



Bulgaria

Dr. Daniel Vassilev Valtchev
Deputy prime minister
Minister of Education and Science



Daniel Valtchev was born in Burgas on August 10, 1962. He completed his secondary education at 4th Foreign Language School in Varna and majored in law at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Law, in 1987. Mr. Valtchev specialized at the International Institute of Public Administration (IIAP, Short cycle) in Paris (1991) and at NATO Defense College (CSCE course) in Rome (1992). In 1995, he earned a doctor's degree in law. Since 2004, he has been Associate Professor at Sofia University, Faculty of Law, Department of History and Theory of State and Law, lecturer in General Theory of Law and Political and Legal Studies. As a member of the 39th National Assembly, Mr. Valtchev was appointed chairperson of the European Integration Standing Committee and member of the Legal Affairs Committee. He co-chaired the EU-Bulgaria Joint Parliamentary Committee and represented the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria at the Convention for the Future of Europe which prepared the draft of the European Constitution (March 2002 – July 2003). Mr. Valtchev was elected member of the 40th National Assembly.

The reforms: the way to the inclusive education

A dynamic approach towards embracing the diversity among students – this is how the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria understands the inclusive process of education where individual differences do not represent any problem, but rather offer opportunities to broaden the scope of education.

The direct link between the topic of the 48th International Conference on Education Inclusive Education: The Way to the Future and the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All has deeply convinced us that the practical implementation of the policies on inclusive education is beyond any doubt a challenge for the educational systems worldwide; because knowledge and education are key factors of sustainable development and economic growth.

The significant changes undertaken over recent years have provided impetus for the advancement of the school education in Bulgaria. The School and Pre-school Education Development National Programme (2006-2015), developed by the Ministry of Education and Science and adopted by the National Assembly of Bulgaria, is the first programme document laying down the fundamental principles and measures for development of the system in the next 10 years.

A considerable progress has been achieved in implementing the priorities in the Bulgarian education system over the last 3 years. The optimization of school education funding mechanisms and the introduction of a system of national standards in external evaluation hold a special place. This year, for the first time, after more than four decades of interruption, state matriculation examinations (Matura) have been successfully carried out. At present, after hard work undertaken at national level, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science succeeded in putting them into practice. 75 000 graduates from secondary education sat for two compulsory state matriculation examinations – the first being in Bulgarian Language and Literature and the second one – in an elective



subject. It is our understanding that the state matriculation examinations are an important part of the entirely new external evaluation system which is in a process of establishment and which is oriented towards students knowledge building-up. Many higher education institutions in Bulgaria have already declared their readiness to use the results from the state matriculation examinations for admission to further studies.

The efforts of the Ministry of Education and Science of Bulgaria to decrease the number of students who have not been included in the educational system or have dropped out at compulsory school age, have resulted in free textbooks and training tools provision for the students from I to VII grade at state, municipal and private schools. The large-scale use of Information and Communication Technologies in school has made it possible to design electronic training courses and to provide laptops and multifunctional devices to all schools, whereas at least 98% of them have been connected with high-speed Internet.

Tangible advancement has been made in integrating children with special educational needs, as well as children for whom the Bulgarian language is not their mother tongue into the mainstream education. Therefore, a Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students of ethnic minority origin has been set up to the Ministry of Education and Science. Different awareness-raising activities have been carried out with a view to enhancing the sensibility of the society to their needs.

The progress we have achieved allowed the Ministry of Education and Science of Bulgaria to better identify the upcoming challenges in the field of school education, namely:

- Adoption of the new school education legislation;
- Implementation of a system of teachers career development; raising the profile and social status of the teachers;
- Implementation of a system for differentiated remuneration of teachers.

I am glad to share our success and I do believe that the inclusiveness of the education system is fully in line, to a great extent, with the respect for the rights of the child and human rights, with the equality and the willingness to recognize the variety of differences both as a challenge and a wealth of the education environment.