

- Vocational Education and Training ACT - VETA (1999) – provides the legislative framework of initial and continuing vocational education and training;
- Act on the Level of Education, Minimal General Educational Requirements and the Curriculum (1999) – defines the conditions and rules for the completion of education
- The Public Education Act, the Law on Level of Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum, and the State Educational Requirements regulate the attainment of lower and upper secondary education together with the study of a profession in vocational schools and vocational high schools.
- The Law on Crafts (2001) regulates the relations concerned with the practicing of crafts, the organization crafts and related apprenticeship training.
- Recognition of Vocational Qualification Act – RVQA (2008) – regulates the conditions and rules for the recognition of vocational qualifications, acquired in other member states or third countries in order to gain access and practice regulated professions.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

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

Another important document for social cooperation is the Pact for economic and social development of Bulgaria till 2009, signed by the Government and national employers' organizations and trade unions. The Pact covers measures (both for IVET and CVET) in the following key policy areas: (19)

- improvement of economic competitiveness;
- implementation of fiscal policy conducive to economic growth, including amendments to tax and social security legislation;
- active labour market policies and development of human resources, including:
- modernising the education system and achievement of high level of inclusion in formal education and implementing effective mechanisms for lifelong learning;
- expanding the sphere of State education related requirements concerning acquiring and acknowledgement of degrees of professional qualifications in all professions and

of curricula, programs and national examination programmes ensuring high quality of vocational education and training;

- establishment of a system for objective evaluation of qualifications and official acknowledgement of knowledge, skills and professional competence acquired through informal or self-education learning practices, and of unified criteria to guarantee the quality of training.

4.3 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IVET AND ORGANIGRAM

AT NATIONAL LEVEL

- **The National Assembly** performs the legislative activity in the field of education, in particular vocational education. It has special commissions on education, science, children, youth and sports matters, as well as a labor and social policy commission.
- **The Council of Ministers** sets out the government policy in the field of vocational education and training.
- **The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science** directs, coordinates and controls the implementation of the government policy for vocational education and training.
- **Ministry of Labour and Social Policy** implements the government policy **for labour market training**;
- **The Ministry of Culture** implements the government policy in the schools of arts.
- **National Agency for Vocational Education and Training** is a specialized body within the Council of Ministers for licensing of activities within the VET system and for coordinating the institutions concerned with vocational guidance and vocational education and training. **As a consultative body** develops the State Educational Requirements for the vocational education and training system and the List of Professions for vocational education and training;
- **The Human Resources Development Center** is a Bulgarian coordinating body (national agency) within the EU Lifelong Learning Program.
- **The representative employer organizations and worker and employee organizations at national level** participate **on the principle of social partnership and social dialogue** in the development, coordination and updating of the legislation and of strategic and concept documents.

Table 1: ORGANIGRAM

FUNCTION LEVEL	Decision making	Executive	Consultative	Partnership
National Level	National Assembly	The Council of Ministers; The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science; Ministry of Labour and Social Policy;	National Agency for Vocational Education and Training	Tripartite Council The representative employer organizations and worker and employee organizations
Regional Level		Regional administration Regional Employment Services Regional Inspectorates of Education	Permanent and provisional employment commissions at the regional development councils of the regions	
Local level	Municipalities	Schools	School Councils	

RESPONSIBLE BODIES AT REGIONAL LEVEL INCLUDE:

- **Regional administration** – participates in the implementation at regional level of the government policy for employment and acquiring of vocational qualification for the labor market.
- **Regional Employment Services** – organize the implementation of the government policy for training of adult unemployed persons for acquiring of vocational qualification under certain conditions; they offer also training measures and projects. They contribute to the planning of enrolments of students in vocational schools according to the regional trends of the labor market.
- **Regional Inspectorates of Education** (located in the regional centers, 28 in number) implement at regional level the government policy in the field of vocational education and training. By developing projects, programs and strategies for development, functioning and improvement of vocational education and training on the territory of the region.

AT LOCAL LEVEL:

- **Municipalities** – participate in the policy formulation in the field of vocational education and training on their territory.

PROVISION

- **Vocational schools** provide initial vocational education and training for acquiring first and second degree of vocational qualification and qualification in a section of a profession. They accept students who have completed at least 6th grade.

- **Vocational high schools** provide vocational education with acquiring of second and third degree of vocational qualification. Vocational high schools may provide also vocational training with acquiring of first, second and third degree of vocational qualification and qualification in a section of a profession. They accept students who have completed their lower secondary education.
- **Schools of arts** provide vocational education with acquiring of third degree of vocational qualification with up to four years course of study after completed lower secondary education.
- **Vocational colleges** provide vocational education and training with acquiring fourth degree of vocational qualification to individuals who have completed their upper secondary education.
- **Vocational training centers** provide vocational training to individuals who have come 16 years of age.
- **Information and vocational guidance centers** provide vocational guidance to students and other individuals.

The different implementation bodies are state, municipal or private, Bulgarian with foreign participation and foreign bodies.

4.4 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CVET

The issues of the continuing vocational education and training are regulated in a number of regulations, however of significant importance are the Labour Code, the Vocational Education and Training Act, the Employment Promotion Act, the Law on Crafts, etc.

The basic laws, which regulate the legal frame of the continuing vocational training in the country, are:

The Labour Code (LC) (1986, last amended in 2004) is the principal enactment of the labour legislation in Bulgaria, which regulates the different opportunities for vocational education and training of the employees: qualification contract, apprenticeship contract, advanced training and retraining contract, etc(14)

The **Employment Promotion Act** – EPA (2001): formulates the transition from passive social assistance towards active measures of the labour market in order to increase the employment and raise the qualification of the labour force; introduces stimuli for employers to train employed for updating and raising their qualification and to train unemployed, in the context of life-long learning; regulates the types of continuing vocational training organized by the Employment Agency and the conditions for its accomplishment (11);

The **Law on Crafts** (2001): regulates the conditions and rules for training crafts, including training by master at a concrete work place in the craft enterprise; determines the basic degrees of the craftsmen training; (15)

The **People's Community Centers Act** – PCCA (1996): regulates the activity of the community centers within the country for fulfillment of their main tasks, including expansion of the people's knowledge, united people with the values and achievements of the science, art and culture through training and creation of possibilities for studying;

4.5 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CVET

Institutional Framework for CVET is identical as described in chapter above for IVET (cf. 4.3).

NATIONAL LEVEL

- **Employment Agency** at the Minister of Labor and Social Policy implements the government policy for employment promotion, labor market protection, vocational informing and counseling.
- The **Economic and Social Council** set up in 2004 is a national consultative body for social dialogue which discusses and makes proposals on important issues of education, including of adult continuing vocational education and training in the context of lifelong learning.
- A **National Council for Tripartite Cooperation** has been set up and is operational at national level. Its main tasks are to monitor the development of the economic situation and examine new measures to address the consequences of the crisis and to support the measures to protect workers and improve the business environment for enterprises. It discusses and gives opinion on draft laws, drafts of subordinate legislation and decisions thereby participating in the vocational education and training policy formulation, but does not have direct functions in this field. Such functions are exercised through the National Employment Promotion Council at the Minister of Labor and Social Policy. This is a social partnership body in the context of the policy for employment and vocational training of employed and unemployed persons.
- **National Employment Promotion Council** at the Minister of Labor and Social Policy is acting in the context of the policy for employment and vocational training of employed and unemployed persons. It is a permanent body for social and administrative cooperation and consultation in employment policy development.
- Another social and administrative partnership body is the **National Consultative Council for Vocational Qualification of the Labor Force**. It carries out activities on coordination of the national policy and strategies for vocational training of the labour force, for coordination on national level between the social partners on the life-long learning, for coordination of the needs for vocational training.

The Labour Offices Directorates as a regional network of the Employment Agency, provide professional information, consultancy and orientation for submission in the most appropriate programme, employment and training; they organize vocational and motivating training of employed and unemployed persons.

PROVISION

The difference between IVET and CVET system is related only to the type of providers. IVET providers are VET schools while CVET is provided by VET centers after passing licensing procedures managed by National Agency for Vocational Education and Science. However, VET schools also may apply for provision of CVET and may provide both IVET and CVET if they have the license from the National Agency for Vocational Education and Science.

Vocational high schools, vocational colleges and vocational training centers are the main institutions providing CVET. Universities, special higher institutes and colleges within the system of tertiary education provide continuing vocational education and training through special units within their structure.

Non-formal continuing vocational training is offered also in the Community Centers; such cases are however rare despite the fact that they have potential for such training. Those traditional Bulgarian cultural-educational associations can organize activities for extending

people's knowledge and skills. In the smaller towns and villages they are the only institutions providing access to a library, Internet and information. That's why they have to be supported in order to contribute the development of the continuing vocational training.

The social partners, according to the VET Act are involved in the external assessment process during state examinations for acquiring qualification in a profession. Notwithstanding the opportunity provided by the Act many vocational schools and training centers have difficulties in including in the commissions representatives of branch employers and trade unions. The problem consists in lack of preparedness and sometimes of competence for real participation in the assessment of vocational competences at exit of education and in the absence of a real mechanism and internal regulatory basis for obligatoriness in ensuring the participation in commissions.

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AT REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

The employment committees at the regional development councils of the regions assist in the implementation of the national employment policy and its coordination in terms of national and local interests. The employment committees are bodies for social partnerships at regional level and consist of representatives of the district administration, regional employment service, regional inspectorate of education, social partners' organizations at regional level, etc.

Social partnership is of crucial importance **at local level**. With few exceptions, local level social dialogue on continuing vocational training is **not very effective**.

5 INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5.1 BACKGROUND TO THE INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

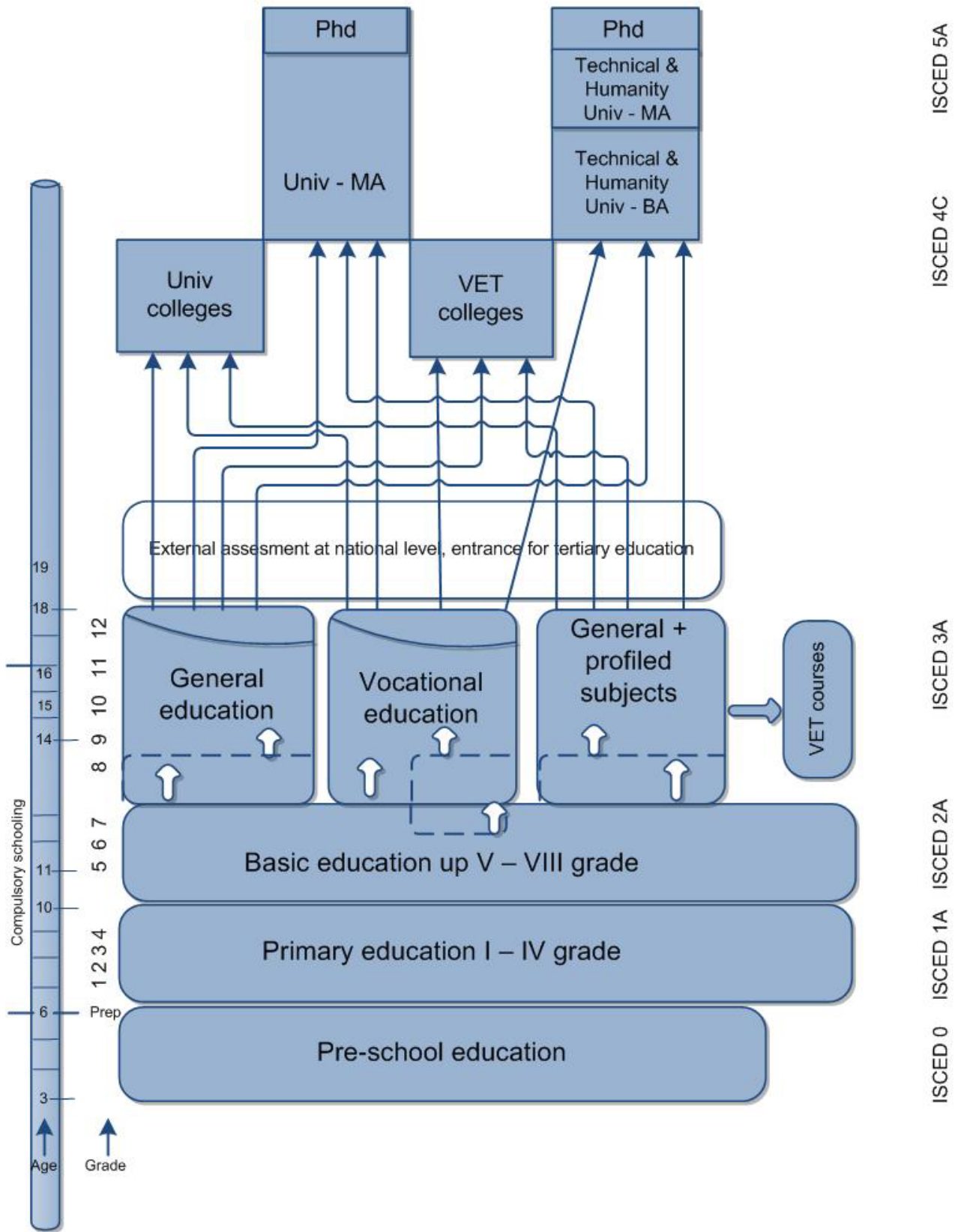
The structure of the Bulgarian system of education includes different types and levels of education providing diverse education paths. See Education System, (Fig.1)

The system of initial vocational education and training is part of the national education system and offers opportunities for acquiring vocational qualification and for its continuous improvement. According to the CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA compulsory schooling in Bulgaria is up to 16 years.

The paths for acquiring vocational education and training include:

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

Bulgarian Education System



According to the level, education is basic and secondary and according to the content it is general and vocational.

The Bulgarian system of vocational education and training comprises three basic components – *vocational guidance*, *vocational training* and *vocational education*. **Initial vocational education and training (IVET)** is an element of two of system’s components concurrently: vocational training and vocational education (cf. 1.5)

According to the VET Act from 1999 initial vocational education and training is intended for acquiring qualification in a profession on the base of several frameworks programmes approved by the Minister of Education and Science(5). These programs specify the age, entry and exit education and qualification level of candidates, as well as the content and duration and the opportunities for upgrading the vocational education and training.

TABLE 1 FRAMEWORK PROGRAMS (5)				
1. PROGRAMME “A” FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION				
TARGET GROUP	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	DURATION	LEVEL OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT (CERTIFICATES/DIPLOMAS)
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)
2. PROGRAMMES “B” FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION				
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
3. PROGRAMMES “C” FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION				
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
4. PROGRAMMES “D” FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION				

Only for people aged 16+				
5. PROGRAMMES “E” FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR ACQUIRING QUALIFICATION IN PART OF A VOCATION				
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
6. PROGRAMMES G				
Only for people aged 16+				

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

The framework programs, elaborated for every profession on the List of Professions for VET (LPVET) are intended for development of curricula and training programs for the institutions authorized to provide training for acquiring vocational qualification. The LIST includes the all contemporary and perspective professions and specialties at the labour market which have been suggested by the employers, the trade unions, education and training providers, state institutions, non-governmental organizations, vocational unions and professionals in various areas(10).

Both vocational education and vocational training are provided on basis of professions and specialties regulated with the LPVET. The list is developed by National Agency for VET (NAVET) (see 4.3) in cooperation with the social partners and is approved by the minister of education and science in coordination with the minister of labor and social policy, the relevant line ministers and the nationally representative employer organizations and worker and employee organizations.

The professions and specialties on this list are classified according to two main elements – professional branches and degree of vocational qualification. The second element – degree of vocational qualification is linked to the level of education.

TABLE 2 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

State Educational Requirement (SER) for acquiring qualification in the profession is developed in cooperation with employers for every profession placed on the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training. The State Educational 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 the vocational training; opportunities for vocational fulfillment according to Bulgarian law; objectives of training; learning outcomes – competences, knowledge, skills; requirements to the material resources for theoretical and practical training; requirements to learners. Since 2007, SERs for acquiring qualification in a profession include as a major structural element a 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 can be demonstrated. The development of SER for acquiring qualification in a profession is organized for every profession by the NAVET³ and is approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science.

The development of the curriculum and training programmes for the vocational training within the school system is responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. The content of vocational training, the breakdown by types of training and the development of curricula and training programs is based on the State Educational Requirements (SERs) for acquiring qualification in a profession.

Vocational education for all, regardless of their age, as well as vocational training for acquiring first degree of vocational education by students in the compulsory school age group is provided on basis of curricula approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science. They 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 - mandatorily elective and optional.

³ National Agency for Vocational Education and Training

TABLE 3 CURRICULA			
N	TYPE OF SUBJECTS	RELEVANT TO:	CERTIFICATE
1.	compulsory general subjects	<i>General education minimum</i>	state-recognized documents certifying attainment of secondary education level.
3.	<i>Compulsory vocational subjects</i>	acquiring qualification in a profession or a speciality	Certificate with degree of vocational qualification.
4.	<i>Compulsory selective subjects and optional selective subjects</i>	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

The structure of the programmes for vocational education include general education training, obligatory vocational training - general, branch and specific for each profession, obligatory foreign language studies related to the profession and optional studies - mandatorily elective and optional.

Pursuant to VETAct (5), compulsory vocational subjects are general, branch, and profession-specific. Compulsory general studies provide the general education minimum necessary for secondary education. They are determined on the base of the Level of Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum Act. (1991)(32)

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 and Health Education Physics and Astronomy , Chemistry and Environmental Protection, Music, Arts,, Physical Education and Sports .

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 .

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

Branch compulsory vocational subjects are unified for all professions in a professional branch placed on the LPVET(9), while taking into account the specifics of every profession. Compulsory branch

subjects provide broad profile knowledge of professions and create conditions for flexibility in mastering professions in the same branch.

The profession-specific vocational subjects build the specific competences required for practicing the 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 Programme “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 developed by the institution which provides the training or by the entity that has ordered the training.

TABLE 4 IVET AT SECONDARY LEVEL					
SCHOOLS	FRAMEWORK PROGRAMMES	TYPE OF TRAINING	LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	ATTAINMENT LEVEL
VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS	Framework programmes “A” and “B”	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	Framework programme “C”	vocational education	second and/or third degree of vocational qualification	lower secondary education level -	upper secondary level
SCHOOLS OF ARTS	Framework programme “C”	vocational education	third degree	lower secondary education level	acquire upper secondary level
VOCATIONAL COLLEGES	Framework programme “D”	vocational training	fourth degree	individuals have completed their secondary education	degree of vocational qualification
VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTERS	Framework programme “E”	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 by types is given in Table 5 and Table 6. Data show that the number of vocational high schools is decreasing, explainable by the population decrease, but vocational colleges are increasingly opened, which shows that professions requiring fourth degree of vocational qualification are in demand on the labor market. The analysis of the slowdown in the licensing of new vocational education centers and of new specialities in existing centers, observed in 2009, shows that the existing institutions have become firmly established and is in position to expand the scope of their activities.

TABLE 5 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 6 LICENCED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CENTRES				
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CENTERS	2006	2007	2008	2009
NEW LICENSES	90	132	161	130
AMENDED LICENSES	40	38	47	59

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

Acquisition of vocational education and acquisition of first degree of vocational qualification in the compulsory school age is financed by the state in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The control on the implementation of curricula and training programs in vocational schools, vocational high schools and colleges is provided by the regional inspectorates of education which are structures within the system of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science located in the 28 regional centers.

Vocational training in vocational training centers is monitored by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training. The schools of arts are under the control of the Minister of Culture.

Assessment of outcomes and organization of examinations are specified in accordance with the State Educational Requirement for the assessment system. For the organization of state examinations for acquiring a degree of vocational qualification, the Minister of Education approves national examination programs 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 order of the Minister of Education, Youth and Science introduces, from June 2009, criteria and indicators for assessment of the outcomes of the vocational preparation in school-based vocational education and training. The same order introduces also a model of self-assessment in vocational high schools and schools. Analysis of the results in the first year of implementation of the quality assurance system elements introduced in VET is pending. Vocational training centers build their own quality systems in accordance with the licensing procedure.

5.2 IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Initial vocational training linked to the requirements for the lowest level of education is provided within **Framework Program “A”** for students in the lower-secondary phase of the basic education level and for persons aged 16+ who have successfully completed the primary phase of the basic education or a literacy course.

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

The entry education level in school age can be successfully completed 6th, 7th or 8th grade and the course of study is respectively three, two or one year. The typical school age in which initial vocational education at the lower secondary phase of the basic education level is provided 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 mentally retarded children and children with deviating behavior are provided based on module training.

The duration of vocational education for individuals aged 16+ who have successfully completed the primary phase of the basic education level or a literacy course according to 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 organization 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.

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 qualification for the professions requiring first degree show 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 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM	MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS	CORRESPONDING ISCED LEVEL AND ORIENTATION	BALANCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS	BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED TRAINING	AVERAGE DURATION OF STUDIES	TRANSFER TO OTHER PATHWAYS
VOCATIONAL TRAINING AFTER 6TH GRADE	see 11B	2A	85:15	23:77	3	To Framework Programs “B”, “C”, “D”, “E” or secondary general education and labor market
VOCATIONAL TRAINING AFTER 7TH GRADE	see 11B	2A	80:20	41:59	2	To Framework Programs “B”, “C”, “D”, “E” or secondary general education and labor market
VOCATIONAL TRAINING AFTER 8TH GRADE	see 11B	3C	75:25	41:59	1	To Framework Programs “B”, “C”, “D”, “E” or secondary general education and labor market
VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR INDIVIDUALS AGED 16+	see 11B	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

Statistical data show that in the past years the number of learners who enroll to study for acquiring of vocational qualification after having completed 6th or 7th grade increases. It goes up from 1692 in school year 2005/2006 to 2087 in school year 2009/2010. This could be explained with the increased

access to this type of training. The number of learners who enroll to study for acquiring of vocational qualification after having completed 8th grade decreases, though negligibly, from 810 in school year 2005/2006 to 875 in school year 2009/2010 . Traditionally, training in school age under this program is not very popular because people strive for attaining upper secondary vocational education. The number of learners aged 16+ in the program also decreases. Statistical data for 2005 show that in all institutions having the right to provide vocational training first degree of vocational qualification acquired 5004 individuals and in 2009 their number is down to 4587.

5.3 IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL

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

TABLE 8 INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE UPPER SECONDARY PHASE						
	TYPE OF PROGRAM	TYPE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING	QUALIFICATION ACQUIRED	TARGET GROUPS	ADMISSION CRITERIA	COMPLETION AND CERTIFICATION
1	“B” Programs	initial vocational training	second degree of vocational qualification;	students and one for individuals aged 16+. (13 - 18 years)	entry education level of the program for initial vocational training of students is successfully completed 8th grade	four years studies(compulsory general, compulsory vocational, compulsory selective and optional selective training
2	“B” Programs	initial vocational training	second degree of vocational qualification;	(13 - 18 years)	The exit education and qualification level to be attained at the end of the training is second degree of vocational qualification and completed 10th or 11th grade.	Completion and certification of vocational training under the program is given in 5.1

3.	“C” Programs	vocational education	second or third degree of vocational qualification;	five variants of Framework Program “C” , 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	“D” Programs	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 development of curricula and training programs for the institutions	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 secondary). The course of study is up to one year.

					which have the right to provide training for acquiring vocational qualification	
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Source: compiled by the authors

FRAMEWORK PROGRAM “B”:

There are two cases for training under Framework programme “B”:

For students who have completed primary education or a 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 persons who have completed a 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 the variants of **Framework Program “C”** is the most common one in the Bulgarian system of vocational education and training. The objective of **Framework Program “C”** is to regulate the terms and procedure for simultaneous acquisition of general secondary education and second or third degree of vocational qualification.

There are **five** variants of **Framework Program “C”**, three for students from IVET and two for adults aged 16+. The variants for students from IVET are (table 5a):

1. with completed primary education with duration of 4 or 5 years;
2. with completed 7th grade with duration 6 years;
3. in the 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 basic education (lower secondary) and applies to the first variant.

The fifth path, which is only for students, allows for starting training in professions with third degree of vocational qualification after completion of 7th grade.

The variant with completed 7th grade with third level of qualification is popular due to the intensive studying a foreign language parallel with the compulsory general subjects. In the first year of training students do not study school subjects on the profession; they study general subjects and languages. This approach is typical only for variant two. School-based vocational education is organized in successive grades and the typical age of students receiving initial vocational education in the upper secondary phase of the secondary education level is 13 – 19 years.

Adult training under the program is of equal duration both for acquiring vocational qualification and for acquiring vocational education in professions with third degree of vocational qualification.

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.

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

Acquisition of vocational education and its certification are given in 5.1.

The preliminary analysis of the learning outcomes specified in SER for acquiring qualification in professions with third degree show 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 section of a profession by students and individuals aged 16+ through initial vocational training.

The exit qualification level to be attained at end of training under the program is acquisition of qualification in a section of a profession.

Completion of vocational training and its certification are given in 5.1.

TABLE 9 ACQUISITION OF INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE UPPER SECONDARY PHASE (FRAMEWORK PROGRAM “B” AND FRAMEWORK PROGRAM “C”)						
Type of educational programme	Main economic sectors (please refer to footnote 1)	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
Vocational training with entry after completion of 7th grade for acquiring of third degree of vocational qualification - for students	see 11B	3A	58:42	60:40	5	To Framework Programs “G”, “D” and labor market
Vocational training with entry after completion of 8th grade for acquiring of third degree of vocational qualification - for students	see 11B	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	see 11B	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+	see 11B	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+	see 11B	3C	53:47	60:40	4	To Framework Programs “G”, “D”, “E” and labor market

Note: Data for column 2 are given in the table in 11B

Source: compiled by the authors

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 selective and optional selective training can include theoretical training and practical training. Pursuant to 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.

On the whole, vocational education and training of students is provided in the school. The theoretical training is provided entirely in the vocational school and the practical training is usually a combination of training at the school and in an enterprise.

Practical training can be provided in:

- Educational and production facilities of the schools;
- Educational and production facilities of similar schools or vocational training centers in the country and abroad;
- Enterprises of legal and natural persons;
- Educational and production facilities at the enterprises

Practical training is organized as educational practical activities and practice.

Educational practical activities ensure building up of the necessary practical skills for practicing of the profession concerned.

Practice (apprenticeship) is an element of the overall vocational preparation and a part of the practical training. It is that part of the practical training in the profession where students practice at a real work place. This practice (apprenticeship) can be provided both in the school and in the enterprise.

Practice is provided during different phases of the training in accordance with what is set out in the curricula. For school-based vocational education and training it is usually after the end of the school classes for the respective school year and vocational training mandatorily ends with practice in the profession which provides mastering of competences related to the specific vocational preparation. The typical age of apprentices is 17 – 18 years for professions with second and third degree of vocational qualification, and for professions with first degree of vocational qualification it is 15 -16 years.

To organize practice in real conditions of work, every school is required to enter into a contract with the respective enterprise.

According to SER for acquiring qualification in professions and the curricula and training programs based thereon, students acquiring initial vocational education and training necessarily undergo practical training. Practical training in a real working environment is supported within the grant scheme “Development of practice training mechanisms for pupils and students” under OP Human Resources Development⁴

Building of practical skills is supported also under The National Program for Modernization of Vocational Education and Training launched in 2008 which is also based on the public-private partnership principle. It has financed 44 schools and procured 1144 work places for practical training of pupils. Twenty-two partnerships were financed and 1348 pupils were provided opportunities for practical training in enterprises in 2009.

5.5 OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

The program that helps to put in place conditions for updating or expanding acquired vocational qualification and for acquiring first, second and third degree of vocational qualification is Framework Program E. It is a precondition for development of continuing vocational training in an environment of pursued lifelong learning policy. It set out conditions for validation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired from previous experience. 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” (5) The documents certifying the acquired degree of vocational qualification are also the same – a certificate of vocational qualification and a certificate of competence issued for professions practicing whereof requires competence – including for practicing regulated professions.

A specific feature of the program is that it sets out the conditions for upgrading vocational qualifications and that initial vocational training is not allowed under this program (i.e. minimum admission age is 16 +). To be included in training for acquiring first degree of vocational qualification, one must have acquired vocational training in neighboring profession or at least in a section of a profession. The program is intended for individuals aged 16+, including also young people. 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 organized 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 program is to set out the terms and procedure for acquiring fourth degree of vocational qualification by individuals aged 16+ and those who have completed their secondary education. Duration of studies is up to two years and includes compulsory vocational training and selective vocational training. The volume of compulsory vocational training is not less than 1260 class hours and includes theoretical as well as practical training. The training in the class hours 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

⁴ Over the period 2008-2009, the scheme financed 71 projects for practical training of pupils in a real working environment. Projects are based 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 companies and enterprises.

vocational qualification is set out in SER (5) for acquiring qualification in professions and the form of training is specified by the training institution.

Preliminary analyses of the learning outcomes formulated in SER for acquiring vocational qualification in professions with fourth degree show that some of the knowledge, skills and vocational competences laid down therein correspond to level 5 of the EQF

TABLE 10 ACQUIRING POST-SECONDARY VOCATIONAL TRAINING						
Type of educational programme	Main economic sectors (please refer to footnote 1)	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	see 11B	4C	No mandatory requirement for studying general education subjects	50:50	2 (1260 class hours)	D, labor market

5.7 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Tertiary-level vocational education and training is provided in colleges (independent and within the structure of universities and special tertiary schools). Colleges are structures providing specialized vocational training in professional branches 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 programs or two-year master programs in the same professional branch (under the scheme 3+2+3).

Students are trained in specialities within professional branches (37) Since 1995, a three-degree structure has been legislatively introduced in Bulgaria. It currently comprises the following degrees: “bachelor” (“professional bachelor” – not less than 180 credits and period of study not less than 3 years; “bachelor” – not less than 240 credits and period of study not less than 4 years), “master”, and educational and qualification degree of “doctor”, which is in conformity with the Framework for Qualifications of EHEA.

The graduates of the short cycle in colleges who have acquired the degree of “professional bachelor in” have: theoretical training providing knowledge in the basics of the professional branch; specialized vocational training in accordance with the specialities taught in the college; practical training by professional branches and specialities, computer training for practicing the speciality. The curriculum contains also knowledge, skills and competences in addition to the speciality training. Those who complete the course of study must have earned not less than 180 credits, including 10 for successfully taken state examination or defended diploma paper.

The higher education programmes for obtaining professional bachelor degree are not defined by the legislation as VET programme, but because of their practical purposes and accepted view of the nature in the other European countries, they may be allocated to the VET programmes

6.1 FORMAL EDUCATION

6.1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND (ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING)

The development of the continuing vocational training (CVT) is regulated in the National Continuing Vocational Training Strategy 2005-2010(5) and the action plans, which are developed every year(17). The priorities for action relate to improvement of the conditions for access to the CVT, achievement of efficient interaction between the institutions involved in the CVT, provision of a high quality CVT, increasing of the investments in the CVT and scientific provision of the CVT.

LEGISLATION

The issues of the continuing vocational education and training are regulated in a number of regulations, however of significant importance are the Labour Code, the Vocational Education and Training Act, the Employment Promotion Act, the Higher Education Act, Law on Crafts etc.

The adopted in 2009 amendments in the LC(12) aimed at improvement of the legislation as regards to the opportunities for maintenance of the qualification and advanced training of the labour force. According to art.228a of the LC the employer shall provide the necessary conditions for maintenance of the qualification and advanced training of the workers and the employees

The training may be carried out in various forms: courses, school, workshops, business trips, specializations, etc.

An obligation of the employee is to participate in the carried out or funded by the employer training for maintenance and improvement of their professional development, to improve their vocational skills and to strive to increase the level of their qualification in accordance with the nature of the work performed

Through the forms of continuing vocational training, the VET Act enables all persons, aged 16, to acquire vocational qualification, to develop the vocational qualification acquired or to retrain in order to improve their position and chances on the labour market. Article 40 of the VET Act enables all people to obtain a document for the knowledge and the skills acquired, if they have an experience in a certain profession, which, however, is approved nationwide (5)

The Employment Promotion Act (EPA) regulates the issues related to the provision of vocational guidance and training for adults through the active labour market policy. The training for adults includes literacy training, training for acquisition of vocational qualification, training for acquisition and development of key competences and motivational training. The act stipulates the training for acquisition of vocational qualification for adults to be carried out by the institutions entitled to carry out training for acquisition of vocational qualification under the VET Act, as well as by the universities.

Moreover, the act regulates the training opportunities through active labour market policies of different disadvantaged groups: unemployed youth (under 29 years of age), disabled persons, unemployed mothers (foster mothers) with children aged 3-5, unemployed ex-convicts; persons, who have acquired the right to receive an early retirement pension and inactive people, etc.

6.1.2 MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMAL CVET

The Bulgarian legislation defines the formal learning as “learning, that occurs in an organised and structured environment and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time and resources). Formal learning is intentional from the trainee’s’ point of view. It typically leads to

certification". The definition used is borrowed from the definition of the formal learning given by Cedefop 2003, "Formal learning – Learning that occurs in an organized and structured environment (in a school/training centre or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time and resources). Formal learning is intentional from the trainee's' point of view. It typically leads to certification."

According to the survey data on the education and training for adults (AES), the participation rate of the adults in the formal education is comparatively lower than the average level for the EU countries.

PARTICIPATION RATES OF ADULTS IN FORMAL CVET

Participation of the population (aged 25-64) in the formal education according to the education attained (%),

TABLE 1 PARTICIPATION RATE IN FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2007				
ISCED97/ GEO	0-2	3-4	5-6	TOTAL
EU 27	2.5	5.7	12.2	6.3
BG	0.2	2.5	6	2.7

Source: Eurostat, AES,

http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng_aes_102&lang=en

The lowest participation rate – 0.2 % - belongs to the adults, who have completed primary or lower level of education. This result is significantly below the average participation rate of the EU countries and reflects the reality in Bulgaria. Among this group, there is a weak motivation to learn, in order to reach a higher level of education and better employment and a strong preference to perform work, which does not require any qualification or requires low level of qualification, etc.

According to the participation rate in the formal education, more active are those, who have completed secondary (2.5 %) and higher education (6%), however these levels are more than two times lower than the average levels for the EU-27.

Lower than the average levels for the EU-27 are the participation rates of the adults according to their labour status

TABLE 2 PARTICIPATION RATE IN FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY LABOUR STATUS (%), 2007				
WSTATUS/GEO	EMPLOYMENT	INACTIVE POPULATION	TOTAL	UNEMPLOYMENT
EU 27	6,2	6,4	6,3	6,3
BG	2,5	4,6	2,7	1,3
EU 27	6,2	6,4	6,3	6,3

Source: Eurostat, AES, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=trng_aes_103&lang=en

The data show that most significant are the differences in the levels for the EU-27 and the unemployed people in Bulgaria, respectively 6.3% and 1.3%. As noted above, the low educated people have low participation rate, as they prevail among the unemployment persons. Slightly higher is the participation rate in the formal education of the economically inactive people - 4.6%, but this slightly higher percentage can be explained only by the personal choice of part the economically inactive people.

TRAINING INSTITUTIONS FOR CVT

The major vocational training institutions are the vocational schools, the vocational high schools, the vocational colleges, the licensed Vocational Training Centers (VTC) and the universities, which are part of the system of higher education. All that institutions issue officially recognized documents for completed vocational training: Certificate of Vocational Training - Certificate of completed training for acquisition of vocational qualification and a part thereof Certificate of updating or expanding of vocational qualification) and Certificate of Vocational Qualification (Certificate of completed vocational training for acquisition of level of vocational qualification).

The vocational schools and vocational high schools may implement as primary vocational education and training, as well as continuing vocational training. These schools are given the opportunity to prepare their own vocational training curricula and syllabi for persons aged 16+, in compliance with the requirements of the Bulgarian legislation.

The Vocational Training Centers are legal entities licensed by the National Agency for VET (NAVET) and entitled to carry out vocational training (10). The licensed Vocational Training Centers carry out vocational training of persons aged 16+ and may offer vocational training for acquisition of first, second and third level of qualification or qualification in part of a profession.

NAVET monitors the activity of the licensed institutions in the vocational training system.

During 2009-2010 school years, the number of the vocational schools and the vocational high schools and colleges was 466, the number of the licensed Vocational Training Centers was 403 and the number of licensed Centers for Information and Vocational Guidance was only 3.

LIST OF PROFESSIONS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The List of *Professions for vocational education and training* includes the current and perspective professions and specialities, offered by the employers, the trade unions, the educational and training institutions, the government institutions, the non-profit organisations, the professional associations and the professionals, operating in various fields, on the labour market. The List is updated on an annual basis. In 2009, it covers 222 professions.

The List is used for classification of statistical data related to the vocational education and training at regional, national and international levels, for preparation of a state admission plan consistent with the needs on the labour market in the vocational schools, the vocational high schools, the vocational colleges and the art schools; for application, planning and training in the vocational training centres; for structuring and classification of information about the professions and the specialities in connection with the implementation of the vocational guidance.

LEVELS OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH ISCED

TABLE 3 LEVELS OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH ISCED			
LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION	SCHOOL HOURS/CREDITS	REQUIREMENT TO THE COMPLETED LEVEL OF EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE AT AGE 16+	EQUIVALENT IN ISCED
FIRST	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
SECOND	At least 660	10 Grade	3C
THIRD	At least 990	Secondary education	4C
FOURTH	At least 1250	Secondary education	4C

Source: compiled by the authors

In the recent years, the short-term training has been preferred – in part of a profession or in the first and second level of vocational qualification. According to the data from the National Statistical Institute, in 2009, 55,125 people completed their training in part of a profession in the Vocational Training Centres.

In 2009, 4,587 people completed their training for acquisition of first level of vocational qualification, 4,651 people completed their training for acquisition of second level of vocational qualification and 3,253 people completed their training for acquisition of third and fourth level of vocational qualification in the VTC-s, vocational high schools and vocational colleges.

FRAMEWORK TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR ACQUISITION OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

The acquisition of vocational qualification in the vocational education and training system is regulated by six Framework Programme, approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science. The Framework Programme may be used for both initial and continuing VET.

TABLE 4 FRAMEWORK PROGRAMS, TARGET GROUP 16+ (5)

1. PROGRAMME “A”				
TARGET GROUP 16+	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	DURATION	LEVEL OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT (CERTIFICATES/DIPLOMAS)
For pupils completed at least first stage of the basic education or who have successfully completed a literacy course under the Employment Promotion Act 16+	completed at least 6th grade	duration of up to 1 year;	Level 1	Certificates for Voc. Qualification
2. PROGRAMME “B”				
For pupils 16+	completed a grade from secondary education or secondary education, with duration of 1 year;	duration of up to 1 years;	Level 2	Certificate for Voc. Qualification
3. PROGRAMME “C”				
4. PROGRAMME “D”				
For 16+	Completed upper secondary education	duration of up to 2 years;	Level 4	Certificate for Voc. Qualification
5. PROGRAMME “E”				
For 16 +	Requirements depend of the profile of the profession and	duration which is determined by the specific vocational	For 16 +	Requirements depend of the profile of the profession and are

	are determined in the SER	training		determined in the SER
<p>Programme “F” for continuing vocational training for updating or expanding a vocational qualification already acquired and also for obtaining Level 1, 2 and 3 of vocational qualification - duration which is determined by the specific vocational training documentation</p>				

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

The Programmes “A”, “B”, “C” and “D” are specified for each profession, laid down in the List of Professions for vocational education and training by the State Educational Standards for acquisition of vocational qualification, on the basis of which curricula and training programmes are developed. Programmes E and F are specified in the vocational training documentation – i.e. in the curricula and syllabi. The documentation is prepared by the training institution or by the candidate, who demands vocational training, whereas when a level of vocational qualification is acquired, this documentation shall comply with the State Educational Standards for acquisition of vocational qualification.

The minimum age for enrolment in any programme for vocational training for persons aged 16+, is 16.

STATE EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS (SER) FOR ACQUISITION OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

The State Educational Requirements (SER) for acquisition of vocational qualification define the professional competences, required by the relevant profession. The SER are developed for the professions, included in the List of Professions for vocational education and training. They are mandatory for all training institutions, which are entitled to carry out vocational training.

The State Educational Standards by professions contain the following elements:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirements for minimum pre-enrolment level of education and qualification for enrolment in the training;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of the profession - work activities, responsibilities, personal qualities, specifics of the working environment, equipment and instruments;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for continuing of the vocational training;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for professional development according to the National Classification of Occupations;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives of the training - mandatory general vocational training, uniform for all professions/professional guidance; mandatory branch vocational training, uniform for all professions/professional guidance and mandatory vocational training;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes of the training - knowledge, skills and personal qualities, which are acquired as a result of the vocational training;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirements for the training facilities necessary for theoretical and practical training;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirements for the trainers with respect to the speciality, the degree and the vocational qualification and competence.

The effective SER is 102 in number, where as 56 are in process of development.

CURRICULA AND SYLLABI

The curricula for the training for the adults include the mandatory vocational subjects, listed below:

- general subjects, common to all professions/professional guidance;

- branch vocational subjects, uniform for all professions/professional guidance;
- specific vocational subjects – it refers to specific profession or speciality.

At the development of the curricula for the training for the adults, the modular approach is widely used and, however, it is a basic requirement for the training institutions. Each module includes topics and tasks required for acquisition of knowledge, skills and personal and professional competences and combines the theoretical knowledge and the practical skills necessary to perform certain activity.

QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE TRAINING FOR ADULTS

Since December 2009, by order of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Mechanism for Quality Assurance and Monitoring of the Training for Adults, developed by the Employment Agency, (EA) has been established. An interagency working group, which involved representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the Employment Agency, the National Agency for VET, the General Labour Inspectorate, the social partners and independent experts in the field of education, developed the mechanism.

To ensure quality of the training for adults, since the beginning of 2009, a new methodology for assessment of the proposals on the vocational guidance and training for adults, developed and funded by the Employment Agency, has been applied. The three key factors for provision of the training - curriculum, training team and training facilities - are assessed. External experts, offered by the social partners, assess the proposals on the vocational training.

INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION IN CVT

According to the Labour Code the employers are obliged to provide conditions for maintenance and improvement of the vocational qualification of the employees for efficient performance of their duties under the employment relationship in compliance with the requirements of the performed work and their future professional development. In case of continuous absence of employees from work the employers are obliged to provide conditions for acquainting with the novelties in the work occurred during their absence, and for achieving the necessary qualification level for efficient performance of his employment duties.

Simultaneously, the employees are obliged to participate in the forms of training organised or financed by the employers for maintenance and improvement of the vocational qualification, for improvement of the vocational skills, and also to take effort to improve their qualification level in compliance with the performed work.

To encourage the participation in CVT, the Labour Code stipulates various opportunities for acquisition of qualification or professional development through different types of contracts.

TABLE 5 TYPES OF INCENTIVES

No	CONTRACTS	TARGET GROUP	SPECIFIC ISSUES
1	Contract for Acquiring of Qualification	Signed between the employer and the person, who is entering or has entered a training institution for acquiring a qualification.	<p>The obligations of the employer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to support the trainee and other terms related to the training; 2. upon termination of the training to give employment to the trainee suitable for his acquired qualification for a period agreed by both parties, which cannot be longer than 6 years. <p>Obligations for the trainee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to finish his training for the agreed qualification according to schedule; 2. to take up employment with the employer in the agreed period of time
2	Apprenticeship Contract	Signed between the employer and the pupil, as the employer undertakes to train the pupil in a certain profession or speciality, and the pupil undertakes to become familiar with it	<p>The contract shall set down the forms, the place and the duration of training, which cannot be longer than 6 months, the compensation due by the parties in case of non-performance as well as other issues related to the training.</p> <p>The parties shall set down in the contract the period of mandatory work by the trainee with the employer after successful completion of the training course, and the employer shall provide work in accordance with the acquired qualification. That period shall not be longer than 3 years.</p> <p>During the training the trainee shall receive labour remuneration in proportion with the work done but not less than 90 per cent of the minimum work salary decreed for the country.</p> <p>The results of the training by apprenticeship contract shall be established by a theoretical and practical test of the trainee. Upon successful passing of the test the trainee shall qualify for a certain degree of qualification in the</p>

			<p>corresponding profession or speciality.</p> <p>After successful completion of the training the employer, in accordance with the apprenticeship contract, must appoint the trainee to a job corresponding to the acquired qualification, and the trainee must take up the job and work during the agreed period.</p>
3	Upgrading Qualification Training and Retraining Contract	Signed between the employer and the worker or the employee for training for upgrading of qualification or for acquisition of qualification in another profession or speciality (re-training)	<p>The contract shall stipulate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. profession and speciality in which the employee is to be trained; 2. place, form and duration of the training; 3. financial, living and other conditions during the period of training. <p>The contract may provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an obligation of the employee to work with the employer for a fixed period, but not longer than 5 years; 2. liability for non-completion of the training
4	Contract for Qualification With a Non-Working Person	Signed between the employer and a person who is preparing to start work with the employer upon completion of the training.	The training could be for upgrading of qualification or for acquisition of qualification in another profession or speciality (re-training)

Source: compiled by the authors

PARTICIPATION OF THE POPULATION AGED 25-64 IN THE FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The persons aged 25-64, compared to the youth aged 7-24, do not participate quite often in the formal education and training. In 2007, only 2.7% of the adults enrolled in the educational system (school, college or university).

TABLE 6 PARTICIPATION RATE IN FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2007				
ISCED97/ GEO	0-2	3-4	5-6	TOTAL
EU 27	2.5	5.7	12.2	6.3
BG	0.2	2.5	6	2.7

Source: compiled by the authors

6.2 NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Bulgarian legislation defines the non-formal education as:

- Any organized educational activity carried out outside the formal system(17);
- Any organized educational activity carried out outside the educational institutions. The non-formal education may include Literacy Programme for adults, life skills, work skills, general culture, etc. The non-formal education is intentional from the trainee's' point of view, but it does not provide any official document. The outcomes of the training may be validated and certified

TRAINING PROVIDED BY ENTERPRISES

According to the Survey on Vocational Training of Employed, carried out by the National Statistical Institute in June 2005, only 25% of the enterprises organized CVT for their employees (courses or another forms). In general, the companies carry out CVT of the personnel when new or improved quality products or services are introduced on the market, when the production methods are improved or when a new company organization or structure is created. According to the survey the innovation activity of the enterprises was relatively low and the number of the enterprises, which introduced new technologies or state-of-the-art methods for production of products or services, was limited. However, this data are different for the large companies, where the changes in the structure and the management occur four times more often, compared to the small companies and micro-enterprises, and therefore determined their relatively active policy with respect to the training of the personnel. Only one-fifth of the employers assessed the qualification and the skills of their employees. The professional skills of the employees were better assessed by the enterprises, which number of employees exceeded 250 - 46.4% of them assessed the professional skills of their employees, while the rate of the enterprises, which number of employees is in the range 5 - 9, was three times lower (15.5%).

TRAINING PROVIDED BY COMMUNITY CENTRES

The Community Centres (3,472) are as traditional Bulgarian educational and cultural institutions, as well as community development centres, which are the best negotiators as regards to the dialogue with the local authorities, the business and the various community groups. They offer non formal CVT.

They are various in content – new information about the alternative forms of employment, carry out motivational courses, acquisition of basic computer literacy, use of Internet and different software, foreign language training, alternative agricultural production (e.g. beekeeping, viticulture), etc.

The non-formal education is usually carried out in the city itself, which makes it more accessible and cheaper.

RECOGNITION OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

The Vocational Education and Training Act (VET) (art.40) enables the people, who have acquired professional skills in a certain profession or who have participated in practical training, to obtain officially recognized documents, certifying the professional skills acquired. In order to obtain the above-mentioned documents, people are required to have working experience in the profession at least 6 months or to participate in a practical training, the duration of which is determined by the training institution. The persons shall sign a contract with a training institution in order to sit for examinations for acquisition of a level of vocational qualification (theoretical and practical examinations in the profession) and, if necessary, to carry out practical training. Each training institution that has the right according to the VET Act to provide training for acquisition of vocational qualification in the respective profession or specialties shall play this role. The examinations are provided for free.

PARTICIPATION OF THE POPULATION AGED 25-64 IN THE NON-FORMAL TRAINING

Data for 2009 and 2008 is not available. The last available survey is for 2007. In that time the high participation rate of the employees in the non-formal education is due to the opportunity of the employers to carry out and fund the training and to the opportunity of the employees to self-finance their training.

TABLE 7 PARTICIPATION RATE IN NON FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (%), 2007				
ISCED97/ GEO	0-2	3-4	5-6	TOTAL
EU 27	16.3	33.3	52.8	32.7
BG	15	38.2	50	35.2

Source: Data is from Survey on Education and Training for Adults (people aged 25-64), carried out by the National Statistical Institute, during the period February 2007 - October 2008 within the Eurostat Pilot Project, financed by the PHARE Multi-Country Programme 2005. According to the methodology used by Eurostat

According to the Survey on Education and Training for Adults in the last 12 months nearly three quarters (72%) of the participants in the non-formal education participated in a training course, every fifth (19.7%) participated in two training courses, 3.1% - in 3 training courses and 2.4% - in 4 and more training courses.

The residence influences the level of participation in the non-formal education. The participation rate of the city residents is higher; however, they have better opportunities for participation in non-formal education (38.1%) than those living in the rural areas - 27.2%.

INFORMAL TRAINING

According to definition used in the Survey on Education and Training for Adults, according to the methodology of Eurostat.

Informal training is a “training which aims at achieving specific objectives and which is not so well organised and structured....which may cover different training events (activities) in the family, at the workplace and in the everyday life of each person and which may either be self-oriented, family oriented or community oriented”

The Survey on Education and Training for Adults showed that almost 1/3 or 28% of the population aged 25-64 participated in an individual training. The women were more active than men were - their participation rates were 29.7% and 26.2% respectively. Every third person aged 25-34 participated in a type of individual training (34.8%), while the participation rate of people aged 35-54 was relatively small - 28.9% and 18.6% of the persons aged 55-64. The participation rate was significantly influenced by the level of education and however, the “higher was the level of education” of the person, the greater was the opportunity for self-education. More than half of the persons, who have completed higher education (54.9%), participated in a type of individual training, while the participation rate of those, who have completed primary or lower level of education, was only 10.1%. Moreover, the participation rate was influenced by the labour status - every third employee was involved in this type of training, while the participation rate of the unemployed and economically inactive people was two times lower. The city residents were often involved in some forms of individual training - 31.1%, while the participation rate of the residents of the villages was 19.1%.

The most popular method of self-education was the use of printed materials (books, textbooks, professional journals, manuals, etc.). This method was used by two thirds of those involved in any form of self-education or 18.3% of the population aged 25-64. Another method of self-education was the use of computer (Internet), which was preferred by 63.6% of the population, however, by the youngest people. Another form of self-education was the educational TV programme, the use of audio and videotapes for educational purposes, etc., whereby the participation rate was 46.8%. However, the unemployed and economically inactive people used this form of self-education. 30.9% of the participants in the self-education benefited from the knowledge of a family member, friend or colleague to enhance their knowledge or skills. The visits to the training centres (including libraries and community centres) and the sightseeing, where the participation rate was respectively 11.3% and 7.1%, proved to be unpopular.

The research showed a felt need of acquisition of knowledge and skills in the field of information and communication technologies - every sixth (17.2%) person was self-taught in the field of Applied Informatics, including as learning of the basic computer literacy, as well as acquisition of the necessary skills regarding the use of software applications and programming. The felt need to study foreign languages was indicated by every tenth participant in the self-education. Other fields preferred for self-education were agriculture (plant growing and livestock), accounting service and taxation, healthcare and cooking.

6.3 MEASURES TO HELP JOB SEEKERS AND PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

The EPA defines the “disadvantaged groups on the labour market” as groups of unemployed people with lower level of competitiveness on the labour market. The main challenges for the policy with respect to the integration of the disadvantaged groups on the labour market are the risks of long-term unemployment, the marginalization, the demotivation, the low level or lack of level of education and qualification, the influence of negative factors, such as health problems, family problems, etc.

These are unemployed youth, including permanently disabled people, people from social institutions, who have completed their education, long-term unemployed people, registered with the Labour Office for at least 12 months, unemployed permanently disabled people, unemployed people - single parents (foster parents) and/or mothers (foster mothers) with children under 3 years of age, people who have

served their prison sentence, unemployed people over 50 years of age, unemployed people with basic or lower level of education and without qualification.

UNEMPLOYED YOUTH UNDER 29 YEARS OF AGE

One of the main reasons for the high unemployment among the youth is the low level of education and qualification and the lack of length of service and working experience, which in the conditions of economic crises, significantly reduces their chances to find a job and increases the risk of long-term unemployment. Therefore, the unemployed youth are the major target groups of the employment policy in Bulgaria. They are involved with a priority in a number of measures and programmes for training and employment. Moreover, special programmes and measures aimed at gaining access of the youth to the labour market and increasing of their employability are implemented.

National Programme “Start of Career”

In order to facilitate the transition from education to employment, the National Programme “Start of Career”, which enables acquisition of working experience for unemployed youth, who have completed secondary or higher level of education, is implemented.

Youth under 29 years of age, who do not have any work experience, who have completed higher education (with diploma acquired) and who are registered with the Labour Office Directorates, may apply for practical training in the public administration, i.e. in ministries, agencies, regional and municipal administrations, etc. The youth under 24 years of age, who have completed vocational education, and who do not have working experience in the profession, which they are qualified for, and who are registered with the Labour Office Directorate, are entitled to apply for a job in the private sector. The probation period under the programme is up to 6 months. In 2009, 448 young people were included in the programme, of whom 31 with vocational education,. The employers are searching mainly for specialists in the field of economics, public administration, international relations, law, computer systems and technologies, ecology, social work, engineering, tourism, etc.

Project “Youth, leaving school”

To ensure social integration and improvement of the employability of the unemployed youth, dropped out of school before completing basic or secondary education, the Project “Youth, leaving school” is implemented.

The project provides vocational training and/or training for acquisition of key competences and practical training up to 6 months or apprenticeship training under the supervision of a coach. In 2009, 113 youth were involved in training under the project.

Project “Profession - Vocation”

Since 2009, the Project “Profession - Vocation”, which aims to improve the employability and the competitiveness of unemployed people on the labour market, however mainly of unemployed young people under 29 years of age without profession and working experience, has been launched in the town of Burgas.

The project provides training for acquisition of qualification in part of the profession “Fitter of energy facilities and installations”, motivation for active behaviour on the labour market and employment.

Incentives for employers to open jobs for unemployed young people under 29 years of age, orphans and disabled youth

In pursuance of the Employment Promotion Act, incentives, which promote the employers to open jobs for unemployed young people under 29 years of age, orphans and disabled youth, are implemented.

The employers shall be funded by the state budget for active labour market policy regarding the wages and/or the payments under the labour and social security legislation of each hired person for a period up to 12 months. When the work requires the hired person to have a higher education, he/she will be paid higher wage. Opportunities for training on the workplace, such as practical and apprenticeship training are given. A person, who has acquired vocational qualification or qualification in a part of profession within the previous 24 months, required by the job description, and who is not experienced in this profession, may participate in practical training. The practical training enables the person to acquire skills and experience. A person, who has basic or lower level of education and does not have vocational skills qualification, may participate in apprenticeship. At the apprenticeship, the employer shall be required to train the employee in the certain profession or craft with the help of another worker or employee (coach).

UNEMPLOYED PERSONS WITH LOW LEVEL OF LITERACY, WITHOUT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

The persons with low level of literacy and the persons without education and vocational qualification are one of the most vulnerable group on the labour market, which may easily become subject to risk of long-term unemployment. Significant parts of this group are the Roma, who, for a number of factors, have not finished school and have small chances to find a job.

National Programme for Literacy and Vocational Training of Roma

An independent National Programme for Literacy and Vocational Training of Roma, which aims at improvement of the employability of the illiterate and low-literate unemployed people by involving them in literacy courses and vocational training, has been implemented. In 2009, 837 persons in total were involved in the programme, as 789 people participated in literacy courses and 63 persons - in vocational training.

Apprenticeship training

In pursuance of the Employment Promotion Act, people who have basic or lower level of education and without vocational qualification may participate in apprenticeship training on the workplace under the supervision of a coach. At the apprenticeship, people may learn practical skills in the course of work. In 2009, 251 unemployed people were involved in apprenticeship training.

Scheme “Literacy for Adults” under the OP “HRD”

The Scheme “Literacy for Adults” under the OP “HRD” envisages 10,500 people over 16 years of age, who have not completed the first level or grades of the second level of basic education, to be included in literacy training and/or in training to complete grades of the basic education. Under the scheme, instruments for validation and certification of the first level of basic education and completed grade of basic education, preparation of the training materials, consistent with the needs of the target group (including the disabled people, persons whose mother tongue is different from Bulgarian, and persons, belonging to other disadvantaged groups) and training of 500 teachers, who will be engaged in the adult training, will be implemented. The aim is to provide “a second chance” to the illiterate persons and the persons, dropped out of school, to educate, to gain the right of access to any vocational training and to participate in the labour market. The duration of the scheme is until 2012.

UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE OVER 50 YEARS OF AGE

The unemployed people at pre-retirement age have equal access to all programmes and projects for employment and training. The Employment Promotion Act provides special incentive for employers to hire unemployed people over 50 years of age. The employers shall be funded by the state budget for active labour market policy regarding the wage (amounting to the minimum working salary or higher of the hired person has higher education) and payments under the labour and social security legislation.

An incentive related to the employment of people aged 50-64, who have acquired the right to receive an occupational pension for early retirement, is implemented. According to it the employers shall be provided funds to pay the social and health insurance contributions. In view of the fact, that the workers and employees over 50 years of age often need additional training to meet the needs of the employers, the incentive enables the receipt of funds for training for acquisition of vocational qualification of the persons hired. The subsidies for employment shall be paid for a period up to 12 months, as the employer has the obligation to retain the employee for an additional period equal to the period of receipt of the subsidy.

UNEMPLOYED DISABLED PERSONS

National Programme for Employment and Vocational Training of Disabled Persons

National Programme for Employment and Vocational Training of Disabled Persons, which includes two components, is implemented: Component 1 "Training for acquisition of vocational qualification" carried out in accordance with the disabilities of the unemployed people and the identified needs of the employers, who may open jobs for unemployed disabled persons and Component 2 "Employment", which encourages the employers to employ disabled persons, either full-time or part-time, for a period at least 36 months.

Programme "Loan without interest for disabled persons"

The Programme "Loan without interest for disabled persons" ensures equality and creates conditions for economic and social integration of the disabled people by enhancement of their competitiveness, achievement of sustainable self-employment, creation of entrepreneurial attitude at the persons with reduced working capacity to start and develop own business. In 2009, 250 persons with reduced working capacity, whom the interest on the credits given by the Microcredit Guarantee Fund has been paid, were involved in the programme.

Incentives for employers to open jobs for unemployed people with permanent disabilities

In pursuant to the Employment Promotion Act the employers shall be funded by the state budget for active labour market policy regarding the wage (amounting to the minimum working salary or higher if the hired person has higher education) and the payments under the labour and social security legislation of each hired person with disability for a period up to 12 months. The employer has the obligation to retain the employee for an additional period equal to the period of receipt of the subsidy

In 2009, 1,476 persons were employed average per month in accordance with the measure for employment of unemployed disabled persons and 633 new persons were involved.

UNEMPLOYED WOMEN

The Employment Promotion Act provides incentives to promote employment of mothers with small children. It encourages the employers to hire mothers (adoptive mothers) with children under 3 years of age and mothers (adoptive mothers) with children aged 3-5. For each new job opened for unemployed women (mothers with children under 3 years of age and children aged 3-5), not included in the average number of staff for the past six months, the employer shall receive subsidies, including funds for the full-time wages for each employee, which amount is determined on an annual basis in the National Employment Action Plan, the hourly part-time wages, funds for payments under the labour and social security legislation.

To improve the level of qualification of the employed mothers with children aged 3-5 the employer may offer vocational training. The unemployed mothers may be involved in training for acquisition of vocational qualification, carried out by the employer and the Employment Agency, funded by the state budget for active labour market policies.

Moreover, in support of the employment of mothers with small children, the National Programme "In support of the motherhood" is implemented. The programme aims at the promotion of employment of the women and their professional development by taking care of their children by the time they reach 3 years of age. Continuation of the Programme "In Support of the motherhood" is the Scheme "Back to Work" under the OP HRD, which is implemented through employment of unemployed persons to take care of the children of families, where both parents are employed under labour contracts or are self-employed.

SOME STATISTICAL DATA ON PARTICIPATION

According to the administrative data of the Employment Agency, in 2009 about 10,182 unemployed people completed vocational training courses financed by the state budget for active labour market policy, as some of them begun their training in the previous year. After successful completion of vocational training course, 31.7% of the unemployed people were employed⁵. Compared to the previous year, the number of the unemployed people, who have completed vocational training and their realisation on the labour market, significantly reduced⁶. The main reason was the deepening of the economic downturn in 2009 and the increasing unemployment in the country, which led to cutting of the training resources and to diversion of funds to provide employment.

In 2009, in order to acquire knowledge and skills to enable protection of the current job or to start a new one, 2,949 employees were involved in training courses. The workers and the employees, whom the vocational qualification requirements, due to changes in the production were increased, prevail. At the request of the employers for protection of the job, the largest was the number of the employed, who were trained in the lining and flooring, painting, reinforcement and concrete, catering, etc.

⁵ According to the data from the National Revenue Agency

⁶ According to the data from the Employment Agency, in 2008, 25,634 unemployed people completed training for acquisition of vocational qualification, of which 45, 5% started wo

7.1 TYPES OF TEACHER AND TRAINER OCCUPATIONS IN VET

7.1.1 TEACHING AND TRAINING OCCUPATIONS IN VET

GENERAL FRAMEWORK

According to the National Classification of Occupations in the Republic of Bulgaria, the teachers are defined as follows:” The teachers teach one or more subjects, either in theory or in practice, or subjects at different levels of education, as moreover, they carry out researches, develop and use concepts, theories and practical techniques on these subjects and prepare textbooks and workbooks...”.

According to Public Education Act the “teacher” (both for general and vocational subjects) can be can be a **citizen** qualified to work as a “teacher”. Teachers are trained in higher institutions. The Act enables persons, who have completed education in the certain sector of the industry to carry out vocational training, i.e. persons, who have not obtained qualification “teacher”.

Public Education Act Art.39,

- item 3 “Vocational training of students can be performed by persons who have completed their education in the relevant professional field”;
- item 4 “Teachers and head teachers are provided with the necessary conditions to improve their qualification.”

The levels of education are “Bachelor” , “Master” and “Specialist”. Teacher training both for “Bachelor” and “Master” educational levels is conducted at all accredited higher education institutions. ‘Specialist’ is conducted in the colleges.

For clarity, in Bulgaria we use the term "teacher training" in the sense of acquisition of a level of education and the term "qualification" in the sense of training, which aims to upgrade the scientific knowledge, the practical skills and the new teaching methods. In the school system (IVET) we also use the term “instructor” or “teacher of practical classes” in the sense of ‘trainer”. “Trainer” is the position in the training centres, in labour market training courses which are part of CVET.

TYPES OF TEACHING OCCUPATIONS

The VET system contains vocational education teachers which are both teachers and trainers. They provide a range of programmes: vocational classes after 6th grade within basic education; vocational lower and upper secondary education , professional development and continuing education.

Teachers

The position of ‘teacher’ in a general school subjects as part of vocational training can be held by people having educational degrees ‘Master’, ‘Bachelor’ and ‘Specialist’ in one of the following:

- specialty from a professional area corresponding to the general school subjects(mathematics, chemistry, literature, languages, sport, etc.) with the obtained professional qualification of a ‘teacher’ and
- specialty from another professional area and an additionally obtained professional qualification of a ‘teacher’ in a general school subjects.

It should be taken into account that the universities and the colleges, teach mainly professionals in various humanitarian, natural mathematics, technical and medical specialties. The students themselves decide whether to acquire teaching qualification along with the main speciality or not.

The position of “teacher” in vocational subjects as part of the compulsory vocational subjects can be held by people having educational degrees ‘Master’, ‘Bachelor’ and ‘Specialist’ in one of the speciality from the professional area engineering, technology, economy , agriculture, tourism, healthcare, , social affairs, ecology, etc

The model for VET teachers could be:

- educational degree in branch of industry: construction, chemistry, agriculture, production of food, services, tourism and etc. and “teacher” qualification;
- only an educational degree in certain branch of industry without “teacher” qualification;
- an educational degree and a “teacher” qualification in general subjects.

In Bulgaria there are no significant differences between the preparation for teaching in the vocational education system and preparation for teaching in the system of adult education. According to the regulations, the compulsory employment of the teachers (for General and for Vocational Subjects) is determined in different ways. The teaching standards set the number of classes of the teachers within the working hours, set forth in their contract, according to the requirements of the Labour Code.

In Bulgarian language the term “teacher” is used both for the process of IVET and CVET.

According to(Regulation № 3 dated February 18th 2008 on the teaching standards and procedures for determining the number of the staff in the national education system, issued by the Minister of Education and Science, published in the State Gazette (SG), issue 27 dated March11th 2008,) For the theory teachers there are 680 classes and for practice teachers - 864 classes.

Trainers (“teachers of practical classes”)

The teachers of vocational subjects, involved in training, according to the curricula in occupations and specialities, should be professionals in the following professional fields: engineers, technologists, economists, agronomists, doctors, professionals in the field of tourism, ecology, healthcare, social activities, public security and safety, etc. **The majority of these professionals acquire teaching qualification in the course of their professional activity.** Moreover, no restrictions (regulatory or other) regarding the pursuit of the occupation by professionals in the industrial sector exist.

TEACHER TRAINING AND TEACHER’S CERTIFICATE

Teacher training and the acquisition of a teacher’s certificate traditionally is organised by higher education institutions. It is regulated in the curricula of the specialties on the basis of different legal acts.

The specifics of the vocational education and training require a significant expansion in the field and the content of the teacher and trainer training, compared to this of the general education. Important aspects of the training of teachers for vocational subjects (both theory and practice) are:

- The upgrading and expansion of the knowledge and skills acquired by the compulsory general education. Example: the curricula in the vocational education and continuing vocational training system, after the subjects Mathematics, Informatics and Information Technologies, include specific for the certain occupation and training course subjects, such as Economic Informatics, Electronic Engineering, Computer Processing of Financial and Accounting Information, Electronic Commerce, etc.
- The logical connection and synchronisation between the theoretical and practical training in the specialities and the occupations;
- The specific forms and methods of practical training. Example: training in education and training companies, industrial training in real industry work environment, etc.;
- The impact on the introduction of new techniques and technologies in the educational content;

- The role of the key competences for successful pursuit of the occupation and mobility on the labour market. Example: foreign language training, teamwork skills, conflict resolution, presentation skills, etc.

TEACHERS' QUALIFICATION LEVELS

The training and acknowledgement of vocational qualification comply with Regulation № 5 dated December 29th 1996 (published in SG, issue 6 dated 1997; as amended in SG, issue 8 dated 1997; as supplemented in SG, issue 73 dated 1997). In accordance with the level of professional competence reached, the teaching staff may acquire the following levels of vocational qualification:

TABLE 1 LEVELS OF TEACHER'S QUALIFICATION		
	VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION
1	Level 5	after successful completion of oral examination according to the syllabus;
2	Level 4	after successful completion of written examination according to the syllabus;
3	Level 3	after successful completion of special one-year vocational teacher training
4	Level 2	after defence of a thesis on the analysis of a diagnostic procedure, applied by the candidates
5	Level 1	after defence of a written working research and innovation project on the teaching practice

Source: compiled by the authors

A very important feature of the system for acknowledgment of qualification is the education and individual tutorials in support of teacher career development. On the basis of the Regulation, teachers in Bulgaria can pursue a positive professional career on the basis of this-degree scale. The first two degrees suppose an orientation to certain contents and technology-related innovations and a presentation of their own good pedagogical practices. The next three degrees ensure step-by-step progress towards activities connected with the application in practice of novelties as well as the creating and testing of own innovations. For the first (highest) degree that also means the popularisation of own innovations through publications.

The requirements for the professional knowledge and skills of the trainers refer to the **craft training as well**, despite the specifics of its content, organisation and certification. The training and acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences is organised and carried out in accordance with the Crafts Act. (Crafts Act, effective as of May 28th 2001, published in SG, issue 42 dated April 27th 2001, as amended in SG, issue 15 dated February 23rd 2010).

The teachers, according to their vocational qualification, shall realize in the school education system and, for the purposes of the labour market, in the training schools by interests and Vocational Training Centres.

7.1.2 RESPONSIBLE BODIES

INSTITUTIONS WHICH REGULATE THE TEACHER AND TRAINER TRAINING

Ministry of Education, Youth and Science provides the planning of the initial training of teachers, the number of the students involved and the funding.

Universities and colleges provide initial teacher training. There are different training programmes for general subject teachers, for vocational teachers and for vocational trainers.

28 Regional Inspectorates of Education (under the Ministry of Education) whose main functions include quality control of the education and training, selection and qualification of the teachers and provision of conditions for their career development.

The Departments of In-Service teacher training carries out activities related to the **training and to acknowledgement of vocational qualification.**

Departments for in-service teacher training of Sofia University, Trakia University and Shoumen University are the main units offering qualification programmes for the greatest number of teachers. These departments hold institutional accreditation by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency as part of the procedure for the relevant higher education institutions.

Besides these departments, in 2005 a special National Pedagogical Centre started to function.

(Regional Rules of the national Pedagogical Centre, state gazette, 17/22.02.2005.)

The Centre has regional structures and one of its main functions is to organise large-scale qualification activities at the regional (local) level in cooperation with the Regional Inspectorates of Education at the Ministry with the strong financial support of the local authorities (municipalities) and the state. Departments for in-service teacher training have a fifty-year-tradition in promoting practical innovations among the teaching body. They support the gradual introduction of priorities in the education policy of the Ministry of Education and Science.

7.1.3 RECENT REFORMS TO VET TEACHER/TRAINER TRAINING

In November 2009, opportunities for career development of teachers and educators were introduced as a key element of the activities for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the teaching and education process. Five horizontal development teacher positions have been introduced: junior teacher, teacher, senior teacher, head teacher, teacher – methodologist, respectively educator positions: junior educator, educator, senior educator, head educator, educator - methodologist.

In 2009 year Ministry of Education and Science announced New Plan for teachers Qualification. Several projects were launched. One of the projects is **Modernisation of Vocational Education** with duration of 18 months and total number of classes - 250. The training is provided in Sofia, Varna and Stara Zadora and designated for engineers, economists, practice teachers in the VET system, etc., who teach in different training institutions. The training programmes include psychological and pedagogical, methodological and private and scientific-oriented modules.

The number of teachers in 2009 from the city of Sofia, who completed training under the project (in the National Teacher Training Centre), was 1,847 and the number of those from the city of Plovdiv -

405. The number of teachers, who acquired qualification in interactive teaching methods in the region of Varna, was 426, which, however ranked the category third. The largest number of teachers - 841, completed maintenance course in their speciality. 437 teachers completed the training in helping children with aggression and conflict resolution in different groups and situations. Only in the year 2009, 167 teachers completed training in project development and protection, 146 – in secondary school drop-out prevention and 138 were interested in teamwork skills development.

The most recent approaches for qualification training of the VET teachers include interactive and group techniques, which focus on the communications and the dialogue in the training process. The technique is based on the principles of continuing vocational training in the lifelong learning and on the key strategic objectives of the renewed Lisbon Strategy.

7.2 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

7.2.1 TYPES OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS IN IVET

The teachers and the trainers are grouped as follows: teachers in general subjects: mathematics, literature, history, geography, languages, sports, informatics and etc.; teachers in vocational (general and special) subjects for theory and practice.

The number of the teachers employed in the system of vocational education and training for the period 2000 - 2009/2010 is variable, however it varies from 18,000 in 2000/2001 school year to 14,550 in 2009/2010 school year. In general, the number of teachers and human resources employed in the education system decreased continuously, due to the improvement of the school network, caused by the economic and demographic situation in the country. The reduction of the number of teachers for this period by 21% indicates all institutions, responsible for the secondary education, in particular for the training of the labour force for the labour market 13,351 of 14,557 teachers in total, employed in the vocational schools, have completed higher education and have obtained Bachelor's or Master's degrees, 1,085 have completed higher education and have obtained Professional Bachelor's degree (mainly in the vocational colleges) and 121 have completed secondary education

TABLE 2 TEACHING STAFF IN THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS BY SEX AND EDUCATION ATTAINED IN THE 2009/2010 SCHOOL YEAR¹

(NUMBER)	2009/10 ²
Total number	14,557
Higher education - Bachelor's and Master's degrees	13,351
Higher education - Professional Bachelor's degree	1,085
Secondary education	121
Men	3,900
Higher education - Bachelor's and Master's degrees	3,122
Higher education - Professional Bachelor's degree	713

Secondary education	65
Women	10,657
Higher education - Bachelor's and Master's degrees	10,229
Higher education - Professional Bachelor's degree	372
Secondary education	56
¹ Including directors and assistant directors, employed as teachers.	
² Including the teachers in the Interschool Centres	

Source: compiled by the authors

TABLE 3 TEACHING STAFF IN THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS					
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
TOTAL NUMBER	19,064	18,775	17,389	15,445	14,557
In Art Schools (Level 3 of vocational qualification)	1,070	1,093	1,084	1,033	1,020
In vocational high schools (Level 3 of vocational qualification)	15,282	15,085	13,759	11,894	11,164
In vocational high schools after completion of secondary education (Level 4 of vocational qualification)	268	405	488	482	551
In vocational high schools and schools (Level 2 of vocational qualification)	2,352	2,120	1,970	1,943	1,708
In vocational schools after completion of 6 th and 7 th grade (level 1 of vocational qualification)	30	27	38	49	54
In vocational schools after completion of 8 th grade (level 1 of vocational qualification)	62	45	50	44	60
Total number of teachers in the private schools	736	888	979	890	986

Source: compiled by the authors

7.2.2 PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF IVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

Basic Pedagogical Teacher Training

The professional qualification of 'teacher' can be obtained after four years of study for a bachelor's educational degree and after one year of study for a master's educational/qualification degree.

Teacher training in the general subjects: Physics, Biology, Chemistry, History, Foreign languages, Theology, Sports, Music and etc. combine fundamental research skills with basic pedagogical skills. The process is regulated by a legislation document that is compulsory for all higher education institutions offering teacher training.

The Regulations includes a mandatory minimum of both theoretical and practical training

Pre service training for the teachers of vocational subjects in the process of acquisition of teachers' professional qualifications is regulated by the Council of Minister's Decree 162/1997 on the acquisition of teachers' professional qualifications. The teachers of vocational subjects obtain the specialties in the field of industry: construction, machine bulding, textile industry, chemistry, agriculture and etc. and acquire additional teacher's qualification.

The following types of higher departments offer teacher's qualifications:

A. Departments offering acquisition of qualification of 'teacher for IVET

Acquisition of qualification of "teacher" is organized by the universities of different branches of industry. Teacher training leading to a teaching qualification is carried out at the Technical University – Sofia, Russe, National Sports Academy, and the National Academy of Fine Arts, University of Construction, Chemistry University and all branch universities. In the private sector, the Bourgas Free University, the Varna Free University as well as New Bulgarian University also attract students seeking certain pedagogical specialties in Economy and Tourism,

Only two colleges in the country in Yambol and in Sliven offer training of instructors/ teachers for practice and laboratory classes.

B. Departments offering subject training

All other subject teachers at low secondary and upper secondary levels are trained at departments offering subject training (Departments of Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Biology, History etc.). Methodic Chairs and a body of professors teaching methodic disciplines function as part of these departments. As a continuation of the strategy to support student mobility, curricula consist of mandatory, non-mandatory and optional disciplines to come closer to students' individual interests.

Master's programmes last for two or three terms and are offered in both part- and full-time forms, with the latter prevailing over the former.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

All teaching staff (VET teachers and trainers, director, deputy directors, librarian, etc.) should participate in further training to improve their professional qualification.

Different continuing education programmes, courses, seminars, projects and other pedagogical tools could be used as long as they are not less than 36 contact hours in total. The Law on Education states that a teacher is responsible for their professional development. Teachers have the right to use

30 calendar days every third year for professional development as paid training leave. It is the responsibility of the headmaster of a VET school to monitor their staff development. Various organisations provide continuing training for VET teachers including school boards, municipalities,

professional associations, the vocational education centre, the teaching and examination centres, universities and higher education institutions as well as continuing vocational training centres

The requirements for advanced training of teachers and the procedure for acquisition of vocational qualification by the teachers in the forms of postgraduate training are determined in documents such as - The Public Education Act, the Rules of Application of the Public Education and Regulation No.5 dated December 29th 1996 on the requirements for participation of the teaching staff in advanced training in the public education system IREDA for acquisition of vocational qualification;

These may be courses, organised by the employers for the teachers involved in branch or specific vocational training. However, the advanced training is usually associated with acquisition of practical technical skills, with exploring new technologies in the foreign language training and with the key competences – teamwork skills, conflict resolution, occupational health and safety, emergency activities, etc. The requirements for participation in advanced training (employment law, financial, etc.) shall be negotiated between the teaching staff and their employers under art.234 of the Labour Code. The organisation of the advanced training shall be negotiated between those who apply to carry out training and the training institution. Both the applicants and the structures of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, MLSP, NAVET and the Employment Agency are entitled to control the quality of education.

The advanced training of the teachers is subject to the activity of the Department of Information and Teaching Qualification of Sofia University. Part-time training in Modernisation of Vocational Education with duration of 18 months and total number of classes – 250 is carried out in the university of Stara Zagora. The training is designated for engineers, economists, practice teachers in the VET system, etc., who teach in different training institutions.

Special attention is paid to the application of the information and communication technologies: special techniques for presentation of academic information, communication between the trainers and the trainees, management of the teaching, feedback on the extent of absorption of the educational content; current examination, examination at the completion of the teacher training and certification.

In-service training is delivered in three higher education institutions in Bulgaria in “departments for information and teacher qualification”. However these departments deal with general pedagogic and education subjects.

What can be listed as examples of good practices are project based initiatives such as training of trainer modules in a number of employment programmes.

Under the “Employment for teachers in training disabled children” programme, specialised courses are being organised and carried out for unemployed teachers who would teach children with various types of disability. The programme “Computer training for young people” also envisages courses for training of trainers. The programme “Crafts education under the dual system, pilot project” includes training of the masters related to the training of unemployed young people over 16 with secondary education. Under the “Project for the integration of young people leaving social institutions”, according to a Memorandum for agreement between the Republic of Bulgaria and Switzerland various courses have been planned for supervisors from these institutions, social workers from the “Social assistance” directorates and teachers.

The professional status of the teachers and trainers needs to be changed as the latter turn out to be among the university degree specialists who get the lowest salaries.

TABLE 4 EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS

	PROJECTS	RESULTS
1	"Promotion of Vocational Training for Adults and Employment"- Bulgaria-Germany Project"	Teacher's Guide for those, involved in adult education; Methodological materials for the teachers involved in the vocational training for adults were classified and developed for the first time.
2	"The continuing training of teachers in Bulgaria facing the challenges of the intercultural dialogue, the social solidarity and the democratic values"	National Information and Communication Technologies Strategy for the secondary schools, along with the relevant implementation programme; qualification "Teacher of Informatics and Information" Technologies"; Training courses for 200 teachers of Spanish language, 440 teachers of German language, 280 teachers of Russian language and 260 teachers of French language.
3	"Foreign Language in Profession"	The syllabi for the vocational training for adults, in the Vocational Training Centres.
4	National Programmes for Development of Preschool Education and Training 2006-2015 and the National Training Programme, in the year 2009,	Teacher training on curriculum and syllabi was carried out and training programmes developed by the universities were implemented.
5	Module "Teacher Training"- 2009	In the year 2009, in training were involved 100 primary school teachers for acquisition of vocational qualification "Foreign Language Teacher at an early stage" and 100 teachers, who have completed higher education, for acquisition of vocational qualification "Foreign Language Teacher" - teacher of English, Spanish, French and German languages. In the year 2009, in cooperation with the Departments of Education to the Embassies of France, Germany, Spain, Great Britain and Russia, maintenance-training courses for qualified foreign language teachers were organised and carried out. In the courses participated 800 teachers in total.
6	Training for development of key competences	In the year 2008, 26,017 teachers were involved in such training. 11,150 of them were teachers in the vocational education and training system: training in entrepreneurial skills, business communications, corporate culture, computer competences, new techniques and technologies, interactive teaching

	<p>methods, etc.</p> <p>In the year 2009, the social and civic competences attracted the attention of the teachers and the training institutions. The number of teachers involved in the teaching subjects Communication Skills, Teamwork, Stress and Time Management, Presentation Skills, Intercultural Dialogue, and Negotiation increased.</p>
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Source: compiled by the authors

7.3 TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

7.3.1 TYPES OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS IN CVET

VET teachers for continuing education programmes (CVET) are not specially noted within vocational education terminology. They have the same requirements as IVET teachers(cf. 7.2).

7.3.2 PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF CVET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

VET teachers in VET schools provide both IVET and CVET courses and there is no distinction regarding their education requirements. In enterprises in-company teachers and trainers could be involved in local training, nevertheless, there is no regulation on their education requirements. Those involved in pprenticeship training should have a craftsman qualification.

The pre-service training is the same for all vocational education teachers.

Professional training programmes are available in different occupational sectors within the higher education system. Graduates obtain a professional qualification or scientific degree in the branch. (cf. 7.2)

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

The info for in-service training of CVET teachers and trainers is the same as of IVET(see 7.2)

8.1 SYSTEMS AND MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEED (IN SECTORS, OCCUPATIONS, EDUCATION LEVEL)

For the purpose of development of effective policies in the field of education, training and employment, as well as for achievement of better correspondence between the demand and the supply of skills, a regular and systematic study, analysing, and forecasting of the knowledge and skills needs should be carried out.

DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL RESEARCH AND FORECASTING SYSTEM

Within the PHARE Projects, a methodology for research, identification and monitoring of the needs of vocational training and a methodology for collection and analyzing of information on the labour market through carrying out of periodical surveys of the type "barometer of the labour market" and comprehensive analysis of the labour market have been developed.

In 2008, an interagency working group for development of national research and forecasting system regarding the needs of skilled labour force in the Republic of Bulgaria was formed. Representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the line ministries, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, the representatives of the national organizations of the social partners, the Institute of Economics and the Institute for Study of Society and Knowledge to the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences were involved in the working group. A concept of structure and institution building of the research and forecasting system regarding the needs of skilled labour force in the Republic of Bulgaria was developed. It is envisaged that the system will be national in scope and will be consistent with and the division of the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, the structure of the professions and the occupations according to the National Classification of Occupations, the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training and the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities. Classification and integration of all data sources and information about the needs of skilled labour force, including European and national researches and analysis, identification of the sources and the methods of collection of information, the instruments, the responsible institutions and the sources and the terms of financing of the system are to be determined. As a part of the system, a pilot model for short-term forecasting, "barometer" type will be developed and tested, using the experience gathered so far.

AD-HOC SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEYS

Ad-hoc surveys of the needs of skilled labour force for the purpose of education and training and the labour market policy are carried out. The first national sociological survey of the needs of the employers was carried out in 2004. From February to June 2007, commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, a second national sociological survey of the needs of the employers of skilled labour force, which included medium-term forecast of the demand of the labour force for the period 2008 - 2010, was carried out.

DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS ON THE LABOUR MARKET

In 2009, a Scheme under the Operational Programmeme "Human Resource Development" for introduction of information systems on the labour market for the purpose of increase of the effectiveness of the labour force on the labour market was launched. The implementation was entrusted to the representatives of the national organizations of the social partners. The scheme envisaged:

- implementation of research and preparation of qualitative analysis of the labour market, including the labour costs by sectors and regions at a level NUTS II;
- development and introduction of information system, featuring indicators for assessment of the labour force competences by sectors and regions, including: carrying out of analysis and researches of the labour market and preparation of forecasts on the skills and the qualification of employees by sectors for the purpose of preparation of maps for assessment of the labour force competences;
- development and introduction of models, guidelines, approaches, networks and mechanisms for assessment of the labour force competences by branches;
- carrying out of studies and the best practices of the social partners in the EU countries, organization and provision of trainings regarding working with the system;
- introduction of the information system at national level; preparation of proposals with respect to the changes in the applicable legislation, aimed at the recognition of the results achieved by the system at national level.

8.2 PRACTICES TO MATCH VET PROVISION (SKILLS) WITH SKILL NEEDS (JOBS)

The List of Professions for VET is updated on an annual base as the expert committees by professional fields and the Governing Board of the NAVET discuss the received proposals for inclusion and/or exclusion of professions and specialties and propose the changes to the Minister of Education, Youth and Science for approval. Proposals for changes in the list could be provided by ministries, agencies, organizations of employers, trade unions, other legal entities or natural persons.

Before the approval, the proposed changes in the List of professions for VET are agreed with the ministries and the nationally representative organizations of social partners.

The professions and specialties included in the List of Professions for VET are in conformity with the labour market, they respond to the National Classification of Occupations and the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88).

The National Classification of Occupations (NCO) is maintained by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy that maintains electronic version of the classification on its web site, collects information about the implementation of the classification, liaises with the National Statistical Institute and with the International Statistical Bureau of the International Labour Organisation in relation to the necessity for updating of the classification. The NCO is updated on an annual base by an order of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy and after consultation with the President of the National Statistical Institute. Justified proposals for changes in the classification could be provided by ministries, agencies, organizations of employers and other legal entities.

On the basis of the List of Professions for VET, the Employment Agency, through its regional offices, conducts annual studies of the needs of the employers in connection with the preparation of the List of Professions and Specialties for provision of training to unemployed persons without securing a job afterwards, i.e. which aims to meet the future needs of skilled labour force.

9.1 STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The scope of the career guidance has been discussed for a long time in Bulgaria, which, being in terms of development of market relations, is still trying to find adequate solutions. These decisions are based on the opportunities for development of the human resources, competitiveness, education, qualifications, career development, mobility, labour market, employment and the quality of life.

The provision of career guidance services in the education, training and employment systems, are set out in the statutory and the strategic documents, such as The Vocational Education and Training Act, the Employment Promotion Act, the Higher Education Act, the National Programme for Development of School and Preschool Education (2006 - 2015), the National Continuing Vocational Training Strategy 2005-2010, the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2008-2013, the National Employment Action Plan for the year 2009 and the Updated Employment Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria 2008-2015

The main challenges, which the institutions and the beneficiaries face, are:

- Lack of national lifelong guidance system;
- Shortage of information and its quality;
- Bad coordination between the responsible institutions, the providers and the users of vocational guidance services;
- Lack of qualified staff in vocational guidance (National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2008-2013).

The analysis of the problem of providing affordable and quality lifelong guidance, based on a research, carried out by the National Agency for VET for the years 2007-2008, showed that “the career guidance in Bulgaria has been long ago in the periphery of the policy, and however, it was rather an addition than an integral part of the Human Resources Development Strategy. As a consequence of the state-of-play of LL guidance in Bulgaria and given that career guidance is a priority line for the development of lifelong learning across Europe, the Management Board of the NAVET approved a Roadmap for Career Guidance in Bulgaria 2009-2013 in February 2009. The roadmap is a result of a two-year research and consultation with policy makers and the providers of career guidance services in the country, carried out by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET), supported by the European Training Foundation (ETF) and CINOP/CROSS. It is a national document that sets out the basic objectives and priorities for development of policies and practices in the career guidance in Bulgaria for 2009-2013

RESPONSIBLE BODIES FOR PROVIDING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES BODIES IN THE EDUCATION AND IN THE EMPLOYMENT SECTOR.

Bulgaria has two established guidance service systems that complement one another when it comes to both activity and objectives: guidance provided by educational institutions and the career-planning as well as the training and occupational information service provided by employment authorities. In the public sector, government educational and employment authorities are mainly responsible for arranging guidance activities; and on the part of educational institutions, guidance provision is also arranged by the education providers, which are typically municipalities. The division of labour between these two guidance systems is quite clear. Educational institutions bear the main responsibility for guidance for students. The vocational guidance and career planning service of employment offices is meant primarily for customers outside the formal education system. All employment office guidance and counselling services are, however, also available to students when necessary.

CAREER GUIDANCE IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

In 2004 a Centre for Vocational Guidance was established within the Ministry of Education and Science. The Centre's main activities included the development and adaptation of tests as well as the creation of an information system covering the vocational schools and vocational colleges in the country. A network of 28 Pedagogical Consulting Offices relating to the regional administrative governing bodies (NUTS II) and covering the whole country was created and initiatives undertaken by these Offices were closely linked to activities of the Vocational Guidance Centre.

Secondary schools also have pedagogical advisers who provide information and counselling about educational opportunities after the seventh and eight grades and after the end of compulsory schooling. At present there are about 1,500 pedagogic advisors in Bulgarian schools and according to current regulations there must be one position for a pedagogic advisor for 500 pupils per school.

CAREER GUIDANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Until 2005 there were only two Career Centres. Ever since an USAID funded project ('Job Tiger') supported the set-up of Career Centres in 34 Universities and higher education institutions (out of 51 in total), which is considered as a lead initiative in career guidance in Bulgaria. In the last decade, both the education and employment sector set out to develop separate structures under their administrative responsibility that also included career guidance services or functions.

Services for information, guidance and counselling of unemployed and employees are mainly provided by the Labour offices (NUTS III) within the framework of the Employment Agency

CAREER GUIDANCE IN EMPLOYMENT

At national level

Nowadays, in the Republic of Bulgaria services for information, guidance and counselling of unemployed, youth and adults are mainly provided in the framework of the Employment Agency system which is executive Agency of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy.

National Agency for Vocational Education - The NAVET accredits institutions in the vocational education and training system, issues and withdraws licences for the provision of vocational training and/or career guidance; generates and maintains a register of vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres.

At regional level

- Directorates General "Regional Employment Service" - implement the government policy on training for acquisition of vocational qualification by adults, coordinate and support the activities of the local Labour Offices and provide services on career guidance, counselling and guidance;
- Standing and temporary Employment Committees under the Regional Development Councils - define, organise and monitor the implementation of the government policy in the field of the employment promotion and the training for acquisition of vocational qualification at regional level;
- Regional Administrations – involved in the implementation of the government policy in the field of employment and acquisition of vocational qualification at regional level; 1 involved in the formation of policy in the field of vocational education and training within their territory with respect to the needs of staff and the development of the training facilities, funded by them, in the schools;

At local level

- “Labour Offices” They are responsible for registration of unemployed actively seeking employment and available vacancies , provide mediation services, organize a qualification and motivational training for unemployed and employed , analyse the supply and demand side on the local labour market and forecast changes in it
- Collaboration Councils under the Directorates General "Labour Office" of the Employment Agency –

Provision

- Vocational Guidance Centres - The Vocational Training Centres and the Vocational Guidance Centres are defined as institutions in the vocational education and training system. They are under the licensing and monitoring of National Agency for VET. In 2009 for the first time two Vocational Guidance Centres were opened.

- The Career Centres operate in the higher education system. The Career Centres in the universities assist in the establishment of close link between the training and practice of students, the improvement of the training programmes, which provide information on practical training and the implementation of projects on the conditions of the labour market in Bulgaria and the areas of professional development of the graduates. The Career Centres are operating in 43 universities in the country.

The Career Centre works with employers as well. It establishes the link between the universities and the businesses at the organization and implementation of internship programmes. The employers use the Career Centre to open vacancies for internships, thereby are ensured that the information will reach the desired recipients. However, this is the place, where the employers may review the CVs, may obtain information about the students and the specialties demanded by them, may conduct job interviews and may announce their participation in the career days. In short, the Career Centre is the instrument, which could considerably help to overcome the barriers in the communication between the business, the academics and the product proposed by them.

OTHER INITIATIVES

A number of new initiatives launched by different actors on the labour market, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry or NGO's, are worthwhile to be mentioned:

- In a few cases, guidance elements (motivation, how to write CVs, conduct interviews) are integrated in training courses for unemployed people at the own initiative of a training provider (eg the Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
- Organisations, such as the NGO 'Znanie Association' (participating in two EU Leonardo da Vinci projects on career guidance) and the Students' Society for Computer Arts offer services for the unemployed, implementing motivation modules in their training which aim at orientation on the labour market, finding one's own capacities and potential and application skills;
- The 'RiPeRiJo' (Right Person in the Right Job) project with Austria, Italy and other partners aims to develop a train-the-trainer curriculum for trainers of labour market programmes. It aims at matching the individual potentials of a wide range of job-seekers with basic qualification with opportunities in the job market through different tools (self-study CD, web-based training combines with face-to face training).

MAIN MEASURES, PROGRAMMES, INSTRUMENTS (COURSES, WEB-SITES) THAT SUPPORT/ FACILITATE COOPERATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SECTORS/ADMINISTRATIONS IN THE AREA OF LIFELONG GUIDANCE

The inclusion of Bulgaria in the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network laid down specific solutions that facilitate the cooperation between the education and employment, such as:

- the National Programme for Development of Lifelong Guidance;
- the national forum for vocational guidance in support of the development of national lifelong guidance system;
- Training and qualification programmes of the personnel, which offers guidance services;
- National and local programmes and projects for vocational guidance, consistent with the specific features of the different regions for the different target groups - youth, elderly people etc.;
- Forums that promote the best lifelong guidance practices.

TABLE 1 APPROACHES USED IN THE VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE		
	APPROACHES	CHARACTERISTICS
1	- What does he/she can?	the approach emphasis on his/her actual knowledge, skills, talents, opportunities, attitudes to certain types of activities, etc
2	What are his/her accomplishments?	diplomas, certificates, professional experience, recommendations, additional qualifications, etc.
3	What type of person is he/she?	the approach emphasise on the biological characteristics, temperament, values, way of thinking, worldview, attitudes to different things etc.;
4	- What does he/she want?	the approach emphasise on the aspirations, expectations, understanding, success in the life, performance, satisfaction, etc.

Source: compiled by the authors

TABLE 2 EXAMPLES FOR PRACTICES IN CAREER GUIDANCE

	CAREER CENTRES	SERVICES
1	RUNI TRAINING CENTRE www.runicenter.com	The centre offers career guidance tests, which aim to assist in identifying the preferences and activities of pupils in 11th -12th grade and the adults. The vocational guidance tests are used to quickly analyse the interests, the abilities, the expectations and the real idea of the clients to choose or change their profession. The result of the tests sets the main guidelines for professional development, i.e. the areas, where the customers could be the most successful ones and could be satisfied with their jobs depending on their interests, personality, needs and abilities.
2	Centre for Career Development at the New Bulgarian University, city of Sofia - e-mail: career@nbu.bg	The centre provides services in career development and vocational guidance in the following key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to choose a profession? - How to prepare my document? - How to behave at the job interview?
3	Student Computer Society- www.scas.acad.bg	It provides consultant services to young people through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the network of Youth Career Centres; - the E-portfolio method in the field of career guidance and lifelong learning. The method involves an electronic game, a motivation test and E-portfolio.
4	National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance - e-mail: nrcvg@hrdc.bg	The national Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG) is a part of the Centre for Human Resource Development.
5	Business Foundation for Education	After successful implementation of a project, career club network was established. In the year 2009, the activities in vocational guidance and personal development, performed by the Career Club, helped the pupils to improve their portable skills and knowledge on the career. These show the results form a research, carried out by the Business Foundation for Education, on the benefits of the initiative, carried out among 197 third to twelfth grade pupils, who participated in the activities. Two thirds of the pupils were aware of the role and the importance of the lifelong learning for their future. 90% of the respondents paid attention to the positive effect of their participation in the initiatives - they improved their

		<p>communication skills, teamwork, confidence and awareness.</p> <p>In the year 2009, 350 second to twelfth grade pupils participated in various activities of the Career Club - competitions, quiz, the "The world of work", the carnival of the professions, the career days, "The art of Professions" Plain Air, etc.</p> <p>The Career Club is the first initiative, which introduced training programmes for early vocational guidance in the secondary schools. Under the pilot project a model, which may be integrated in the Bulgarian schools and may become a part of the learning process, was tested. To facilitate its use in other schools, methodology and information materials were prepared and a website was created. The initiative was implemented under the OP "Human Resources Development".</p>
6	<p>Project "Attractive Vocational Guidance for Pupils" - in progress; http://avgproject.eu</p>	<p>It aims to improve the attractiveness and effectiveness of the vocational guidance for the pupils in the primary schools by adapting innovative vocational guidance methodology. The approaches to be implemented are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to study the pupils' information needs in different professional fields, the opportunities of the vocational education system and the labour market needs in each of the participating countries; to develop and implement a methodology for psycho diagnostics in order to determine the personal and professional profile of the pupils; to develop and implement a methodology for group-dynamic training of the pupils, aimed at the development of their competences; to develop and implement a methodology for teacher and trainer training (school psychologists, class teachers and pedagogical advisors) in vocational guidance of pupils.

Source: compiled by the authors

9.2 TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

TABLE 3 TARGET GROUPS			
N	TARGET GROUP	CHARACTERISTICS	PROVIDERS
1	children with special educational needs	Children with special educational needs because of certain deficiencies, caused by cognitive, motor, and sensory factors.	Centers to Ministry of Health
2	students	The range of the career guidance activates, carried out by the Career Centers in the universities increased. A component of these activities is the development of projects - the main beneficiaries herein are the students and this explains the growing interest and the satisfaction with the results	Universities
3	employees	The employees are: persons who work under Labour Contracts in accordance with the Labour Code and who are in public employment relations according to the Public Employment Act, under which they receive a wage in cash or are paid in kind for the work performed under a permanent or temporary contract, either full-time or part-time.	Employers organisations
4	unemployed youths under 29 year of age	According to Eurostat, in the nine months of 2009, the average level of unemployment of the youth aged 15-24 in the EU was 19.2%, while the level of the unemployed youth in Bulgaria was lower than the average one for the EU by 4.3%.	Labour Offices

5	unemployed people with primary or lower level of education	<p>Their absolute number increases, but meanwhile it continues to decrease as a percentage of the total number of the unemployed people. From January to September 2009, their average monthly number increased from 3,391 to 142,106 people compared to the same period in the previous year. Their rate was 53.1%, by 5.3% lower compared the same period in the year 2008.</p>	Labour Offices
6	unqualified unemployed people	<p>in the year 2009, their number increased compared to the same period in the year 2008. Their average monthly number from January to September 2009 was 156,330, i.e. 6,330 people more compared to the same period in the previous year. The unemployed unqualified people are still the largest group among the unemployed people. Their rate was 58.4%, i.e. 4.7% lower compared the same period in the year 2008.</p>	Labour Offices
7	long-term unemployed people	<p>From January to September 2009, the average monthly number of the long-term unemployed people was 78,492 and it decreased by 44,389 people, compared to the same period in the previous year. Their rate decreased from 22.4% to 29.3%. The duration of unemployment is largely determined by the level of education and the vocational training of the individuals.</p> <p>Therefore, the number of long-term unemployed people with primary and lower level of education was 69.1% and the number of unqualified</p>	Labour Offices

		people was 71.9%.	
8	unemployed disabled people	Their number slightly decreased. The average monthly number of unemployed disabled people registered with the Labour Offices in the nine months of 2009 was 12,512, i.e. 198 people less than the same period in the previous year. Their rate of the total number of unemployed people during the same period was 4.7%.	Labour Offices
9	unemployed people over 50 years of age	The number of those registered with the Labour Offices increased. From January to September 2009, the average monthly number of unemployed people over 50 years of age was 102,247, i.e. 8,754 more compared to the same period in the year 2008. Their rate of the total number of unemployed people was 38.2%. More than half of the unemployed people over 50 years of age have completed primary or lower level of education (56.4%) and were not qualified (58.0%).	Labour Offices
10	discouraged people	They are a part of the economically inactive people, who wish to work, but do not search for a job, because they believe that they are not be able to find such. In the nine months of 2009, their number was 174,000, as it increased by 22,400 compared to the same period in the previous year.	. Labour Offices

Source: compiled by the authors

THE MAIN GUIDANCE METHODS APPLIED FOR THE MAIN TARGET GROUPS, AS WELL AS FOR GROUPS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

For pupils: pedagogic counsellors in the schools apply methods for assessment of the abilities, interests, personality, etc. in order to set realistic targets for the future development. In the primary schools, such qualities are assessed through monitoring of the pupils at the class sessions or when playing games.

The most common methods are the "Open Doors", "The Days of Professional Choice," and "The World of Professions" methods. Other activities organised are: establishment of student companies, participation in competitions according to the profession, Plain Air "The Art of Professions", carrying out classes in conflict resolution, building skills for searching of a job: CV writing, interview appearance, behaviour at the interview and counselling and work with parents, teachers and social workers. The national competitions "The best in the profession" in the professions chief, fashion designer and bartender are organised every year.

For students: - The Career Centres in the universities and the career consultants offer the following services: individual and group sessions, counselling on specific issues, mostly related to the opportunities for employment according to the speciality acquired and preparation for a job interview. A large number of students initiate and develop projects at national level and participate in partnerships with institutions from other countries.

For example, in 2009 – 2010, the Professional and Career Centre and the Scientific Laboratory of Experimental and Vocational Education in the St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University develop projects directly related to the career guidance and development:

- Vocational guidance and counselling in school and opportunities for the pupils to improve their performance on the labour market - "My job - my future" in collaboration with the Career Centre at the University of National and World Economy.
- Organisational model, which assists in adaptation of the Bulgarian teaching profession;
- Vocational guidance and career development of young volunteers for implementation of social work;
- Training programmes for career consultants - a model of partnership between students, employers and universities, which promotes the competitiveness of the labour force - implemented with the financial support of the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2007-2013 in collaboration with the company Manpower Bulgaria OOD;
- Attention should be paid to the Project of the St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University "How to manage our skills", which was completed in 2009.

For the target groups over 16 years of age, the Directorates General "Labour Office" offer the following vocational guidance services:

- Individual or group professional counselling, which aims at the assistance in the choice of profession, or speciality, the level of qualification and the ways to obtain the required qualifications.

- Individual or group provision of professional information with respect to the nature of the professions, the conditions and requirements for their pursuit, the state and the trends in the use and the development of the professions at regional and national level, the personal requirements for the adaptability, the opportunities for vocational training, studies and advanced training; the training institutions: forms of training, conditions for enrolment, requirements for the applicants, documents issued at the completion; career opportunities in the labour market.

The career consultants in the Directorates General "Labour Office" use mainly the following methods:

- Counseling sessions for identification and development of the personal abilities and skills;

- Assistance in searching for a job;
- Inclusion in various forms of training for development of the professional knowledge and skills;

Moreover, the support for development of employment services is based on the implementation of activities within the Pan-European network EURES(Information events, individual counselling services and provision of information for the job seekers, which familiarize the participants with the opportunities to mediate and obtain an expert consultation by EURES and the most important requirements for work in another EU country.)

9.3 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

The career guidance practitioners in Bulgaria, who are involved in the education and employment sectors, are persons, who have completed higher education and specialities in the field of education and training – training in Pedagogy of Education for teachers, who study the learning process, theory, methods and techniques of transmission of knowledge. The content of the training programmes includes Didactics, Measurement and Assessment in Education, education sciences, Social Education, etc. (NSI, Fields of Education Classification 2008).

These training programmes include modules in the field of vocational and career guidance, counselling and referral.

The majority of the universities, where teachers and specialists in Pedagogy are trained, implement training programmes for career consultants. For example, the largest university in Bulgaria, the St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University, in particular the Faculty of Education offers:

- Master Programme in “Career education and vocational training” (distance learning). The course aims at preparing specialists for the needs of the career guidance and career development;
- Master programme in “Training and redirection of labour forces”. The programme aims at providing specialists in the field of professional development and guidance and the development and vocational training of the staff according to the current requirements and trends on the labour market.
- Postgraduate programme in “Vocational guidance and career counselling”. The duration of the course is one year and it aims at providing consultants in vocational and career development in the education, social and business sectors. The postgraduate programme as well provides support for already active practitioners in improving and updating their skills and knowledge for updating their performance.

The Faculty of Natural Sciences and Education at the Angel Kanchev Faculty of the University of Ruse offers:

- Master Programme in “Career counselling and development” (regular and distance learning). Those, who have completed Pedagogy, Economics and Social Sciences, may apply for this programme.

Specialized training for career consultants has been offered since 2005 by Business Foundation for Education and Job Tiger – based on the international programme for certification of career consultants Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF).

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

IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND/OR CONTINUING TRAINING

There are no specific statutory requirements, other than the above-mentioned, for career counsellors. The acquired levels of education shall be Professional Bachelor, Bachelor and Master degrees in the relevant specialties and shall meet the requirements for implementation of the activities of the career consultants.

10.1 FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

State and municipal schools, centres for vocational education, centres for information and vocational orientation and centres for qualification of the training specialists are financed by: the state budget; the budgets of the municipalities; sponsorship, donations, and national and international programmes.

Each year, the Ministry of Education and Science specifies the annual cost per pupil in compliance with the state educational requirements, differentiated by educational degree and type of school, and according to the conditions in the respective settlement, after its coordination with the Ministry of Finance. The approach is implemented as well as for vocational schools within the system of public secondary education. After the funds are specified and the national budget is approved of by the National Assembly and after the approval of the municipal budgets, the Ministry of Education allocates budget funds to capital investments, subsidies for scientific research in the field of preschool and secondary education and for training of teachers and school heads.

Both ministries, Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Finance, approve of the standards and provide the regulators and other economic conditions for the efficient functioning of all schools, including vocational schools are funding for maintenance and pay comes under a separate heading in the budgets of the municipalities and that of the Ministry of Education and Science. Funds are allocated to the schools and serve as basis for drawing up individual school budgets.

Apart from the national budget, vocational schools raise funds themselves for maintenance and development of their facilities and equipment from the municipal budgets and from additional activities which concern to labour market training, leasing school and sports facilities, machines and equipment, renting agricultural lands, by training and manufacturing activities

“Delegated budgets” were introduced into schools by 2009. The main tasks of the system of delegated budgets are to develop decentralized financial management of secondary education and to endorse the financial independence of schools. The approach aims at strengthening the economic independence of schools, decentralizing the management of finances, searching for additional sources of funding, and achieving transparency with respect to allocation of funds. The mechanism is based on a number of normative acts and regulations. The school are entitled to act independently in the sphere of finances and to receive the allocated funds according to a certain formula. It is interesting to point out that the school acquires the right to keep the additional revenues accumulated – they are not deemed as regular funding - and to use them, at its own discretion, for development of its facilities. Within the same financial year, funds from one budget line may be carried over to another budget line following an approval by the funding body. The funding formula is specific for each school and is used to allocate funds for the main activities.

The funding formula is specific for each school and is according to the branch sectors and is used to allocate funds for the main activities.

10.2 FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

10.2.1 FUNDING FOR PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVET

The vocational training of persons over 16 years of age is funded by the state budget for active policy on the labour market, where the training is organized by the Employment Agency, with funds granted under the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development", co-financed by the European Social Fund, by the organizations of the social partners and by the persons themselves.

In 2009 the budget spent for active labour market policy amounted to 211, 345 thousand BGN (108 059 thousand EUR), as 86.8% were resources from the state budget and 13.2% were co-financing from another sources as the United Nations Development Programme, etc. The resources spent for adult training were 3, 989 thousand BGN (2 040 thousand EUR).

The budgets of the OP HRD schemes started in 2009 are as follows:

1. Schemes "I Can" (2009 – 2012) - 51, 001 " (2009-2012) - 90, 000 thousand BGN (46, 000 thousand EUR) which is aimed at training for acquisition of vocational qualification of employees passed to part-time working due to the economic crises;
2. Scheme "Development" (2009 - 2012) - 250, 0 thousand BGN (26, 077 thousand EUR) which is aimed at training for acquisition of vocational qualification and/or training for acquisition of key competences of employees;
3. Scheme "Adaptability 00 thousand BGN (127, 800 thousand EUR) which is aimed at training for acquisition of vocational qualification of persons redundant due to restructuring or closing down of the enterprise, reduction of the volume of work or closing down of production industry;
4. Scheme "Back to Work" (2009 - 2012) - 64, 000 thousand BGN (32, 700 thousand EUR) which is aimed at training of unemployed persons for provision of child care services and their subsequent hiring to care for children aged 1 – 3 in families where both parents are employed on labour contracts or are self-employed.

10.2.2 FUNDING FOR CVT IN ENTERPRISES

The costs of the enterprises for carrying out continuing vocational training (CVT) courses in 2005 amounted to 51, 953 thousand BGN (26, 563 thousand EUR) and represented 1.1% of the labour costs (Table 17). The highest was the rate of the fees and the payments for CVT courses - 57.4% of the total costs. The costs of business trips (travel costs and subsistence) and the costs related to the courses were 28.4%. The costs connected with the student centre, the training facilities in the enterprises and the costs of training materials were 8.1%. The lowest costs were those spent for the teachers – just 6.1%.

TABLE 1 COST OF CVT COURSES AS % OF TOTAL LABOUR COST (ALL ENTERPRISES), 1999 AND 2005								
STAFF	10-49	10-49	50 - 249	50 - 249	250 +	250 +	TOTAL	TOTAL
YEAR	2005	1999	2005	1999	2005	1999	2005	1999
EU 27	1.1		1.4		1.9		1.6	
EU 25	1.1	1.5	1.4	2.4	1.9	2.4	1.6	2.2
BG	0.8	0.4	1.3	0.2	1.1	1.4	1.1	1.0

Source: compiled by the authors

On average, 241 BGN (123 EUR) were envisaged per participant in CVT courses. The enterprises, whose number of employees was in the range 10 - 49 persons, spent the largest amounts for training per person - 342 BGN (175 EUR) on average, followed by the enterprises, which number of the employees was in the range 50 - 249 - 297 BGN (127 – 152 EUR) The large enterprises, regardless of the fact, that they included the largest number of persons in the training events, spent an average a smaller amount per participant in the courses - 199 BGN (102 EUR). In 2005, the most expensive were the CVT courses of the persons employed in the field of the real estates, the rents, the business services and the other activities, connected with the social and personal service, as well as in the field

of the financial intermediation - 362 BGN (185 EUR) on average. They are followed by the CVT courses of the persons employed in the field of the trade and the repair and maintenance of motor vehicles and motorcycles and personal and household goods - 312 BGN (160 EUR) per participant on average and the persons employed in field of the transport, storage and communications - 309 BGN (158 EUR) per participant an average. The lowest were the average costs per participant in CVT courses in the field of the extractive industry – 77 BGN (39 EUR) per participant and in the hotel and restaurant industry - 99 BGN (51 EUR) per participant. Significantly lower were the training costs of the state enterprises, compared to the training costs of the private enterprises - respectively 151 BGN (77 EUR) and 263 BGN (134 EUR) per participant in the courses.

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

The below listed programmes and measures targeted to disadvantaged groups on the labour market are financed by the state budget for active labour market policy. According to the data of the Employment Agency the spent resources for 2009 are as follows:

PROGRAMME / MEASURE	SPENT RESOURCES IN BGN	SPENT RESOURCES IN EUR
UNEMPLOYED YOUTH UNDER 29 YEARS OF AGE		
National Programme “Start of Career”	1 394 082	712 783
Project “Youth, leaving school”	197 137	100 795
Project “Profession - Vocation”	10 917	5 582
Incentives to open vacant positions for unemployed youth under 29 years of age, orphans and disabled youth	857 663	438 516
UNEMPLOYED PERSONS WITH LOW LEVEL OF LITERACY, WITHOUT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		
National Programme for Literacy and Vocational Training of Roma	733 945	375 260
Apprenticeship training	1 318 985	674 386
UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE OVER 50 YEARS OF AGE		
Incentives for employers to open jobs for unemployed people over 50 years of age and people aged 50-64, who have acquired the right to receive an occupational pension for early retirement	3 617 112	1 849 400

UNEMPLOYED DISABLED PERSONS		
National Programme for Employment and Vocational Training of Disabled Persons	8 450 761	4 320 805
Programme “Loan without interest for disabled persons”	352 886	180 428
Incentives for employers to open jobs for unemployed people with permanent disabilities	2 998 925	1 533 326
UNEMPLOYED WOMEN		
Incentives for employers to open jobs for mothers (adoptive mothers) with children under 3 years of age and mothers (adoptive mothers) with children aged 3-5	2 559 196	1 308 496

Source: compiled by the authors

10.4 GENERAL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND MECHANISMS

Since 2009, a new financial instrument for funding of the training for adults – training vouchers - was introduced with a Decree of the Council of the Ministers. The vouchers are used for training for acquisition of vocational qualification or key competencies of employed and unemployed within the OP HRD. Unlike the present mechanisms for financing of training (whereby the funds are directly given to the training institutions), the vouchers are given directly to the people. Due to the opportunity of the persons to choose as the type and the duration of the training, as well as the training institution, better correspondence between the training offered and the training needs is achieved.

Within three OP HRD schemes started in 2009, training vouchers, provided directly to the persons are used.

1. Scheme "I Can", which is aimed at training for acquisition of vocational qualification and/or training for acquisition of key competences of employees (2009 – 2012);
2. Scheme "Adaptability", which is aimed at training for acquisition of vocational qualification of employees passed to part-time working as a result of the crises (2009-2012);
3. Scheme “Development”, which is aimed at training for acquisition of vocational qualification of persons redundant due to restructuring or closing down of the enterprise, reduction of the volume of work or closing down of production industry (2009-2012).

11 NATIONAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING STATISTICS - ALLOCATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES BY LEVELS OF EDUCATION

The national vocational education and training (VET) statistics is provided by the National Statistical Institute and covers the following statistical surveys:

- Formal vocational education and training in the schools and the vocational colleges – carried out annually;
- Higher education - Professional Bachelor degree – carried out annually;
- Vocational training for adults in the vocational training centers (VTC) – carried out annually;
- Continuing vocational training for employees (CVTS). It is carried out every five years;
- Adults education and training – AES. It is carried out every five years.

The vocational education and training statistics is based on the legislation of the EU and the European Commission, including Regulation № 452/2008 of the European Parliament and the Council concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning, Regulation № 1552/2005 of the European Parliament and the Council on statistics relating to vocational training in enterprises (CVTS), the UOE Data Collection (a joint Eurostat-Unesco-OECD education statistics questionnaire) and the methodological documents of Eurostat regarding the adults education and training survey. However, the VET statistics is consistent with the national legislation, including the Statistics Act, the Education Act, the Vocational Education and Training Act, the Higher Education Act, etc.

11.1 CLASSIFICATION OF NATIONAL VET PROGRAMMES - FIG.3

11.1.1. MAIN CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATION OF THE VET PROGRAMMES BY THE LEVELS OF EDUCATION ACCORDING TO ISCED

To help the readers of this report, we will point out the levels of education according to the Bulgarian legislation. These are:

- Preschool education
- Primary education - 1-4 grade
- Junior secondary education – 5-8 grade
- Secondary education – 9-12 grade. The two-year vocational training in vocational colleges after completion of the secondary education does not provide level of education, but only a vocational training.
- Higher education - degrees of professional bachelor, bachelor, master and doctor.

The levels of education, specified above, are general levels of education and do not coincide with the levels of qualification, which are four - first, second, third and fourth level according to VET Act (article 8).

The VET programmes and their place in the national level of education concerned are determined by the legislation, however any such groups of programmes are defined in the junior secondary and the secondary education (the place of the post-secondary education programmes was pointed out above). The higher education programmes for obtaining professional bachelor degree are not defined by the legislation as VET programme, but because of their practical purposes and accepted view of the nature in the other European countries, they may be allocated to the VET programmes.

The main criteria for allocation of the VET programmes to the level of education according to ISCED are laid down in the official document of the UNESCO International Standard Classification of

Education - 1997. Therefore, we will only mention them thereto, as they represent the content and the purpose of the programme, its duration and the entry requirements for enrolment of pupils in this programme.

The graph description of the educational programmes of the Bulgarian educational system (including the VET programs) and their conformity with the ISCED are shown on the diagram below.

One of the characteristics of the VET in Bulgaria is the availability of programmes, which cover two levels of education according to ISCED - ISCED 3 and ISCED 2 (partially). These are the programmes for acquisition of tertiary qualifications in vocational high schools, which start from 7th grade, i.e. before completion of the primary education and end at 12th grade (until two years ago the duration of these programs was 6 years and they covered 8th-13th grade). The official statistics report on these programmes, the new programmes, the enrolled, and the graduated pupils of 3A level according to ISCED.

11.1.2 VET LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

In the table below, we will summarize all VET programmes, as we will indicate their belonging to the national levels of vocational qualification and the levels of ISCED. The programmes are divided in two groups – regular (primary) VET programmes and formal vocational training programmes for adults for obtaining level of education, equal to the vocational qualification obtained at completion of any regular VET program.

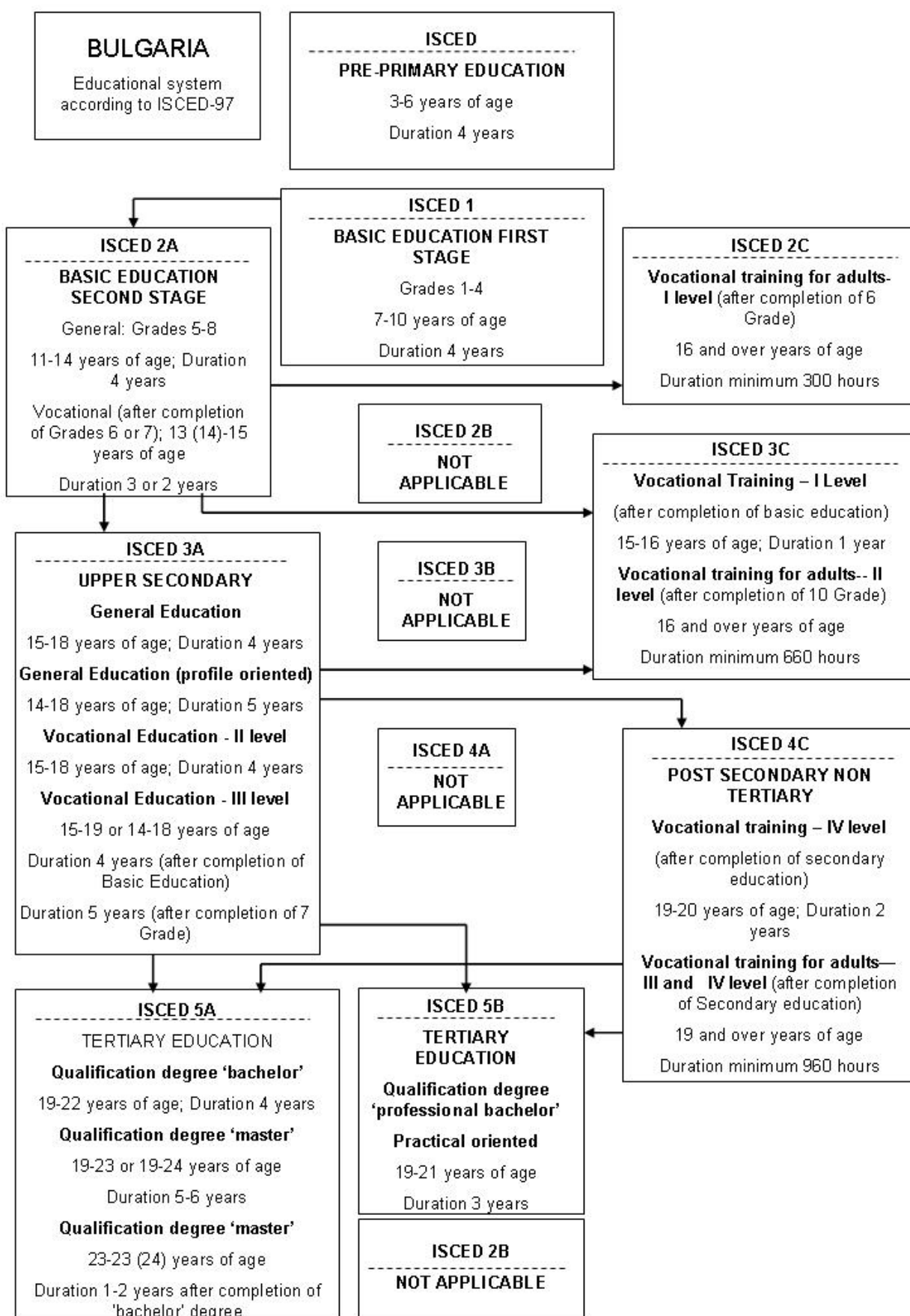


TABLE 1 VET LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM						
Level	Equivalent in ISCED	National level of vocational qualification	Minimum duration	Maximum duration	Average duration	Typical starting age of pupils
INITIAL VET AND VET AT POST SECONDARY AND TERTIARY LEVEL						
Lower secondary (after 6 Grade)	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
FORMAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR ADULTS						
Lower secondary	2C	1	300 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

11.2 FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The National Statistical Institute collects, aggregates and distributes statistical data about the newly enrolled and the graduated pupils in broad fields, narrow fields and detailed fields in conformity with the ISCED and the methodological guidance Fields of Education and Training Manual of Eurostat dated 1999.

TABLE 2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING - CARRIED OUT UNDER PROGRAMMES	
LEVEL	FIELDS OF EDUCATION/STUDY
Lower secondary ISCED 2A	5 Engineering, Manufacturing And Construction, 6 Agriculture and Veterinary, 8 Services, 9 Fields Unknown
Upper secondary ISCED 3C	5 Engineering, Manufacturing And Construction, 6 Agriculture and Veterinary, 8 Services, 9 Fields Unknown
Upper secondary ISCED 3A	2 Humanities and Arts, 3 Social Sciences, Business And Law, 4 Science, Mathematics and Computing, 5 Engineering, Manufacturing And Construction, 6 Agriculture and Veterinary, 7 Health and Welfare, 8 Services, 9 Fields Unknown
Postsecondary ISCED 4C	2 Humanities and Arts, 3 Social Sciences, Business And Law, 5 Engineering, Manufacturing And Construction, 6 Agriculture and Veterinary, 7 Health and Welfare, 8 Services, 9 Fields Unknown
Tertiary ISCED 5B	1 Education, 2 Humanities and Arts, 3 Social Sciences, Business And Law, 4 Science, Mathematics and Computing, 5 Engineering, Manufacturing And Construction, 6 Agriculture and Veterinary, 7 Health and Welfare, 8 Services, 9 Fields Unknown

Source: compiled by the authors

11.3 LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OR CLASSIFICATIONS

Currently the levels of vocational qualification for acquiring qualification in a profession on the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training are set out in LVET, but an approved **National Qualifications Framework** /NQF/ does not exist.

The development of a **National Qualifications Framework** (NQF) is in advanced stage and the framework is expected to be completed in the current year. To date, the part for the tertiary education is ready. The designated working group under Ministry of Education, youth and science strives for the national qualifications framework to cover all qualification levels acquired within the general, vocational and tertiary education in Bulgaria, including adult education and training, initial and continuing education and training, and to make it **learning-outcomes-oriented**.

Since 2007, **the State Educational Requirements by professions**, developed by NAVET, have a new structure which includes in addition to the previously existing elements also a new one – **expected learning outcomes** – competences, knowledge, skills. The structure of SER for acquiring qualification in a profession in Bulgaria enables facilitated comparison and recognition of qualifications acquired in and outside Bulgaria through the European Qualifications Framework, as well as gradual development of a credit transfer system within the VET.

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- http://www.mlsp.government.bg/	- Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
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- http://www.navet.government.bg/	- National Agency for Vocational

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- http://www.az.government.bg/	- Employment Agency
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- http://politiki.bg/	- Open Society Institute
- http://www.esc.bg/	- Economic and Social Council
- http://www.runicentre.com	- Runi Training Centre

12.3 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