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DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE 1994-1996

National Report of the Republic of Bulgaria

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CONTENTS

[Development of education](#)
[Structure of the education system](#)
[Administration and financing of the education system](#)
[Organization and content of studies](#)
[Pre-school education](#)
[Elementary education](#)
[Basic education](#)
[Secondary comprehensive education](#)
[Vocational education](#)
[Problems of the annual course repeaters and drop-out pupils](#)
[Special education](#)
[Private school education](#)
[Extra-school activities](#)
[Teaching staff](#)
[Work load of the teaching staff](#)
[Training of the pedagogical staff. The role of universities](#)
[System of teachers' qualification](#)
[Material and technical assets. Provision of textbooks and manuals](#)
[Higher education](#)
[Scientific research in education](#)
[International activities](#)
[New normative documents on education](#)
[Reference literature](#)

Development of education

Social development in recent years has brought changes to the system of values, gave rise to a number of demographic problems, initiated the opening of the education

system to everything valuable in the world practice, and led to revaluation of the national traditions. The conditions of market economy, the operation of principles of the free market and competition, and the redistribution of priorities in the economic sphere call for new solutions to the problems of the professional structure of society, of correlation between the general and vocational education in secondary schools.

On the eve of the 21st century, in a world of constant change, the major question is what kind of education the Bulgarian society needs, what should be the structure, contents and length of this education, to what extent the values and traditions of the existing education system should be retained and furthered, etc.

Answers to these questions are sought in the newly developed Draft Concept on the Development of Secondary Education (1995-1996).

Preparing the younger generations for adequate life and activities under the conditions of market-defined relationships, in a democratic, civil, law-governed and plural society, in which the free fulfilment of the personality will incorporate its responsibilities for the present and the future of the nation and of mankind, is deemed the principal social mission of education.

The goals of secondary education are formulated on the basis of the contemporary social mission:

- to raise citizens of great erudition who share the national and common human values, able to live and communicate in a democratic civil society;
- to develop the intellectual potential and communication abilities of the personality, its individuality, independence and capacity for continual self-education;
- to bring up highly moral, physically healthy and active personalities, able to shoulder their civil responsibilities and to act accordingly;
- to inculcate national, cultural and historical self-awareness and to bring up the younger generations in a spirit of patriotism, respect for human rights and freedoms, loyalty to family and motherland, and sensitivity to the global problems of humankind;
- to ensure a specified level of general and vocational training for the personality, enabling it to engage in continual education, self-education and take an adequate part in the public activities under the conditions of market economy.

The reform of education is also based on some important principles stemming from the traditions in Bulgarian education, such as:

- an equal start for everybody through general and compulsive education up to the age of 16;
- a right to secondary education for every citizen and a free choice of education;
- a free-of-charge instruction in the Government-funded and municipal schools;

- civic character of education;
- equality and joint instruction of the pupils of both genders;
- a link between the comprehensive and vocational training, between theory and practice;
- effective combining of compulsory and optional instruction; combining the in-class, group and individual forms of work;
- unity of action of education and the other social pedagogical factors;
- participation of parents and community in school activities;
- continual instruction ensuring various types of education and professional qualification unlimited by age.

The social processes, the economic and social context, as well as the targets of education define the main priorities in its future development:

- upgrading the quality of education so as to influence most effectively the quality of the working potential;
- basic education for all, mastering of a specified necessary minimum of knowledge and skills for social and professional realisation of the personality;
- extending the optional instruction: diversity, flexibility and combinatorial properties of instruction;
- raising the level of mother tongue and foreign language instruction of students as an especially important condition for successful social and professional communication and realisation;
- adequate use of computer equipment and information technologies in school education as a necessary moment in training the future citizens of the information society;
- mobility of training and continuity of education in line with the accelerated technological development of the contemporary society;
- civil education and instruction inculcating new strivings, ambitions and value attitudes which will shape the student as a citizen of a democratic society.

What are the main reasons necessitating these changes in Bulgarian education? They are mainly linked with the need to find answers to the dynamic social and economic processes demanding a new balance in education so as to preserve the national tradition, to prompt education renovate its contents and technologies, to train specialists in line with the newly developed needs in economy and public life, in compliance with the standards of the advanced countries. The new characteristic of the labour market and prospects for development of vocational education also call for

change, as well as for closer integration with the European structures. The changes are oriented towards a good correlation between the principles of stability and mobility in the education system. This is an important stake because the development of man and his realization tomorrow greatly depend on the quality of education today.

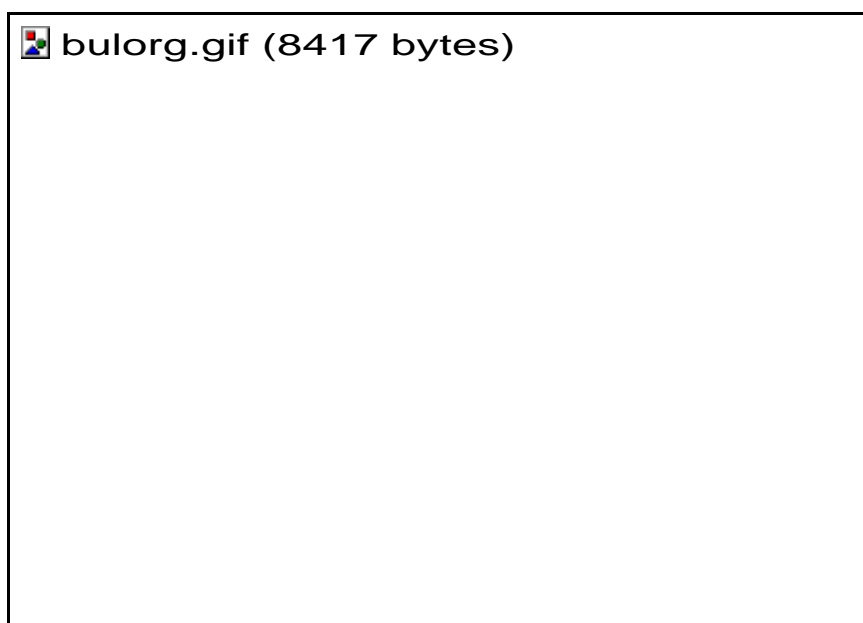
Expected results from the changes which take place in the education system:

- inspiring a stronger motivation in students to obtain education;
- development of adaptability for a fast renovation and extension of professional competence;
- rendering the instruction of students more pragmatic against the high theoretical character of the content of studies;
- mastering the information technologies on a higher level in the process of instruction;
- a more profound profile-setting in education according to the interests and abilities of the students.

Structure of the education system

The structure of the education systems comprises the Government-funded, municipal and private schools, Bulgarian schools with foreign participation, as well as the extra-school activity units (See Diagram No 1).

Structure of the education system in Bulgaria



1. Creches and kindergartens
2. Elementary school (1st-4th form)
3. Pre-secondary school (5th-8th form)
4. Basic school (1st-8th form)

5. Secondary comprehensive school (1st-11th/12th form)
6. Profile-oriented secondary schools with a 4-5 year course of instruction
7. Technical schools (vocational secondary schools) with a 4-5 year course of instruction
8. Secondary vocational schools
9. Vocational schools
10. Special schools
11. Private schools

The education system has four levels:

- elementary education in the course of 4 years;
- basic education in the course of 4 years (4 + 4);
- secondary education comprising comprehensive secondary education and vocational secondary education in the course of 3-5 years;
- higher education.

Basic education continues from the 1st to the 8th (4 + 4) form and comprises:

- elementary education in the course of 4 years;
- pre-secondary education from the 5th to the 8th form inclusive;
- vocational-technical classes after completion of the 6th, 7th and 8th form.

Basic education is completed without examinations. Certificates for basic education are issued on the grounds of the score in the subjects of study included in the plan of studies.

Secondary comprehensive education extends from the 9th to the 12th form inclusive and comprises:

- profile-oriented secondary schools with admission after the 8th form and a 4-year course of instruction (natural sciences and mathematical orientation, the humanities, sports, etc.);
- profile-oriented schools with intensive foreign language instruction with admission after the 7th form and a 5-year course of instruction;
- comprehensive secondary school from the 9th to the 11th/12th form.

Secondary vocational education comprises:

- technical (vocational secondary) schools with admission after a completed 8th form, with a 4-year course of instruction;
- technical schools(vocational secondary) schools with admission after a completed 7th form, with intensive foreign language studies and a 5-year course of instruction;
- secondary vocational-technical schools with admission after the 8th form and a 3-year course of instruction.

Secondary education is completed after sitting for matriculation exams and receiving a certificate or diploma entitling the owner to continue his/her education on a higher education level. After successful passing of equalising exams, students are permitted to switch over from one school to another, or from one profile to another.

The forms of instruction are: day-time, evening, extramural, correspondence, individual and self-instruction.

There are special schools and service units for children with chronic health conditions and specific education requirements.

Compulsory education extends from the age of 6-7 to the age of 16. For persons over 16 years of age there are evening-class (shift) schools. The units for extra-school activities (municipal children's centers, sports schools, young technicians and agrobiologists stations, centers for work with children, etc.) constitute an indivisible part of the education structure.

The academic year officially extends and is distributed by terms of instruction as follows:

Start of the academic year: September 15th.

1st term of instruction: September 15th - February 5th.

2nd term of instruction:

February 8th - May 24th for the 1st and 11th (12th), last secondary school form;

February 8th - May 31st for the 2nd to 4th form;

February 8th - June 15th for the 5th to 8th form;

February 8th - June 30th for the 9th, 10th (11th) form, when it is not the last form.

Distribution of academic hours by levels and subjects of study is presented in Supplement No1.

Administration and financing of the education system

The main characteristic of education is a further democratisation, decentralisation and extension of autonomy of the education establishments. A simplified structure of administration, high professionalism and competence of the specialists, freedom of action and striving for innovation are now in the processes of establishment.

Administration of education is effected on four levels: national, regional, municipal and school level. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technologies is a specialised body of the Council of Ministers for administration of the education system. It determines and carries out the Government policy in the field of education. It forecasts and plans the activities connected with the development of education in long-term programmes and operation plans, organizes and coordinates the work of the administrative units and education establishments, exercises control over the work of all types and levels of schools and kindergartens in the country. The Ministry approves the education documentation, the education network, looks after the transfer of innovations, the supply with textbooks and manuals, the teaching staff. It conducts the international activities in the field of education.

There are 28 school inspectorates set up on regional level, which act as specialised territorial bodies of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technologies for operative administration of the education structures. They exercise planning, coordination and control functions over the work of schools on the territory of regions. A regional inspectorate comprises experts in the organization of secondary schools and experts in the various subjects of study.

The municipal education bodies represent an element of the Government territorial structure and take part in the realization of the education policy on the territory of municipalities. They are responsible for the under-16 compulsive education, pre-school education and extra-school activities of the children, for health care, financing, material and technical assets, buildings, canteen catering, hostels, recreation, sports facilities, transportation of children, students, teachers, for scholarships and special grants for students.

The school is a legal entity. Its autonomy - pedagogical, organizational, methodological, administrative and managerial, staff selection, etc. - has been considerably extended in recent years. The school Principal and the Pedagogical Council are the administrative bodies of the school. An old school tradition for establishing boards of school trustees as a link with parents and the community has been restored since the 1995/1996 academic year. These boards of trustees comprise the school principal, teachers, parents, public figures, businessmen, cultural workers, etc. A Parents Council, a Students Council, a Class Council, etc. could be also set up as public bodies with the school. The school has a right to initiate their activity in compliance with the age specificities of the students and the administrative needs of the school.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technologies engages in organising and coordinating activities with other ministries and departments in connection with the administration of schools which train specialists in the respective spheres, as, for instance, in the field of mechanical engineering, chemistry, agriculture, transport, mining, economy, etc.

Higher education is administered in line with the newly adopted law on autonomy of the higher education establishments.

Education is financed from the State Budget as a main source, via the Ministry of Education, Science and Technologies, and from the local budgets via the municipal administrations. Funding is differentiated according to the education levels and type of schools. Funds are allocated for capital investment, subsidising of scientific research, upgrading the qualification of teachers, and for the salaries of the staff in the field of education. Instruction in private schools is not funded by the Government.

The relative share of expenditures for education in the Gross Domestic Product constituted 4.87% in 1994, 4.51% in 1995 and 4.27% as envisaged in the draft budget for 1996.

The education outlays are distributed by education levels (secondary, semi-higher and higher), including for capital investment. There are funds earmarked for upgrading of

qualification. Education funding marks an increase but in absolute values. The relative share in the GDP shows a decrease in recent years (Supplement No 2).

Organization and content of studies

Instruction in comprehensive and vocational schools follows a plan of study approved in 1995 (Supplement No 1). The content of studies is structured into a generally compulsory and an optional part. Generally compulsory instruction is basic in character, while the optional forms a foundation for unfolding the individual interests and specific abilities of the children. Optional instruction is profile-oriented, compulsory-elective and free.

Comprehensive training amounts from 22 to 25 academic hours per week in the 1st-4th form; 25 to 30 hours in the 5th-8th form and from 29 to 11 hours in the 9th-12th (13th) form.

The number of children and pupils in the groups and classes varies from 12 to 22 in the kindergartens, and from 15 to 26 in the schools. The number of pupils in class in the special schools is from 8 to 16 persons.

Data on the average number of pupils per class at the different education levels has also registered improvement in the last two years. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technologies pursues a number-reduction policy per class, with a view of creating better conditions for class work, familiarizing the students better and covering them better in the process of instruction. This trend held out in the last decade and is characteristic for the last two years. The data is presented in the following Table.

Average number of pupils per class at the different education levels

Level of education	1994/1995	1995/1996
Pre-school	20.68	21.44
Elementary	20.20	20.14
Basic	20.43	19.98
Secondary comprehensive	22.79	22.50
Secondary vocational	22.92	22.57

The content of comprehensive studies unfolds along the following lines:

- Bulgarian language and literature;
- foreign languages;
- mathematics and information technologies;
- natural sciences and ecological education;
- history and social sciences (including economic sciences) and preparation for private and family life;
- music and pictorial art;
- technological sciences;
- health care and hygiene instruction, physical culture and sports.

The content of studies is determined in line with the Government education norms underlying the uniform criteria for evaluating the accomplishment of the students.

Compulsory-elective instruction begins in the 9th form and covers from 2 to 21 hours a week.

Optional instruction begins in the 1st form, with 3 hours a week, and amounts to 4 hours in all other forms.

The correlation of the generally compulsory, compulsory-elective and optional instruction varies in the different schools. The above-mentioned possibilities are but a precondition for each school to establish its own image. The trend towards a differentiated approach and a more practical orientation in selecting the content of studies makes it possible to coordinate more effectively the goals, content and organisational forms of instruction. The major problem now is the insufficiently substantiated content of studies, the increasingly theoretical character of school courses in specified subjects of study, which strongly lower the score of a great percentage of students.

Instruction in all types of schools and on all levels of education is carried out in Bulgarian. Exception make the schools with intensive study of foreign languages, where some subjects are taught in the respective foreign language, as well as the private colleges. In Government-funded schools foreign language studies begin in the 5th form and amount to 4 hours a week in all forms up to the 12th (13th) form. Some of the most prospering schools in the country are the secondary schools with foreign language instruction accordingly in English, French, Russian, German, Spanish, Italian, etc., as well as the natural sciences and mathematical schools and the schools teaching the humanities.

The knowledge and skills of the students are evaluated in the process of study by tests and other oral, written and practical forms of examination. Current control is exercised by the teacher, with forms selected personally by him, while the teachers and Government education administrative bodies exercise it recurrently. The knowledge and skills are evaluated by a six-grade scoring system. Scores are recorded for each term of study, academic year and level of education. A general annual score is taken in the first form and in the 2nd-4th form only the annual score in the main subjects on the plan of studies is recorded.

A National Testing Centre (NTC) was set up in 1994 to organise and carry out national testing and examinations for evaluation of the effectivity of education. Instruments and technologies for testing and evaluation of the results of education are now in the process of preparation. Since 1996 NTC has been incorporated in the Institute for Education and Science and has retained its functions.

Pre-school education

The system of pre-school instruction encompasses the children in the 2 to 7 years bracket. Along with the prevalent (over 95%) Government-funded sector, a private sector is developing too.

Objective: The kindergarten shall furnish relevant conditions for the development of the child's abilities and for making it ready for school education.

Pre-school education fulfils its targets and tasks in day-care, health, special and half-day kindergartens and school preparatory groups (Supplement No 3). The greatest number of children is claimed by the day-care kindergartens, which constitute 3648 out of the total number of 3651 child-care centers. Some 258 935 children in them are distributed into 12 331 groups. The children are looked after by 24 679 teachers, 8874 of which are with higher, 14 967 with semi-higher and the rest are with secondary education. There are 661 music instructors and 107 psychologists. The 1995 pre-school coverage of children is 40.42% or by 3% lower than in 1994 (see Supplement No 3 and 4). The reasons for such almost by half reduction as compared to 1989 (82%) vary, but most significant are the economic ones. Many children who do not attend now the kindergartens belong to families of unemployed, to marginal-income and risk families. The reduced kindergarten coverage of children in pre-school age exposes most of them to the risks of the street. That is why the National Programme for Development of Education features establishment of new free of charge, or for a minimum charge, school preparatory groups with the kindergartens and schools. Besides this, a network of playing facilities will be set up and play groups will be formed for children from marginal-income families and for neglected or homeless children.

Attendance of kindergarten is optional.

The pedagogical process in kindergartens is aimed at the emotional, moral, aesthetical, intellectual and physical development of children.

The novel thing in the pedagogical practice of pre-school instruction is that the volume and character of the content of studies for different activities is determined by two programmes: a) the Programme for Education of Children in the Two to Seven Years Bracket; b) Children's Activity in Kindergarten. The selection and structuring of the content of studies is chiefly subject to the integrationally-situational and thematically-spiral principle. The programmes operate on a national level and teachers are entitled to opt for one of them.

The content of studies covers several global themes: "My world", "I and the others", "I and Nature", etc. Play is the main method of organising pedagogical interaction.

The development of children is studied jointly by teachers and parents in a natural environment and activities (play, occupation, festivals, excursions, etc.) for the children. Play, study of products of children's creativity and natural pedagogical experiments are leading methods in this process.

Elementary education

The problems of democratisation and humanisation of the education process on the elementary school level have acquired particular importance in recent years. The accumulated experience and traditions have been reevaluated along these lines and radical steps for change undertaken on the basis of contemporary achievements. The efforts are aimed at bringing the work in elementary schools maximum close to the

life of children, to help them study, increase their interest in living an active life, to understand and solve on their own the encountered problems and to gradually develop the qualities of citizens of a humane and democratic society. With a view of all this the content of studies is upgraded and the methods and means for instruction and education are diversified, in order to offer better opportunities for independence, personal freedom and active participation on the part of the students. It has been recommended to teachers to use didactic technologies and methods of work (such as group work) so as to create an atmosphere of interaction and mutual cooperation between teacher and pupils and between the pupils themselves.

The plan of study for the elementary school level provides for studying the Bulgarian language and literature, mathematics, history, natural history, pictorial art, music, practical classes, physical culture (21-25 hours a week). This is the comprehensive instruction minimum. The plan of study also provides for 3-4 hours a week of optional instruction. These hours are mainly used and distributed between foreign language studies, sports or aesthetically-oriented classes. They are held outside the compulsory hours of study (no more than 1 hour a day). The curricula for optional instruction are prepared by the teachers and are approved by the school Principal, after advising the parents what is the school's potential to organize optional instruction and after collecting from them written statements specifying the subjects of study and the respective teachers for this type of instruction.

Some secondary comprehensive schools approved by the Ministry apply a specially developed plan for early foreign language studies (from the 1st form) and approximate plans of study for music, choreography and pictorial art classes. The establishment of such schools should meet the requirements for staff and material facilities provision and should be coordinated with the municipal administration and the regional inspectorate of the Ministry for Education, Science and Technologies.

Each elementary school teacher shall plan his/her teaching activities by distributing approximately the education material of the subjects of study taught by him/her. The form master shall develop a plan for work with the students in compliance with their interests and needs. Special attention should be paid to health education and instruction, to ecological and civil education, traffic safety instruction and civil defence, practical classes and development of professional interests, moral, patriotic, aesthetic and physical education.

The period of transition has conditioned many pedagogical and social problems which affect the elementary school. The question of diagnosing the readiness of children for school, the work in preparatory groups, etc. have proved particularly topical in recent years. The admission and keeping of all children subject to compulsory education, the enrolment of those who do not know well the Bulgarian language in the preparatory groups, etc. have strong social aspects.

All children at the age of 6 or 7, at the choice of their parents, are admitted in the first form of the municipal and Government-funded schools on September 1st of the respective year.

The readiness of children for school shall be diagnosed by a Medical and Pedagogical Commission with the municipal council. The school Principal is also entitled to

organise such diagnosing of their readiness for school (by tests or in an interview), in order to facilitate differentiation and individualisation of the school work of teachers.

The pattern for organising the education and instruction on the elementary school level shall be determined by the pedagogical council, allowing for the preferences of the parents and the concrete conditions of the school. It could follow a half-day or a full-day scheme. Besides comprehensive instruction, a full-day pattern (in two versions) features also some other activities: self-instruction, organised recreation and sports, interest groups.

According to the provisions of the 1991 National Education Act, preparatory classes should be organised for children over 6 years of age subject to compulsory education, who are in poor command of the Bulgarian language and have not attended a kindergarten. The pupils in the 1st form do not repeat the annual course, except on recommendation of a consultative medical commission and a written request from their parents.

Basic education

Basic education is obtained after a successful completion of the 8th form. The uniform comprehensive training in all subjects of study is characteristic of this type of education. This period lays the foundations for studying the basics of the different sciences and is characteristic with a relative completion of this type of instruction. A novel moment is the presented opportunities for intensive training already in the 5th form which makes accelerated passing from one form to another possible for students. The pedagogical system is open to any innovative ideas.

The completion of the 8th form is accompanied with the issuing of a certificate for completed basic education featuring:

- the annual score in the subjects of study in the 8th form;
- the score in optional instruction in the 8th form.

The overall score for completed basic education is calculated as an average score, with 0.001 precision, of the score in all subjects for the 8th form: Bulgarian language and literature, first foreign language, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography.

The weekly and daily pattern of organisation of the process of education and instruction shall comply with the specificities of the region and shall ensure sufficient time for work, recreation and play to the students. The work with mixed classes in the small settlements and villages merits special attention.

Secondary comprehensive education

Secondary comprehensive education is obtained after successful completion of the last secondary school form and successful passing of written matriculation exams. It is carried out in profile-oriented secondary classes with the comprehensive secondary schools and comprises the compulsory basic education and profile-oriented instruction in a specified scientific field or professional sphere. The compulsory basic

education consists of a comprehensive education minimum, computer and foreign language instruction.

The tradition of profile-oriented schools in foreign languages, mathematics, the humanities, etc. will be maintained in the future. A tendency for vocational orientation of some of the secondary schools will be gradually developed too. The secondary education system comprises also special profile-oriented schools for students with manifest achievements in specified scientific fields, as well as profile-oriented schools on a national level.

Students sit for written matriculation exams:

a) In the secondary comprehensive schools with non-profile instruction in:

- Bulgarian language and literature;
- an optional comprehensive education subject studied within the framework of the compulsory-elective instruction in the last secondary school form.

b) In the profile-oriented classes of the secondary comprehensive schools and the secondary schools with profile-oriented instruction in:

- Bulgarian language and literature;
- the main profile-oriented subject (when the main profile-oriented subject of study is the Bulgarian language and literature, the students sit for the second profile-oriented subject of study).

The students do not sit for matriculation exams in physical culture and technologies.

Students, who have completed successfully the last secondary school form with an average arithmetical score on the respective subject of study at least "very good" 5.00 and an annual score for the last year of study (in general compulsory instruction or compulsory-elective instruction) also no less than "very good" 5.00, are exempt from sitting for the matriculation exams.

Those who have completed successfully their secondary comprehensive education receive a diploma for secondary education. The diploma shall feature obligatorily the profile of instruction.

Vocational education

In the course of its 123-year history vocational education in Bulgaria was carried out through a system of different kinds of schools. This type of education is superstructured over a completed school level or form and offers opportunities for upgrading the comprehensive education along with obtaining a professional qualification.

The following types of school exist:

1. Technical and secondary special schools with admission after the 7th form. The course of study in them is 5 years. The graduates receive secondary special education.

Technical schools have a stepped-up foreign language training. The foreign language is taught 15 hours a week in the first year, followed by 6 hours a week in the second and 3 hours a week in the third and fourth. Secondary special schools after the 7th form train their students in the field of culture.

2. Technical schools after the 8th form. The course of study in them is 4 years. Their graduates receive secondary special education.

3. Secondary vocational-technical schools after the 8th form. The course of study in them is 3 years. Their graduates receive secondary vocational education.

4. Vocational schools with admission after the 6th, 7th and 8th form. These schools cater to students who for one or another reason have dropped out of the compulsory comprehensive school up to the 8th form. Thus they are offered an opportunity to acquire professional qualification and to complete their basic education. The course of study varies: 1, 2 or 3 years, depending from which form on the student is admitted.

5. Vocational classes with the comprehensive schools. They open up in the small settlements lacking a developed network of vocational schools.

The various vocational schools are distributed in number in the professional fields as follows:

Professional field	Technical schools	Secondary vocational-technical schools	Vocational technical schools
Geology, prospecting and mining	8	-	-
Metallurgy	5	-	-
Power generation	8	2	-
Mechanical engineering and instrument-building	38	48	-
Electrical engineering and electronics	26	9	1
Transport	14	28	-
Chemical industry	19	6	-
Building and construction	21	28	-
Agriculture	30	46	6
Forestry and wood processing industry	9	9	-
Food-processing industry and public catering	24	17	-
Light industry	14	33	2
Economy, management and commerce	31	-	-
General	247	226	9

Vocational education of adults is carried out in the above-mentioned schools in evening, extramural and external classes. In the evening technical schools, after a completed 8th form, the course of study is 4 years and in the secondary vocational-

technical schools it is 3 years. After completed secondary education adults are also trained in technical schools (in day-time and in the evening) with a 2-year course of study.

Admission of students in the various types of vocational schools depends on the school criteria. Traditional links with enterprises and firms have been established which provide material assets for the practical training, as well as opportunities for the students to participate in the real production process. The Government plays the leading role: it plans vocational education, finances and organizes it, controls the quality of instruction. Until recently this was quite justified being in line with the strongly centralised planned economy. Transition to market realtions gave rise to contacts with institutions outside the education system: employers, syndicates, branch chambers. Such partnership is effected in the organization of the overall process of education and especially in determining the requirements posed to vocational training and the evaluation of professional competence at the output of the system. It is expected to help overcome certain shortcomings in vocational training and evaluation of professional competence at the output of the system which have emerged in the process of economic crisis. Recession has severed the contacts of some enterprises with the vocational schools and thus affected adversely the quality of practical training.

The year 1994 witnessed compilation of a New List of Occupations for School and Extra-School Training which replaced the four lists of occupations used so far for vocational training.

The new List comprises 183 occupations distributed between 22 professional spheres and is by 73 occupations short of their total number in the former four lists. The occupations are differentiated by the degree of qualification, depending on the type of school they are taught in and the level of the vocational and comprehensive training obtained. The occupations of the 3rd qualification degree studied in the technical schools were subject to greatest change. There are 71 such occupations, far less than in the former list where they numbered 133. Their content and profile were extended. The profile of occupations of the 2nd qualification degree studied in the secondary vocational-technical schools was also extended. Only the occupations of the 1st degree of qualification studied in the vocational schools have increased in number (with 22). They have a narrower profile owing to the lower education level of the students. New craft occupations, mainly of the 1st and 2nd qualification degree, were added to cater to the needs of the newly developing small and medium private businesses.

The correlation between the levels of education and the degrees of qualification in the new list of occupations for school and extra-school training was borrowed from International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) - 1988 (ILO, 1990) and the categories of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED, UNESCO, 1976). Thus the degrees of qualification were brought at par with the international classification of occupations.

The new list of occupations is being introduced in practice stage by stage. In 1995 Government education norms for the content of instruction in 7 occupations were prepared and in 1996 such norms are being developed for another 18 occupations.

The content of studies is structured into three groups of subjects of study: compulsory (Bulgarian language and literature, optionally selected foreign language, history, geography, mathematics, physics, biology, philosophy, physical culture, theoretical subjects of study relevant to the respective occupation, and practical training), compulsory-elective (1-2 subjects of the comprehensive or vocational instruction, optionally selected but compulsory for study within the framework of the established hours of study for the week) and optional (subjects of study and activities, listed or not in the plan of study, optionally selected and studied in addition to the compulsory hours). The compulsory-elective and optional instruction totals from 4 to 6 hours a week in the various courses of training. The correlation between compulsory comprehensive and compulsory vocational training in technical schools with admission after the 8th form is 1:1.5, and in the secondary vocational-technical school it is 1:1.25.

The number of vocational schools and of the students in them is presented in Supplement No 7.

Problems of the annual course repeaters and drop-out pupils

Data on drop-out pupils show a positive trend of certain reduction in their numbers in the last two years (from 44 869 in the 1993/1994 academic year to 42 351 in the 1994/1995 academic year). There is a following pattern (in per cent) by education levels:

Education level	1993/1994	1994/1995
Elementary	2.96%	2.98%
Basic	3.74%	3.87%
Secondary (comprehensive)	4.24%	3.95%
Vocational	4.08%	4.63%

This trend is characteristic chiefly for secondary comprehensive education, where the reduction is about 0.30%. The other types of education witness certain increase in the number of drop-out students. The main reasons for drop-outs in the 1994/1995 academic year are: reaching the age of 16 for compulsory education (38% of all drop-outs), emigration abroad (24%), unwillingness to continue education (12%), unconfirmed moving out (11%), prolonged ailment (1.9%), etc. Most of the drop-outs are of Romany extraction.

Data on students repeating their annual courses also show a positive trend of certain reduction in their numbers, but it is characteristic only for the basic and secondary education. Elementary education witnesses an increase in the numbers of annual course repeaters.

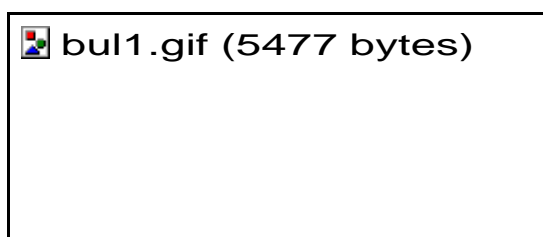
Education level	1994/1995	1995/1996
Elementary	2.73%	3.45%
Basic	4.14%	4.02%
Secondary (comprehensive)	1.18%	1.15%

Vocational	1.17%	1.38%
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The reasons for students to repeat the annual course of study are kindred to those for dropping out. Most often they pertain to difficulties in mastering the content of studies, poor motivation to study, health reasons, etc.

The total number of students by types of education and schools is presented in Supplement No 5 and 6. The correlation of the number of students from the 9th to the 12th form studying in the different types of schools is shown in Figure 1.

Fig. 1. Distribution of 9th to 12th form students by types of school



The percentage of students who passed to a higher school level is presented in the following Table:

Education level	1994/1995	1995/1996
From elementary to pre-secondary	99.04%	99.49%
From basic to secondary comprehensive	40.16%	39.00%
From basic to vocational	57.93%	60.75%
From secondary comprehensive to higher education	65.69%	76.70%
From secondary comprehensive to semi-higher education	14.73%	12.39%
From secondary vocational to higher education	28.88%	41.70%
From secondary-vocational to semi-higher education	9.48%	7.90%

The presented data show a strong positive trend towards an increase in the numbers of students passing to a higher education level. This is especially valid for students passing from elementary to pre-secondary level, from basic to vocational level, from secondary comprehensive to higher education, and from the technical and secondary vocational education to higher education. This optimistic trends stands for a better motivation for study in recent years and a striving on the part of a considerably greater part of the students to obtain a higher level of education.

Special education

Special schools are intended for students in need of special care, help and protection on the part of the Government and society. These are:

- for students with chronic health conditions: health, hospital, sanatorial schools;
- for students with lasting health impairments;
- for mentally retarded children and children with speech, hearing, sight and accompanying them impairments;
- for students with specific education needs: children's and adolescent homes, boarding schools, social and pedagogical boarding houses.

Health schools are of the comprehensive or vocational type and engage in education, instruction and medical treatment of the ailing students with respiratory, cardiovascular, intestinal, liver, kidney, psychic and other conditions.

Sanatorial and hospital schools are set up withj the sanatoria and hospitals and are intended for ailing children subject to compulsory education.

The schools for children with lasting impairments engage in education, instruction and rehabilitation aimed at correcting and compensating for the impairment and for encouraging the development of students.

The school-homes for children and adolescents raise, teach and educate children without families or whose parents were deprived of parental rights. They a basic comprehensive schools.

The admission of students in the special health schools and the schools for impaired students is arranged on instruction of the Minister of Health care and the Minister of Education, Science and Technologies.

The instruction and education in special schools is carried out according to Government-set education norms. Teachers and Government extend great care for these students. The forms and groups comprise a small number of students taught according to specially adopted norms.

The types of special education establishments according to their specificity and number of students in them in 1994/1995 and 1995/1996 are shown in Supplement NO 8 and 9.

The last year witnessed a certain drop in the number of special schools (3 less) but the numbers of their students has slightly increased. Generally this type of education establishments are rather stable. There is a striving for the children with health problems who nevertheless can study in the mass schools to keep them in these schools, without tearing them apart from their natural environment, and to admit in special school those with graver health and social conditions.

Private school education

The private secondary schools are a new reality in Bulgarian education.

The legislative basis for development of the private school sector is determined by:

- Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, adopted by the Grand national Assembly in 1991;
- National Education Act, adopted by the Grand national Assembly in 1991;
- Regulations for Application of the National Education Act;
- Ordinance on Private Schools of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technologies(MEST).

On the basis of this regulation the Government, respectively MEST, create the necessary conditions and preconditions for the development of this process. By its actions the Ministry assumes the stand that private schools within the context of the changing economic, political, social and cultural realities in the country have their place in the system of school education. They present an extra opportunity for ensuring the constitutional right of each citizen to freely choose the type of schools and form of his/her education.

The first private schools in Bulgaria opened in 1992. The conditions and order for opening of private schools are clearly defined in the above mentioned Ordinance on Private Schools of MEST. The Minister of Education, Science and Technology is legislatively entrusted with the regime of certification of these schools.

Currently there are 78 private schools of all types opened and working in the country:

- elementary - 21;
- basic - 9;
- secondary comprehensive - 6;
- vocational - 33;
- religious (Orthodox Christian and Muslim) - 4;
- secondary comprehensive with foreign language instruction - 5.

The students in private schools number about 6000; the teachers are about 500 in number.

The relative share of private schools in regard to Government-funded is about 1%.

As a part of the secondary education system, the private schools are supervised and controlled by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technologies as a specialised Government body for relevant competence in the sphere of education, and by the regional MEST divisions, the regional inspectorates.

Methodological help for the organization of the process of education and instruction, for the qualification of teachers and for the introduction of new programmes in private schools claims an important place in the control activities.

MEST controls the issuing of diplomas for completed secondary education and professional qualification.

In principle private schools work by plans of study coinciding in their compulsory part with the Government plan of study. Along with this they are entitled to use other curricula enabling a more differentiated and specialized training of the students. These

are curricula for intensive foreign language education , instruction in music, pictorial art, ecology, civil education (for the secondary comprehensive schools).

The private vocational schools apply widely programmes for study of economics (management, trade and marketing, business administration, banking and insurance), tourism, hotel-keeping, fashion business, agriculture, etc.

The prospects for the development of private schools in Bulgaria are determined by several factors: lack of national traditions and know-how in this field, the economic crisis in the country, etc.

Their prospects should be viewed not so much in the quantitative growth of their numbers, as rather in achieving a high quality of education through application and experimentation of new pedagogical ideas, programmes and education technologies.

Extra-school activities

In recent years the system of extra-school establishments in the country has been gravely destabilised owing to self-sufficient ideological considerations, acute shortage of material and financial resources and, above all, lack of a strategy on the part of the education administration for their development. Currently 316 extra-school units are in operation, of these 164 centers for work with children, 71 unified children's complexes, 34 centers for school students technical and scientific creativity, 30 school students sports schools, 9 school students observatories and planetaria, and 7 art schools. Owing to the restitution, confiscation for other purposes, etc. the material assets for children's activities in leisure time and their capacity for coverage of children have suffered a hard blow.

In the 1995/1996 academic year MEST set as a priority task the development of extra-curricular and extra-school activities. Attention was duly paid to the optimum functioning of the National Centre for Extra-Curricular and Extra-School Activities set with the Ministry. Development of normative basis is under way; sittings, working meetings, seminars, scientific and practical conferences are organised for thinking over the status and functions of extra-school education in the contemporary education system, of its national traditions, as well as for formulating new ideas on its content and themes, organisational and technological backing. Conditions are created for the advancement of the productive forces of the adolescents, for manifestation and meeting of a wide range of needs and interests of the students outside their compulsory curricula. The programmes are approximate, optional which creates opportunities for creative freedom of the instructors. The contents of these activities exceed by far the framework of the school curricula, comprising problems and novelties in the field of science, technologies, artistic culture, civil and health education and instruction, etc.

The changes in the strategy for the realisation of extra-school education are oriented towards not only mastering of knowledge and experience, but at accepting the national and general human values, building of self-confidence and positive attitudes, encouragement of personal initiative, mobility, striving for self-expression and self-improvement, a healthy way of life.

Teaching staff

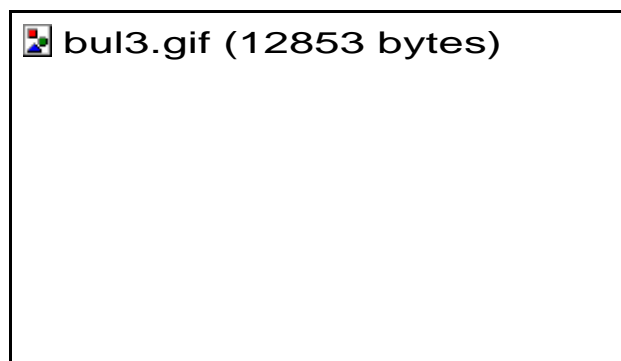
The numbers of teaching staff working on the different levels and types of education distributed by the level of their qualification and pedagogical training and by age are presented in Supplement No 10 and 11.

The total number of teachers has marked an increase in the last two years, which is characteristic chiefly for the comprehensive schools and especially for the teachers in the 9th to 12th form. This growth is connected with the extension of secondary education. The teaching staff in the education establishments is generally stable which is a good precondition for a successful work in education and instruction. There is a trend towards an improvement of the qualification characteristic of teachers. Some 62.24% of all teachers have higher education. This is particularly valid for the teachers in elementary school, where from 36.10% of teacher with higher education in 1993/1994 their percentage grew to 44.49% in the 1995/1996 academic year. This trend is also characteristic for the teachers in pre-secondary school, where the increase stands for about 4%. (See Figs 2 and 3).

Fig. 2. Teachers with higher education in comprehensive schools in the 1993-1996 period



**Fig. 3. Distribution of teachers by education
A. In the 1993/1994 academic year**



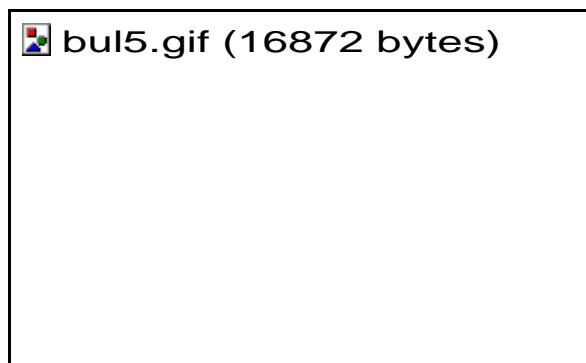
B. In the 1995/1996 academic year



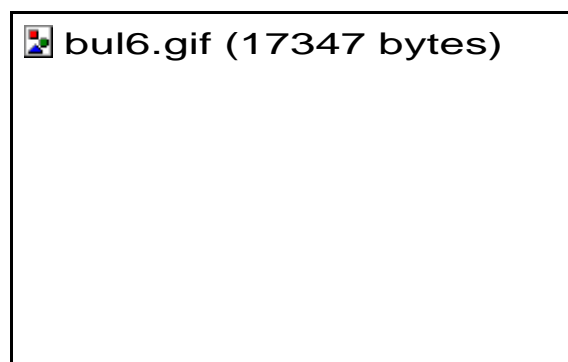
Note: The graphs do not feature "other" owing to the low percentage in the 1993-1996 period (0.08%).

A certain drop in the number of women in the pedagogical staff is characteristic for the period under review (from 78.69% in 1993/1994 to 76.19% in 1995/1996), as well as certain rejuvenation of the teaching staff (See Fig. 4).

**Fig. 4. Characteristic of teachers by age
A. For the 1993/1994 academic year**



B. For the 1995/1996 academic year



Note: The graph does not feature "retirement age" owing to the low percentage: 0.78% for 1993/1994 and 0.01% for 1995/1996.

In general the education system is provided with the necessary qualified teaching staff. Certain shortage of teachers is felt in some remote regions of the country. In line

with the much brisker international contacts of the country the number of pupils studying English language has considerably increased in recent years conditioning the demand in more qualified teachers in English.

Work load of the teaching staff

Teachers in the secondary education establishments work according to norm set up in 1990 (*State Gazette*, No 91 of 1990). These norms reflect only their work load in the teaching activities. The preparation for the the work hours, the extra work with students, parents, the organizational and pedagogical activity, the keeping of teaching documentation, etc. are not included in the norms for obligatory teaching work. According to the established norms the work load of the teaching on the various levels of instruction is as follows:

Work load of teachers

Teacher in kindergarten, unified children's establishment, etc.	30 hours a week
Music teacher, instructor in rhythmic	24 hours a week
Teacher in the 1st-3rd form: classes	according to the plan of study but no more than 20 hours a week
Extra-class activities according to the plan of studies	24 hours a week
Teacher in the 4th-11th (12th) form in the secondary comprehensive schools, technical schools, art schools, secondary vocational-technical schools in:	
a) Bulgarian language and literature, mathematics, foreign languages, informatics, general technical and special subjects of study	648 hours a year 684 hours a year
b) physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy	720 hours a year
c) history, geography, fundamental of aesthetics, ethics, law, psychology, logics, philosophy, sociology, pictorial art, physical culture	792 hours a year 864 hours a year
d) practical instruction	30-42 hours a week
e) practical classes, laboratory exercises, motor practice	
f) practical training in production	
Tutor	30 hours a week
Instructor in practical training	
a) in the homes for children and adolescents	30 hours a week
b) in the special schools	24 hours a week

There is a characteristic tradition in Bulgarian education for the principals and deputy principals of the schools to engage in teaching activity, with the number of

teaching hours determined by the category of the school and varying between 72 to 216 hours a year. The principals of the elementary schools with more than 10 class divisions are exempt of teaching.

Training of the pedagogical staff. The role of universities

Teachers in the Republic of Bulgaria are trained for all degrees of higher education: semi-higher, Bachelor's, Master's and Doctor's degree. Teachers can obtain their semi-higher degree mainly in the pedagogical colleges and semi-higher institutes, and their university degrees in the Government-funded and private universities. In recent years a number of engineering and technical institutes and universities have engaged in training teachers for the technical and vocational schools with the respective education profile.

Teachers employed in the university and pedagogical higher education establishments have marked a 15.7% increase as compared to last year, while in comparison with 1995 the increase is about one-third 27.0% (See Supplement No 12). The number of teachers in the engineering and technological and economic higher education establishments who train teachers for the relevant type of schools was retained in the last two years.

The relative share of the teaching staff in the pedagogical colleges and semi-higher institutes also remains the same in this period.

It could be maintained that in the period under review, irrespective of the adverse economic conditions and the relatively low remuneration of the teachers' work, the higher education system has managed to retain its teaching staff in the spheres related directly with the qualification of teachers for the different levels of secondary education. Thus the various types and degrees of higher education establishments have managed to maintain continuity between the various levels of the system, even under the conditions of the acutest economic crisis.

The programmes for basic training of teachers comprise elements pertaining to:

a) mastering of the subject of study

Training and qualification of teachers in mastering the various subjects in the plan of study, depending on the level of the school for which the plan is intended, follows two patterns: according to first, the teachers obtain basic pedagogical training in the course of 1.5 to 3 years, followed by another subject on the school programme in the form of specialisation. This model is characteristic for the plans of study of the pedagogical specialties training pre-school and elementary schoolteachers. Mastering of the subjects of study is entered in the plan of studies of the specialty as a supplementary qualification to the pedagogical qualification. According to the second pattern, studies for a specified specialty (philology, mathematics, physics, etc.), which coincides with the respective subject or group of subjects of study taught at school, may take pedagogical orientation. In this case pedagogical qualification is supplementary for the philologist, mathematician, etc, entitling them to teach this subject at school. This pattern is chiefly followed in training teachers for the third level of instruction or 9th to 12th form.

Depending on the pattern used, the mastering of a subject taught at school could be either a major element of the plan of study or an auxiliary one to the pedagogical and methodological training of the future teacher.

b) pedagogical and methodological competence

In the beginning of 1995 an Ordinance on Unified Government Norms for Higher Education of Teachers was adopted by Decree No 12 of the Council of Ministers, according to which a compulsory minimum of 4 disciplines of study was set, along with a horarium of 300 hours ensuring the pedagogical and methodological competence of teachers on a single subject of study. The Ordinance also provides for obligatory forms and a horarium for practical training of the future teachers guaranteeing the minimum level of their teaching competence. This Ordinance regulates the pedagogical and methodological element in the plan of studies for training of teachers according to the first pattern.

Since 1996 the development of a similar ordinance is under way, intended to regulate the basic pedagogical and methodological training of teachers following the second pattern, i.e. for whom the mastering of a specified subject of study is supplementary to the plan of study.

c) The plans of study and curricula intended for training pre-school and elementary schoolteachers widely feature elements shaping the abilities for development of interpersonal relations, as well as elements catering to such new expectations as civil, health, intercultural education, etc., amounting to 30-35% of the plans of study and curricula. The instruction of teachers for the specific subjects of study, however, almost lacks in such elements. The reason for this lies in the different philosophy of structuring the plan of study for the specialists in various subjects, in which the teaching qualification is left in the background and intended to save the certified mathematician, historical, biologist, etc. from unemployment. Owing to this, the curricula of the specialists in different subjects are overloaded with special and specialised knowledge, mostly totally unintended for teaching of students. This makes impossible the discovery of slots to introduce courses and programmes aimed at forming abilities for human interrelations or such in line with the new expectations.

System of teachers' qualification

The upgrading of the professional qualification of teachers takes place in three specialised institutes with the Universities in Sofia, Stara Zagora and Varna, as well as in a number of specialised units at other universities and pedagogical institutes. Various forms of qualification are used: short- and long-term, annual specialisations, seminars, discussions, lectures, etc. The system for obtaining a qualification class, which has prevailed of late, yields good results: it has two degrees - 2nd and 1st class and ensures higher remuneration.

The new national context in the period of transition to a new economic system calls for improvements in the system of qualification of teachers. Attention is focused on:

- revaluation of the content, forms, methods, planning approach to qualification;

- replacement of the principle of obligatoriness with the principle of economic interest to upgrade qualification, backing of the achieved higher qualification level with higher remuneration;
- legislative guarantees for the optimum realization of qualification process, etc.

Solution of these problems pertains to a gradual setting up of a System for Teachers' Qualification by the MEST. Basic Principles and a Draft-Ordinance on the Order and Conditions for Upgrading the Qualification of Pedagogical Staff have been developed and pending approval. The adoption of normative acts to guarantee the functioning of the system by the competent Government bodies will be the final stage.

The major principles of the qualification activity in the main documents are as follows:

- all-round approach and uninterruptedness;
- comprehensiveness;
- interest;
- dynamism, flexibility and adaptability;
- consistency and differentiation;
- decentralisation and autonomy;
- unity of the qualification forms, etc.

The Draft-Ordinance also provides for diversification of the qualification forms in schools - seminars, practical courses, training, lectures, scientific, practical and methodological conferences, etc., as well as in the specialised institutes - all-round, thematic and instruction courses, professional pedagogical specialisations and training for the improvement of professional skills.

The Ordinance also comprises new suggestions for qualification degrees, modes for obtaining them with a view of the development of teachers, etc.

The new System for Qualification of the Pedagogical Staff is expected to allow more comprehensively for the specificity of the work of school principals, inspectors and other administration.

Material and technical assets. Provision of textbooks and manuals

One of the tasks of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technologies is to supply the education system with textbooks and obligatory manuals. This task is regulated by the National Education Act, the Draft-Bill on National Education, the Decree of the Council of Ministers 218/X.1994 and Ordinance 4/25.01.1995. In line with the current normative regulation the Ministry is obligated to supply the education process and all students from the first to the last form with textbooks and obligatory manuals, free of charge from the 1st to the 8th forms, and paid for the rest.

Publishing and distribution of textbooks is based on competition and bidding. Each academic year some subjects of study are specified for new textbooks open to contest-based writing, publishing and distribution. The initial conditions for bidding are announced in which all Bulgarian publishing houses meeting the requirements set by the Ministry can take part.

Under the conditions of real competition with respect to the quality of contents, the artistic and polygraphic layout and the price the Ministry approves these textbooks suitable for use in the schools throughout the country for instruction of students in a specified subject. The schools are entitled to choose freely among several alternative textbooks those to be used for their instruction of their students.

Along these lines MEST work with more than 30 Government and private publishing houses which publish and distribute over 480 kinds of textbooks for comprehensive and about 800 kinds of textbooks for vocational instruction.

A new system for distribution of textbooks from the 1st to the 8th form introduced in 1995 provides for direct delivery of the textbook to the schools on the grounds of a preliminary applied order. It ensures direct contacts between the schools and the publishing houses contributing to a realistic evaluation of the finished product and binding publishing to practice.

Provision of textbooks is funded from a specialised fund in the State Budget. The allocation of this fund ensured more secure financial backing of the activities of all participants in the process.

The introduction of the contest principle in the publication of textbooks provided the Bulgarian school with much better and more professionally executed textbooks. A considerable qualitative advancement was made in the textbooks and manuals intended for the elementary schools. Creation of textbook standards for the various age groups is supposed to further improve the procedure for development and approval of textbooks.

To meet the needs of the secondary school students who purchase themselves their textbooks a school supply scheme for their provision is intended to be set up.

Recent years witnessed some grave problems in supplying the schools with contemporary computer hardware and software. There are 25 in-school centres linked into a local network and with computers of different make. Generally the IBM (about 30%), Macintosh (2%) and the Bulgarian Pravets-8 (67%) prevail in Bulgarian secondary education. In the last two years, however, owing to financial cuts, there are no target allocations for computer hardware and software. Any contributions along these lines come chiefly from donors. The comprehensive schools and the instruction in comprehensive subjects in the vocational schools are better backed with software: about 66.5% of all software, 19% for the general technical and 14.5% for the special subjects of study.

Somewhat better is the provision of the education establishments with traditional audiovisual and technical applications: overhead projectors, aspectometers, cassette-recorders, TV sets, etc. but didactic materials for work with these appliances are also insufficient and not in compliance with the new contents of study. Some professional schools are insufficiently backed up technically in line with the current professional training of the students. Owing to inflation and difficulties in purchasing new and modern equipment the technical backing of some vocational schools lags behind. At the same time on the initiative of their administration and use of sponsors other schools have considerably improved it.

There is an urgent need to change the strategy and priority orientation of funding for purchase of modern education equipment which will facilitate the process of study and will ensure opportunities for extra income to the education establishments. The new concept on development of secondary education provision with modern computer training of the students is one of the leading priorities. Development of an integral programme for supplying the schools with the necessary computer hardware and software, as well as with methodologies for their use is forthcoming.

In recent years in the result of a number of laws and by-laws the ownership of the material assets in education became rather varied: municipal, of MEST, departmental, of various firms, private.

By Decree No 151 of the Council of ministers of 1993 the funding of over 800 education establishments and servicing them units were transferred from the branch ministries to the Ministry of Science and Technology, which distanced the municipalities from the solution of their problems.

Restitution legislation also affected many education buildings and courtyards. As a result of the new economic conditions the state of the education buildings changed adversely. The funding of activities of the education establishments is considerably shorter of their real needs. Repairs and equipment are financed only in case of emergency.

Buildings, especially the older ones, are subject to increased decay. In their search for a way out of the financial difficulties a number of schools take orientation to some new economic approaches, such as contracts on cooperation, sponsorship, lease of property, etc.

Generally the state of material assets could not be termed as very good owing to the fact that most of the buildings were erected more than 30-40 years ago, they are aging and do not meet the contemporary requirements of the process of education.

The construction of new schools is hampered by the financial difficulties experienced by the State.

A tendency towards depopulation of schools in the small frontier and mountainous settlements and overpacking in the big cities is observed. These faces the municipalities and MEST with some grave problems related to the rational use of the available buildings.

There is shortage of gyms, professional training centres, hostels.

Centres for recreation of tourism of students are built, with 277 rest homes: 74 at the seaside and 103 in the mountains.

Their capacity totals 27 000 students per shift, but most of them cannot be used round the year owing to lack of heating.

Under the new economic conditions MEST and the municipalities are looking for opportunities to develop the material and technical assets in order to make it better meet the current needs.

Higher education

In 1996 the system of higher education in Bulgaria has 41 higher and 47 semi-higher education establishments with a total of 250 309 students studying for four education degrees:

- pre-university education with a 3-year course of training in colleges and institutes (the so called semi-higher institutes); its graduates receive a diploma for higher education and qualify as a Specialist;
- Higher university or institute education with a 4-year course of training for the Bachelor's degree;
- Higher university or institute education with a 5-6-year course of training for the Masters's degree;
- Post-graduate 3-year course of training for the Doctor's degree.

This new structure of the higher education has been in force since the end of 1995, enacted by the new Higher Education Act adopted by the National Assembly.

In the last two years higher education in Bulgaria has marked a considerable growth, irrespective of the unfavourable economic conditions and cutdown in funding. Thus, for instance, if the 1993/1994 academic year witnessed a 8.5% growth in the number of students taught in the higher education establishments as compared to the preceding academic year, this growth was 11.5% for 1994/1995 and in the current academic year (1995/1996) it is already 14% (See Fig.5).

Fig.5



In 1995 the National Assembly approved new private higher education establishments, thus bringing their number to 5. Approximately one-tenth of all students in the country are taught in them.

In the 1994-1996 period the structure of distribution of students by spheres of training has been retained with respect to the preceding period (See Supplement No 13): the highest relative share is claimed by the students in the university and pedagogical specialties, followed by those in the engineering and technical and economic specialties. The growth rates within this structure, however, are not the same in the

period under review, as it could be seen from the Table, while the relative share of students in the university and pedagogical specialties is on the increase and amounts to 44.8% in the last year (as compared to 38.3% in 1993/1994), the relative share of students in the engineering and technical specialties has dropped from 28.6% in 1993/1994 to 21.1% in the current academic year. The interest in the higher agricultural education has strongly ebbed, by 43.8% as compared to 1994.

While the demand in university education in the period under review is growing, pre-university education has witnessed a 8.9% decrease as compared to the preceding years and internal structural changes.

The latter are characteristic with an increase of the relative share of students in the medical specialties, which this year claim the greatest relative share, while the proportion of students in the technical specialties was brought down to the second place, followed immediately by that of the students in the pedagogical specialties. Mention deserves the fact that compared to 1994 the number of students in the semi-higher religious education establishments has doubled from 63 to 129.

The structure of the newly admitted students in the higher education establishments shows the following trends in the last two years (See Supplement No 14):

- The relative share (59.4%) of students in the regular form of instruction was retained, irrespective of the fact that the growth rates practically go down as compared to 1994, when their share was 63.4%.
- The share of students in the 18-19 age bracket in the quota of the newly admitted students was retained: it is rather high (46.2%) for a country like Bulgaria and ranks her among the countries with mass higher education.
- The role of the secondary comprehensive school as the main "supplier" of students for the system of higher education was retained (half of students admitted in the higher education establishments have comprehensive secondary education).

The period under review manifests a drastic drop in the number of Bulgarian students abroad (as compared to 1994/1995 along this drop is 96%)*. The students sent abroad to study in the engineering and technical specialties who traditionally claimed the greatest share of all students abroad this year yielded the lead to those studying in the university specialties.

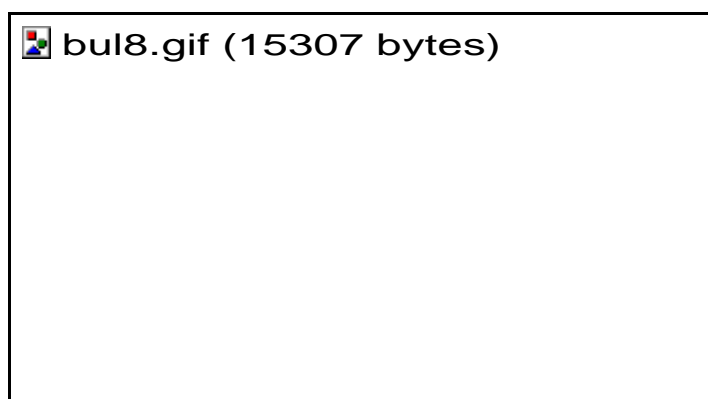
One of the positive trends in the development of higher education in recent years is legislative regulation of the autonomy of the higher education establishments. The right obtained by them to manage themselves their own finances has led to competition between the universities for students, which reflected on the diversification of the specialties and programmes of instruction, to setting up new and interesting courses of instruction.

On the other hand the idea that higher education is a type of social service prevails in the Bulgarian society, as well as the expectation that the Government should be the main financial source for the development of the higher education establishments. The Government on its part has not renounced this function too. The economic difficulties of the transition towards a market economy, however, bring to the fore the

exceptional importance of the problem for a more effective and rational spending of the available funds, looking at the same time for alternative financial sources. The striving of the university administrations to meet the growing demand in specified types of training not always is accompanied with efforts to provide a sufficiently good quality of education and leads to ungrounded growth of single sectors, such as law (a 450% growth) and economics (a 250% growth). Such an imbalance merits a consideration of the need to bind the autonomy of the single higher education establishment to the framework of general goal of the development of the system of higher education and public interest (not always coinciding with the corporate interest of the academic community).

Distribution of students between the different types of higher education establishments by spheres of training (See Supplement No 13), along with the educational aspiration of the Bulgarian youth, illustrates at whose expense the testified growth is effected and what disproportion could be expected in the near future. Thus, for instance, irrespective of the Government policy for increase of the Government-set quotas every year, in the last two years their share of newly admitted students has marked a decrease in real terms (from 49% in 1994 to 41.5% in 1996), while the student quota in paid education has respectively increased from 47.9% to 59.4%. (See Fig. 6)

Fig. 6. Changes in the distribution of Bulgarian students according to the mode of their support in the universities in 1993-1996.



The fact that the marked growth is at the expense of payment by physical persons arises concern owing to the steady decline of the share of students supported by legal entities. Allowing for inflation and escalating cost of life in the country, the students who pay themselves for their education face the risk of being unable to finish it or, at the best, to be compelled to do extra work in order to continue it. Thus the paid form of education becomes an important financial barrier for the availability of higher education and a realistic threat for the quality of qualification of the young people. That is why the Government proposed for the next academic year (1996/1997) not only Government-funded quotas but also quotas for paid education, thus attempting to restore the balance between the Government funded and paid education. This autumn the Government-funded quota of students is expected to increase (53.6% of the newly admitted students), which means that the Government shall guarantee tranquil

finishing of education for a greater number of young people, irrespective of the economic conjuncture in the country in the next several years.

The setting up of a National Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation of the Higher Education Establishments (in line with Chapter 10 of the Higher Education Act) is intended to contribute to the development and application of criteria and norms for evaluation of rentability of the different education establishments.

The establishing of the Agency is intended for June 1996 and will begin work from January 1997.

The increased demand in higher education in the period under review coincides with the increase of the proportion of the specialists with higher education in the education structure of the employed persons in Bulgaria. The growth rates of the number of students in the higher education establishments exceed by far the demand in specialists with higher education in the labour market. It should be taken into consideration that the unfavourable economic conditions in any country would limit the "intake capacity" of the labour market, which reflects on the opportunities to find work for a considerable percentage of the graduates from the higher education establishments.

In September 1994 the conditions and order for setting up Government norms for the different specialties in higher education were approved by a Decree of the Council of Ministers. The state norms establish the minimum general conditions and order for recognising the higher education in a specified specialty.

In 1995 The Council of Ministers set up the Government norms for the law specialty, for pedagogical qualification and recently for medicine and economy. They provide for a minimum of compulsory disciplines, correlation between the theoretical and practical training, and additional requirements, without which the training and the respective diploma issued by the higher education establishment on the grounds of this training should not be recognised.

It should be noted that the successful accreditation of the respective higher education establishment is put in direct dependence in the Higher Education Act on the relevance of the provided training to the Government norms.

Analysis of the data shows that in general the tendency towards the expansion of the system of higher education in Bulgaria has continued in the last two years, irrespective of the adverse economic conditions. The system of the higher education establishments has been preserved and witnesses the first signs of structural integration with the unification of several higher education establishments into the Thracian University. It could be hoped that the processes of institutional integration will deepen in the next two-year period.

The legislative regulation of the autonomy of the higher education establishments has rendered an impetus not only to institutional diversification (most markedly manifested so far), but to vertical diversification of the higher education too by the introduction of more educational and qualification degrees (Specialist, Bachelor, Master, Doctor). The increased availability of higher education and the increasing

students contingency are another characteristic feature of democratisation of higher education in the period under review.

Along with this, some negative trends are observable which make the further democratisation of the system problematic. The fact that the increased availability of higher education to a greater number of Bulgarian young men and women is accompanied with financial barriers for their study arises concern. The growth of the student contingencies in these two years is due to the increased number of students who pay themselves for their education. Under these conditions retaining the traditionally egalitarian character of the higher education in Bulgaria become a difficult task.

The kernel of the teaching and the social gains of the students (such as scholarships, students canteens and hostels, sports and recreation centres) are preserved at the cost of great efforts and chiefly leads to lack of improvement of the material assets of the higher education establishments. The freezing of the material assets become a grave obstacle for upgrading the education process and for introduction of active forms of instruction and modern education technologies pertaining to the improvement of the accomplishments of the students. The informational backing of the education process is inadequate both to the increased number of students and to the requirements for academic quality. An average of 40 students wait to use one seat in the reading hall of the University Library. Merely 25% of the standard-required area for library servicing of students is only provided. The systematic renovation and enrichment of the library stock with book and materials necessary for the education process has been violated.

All this directs the attention in solving the problems of the higher education funding in the following years not only as a quantitative increase of the funds for this sector, but as an effective instrument of the Government policy for preserving and developing the democratic achievements of the system and for maintaining the high academic standards.

Scientific research in education

Scientific research in the field of education is carried out at the specially set for the purpose Institute for Education and Science (IES) and some higher education establishments, universities, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, etc.

The more important lines in scientific research are as follows:

- methodology of development of Government education standards;
- improvement of the administration system of education by way of its democratisation, as well as of the system for measuring and evaluation of effectivity of education;
- Bulgarian school in the 21st century;
- civil education and socialisation of personality;
- innovations in the technology of instruction;
- use of computers as a means for instruction and management, etc.

In the last two years continued the joint European research on the theme: "Interaction of School and Cultural Environment for the Education of Students" with the UNESCO National Commissions Programme. On the basis of the project adopted at a meeting of experts (October 1994) and proposed by NINCON-Bulgaria, results from the scientific research carried out in nine European countries have been obtained and discussed at a scientific seminar (November 1995). Now the last stage of preparing and bringing out a joint publication is commenced. A sitting of the editorial board is forthcoming (June 1996) and the last experts meeting (September 1996).

The experimental work on the "management and Economy" programme for training of managers with secondary education is particularly topical.

The programme has started in 1991 in 7 secondary schools. Now it is carried out in 45 schools. Some 12 000 students are being trained.

The plan of studies comprises all general disciplines for the secondary comprehensive schools, basic and special disciplines such as: basics of market economy, company organisation and management, marketing, culturology, market and market conjuncture, exchanges and exchange policy, management of banking and finances, company law, foreign trade business, company work with computers, personal management, operative manager at his work place, etc.

Modern education technologies are applied in the process of instruction, introduction of multimedia centres and products is under way. The students have specially written textbooks on all disciplines.

International activities

Bulgaria maintains traditionally active bilateral relations with more than 100 countries. Within the bilateral agreements an exchange of specialists in the field of secondary and higher education, of postgraduate students and scientific researchers is realised. Joint projects with number of countries incl. Germany, Austria, France, the USA, the Netherlands and others are being elaborated.

The main priority of Bulgaria in the bilateral, regional and international co-operation during the last few years was the active presence of the country in the European structures for education and science with a view to the implementation of the European integration strategy. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology participates in the Co-ordinating Commission for European Integration activities, implements the national strategy and recommendations of the White Paper of the European Commission.

The main aspects of the reform in the secondary and higher education systems were supported through a participation of secondary and higher education specialists and institutions in projects of the international organisations: UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the PHARE Programme.

UNESCO/UN:

- European study with international co-ordinator - Bulgaria "Interaction between schools and cultural institutions";
- Regional project for preventive education with international co-ordinators - Bulgaria and Hungary;
- National project "Informatics and education" within the framework of the UNESCO international project "2000+";
- Intersectoral project of UNESCO and the World organisation for pre-school education (OMEP) "Interaction between the child and the institutions";
- Subregional project for ecology and civic education "The Blue Danube" with international co-ordinator Bulgaria;
- Active work of 45 schools of the System of the UNESCO associated schools whose activities are oriented into three main directions, related to the basic Organisation programme: Culture of peace, reservation and promotion of the world cultural and natural heritage and the intercultural education.

Our co-operation with the System of the UNESCO associated schools in the other Organisation member-states, the UNESCO European centre for higher education CEPES, the UNESCO European centre for science ROSTE, the Organisation for co-operation for Renovation of Education in Europe CORDEE, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is effective;

Our relations with the Central European Initiative are developing successfully.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE:

- Project "Language Learning for European citizenship";
- Project "A Secondary education for Europe";
- Project "History teaching in the New Europe"
- Project "Democracy, human rights, minorities: educational and cultural aspects";
- Project "Access to higher education in Europe";
- "Legislative reform Programme in Higher education";
- An active academic mobility is realised within the framework of the Council of Europe;
- Participation in the European competition "Europe at school".

THE EUROPEAN UNION:

- Co-operation in the field of vocational and higher education (TEMPUS);

- Participation in the IV Framework Programme for research, technology and development and in the INCO-COPERNICUS Programme.

THE PHARE PROGRAMME:

- Regional project for distance education in the higher education institutes. A National Centre for Distance Education is established;

- National projects in secondary education;

- Regional project COSINE.

THE WORLD BANK:

- Projects in secondary and higher education.

New normative documents on education

1994

1. Regulations for Structure and Work of the Centre for the Research and Training in Vocational Orientation.
2. Regulations for Structure and Work of the Pedagogical Consulting Rooms.
3. Ordinance on Admission of Students in the Government-Funded and Municipal Comprehensive and Vocational Schools.
4. Ordinance on Determining the Number of Pupils and Children in the Classes and Groups in the Schools, Kindergarten and Auxiliary Units.
5. Ordinance on the Specific Economic Regulations for Work of the Units within the System of National Education.
6. Instruction for the Requirements for Employment as Teacher or Tutor in Compliance with the Received Education and Professional Qualification.

1995

1. Regulations for the Work of the Circulating Fund for Textbooks.
2. Regulations for the Structure and Work of the Regional Inspectorates of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technologies.
3. Regulations for the Structure and Work of the School Boards of Trustees.

4. Ordinance on the Private Schools and Kindergartens, for Bulgarian Schools and Kindergartens with Foreign Participation, for Foreign Schools and Kindergartens.
5. Ordinance on Evaluation, Publishing and Distribution of Textbook for the Secondary Education System.
6. Instruction for Carrying out the Control over the National Education System.
7. Instruction for the Organisation of Work of the Comprehensive and Vocational Schools in the 1995/1996 Academic Year.

Reference literature

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2. Regulations for the Application of the National Education Act, State Gazette, No 31 of 14.04.1992.
3. Conception of the Development of Secondary Education in the Republic of Bulgaria, MEST, Sofia, 1995.
4. Instruction for the Organisation of Work in Schools in the 1995/1996 Academic Year, MEST, Sofia, 1995.
5. Norms of Obligatory Teaching Work at the education Establishments, Management of Education Bulletin, No 4, 1990.
6. Vocational Education in Bulgaria: State, Problems, Prospects, MEST, Sofia, 1995.
7. Statistical Handbook, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 1994, 1995.
8. General and Vocational Education, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 1993/1994; 1994/1995.
9. Data Base on the General and Vocational Education, Institute for Education and Science, Sofia, 1995/1996.
10. Higher and Semi-Higher Education in the 1993/1994 Academic Year, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 1994.

11. Higher and Semi-Higher Education in the 1994/1995 Academic Year, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 1995.

12. Higher and Semi-Higher Education in the 1995/1996 Academs available on the students going to study abroad on their own.