



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Education and Culture

LLL: horizontal policy issues and international affairs

LLL: contribution to the Lisbon process

Brussels, 4 February 2009

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**Preparation of the 2010 Joint Report on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme
Guidance Note for the 2009 national reports**

Introduction:

- The European Commission Communication 'On an updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training' proposes that future joint progress reports should focus in greater detail on certain specific priorities for action and that this approach should be adopted for the next joint progress report, due for 2010.
- The Commission has proposed, for the reasons set out below, that the thematic focus for the 2010 joint progress report, and thus the 2009 national reports, should be on key competences. The Education and Training 2010 Coordination Group (ETCG) on 26 January discussed and broadly endorsed this approach, with specific suggestions on the questions and on other policy areas, for example EQF implementation. The overall focus on key competences has therefore been retained in this final version taking into account the suggestions received from the ETCG, Eurydice and Cedefop.
- The area of key competences is identified as a priority for action in the Communication 'On an updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training', firstly, because the EU benchmarks illustrate that progress is insufficient especially regarding low achievers in reading, which is in decline. Secondly, implementation needs to be strengthened regarding enabling citizens to communicate in two languages in addition to their mother tongue and science teaching. Finally, the Communication stresses the need for better implementation of transversal key competences in order to enhance people's capacity for LLL and creativity and innovation.

The Recommendation on key competences for LLL furthermore invites the Commission to review the impact of this recommendation within the framework of the Education and Training 2010 work programme, and report four years after the adoption of the Recommendation (i.e. by December 2010) to the European Parliament and to the Council on the experience gained and implications for the future. The 2009 national reports will provide the basis for this analysis.

• Finally, the Council conclusions on improving the quality of teacher education agree on the need for the development of more competence-centred approaches to teaching. The 2008 Resolution on a European strategy for multilingualism recalled that the knowledge of languages is one of the basic skills each citizen needs and invited Member States to provide a wide range of languages and strengthen lifelong language learning. Furthermore the 2008 Council Conclusions on adult learning stress the need to raise skills levels and to offer second chance education to those who left school without a qualification. The Bordeaux Communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in VET also underlines the necessity to acquire key competences, referring in particular to social skills, foreign language skills, entrepreneurship and being open to other cultures. With the decision to focus on priority areas, reporting on other policy areas will be more limited. Countries should only provide information on major developments in either policy reform or implementation in these areas.

Practical information:

Compared to the previous reporting exercise, the structure of the guidelines has been simplified and the amount of detail has been reduced in order to increase user friendliness. Where possible the Commission has taken account of information already available, for example through Eurydice, Cedefop, the Working Group on Adult Learning, and the Copenhagen and Bologna processes, when formulating the questions.

The following sections set out a structure for the national reports. In the interests of receiving reports which are comparable, please respect this structure and provide information on all elements of the guidelines. For the thematic section on key competences there is a detailed set of questions which covers general (primary, lower secondary and general upper secondary) education, VET and adults, the key sectors to which the Recommendation applies. In addition to this thematic section, there is one general question on significant developments in each of the areas of higher education, VET and transversal LLL issues.

When producing your contribution, please take account of the following:

- Reports should not exceed 20 pages. They may be written in your own language but where they are not written in EN, FR, or DE a translation of your report into one of these languages is kindly requested.
- Reports should describe and analyse individual countries' progress on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme, particularly in relation to key competences. Reports should give the information necessary to present a valid and coherent view of the current priorities and developments. Please also highlight any recent measures taken in response to the current economic downturn.

The purpose is not to describe national education and training systems in full and in detail, as this information is available through Eurydice and Cedefop. If you have provided relevant

information in other reports to the Commission, Eurydice or Cedefop please cross refer to the relevant portion of that report.

- Examples of specific measures / good practices are requested for illustrative purposes, but the emphasis should be placed on the overall approach taken by your country to the development / reform of the systems. Such examples should be annexed to your report (they do not count towards the 20 page limit).

- If you have consulted social partners and stakeholders in the preparation of the national report please let us know.

- When referring to a new policy, please give a clear indication of its title, year of adoption and the state of play concerning its implementation. References for further enquiries should also be supplied, in particular websites, but also contact points or other relevant documentation.

- For your information please find included in the annex the list "Education & Training 2010 - Main policy initiatives and outputs in education and training since the year 2000", which includes references and links to the main documents referred to in these guidelines. The European Commission website on Education and Training also contains a wealth of information: http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.htm. The synthesis report of the Cluster Key

Competences- Curriculum Reform is available under the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/peer07_en.pdf.

Member States are kindly requested to send their contributions to Michael.Teutsch@ec.europa.eu and Pernille.Andersen1@ec.europa.eu by 7 May 2009.



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

**NATIONAL REPORT – CONTRIBUTION
OF REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
TO THE 2010 JOING INTERRIM REPORT
OF THE COUNCIL AND OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
ON THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010
WORK PROGRAMME**

Sofia, May 2009

Note: This report has been written based on materials – contributions provided by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and the national Agency for Vocational Education and Training. The contents of the draft report has been agreed within Work Group 16 “Education, mutual recognition of professional qualifications, youth, science and research” to the Council of European Affairs to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria. Representatives of the responsible ministries and other institutions and stakeholders participate in this work group, incl. representatives of the branch organizations and employers’ organisations, and trade unions. All issues concerning the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in the decision making process of the EU in the field of education and training are to be agreed within this work group and by the Council of European Affairs. After reaching this agreement, the draft report has been approved by the Deputy Minister of Education and Science responsible for the European integration.

CHAPTER 1: KEY COMPETENCES FOR LLL AS PART OF COHERENT AND COMPREHENSIVE LLL STRATEGIES

(APPROX. 10 PAGES)

This chapter focuses on policy developments to implement the 2006 Recommendation on key competences for LLL. The Recommendation sets out eight key competences that young people should develop during their initial education and training, and that adults should have the opportunities to develop, maintain and update throughout their lives. The Recommendation also calls for appropriate provision for those who due to educational disadvantage need additional support to fulfil their educational potential.

The experiences gained in joint work between Member States and the Commission through peer learning indicate that a competence-based approach to teaching and learning involves not only the (re-)design of curricula, but also the re-thinking of teacher education (initial and inservice), school development, assessment procedures, production of learning materials, and support for schools and teachers to develop and adopt a competence based approach. In this context, the questions below derive directly from the Recommendation on key competences, from the related conclusions of the Council and from the experience gained in peer learning on the implementation on the recommendation.

The Recommendation calls upon Member States to "develop the provision of key competences for all as part of their LLL strategies, including their strategies for achieving universal literacy, and use [the European] Framework as a reference tool".

QUESTION 1

In what concrete ways has your country developed its provision for Key Competences since 2006? Has there been any link to your country's lifelong strategy? Which actors have been involved? What use was made of the European framework and the work of the cluster on key competences (if possible, please provide concrete examples)?

The accession of the Republic of Bulgaria to the EU imposed changes in the field of education and training, including those related to harmonisation of the levels of education and qualification to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and to acquisition of key competences. One of them is related to dissemination of knowledge by high quality educational system guaranteeing long-term employability. In the same time the educational system should respond to the new dynamically changing realities and to develop young people's creativity skills, skills for thinking in different aspects, skills in different areas, and adaptivity. Young people cannot expect yet to spend their entire life in one and the same field of activity or even on one and same professional post, their professional pathway will be changing. Therefore they will need wider spectrum of general skills, which will help them to adapt. These new requirements are imposing as a tendency and are valued more than the specialized knowledge.

In 2008 two key documents in this area have been developed by interinstitutional task forces. They have been adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria as follows:

1. National LLL (LLL) Strategy (2008 – 2013)

In Section III, item 4 of the Strategy – “LLL Priority Directions” a special attention is taken to the guidelines for further development of the key competences in LLL context. To this end, the following activities are foreseen:

- Inclusion of key competences in the draft of a National Qualifications Framework (deadline – by 2011);
- Introduction of acquisition of key competences in education and training (deadline – by 2011);
- Design and implementation of national programmes for adults, targeted to acquisition of key competences (deadline – by 2011);
- Development of mechanisms for validation and certification of acquired key competences and its legislative regulation (deadline – by 2013).

2. Renewed Employment Strategy (2008 – 2015)

The issue concerning the key competences has reviewed in Section III “Assignments in the main fields”, as follows:

- *Item 3.4. Education and Training Supporting the Transition towards Knowledge-based Economy*”, described in more details as follows:
 - *Item 3.4.1. Improving the access to education and training, reduction of school drop-outs and integration of the early school leavers on the labour market* – it is written there that “..Measures financed by the State Budget and the European Funds shall be realised for overcoming the negative outcomes for the early school leavers coming from the secondary education system, providing them a second chance by: .. **training for acquisition of key competences, as for example entrepreneurship, computer and foreign language skills** (deadline – by 2015)”;
 - *Item 3.4.2. Improving the quality and the effectiveness of education and training* – in a first place among the actions for achieving the key objective of the reforms in education and training, it is pointed out that “Analysis and optimisation of the **State Educational Requirements on Educational Contents and of the curricula** should be done, targeted to acquisition of key competences necessary for a successful realisation on the labour market (deadline – by 2015);
 - *Item 3.4.3.2. Improving the links between training and labour market demands* – it is pointed out that “in order to ensure effectiveness and purpose fulness of the investments in adult training done by the State, the business, and the individuals, the **acquisition of key competences** necessary for successful realisation on the labour market **should be promoted**, as well as practice training in real manufacturing work conditions after acquisition of a vocational qualification (deadline – by 2010).

The State Educational Requirements (SERs) on Educational Contents, adopted by an Ordinance No 2 of 18 May 2000 on the Educational Contents¹, include achievable knowledge, skills, relations and competences that the students should possess at the end of each educational stage. The relations and the competences draw-up the students’ abilities to describe and analyse values, conflicts and problems, to make free and adequate choice in concrete live situations, and to predict the possible social and moral outcomes from decision making in different fields. Standards are set by the SER on Educational Contents. They include the following key groups of skills in curricular context by subjects: language literacy; Math literacy; information use; communicative skills; social and emotional competence; critical thinking and problems solving.

¹ Issued by the Minister of Education and Science, publ. State Gazette issue 48 of 13 June 2000, in force since 13 June 2000, amended, issue 46 of 28 May 2004, in force since 1 July 2004, amended and supplemented, issue 58 of 18 July 2006.

The educational structure has been reconsidered in the context of the EQF. An analysis of the general educational contents has been done in this respect. The aim to harmonising the Bulgarian education with the modern European tendencies is reflected in the new educational standards design. SER on the Educational Contents are in line with the actualised Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in the Field of Education and Training – despite of that they have been designed before the adoption of the National LLL Strategy (2008 – 2013)²

A number of programme documents have been adopted since 2006 establishing conditions for professional and career development, linked to higher **qualiifcation of the pedagogical staff** and evaluation of the outcomes of their work:

1. The issue concerning the pedagogical staff's career development and establishment of conditions for its authority and social status is set in **the National Programme for School and Pre-school Education Development (2006 - 2015)**³ by:

- **Teachers' Qualification** – Qualification⁴ National Programme has been launched in 2007. By its implementation an actualisation and building-up of knowledge, skills and competences related to the key competences foreign language skills and computer skills are to be achieved. Qualification courses for acquisition and building-up of transversal skills and competences related to team work for identification of the aggression at school, assisting the teachers' work, especially the young teachers, are also foreseen by implementation of activities under the Human Resources Development Operative Programme (2007 – 2013)⁵. Qualification of School Headmasters module is a part of this national programme.

- Differential Payment System linked with the students' learning outcomes - Differential Payment National Programme has been adopted by a Decision No 541 of the Council of Ministers of August 7, 2007. It has been actualized by Decision No 339 of the Council of Ministers of May 26, 2008. Conditions related to governance and evaluation of the labour in the school and pre-school education system have been established by this programme;

² The National LLL Strategy (2008 – 2013) has been developed by a task force including representatives from the different responsible institutions and of the social partners. It has been discussed at a national level, incl. with the social partners. It has been adopted by a Decision of the Council of Ministers of 30 October 2008.

³ It is adopted by a Decision of the National Assembly in June 2006.

⁴ It is adopted by a Decision of the Council of Ministers of 20 April 2007, amended and supplemented by Decisions of the Council of Ministers of 26 May 2008 and of 14 February 2009

⁵ Component “Improving the qualification and creation of conditions for career development of teachers, school headmasters, and academics”

- **Career Development System for the Pedagogical Staff** – Career Development module to the Differential Payment National Programme was discussed with the social partners in 2008.

2. **Amendments and supplements of the national legislation (Employment Promotion Act, Vocational Education and Training Act)** have done in 2008, with main aim to promote adult learning and improve the quality of the labour force:

- The scope of **adult training** financed by funds for active policy on the labour market has been expanded. Training opportunities for acquisition and improvement of key competences (computer skills, foreign language skills, etc.) are provided together with literacy training, acquisition of vocational qualification, and motivational learning. The amount of funds for training⁶ is determined annually by the Employment National Action Plan.

- Legislative changes have done with respect to the **adult training in literacy**. Its aim is to regulate the acquisition in the full-time course framework of the general education minimum of knowledge at the initial stage of primary education. Adult training in literacy is provided by the schools, using specialized curricula approved by the Minister of Education and Science. The individuals who have completed successfully a literacy course have the right to attend vocational training for acquisition of qualification in professions demanded on the labour market.

- **2008** has been designated by the Minister of Education and Science for a **Year of the Eight Key Competences**.

QUESTION 2

Describe briefly how each of the eight key competences (Mother tongue; Foreign languages; Maths, science and technology; Digital competence; Learning to learn; Social and civic competence; Initiative taking and entrepreneurship and Cultural awareness and expression) is included in (i) the national framework curriculum (or equivalent document, including for example at the regional level) for general education, and (ii) for VET?

⁶ **Training of unemployed persons** is fully financed by the State Budget for active policy on the labour market. Widening the access to it is guaranteed by this way. The unemployed individuals receive a scholarship, money for transport and daily allowance. **Training of employed persons** for acquisition and improvement of key competences is co-financed by the State Budget to the maximum amount of money set in the Employment National Action Plan for the corresponding year. The rest of the money necessary to cover the full amount of the expenses for training employed individuals is co-financed by the employer.

Key Competence	General education (primary, lower and general upper secondary education)	Vocational education and training
Mother tongue	<p>Building-up of skills for communication in mother tongue starts at preprimary education stage. Bulgarian language is learnt at levels of primary and secondary education as a compulsory subject. Communication in mother tongue, as ability for expression and interpretation of understandings, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions, is included in the standards (SER) for educational contents in Informational Technologies, Societal Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Ecology. Specialized curricula for compulsory education are approved targeted to students whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners' ability for active communication at work place is set as a basic requirement set in all SER for acquisition of qualification by professions. - Vocational training of unemployed and employed individuals organised by the Employment Agency is provided only in Bulgarian language. - Inclusion of unemployed and employed individuals in VET qualification courses with instruction in mother tongue other than Bulgarian is a challenge for the training institutions, in particular for the vocational training centres. These centres adjust its syllabi and curricula taking into account the learners' mother tongue. It is valid especially in the regions with mixed population. These regions often are more poor and disadvantaged than the other regions in the country.
Foreign languages	<p>The training hours set by the syllabus for all students provide the possibility for learning of two foreign languages. Foreign language learning is in conformity with the European Foreign Language Framework. The positive attitude to cultural diversity and the interest in foreign languages are reached also by standards included in the instruction in Societal Sciences, Civic Education, Music, and IT.</p>	<p>Performing successful professional communication and using specialized terminology in at least one foreign language are a part of the requirements set by the SER for acquisition of qualification by professions. The proficiency level is defined depending on the degree of vocational qualification for a given profession and the responsibilities that the individuals practicing it must carry out in a real work environment. Learning foreign languages is set in all syllabi and curricula of the vocational training centres. Its aim is active use of</p>

		foreign languages at work and greater mobility on the European labour market.
Math, science and technology	The ability for use of basic mathematical principles and processes in the daily life is built up in the students by including the acquisition of this key competency in the standards in Natural Sciences, Informatics and IT. The modelling of processes and phenomena, the Math logic, probabilities and statistics, etc. are only a part of the standards set by SRE on the Educational Contents in all school education stages.	In certain SER for acquisition of qualification by professions are set competences related to Maths, Precise Sciences and Technologies. These competences are important for all professions in the field of VET. They are the most applicable in technical professions and specialties. They are set in General Technical Preparation section of the syllabi and curricula designed by the vocational training centres as well.
Digital competence	Acquisition of digital competence is performed mainly by study Informatics and IT subjects. Standards related to the use of IT are included also by studying Geography (by use of interactive geographical maps and informational systems), in Natural Sciences (experimental data processing in tables, charts and diagrams), in Societal Sciences (respect of individuals' main rights and freedoms and of the contemporary civic and democratic values, etc.). Programme for implementation of ICT at school has been developed and implemented in 2008. It includes also the use of electronic registers. Self-evaluation sheet for the activities related to ICT at school has been developed and provided to all headmasters in March 2009. It is published on the National Institute	The use of computer equipment and modern software products are a part of the requirements set by SER for acquisition of a qualification by professions. The use of IT requires critical attitude towards the available information and responsible use of interactive media tools. This competence includes also the interest to participation in communities and networks for cultural, public or professional purposes. The computer skills are included as key competence in all syllabi and curricula of the vocational training centres as well. Profound computer skills are acquired by training for "Computer Operator" profession. Training in this profession is provided both by the Employment Agency and by employers who invest money for improving the qualification of their staff.

	<p>for Headmasters' Training's web site /www.niod.bg/</p> <p>Infrastructure for e-environment for blended learning for the headmasters' needs has been developed and implemented in April 2009.</p>	
Learning to learn	<p>Acquiring of learning to learn skills starts at pre-primary education stage and continues during the whole process of students' education and training. All subjects include standards related to this competence. Some of these standards are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of all stages of personal development, understanding the learning as a process, and merging the knowledge processes in a model for gaining knowledge about the world; • Discernment of a rational, emotional, and intuitive thinking; • Application of all forms of thinking and creativity in understanding of experience of life; • Use of the visual memory for reveal of specific features of objects and phenomena and understanding the links between text and image; • Discovery of connections between the idea of the literature creation and the experience of life problems; • Skills for evaluation of true and rationality in a given situation; • Creation of evidences based on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building-up of a mechanism for adequate feed-back, monitoring of the implementation of innovations in school governance that are provoked by the training in execution of the programme and optimisation of the used qualification model; • Promoting the exchange and dissemination of good practices in school management by competitions; • Design of "School Manager" electronic magazine for publishing of research elaborations in school governance; • The positive attitude for acquisition of learning to learn skills supports both the educational process itself and the individual's ability to cope with difficulties and problems, and to apply all learnt in a variety of situations in life. • Following data⁷ of our National Statistical Institute provided from the Adult Education Survey (AES) of EUROSTAT, the participation of the population aged 25-64 in formal, non-formal and informal learning in 2007 is 36.5%. Bulgaria is on tenth place among the 17 Member States of the EU that have participated in this survey.

⁷ These data are published on the web site of the National Statistical Institut /www.nsi.bg./

	<p>logical structure of the studied theory;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of arguments concerning the choice of information tools used in solving educational tasks alone or in a team; • Summarizing of results from research and making conclusions concerning reason-consequence links in natural phenomena; • Self-study or study in team using given knowledge base and techniques, self-evaluation and evaluation of the other team-members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By data of the National Statistical Institute in 2007 the number of learners registered to attend courses for acquisition of a degree of a vocational qualification in vocational training centres, vocational secondary school and and vocational colleges has been 17 300. In 2008 its number has been 15379 or with 4 662 individuals more than in 2006.
<p>Social and civic competence</p>	<p>The provision of this competence is ensured by standards⁸ in Philosophy, History and Civilisation, Geography and Economy, Bulgarian Language and Literature, Technologies, and Natural Sciences and Ecology. Building-up of this competence is a continuous process. It starts from pre-school education stage and its practical realisation is through attaining these standards during the training at an initial stage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and more people are vieing each other by skills that are not directly linked to their vocational qualification. The conditions set by the employers for many work places include general personal, social and civic skills and qualities that a professional is supposed to possess regardless the concrete specialty. Skills for team work, situation analysis, planning and assignment of tasks, critical thinking, creativity, ability for fast decision making under unpredictable situation changes,responsibility, communicatineevess, conflicts resolving, etc. • Regarding the curricula of the vocational training centres, social and civic skills existmainly in the field of Labour Law and Communications. • The necessity for building-up of

⁸ SER, approved in 2000 г. and actualized in 2006

		<p>social and civic skills is taking into account by the employers. It is a subject of workplace training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized training of school headmasters is provided by Qualification National Programme, Headmasters' Qualification module, with respect to their supervising, monitoring, evaluation and control activities. In order to become a good educational manager, the school headmaster should know different management techniques, strategies and approaches, to master techniques and technologies for control of the educational institution. The demands the school headmaster to be familiar with the project in education, to possess skills for supervision of teams and for impressions control by work with the media, incl. by means of the <i>Good News</i> online competition are also in accordance to the modern educational management perceptions.
<p>Initiative taking and entrepreneurship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative taking, active attitude, independency and innovative approach in the personal and social life, as well as motivation and unhesitation for achieving the goals set are provided by topics included in the curricula in different subjects during the whole educational course. Some examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Orientation in basic rules in Business-Ethics and in taxation relations between the individual and the State; ○ Further education and career choice; ○ Project Drafting Methodology; ○ School self-governance forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of initiative taking and entrepreneurship competences in VET is set by the SER on acquisition of a qualification by professions, for all professions, within the framework of the general compulsory subjects. • Training at the vocational schools in all professions includes the subjects Entrepreneurship, Economy, and Business Communications. The curricula for the Vocational Secondary Schools in Economy contain training in Entrepreneurship and Small Business, Innovations and Innovation Policy, Business Policy; Business Culture, etc. depending on

	<p>and contacts with the local and national authorities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual budget planning and family incomes distribution; ○ Analysis and re-evaluation of the approaches chosen for solving practice-applied tasks and modelling of concrete situations; ○ Ability for describing the national economy, the economic sectors, and the different branches and activities for each of them; ○ Planning and optimisation of a laboratory experiment, implementation of ideas for making harmless substances that are harmful for the human and for the environment; ○ Rules for communication and for advertisement of products; 	<p>the concrete profession.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example for training in Initiative Taking and Entrepreneurship provided by the vocational training centres is that targeted to ex-military staff. • The network of the Bulgarian training enterprises includes 252 acting education and training companies (ETC), as 94 of them are established during the current school year. Their coordination centre is a member of EUROPEN. ETC fairs are organised annually. During the 2008 fair an Electronic Labour Market has been launched. Its aim is organising practical training and training in enterprise for students from the vocational schools. • Training and consultation of school headmasters in Delegated Budget is another example.
<p>Cultural awareness and expression</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to evaluate the importance of creative expression of ideas, experience and feelings by a variety of means is provided by standards in the subjects Music, Arts, Bulgarian Language and Literature, Everyday Life and Technologies, History and Civilisation, etc. Some examples of standards on educational contents are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the art as a knowledge about the world, like a process of creation and / or of self-improvement; • Accepting of the value of cultural differences; • Identification and description of 	<p style="text-align: center;">-</p>

	<p>typical monuments of the national and world culture;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascertainment of distinctiveness, succession, and mutual influences; • Ascertainment of synchroniousness or asynchronousness in the historic and cultural development of the different societies; • Recognition of a everyday life and of a festive environment and behaviour norms according to the ethnical belonging; • Selection of expression tools for design of an own creation in view of a concept and kind of the expression material; • Study of a literature creation in the context of its cultural system and its analysis according its cultural and artistic norm; • Realization of the role of Christianity in creating the European cultural model; • Critical attitude towards different points of view for visual-sign interpretation of the contemporary life (advertisements, media images, etc.). 	
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The importance of acquiring key competences by the individuals is valued by the Government while defining the national priorities and objectives. “Establishment of conditions for acquisition of key competences for learning” is among the main objectives in the draft of a new Law for School and Pre-school Education Development, approved by the Council of Ministers in March 2009 and submitted for adoption by the National Assembly. Its aim is to guarantee general education, which prepares the young people for life, further education and training, and employment. It will support the implementation of a complex approach in building-up key competences in all school education aspects (renewal of curricula, assessment procedures, design

of textbooks and school appliances) and will assist the teachers' training and qualification to be reconsidered as well.

Regarding the disadvantaged youth that need special support during the education and training process due to personal, social, cultural or economic circumstances, training using individual curricula for passing in the next grade without repeating the school year, etc. is provided.

National Action Plan for reducing the school drop-outs and for bringing the students in compulsory school age back to school (2008 – 2013) has been developed. Currently it is sent for interinstitutional agreement to all members of the Council of Ministers before to be submitted for adoption.

National Programme "With care to each student", including "Ensuring extra-training for students aimed at improving their achievements in the general education subjects" module has been realised. The objectives of this module are as follows:

- possibilities for extra-training of children with problems in assimilating the educational contents;
- motivation of teachers to work with the students taking in account their personal abilities and interests;
- promoting the application of innovative approaches in teaching and learning for children with different abilities;

The Ministry of Education and Science, through its Policy in General Education Directorate, is a direct beneficiary in a procedure for direct provision of free financial aid by Component 1 "Support for children trailing with the educational contents and for gifted children" of a scheme of the Human Resources Development Operative Programme.

The Recommendation states that Member States should develop the provision of key competences "with a view to ensuring that initial education and training offers all young people the means to develop their key competences to a level that equips them to adult life, and which forms a basis for further learning and working life". It calls for an appropriate provision "for those young people who, due to educational disadvantage caused by personal, social, cultural or economic circumstances, need particular support to fulfil their educational potential".

QUESTION 3

By what means (e.g. learning material or learning support) does your country seek to support schools and teachers to ensure that *all* young people leaving initial education and training (i.e. including the educationally disadvantaged) have developed these competences to a level that equips them for adult life?

In relation to facilitate the access to general education for all, Decree No 104 of the Council of Ministers has been amended and supplemented. This Decree regulates the provision of free

textbooks and school appliances not only for the pupils from 1st to 4th grade, but also for the students from 5th to 7th grade. School appliances for the children at the public, municipal and private kindergartens have been bought and provided, as well as textbooks and school appliances for the students from 1st to 7th grade at the public, municipal, and private schools.

The modern textbooks are based on learning methodologies that stress onto the students' ability for self-study, for information search and finding from a variety of information sources.

Modernisation of the educational process is oriented towards mastering key competences based on the student-oriented approach in the daily practice. It is guaranteed by performing well targeted monitoring of the children with respect to their achievements, difficulties, and expressions.

Ongoing reform of the education system, by closer links to the labour market, is aiming to create conditions for improving the general education level of the population in mid-term and long-term perspective. During the recent years greater attention is paid to improving employability of individuals that have already left the education system and are seeking for professional realisation on the labour market. The efforts for raising the participation in LLL are especially important for the early school leavers, as well as for low-qualified individuals and those without qualification.

New curricula for adult education have been developed and approved by the Minister of Education and Science in relation to the amendments the National Programme for Roma's Literacy and Qualification since on 12 February 2008. Since 2008/2009 school year they are applied for literacy courses organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. They are developed according to the SER on the Educational Contents at initial education stage. After reaching the desired learning outcomes the learners have the right to pass an examination for acquisition of a certificate for completed initial education stage that allows them to pass to lower secondary education stage or to attend vocational training. The specific features of the educational contents, its logic and structure, the interconnections within a subject and between the subjects, the training principles and methods have been taken into account in these curricula, and the stress is put onto the key competences that will contribute for a successful realisation on the labour market.

The Employment Promotion Act allows unemployed that are motivated for training and improving their personal capacity to attend training courses for acquisition of a vocational qualification. In this respect the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Science are directed towards creation of legislative conditions for training individuals up to age of 16 (compulsory

school age) at school and for validation of knowledge for completed primary education stage and completed grade of basic education.

In order to ensure suitable infrastructure for continuous VET and equal access for adults to acquire vocational and key competences for LLL, the Ministry of Education and Science launches annually a competition for design of electronic school appliances designed by teachers and published on the Ministry's web-site.

4 vocabularies in Construction, Electrotechnics, Tourism, and Machine Engineering have been developed under the framework of a PHARE **EUROPEAID/124376/D/SER/BG** project BG2006/018-343.10.01 "Human Resources Development and Employment Promotion" They are published on the Ministry of Education and Science's web-site and can be used both by students and adults. Methodology for vocabulary design has also been developed and disseminated through the project. It will help the teachers in VET to improve their foreign language skills.

*The Recommendation states that Member States should develop the provision of key competences "with a view to ensuring that adults are able to develop and update their key competences throughout their lives, and that there is a particular focus on **target groups identified as priorities** in the national, regional and/or local contexts, such as individuals needing to update their skills"; and that "appropriate **infrastructure for continuing education and training of adults including teachers and trainers**, validation and evaluation procedures, measures aimed at ensuring equal access to both LLL and the labour market, and support for learners that recognises the differing needs and competences of adults, is in place ". Furthermore, the Recommendation highlights the importance of the **coherence** of the provision: links with social, employment, cultural and innovation policies, and collaboration with social partners and other stakeholders.*

QUESTION 4

What progress has your country made towards ensuring that all adults have opportunities to develop and update their key competences?

The strategic document providing the guidelines and the objectives of the educational reform is the National Programme for School and Preschool Education Development (2006 – 2015). One of its main assignments is establishment of an effective system for teachers' qualification, including further work on the national register of teachers containing information about the qualification courses that they have passed.

2007 Qualification National Programme (Decision of the Council of Ministers of 20 April 2007) has been launched in 2007 in order to achieve these objectives. It established conditions for teachers from different target groups to attend qualification courses for actualisation and up-grading of knowledge and skills related to foreign language skills and computer skills.

2009 Qualification National Programme foresees:

1. Qualification in foreign language of teachers without rights to practice the profession of a teacher in foreign language;
 - Qualification of primary teachers for acquisition of a qualification “Teacher in Foreign Language” – 100 teachers;
 - Qualification of teachers with higher education without right for teaching in foreign language – 100 teachers;
2. Supporting qualification of teachers with right for teaching in foreign language from 1st to 12th grade – 700 teachers;
3. Qualification of teachers with higher education in Natural Sciences and Maths for acquisition of a qualification “teacher in Informatics and IT” – 400 teachers.

Through its Qualification of Headmasters module, the programme prepared and executed by the National Institute for Headmasters’ Training provides possibility to all headmasters to pass free short-term courses using specialized curricula in Computer Skills, Learning to Learn Skills, Social and Civic Skills, Initiative Taking and Entrepreneurship. LMS system for distance learning is currently under construction. IT will expand the possibilities for access to training for all target groups.

Taking in account the fact that the education and training level of the population is an indicator for quality of the human resources (literacy, vocational training, and training for acquisition of key competences) is an essential element of the policies in the field of education and training and on the labour market policies in Bulgaria. The right for employed and unemployed individuals to attend training for acquisition and up-to-dating of key competences is legislatively regulated.

The active policy on the labour market pays special attention to the unemployed individuals with low literacy level, uneducated and without qualification, incl. early school leavers. They are one of the target groups due to their low chances for finding a job and the risk to be long-term unemployed. The efforts are targeted to improving the employability of illiteracy unemployed and unemployed with low literacy level. They may get a second chance for learning by attending 5-month courses in literacy in order to join further training for acquisition of vocational qualification and to start suitable for them job.

Training in literacy is organised under the framework of regional programmes for provision of literacy courses, qualification courses and employment programmes as a component of other national programmes for training and employment, as well as by PHARE projects. Independent National Programme for Provision of Literacy Courses and Vocational Qualification of Roma is

available since May 2006. During 2006 – 2008 more than 6000 individuals have participated in literacy courses by the programme.

The efforts are targeted to improving the quality of literacy courses for adults. University teachers have designed specialized curricula and training materials. Teachers' training in Andragogy has been done as well.

Opportunities for adult training for acquisition of key competences are provided by the Human Resources Development Operative Programme co-financed by the European Social Fund. Scheme for provision of intensive foreign language learning and ICT training for unemployed youth up to age of 29 has launched since the beginning of 2009.

QUESTION 4a

What, if any, are the current adult target groups and the specific provisions put in place for them?

The National Programme for Literacy and Qualification Courses for Roma, adopted by the Government, is oriented to training of illiteracy or low qualified individuals self-determined of Roma origin who have registered at the Labour Offices. Unemployed illiteracy or low qualified persons up to age of 29, also registered at the Labour Offices, are to be included with a priority in the programme. Unemployed illiteracy or low qualified persons of other ethnical groups and nationalities may also be included.

In 2007-2009 the main target groups are teachers in foreign language and ICT. Training of the following groups of teachers started in 2007 and completed in 2008:

- Primary teachers in foreign language for up-to-dating of their knowledge, skills, and competences;
- teachers with higher education without right for teaching in foreign language;
- teachers with higher education – Philologists without pedagogical right;
- teachers in foreign language with pedagogical right, teaching students from 5th to 12th grade – supporting qualification;

Conditions for building-up of an effective system for teachers' qualification, equal access to qualification services, and better motivation for attending such courses will be established by launching the component "Improving the qualification and establishing conditions for career development of teachers, academics, and headmasters" of the Human Resources Development Operative Programme.

Training courses for up-to-dating and building-up of teachers' knowledge, skills, and competences not only in the traditional key competences (foreign language skills and IT skills), but also in transversal competences are foreseen to be organised in 2009, as for example:

- aggression prevention at school – preparation of class teachers, psychologists and pedagogical councillors in school aggression identification; work with children, students, and parents in aggression prevention;
- senior teachers – team work training and assisting the junior teachers;
- training teachers from the vocational secondary schools in basic entrepreneurship skills.

The duty for promoting school and kindergarten headmasters' qualification is legislatively regulated by the Rules of Procedure for implementation of the National Education Act.

QUESTION 4b

What national data are available on the participation of adults (and any adult target groups identified as priority) in provision designed to develop their key competences?

- By 2008 National Programme for Literacy and Qualification courses for Roma it is foreseen 1300 unemployed individuals to pass training and qualification courses.
- By Ministry of Education and Science's process to be launched in 2009 it is foreseen 10 000 individuals up to age of 16 to pass literacy courses and to be reintegrated in the education system in the next 3 years.
- Qualification courses for different target groups of teachers – for up-to-dating and building-up of their knowledge, skills, and competences have been organised, as follows:
 - ✓ Courses for acquisition of new knowledge, skills, and competences – 2270 teachers in Physics, Chemistry and Biology have been qualified to teach a new subject (Human and Nature);
 - ✓ Courses for acquisition of an additional professional qualification – обучени бяха 1150 teachers have been trained for acquisition of *Teacher in Foreign Language* qualification using syllabi and curricula designed by the higher education institutions, as follows:
 - 500 primary teachers - for acquisition of *Teacher in Foreign Language in Primary Stage* qualification;
 - 625 teachers with higher education - for acquisition of *Teacher in Foreign Language* qualification;

- 25 teachers - Phylologists without pedagogical right - for acquisition of *Teacher in Foreign Language* qualification.
- Courses for improving knowledge, skills and competences of the teachers in Foreign Language according to the requirements of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, as follows: 200 teachers in Spanish; 100 teachers in Russian; 60 teachers in French.
- ✓ Qualification courses in key competences have been organised. 26017 teachers have attended them.
- ✓ Training of 1151 teachers in VET, as follows:
 - 33 teachers for teaching in Entrepreneurship Skills;
 - Teachers-methodists and 123 teachers from 41 vocational secondary schols;
 - Foreign language in the profession – 54 teachers;
 - Computer skills – 95 teachers;
 - New Techniques and Technologies – 710 teachers;
 - Interactive Training Methods – 136 teachers.
- ✓ Training of 2356 school and kindergarten headmasters included in programmes of the National Institute for Headmasters' Training in 2008 /source – the register of the Institute/.
- ✓ 3163 headmasters registered in the information system of the National Institute for Headmasters' Training as active users of electronic educational contents /key competence – computer skills/.

QUESTION 4c

In designing the provision for adults, what collaboration is in place with representatives of other policy areas, social partners and other stakeholders?

Three-party principle for decision making concerning social issues of especial importance is used in Bulgaria. Branch Council for Three-Party Cooperation is established in the field of education and training. It includes teachers - representatives of the trade unions in VET, representatives of the employers organisations, and representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science. Main issues for discussion in this Council are related to labour relations and human resources development. Topics concerning the teachers' career development, incl. qualification opportunities, syllabi and curricula for qualification courses, teachers' career development system that takes into account their higher qualification and the outcomes of their work, etc. are also discussed.

Concerning adult education and qualification, it is carried out in partnership with:

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy;
- The Employment Agency and the Employment Regional Services;
- The Labour Offices Directorates;
- The Employment Commission to the Regional Council for Regional Development;
- The municipal administrations;
- Non-Governmental Organisations;
- Organisations for training in Vocational Qualification module;
- The higher education institutions.

The national policy for employment and adult training is developing and implementing in cooperation with all stakeholders and social partners. All proposals for legislative changes in this field are reviewed and discussed at a preliminary stage by the National Council for Employment Promotion (NCEP) to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. NCEP consists of equal number of representatives from the main public bodies and nationally represented employers' organisations and trade unions at a national level.

The National Advisory Council for Vocational Qualification to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy provide its agreement concerning the national adult education policy development and assists to the interaction with the social partners with respect to LLL issues. Representatives of ministries, agencies, commissions, of nationally represented employers' organisations and trade unions, as well as of NGOs participate in this council.

The national policy in the field of employment and adult education is supported at regional and local level by the Employment Commissions to the regional councils for development and the councils for cooperation to the Labour Office Directorates, which include representatives of the regional and municipal authorities, regional structures of the ministries, social partners' regional bodies, branch organisations, NGOs, etc.

The relationships with the social partners concerning the periodical up-to-dating of the List of the Regulated Professions and the development of SERs on Acquisition of Qualification by Professions are continuously improving. The up-to-dated Framework Requirements for Design of SERs for acquisition of qualification by professions ensure design of new SREs and up-to-dating of existing SERs by using the learning outcomes approach. SERs are currently considered as a tool for validation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by non-formal learning. This measure is well matched with the overall process of implementing the main European tools in education and training in Bulgaria.

National Agency on VET is a governmental organisation working on three-party principle. All decisions, incl. for approval of SER for acquisition of qualification by professions, Vocational training centres licensing, etc. They are to be taken by three-party expert commissions and three-party Board with social partners' active participation.

14 meetings with the Regional Inspectorates for Education have been done in February 2009 for discussing the curricula for headmasters' training. The curricular design for kindergarten headmasters' training is carried out in partnership with the National Association of Municipalities. Framework agreement for qualification activities has been concluded with Municipality of Varna as well. Representatives of the National Institute for Headmasters' Training attend the annual meetings of the Bulgarian Teachers Union.

The national legislation concerning Roma's literacy and qualification, are in accordance with the following documents:

- **Programme of the Government of the European Integration, Economic Growth, and Social Responsibility (2005 – 2009)**, in which an especial attention is paid to the active policy implementation in promotion of qualification and employment promotion with stress onto the disadvantaged individuals on the labour market;

- **Joint Assessment Paper (JAP) and Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM)**, concerning the integration of disadvantaged individuals on the labour market and, in particular the Roma ethnic group;

- **Employment Promotion Act, National Education Act, VET Act**, which regulate the rules and the order for performing education and training activities;

- **Framework Programme for Equal Integration of Roma in the Bulgarian Society**, where the design and implementation of programmes for qualification and employment taking in account the labour market needs is set as a requirement;

- **Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015)** – special attention is paid in the Employment Section of its action plan concerning the efforts for improving Roma's competitiveness on the labour market, incl. in its modern sectors, by improving unemployed Roma's employability and qualification.

The Council conclusions on improving the quality of teacher education agree on the need for the development of more competence-centred approaches to teaching. Member States agreed that career-long teacher education should, inter alia, enable teachers to teach transversal competences, to work effectively in collaboration with colleagues, parents and the wider community, and become autonomous learners in their own career-long professional development.

The work of the Cluster Key Competences-Curriculum Reform suggests that in order to move successfully towards a competence-based approach, initial teacher education may need to be re-thought, and that teachers, as key agents of change, need be trained and supported through targeted continuing professional development.

The Cluster Teachers and Trainers has noted that teacher education itself needs to be based upon a coherent set of explicit teaching competences to be acquired and developed throughout the teacher 's career.

QUESTION 5

How have curricula, statements of teacher competence requirements, or equivalent guidelines, for (a) initial and (b) in-service teacher education been developed to ensure that teachers are equipped to implement a competence-based approach (e.g. the teacher as co-structor or facilitator of learning, team teaching, collaboration between teachers and parents, participation in school development, formative assessment techniques, and self-directed professional development)? Have any specific measures been taken in the area of VET teachers and trainers?

By the general education curricula the new approach for structuring and presenting the educational contents has been approved. The priorities for secondary education have also been taken into account. They are targeted to:

- reduce the information overload;
- take into account the students' personal experience and age special features;
- stimulate the students' thinking, learning with understanding and experience;
- stimulate the students' mental, social, physical, and emotional development.

The aim in new educational contents design is its interactiveness, practical orientation, and orientation towards acquisition of modern competences.

The desired learning outcomes are defined in the curricula with an objective to overcome the fragmentation in the teaching process, to set pointers for further activity towards reaching the standard. By this way our aim is to stimulate teachers' creativity giving them more freedom to reach the desired outcomes.

In order to adapt the teachers' competences built-up in the traditional pedagogical context, we study the other countries' experience in identifying and satisfying the teachers' needs of professional improvement in changing environment. While setting the teachers' qualification activities, we stress onto their skills actively to study their behaviour, to perform self-evaluation

not only in the light of their values, but also according to the requirements for professional behaviour set in the legislation.

The strategy for teachers' improvement in the field of key competences is based on their motivation for career development and provision of detailed information /list/ concerning the existing possibilities for professional improvement.

Regarding the teachers' skills improvement, the stress is set onto their computer skills, the use of interactive methods in teaching, and training for acquisition of competences related to new techniques and technologies. In 2008 200 teachers in VET (in the field of Machine Engineering, Food Technologies, Manufacturing of Foods, Drinks, Clothing, and Wood Articles) have been trained in new technologies in industry.

The activities of the Young Entrepreneur project (2007 – 2009) include publication of methodical guide for teachers with cases in Entrepreneurship to the textbook in Entrepreneurship and Management in 3 parts. The publication has been disseminated to the vocational secondary schools. Training in Entrepreneurship for teachers-methodists from 21 pilot vocational schools and further training for multiplication of results for 63 of the teachers-methodists has also been done. Training in Entrepreneurship and Personality of 40 English and German teachers has been done as well.

By PHARE 2004 – 2006 programme **EUROPEAID/124376/D/SER/BG**, project BG2006/018-343.10.01 “Human Resources Development and Employment Promotion” 300 teachers have participated in training for improving their computer skills; 250 teachers – in training in Interactive Teaching Methods; 200 teachers – in New Technologies in Manufacturing. Regional training communities have been established by this project – by training of 810 teachers to start establishing of networks and educational communities. 300 facilitators (teachers in VET) and 180 representatives of employers' organisations have been trained in design the profile of the professions in VET in the SER on acquisition of qualification by professions and in design of educational contents based on the learning outcomes approach and taking into account the labour market needs, and in applying DACUM method as well. In a result, 30 SER for acquisition of qualification by professions have been designed. They have been discussed with 283 representatives of the industry and have been evaluated by 200 evaluators.

Training of 900 teachers is foreseen during the third phase of the project, started in 2009. Besides acquisition of foreign language skills, ICT skills and interactive teaching methods, training in new technologies is included there too.

Cooperation with stakeholders in relation to promoting teachers' qualification is expanding too. Training of 300 teachers in Welding and Construction has been organised in 2008 funded by the employers' organisations and the big manufacture companies.

Specialized training of teachers has been done under the umbrella of a PHARE project "Human Resources Development" executed in 2008 in the following fields:

- foreign language learning with focus on the terminology in a given profession – 92 teachers;
- computer skills (300 teachers), new technologies (200 teachers) and interactive teaching methods (250 teachers).

The Ministry of Education and Science realised a programme for practical training of students at school and in higher education funded by Human Resources Development Operative Programme (2007 – 2013). 37 vocational secondary schools have passed the competition under Component 1 "Practices for students in real work environment". Practical training of 74 teachers in real work environment is foreseen in the activities of the project jointly with 82 supervisors from the business in implementing new techniques and technologies in manufacturing, with aim to improve the teachers' professional knowledge, skills and competences.

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the national policy in teachers' initial and further qualification by development and adoption of a number of legislative acts, as for example:

- **National Education Act** (publ., State Gazette issue 86 of 1991, further amended and supplemented) - Article 39 stipulates that:
 1. Teacher / educator can be a citizen who has teaching rights;
 2. Teachers training is performed within the higher education system;
 3. Students vocational training may be performed also by citizens who have completed their education in the corresponding specialty;
 4. Conditions for qualification promotion are provided to teachers and headmasters.
- **Higher Education Act** (publ. State Gazette issue 112 of 1995, further amended and supplemented) – it regulated the rules and the order for acquisition of higher education and qualification. According to its Art. 42 (1) - amended and supplemented, State Gazette issue 41 of 2007, the higher education system organises education after secondary education completion and consists of the following degrees:
 1. **Education and qualification degree of Bachelor** - for its acquisition according to the syllabus are required:

a) **180 ECTS credits minimum**, 10 of which are acquired for a successfully passed state exam or defended diploma thesis, and **3 years minimum duration of study** – the degree to be acquired is “**Professional Bachelor in...**”⁹ (ISCED 97, level 5B);

b) **240 ECTS credits minimum**, 10 of which are acquired for a successfully passed state exam or defended diploma thesis, and **4 years minimum duration of study** – the degree to be acquired is **Bachelor (ISCED level 5A)**;

Training in Bachelor courses according to syllabus ensures extended profile training or specialized professional training, which is performed by professional fields and specialties.

2. **Education and qualification degree of Master:**

a) **300 ECTS credits minimum**, 15 of which are acquired for a successfully passed state exam or defended diploma thesis, and **5 years minimum duration of study**;

b) **120 ECTS credits minimum**, 15 of which are acquired for a successfully passed state exam or defended diploma thesis, and **2 years minimum duration of study after acquisition of “Professional Bachelor in...” degree**;

c) **60 ECTS credits minimum**, 15 of which are acquired for a successfully passed state exam or defended diploma thesis, and **1 year minimum duration of study after acquisition of Bachelor degree**.

3. Education and Scientific degree of Doctor (ISCED 97, level 6) – **3-year-minimum** duration in full-time studies / **4-year-minimum** duration in extra-mural studies, as well as self-dependent training. All of them are open to Master’s degree holders. Doctoral candidates’ training is performed in science specialties.

According to the Higher Education Act, the higher education institutions design the educational contents of curricula for initial teacher education and training by themselves, as for example:

- For primary education teachers it is performed by the higher schools that prepare primary teachers;
- For secondary education teachers it is performed by the higher schools that prepare secondary teachers..

The faculty as a main unit within the structure of higher school consists of departments for training of students, doctoral candidates and post-graduated students in one or more professional fields of the areas of science, in which the higher school is accredited. One of the main functions of the Faculty Council as a governing body of the faculty is:

⁹ For example – Professional Bachelor in Tourism, etc.

- ✓ to propose to the Academic Council draft syllabi and qualification characteristics by education and qualification degrees and specialties;
 - ✓ to adopt the curricula by the specialties taught in the faculty, as well as the individual syllabi for training students, doctoral candidates and post-graduated students.
- **Ordinance on the unified state requirements for acquisition of a Teacher vocational qualification**, adopted by a Decree No 162 of the Council of Ministers of 17 April 1997 (publ., State Gazette issue 34 of 1997) - the Ordinance defines the unified state educational requirements for acquisition of a Teacher vocational qualification for individuals with higher education acquired at higher schools according to the regulations set by the Higher Education Act and by this Ordinance. Teacher vocational qualification may be acquired simultaneously during the higher education study or after its completion.

The Ordinance sets:

1. The minimum number of compulsory subjects and their minimum training horarium in hours, which includes:
 - Pedagogics (Theory of Education and Didactics) – 60 hours;
 - Psychology (general, by ages, and pedagogical) – 45 hours;
 - Audio-visual and information technologies in education – 15 hours;
 - Methodics of training – 60 hours.
 2. Eligible subjects, which should be not less than 15 training hours for each of them - they are distributed in two groups depending on the type of the specialty, as follows:
 - First group – pedagogical, psychological, and methodic subjects;
 - Second group – interdisciplinary and applied-experimental subjects, related to professional-practical teachers career development.
 3. Main forms of training and the minimum horarium in training hours for teacher practical training, which includes:
 - hospeting – 30 hours;
 - current pedagogical practice a – 45 часа;
 - pedagogical practice before diploma thesis development and defence – 75 hours.
 4. Training for acquisition of a Teacher qualification completes with integrated practical-applied state examination, which consists of presentation and defence of a lesson developed by the learner. The Teacher qualification acquired is certified by a Certificate for vocational qualification.
- **Ordinance No 5 on the conditions for promoting pedagogical staff's qualification within the national education system and the order for acquisition of vocational qualification**

degrees, issued by the Minister of Education, Science and Technologies (publ. State Gazette issue 6 of 1997) – This Ordinance regulates the conditions for teachers' qualification promotion within the national education system (school education) and the order for acquisition of teachers' education and qualification degrees. Teachers qualification promotion is aimed to:

- ✓ ensure correspondence between the social practice, the education system demands and the level of teachers' professional competences;
- ✓ provide possibilities for meeting the teachers' professional interests and their career development.

The teachers' qualification promotion training is implemented within the higher education system by higher education institutions established in accordance with the Higher Education Act. The main organized forms for teachers' qualification promotions are, as follows:

- Comprehensive course – with duration of minimum 3 weeks /attending hours/ with curriculum covering modern problems according to the functions of the teachers' pedagogical post;
- Thematic course - with duration up to 2 weeks with curriculum covering theoretical and practical study related to concrete pedagogical problem;
- Instruction course - with duration up to 1 week with curriculum covering training in new educational contents, specific professional functions, etc.;
- Professional-pedagogical post-graduated course;
- post-graduated course in concrete scientific area;
- training for acquisition and improvement of professional-pedagogical skills;
- seminar, practicum, problem group, conference, etc.

Five degrees of teachers' vocational qualification are to be acquired in consequence according to the level of professional competence reached by the teacher.

There is a special section named **Teacher Authority and Social Status Promotion** in the **National Programme for School and Pre-school Education Development (2006 – 2015)**. It defines the main directions for reforms in human resources management in the education system, incl. establishment of:

- an effective system for teachers' qualification and development of a programme for teachers' professional competences development in several directions – periodical up-to-dating of knowledge, mastering new training methods, training in ICT;
- an information system about the teachers and their qualifications;
- teachers' career development system;

- an effective system for teachers' work assessment linked to the differential payment system;
- teachers' recompense system.

According to the Qualification National Programme **the teacher career development** has **horizontal dimensions** - in the framework of 5 pedagogical posts – “junior teacher”, “teachers”, “senior teacher”, “chief teacher”, and “teacher-methodist” and **vertical dimensions** – in the framework of the administrative posts within the education system – from “assistant headmaster” to “expert in the central administration for education and science. All this should be binded to higher qualification and the teachers work.

In 2007 – 2009 the National Institute for headmasters' Training has carried out specialized training in Team Management, Pedagogical Interaction Models, and Family and Kindergarten.

The 2008 Council conclusions on school education suggest focusing cooperation on "not only reinforcing the subject-based, but also transversal competences (usually taken as learning to learn, social and civic, initiative taking and entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression) ". The work of the Cluster Key Competences suggests that they, in particular, require a broader approach by subject teachers, more effective collaboration between teachers, and a common vision within the school of their importance and ways of promoting them.

QUESTION 6

What approaches (including new ways to organise learning) does your country take to promote the acquisition of transversal key competences in general education (primary, lower secondary and general upper secondary), VET, adult learning and teacher training (in particular learning to learn, social and civic competence, initiative taking and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression)? Where appropriate please refer back to Question 2 on curricula.

The Ministry of Education and Science takes into account the nessesity for better mastering of transversal key competences, improvement of the capacity for LLL, creativity and innovations¹⁰.

¹⁰ To this end, two projects have been implemented for 2 years related to popularizing the European Reference Framework for key Competences. The project activities have included: publication of a leaf-let in Bulgarian language about the the European Reference Framework for key Competences, posters, and organization of seminars. The culmination was the designation of 2008 as a Year of Key Competences in the Bulgarian school. One month was assigned to each of the competences, and during this month the schools organized activities related to this competence. At the end of each month one Bulgarian town has been a host for competitions linked to this competence with participants - students from all over the country. The students' tasks were aimed to demonstrate transversal key competences focused on the key competence for the month. Team work, use of Internet, and presentation of the outcomes using modern IT were compulsory condition in the competitions.

The national state examination programmes designed in 2007-2009 ensure unified criteria for external assessment of the students' learning outcomes during the state examinations for acquisition of a vocational qualification¹¹. They are based on actualized syllabi and curricula. The national examination programmes for acquisition of qualification by professions include cases / practical assignments, as well as a project design and its defence (in the most cases). It provides possibility for manifestation of transversal key competences mastered by the students and, more precisely, of Initiative Taking and Entrepreneurship, and Cultural Awareness and Expression.

The key competences acquired by the students are related to the areas of knowledge, the skills and the habits related to personal development, social cohesion, active citizenship, and employability. They include "traditional" competences as for example mastering mother tongue, mastering foreign languages, basic knowledge in Maths and Accurate Sciences, computer skills, as well as transversal competences like learn to learn, social and civic competences, initiative taking and entrepreneurship, as well as cultural awareness and expression.

4 out of 8 key competences defined in the framework are transversal competences. It raises a couple of questions as for example how to describe them by curricula based on "traditional" subjects, to what degree the schools should be reorganized, and what teachers education and training is needed in order the teachers to be able to assist their students to acquire these competences in the teaching process and by outdoor activities.

The National Programme for School and Pre-school Education Development (2006-2015)

put on the agenda the issue about teachers' development in the system and establishment of conditions for raising their authority and social status by:

Teachers' Qualification – Since 2007 the Qualification National Programme¹² is implementing. Its main outcomes are, as follows:

- ✓ improving the quality of the educational process and the quality of secondary education management by higher quality of teachers' qualification;
- ✓ improving the proficiency level and the management skills of headmasters, teachers and educators, their career development and performance leading to higher quality and effectiveness of the educational process;
- ✓ achieving a good match between educational needs and teachers' proficiency level;

¹¹ State examinations in Theory of Profession and state examinations in Practice of Profession.

^a adopted by a Decision № 245 of the Council of Ministers of 20 April 2007.

- ✓ creating an environment that stimulates the teachers' inner demands for qualification promotion, development, performance improvement and self-improvement;
- ✓ ensuring in time information about changes, training in actual topics in accordance with the new realities and tendencies in the educational process;
- ✓ higher quality of foreign language learning.

The main priority areas in teachers' qualification in 2009 are related to training and acquisition of traditional skills as for example foreign language skills and computer skills, as well as training and acquisition of transversal competences like social and civic competences, initiative taking and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression.

In implementing the activities under the umbrella of the Human Resources Development Operative Programme, Component "Qualification Promotion and establishment of condition for teachers', academics' and headmasters' career development", it is foreseen training of:

- ✓ 1200 foreign language teachers;
- ✓ 1000 ICT teachers;
- ✓ 1200 teams of class teachers, psychologists and pedagogical conceillers in aggression prevention at school;
- ✓ 100 kindergarten teachers in Preparation for Entering School diagnostics;
- ✓ 344 new appointed teachers - introduction qualification.

The key competences approach requires more attention to the acquisition of skills, positive attitudes towards learning, fostering more autonomous and collaborative approaches to learning. In this context, one of the key issues identified by the Cluster Key Competences is the assessment of learning, and school evaluation. At the level of the individual, there is a need to extend and enhance the use of formative assessment (assessment for learning), and at the systemic level, to develop means to monitor the acquisition of transversal competences.

QUESTION 7

How is summative and formative student assessment¹³ used to help pupils/students acquire key competences, including the transversal ones? Please describe your current approach¹⁴.

¹³ Summative assessment is generally carried out at the end of a particular stage of a course of study, or at the end of an entire course. It summarizes the development of learners at a particular time. Summative assessment is also referred to as 'assessment of learning'. Formative assessment refers to the frequent assessment of student progress

Summative student assessment is performed at the end of a given stage of the school year or at the end of the school year. Its aim is to summarize the students' development at a given moment. It is also called "learnt assessment". The formative student assessment is related regular assessment of the progress made by the students during the whole school year. Its main aim is educational needs identification that the instruction and the learning should adapt to. It is also called "training assessment".

Acquisition of key competences, which to support the students' professional and social realization was a main issue in a study¹⁵, initiated and performed by the Centre for Quality Evaluation and Control of Education to the Ministry of Education and Science. Its target group was 460 students at 11th grade at the vocational secondary schools from 15 regions in the country.

QUESTION 8

How does your country - at national and or regional and local levels - evaluate the outcomes of education and training systems in relation to key competences? How is such evidence used for developing policy?

Annual evaluation of the outcomes of the education and training process is performing in accordance with the objectives for guaranteeing the quality of education set by the National Programme for School and Pre-school Education development (2006 – 2015). The process of general introduction of tests in the Bulgarian school that has started in 2007/2008 school year is

throughout a course of study. Its main aim is to identify learning needs and to adjust teaching and learning accordingly. Formative assessment is also referred to as 'assessment for learning'

¹⁴ Please note that Eurydice is currently gathering information for the study: "National Testing of Pupils in Europe at ISCED Levels 1 and 2" through your National Eurydice Units
<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/ContactUs>

Please focus on your policy approach when answering question 7 and cross refer to information provided to Eurydice where appropriate.

¹⁵ Some of the outcomes of this study are, as follows:

The students' attitude with respect to the qualities that they determine as leading to successful professional realization on the labour market, such as information awareness, willingness, team work skills is indicative. Qualities like initiative taking, entrepreneurship, skills for self-dependent decision making related to a given assignment, studiousness, communicative skills, computer skills and foreign language skills are left behind in their ranking – they do not master them enough in order to use them in the education process and in their personal and professional realization.

Curricula revision started as a consequence of this study concerning their supplementation and provision of conditions for better acquisition of these key competences. Other measures were:

- building-up of an adequate feed-back mechanism: inquiry sheets, online inquiries, online tests for proficiency level assessment;
- monitoring related to introducing innovations in school governance provoked by training through Headmasters' Qualification Programme, "Good News" and "School Manager" competitions;
- promoting the participation in competitions by awards, preferential participations in international exchange of teachers and teachers' pilot qualifications, and qualifications' certification.

widening and improving step by step. In 2008/2009 school year external assessment is carried out in the following grades and subjects:

- 4th grade in Bulgarian language and Literature, Maths, Human and Nature, Human and Society;
- 5th grade in Bulgarian language and Literature, Maths, Human and Nature, History and Civilization; Geography and Economy, foreign languages;
- 6th grade in Bulgarian language and Literature, Maths, Human and Nature, History and Civilization; Geography and Economy, foreign languages;
- 8th grade with intensive foreign language learning – in English, Spanish, Italian, German, Russian, and French;
- Admission examinations after 7th grade in in Bulgarian language and Literature, and Maths;
- State matriculation examinations (Matura) in Bulgarian Language and Literature, in eligibly chosen subject, and third examination in a desired subject (Bulgarian language and Literature, English, Spanish, Italian, German, Russian, and French, Maths, History and Civilization; Geography and Economy, Physics and Astronomy, Biology and health Education, and Philosophy.

The aim of these examinations is to measure the acquisition of the corresponding level of general education minimum, incl. that of the key competences included in the standard.

The conclusions of the conducted external assessments are a base for indertaking measures at a national level, as for example With Care to Each Student National Programme developed in 2008 and executing in 2009 too. It includes Ensuring Students' Extra-Training for Improving Their Level of General Educational Attainments module.

The conclusions of Bulgaria's participation in PIRLS, TIMSS and PISA are related to reconsidering our strategies and tools for external assessment towards stressing onto practical knowledge and skills related to the labour market.

The acquisition of a vocational qualification degree at a national level is carried out based on a national examination programmes, approved by the Minister of Education and Science. Assessment criteria with respect to the key competences exists together with the criteria for assessment of competences that are specific for a given profession.They assist the students to adapt better to real working environment.

CHAPTER 2: TRANSVERSAL LLL ISSUES (APPROX. 4 PAGES)

QUESTION 9

What progress has your country made in the development and implementation of a coherent and comprehensive LLL strategy (including the development of national qualifications frameworks linked to the EQF, systems for the validation of nonformal or informal learning and learning outcomes based approaches)?

The National LLL Strategy (2008 – 2013) has been developed in 2007, with participation of stakeholders' representatives at a national level. It has been adopted by a Decision of the Council of Ministers on 30 October 2008. The strategy is based on the programme of the current Government of European Integration, Economic Growth and Social responsibility and other national strategic documents in implementation of the Lisbon Strategy. It provides recommendations about the actions to be undertaken by the government in relation to the Bulgarian citizens' future preparation for active participation in the global knowledge-based economy.

The Strategy is developed taking into account the new objectives and the new global range of LLL in Bulgaria as a new member State of the EU. The decision concerning its adoption is in compliance with the policies of the EU in a Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council for establishment of the LLL programme.

The aim of our national LLL Strategy is to join the efforts of all institutions and citizens in Bulgaria for establishing conditions and for a realization of the LLL process for personal and professional development of every citizen in order to contribute to the knowledge-based economy.

The general assessment of the representatives from the business and of the State is that many efforts should be put together to merging the efforts of all participants in LLL –learners, educational and training institutions, public bodies, employers' organizations, trade unions, regional and municipal administrations, local communities and other partners.

Main role in the implementation of our strategy have the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The implementation of an integrated LLL approach requires the use of appropriate and sufficient resources. The implementation of our national LLL Strategy (2008 – 2013) at regional and local level should be supported by the measures under the framework of the regional and municipal development plans for 2007 – 2013, the integrated LLL programme, and the three operative programmes – Human Resources development, Competitiveness, and Regional development.

The main priority fields for LLL development in Bulgaria are:

- Improving the opportunities for LLL;
- Assuring quality and effectiveness of LLL.

The main fields for further work are in line with the common European principles of the Memorandum for LLL and the key competences recommendation.

Although the Strategy is targeted to all, it foresees policies and measures for the people from certain target groups, as follows:

- learners from the secondary and higher education systems, gifted and talented people;
- employed individuals, as a group with highest expectations regarding the education and training provision;
- unemployed individuals, as a group with underlined necessity for mastering key competences, the youth above age of 16 without completed secondary education and without vocational qualification, and the early school leavers;
- aged individuals, before and after retirement;
- certain groups at risk – disadvantaged people, people living in isolated areas, prisoners, illiterate people, people with special education needs, and people with significant social dependencies.

Actions for promoting all Bulgarian citizens to participate in LLL and to improve their adaptability with respect to economic and social changes are set in implementing the Lisbon objectives and the main LLL priorities in Bulgaria. It will improve their personal well-being and competitiveness, as well as the competitiveness of our national economy.

Ensuring flexible access to LLL is related to activities for promoting educational mobility and provision of more opportunities for:

- second entrance to the educational system for all groups of the population;
- development and implementation of modern approaches and training methods taking into account the learners' specific needs;
- improving the practices for recognition of non-formal and informal learning and of prior learning as well;
- development and implementation of credit transfer system in VET;
- e-learning and distance learning development and attractiveness;

Ensuring quality and effectiveness of LLL is linked to activities concerning:

- educational contents optimization directed to change of the attitude towards the educational process;
- good match between education, training and business demands in line with the technological development in the different economic sectors;

- continuous VET development;
- improving workplace training and strengthening the role of the branch organizations;
- developing mechanisms for validation and certification of key competences and its legislative regulation;
- training of teachers, trainers, educators, and academic staff;
- widening the access and guaranteeing higher quality of guidance services and lifelong guidance development;
- National Qualifications Framework development for ensuring transparency of the system for recognition of qualifications;
- evaluation of learning outcomes;
- policy developments towards promoting scientific research as a generator of innovations in education and training.

The indicators and reference levels included in the Coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring of the progress in implementing the Lisbon objectives are used for monitoring of the progress in implementing our National LLL strategy as well. As a result of the implementing the policies and measures set in the strategy we expect:

- raise of the participation in pre-school education;
- decrease of the early school leavers' percentage;
- improvement of the literacy levels in languages, maths, and the students' knowledge in natural sciences as well;
- Raise of the adults' participation in LLL;
- improved the educational structure of the population;
- provision of training for teachers and academics;
- raised frequency of using the Internet and increased number of people with personal computers.

The activities in implementing the Strategy are oriented towards:

- development of an effective system for LLL, taking in account the elearners' needs and creation of a variety of opportunities for formal, non-formal and informal learning matched to the labour market demands;
- clear definition of the responsibilities, optimization and coordination of all participants' activities in the LLL process;
- improving the legislative base in order to facilitate the realization of the LLL concept in BG and promoting the participation of different social groups in LLL with special attention to the groups at risk;

- development of LLL quality assurance systems with respect to educational contents, educational environment, assessment methods, modern training methods, learners' qualification, etc.;
- introduction of a credit transfer system in VET and of an individualized approach to the learners' personal and professional development, as well as promoting mobility of learners and employed individuals;
- promoting culture and motivation for learning by developing LLL guidance system at school, university, and work place;
- developing mechanisms for validation of non-formal, informal learning, and learning based on previous experience, as well as development of transparent and coherent system for recognition of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and competences);
- promoting research and improving the statistical data gathering methods with respect to LLL;
- development of a financing system as a tool for guaranteeing the quality of education and training by shared responsibility of the State, employers and learners;
- creation of mechanisms for interaction and exchange of information between all participants in LLL.

The development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) compatible with the EQF is an important national priority. It will serve as a base for implementing the other European policies and tools in this field.

In April 2008 a task force responsible for implementing the EQF recommendation has been established by Order of the Minister of Education and Science. Its assignments are:

- to prepare a table of concordance between the national qualifications levels and the EQF;
- to develop a plan for further actions related to sectoral qualifications frameworks design;
- to make a proposal for changes in the national legislation concerning the documents issued in the national education and in the higher education system. Its aim is to introduce the requirement information about the corresponding NQF/EQF levels to be included in the contents of all these documents.

The political will for development and implementation of an isystem for validation of non-formal and informal learning is also set as a main activity in the Strategy for Continuing Vocational Training (2005 – 2010) – in the framework of its Priority 3 “Provision of high quality continuing vocational training”. The responsible institutions are the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and the social partners.

Popularising the opportunities for validation of vocational competences acquired by non-formal and informal learning is a main policy measure undertaken in LLL context. In 2007 an active

rubric named “Validation of non-formal and informal learning” has been created on the Ministry of Education and Science’s web-site. It contains information about the experience of other European countries (France, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Italy, and others) in this field. Training seminars have been organized in 2007/2008 with participation of employers, the business (by sectors and branches), education and training institutions, the Regional Inspectorates for Education, and NGOs.

A project NP 2003.8-001 “Promoting adults’ vocational training and employability in Bulgaria“ has been developed in cooperation with GOPA Consulting and with participation of representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Branch Chamber of Wood-Processing and Furniture Manufacturing, the Branch Chamber for Tailoring Manufacturing, the “Support” Labour Confederation¹⁶, and the Independent Trade Unions Confederation in Bulgaria. The objectives of this project are oriented towards development of a framework and procedures for assessment and validation of competences acquired by non-formal and informal learning.

A package of documents has been developed as a result of the project in 2008/2009, which includes:

1. A model of a system for validation of competences acquired by non-formal and informal learning.
2. Rules of procedure concerning the activities of the National Commission for Validation and its members.
3. Rules of procedure concerning the activities of the Regional Commissions for Validation and their members
4. General rules for selection of executive bodies/institutions to the system for validation of competences acquired by non-formal and informal learning;
5. Instruction concerning the activity of the specialist-secretary that receives the application forms for validation of competences.
6. Patterns and application forms;
7. Individual validation plan;
8. Atestation form to be completed by the employer;
9. Information card for initial (guiding) interview with the candidate.

The model is tested by its applying for three mass professions with first degree of vocational qualification in the following fields: manufacturing of textile wearing, shoes and leather articles,

¹⁶a trade union

and social activities. The legislative regulation of the model is foreseen in the draft of the new Law for School and Pre-school Education Development¹⁷ and in further sub-law provision.

The National Institute for Headmasters Training is currently implementing a project BG 051PO001/3.1-02, funded by the Human Resources Development Operative Programme, financed by the European Social Fund. Its theme is “Developing curricula and trainings for headmasters of schools, kindergartens and service units within the education system. Its period of realization is 2008-2010. Its intervention field is Improving quality of service in education and training, priority field; “Improving quality of education and training in line with the labour market demands for building up knowledge-based economy. Activity № 6 of the project is “Development of draft standards for acquisition of headmaster rights”. It fully corresponds to the identified needs: to contribute to clear definition of the competences field that the school manager has to possess; the post appointment process to become more clear and transparent, which will motivate teachers and assistant directors to improve themselves and to acquire headmaster rights. This activity related to the process of modernizing school education in Bulgaria by using the competence-based approach in the design of standards for acquiring headmaster rights. The choice of this activity is in line with the modern world-wide tendencies for use of competence-base and approach in defining the post of school headmaster, as the development of its draft standards in BG is understood as a necessary.

A project “Popularising LLL in Bulgaria” is realized in 2008, by the call for proposals for “Development and implementation of National LLL strategy” under the Education and Training 2010 work programme. Its main objective is to assist the LLL development process in BG by raising the society’s confidence in the meaning of education and training, conducting wide-spread information campaign concerning the LLL policies and priorities both at European and national level and provoking public discussion on related to LLL topics. A number of conferences and seminars have been organized both at national and regional level with participants representatives from public institutions, regional and municipal authorities, employment services, secondary and higher schools, social partners, non-governmental organisations. Leaflets with papers on LLL topics were designed and published, the National LLL Strategy was also published both in Bulgarian and English through the same project; web-page of the LLL in Bulgaria and a national logo for LLL were designed too.

Actualised methodology for design of SER for acquisition of qualification by professions has applied since two years. It is learning outcomes oriented. The shift towards learning outcomes

¹⁷ The draft of this law is currently approved by the Council of Ministers and is submitted for adoption by the National Assembly (the Parliament).

provides conditions for development of the NQF, and of a national system for non-formal and informal learning. The process of implementing the LLL policies in the vocational training centres includes qualification courses for adults (for acquisition of profession, for improving and up-to-dating of qualification, and for acquisition of key competences).

CHAPTER 3: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (APPROX. 3 PAGES)

QUESTION 10

What progress has your country made in increasing the attractiveness of VET programmes and their relevance to the labour market?

Vocational education and training development during the previous period was aimed at improving relations with the labor market and improving the quality and attractiveness. Efforts to increase the popularity and the interest in vocational education and training were focused on:

- **Ensuring transparency of vocational training acquired in secondary schools** - in 2007 National calendar of competitions in various professions was developed and implemented. Its aim is to present the public the best performances of pupils, quite important is the assessment of employers who are members of the examination committees. Thus external assessment of learning outcomes in schools and vocational education popularization is provided. In 2007 16 national championships in various professions were held. In 2008 nine national championships were organized, Panorama of Vocational Education in 2009, which combines performance of 12 national championships was prepared in April 2009. The panorama includes a discussion of vocational education attractiveness and business participation in this process and notification of special nominations for socially responsible business - "Investor in the future".

The National Calendar of various professions competitions, approved by the Minister of Education and Science, for a second consecutive year competitions in Economics and Entrepreneurship are organized, involving 376 students from schools in the country. 40 students from vocational schools from 37 towns of the country participated in Skills & Work Challenge 2008 national competition, while students from 5 vocational secondary schools attended Skills & Work Challenge 2008 international competition.

The annual National Olympiad in technical drawing will mark its 25th anniversary in May 2009. The Olympiad will be held with the active participation of employers and higher education representatives that are developing the examination materials, and were assessing the results of students. The higher schools recognize the results of the Olympiad for higher school entrance in

the certain professional field and thus setting the basis for the transfer of credits between vocational and higher education.

- **Improving the relations with the social partners and their actual participation in the vocational education process:**

Related to the funding from the European Social Fund under the Human Resources Development Operative Programme (2007-2013), the Ministry of Education and Science implemented the School and Student Practice Programme. The total amount of the grants under its Component 1, "Practice for students in a real work environment" is amounting to BGN 1 955 830. The amount of ESF funds is 1 662 455 euro, the national co-financing is 293 375 euros. Providing jobs for training students in industrial conditions is an obligatory condition for a participation in the program. Funding will be provided to 37 vocational schools, which will help building effective links between business and vocational education and will facilitate the acquisition of key competences and specific skills for the use of new technologies on the labor market.

In 2008 the Council of Ministers adopted a Modernization of the Vocational Education System National Programme with a budget of 5 million eur. Vocational schools could submit project proposals for funding by the programme. As a condition for participation in the programme, mandatory co-financing, worthing 20 percent of the cost of the project, was provided by employers. As a result of the implementation of the national programme were enhanced facilities in 44 schools as the involvement of the business amounted to EUR 1 355 129 to EUR 5 million provided by the state.

The successful implementation of the programme was a prerequisite for its extension in 2009 (currently we are in a period of proposals receiving). The percentage of the compulsory co-financing by employers in the framework of the National Programme in 2009 is increased to 50 %.

Starting from the organization of sporadic training of teachers to increase their skills, provision of funding for prizes and support for organizing competitions by professions, the State and the social partners came to the idea to develop a common platform for a social partnership.

In March 2009 a Framework Agreement for cooperation in vocational education and training was signed by the Minister of Education and Training, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, and the stakeholders at a national level. Its aim is to improve the mechanism of cooperation between the responsible institutions in the development of vocational education and training in Bulgaria, in line with the new requirements of the national and regional economy and the challenges of the rapidly developing and high competitive labour market. The subject of the Agreement is to join the efforts for implementing common long-term policies and actions to

modernising VET in Bulgaria – decision making on common actions and sharing responsibilities in this field as a factor to ensure a competitive workforce and to improve the employability and the economic growth.

The interested parties have agreed for cooperation in the following priority fields:

- Vocational education restructuring based on sectoral and regional principle with aim to facilitate the professional and geographical mobility and the employment possibilities;
- Increasing the investments for widening the access, higher quality and attractiveness of VET by public-private partnerships development;
- Harmonization of VET in BG in line with the European processes and policies.

The interested parties have engaged to launch point activities for:

- modernization of VET by: modernizing the education contents, teachers' training and qualification, training equipment, rebewval, effective organization and performance of practical training;
- cinchronization of the school network and of the state administration plan with the results from the system for research and forecasting the labour market demands by regional and sectoral levels;
- provision of quality vocational training in strategic for the economy HiTech professions as well as in not so attractive but important for certain economic sectors professions;
- development of a national system for quality assurance in VET;
- support to the recognition of vocational qualifications and competences and creating conditions for transparenance and mutual trust.
- building-up of a national information system for search and supply of workpower and VET;
- development of a national career guidance system

The implementation of measures and activities set in this agreement is performed at three functional levels:

- national level – interinstitutional task force with participation of representatives from the nationally represented employers' organizations annually perform analyses and propose decisions for concrete actions and monitors its implementation;
- regional – the regional authorities and the regional structures of the employers organizations ensure the implementation of concrete actions at a regional level;
- local – by bilateral agreements between vocational schools and employers

Regular and systematic studies and forecasting of the labour market demands are necessary in order to improve the match between education and training, incl. VET and the labour market demands for work power with certain qualification. During the recent years a number of

different measures in this field have been undertaken, as for example: specialized sociological study on *ad hoc* basis, annual study performed by the Employment Agency, development of tools and methodologies for such studies done through international projects and PHARE programme.

In 2007 a national representative study on the employers' demands for workers with a given qualification has been done ordered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Middle-term forecasting concerning the demands for work power in 2008-2010 has been performed too.

The Employment Agency studies the employers' demands on annual basis aiming to plan and organize vocational training courses and training for acquisition of key competences for unemployed. This study is financed by the budget for active policy on the labour market. Based on the results from this study and after an agreement by the National Advisory Council for Vocational Qualification of the Working Power, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy approves a List of professions and a List of Key Competences used for organizing the training courses.

Examples for increasing the attractiveness of VET programmes are:

- unemployed individuals' training in a given profession or in a part of a profession based on the data of the study on the labour market demands (guaranteed work placements), ordered and funded by the Employment Agency;
- employed individuals' training in a given profession or in a part of profession for keeping their work places;
- training under the umbrella of the European programmes, as for ex. "Leonardo da Vinci" and "Transfer of Innovations".

The experience acquired in the process of planning and implementation of studies is to be used for building-up of the national system for study and forecasting of the needs for work power with a given qualification in Bulgaria. In 2008 an inter-institutional task force has been established with social partners' participation with an assignment to design the system. The work on systematization and merging all information sources¹⁸ concerning the demands¹⁹ for work power with certain qualification has already started.

Regular studies, short, and long term forecasting of the LM demands are foreseen as well.

¹⁸ incl. European and national reports, structural studies and analyses

¹⁹ that can influence on the working life, the economic development, the labour market and the education and training system

All interesting parties and stakeholders will be involved in implementing the activities related to the system, as for example the responsible authorities in the field of education and training, the training institutions, insurance and taxation bodies, statistical bodies, social partners, etc.

The employers will play a key role in this process. The results from the study will be used as a base for developing the state plan for admission of students and students in higher education, for organizing adult training, and for modernizing the curricula with respect to the new knowledge and skills as well.

CHAPTER 4: HIGHER EDUCATION (APPROX. 3 PAGES)

QUESTION 11

In the area of Modernisation of Higher Education what progress has your country made in relation to:

- Plans/asures to diversify the income streams of Higher Education Institutions?**
- Plans/incentives to encourage Higher Education Institutions to open up to lifelong learners?**

- Plans/asures to diversify the income streams of Higher Education Institutions

Bulgarian higher education continues its development towards modernisation and harmonisation of its traditionally strong features with the contemporary European standards and good practices. Higher schools have an academic autonomy while the governing functions of the State in the field of high education are reduced to provision of the general system functioning framework and conditions. The State promotes the higher schools in their efforts to create strong and stable structures with enough autonomy and transparency of governance processes.

Good practices examples are being studied and distributed; new management models related to implementing of modern forms of governance and leading to a better financial consolidation of the higher education institutions have been investigated. Managing and academic functions separation is clearly marked in the private higher schools and also in some public ones, aiming to strategic capacity and financial stability enhancement.

The Ministry of Education and Science and the higher schools work actively for a proper surrounding of the higher education system modernization, appropriate with the society and the business demands. At a national level, promoting the relation between business, social partners and higher schools is defined as a key priority in the Bulgarian higher education reform. Its aim is to achieve adequacy between the requirements of the labor market and the quality of labor potential, providing a permanent and sustainable employment of the young people.

In this aspect, Higher Education Act amendments were made in May 2007. Their main objective is creating competition conditions between the higher education institutions in Bulgaria, as an important precondition for higher education improvement. Changes in the model of financing higher education were made and they could be summarized as follows:

- Extension of students admission in the higher schools. For the 2008/2009 academic year 58 802 places for students in public higher schools were adopted, which is almost 15 000 more places than those during academic 2007/2008;
- Provision of stronger powers of the higher schools in setting tuition fees;
- Subsidizing students who are actually admitted, not the number of vacancies.

The main consequences of the implementation of these changes are as follows:

- Creating competition conditions for higher schools;
- Creating conditions, in the perspective, for dropping out admission exams and approving state matriculation exams as an "entrance" to higher education;
- Reducing the pressure for establishment of new higher schools and creating conditions for higher education institutions consolidation process development.

- Plans/incentives to encourage Higher Education Institutions to open up to lifelong learners

In the National LLL (2009 - 2013) following development guidelines have been included in the field of higher education:

- Preparation for professional and personal development, employability and a life of active citizenship in the knowledge based society;
- Popularization of higher education: expanding policies for access to education and qualification in the system, ensuring transparency of qualifications and facilitation of recognition procedures, improving the system of accumulation and transfer of educational credits.
- Strengthening the dialogue with the nationally represented employers' organisations in the field of expansion of specialized training for a fast realization in the labour market
- Promoting and improving the distance learning using modern information and communication technologies, ensuring appropriate educational environment for people with special educational needs and disadvantaged.
- Qualification acquisition and improvement – giving a clear definition of the learning outcomes in accordance with the levels of the national qualifications framework for higher education.

- Prior learning recognition mechanisms establishment (formal, nonformal and informal learning, professional experience, etc.) for the purpose of higher education and recognition of prior learning in different contexts;
- Quality assurance – enhancing the role of the quality assurance and control systems at institutional level, which include the academic staff as well; participation of foreign experts in the external institutional and programme evaluation; effective criteria establishment, taking into account the learning outcomes;

The achieving of the Strategy objectives requires following activities:

- Inclusion of LLL issues in the draft Strategy for higher education development and in the Higher Education Act (deadline – by 2013);
- Adoption of a new Classifier of the Areas of Higher Education and the Professional Fields and a methodological guidance for its implementation (deadline – by 2011);
- Provision and maintenance of the quality of training and of the academic staff in accordance with the post-accreditation monitoring and control procedures (deadline – by 2011).

For improving the quality of educational services provided by the Bulgarian higher education institutions and building-up of an effective training and career development system for the academic staff, at the end of 2009 the Ministry of Education and Science through its Policy in Higher Education Directorate launches a project “Enhancing the qualification of academics” in the framework of the Human Resources Development Operative Programme.

The specific objectives of the project are related to:

- Improving the academics’ competences in 3 key areas:
 1. foreign language skills;
 2. using ICT skills in the educational process;
 3. specific professional competencies related to advanced training programs creation with a greater European dimension.
- Implementation of **mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, forecasting and planning of training aiming to enhance the qualification** of the academics and to improve the quality of educational services.

Expected Effects of the Project:

- For the direct target group (academics):
 - competence improvement (general and professional);
 - improving the quality of teaching and of the opportunities for professional development;

- raising the lecturers' prestige;
- encouraging the participation of higher school lecturers in the LLL forms
- stimulating their academic mobility, research potential and international contacts.
- The project will provide an indirect impact at several levels:
 - Academic staff (colleagues) - through knowledge dissemination among the higher schools as a result of assessment activities and the multiplication of learning outcomes through the training assignments. Personal example of the acquired new knowledge and competencies will be a building competitive incentive for inclusion of other academics in further trainings as well.
 - Students - through the improved quality of training, motivation and development incentive, through increasing competitiveness and better chances for a successful and satisfying career;
 - Higher schools - more competent trained academics, better and more modern syllabi and curricula, more intensive international cooperation, enhancing the European dimension of education, higher prestige and evaluation. Also, as a final result, the higher schools will have reach tools for assessing the academics' needs of additional qualification and training, for monitoring of their career development, for a feedback from students concerning the quality of the received educational services.

The project is expected to be realized by 2010.
