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# Mrs. Gergana Passy participated in the 8th National Conference on e-Education

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[1]

On 13th November, 2012 the ICT media hosted the 8th National Conference on e-Education, entitled "ICT – the realized necessity for the future", which took place with the kind support of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the Council of Rectors, the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science, Children, Youths and Sports, as well as with the special co-operation of the Bulgarian Virtual University.

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**Date:**

20/11/2012

**Speaker:**

Gergana Passy

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University. The event was held in the Sheraton Hotel in Sofia and gathered in one place representatives of the primary, secondary and higher education, the country's libraries, the career centers at the Bulgarian universities, and the student organizations and non-profit associations in the field of e-learning.

The Eighth National Conference on e-Education emphasized mainly on institutional development policies of the learning process, e-learning resources and access and e-learning initiatives in secondary and higher education in the country. The event sought to put special focus on educational resources and intellectual property rights, the place of ICT in secondary schools and universities, best practices for improving the qualifications of teachers.

Bulgarian digital champion and former Minister for European affairs Gergana Passy also took part in the conference. She expressed the opinion that the world is on the brink of a fundamental change that will exert its influence on the way people live, study and share information. According to her teaching models of today will become uninteresting for the pupils of tomorrow, because they will not correspond to the latter's level of development and it's up to the teachers to adapt to the youngster's interests. The conversion of the pupils into competitive young people depends on how Bulgarian education adopts the worldwide teaching techniques. She characterized Finland and South Korea as leaders in the field of modern technologies in education, but also mentioned that in these same countries teachers are highly valued. Business worldwide is increasingly investing in educational innovations and far more up-to-date teaching methods.

Mrs. Passy gave as examples different commercial and noncommercial modern educational institutions and organizations and namely the Khan Academy, Minerva educational institutions at Harvard and Yale, the Skillshare online private lessons, the Treehouse online training program for students in programming, as well as the Bulgarian freeware Telerik Software Academy.

According to the Bulgarian digital champion new educational technologies are still predominantly unknown in Bulgaria, and yet there are some preconditions for an information revolution to happen in the country in a good way. Therefore the most important question is not if, but how technological innovations will enter Bulgarian schools. She pointed out several necessary prerequisites that are to be fulfilled. First of all, improving the facilities and equipment as well as speeding-up internet connection are needed so as to meet the expected rise in the number of users and the quantity of educational materials that will be downloaded. She supposed that the problem with Turkey, concerning Bulgarian diplomas, wouldn't probably arise if it was possible for every questionable diploma to be uploaded to the internet and checked there.

The second prerequisite is far more important because it requires a reform in the personnel system in education. Only teachers can be the true catalyst for change and it is up to them to educate children how to use the internet safely. That is why it is necessary to develop a carefully considered state program for education that includes affirmative action with high salary, constant qualifications and travels for exchange of good practices between all teachers, who are interested in new technologies. State should also give more freedom of action to the teachers to exercise initiative and use new teaching practices. Mrs. Passy made a comparison between one school in Sofia where paper diaries are still in use and another one in the Rhodopes where online education has already been introduced and allowed pupils to do their lessons although the school itself was closed due to a flu vacation. She added that it is not necessary for new technologies to be expensive.

Lastly Mrs. Passy made the following conclusions about the e-education:

- Unlike other forms of education, this is the only one that will come from outside and new technologies will encompass all areas of public life, and not only education

- In this reform pupils will be happier than teachers

- New technologies will fundamentally change the way we live and learn, because the skills needed to operate with them will increasingly be perceived as necessary basic skills for anyone to master.

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## Newsroom Item Type:

- Event reports [3]

## Around Europe & the World:

- Bulgaria [4]

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/newsroom/document.cfmdoc_id1134
[2] http://events.idg.bg/en/2012/education/agenda
[3] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/newsroom/all/event-reports
[4] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/country/bulgaria