

**Education Policy for Education for Democratic Citizenship and the  
Management of Diversity in South East Europe**

**Country Report - Bulgaria**

## **Stocktaking research on EDC policies in Southeast Europe**

### **Education for Democratic Citizenship in Bulgaria**

#### **Contents:**

- National context:
  - Development performance policies;
  - Population;
  - Economic development;
  - The social costs of transition;
  - The current political agenda;
  
- Policies and legislative base:
  - General considerations;
  - Education for democratic citizenship;
  - Valuing cultural diversity and social cohesion;
  - Cross cutting issues;
  
- Policy implementation measures:
  - General considerations;
  - Education for democratic citizenship;
  - Valuing cultural diversity and social cohesion;
  - Cross cutting issues;
  
- Views from the grass roots:
  - General considerations;
  - Chosen approach to data gathering;
  - Findings;
  
- Policy goals and measures table
  
- Conclusion:
  - State policy;
  - Measures for policy application;
  - Attitude of local community of end users towards policies and implementation measures;
  
- References and sources of information

# **Education for Democratic Citizenship and the Management of Diversity in Bulgaria**

## **Stocktaking research report**

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### **1. NATIONAL CONTEXT**

#### **Development Performance Policies**

In 1989 Bulgaria initiated a **process of deep political and socio-economic reforms**, which gave rise to public expectations of rapid improvements in individual liberties and living conditions. Having chosen democracy, Bulgaria opened up to the world, its political life became more active, the country entered upon a transition towards a market economy, free media and civic organizations evolved. A range of important political and social issues came under wide public discussion.

There are remarkable changes in the whole development of Bulgarian society such as economic stabilization and prosperity of the market, development of democratic principles in social life, a positive approach to foreign policy as an important factor for Balkan stability; a general movement towards decentralization of public service management; and a stronger role for local authorities and citizens in regional decision-making processes.

Over the past ten years, the most significant outcome of these changes has been the considerable progress made in building democratic institutions and the promotion of civil liberties. **The adoption in 1991 of a new constitution** marked a turning point in the democratization of Bulgarian society. It established the legislative foundations for a parliamentary democracy, based on the principles of powers, political pluralism, free enterprise and the inviolability of private property.

#### **1.1. Population**

The majority (68 %) of Bulgaria's 7.977 million people live in urban areas. Ethnic Bulgarians represent 83% of the population, while small ethnic minorities of Turkish and Roma descent make up 8.5 % and 2.6 % respectively. Other ethnic groups in Bulgaria include Armenian, Tatar, Gagauz and Circassian peoples. Since 1990, the overall natural population growth has been negative.

#### **1.2. Economic Development**

Generally, economic developments in Bulgaria can be described as follows: fluctuating economical growth with increases in GDP (5 % Growth for 2000 compared to 1999), a low inflation rate, a negative foreign trade balance and an increasing amount in foreign investment. The GDP per capita for 2000 was 1700 EU. The average GDP per capita in European countries for 2000 was 22 816 EU.

### **1.3. The Social Costs of Transition**

The social cost of the transition in Bulgaria has been one of the highest in Central and Eastern Europe. Though the transition process has been accompanied by gains for the population in terms of human beings and civil liberties, and while many have experienced increases in wealth through restitution of property and profitable private sector activity, a large proportion of the population has experienced a decline in their general quality of life, through mounting poverty, decreasing incomes, rising unemployment and greater inequality and insecurity.

A range of measures can be used to demonstrate the degree to which the standard of the living for the average Bulgarian household falls short of western European norms. Bulgaria has moved from a situation in which absolute poverty was an exception to one where it became commonplace.

Poverty also has an ethnic dimension, with higher rates of impoverishment found within Roma and Turkish groups. Over 40 % of Bulgarian Turks and 84 % of the Roma population are estimated to live in poverty. Similarly, unemployment had been an almost unknown phenomenon for many decades.

The rate of registered unemployment has been steadily increasing over the past five years, from 11.1 % in 1995 to 12.5 % in 1996, to 13.7 % in 1997 and 19 % in mid- 2000. There are some 700,000 registered unemployed.

### **1.4. The Current Political Agenda**

The present government clearly recognizes the need to proceed forcefully with reforms. This is reflected in its policy document entitled "Bulgaria 2000". This document is intended to achieve strong economic growth and higher living standards, while substantially advancing critical social and infra-structural needs. It has been developed in the context of the government's European Union accession strategy with the aim of making substantial progress towards the fulfillment of the Copenhagen criteria.

The **National Plan for Economic Development** (NPED) of Bulgaria for the period 2000 - 2006 is being revised and brought into compliance with EU requirements. The document highlights five priority areas for policy intervention:

- Market economy and institutional framework for accession to the EU;
- Economic and business competitiveness;
- Infrastructure and environment;
- Quality of life and human resources;
- Sustainable regional development;

NPED is the first government attempt since 1989 to apply a systematic and coherent approach towards development, with a primary focus on Bulgaria's economic situation.

## **2. POLICIES AND LEGISLATIVE BASE**

This presentation aims to examine the current situation, prospects and expectations for education for democratic citizenship and management of diversity in the Bulgarian education system. We used the following sources of information in this stocktaking research report:

- Official governmental documents;
- Legislation in force;

- Data from researches of different institutions and organizations;
- Information given by civil organizations and freelance experts;
- Practical examples of good practices and implemented projects in that field;

## **2.1. General Considerations**

It was quite natural, during the more rapid changes at the beginning of the nineties, to recognise the necessity of public discussion for new parameters of our education system and changes in the whole education strategy in order to facilitate the development of democratic processes in society, creating changes that will form a new type of citizens.

The new concept of citizenship consists of many different aspects (judicial, economical, political and ethical). There is agreement that the nation's richest resource lies in the education of the young generation. The school can be said to be accomplishing its social mission only if it responds to current social needs by preparing young people to be worthy citizens of their country and of the world, capable of developing values passed on to them while building a better world.

During the last several years, a national discussion has taken place about the aims, objectives, content, organization and teaching methods of civic education. This discussion has taken place on many levels and has resulted in clashes between traditional approaches and those that are more innovative. The discussion reveals differences in attitude, value orientation and interests. One major area of agreement is that civic education should be among the priorities in current education reforms. There are significant differences of view regarding the didactic strategies through which civic education should be delivered in the Bulgarian school.

It is important to mention that the term 'education for democratic citizenship' (EDC) is still not common in Bulgaria. State records and strategy use the term "civic education". That is also the way it is written in the Public Education Act and in the State Education Requirements. During the last few years the term "EDC" has been widely discussed. In this report both terms (EDC and Civic Education) will be used, because, in the view of the author, they are similar in content. There is a conjecture that in the near future the use of EDC as an important education strategy will gain the necessary popularity among the citizens. A serious ground for development in this respect is the result from the meeting of the Ministries of Education in Krakow, in October 2000 where the basic concepts for EDC were outlined.

After a long and broad public discussion about the role of the civic education in the Bulgarian education system a decision was taken saying that Civic Education may be a part of the Social Sciences and Civic Education field, which integrates school subjects that have a leading role in the development of children's social culture. In the regulation for the curriculum that came into effect in August 13, 2000 it is written that civic education is an interdisciplinary element of the general compulsory education. The preparation of children in the field of social sciences and civic education is implemented through integral school subjects.

### **Priorities of the government with regard to the education system**

Below we will examine contemporary priorities of the Bulgarian Government regarding education, as written in the state records. We will present priority texts related to the aims of the education for democratic citizenship.

The Bulgarian Government is trying to meet the challenges of this transition period and is also seeking effective policy for enhancing education and training quality. Within that framework, changes in the education legislative base are taking place on a long-term base. Within the system of *secondary general education*, changes are closely related to the following basic objectives:

- 1/ National education system improvement within the context of both the national and European dimensions.**
- 2/ Establishment of a legal base responsive to the education system changes.**
- 3/ Management and coordination with special focus on optimization of the national resources in the education system.**

The above mentioned objectives could be accomplished through:

**I. State quality standards development, according to the recent amendments to the Public Education Act.**

I.3. Elaboration of standards concerning the study content and the assessment system. They lay an emphasis on *the formation of personal, social and civic skills, as well as on the development of active study methods for teaching and learning.*

I.4. Development of a study *standard for children with chronic diseases as well as with special education needs.*

**II. Changes within the general comprehensive curriculum related to:**

II.3. Development of civic, economics and democratic knowledge.

**III. Decentralization of the education system management in compliance with an active and independent school policy.** The nature of system management is the subject of fundamental changes. Instead of a strongly centralized system, a new model of administration is now being developed, giving individual character to the regional educational structures. *The process is mainly related to the redistribution of administrative functions of the units within the system in compliance with their specificity and readiness. School cooperation and partnership with local authorities, governmental and non-governmental organizations are also in process of expansion.* One should also mention the draft of the School Board Act.

**IV. Legal base development, concerning changes in the system of secondary education.**

Basic documents providing for the development and management of the education system are in process of elaboration, for example:

Rules of Procedure, concerning the implementation of the Public Education Act;

*Concept for religious education, concerning curriculum and manuals development for grades 1 to 8. Instruction for mother tongue teaching at Bulgarian secondary schools. Programs for integrated forms of education for children with special needs.*

As to the system of **vocational education and training**, priorities are also connected with the economic and political changes in Bulgaria. In order to achieve better mobility and adaptability of the trainees for the labor market, a new approach is being applied. The main objective of the reform process is to provide possibilities for every member of our society to acquire, develop, upgrade or continue her/his professional education and training in order to meet her/his personal needs and those of the market.

*Active participation of NGOs in the training process. Social partners participation* in the process of study content development. The expected changes within the system of vocational

education and training are mainly oriented towards the process of decentralization and democratization of the respective system, as well as to the creation of *preconditions for life-long learning and qualification up-grading*. Finally, one should mention the working-out of a draft of a **National Programme for Adult education**, with special focus on the development of a **National System for Adults**.

**Providing preconditions for “life long learning” activities.** According to Article 42 (6) of the Higher Education Act, higher education institutions are entitled to organize distance education courses. To this end, a National Distance Education Center was created in 1995, thus providing the formal framework for both life long learning and adult education activities in our country.

The above-mentioned priorities are written in the Acts of Parliament that touch upon national educational strategy. Below we will try to analyse the connection between the existing legislation regarding civic education (education for democratic citizenship) and practical measures undertaken for the development of the education process.

As a whole there is a good constitution and legislative base that would make the development of democratic values and respect for diversity legitimate goals for the public education system. All socio-political activities in Bulgaria are based upon the basic legislation of the Bulgarian constitution.

**Article 6** (1) reads that all persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

(2) All citizens shall be equal before the law. There shall be no privileges or restriction of rights on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic self-identity, sex, origin, religion, education, opinion, political affiliation, personal or social status, or property status.

**Article 53** (1) Everyone shall have the right to education.

**Article 54** (1) Everyone shall have the right to avail himself of the national and universal human cultural values and to develop his own culture in accordance with his ethnic self-identification, which shall be recognized and guaranteed by the law.

As part of the social environment the education field is naturally guided by these main principles. Both in the Public Education Act and in the Higher Education Act the right to education of everyone is underlined, and a prohibition of all kinds of discrimination is also underlined. As expressions of the Bulgarian will to ensure equal chances of gaining Higher education for everyone, in 1999 paid tuition was abolished, and general tuition fees were initiated.

The State budgets allow for annual social scholarships for needy students. At present, a crediting system is being developed. Through it, hopefully, the students could cover their tuition expenses and allowances.

Needy groups and disadvantaged communities are protected by the Act in their right to gain higher education. In view of the difficulties they face when preparing to enter university, there is an Article in the Higher Education Act according to which the above-mentioned social groups enjoy concessions in entrance examinations.

A great number of measures for extended activities that will bring about the social vision for education in accord with universal ideas of tolerance, humanistic and democratic values are grounded in the strategy for development of Bulgarian higher education.

Another important process is that of decentralization of the education system. In the process of transition from intensely centralized to decentralized management, redistribution of

management functions must be carried out. Possibilities are created for a greater number of various social partners to participate.

In the Republic of Bulgaria the legislation body is the National Assembly and the superior executive body is the Council of Ministers.

Pursuant to **Article 34, Paragraph 1** of the Public Education Act, state policy in the area of education is pursued by the Council of Ministers. Its specialized body (Paragraph 2) for managing the education system is the *Ministry of Education and Science*. It controls the activities of all kinds of kindergartens, schools, servicing units and degrees of education (Article 35). In addition to the control function, the Ministry also performs other functions, such as planning, organization, coordination, etc. (Articles 142 and 143 of the Regulations on the Implementation of the Public Education Act).

The state specialized regional body responsible for managing the regional education system is the *Education Inspectorate*. Its structure, functions, and headquarters are determined by Rules affirmed by the Minister of Education and Science (promulgated in Az Buki Newspaper, issue 22 from 1999). Its main purpose is to manage and exercise control over the activities of schools and the training process in relevant regions.

**Articles 36 and 48** of the Public Education Act determine the role of *municipalities* in the education system. Municipalities are an extremely essential unit in the management system as they provide for the necessary material, technical, personnel, financial (to a great extent), social and organizational conditions for the practical implementation of education for all.

The School in recent years has adopted a number of innovation activities that profoundly affect the concept of its orientation and adaptation to a market economy, its goals, principles and strategies for activity and development. A principal manages the school. He heads the Pedagogic Council, which discusses and reaches decisions on the main pedagogic issues.

Specifically established bodies, which have an elective and consulting nature, assist the management at various levels such as: *Municipal Councils* (elective bodies to the municipalities); *commissions to combat antisocial activities* of minors in municipalities and schools; *boards of schools trustees in schools, municipal or school public councils, etc.*

Obviously, there is a tendency for decentralization of the education system, but the process is not finished yet. For example, a greater part of the decisions on strategic problems such as curriculum, school aids, and personnel policy are taken at the level of the Ministry of Education and Science.

## **2.2. Education for Democratic Citizenship**

### ***2.1.1. Curriculum***

One of the priority fields in Bulgarian education is directed at youth to help them to grow up as active and competent citizens of Bulgaria, Europe and the world as a whole. During 1999, in adopted normative documents produced by the Ministry of Education and Science, civic education is set up as one of the priority cultural and education fields for children from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade of the general education preparation. This finds expression in a new curriculum implemented by Ordinance # 4 from September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1999. There, an education field called "Social sciences and civic education" exists. It includes the following basic subjects: homeland lessons; human being and society; history and civilization; geography and

economy; psychology and logics; ethics and law; philosophy; human being and the world. Besides this, a compulsory school-leaving examination on social sciences and civic education is being introduced. It will be conducted for the first time in the year 2003.

Problems related to democracy, human rights, peace culture and intercultural dialogue play a central part in the Bulgarian curriculum structure for civic education. In May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2000, Ordinance # 2 State Education Requirements (standards) for social sciences and civic education (content, aims, approaches) was approved. In the final documents both general characteristics of civic education (content, aims, approaches) and concrete requirements for civic education in general compulsory school education are included. In essence, these requirements (standards) are statements describing learning, skills and relations that are a core of civic knowledge and which students have to gain as a result of compulsory school preparation.

Interdisciplinary in content, civic education is mainly implemented by various compulsory subjects in the field of social sciences and civic education.

According to the state education requirements (standards) training on civic education aims to develop and a young man or woman who:

- ✓ Is an independent and free person, able to assume responsibilities for himself / herself and for others;
- ✓ Knows and stands upon his / her rights, freedoms and responsibilities;
- ✓ Is aware of his / her spiritual harmony with the Bulgarian nation and the other European nations as well;
- ✓ Has an appropriate attitude toward the state and the society;
- ✓ Masters mechanisms for constructive social participation and change;

The **State Education Requirements** describe the most important learning, skills and attitudes that children could and should receive as a result of their training within the bounds of the general compulsory preparation when finishing a certain education level or stage.

**For example, in primary school (grade 4) the pupil must be able to:**

- ✓ Know the equal worth of every human being;
- ✓ Be able to stand upon his / her rights, without breaking other's rights;
- ✓ Know how to resolve conflicts;

**In secondary school (grades 7 - 8) the State Education Requirements require that children must be able to:**

- ✓ Specify the term "state";
- ✓ Draw conclusions about contemporary tendencies in global economy;
- ✓ Discern ethnic from religious and from language group;
- ✓ Know the role of the cooperation among the nations for globalization;

**In secondary school (grade 12) the children must be able to:**

- ✓ Study the origin and the development of the idea for democracy;
- ✓ Expound the mechanisms of power;
- ✓ Know and perhaps take part in the forms of civic control on state institutions;
- ✓ Analyze the development of the idea of civic society;
- ✓ Know the international records of human rights;
- ✓ Know the idea of "citizen of the world";

Of course, this is an extract from the record that determines the learning, skills and attitudes of children in the field of social sciences and civic education. The accepted State Education Requirements match the contemporary understanding of education on democratic citizenship and give clear direction on how the expected results in that particular field of the Bulgarian

education system should look. In fact, the State Education Requirements are the result of sustained efforts and cooperative work by experts, scientists, NGOs' representatives, teachers and citizens working under the guidance of the Ministry of Education and Science. A committee for elaborating standards was established. The standards were published in an education newspaper "Az Buki" in order to stimulate open discussion and public suggestions. The standards were discussed also in special seminars organized by the Ministry of Education and Science with the participation of experts, teachers, and NGOs' leaders. Thus, after a prolonged work, the standards were approved and published in the "Official Gazette".

### **2.2.2. Democratic learning environment.**

Active parents' participation in school activities is made possible through the Public Education Act Article 38 (4), which allows for the creation of a board of school trustees in each school and kindergarten. This is a public agency aiming to help these institutions. Its organization and activity is determined by regulations approved by the Ministry of Education and Science.

In the internal regulations of each school it is written that a School Council of Students must be formed. Its representatives have to participate in the decision - making process on school problems.

### **2.2.3. Teacher training**

At this stage the theoretical statutory points are the basis for practical realization of civic education. The troubles begin here. Although the idea for civic education began to develop in Bulgaria immediately after the changes, at the very beginning of the nineteen-nineties, the question of the training system of Bulgarian teachers on civic education remained open.

In universities civic education is not learned officially. In Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski" a department of "Humanities and Civic Education" exists, but students cannot specialize in civic education.

Besides universities, other institutions which can provide training in civic education are, the Central Institute of Teachers in Sofia, and two regional institutes for in-service Bulgarian teacher training, located in Stara Zagora and Varna. There is no clear government policy for creating a training system on civic education both for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and In-Service Teachers Training (IST) yet.

By statute, for example, the National Education Institute is an institution that implements scientific data related to the education policy of the Ministry of Education and Science, with regard to the theory and practice of civic education. The National Education Institute carries out research concerning the successful implementation of civic education in Bulgarian school. Working together for elaboration of standards is a clear example and an effective model for future collaboration. However, a typical weakness regarding problems of civic education is that the various institutions (governmental and nongovernmental) do not achieve an appropriate level of collaboration and coordination, which inevitably decreases effectiveness and leads to chaos.

## **2.3. Valuing cultural diversity and social cohesion.**

### **2.3.1. Curriculum**

We would like to start the analysis of cultural diversity by using again a report of UNDP in which is written that for the last several years, human rights has simultaneously been an area

of both ideologized debate and widespread misunderstanding. The public's grasp of human rights concepts and international standards is still very low. Insofar as it exists at all, this is concentrated within the framework of an egalitarian, state protectionist notion of human rights and has more to do with social and economic protection than standards of individual integrity.

The situation of crisis and economic and social constraint faced by an ever-growing strata of the population nurtured deep rooted prejudices and feelings of hostility towards "others". Prejudice and discriminatory public attitudes are targeted against the Roma communities and different religious groups in particular. Problems that piled up during social development put under test the tolerant co-existence between different ethnic groups in Bulgaria. And now the problems about the equal possibilities for education and social realization of the young people whose status is not equal are still outstanding.

The situation will remain the same in the forthcoming years, because this problem has built up over a long period. According to the data of the Ministry of Education and Science the dropouts were 36.155 students during the school year of 1997 / 1998. Different researches point out that the dropouts are mainly Roma people. There are Roma neighborhoods at the outskirts of almost any Bulgarian city, town or village. These are marked by increasing poverty, high unemployment figures (over 90%), growing illiteracy, deteriorating basic health care, chronic malnutrition and a collapsing infrastructure. The Roma neighborhoods already represent a network of poverty pockets, where they live in complete social isolation and deprivation. There are no relevant statistics on the real problems faced in these neighborhoods. Due to the centralized approaches to information gathering and policy development, government interventions in the area of education, employment or social welfare remains inefficient.

One of the main reasons for the poor status of Roma people is their unequal educational start. This is why they are almost beyond being able to compete in the manpower market. During the past years the Government and the Ministry of Education and Science have taken some steps to build equal education opportunities for the children whose who have suffered from this discrimination.

**Article 8 (2) of the Public Education Act** reads that Schoolchildren, whose mother tongue is other than Bulgarian, besides the compulsory study of the Bulgarian language, may study their mother tongue in municipal school under the protection and control of the state. **Article 20 (2)** reads that special preparatory classes shall be formed for children whose Bulgarian is not fluent. **Article 21** reads that special kindergartens and servicing units shall be established for children suffering from chronic diseases or with special educational needs.

The **Public Education Act** regulates the right to religious education. **Article 30 (1)** reads that Religious institutions on the territory of Bulgaria may open divinity schools for their own ritual needs for children who have completed primary education with the permission of the Ministry of Education and science.

**Article 30 (2)** reads that education in religious schools may be recognized as equal to secular education by the Ministry of Education and Science should it meet the state educational requirements for the respective level of schooling.

**Article 15** of the Public Education Act reads that the state educational requirements stipulate the stages of the compulsory general education and vocational training, where they shall provide conditions for development of free, moral, enterprising and law-abiding individuals, respecting other people's rights, culture, language and religion.

The state education requirements for curriculum in the field of social sciences and civic education demand that children have knowledge of the equal and irreversible human rights; to know the term "citizen"; to be familiar with the main rights and responsibilities; to be able to defend their own rights without breaking others' rights.

The National Assembly ratified the **Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities** in 1999. The Convention aims to integrate fully minority groups in Bulgarian society. The convention itself makes provision for establishing Roma information centers.

In conclusion, we may say that there already exist formal conditions for learning mother tongue in Bulgarian school. Concrete difficulties in the implementation of this policy and the measures which the Ministry of Education and Science adopts along these lines, will be discussed in the Policy Implementation Measures section.

Another advantage is the conclusion of agreements between civic organizations and the Ministry of Education and Science on one hand and, on the other, between local institutions and the Ministry of Education and Science, in order for various education programs to be implemented. Thus, interested people from minorities participate in the realization of these programs, and have opportunity to express themselves publicly and to be heard.

### **2.3.2. Structural / organizational**

The **Public Education Act, Article 9 (1)**, states that each citizen may exercise his / her right to education in a freely chosen school and type of education depending on his / her individual preferences and faculties; and paragraph 2 of the same article reads that the right referred to in paragraph 1 shall be exercised for people who have not come of age by their parents or guardians. On an administrative level there are conditions according to which the Bulgarian schools could be mixed, but the reality is quite different.

Because there is no official regulation for the participation of various ethnic groups in school and classes, quite often only children from one ethnic group attend school lessons - either Bulgarians or Turks and Roma.

The establishment of a Framework Programme for equal rights integration of Roma people in Bulgarian society and the creation of an Advisory Council to the Ministry of Education and Science is stipulated in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Elements of the programme are the work with Roma people in several areas, such as education on human rights; women' role; labor inequality; training of specialists from the Roma community for active participation in public life.

The National Council on ethnic and demographic issues has been established, with the aim of developing programs for improving educational and living standards of minority groups.

### **2.3.3. Teacher Training**

The law regulates for learning of the mother tongue in school but there are not enough teachers who could teach children their mother tongue. This is the same problem we have with the teachers of the Turkish language. There is a speciality programme "Turkish Philology" in the University of Sofia but so far the graduated specialists are few. The problem is getting bigger and bigger with the specialists who could teach the Roma language. In fact, there are none. There is no training system or training upgrading system to enable teachers to work with Turkish and Roma people more effectively. The pupils start school without

knowing the Bulgarian language well and normally they drop out from school after some years studying.

## **2.4. Cross Cutting Issues**

### **2.4.1. Life-long Learning**

Adult education for active citizenship in its complexity and in the context of democratic changes in our society is a big challenge not only to the educational institutions, but also to the whole society. One of the Government's priorities is to work on a variant for a National Adult Education Program. It is clear that the old system could not meet the new needs, especially as far as adult education for active citizenship is concerned. It is obvious that in order to build an effective system for such training, and serious surveys on all levels, and involving all interested parties, are needed.

#### **Labor market policies**

The development of the labour market in the country in the last decade has reflected the major trends and processes in the development of the national economy: decline in some traditional sectors, privatisation, liquidation of companies, the emergence of a new private sector.

Some of the main labor market problems are as follows:

- Relatively high unemployment rate and high long-term unemployment rate;
- Unemployment disparities in terms of region, age and sex;
- Disadvantaged labour market groups (youths, disabled, persons without training, unemployed women from ethnic groups);
- High share of unemployed with low educational attainment and without any training skills;
- Discrepancy between existing vocational skills and the required training skills.

At present stage, the vocational training inadequacy experienced in Bulgaria is mainly structural: the deficiencies can be observed at a regional level (in the areas located away from the big industrial and administrative centres, mountainous regions etc.) and at a sub-sector level (for some vocational trends and professions).

The discrepancy among the supplied and the demanded training skills is evident mainly in the group of school drop-outs, youths with completed secondary comprehensive education (education with predominantly academic character), those without or with a very low level of vocational training, in the group of people with completed education and vocational training but with no work experience, as well as in the group of long-term unemployed persons.

The educational attainment and vocational training among certain groups of the population (especially among the Roma) is low, causing significant constraints in the growth of their employment level.

There are some gaps in modern basic labour force skills, mainly interdisciplinary and inter-vocational skills and key training skills. There is a lack of appropriate training for new vocations, namely the new technologies in manufacturing and services, modern agriculture techniques, etc. Additionally, there is a lack in *entrepreneurial skills*.

Since January 1998, Labour market policies are regulated by the Unemployed Protection and Employment Promotion Act (UPEPA). It provides the legislative basis of the unemployment benefits system in Bulgaria, plus active labour market policies.

In 2001 the National Action Plan was elaborated in co-operation with social partners. It is based on European Employment Strategy pillars and guidelines. The Plan was adopted by the Council of Ministers in April 2001. It defines priorities of employment policy and aims to encourage employment creation and to decrease labour market pressure by improvement of employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities.

### **Vocational Education and Training**

In Bulgaria, initial Vocational Education and Training (VET) has been traditionally integrated in the secondary education system. It gives the opportunity to acquire vocation and secondary education.

In Bulgaria the legal framework of the VET system is relatively well developed. The main legal acts setting up the institutional framework of VET are the Vocational Education and Training Act and the Unemployment Protection and Employment Promotion Act. Both laws encourage participation of social partners in the VET system.

The VET Act is the special law regulating organisation, institutions, management and financing of the VET system. A major principle of the functioning of the system is the co-operation between education institutions, central and local administration and employers' and employees' organisations.

The VET system includes vocational guidance, vocational education and vocational training. It is organised in vocational schools and gymnasiums, colleges, vocational training centres, and information and career guidance centres.

### **Vocational education and training policy institutions**

The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) implements state policy in the field of VET by managing and controlling the activities of all kinds of education institutions, adopting the list of professions for VET, approving the annual admission plan, providing training programs in the VET system, analysing the results and effectiveness of VET, etc.

The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) is the state body accrediting and licensing VET activities. The Agency coordinates the institutions in the field of vocational guidance, training and education. NAVET is managed under tripartite principle – representatives of each social partner have an equal quota in the Management Board. The experts' committees are composed according to the same tripartite principle.

It is important to mention that the education field called "Social sciences and civic education" that exists in general school is already compulsory for vocational education schools. This means that the children from vocational education schools will be trained on the same program.

### **Life Long Learning**

The Republic of Bulgaria upholds the Memorandum for Life Long Learning of the European Commission. Life Long Learning is taken up as one of the main factors for developing and improving the professional and civic activity of people.

Government policy for human resource development is an ingredient of the social policy aimed at transforming the Bulgarian society into a learning and teaching one, and opening the Bulgarian borders for an active cooperation on education, science, culture and technologies with the European countries.

This policy is developed in:

- National Plan for Economic Development, Sector IV - Human resource development, the paragraph for labor market, employment and adult professional training (persons above aged 16) - employed and unemployed;
- National Employment Action Plan 2001;
- National Strategy for Human Resource Development 2006;
- National and regional employment and professional training projects and programmes;

#### **Life Long Learning Admission. Legislation in force -**

In the Republic of Bulgaria there is no special legislation on Life Long Learning. The legislative base is contained in:

- **The Bulgarian Constitution (1991)**

Life Long Learning is a right guaranteed to every Bulgarian citizen. Article 53 (1) reads that everyone shall have the right to education. Article 53 (6) reads that the state shall promote education by opening and financing schools, by supporting capable school and university students, and by providing opportunities for occupational training and retraining. It shall exercise control over all kinds and levels of schooling. Article 48 (3) reads that everyone is free to choose an occupation and place of work.

- **Labor Code (2001)**

The Labor Code includes the common norms for the right to education of the active population in the context of Life Long Learning.

#### **Life long learning, implemented in the education system, is regulated by: The Public Education Act (1991)**

Article 4 (1) reads that Citizens have the right to education. They may continually improve their education and training skills.

- **Regulation for application of the Public Education Act (1999)**

- **Education Degree, general educational minimum and syllabus (1999)**

Article 3 (1) reads that education degree supplies the needed erudition level as well as education sequence and continuity.

- **Vocational Education and Training Act (1999).** This Act affirms the state's constitutional obligation to provide conditions for vocational education and training upgrading.

- **Normative Ordinance for the content, management and control of public education and vocational education and training.**

- **Higher Education Act (1995)**

The act regulates the training of highly qualified specialists above the public education level, and the independence of Higher education from ideologies, religions and political doctrines.

- **Unemployment Protection and Employment Promotion Act. (1997)**

- **Ordinance for putting into practice the Unemployment Protection and Employment Promotion Act.**

The ordinance regulates basic norms and standards regarding continuous vocational education.

- **Culture Protection and Development Act (1999)**

- **Trade Act (2001)**

- **Government decrees**

The relation between EDC, MofD / VET and LLL are still not mentioned in the documents showed above.

We would like to outline again that civic organizations are more active in the process of including young people in concrete activities. These are activities that give youth practical skills in active civic participation. It is important to highlight the role which foreign donors have had so far in the country. As for the system for adult education for active citizenship in Bulgaria, we may say, that it is inefficient, because of insufficient participation by citizens in discussions and in the decision - making process.

#### **2.4.2. Research and policy development**

Implementation of high-grade research is an expensive process. This explains the search for funds outside of the Bulgarian borders. In its statute the National Institute for Education carries out research on how civic education can be implemented successfully in schools.

For analysing processes that are running at the present moment regular annual reports of big international institutions as UNDP, the World Bank, the Council of Europe, UNICEF, etc. are used.

#### **2.4.3. International Co-operation**

School authorities are looking for cooperation with Bulgarian NGOs and foreign organizations more and more. Owing to the active presence of Open Society Institute, Helsinki Committee, UNESKO, UNICEF, UNDP, Safe the Children, The World Bank, Council of Europe, UNAIDS European Union Friedrich Ebert Foundation St. Triphon Foundation ARC Fund Center for the Study of Democracy Headley Trust a large number of teachers and schools have the opportunity to participate in projects concerning the civic society. This has a strong bearing on the improvement of teachers' training skills in civic education.

#### **2.4.4. Quality Assurance**

Below, a list of institutions which exercise qualitative monitoring on civic education and are officially approved by the Constitution is presented.

The specialized body for managing the education system is the Ministry of Education and Science. The State specialized regional body responsible for managing the regional education system is the Education Inspectorate. Its main purpose is to manage and exercise control over the activities of schools and the training process in relevant regions.

Municipalities are an extremely essential unit in the management system as they provide for the necessary material, technical, personnel, financial (to a great extent), social and organizational conditions for practical implementation of education for all. A principal manages the school. He heads the Pedagogic Council, which discusses and reaches decisions on the main pedagogic issues.

Specifically established bodies, which have an elective and consultative nature, assist the management at various levels such as: Municipal Councils (elective bodies to the municipalities); commissions to combat antisocial activities of minors in municipalities and schools; boards of schools trustees in schools, municipal or school public councils, etc.

Important tools for evaluation of civic education training quality are the adopted state education requirements, May 2000, with Ordinance # 2, see Section 2.2.1. The state education requirements are standards for social sciences and civic education (content, aims, approaches). In the accepted documents both general characteristics of civic education (content, aims, approaches) and concrete requirements for civic education in general compulsory school education are included. In essence, these requirements (standards) are statements describing learning, skills and relations that are a core of civic knowledge and which students have to gain as a result of compulsory school preparation.

The new Higher Education Act (1995) launched and institutionalized the assessment and authorization system of Universities and specialties. The National Agency for assessment and authorization was established during the last years.

#### **2.4.5. Information and Communication Technologies**

In 1996 and 1997, an analysis of conditions for training on Information and Communication Technologies was carried out. As a result of this, the Ministry of Education and Science developed a National Education Strategy on Information and Communication Technologies (1998).

Along with training in high school the strategy is designed to launch the Information and Communication Technologies in elementary and junior high school education. Lack of technical equipment is a main obstacle for the implementation of the Information and Communication Technologies Program. This is why the second part of the Strategy is about hardware and software supply in schools and connection with the Global network.

There is a commitment to encouraging the formation of a so called "technical culture". State Education Requirements for school content in the education field called "Lifestyle and technology" are elaborated. This field contains three school subjects: "Domestic lifestyle and technology", "Domestic technology and economy" and "Technologies". This is written in Ordinance # 2 from May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2000. Thus the foundations of technical literacy and competence of children from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade are built.

In the vocational education and training system the technical culture is built gradually through learning general and special technical subjects as well as technology and professional engineering according to school program and syllabuses. The ideas for EDC and MofD are still not mentioned in documents for ICT.

### **3. Policy Implementation Measures**

#### **3.1. General considerations**

In Section 2.1. the priorities of the government with regard to the education system were presented. In the program strategy of the Ministry of Education and Science it is stated that education and training have always played an important role in the historical development of our society. The Bulgarian Government is trying to meet the challenges of the transition period and is also seeking effective policy for enhancing education and training quality. Within that framework, changes in the educational legislative basis are taking place on a long-

term basis. Within the system of *secondary general education*, changes are closely related to the following basic objectives:

- National education system improvement within the context of both national and European dimensions;
- Establishment of a legal basis responsive to education system changes;
- Management and coordination with special focus on the optimization of the national resources in the educational system;

( For more information take a look at Section 2.1.)

The institution indicated in the Public Education Act (Article 35) bears responsibility for the management of the state education policy. There is written that *Ministry of Education and Science* controls the activities of all kinds of kindergartens, schools, servicing units and degrees of education. In addition to the control function, the Ministry also performs other functions, such as planning, organization, coordination, etc. (Articles 142 and 143 of the Regulations on the Implementation of the Public Education Act).

The state specialized regional body responsible for managing the regional education system is the *Education Inspectorate*. Its main purpose is to manage and exercise control over the activities of schools and the training process in relevant regions.

Articles 36 and 48 of the Public Education Act determine the role of *municipalities* in the education system. As it appears, municipalities are an essential unit in the management system as they provide the necessary material, technical, personnel, financial (to a great extent), social and organizational conditions for practical implementation of education for all.

The School in recent years has adopted a number of innovation activities that affect profoundly its orientation and adaptation to market economy, its goals, principles and strategies for activity and development. A principal manages the school. He or she heads the Pedagogic Council, which discusses and reaches decisions on the major pedagogic issues.

Specifically established bodies, of an elective and consultative nature, assist management at various levels: e.g. Municipal Councils (elective bodies to the municipalities); commissions to combat antisocial activities of minors in municipalities and schools; boards of schools trustees in schools, municipal or school public councils, etc.

Other institutions on a national level are:

- The National Education Institute carries out research on the education policy of the Ministry of Education and Science regarding theory and practice of civic education.
- The Education and Qualification department at the Central Institute of Teachers' upgrade and publish training methodology materials related to civic education.
- Humanities and Civic Education department at Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski"

Universities and other institutions, which provide training in civic education, are the Central Institute of Teachers Development Sofia, and two regional institutes for in-service Bulgarian teachers trainings, located in Stara Zagora and Varna.

Numerous projects involving active cooperation with NGOs are implemented in our country. The projects relate to the theory and practice of civic education both in schools and out of them. Joint work of civic organizations with the youth is mainly directed to extracurricular

forms. Among the most active NGOs are Open Society Foundation, Open Education Center, Bulgarian National Debate Association, Program "Step-By-Step", Interethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation, School Association for Global Education, etc. Syllabuses on civic education for teachers, working in all kinds of schools and gaining different education degrees, are elaborated and implemented. Diverse forms of interactive education are initiated. Activities on civic education, peace culture education, tolerance and international understanding are carried out through school events. Lately, these activities are implemented through the more effective work of NGOs aiming to help teachers and children from different schools and universities to work together with local authorities and other organizations.

## **3.2. Education for Democratic Citizenship**

### **3.2.1. Curriculum**

Integration is a key word when civic education training is implemented in the education field "Social sciences and civic education" from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The subject "Human being and the world" is stipulated at 12<sup>th</sup> grade, aiming to summarize what has been learnt during the whole education period. Concrete measures so far:

- The approved state education requirements by the Ministry of Education and Science in the year of 2000 are a key point in the process of confirmation of civic education. Learning, skills, values, competencies which each child should gain in civic education field during his / her initial training are regulated in the state education requirements.
- In August 2000 new syllabuses for compulsory subjects were adopted. The main consideration when the programs were developed was an elaboration of the standards for the syllabus on civic education. Programs now follow these standards and provide basic civic education for children from all kinds of schools. The new textbooks for the year 2001 in the field of social sciences and civic education, if approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, should provide an encouragement to schools to implement the standards.
- There are changes in the Public Education Act. Training continues for 12 years. New subjects are being initiated, including civic education, which correspond to European standards and dimensions.
- Civic education is a practice existing in some schools, but this is not regulated officially yet.
- A new package of textbooks on philosophy, which should be useful for civic education training, have been published.
- Civic education is included in the plan for educative work. This is a requirement in order for Norm # 1 to be approved - a basic document for each school. The norm is elaborated at the beginning of every school year.
- In the annual curriculum it is written that in a subject called "Class' lesson" it is compulsory to discuss civic education themes. This subject is held once weekly.

Civic education training is put into practice through the elaboration of teaching models designed to be included in school subjects, especially in the humanities.

Another approach is a learning of problems that have been discussed on a level above the subject itself. The core of the approach is the elaboration of integral lessons and forming connections among various school subjects. In that case, issues related to peace values, peaceful conflict resolution, communication among people belonging to diverse cultures, cooperation and understanding among people become a rallying point of several school subjects. Children gain not only knowledge, but acquire and develop skills, for example - to

debate, to be tolerant, to understand cultural diversity, to adopt and appreciate other's viewpoint.

The problem with manuals on civic education still exists. At present there are few training textbooks that could be useful when teaching civic education. There are some manuals that are approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. In this field ongoing efforts are mainly on the part of the NGOs. To a great extent the credit for the already existing civic education methods and approaches is due to the NGOs.

It is quite important that the new normative documents of the Ministry of Education and Science guarantee a freedom, to a certain extent, to schools and teachers when they work out their syllabus and curriculum to correspond exactly to students' potentialities and interests; and at the same time to have an effect on specific problems of local community. For example, from the several textbooks for one school subject, that are approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, teachers have the right to choose which one of them to use in their school. Usually, there are from 3 to 5 textbooks for each school subject, approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. In the field of social sciences and civic education the content of the textbooks ought to provide opportunities for implementation of the civic education standards.

The elaborated state education requirements on civic education were preliminary published and discussed by all interested people in the education field. During the public discussion the main issues were outlined, for example democratic values, human rights, inter-culturalism, international understanding and cooperation. In the discussion, on the state education requirements concerning the civic education, some NGOs' representatives participated actively.

It is in process of creation, but still there is not an officially published programme of the Ministry of Education and Science for practical training on civic education. This lack causes confusion, and prevents a unified approach.

### **3.2.2.Structural/organizational**

In current education strategy a compulsory school - leaving examination on civic education is planned. It will be held for the first time during 2003. For the current academic year 2001 / 2002 a pilot school - leaving examination is planned, but the new Government's viewpoint is still not known.

In some schools, Pedagogic Councils which analyze civic education training are in existence. There is no known national strategy of the Ministry of Education and Science for monitoring and analysis the process of training on civic education in Bulgarian school. For the time being, monitoring is mainly done on a local level. Education Inspectorates and Education Departments in municipalities bear the responsibility for monitoring. It is quite difficult to obtain financial security regarding civic education policy from the state budget. That is why, the Ministry of Education and Science is looking for partnerships with foreign donors and active Bulgarian NGOs aimed at additional fund raising.

A joint project between the Ministry of Education and Science and the World Bank for the modernization of education is going to be implemented. The upgrading of teacher training on the new standards and syllabus is stipulated.

### **3.2.3.Teacher Training**

Still, there is no link between the expected results from the training on civic education and their practical achievements. In universities, where students are trained to become teachers, there are no clear and concrete methods for teaching civic education.

The Ministry of Education and Science, Humanities and civic education Department at Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski" and the Central Institute of teachers' qualification upgrading organize seminars on civic education. At these seminars teachers, lecturers and students take a first-hand look at the experience of European countries. The same seminars are held for parents, children and public figures.

In the form of different projects financed by foreign donors, NGOs offer diverse forms of teachers' training and seminars.

Of course, this is insufficient and there is no fixed system. On the other hand, the coordination between the Ministry of Education and Science, and the leading Bulgarian NGOs in the field of civic education needs to be improved.

There are well - trained specialists and experts working for NGOs in that field as well. The training they offer is quite interesting and gives good practical ground for the development of training on democratic citizenship. Widely practiced are interactive methods that highly motivate the students for active participation in the teaching process. The teachers themselves increase their practical skills, using various teaching methods and activities according to what best fits the psychological and age characteristics of students. The most popular and recommended teaching methods and activities are role games, conversations, group discussions, observations, simulations of different institutions, literature and document reviews, small group activities, dramatizations, situation analyses, debates (structured), group and individual project works, conflict resolution and negotiation.

There is no final decision about licensing of NGOs. These licenses could give them the right to teach teachers. The certificates, which NGOs issue so far, are not acknowledged by the Ministry of Education and Sciences as an improvement of teachers' training skills.

Difficulties for teachers who want to attend seminars and improve their training skills exist. Most seminars are held in the big cities rather than in the rural settlements and the isolated areas in the country. This leads to unequal attendance at seminars and unequal opportunities to improve teachers' training skills, and to put into practice the new methods of teaching pupils. There is no clear statement from the Ministry of Education and Sciences on how exactly this inequality is to be overcome.

The positive fact is that the Ministry of Education and Sciences and the other institutions are displaying signs of an increased willingness to **collaborate with NGOs'** experts. National meetings, organized jointly by the Ministry of Education and Sciences and NGOs aiming to analyze and discuss the development of the training on civic education and the NGOs' role in that field, are now beginning to be held.

#### **3.2.4. Democratic learning environment**

There are very good practices when this democratic model is applied. In fact, most of the school councils exist, but the larger part of them exists only on paper, registered only because of the existing rule for that. Practical mechanisms for effectiveness of the school councils need monitoring by the local authority and the Ministry of Education and Science, and concrete guidelines of improvement drawn up. This is particularly important for the rural settlements and the isolated areas.

To a great extent the active participation of society depends on the mutual efforts of the school administration and the citizens. Practice shows that there are a large number of operative school trustees, which help a lot, as for example: fund raising, expert consultations, and participation in discussions of school problems.

Regretfully, some obstacles still exist which hinder the transformation of the school into a cultural and resource center for the community, where the citizens have the right of free access to the school base and its necessary equipment. The local authority is still not eager to liberalize this process, and this definitely leads to a drop off in parents' participation in school activities. Often, in fact, the members of the school trust are the most active people. Thus we lose the potential contributions of many other parents.

In many Bulgarian cities there are town and school parliaments created with the help of the NGOs. These parliaments work quite well with the school administration. The selection of members of these youth parliaments was made through an election campaign. Each candidate has to uphold his / her platform. These parliaments are a good example of youth's readiness and ability to be active citizens when there are appropriate conditions for that. In support of this initiative there is the election arising from the Charter for Youth Participation in local self-government by the municipality councils. Unfortunately this does not exist everywhere.

As was mentioned, there are legislative opportunities for more active parents' and pupils' participation in the government of school activities, but the problem with training and gaining practical skills is left open. In the curriculum this deficit still exists and it depends on the enthusiasm of certain teachers to work with the pupils. The expertise and skills of teachers in preparing pupils for a more active role in decision-making is paramount.

### **3.3.Valuing cultural diversity and social cohesion.**

#### **3.3.1. Curriculum**

State institutions, in collaboration with NGOs, take good care of representatives of different communities marked as disadvantaged groups - people with various physical and mental diseases, needy ones, minority groups, children in risk, etc.

Regarding minority groups, work is progressing on preserving their culture identity and originality. Learning the mother tongue is guaranteed at school. Various textbooks and school manuals are published, but still there is no approved syllabus for learning the mother tongue from the Ministry of Education and Science.

Recently, a civic education textbook for children with special needs was published and this is a positive step for work with these Bulgarian schools.

The Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with NGOs, implements various projects. Varied textbooks are published. Some of these important activities are:

- Together with **"Partners - Bulgaria" Foundation and Bulgarian National Committee of UNICEF** training materials are elaborated and basic international documents in the field of human rights and children rights are published. They are given to specialists who work in schools, boarding - schools, kindergartens and other institutions working with children. To help the specialists in their work, seminars are held. There, the participants are trained to work with the training materials.
- In cooperation with the **Civic Movement for Children Protection in Bulgaria "Conscience"**, a brochure called "How to protect our children - advice for children and parents" was printed. The brochure was disseminated in schools.

- Working with the **"Gender Project in Bulgaria" Foundation**, projects involving the active participation of pupils and children are implemented. These projects are directed towards overcoming prejudices in relations between the sexes. Programs include learning basic human rights, international and Bulgarian legal norms and standards, documents, institutions which work for the protection of human rights, as well as topics which the children themselves would like to discuss.
- The **"Interethnic Initiative for Human Rights" Foundation** is working on initiatives related to heightening intercultural understanding and tolerance through the popularization of culture, lifestyle, and popular beliefs of diverse ethnic communities. Various printed materials on that issue are published. They are disseminated in various Bulgarian schools. Teachers' training programs on human rights and intercultural interactions are prepared. They are put into practice at schools where children from diverse ethnic communities learn. Teachers' seminars are held, aiming to heighten their competence in working in multicultural environments by sharing good practices. Opportunities for cooperation on a regional level are provided.
- In spite of the considerable work done so far the problem with supply of various methodologies for intercultural education on a National level is still not solved.

### **3.3.2. Structural/organizational**

Although the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is ratified, action on measures adopted in it have not yet been taken. The program for equal rights integration of Roma people and the establishment of Advisory Council to the Ministry of Education and Science over the education problems of Roma people are not a reality yet. Regretfully, in the main Bulgarian towns there are schools where only children from minorities - mainly Turks and Roma people - are studying. This is due to the fact that in the main towns isolated regions exist, populated mainly by people from minority groups. In the biggest towns, such as Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, etc., there are more than one of such districts. There are a lot of schools and kindergartens where separate classes for children from minorities are formed. People from minorities take this as "covert discrimination" and this works strongly against the idea of social cohesion in Bulgarian society.

### **3.3.3. Teacher Training**

Serious attention is paid to minority groups and especially to the Roma community. Various projects aimed at making Roma people familiar with democratic principles, human rights, Framework Convention for children from National minorities, tolerance, non-violence, participation in local self-government are implemented. Training for leaders is provided. Numerous projects are aimed at socializing and integrating vulnerable people in society, guaranteeing their rights and providing for their specific needs, stimulating their participation in civic activities, etc.

Here we will present two from the great many projects that aim to create equal education opportunities. These are projects implemented with the participation of international partners and with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science.

The name of the first project is: "School for everyone". It is financed by Phare program and is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Sciences together with the Dutch organization called "Dialogue development". Thirteen centers for educational services and training were

built. Their primary goal was to help solve the problem of dropouts. So far the project is successful and is still ongoing.

The other interesting project is about training and preparation of Roma and Turkish assistant-teachers. The British Know-How Fund finances the project. The activities are carrying out in the populous Roma district located in the town of Plovdiv called "Stolipinovo". The primary goal is to help assistant- teachers to get basic pedagogical preparation in order to help the teaching process in kindergartens and primary schools. The project highlighted pretty good results. Now, a variant is discussed, namely, that this particular idea be applied on a national level with the organizational and expert support of the Ministry of Education and Sciences.

There are numerous partnerships among Bulgarian NGOs, local authority and foreign organizations aiming to sustain social cohesion. The partnership between the Ministry of Education and these bodies is showing signs of improvement. Joint national meetings for sharing good practice and joint planning for future collaboration are being held. As a result of such meetings an idea for creating an Advisory Council charged with solving Roma problems, with the participation of NGOs' representatives and experts from the Ministry of Education and Science, was initiated. From the beginning of this year the State Agency for Child Protection has been instituted. Its aim is to improve the quality of life of Bulgarian children. The World Bank, the European Union, the British Government and the Japan Government finance the Agency. The duration of the project is three years and it will include six Bulgarian municipalities.

### **3.4. Cross Cutting Issues**

#### **3.4.1. Life-long Learning**

To a great extent, key messages formulated in the Memorandum of Life Long Learning fit National priorities. These priorities are both part of the Strategy for Human Resource Development and of Measures and Activities of the National Employment Plan for the year 2001. Concrete steps are undertaken regarding the following six key messages:

1. New basic skills for all
- 2: More investment in human resources
- 3: Innovation in teaching and learning
- 4: Valuing learning
- 5: Rethinking guidance and counselling
- 6: Bringing learning closer to home.

There are concrete programs regarding VET and the labour market:

#### **1. Increasing employment**

- (a) Programmes for reducing unemployment and employment promotion.
- (b) Programmes for unemployed youth, which provide measures to encourage employers to hire young people.
- (c) Programmes related to facilitating the transition from school-to-job.
- (d) Programmes related to the transition from passive to active measures: Encouraging the employment of vulnerable population groups: Encouraging employers to hire disabled persons. Programmes for literacy, qualification and employment; National framework programme for social and economic integration of the Roma people.

## **2. Development of entrepreneurship**

(a) Facilitation of starting and developing a business.

(b) Developing possibilities for new job creation

## **3. Encouragement of business adaptability:**

establishment of Social Investment Fund.

## **4. Support to equal opportunities policy.**

Gathering and evaluation of statistical data on gender indicators has commenced. Bulgaria elaborated in 2001 a Draft of Equal Opportunities Act, which will establish a National Mechanism for Equal Opportunities.

The information presented in section 3.4.1. is schematic because both in the documents and the concrete measures there can not be seen a close bond between improving the processes of Lifelong learning and vocational education and training on one hand, and on the other hand between EDC and the Ministry of Education and Science.

In practice, adult education for active citizenship is implemented by virtue of the activity of Bulgarian NGOs, through various projects, mainly financed by foreign donors. These are projects which help citizens to develop skills on how to work more effectively with national and local institutions and to take part in the decision-making process.

### **3.4.2. Research and policy development**

The National Institute for Education carries out research on issues related to civic education. Projects and research are conducted both on a National and International level. For example:

- Research on civic preparation of children aged 14 - 15. The research is carried out together with the International Association for Evaluation of education achievements, The Hague, under the guidance of Professor G. Purta, USA, 1996 - 1999;  
It is interesting to analyze the results from the research on 14 years old youngsters. Bulgarian students are at the international mean in performance on *civic knowledge* and *civic engagement* and below the international mean on *civic attitudes*. It is necessary to bear in mind that this research was done in the period from 1996 to 1999. The adoption of the civic education standards and new curriculum started in the year of 2000 in Bulgaria. Probably, new data are needed in order to update the results.
- Education for democratic citizenship is a big project of the Council of Europe. It started in 1997 and will most probably continue until 2002;
- Learning human rights and civic education - together with the International Federation of United Schools, 1997-1999;
- In November 2000 an International conference on Peace culture was conducted in Sofia. It was organized by the National Institute for Education and International Balkan Institute "Balkan Peace";
- People from Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski" formed a team and conducted research on the following theme: "Host family and other forms of alternative care, following the exact way of treatment of pupils and youth living in children's home" and "Children rights in Bulgaria", March 2000;

The research of the National Institute for Education in 1997 was on the education of information and communication technologies problems.

### **3.4.3. International Co-operation**

In a report of UNDP between 1997 and 2000, 24 donors, including the government of Bulgaria and national and international NGOs, have participated in UNDP's work, providing \$34 million worth of funds. This partnership is not only based on UNDP's capacity and experience in supporting the timely and efficient implementation of development co-operation projects, but also on the innovative nature of these projects and their focus on critical national development problems. Many of the partnerships also involve discussion and joint policy and advocacy work on important social and developmental issues. For example, UNDP's work on child welfare has been done in co-operation with the World Bank and UNICEF, while helping to stimulate the debate on local governance has involved organizing seminars and workshops with a number of foreign donors and local organizations. UNDP Bulgaria works with up to 50 such civil society and community based organizations, which include joint advocacy on the plight of vulnerable groups, promoting policies on good governance and highlighting human rights.

We would like to point out that the above-mentioned data are concerned directly with the activities of UNDP. Within the bounds of this report it is not possible to present a lot of ideas, cooperation and projects that contribute to the active participation of the citizens in the social life. A positive tendency is that the Government and the local authority are free to give all kinds of help – on the financial and expert level. This is a guaranty for future successes.

The information about the international cooperation mentioned above is relevant for youth participation in social life too. A large number of projects and activities are financed by foreign donors, but it is true also that the local administration and school authority are open to democratic practices more and more nowadays, with the participation of the citizens and the young people in decision - making processes. The researches of IEA (1999 IEA Civic Education Study) point out that the youth are open to different types of involvement in civic life (about 50 %). The local authority fosters many of the youth initiatives and useful decisions follow. The rulers themselves need to improve their training level by gaining skills in how to cooperate with the civic sector and how to allow the citizens to participate in decision- making process.

### **3.4.4. Quality Assurance**

The National Agency for assessment and authorization conducted successfully the first assessments and authorizations of Universities (institutional authorization) and separate specialties (program authorization). The process will continue over the next years through the launching of due normative amendments (implementation of specialties classifier, consistent with ISCED; implementation of state requirements on education training degrees and education standards).

Although the Higher Education Act makes provisions for launching a model structure for a curriculum and assessment system their actual implementation is a fairly slow process.

There are not clearly defined and fully developed mechanisms for appreciation of nontraditional training. In actual practice, skills and learning gained in nontraditional courses and education forms have not been formally adopted.

There is no organized system for learning civic education in universities and in practice there are no mechanisms for assessment of teachers who could train on civic education.

In the NGOs' network as well as in Labor network the assessment and issuing of certificates is put into practice through licensing. Having a license is recognition of aims and tasks as well as of management systems. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has a mechanism in

force while the Ministry of Education and Science still do not have a clear system for licensing NGOs which organize training. This is similar to the situation in the civic education field and intercultural education.

At that stage we could mention some concrete mechanisms for enhancing training quality in school.

The approved state education requirements are an important step along these lines. In current education strategy a compulsory school - leaving examination on civic education is planned. The examination will be held for the first time in 2003.

In the Educative Work Plan civic education is included. This is a requirement in order for Norm # 1 to be adopted. Norm # 1 is a basic document for every school and is adopted at the beginning of every school year.

In the annual curriculum it is stated that in a subject called "Class' lesson" themes on civic education must be discussed. This subject is held once weekly.

It is obligatory to hold Pedagogic Councils at schools through which to analyse civic education training. There is no known national strategy of the Ministry of Education and Science for the monitoring and analysis of the process of training on civic education in Bulgarian schools. For the time being monitoring is done mainly on a local level. Education Inspectorates and Education Departments in municipalities bear the responsibilities for monitoring.

#### **3.4.5. Information and Communication Technologies**

School equipment with Information and Communication Technologies is an important part of the education training process. In order for the National Information and Communication Technologies Strategy for the year of 2001 to be fulfilled, a plan for the equipment of computer rooms in 440 schools out of 3500 general and vocational high schools is designed. A greater part of these rooms will be established and equipped in small towns. So far 500 rooms have been equipped. Some steps are being taken towards supplying schools with adapted and original Bulgarian software for training. This software will make easier the work with computers. It is scheduled that 35.000 computers be supplied to the school network by 2005.

The Bulgarian Higher Education System has long experience in launching Information and Communication Technologies. At the same time there are a lot of impediments in that field. The difficulties are mainly with a lack of necessary equipment. As a whole there is a tendency for all students to achieve computer literacy.

#### **3.4.6. Finance**

Pursuant to the Public Education Act and the Regulations for its Application the funding of Bulgarian education is provided mainly by the state budget through the Ministry of Education and Science and by the local budgets through municipal administrations. The amount of the funds varies depending on the levels of education and types of schools. The Government does not subsidize the training in the private schools.

According to data from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education and Science the relative share of costs for education in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the period from 1992 to 1998 is going down. Education costs as a percentage of GDP for education in 1998 has been halved compared with 1992 (from 3.2% to 6.06% in 1992)

Many of the acts, regulations, ministry decrees and other legal provisions regulate financing and legal requirements in education during the period 1990 - 1999. All aim at improving the quality of education by better funding from additional resources and better use of funding.

In June 1994 the Ministry of Science and Education adopted Regulations No. 6. It is essential to note that Regulations emphasize that the institutions in the education system shall also receive funding from free funds provided by additional activities, from donations, contributions made by companies and government agencies for specific purposes (Article 4). Later, in the Act amending the Public Education Act (promulgated in Official Gazette, issue 36 from 1998) Article 44 was worded, which in its essence comprises requirements for the accumulation of funds from additional sources - types of activities, criteria, preferences, etc.

Through the project "Financial Managing of the Secondary Education", adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science and funded by the PHARE program, 100 schools have been implementing the policy of decentralized decision-making through application of a delegated budgets system. The essence of the delegated budget is as follows: subsidies from the state and municipal budgets are allocated to schools according to a certain formula based on several criteria such as the number of students, the size of the school building, expenses on repair work and maintenance. The principal of the school has greater freedom and flexibility to operate the funds, as he or she deems necessary. The Ministry of Education and Science or municipalities do not collect the remaining part or the accumulated funds, which are used during the next fiscal year without any reduction of the subsidy. The Ministry of Education and Science is expected to take a decision to expand the practice of delegated budgets.

#### **4.Views from the grass roots**

##### **4.1.General considerations**

Traditionally, the state ensures basic education for Bulgarian students. The Ministry of Education and Science determines and implements the national strategy on education for all. A number of non-government organizations cooperate with the bodies for the management of education at national, municipal and institutional levels. Joint programs are elaborated, various activities are realized through which these organizations cooperate in the solving of the many and complicated problems connected with EDC and MofD, the training and personal development of young people, the education and qualification of adults and teachers. The interaction between the non-government organization and the Ministry of Education and Science is regulated in law by bilateral agreement.

Non-government organizations direct their efforts on behalf of education towards elaboration of programs and projects in important areas such as:

Establishment of public mechanism for supporting and implementation of educational changes: Open Society Foundation , Potential Foundation, Open Education Center, Catholic help services, Step-By-Step Foundation

Civil education and training – Open Education Center, National Debate Association, "School for Everyone" Association, etc.

Engaging the free time and active civil participation of children and young people – National Debate Association, To the Child with Love Foundation, Raina Kabaivanska Foundation, Bulgarian Song Foundation, Children Movement "Knights of learning", etc.;

Rendering specific assistance to children at risk and with behavior deviations; integration and re-integration of these children – "School for everyone" Association”, Diversity Foundation, International Center on the Problems of Minorities and Cultural Relations Foundation, etc.;

Social programs aiming at assisting children in disadvantaged position– Future for Bulgaria Foundation, Childhood Public Fund, Christian Children Trust, European Children Trust, etc. Human Rights and Children Rights Education.

Foundation "Partners - Bulgaria", Bulgarian National Committee of UNICEF.

Organization "Save the children", "Bulgarian Gender Researches" Foundation, "Interethnic Initiative for Human Rights" Foundation.

Broadening the education access to Roma children: Open Society Foundation Step-By-Step Foundation, Coalition of civic organization "Stolipinovo", Education for Democracy Center, "Dialogue development", "Drom" Foundation, "Romani Baht"

Programs for stimulating bilingual abilities of children from minority groups as well as programs for supporting teachers in their work with bilingual children.

Balkan Foundation for intercultural education and understanding "Diversity".

## 4.2. Chosen approach to data gathering

The following approaches were used to collect information

- Two focus groups with 35 participants from NGOs and teachers from all over the country were conducted.
- Individual interviews with NGOs' leaders working in civic education field.
- Individual interviews with NGOs' leaders of minority groups.

## 4.3. Findings

Do the practitioners sampled know of the existence of relevant government policies?

The discussions showed that regarding Government policy in EDC and MoED the participants had knowledge on: Ratification of the Framework Convention for minorities protection; Program for improving children prosperity; the adopted civic education strategy from the Ministry of Education and Science; the discussion and adoption of the state education requirements; the decision to have a school-leaving examination on social sciences and civic education.

Were they consulted / involved in the preparation of these policies?

Some of the persons with whom interview was conducted have been participants in a round table where Bulgarian civic education strategy was discussed. They have been invited on seminars, organized by the Ministry of Education and Science with the sole purpose of discussing civic education in Bulgaria. Others who did not take part in these seminars know that in the discussions experts, teachers, NGOs' representatives participated in order for a final decision to be taken.

What partnerships exist in the programs or other measures for the implementation of these policies?

- **Collaboration between education institutions on a national and local level exists.** The institutional support is mainly moral and organizational. In signed agreements with NGOs for joint work, quite often there is a clause, which reads that the Ministry of Education and Science or the local administration do not enter into a financial engagements. To a great extent, **funds are the responsibility of civic organizations**, received in the form of funded projects or other forms of sponsorship.

- **Partnership is more obviously expressed on a local level.** Diverse joint projects between local education institutions and NGO are implemented. The projects related to teachers' training on civic education, various forms for stimulating teachers to keep on training, youth public events showing their activity as citizens, intercultural education and activities for development of intercultural collaboration and tolerance, etc. The local authority is open for partnership. The funds are the main and only problem.
- The most **popular measures that have been enforced** are: courses on civic education, which the Central Institute of teachers' training organizes; New textbooks on philosophy were published; some teachers' manuals on civic education, published by NGOs; the obligation to appoint Pedagogic Councils to analyze civic education training; the requirement to launch education topics on civic education; the requirement to discuss topics on civic education in so called "class lesson" subjects; opportunity for civic education to be launched as compulsory or liberal study in school norms; the suggestion of a general subject called "Human being and the world" to be studied in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

What gaps and/or problems do they see in national policies in this field?

**Problems in education policy regarding EDC and MofD as seen by practitioners.**

- State documents decreed that only universities and institutions could train civic education, although there are many well- trained experts on civic education outside of these institutions.
- Lack of mechanisms for training on civic education outside the state institutions. Licensing procedure in the field of training on civic education is delayed.
- To a great extent universities still use old methods and approaches for training. In the university syllabus civic education has not yet been implemented.
- Conditions for marketing of education services on civic education are not provided yet.
- Gaps in the legal system, which allow the existence of schools where only children from minority groups study. Such schools exist especially in isolated ethnic towns and districts. This provides conditions for the segregation of Roma schools.
- Lack of effective integration policy for children with physical and light mental diseases in ordinary schools. Now they are trained in special schools, of which there are 121 at present.
- As a whole there is not a clearly defined Government policy regarding youth within which to provide conditions for practical activity. The problem with emigration of young people is not a secret. Children Centers and Youth Scientific and Technical Centers that existed in the past are closed now, without any suggestions of alternative activities for the spare time of the youth.
- Roma leaders say that it is not a state policy to finance innovation of an extracurricular form. only the state could support them. Another problem which Roma leaders note is that there is no policy for the integration of children's parents from minorities in society.

What gaps and/or problems are they aware of in current government policy implementation measures?

- The most important problem is that of training. State education requirements have been adopted but how upgraded training could be obtained is still an open question.

On the one hand there is no adequate training system, and on the other hand there is not a good information system about what does exist.

- Weaknesses in communicating information to society about the intentions of the Ministry of Education and Science regarding civic education. Teachers themselves ask questions: "What exactly is civic education?" or "Who has the right to teach civic education?"
- Lack of adequate measures for integration of youth in public processes, which is perhaps the most powerful factor in forming civic attitude and activity.
- Textbooks and manuals are not enough, especially in small towns and isolated areas.
- It is still not clear whether there is a civic education department in the Ministry of Education and Science as such, as for vocational education training.
- A school -leaving examination is planned, but there is not a general subject on civic education yet.
- Training courses on civic education are not by competition. It means that there are lecturers who have the official right to train civic education, although it is disputable how well trained they are. At the same time, there are a lot of well-trained people, who work in the NGO sector, but who do not have official right to train for civic education.
- According to NGOs' leaders a serious problem is the relations between children and teachers in school. Relations of the 'chief – dependent' kind.
- Roma leaders note that almost there is no training of people from minorities. Conditions for studying the mother tongue in school are not provided. In schools where mostly children from minorities study, not all the teachers are well -trained, and the training there is not like that in the other ordinary schools in Bulgaria.

What problems are they themselves facing in working within the national policy framework in this field?

- Practitioners shared that they could not take part as facilitators in courses for teachers' training on civic education. They are feeling isolated from this process.
- There exists a bureaucracy and sluggishness in the decision-making process.
- The Ministry of Education and Science does not consult a lot of stakeholders when problems are discussed and strategies are developed.
- School administrations are open to various kinds of collaboration with NGOs, but the state does not always officially support and become a guarantor for these partnerships.
- NGOs leaders from minorities feel the unwillingness of state employees to put into practice normative documents for the development of democratic practices for active participation of minorities in public life.

People from minority groups feel the slighting attitude of the majority towards their education problems. It is quite difficult for Roma children to enter elite schools and this impedes the process of Roma education.

The table below shows the bonds between policies and measures. We will begin with a reminding of the state document for its primary priorities for development of Bulgarian education.

We will point the following basic objectives for primary and secondary education:

- 1/ National education system improvement within the context of both the national and European dimensions.
- 2/ Establishment of legal base responsive to the education system changes.
- 3/ Management and coordination with special focus on optimization of the national in the education system.

Policy goals	Sources	Measures
<p><b>Development of civic and democratic knowledge and formation of personal, social and civic skills</b></p>	<p>A new curriculum implemented with <b>Ordinance # 4 from September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1999</b>. There, an education field called "Social sciences and civic education" exists.</p> <p><b>May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2000, Ordinance #2 State Education Requirements (standards) on social sciences and civic education (content, aims, approaches) were approved.</b></p> <p>In the accepted documents both general characteristics of civic education (content, aims, approaches) and concrete requirements towards civic education in general compulsory school education are included.</p>	<p><b>A subject "Human being and the world" is stipulated At 12<sup>th</sup> grade</b>, aiming to summarize the learned materials during the whole education period.</p> <p><b>In august 2000 new syllabuses for the compulsory subjects were adopted.</b> Main requirement when the programs were elaborated was the standards for syllabus on civic education to be considered.</p> <p>Training continues 12 years. <b>New subjects are initiated, including civic education, which correspond to European standards and dimensions.</b></p> <p><b>Civic education to be a part of standard consumption</b> is a practice existing in some schools, but this is not regulated officially yet.</p> <p><b>New package of textbooks on philosophy</b> which to be useful for civic education training are published.</p> <p><b>Civic education is included in the plan for educative work.</b> This is a requirement in order Norm # 1 to be approved - a basic document for each school.</p> <p><b>In annual curriculum is written that in a subject called "Class' lesson" themes on civic education are compulsory to be discussed.</b> This subject is holding once weekly.</p> <p>Elaboration of teaching models designed to be included in school subjects, especially in the humanities.</p> <p>Elaboration of integral lessons and forming connections among various school subjects.</p> <p><b>Numerous projects with active cooperation of NGOs</b> are implemented in our country. The projects related to theory and practicing civic education both in schools and out of them.</p>
<p><b>Enhancing education and training quality. Improving teachers' training skills</b></p>	<p><b>Priorities of the government</b> with regard to the education system <b>The Statutes of:</b> Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski" a department of "Humanities and Civic Education";</p> <p>Central Institute of Teachers development located in Sofia, and two regional institutes for in-service Bulgarian teachers trainings, located in Stara Zagora and Varna.</p> <p>National Education Institute</p>	<p>In current education strategy a compulsory school - leaving examination on civic education is planned. It will be held for the first time during the year of 2003</p> <p><b>A joint project for modernization of the education between the Ministry of Education and Science and the World Bank</b> is going to be implemented.</p> <p>Teachers' upgrading training on new standards and syllabus is stipulated.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education and Science, Humanities and civic education Department at Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski" and the Central Institute for teachers' upgrading training <b>organize seminars on civic education.</b></p> <p><b>In the form of different projects financed by foreign donors, NGOs</b> offer diverse forms of teachers' trainings and seminars.</p>
<p><b>Decentralization of the education</b></p>	<p><b>Public Education Act</b> the role of <i>Education Inspectorate</i> by Rules affirmed by the Minister of Education and Science</p>	<p><b>Redistribution of administrative functions</b> of the units within the system in compliance with their specificity and readiness. Pedagogic Council,</p>

<p><b>system, management, active and independent school policy</b></p>	<p>Articles 36 and 48 of PEA determine the role of the <i>municipalities</i> in the education system. <b>School Board Act.</b></p>	<p><b>Specifically established bodies:</b> Municipal Councils (elective bodies to the municipalities); commissions to combat antisocial activities of minors in municipalities and schools; boards of schools trustees in schools, municipal or school public councils, etc. <b>Creating of school councils and operative school trustees.</b> In many Bulgarian cities there are town and school parliaments built with the help of the NGOs.</p>
<p><b>Providing equal education opportunities for everyone</b></p>	<p>Bulgarian constitution, Article 6 (1) reads <b>that all persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights.</b> (2) All citizens shall be equal before the law. There shall be no privileges or restriction of rights on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic self-identity, sex, origin, religion, education, opinion, political affiliation, personal or social status, or property status. Article 53 (1) <b>Everyone shall have the right to education.</b> Article 54 (1) <b>Everyone shall have the right to avail himself of the national and universal human cultural values and to develop his own culture in accordance with his ethnic self-identification, which shall be recognized and guaranteed by the law.</b> Article 8 (2) reads that Schoolchildren, whose mother tongue is other than Bulgarian, besides the compulsory study of the Bulgarian language, may study their mother tongue in municipal school under the protection and control of the state. Article 20 (2) reads that special preparatory classes shall be formed for children whose Bulgarian is not fluent. Article 21 reads that special kindergartens and servicing units shall be established for children suffering from chronicle diseases or with special educational needs. <b>Public Education Act</b>, Article 30 (1) reads that Religious institutions on the territory of Bulgaria may open divinity schools for their own ritual needs for children who have completed primary education with the permission of the Ministry of Education and science. Article 30 (2) reads that education in religious schools may be recognized as equal to secular education by the Ministry of Education and Science should it meet the state educational requirements on the respective level of schooling. <b>In the Public Education Act</b>, Article 9 (1) reads that each citizen may exercise his / her right to education in a freely chosen school and type of education depending on his / her individual preferences and faculties; and paragraph 2 from the same article reads that the right referred to in</p>	<p><b>Various textbooks and school manuals are published</b>, but still there is not elaborated and approved syllabus for learning mother tongue by the Ministry of Education and Science. <b>Civic education textbook for children with special needs was published.</b> The Ministry of Education and Science in <b>cooperation with NGOs implements various projects.</b> Varied textbooks are published. <b>Still there is not a training system</b> and upgrading training system for teachers who to work with Turkish and Roma people more effectively.</p>

	paragraph 1 shall be exercised for people who have not come of age by their parents or guardians.	
<b>Creation of preconditions for long-life learning and upgrading training.</b>	<p><b>Unemployed Protection and Employment Promotion Act (UPEPA).</b> It provides the legislative basis of the unemployment benefits system in Bulgaria and active labour market policies.</p> <p>In <b>2001 the National Action Plan was elaborated in co-operation with social partners.</b> It is based on European Employment Strategy pillars and guidelines. Plan was adopted by the Council of Ministers in April 2001. It defines priorities of the employment policy and aims to encourage employment creation and to decrease labour market pressure by improvement of employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities.</p> <p>The main legal acts setting the institutional framework of VET are the <b>Vocational Education and Training Act and the Unemployment Protection and Employment Promotion Act.</b> Both laws encourage participation of social partners in VET system.</p>	<p><b>National Programme for Adult education,</b> with special focus on the development of a National System for Adults.</p> <p><b>Ministry of Education and Science (MES)</b> implements the state policy in the field of VET by managing and controlling the activities of all kinds of education institutions, adopting the list of professions for VET, the approval of annual admission plan, qualifications programs in the VET system, analysis of the results and effectiveness of VET, etc.</p> <p><b>National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET)</b> is the state body accrediting and licensing VET activities. The Agency coordinates the institutions in the field of vocational guidance, training and education.</p>
<b>Development of Information and Communication Technologies in elementary and junior high school education.</b>	<p><b>National Education Strategy on Information and Communication Technologies (1998).</b></p> <p><b>State Education Requirements for school content</b> in educational sphere called "Lifestyle and technology" are elaborated. In vocational education and training system the technical culture is built gradually through learning general and special technical subjects as well as technology and profession engineering according to school program and syllabuses.</p>	<p><b>Information and Communication Technologies Program.</b></p> <p>The educational sphere contains three school subjects: "Domestic lifestyle and technology", "Domestic technology and economy" and "Technologies". This is written in Ordinance # 2 from May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2000. Thus, foundations of technical literacy and competence of children from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade are built.</p> <p>In vocational education and training system the technical culture is built gradually through learning general and special technical subjects as well as technology and profession engineering according to school program and syllabuses.</p>

## 5. Conclusion.

This stocktaking research report presents the situation of EDC and MofD in contemporary Bulgarian education system. Analysis is in three strands:

1. What policies have been developed?
2. What measures have been adopted to implement these policies?
3. What does the local community of end users (teachers and other NGO's) think of these policies and implementation measures?

### What conclusions can be drawn?

Over the last years systematic work and efforts towards providing a place for civic education training in Bulgarian education system has been in hand.

- To a great extent legislative conditions for implementation of this process are provided.
- Promising partner relations between education institutions and interested parties are established.
- Changes in the education system follow in conformity with democratic changes in the whole socio-political life in Bulgaria.
- There is a tendency towards creating a stable ground for qualitative and productive training on civic education.

It is quite natural in hard times of transition for education to face unsolved problems and the need for positive changes. In civic education field we would like to put forward directions for improving.

### 1. State Policy

- It is necessary for **the terms EDC and MofD to find a place in official state documents** and to gain currency in line with contemporary European tendencies and dimensions. It is necessary to clarify the link and the relations which exist between EDC on the one hand, and civic education, human rights education, intercultural education, peace education and global education on the other hand. Responsibility for that lies not only with the state institutions, but also with all active civic organizations.
- Establishment of a **legislative base for EDC and MofD and the incorporation of this in University syllabuses and in teacher training**. Legislative conditions for additional training for teachers in this field **need** to be provided.
- Adoption of a system to provide opportunities for **NGOs** to take part in courses for teachers' upgrading training. This means the **licensing process must be speeded up**.
- It is necessary for Government policy regarding youth participation in social processes as well as **state priorities regarding youth role in future to be clearly defined and widely disseminated**.
- In documents for the development of **Vocational Education and Training and Life Long Learning the terms EDC and MofD must be incorporated; and a program** for their practical application must be adopted.
- Additional efforts are needed in order for **legislative conditions for integration of disadvantaged children and youth to be provided**.
- **Market conditions for civic education services** and methodological supply must be provided. This process regarding other syllabuses is advanced.

### 2. Measures for policy application

- **Description of National Training System to be well advertised**. The accent should be on modern teaching approaches.
- **Various and sufficient items of educational textbooks have to be available**, as well as original texts of official international documents (declarations, conventions, memorandums, etc.) Practical application and training in the issues that relate to the interests and life experience of the young people.
- Providing conditions for **broad exchange and popularization of information using different forms** (conferences, seminars, meetings, Internet, etc.). Sharing good pedagogic practices, experience, and approaches.
- **Wide explanatory work needs to be done on the adopted model** which sees civic education as an interdisciplinary kind of education. Discussion of the strong points and

an explanation of the suitability of this approach for almost all compulsory subjects in the field of social sciences and civic education is needed.

- **Strong state intervention regarding resource supply of the education process in and out of the school.** This means research and comparative analyses, elaboration of uniform evaluation criteria aiming at qualitative teaching processes.
- Establishment of an **effective system for impartial monitoring and control.** Application of measurable indexes in line with the state education requirements.
- Accepting of **adequate measures for active and prolonged involvement of youth in social processes** and increasing their role in decision-making process.

### **3. Attitude of local community of end users (teachers and other NGO's) towards policies and implementation measures.**

- **Strengthening partner relations and using experts** from NGOs and municipality when strategies are elaborated.
- It would be a good idea to establish a **National Public Council** on EDC and MofD problems.
- Closer **collaboration in the process of development and implementation** of joint projects **for finding additional funds from foreign donors.** Creation of decentralized National and local funds in order for EDC and MofD activities to be financially secured.
- One good option could be the use of the existing unique traditional form for **cultural development of Bulgarian society - the community centers.** There are more than 3050, and 4/5 from them are located in rural settlements. They are public centers, which have libraries at their disposal and provide opportunities for the development of various education forms both in towns and in the smallest villages. A significant fact is that one of the priorities of the National Development Plan (2001-2006) is: "education development and vocational education and training, suitable for the needs of Labor Market". Within its frameworks is the plan for the community centers to be transformed into centers for upgrading training, new professions and social contacts.

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