NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Formal education in Bulgaria is managed by local authorities. It has the following structure: pre-primary education (0 to 6 years), primary education (first through fourth grade), lower-secondary education (fifth through eighth grade), upper-secondary education (ninth through twelfth grade) and higher education.

Primary and lower-secondary education are mandatory. Pre-primary, upper-secondary and higher education are optional. Primary and secondary education in Bulgaria are free in public schools. There are primary schools (first through fourth grade), basic schools (first through eighth grade), secondary schools (eighth through twelfth grade) and general-secondary schools (first through twelfth grade). In the case of basic and secondary-general schools, students are not obliged to attend the same school through all education stages.

It is not uncommon for Bulgarian schools to have “two-shift” schedules - half of the students (e.g. first through fourth grade) have classes in the morning, while the other half have classes in the afternoon. Typical hours for the morning classes are 7.30-13.00, whereas the second “shift” starts at about 13.30 and finishes at 19.00. The shifts are rotated every month.

Throughout the school year, the students’ skills and knowledge are tested through oral, written, practical exams and tests. The Bulgarian grading system is based on a 6 grade qualitative and quantitative scale (poor 2, fair 3, good 4, very good 5, and excellent 6). Children in first grades are assessed only on a qualitative scale (poor, fair, good, very good, excellent). This scale is also used for grading children with special needs.

National external examination is carried out at the end of fourth, seventh and twelfth grades of general education through tests. All eighth grade students of special intensive foreign-language studies course have to pass a national foreign language external assessment test at the end of the school year.

All classes in public schools and universities are taught in Bulgarian. The school year is divided in two terms for students in schools, and two semesters for university students. Classes in schools start on September 15th and the school year ends on June 30th for high school students. Younger students finish by the end of May or mid-June.

Education in Bulgaria is compulsory between the ages of 7 and 16. Parents have legal responsibility to secure the school attendance of their child. All schools in the country are co-educational, admitting students of both genders. The official language of instruction is Bulgarian. Schoolchildren who have a different first language, besides the compulsory study of the Bulgarian language may study their mother tongue in municipal schools under the protection and control of the state.

The educational system (prior to higher education) comprises 12 grades, organized in two major levels: basic and secondary. Basic education (grades first through eighth) is subdivided into two sub-levels: elementary (grades first through fourth) and presecondary (grades fifth through eighth). Secondary education normally encompasses grades eighth through twelfth, but can start earlier depending on the type of school. There are two major kinds of secondary schools: secondary comprehensive, usually called gymnasia (high school) and secondary vocational, most often referred to as tehnikum (vocational school.) Special schools at all educational levels accommodate students with impaired health. Private schools constitute a new element in the structure of the education system.

Special schools accommodate students in need of special care because of learning disabilities, health, or emotional problems. There is a wide variety of special schools, catering to children who are chronically ill, mentally retarded, blind or visually impaired, hearing and speech impaired, or who have behavioral problems bordering on juvenile delinquency. In 1999-2000, there were 146 special schools at all levels of the education system with 16,000 students enrolled. A significant number of the special schools function as internati (boarding schools).

Private schools are still relatively few in numbers. The curriculum is structured into three components: compulsory, elective, and optional; the correlation between those varies at different types of schools. Subjects fall into the following eight major areas of content: Bulgarian language and literature, foreign languages, mathematics, information technologies, social sciences and civics, natural sciences and ecology, music and art, physical culture and sports.

Schools operate on a five-day week schedule. September 15 or the workday closest to it marks the beginning of the school year. This is a festive occasion. Many students go to school carrying bouquets of flowers for their teachers and may be accompanied by their families. The duration of the school year varies by the school level and grade and depends on the quantity of material that needs to be covered. It ends on May 24 for grades 1 and 12 (in the latter case, the intention is to provide time for the matriculation examination). The school year continues until May 31 for grades 2 through 4, until June 15 for grades 5 through 8, June 30 for grades 9 through 11. The school year is divided into two sroka (terms, singular is srok); the first term begins on September 15 and ends on February 4, the second one starts on February 9. There is a Christmas break (December 24 through January 6), an inter-term break (February 7-8), a spring break (April 1-10), and a two-day break before Eastern Orthodox Easter. In addition, first graders only have a short break in the fall (November 11-13). Setting school vacations in relation to religious holidays is a departure from the practices of the communist regime, which

did everything possible to discourage religion and banish it from the public sphere. The summer vacation spans from the end of the school year until September 15. If schools are to be closed due to inclement weather or fuel shortage, the days missed are compensated at the expense of vacation time.

Students from grades 1 through 12 normally spend half a day in school; the other half is dedicated to homework and independent study at home. In elementary school and sometimes in presecondary school there exists an option called zanimalnya (extended care) for students to spend the other half of the day in school working on their lessons under the control of a teacher. This is done upon the explicit request of the parents. Schools in big cities operate according to a two-shift scheme (morning and afternoon) because of shortage of school premises. In small cities and villages the one-shift scheme is prevalent.

The grading system is based on numerals, where 6 is otlichen (excellent), 5 is mnogo dobar (very good), 4 is dobar (good), 3 is sreden (satisfactory), and 2 is slab (poor). Passing grades are 3 through 6; 2 denotes a failure. Very rarely applied, 1 (very poor) is sometimes given for academic misconduct. This grading system is used at all levels of schooling. Grading is based on written and oral testing, homework, and in-class participation. Students do not pass automatically to a higher grade level. Students who have poor grades in more than three subjects repeat the year. In case of three or less poor grades the student has the right to take a supplementary examination, a failure in which also results in repeating the grade. There is no passing to a higher grade on probation. Students are not allowed to repeat grades more than twice in their school career.

Textbooks are subject to contest-based writing, publication, and distribution. All Bulgarian publishing houses that meet the criteria set by the Ministry of Education and Science can compete. The textbooks suitable for use in a particular subject are selected under conditions of real competition with respect to content, artistic layout, and price. On those terms, the Ministry works with more than thirty state and private publishing houses, which print and distribute over 480 textbooks for comprehensive and 800 textbooks for vocational instruction. The schools then place their orders directly with the publishers. The introduction of the contest principle in the publication of textbooks raised professional standards and resulted in improved quality of textbooks.

Bulgarian schools are well equipped with traditional audiovisual aids, such as maps, charts, and globes. Simple technical appliances (like overhead projectors, TV sets, cassette-recorders, and slide-projectors) are also widespread, but the instructional materials that go with them are often obsolete and not in compliance with the new content of study. Office equipment,

copiers, and printers are generally lacking in classrooms. But schools face grave problems in securing contemporary computer hardware, software, and communications. The need to update information technologies is well recognized and guidelines have been developed for their introduction.

Bulgarian educators are generally quite open to new instructional techniques and methods. The problems stem from a poor material base. Relatively few computers are available, and those tend to be outdated models with inadequate performance. The existing computers in 1995 were IBM (about 30 percent), Macintosh (2 percent), and the archaic Bulgarian Pravets-8 (67 percent). Due to financial difficulties, very few funds have been allocated for purchase of new computers and any contributions in this field come primarily from donors. Despite all these difficulties, many Bulgarian schools are on-line and teachers and students partake in the information exchange.

Bulgaria has significant minority populations whose first language is not Bulgarian. Under the circumstances, it is very important that schools breed a public spirit of tolerance and dialogue. Traditionally, minorities have enjoyed all rights to education as Bulgarian citizens and have been well integrated in the education system. After the fall of communism in 1989, many former Eastern Bloc nations lived through a process of redefining of national identity, nation-states and citizenship that led to the eruption of conflicts and civil wars. Bulgaria constituted a fortunate exception from this pattern and the education system was entitled to some credit for preserving the national peace. Though, a significant deficiency is the lack of methods for teaching Bulgarian as a foreign language to schoolchildren who speak another language at home. An alarming symptom of alienation is the increasing dropout rate among Roma children who are of compulsory education age.

Education in Bulgaria, although fundamentally national in character, has significant foreign influences. Russian impact was most pronounced during the period of the national revival in the nineteenth century and stemmed the ideas of Slavophilism and pan-Orthodoxy. Many young Bulgarians went to pursue their education in St. Petersburg and Odessa. Immediately after the liberation from Ottoman domination in 1878, achieved with decisive help from Russia, Russian experts remained in Bulgaria to assist with the establishment of the administrative structure of the young nation-state. After the end of the World War II, Bulgaria became a satellite state of the Soviet Union and was heavily subjected to Russian influence in the sphere of culture and education. The model of the entire education system, and particularly that of higher education, was designed to emulate the Soviet education system. Russian language became a compulsory subject as early as fifth grade and intensified at every

subsequent school level. The generations of Bulgarians educated under communist rule have command of Russian which provided immediate access to a much larger scope of publications. Russian was promoted as a lingua franca among professional circles of the Eastern Bloc nations. Many Bulgarians received their higher education in Soviet institutions of higher learning, particularly in the technical fields. Although, after 1989, Russian influences on Bulgarian education were on the decline.

Western European and American influences are also evident. German impact, channeled through the Bulgarian royal house which was of German dynastic descent and facilitated by German economic interests in the Balkans, was considerable during the two World Wars that Bulgaria entered as an ally of Germany. French cultural and educational influences infiltrated through the efforts of Jesuit priests in the nineteenth century and the francophone programs of the French government throughout the twentieth century. The first exposure to American educational influence began with the work of Protestant missionaries in the middle of the nineteenth century, remained in the country until the communist regime expelled them in 1945. Meanwhile, they opened some of the first nurseries in Bulgaria, as well as teacher training institutes, vocational schools, and a college in Sofia. The latter was restored in the early 1990s; despite its name, it is in fact one of the most prestigious high schools in the Bulgarian capital. The most significant embodiment of American presence in the Bulgarian education system is the American University in Blagoevgrad, which attracts students from all Balkan nations. Well-educated strata of the population normally speak at least one Western language. Until the 1970s, choices were almost evenly split between German, French and English; younger generations, especially after 1990, overwhelmingly opted for English.

A major goal of the reform of Bulgaria's education system was to bring standards in line with the European context and to harmonize the educational process with that of Western Europe. This was expected to assist the nation's accession to the European Union. In December 1999 Bulgaria was invited to begin negotiations to that effect with practical discussion that begun in March 2000 on six topics, the first two of which were "education and training" and "science and research." Of primary importance is the impact of educational programs and initiatives sponsored by international organizations: UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Union, the World Bank. Joint initiatives in education, such as the programs PHARE, TEMPUS, COPERNICUS in the 1990s vastly improved Bulgaria's structure and content of its education.

Educational institutions

Educational institutions are main data sources for enrolments, teaching staff and other personnel. Type of educational institutions and their characteristics, determined by different criteria are integral part of essential indicators for enrolments and personnel.

An educational institution is defined as a center taking independent decisions, which performs educational services for persons and organizations and is established according to the rules of the law. This means that the institution has a manager (director, rector or another manager) i.e. that this is an 'independent' educational institution. 'Dependent' educational institutions are branches or units known under other names and are typically subordinate to an independent institution.

Educational institutions are those, which directly perform training according to educational programs with students in organized classes (groups) at place or by a distant mode of attendance. Self-training persons and firms conducting qualification courses, language training and others do not come into the scope of the definition of educational institutions.

- Types of educational institutions and their main statistical characteristics
  - ✓ Kindergartens

    Main characteristics:

    Type of ownership (public and private);

    Type: all-day, remedial, special

    kindergartens for children with special educational needs and/or with chronic diseases,

    half-day, weekly, seasonal.

Stages of the Education System

Before going to primary school, children in Bulgaria have to spend at least two years in kindergarten.

- ✓ Pre-primary education in Bulgaria

Kindergartens and schools are public, municipal or private, depending on the type of their funding.

The process of signing up a child in a pre-primary education facility can be very long and stressful due to the fact that in the past few years there haven't been enough free spots for all children.

As of 2010/2011, two years of pre-primary education is compulsory either at kindergarten or in preparatory groups at primary schools.

Free education aids for children in the compulsory pre-primary groups are provided by the state. Parents pay only a monthly fee for food. The size of the fee can be reduced for low-income households. As of 2010, parents also pay for the activities outside of the state's educational requirements (e.g. English classes, dance classes etc).

Kindergartens and nursing schools operate Monday to Friday, 7.00-19.00, but parents can choose to take their children home around lunch time. There are nursery schools for children aged 0-3 and kindergartens (detska gradina) for children aged 3 to enter the first grade (children aged six or seven).

Primary and lower secondary education

The duration of primary education (natchalno obrazovanie) is four years. Normally, it starts when a child turns seven, but it is not uncommon for parents to send their children in the 1st grade at the age of six. There are no restrictions regarding the choice of non-specialized primary schools. However, some schools would only accept children with an address registration in the neighbourhood where the school is located.

There is a relatively small number of primary schools and most children attend basic schools or general secondary schools from the first to the fourth grade. Primary school students who go to basic or general secondary schools can switch schools after the fourth grade, if there is another school that offers specialized subjects that interest them.

The past few years many schools offer specialized classes after the fourth grade in order to attract more students and to make the choice of a specialized high-school class/school easier. However, most students would switch after the seventh or the eighth grade and apply for a vocational school or an upper school of specialized studies.

After finishing the fourth grade students get a certificate of elementary education. To get a basic education diploma students can go to a lower-secondary school or choose to attend a general secondary school. Lower-secondary education (osnovno obrazovanie) is also four years. At the end of the four years, the student receives a basic education diploma. It gives students the right to enroll in an upper-secondary education school. If the student chooses to go to one of the specialized high schools, they have to pass two or more exams in order to get a spot in one of the classes of their choice.

Upper secondary Education

In Bulgaria, upper-secondary education is optional. Students need a basic education certificate to apply for an upper secondary education school.

There are several types of upper-secondary education schools in Bulgaria: upper-secondary schools (gimnazia), general secondary schools (sredno obshtoobrazovatelno uchilishte),

upper schools of specialized studies (profilirana gimnazia), vocational schools (profesionalni uchilishta).

Enrollment at vocational secondary schools, upper schools of specialized studies and classes of specialized studies of some general secondary schools after the seventh grade takes place according to the students' results at external national exams and their preferences for schools. The eighth grade admission to those schools is based on the student's successful performance during the course of their prior studies. However, some vocational schools enroll students depending on the decision by the school principal and the pedagogical council of the school.

As of 2012, Bulgarian language and literature, and math exams are mandatory for all students in the seventh grade. Even children who wouldn't change school/class should take these exams. For some schools, additional examination can be required.

If the student enrolls after the seventh grade, the duration of secondary education is five years and students receive a primary education diploma at the end of the ninth grade. Students who start their high-school education after the eighth grade, get their primary school diploma at the end of their first year and the period of education is four years.

The Ministry of Education is planning changes in legislation as of 2012/2013, following which pupils will complete their basic education after seventh grade.

The high school stage will be divided into two levels: mandatory for all students from the eighth to the 10th grade included, and optional 11th and 12th grade for students willing to complete their secondary education. At the end of each stage students will receive certificates entitling them to continue their education at higher education institutions.

Students who go to upper schools of specialized studies obtain skills and knowledge in specified areas. The most common specialist studies in such schools are a foreign language and history; a foreign language and economic studies, or a foreign language and biology. In many cases, after graduating from high school, students from these schools choose to continue their education in the same area and apply for corresponding university majors.

Students who graduate from vocational secondary schools get a certificate of qualification, since their last year mostly consists of practice hours, sometimes in related industries. This certificate can count as experience and it might help if a student wants to start a relevant job immediately after high school graduation.

All students should pass a state school-leaving examination (Matura-matriculation examinations) in order to get an upper secondary school diploma. This examination is in Bulgarian language and literature and one subject of the student's choice. They are entitled

to sit for another matriculation exam of their choice in one other subject. The results of these exams can rank students in some higher schools if the higher institution allows this option.

Tertiary Education

There are about 50 higher education facilities in Bulgaria, both public and private. In order to enroll in one, a student needs an upper-secondary education diploma.

To enroll in a university in Bulgaria students have to have passed the matriculation exams and possibly additional examinations that vary according to the regulations of the institution of their choice.

There are several types of higher education facilities:

Universities (Universiteti) offer studies in a wide range of disciplines in at least three of the four major areas of knowledge (humanities, natural sciences, social and technical sciences) at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degrees.

Specialized higher schools (Spezializirani visshi uchilishta) provide education mainly in one major area of knowledge, which is indicated in the institution's name. These institutions may provide Master and Doctoral programmes with the provisions of the law.

Independent Colleges (Samostojatelni koleji) are institutions providing more vocational-orientated higher education. They offer three-year programmes of training and graduates get the qualification of 'Professional Bachelor in…'. College graduates can continue their education in a Master programme within the same area of knowledge.

Higher education in Bulgaria is paid for. The prices range between 300 leva (approx. 160 euros) and 3000 leva (approx 1600 euros). The tuition fees in international universities usually start at about 1000 euros. The highest tuition fees are for medicine, law or arts majors. Also, prices differ according to the institution, its location, the degree the student applies for, etc.

The academic year in the universities starts around October 1st and the summer exam term ends by the end of June. Exams can be re-taken in September. There is a limited number of times that a student can re-take an exam. This number, as well as other requirements related to the right of a student to take an exam depend on each university’s regulations.

ORGANISATION OF PRIVATE EDUCATION IN BULGARIA

International Schools

International schools can be the perfect solution for an expat student (multinational corporation executives, children of diplomats, NGO staff) in Bulgaria. There may be some local population, but the schools are geared for an international student body. Schools usually follow a curriculum model from the US, UK, France, Canada or Australia/New Zealand. Primary

instruction may be any language (and multiple languages are usually taught), but it is usually in English, French, Spanish, German, or Japanese. Many schools provide similar standards of schooling around the globe, providing for an easy transition between schools whether they are in France or Vietnam. Schools often provide internationally accepted accreditation such as the international baccalaureate.

Admission and enrollment procedures vary from school to school. Space is often limited and preference may be given to students based on nationality. Tuition tends to be expensive based on local standards, but offers high standards of learning, boast smaller class sizes, first-rate facilities, and extracurricular. Boarding facilities are available at some schools, but most only provide day classes.

- ✓ Accreditation

The CoIS (Council of International Schools) is a non-profit association of international schools and post-secondary institutions which provides educational accreditation, teacher and leadership recruitment services, links to higher education, governance assistance and help with founding new schools. The New England Association of School and Colleges (NEASC) is an accrediting association which establishes standards for all levels of education, from pre-K to doctoral. The European Council of International Schools (ECIS) verifies schools in Europe.

Sofia

Anglo-American School of Sofia (AAS-Sofia)

Address: Siyanie Street 1

Pancharevo, Sofia 1137, Bulgaria

Tel: 359 2 9238810 11

Tuition Rates: €5,835 - 21,345 per year

The Anglo-American School of Sofia serves the international community in Bulgaria's capital city. Students range in age from 4 to 18 with English language instruction. We offer a curriculum that combines both US and UK best practice. The school is accredited by the CoIS and NEASC. AAS is also an authorized International Baccalaureate World School.

Zlatarski International School

Address: 49 Kliment Ohridski blvd

Sofia, Bulgaria 1756

Tel: 359 2 974 36 66

Tuition Rates: €3,500 - 8,000 per year

Core curriculum center on the subjects Bulgarian language, English, German, Spanish, Economics, Biology, and more. The equivalent to AAA in the British A levels results, rank Zlatarski School among the best international schools around the world. The school offers the International Baccalaureate (IB), IGCSE and A Levels. It is also a Cambridge University international examination test center.

American College of Sofia
Address: Floyd Black Lane, MLADOST-2
Sofia 1799, Bulgaria
Tel: (359-2) 434 10 08, 434 10 10, 434 10 11,
Tuition Rates: €5,700 - 14,500 per year
The American College of Sofia is an independent, co-educational secondary school. English is the primary language of instruction, but the school caters to Bulgarian youth. There are, however, children of every nationality. The curriculum is based on the American system. It is accredited by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education, MSA, and IBO.

French School in Sofia
Lycée Victor-Hugo de Sofia
Address: 110 Simeonovsko chaussée
quartier Vitosha
Sofia 1700 Bulgaria
Tel: (00359-2) 963 29 64, 963 21 19
Tuition Rates: Inquire at school
The school belongs to the network of AEFE with a French program. Instruction is in French and is based on the French educational system. The school is open to international students as well as Bulgarian students.

German School in Sofia
Veda
Address: 18 Marin Dochev Hristov str.
Sofia, Bulgaria
Tel: 359 2 9311467
Tuition Rates: Inquire at school

Private school and kindergarten with German language teaching. Provides an all-day kindergarten.

Veliko Tarnovo

American College Arcus

Address: 16 Dragoman Str.

Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

Tel: +359 62 619959

Tuition Rates: €2,200 - 3,000 per year

The school is recognized and registered with the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and is a member of the CoIS and a member of the ECIS. Instruction is in English and it offers the IB program. School uniforms are required and a private dormitory is available.

Schools in Varna

American school in Varna

The American High School of Bulgaria

Address: Ж.К. Chaika, Varna

Tel: +359879589930

Tuition Rates: 1500 Euro (Hybrid High School program) / 5000 Euro (Full High School Program)

The American High School of Bulgaria is a private high school - a partnership between three giants in education; accredited regionally, nationally and internationally. They offer a chance for students to obtain a fully-qualified US diploma that is recognized by thousands of higher education institutions in the USA and worldwide. This high school program is taught ONLY in English and is assessed ONLY by American instructors based in the USA.

French School in Varna

Ecole Francophone Internationale de Varna (EFIV)

Address: Varna 9006 Bulgarie

Tel: +359 879 533 802

Tuition Rates: Inquire at school

The French International School of Varna is a member of the French secular programs and follows the program of the Ministry of Education of France. Children begin the school at the age of 3 in French language instruction.

Vocational Education and Training in Bulgaria

The right to education is guaranteed by the constitution. Education and training provision is regulated by three main acts:

- ✓ Pre-school and School Education Act (2015) (17);
- ✓ VET Act (1999, last amended in 2018);
- ✓ Higher Education Act (1995, last amended in 2016).

The Pre-school and School Education Act defines the following education levels:

- ✓ primary (grades 1 to 4) (European qualifications framework, EQF/national qualifications framework, NQF level 1);
- ✓ basic (grades 5 to 7) (EQF/NQF level 2);
- ✓ secondary stage one (grades 8 to 10) (no EQF/NQF level assigned);
- ✓ secondary stage two (grades 11 to 12) (EQF/NQF level 4);
- ✓ (professional) bachelor (EQF level 6; NQF level (6A) 6B);
- ✓ master's (EQF/NQF level 7);
- ✓ doctoral (EQF/NQF level 8).

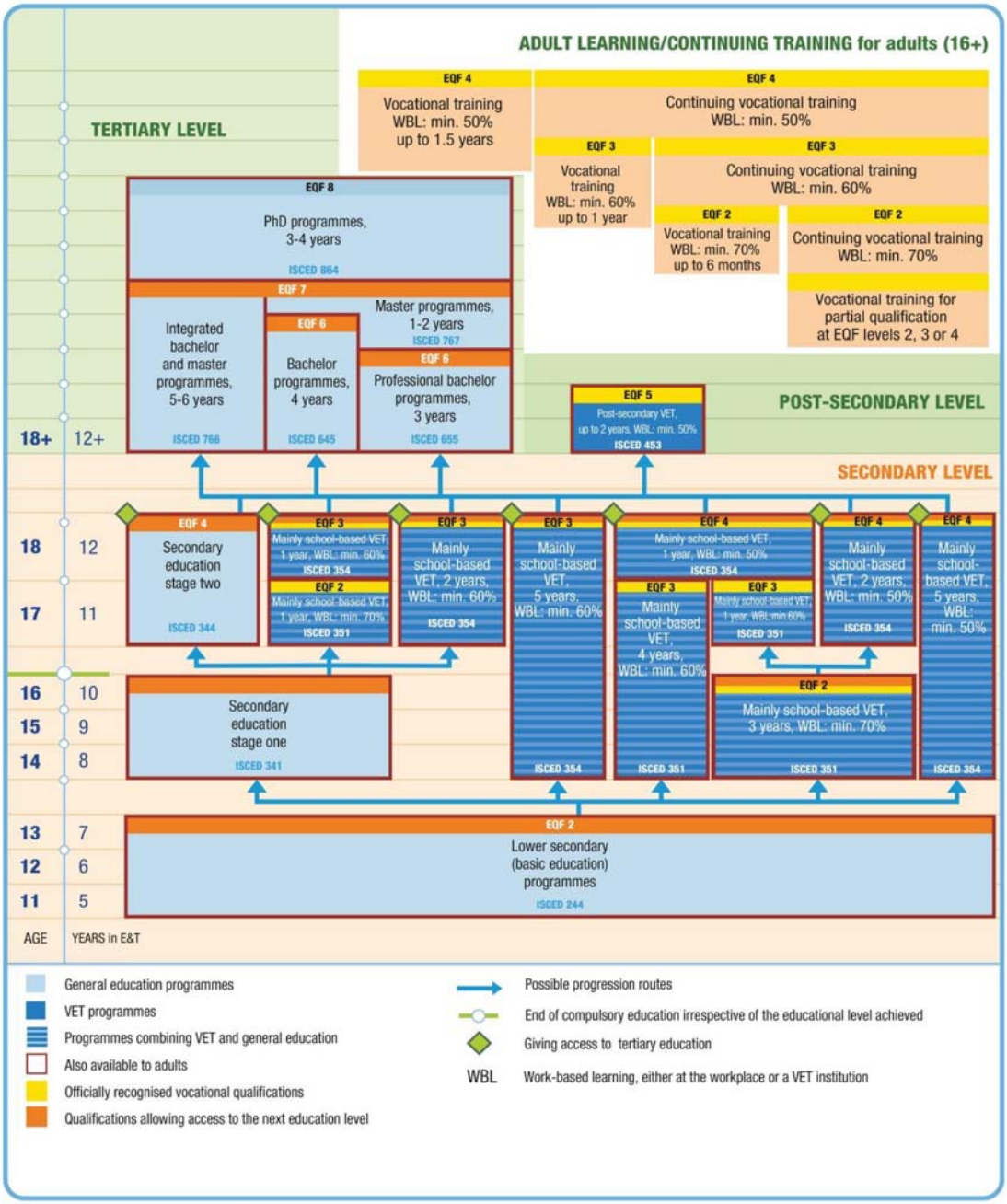


Fig. 1. Education system structure in Bulgaria.

Primary and basic education (grades 1 to 7) is compulsory. Primary education starts at age seven and is provided by State, municipal and private schools.

There are no VET programmes at this level. Graduates may continue to general or vocational secondary education. In 2016/17, all general education programmes became profiled, meaning they specialise in a selected subject such as mathematics, natural sciences or foreign languages.

Secondary education comprises general (profiled) and VET programmes in two subsequent stages: one and two. It is compulsory for learners until they reach age 16. At the end of stage

two, learners who pass State matriculation examinations (Matura) (Bulgarian language in addition to another subject or – for VET learners – State qualification examination) receive a secondary education diploma (EQF level 4). Others receive a certificate for completion of secondary education with access to vocational training for adults but not to higher education. VET programmes provide graduates with a general education diploma in addition to a VET qualification certificate.

Higher education does not formally comprise VET programmes. However, professional bachelor programmes (NQF level 6a, EQF level 6) offer more practice-oriented studies than academic bachelor programmes. Higher education providers may establish vocational training centres and provide vocational training, but this is not considered as higher VET. Partnerships between VET and higher education providers ease transitions from secondary VET to tertiary programmes. Learning outcomes acquired in VET may be recognised by higher education providers, sometimes allowing VET graduates to enrol in tertiary programmes without entry examinations. Some higher education programmes even reserve places for VET graduates in similar study fields, as with technical universities in engineering programmes.

Recognition of Diplomas in Bulgaria

Academic recognition is a formal written confirmation of the value of a higher education diploma or another similar qualification, issued by an educational institution recognized by a competent state authority as part of the system of secular higher education of the country concerned.

The Recognition procedure is intended to help graduates of foreign higher education institutions who are willing to continue their education or to start work in Bulgaria.

WHICH DOCUMENTS CAN BE SUBMITTED FOR RECOGNITION?

Qualifications, certifying HIGHER EDUCATION at Bachelor's or Master's degree or without degree:

- ✓ issued by educational institutions, recognized by a competent national authority as part of the system of secular higher education of the country concerned;
- ✓ acquired in accordance with the higher education legislation of the country on the territory of which the education had been provided,
- ✓ In order to be subject to academic recognition in Bulgaria, your qualification must provide academic rights in the country in which it is issued.

Which Qualifications are not subject to academic recognition:

- ✓ Qualifications which do not formally confer higher education in the country in which they are issued;

- ✓ Qualifications, which do not meet the state requirements for acquiring higher education in Bulgaria;
- ✓ Qualifications, which are issued in violation of the legislation of the country in which the higher education institution is based or the legislation of the country on the territory of which the education had been provided.

WHAT SET OF DOCUMENTS SHOULD I PRESENT TO the National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID)?

Citizens seeking academic recognition of higher education acquired in foreign higher education institutions need to submit the following documents at the Front office of NACID:

- ✓ Filled-in Application Form for Academic Recognition, available online in
- ✓ Application Form
- ✓ Original and a copy of the higher education qualification or another similar document, issued by an educational institution recognized by a competent state authority as part of the system of secular higher education of the respective country. The diploma must be accompanied by a translation into Bulgarian by a so-called "Sworn translator". See section 3. from the right menu.
- ✓ Original and copy of the Diploma Supplement, as well as original and copy of a European Diploma Supplement if you have one.
- ✓ The Diploma supplement, with the exception of the European Diploma Supplement, must be accompanied by a translation into Bulgarian by a so called "sworn translator". See section 3. from the right menu.
- ✓ Copy of identity document and a document certifying the change of the applicant's names if such a change has occurred.

LIFELONG LEARNING FRAMEWORK IN BULGARIA

The National Strategy for Lifelong Learning (NSLLL) sets out the strategic framework of the state policy in education and training during the period, which aims at achieving the European goal for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Strategy has been elaborated in response to challenges, which on one hand have to do with our country's need to overcome the consequences of the financial crisis in Europe and worldwide, and on the other – to preserve the national identity and cultural diversity in the course of implementation of the cohesion policies.

The long Bulgarian transition to democracy and market economy is yet to lead to the establishment of consistent qualifications systems, which would match the new economic processes. Amid conditions of high unemployment, the enterprises experience an ever

increasing deficit of workers having the necessary qualifications, which, in parallel with the aging population and slow pace of the reforms in education, is seen as a significant impediment to economic growth and attraction of new investments into Bulgaria.

Quick dissemination of modern-era technologies served to further swell the gap between supply and demand on the labour market. This reflects on the quality supplied, which makes the need for reforms in the education and training system an even more urgent one.

At the same time, albeit at a slow pace, the national economy is beginning to find its own direction of development and formulate its own demands in regard to the levels of knowledge and key competences.

From this perspective, the time is ripe for measures to be taken in regard to the need for new skills through changes in the education and training system, which would ensure building up the mentality for lifelong learning.

This Strategy for Lifelong Learning is expected to be perceived as a response to all emerging challenges regarding the social inclusion and economic growth.

The Strategy applies the definition of lifelong learning, as used in the EC Memorandum on LLL (2000), namely: “all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence”.

The following principles will be applied in the course of implementation of the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning during the period 2014-2020:

- ✓ Quality: transforming lifelong learning into a factor for the success and competitiveness of the citizenry, the institutions, and organizations by providing the conditions to achieve higher educational objectives;
- ✓ Equality and diversity: ensuring equal opportunities for all individual and collective stakeholders to exercise their rights and duties arising from their participation in various and multiple forms of lifelong learning, which take place in diverse socio-economic contexts;
- ✓ Decentralization: transfer of powers and resources from central government bodies and public institutions to the regional administrations, the municipalities, the setups of social partners, the non-governmental organizations, etc., and also to associations of training providers in order to ensure the access to lifelong learning activities for various target groups and specific participants;
- ✓ Cooperation: conduct of consultation processes at various levels, proactive dialogue and allocation of the rights, duties, and risks among all stakeholders in order to

achieve the strategic objectives and priorities of the lifelong learning policy through implementation of the specific measures scheduled for the impact areas;

- ✓ Measurability: enhancement of the opportunities for monitoring and measuring the education objectives;
- ✓ Flexibility: preparedness of the stakeholders to respond, upon occurrence/ascertainment of unforeseen social and socio-economic processes, through expansion of the earmarked objectives and actions.

All participants in the processes associated with the lifelong learning policy may further develop the basic principles according to the level of their operations.

The main challenge is to organize the education and training and align them towards attainment of the key competences by all learners. To achieve this objective and turn into a fundament of the educational process more focus should be placed on the acquisition of basic skills, which would evolve into permanently attained competences such as competences in the mother tongue to achieve functional literacy, literacy in the area of mathematics and natural sciences, technological and digital literacy, as well as foreign language communication skills. At the same time, higher quality of teaching must be ensured, a crucial prerequisite, which required effective basic qualification and ongoing, continued qualification of teachers and educators.

Another important prerequisite is to transform the profession of teacher and educator into an attractive career choice through all expedient means and tools. Governance of the education and training institutions must be improved in order for effective and flexible quality assurance systems to be elaborated. It is essential to upgrade the funding system as a tool to ensure the efficiency of primary and continuing education and training through the shared and balanced responsibility between the government, the employers, and the learners.

Country Specific Data Resources on Education

- ✓ Ministry of Education and Science
  www.mon.bg
- ✓ Ministry of Economy
  https://www.mi.government.bg/

- ✓ Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
  www.mlsp.government.bg
- ✓ European Structural and Investment Funds Information Portal
  http://eufunds.bg/

- ✓ Innovation and Competitiveness Operational Programme
  http://opic.bg/
- ✓ Human Resources Development Operational Programme
  https://esf.bg/
- ✓ Fund of funds/Fund Manager of Financial Instruments in Bulgaria
  https://fmfib.bg/
- ✓ Employment Agency
  http://www.az.government.bg/
- ✓ Social Assistance Agency
  http://www.asp.government.bg/
- ✓ Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency
  http://www.sme.government.bg/
- ✓ Public Procurement Agency
  http://rop3-app1.aop.bg/
- ✓ Ministry of Finance
  http://www.minfin.bg/
- ✓ Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works
  http://www.mrrb.government.bg/
- ✓ History, institutions, functions and EU Funds
  http://europe.bg/
- ✓ European Social Fund
  https://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp
- ✓ Regional policy of the EU
  http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.cfm
- ✓ Research and innovation policy of the EU
  http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm
- ✓ Project "Student practices - Phase 1”
  http://praktiki.mon.bg/sp/
- ✓ Project “Student scholarships - Phase 1”
  http://eurostipendii.mon.bg/
- ✓ Project "Your class”
  http://tvoiatchas.mon.bg

List of Higher Education Institutions

1.	Agricultural university – Plovdiv	http://www.au-plovdiv.bg
2.	Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv	http://www.artacademyplovdiv.com
3.	Academy of Ministry of Interior	http://www.academy.mvr.bg
4.	American University in Bulgaria – Blagoevgrad	http://www.aubg.bg
5.	Burgas Free University	http://www.bfu.bg
6.	Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar"	http://www.vfu.bg
7.	St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo	http://www.uni-vt.bg
8.	Nicola Vaptsarov Naval Academy	http://www.naval-acad.bg
9.	University of Structural Engineering and Architecture “Lyuben Karavelov” – Sofia	http://www.vsu.bg
10.	Higher School of Transport “Todor Kableshkov” – Sofia	http://www.vtu.bg
11.	University of Agribusiness and Rural Development - Plovdiv	http://uard.bg/bg
12.	Higher School for Insurance and Finance - Sofia	http://www.vuzf.bg
13.	"G. S. Rakovski" National Defence College – Sofia	http://rnda.armf.bg/
14.	European College of Economics and Management - Plovdiv	http://www.ecem.org
15.	European Polytechnical University - Pernik	http://www.epu.bg/
16.	University of Economics – Varna	http://www.ue-varna.bg

17.	College of Economics and Administration – Plovdiv	http://www.ceabul.net
18.	College of Management, Trade and Marketing – Sofia	http://www.mtmcollege.org
19.	College of Telecommunications and Post – Sofia	http://www.hctp.acad.bg
20.	College of Tourism – Blagoevgrad	http://www.cotur.org
21.	University of Forestry – Sofia	http://www.ltu.bg/
22.	Medical University "Prof. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna	http://www.mu-varna.bg
23.	Medical University – Pleven	http://www.mu-pleven.bg
24.	Medical University – Plovdiv	http://meduniversity-plovdiv.bg
25.	Medical University – Sofia	http://mu-sofia.bg
26.	International University College – Dobrich	http://www.vumk.eu
27.	International Business School – Botevgrad	http://www.ibsedu.com
28.	University of Mining and Geology "St. Ivan Rilski"- Sofia	http://www.mgu.bg
29.	Vasil Levski National Military University – Veliko Tarnovo	http://www.nvu.bg
30.	National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts “Krustyo Sarafov”	http://www.natfiz.bg
31.	National Academy of Music “Prof. Pancho Vladigerov” - Sofia	http://www.nma.bg
32.	National Sports Academy “Vassil Levski” – Sofia	http://www.nsa.bg
33.	National Academy of Art – Sofia	http://nha.bg

34.	New Bulgarian University – Sofia	http://www.nbu.bg
35.	Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”	http://www.uni-plovdiv.bg
36.	Ruse University “Angel Kanchev”	http://www.uni-ruse.bg
37.	Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”	http://www.uni-sofia.bg
38.	University of Library Studies and Information Technologies – Sofia	http://www.unibit.bg
39.	Academy of Economics “D. A. Tsenov” – Svishtov	http://www.uni-svishtov.bg
40.	Theatre College “Luben Groys” – Sofia	http://lgroys-college.com
41.	Technical University – Varna	http://www.tu-varna.bg
42.	Technical University – Gabrovo	http://www.tugab.bg
43.	Technical University – Sofia	http://www.tu-sofia.bg
44.	Trakia University – Stara Zagora	http://www.uni-sz.bg
45.	University of National and World Economy – Sofia	http://www.unwe.bg
46.	University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy – Sofia	http://www.uacg.bg
47.	University of Food Technologies – Plovdiv	http://uft-plovdiv.bg
48.	University “Prof. d-r Assen Zlatarov” – Burgas	http://www.btu.bg
49.	University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy – Sofia	http://www.uctm.edu
50.	DirectLoansLenders Scholarship Program	https://directloanslenders.org

51.	University of Shumen “Konstantin Preslavsky”	http://www.shu-bg.net
52.	South-West University “Neofit Rilski” – Blagoevgrad	http://www.swu.bg

NATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM

The contemporary system of a mandatory health insurance is governed by the Health Insurance Act (1998, State Gazette # 70).

This political vote came in response of the heavy problems in the public taxation financed system of healthcare and as a continuation of the common tendencies in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and of the historical tradition in the country.

The adopted Law governs at one and at same time the questions of the mandatory and voluntary health insurance. It creates legislative framework for the organization of the mandatory health insurance to follow a public contract model.

Organization and Management

The mandatory health insurance system is designed as a state monopoly. It has the exclusive right to grant mandatory health insurance and to guarantee the observance of the insurance rights in respect of all nationals. This decision is based on subtle arguments.

The system is socially oriented and is one of the layers of social protection of the population. If the market of the mandatory health insurance were differentiated between more players, the overall cost expenditures of all established funds would have been higher compared to that of the national system. This is so because of the well-known fact that in the field of health insurance acts the market defect "savings from scale" (diminishing returns) which makes the market unjust and relatively closed for new players. Through monopoly it is possible to accumulate a common fund for the goals of the social health insurance, out of which one can put aside means for development and crediting of other innovative activities, while at the same, if there occurs shortage of means - to receive subsidies from the state. The existence of monopoly does not necessarily mean that there exists exclusive and monopoly conduct, which is a more important indicator for violations of the Protection of Competition Act, compared to the market share of the players. Monopoly conduct would mean to diminish the volume of the service packages and to increase the volume of the contributions without an adequate quality increase of the services. But it is envisaged in the Law that the Minister of Health defines the Guaranteed Medical Services Package and supervises its observance through the "Health Insurance Supervision" Department. The adoption of the volume of the contribution is effectuated through a purely public way by the vote of Parliament. The choice of one fund for social health insurance brings into balance the interrelations with the health services providers who are also associated and represented by the professional organizations of the doctors and the dentists. The Law does not provide for a re-distribution mechanism to

level the risks, which would have been necessary in the process of functioning of more than one independent funds.

In Bulgaria, emergency healthcare is considered to include all the medical activities with the aim to treat any emerging acute life-threatening disorders and to maintain the vital functions of the body. All hospitals are obliged to provide the necessary scope of emergency healthcare to any person in need of such care, regardless of their nationality, residence and health insurance status.

If you have a health insurance, all the cost related to emergency healthcare is covered by the NHIF.

If you don't have an insurance, the costs of the emergency healthcare in terms of ambulance cost or ER doctor check-up before the patient's hospitalization are ensured by the state. However, any necessary tests performed at the ER such as x-rays, blood/urine/biochemistry test and medications used for your treatment are paid by the patient.

For persons granted international protection. people who have already received international protection (refugee/humanitarian status or persons with granted asylum) have the same healthcare rights as Bulgarian citizens and must pay their health insurance on their own.

The payment of health insurance for asylum-seekers within their Procedure for granting refugee status or humanitarian status is done by the State Agency for Refugees with funds from the state

Budget. However, the obligation to cover the health insurance on your own arises from the date of initiation of a procedure for granting refugee or humanitarian status.

After the beneficiaries of international protection have obtained their ID Card, they have to go through a particular procedure in order to arrange the transfer of their health insurance coverage.

A copy of the ID card needs to be provided to the State Agency of Refugees (SAR) by submitting it to 'Ovcha Kupel' Registration Centre in order to have an official Certificate by SAR issued.

This Certificate must be provided to the National Revenue Agency (NRA) that can then transfer the health insurance payments from the holders Personal Number of a Foreigner to their Uniform Civil Number/Personal Identification Number (EGN).

If the person is unemployed or he/she is considered a self-insured (due to, for example, having a freelance occupation such as being a doctor, merchant, craftsman, agricultural landowner, etc.) then they have to pay the health insurance on their own. As of August 2017, this comes to 18. 4 BGN a month. However, if the unemployed person is registered as unemployed with

the Labour Office and receives unemployment benefit, the health insurance contribution is paid by the Unemployment Fund.

If a person with a refugee or a humanitarian status qualifies for receiving monthly social benefits and targeted heating allowances under the Social Assistance Act, if he/she is not insured on another basis and if he/she is accommodated in specialized institutions for social services, the health insurance contribution is at the expense of the State Budget.

If insurance has not been paid for a total of three months, the person is marked as having discontinued health rights which can be redeemed upon payment of the missing amount. If a person has their health rights discontinued then they have to pay for any health services they may wish to use, such as hospital visits, on their own.

If they want to have their health rights back and immediately go to the hospital, aside from paying the necessary amount, the person has to take a notice of sums owned to the doctor, because the latter will be unable to see in the system if the rights have been redeemed.

You can check your health insurance status or any amounts that may be owed on the NRA's website after entering your personal Number of a Foreigner or Uniform Civil Number.

Typically, a person is released from paying for health services upon paying insurance. However, there are certain minimum fees which are paid by the patient such as for overnight hospital stays (as of 2019, it's 5.80 BGN per night) and visits to the personal General Practitioner and dentist (as of 2019, it is 2.90 BGN).

Also, all services not covered by the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) are paid in full by the patient.

There is no fee for the personal GP to be paid for children and for pensioners the fee is only 1 BGN. More information on this topic can be found on the NHIF's website.

Every person with paid health insurance is assigned to a General practitioner (Gp). This can be done during or after the procedure for granting international protection. The personal GP does regular check-ups, provides you with referrals to visit specialist doctors and medical certificates for starting work, among other things. If the person already has a personal GP and wishes to select a new one, they can only do so in the period of 1 st-30th June or 1st-31st December.

Certain doctors stop taking on new patients for administrative reasons ev8n before the end of these periods, so it is not advisable to wait until the very last moment.

There is a register of General Practitioners who have a contract with NHIF which you can use to find GP near your address of residence.

Persons with granted international protection have the right to visit specialist doctors under the same terms and following the procedure for Bulgarian citizens. Specialists can be visited through a referral letter issued by your GP. In that case, the check-up is covered by the health insurance fund and the patient pays only a minimum fee. However, if you are not able to obtain a referral letter from the GP or the specialist you have chosen to visit does not with work with the NHIF, then you can make an appointment with the specialists, but you will need to pay the whole price of the check up on your own, The prices of consultation visits of specialist varies and they can be from 40-70 BGN excluding any tests performed during the visit or afterwards.

Persons with granted international protection have the same access to dental medical services under the terms and following the Procedure for Bulgarian citizens.

Persons with granted international protection have the same access to medication under the terms and following the procedure for Bulgarian citizens.

Medicines can be obtained in licensed pharmacies or drug stores. Majority of the specialized medications such as antibiotics, painkillers, anti-inflammatory medications, blood pressure regulators, etc. can be obtained only with a medical prescription issued by a doctor. However, some mild medicines such as cold medicines (paracetamol, nurofen, aspirin, analgin, etc.) can be purchased without a doctor's prescription. In general, medications are paid in full by the patients. However, in some of continued or long-term treatment necessary some medications prescribed by a specialist doctor may be covered in full or partially by the health insurance.

This is done based on a prescription book issued by the GP. Pharmacies and drug stores in Bulgaria are easily accessible and the prices of the medications may vary across different pharmacies. In most of the big cities, there are also pharmacies working 24/7 and the prices of medicines does not differ during day or night working hours.

National revenue agency - http://www.nap.bg/en/

Whether you're living in Bulgaria or just visiting, it's extremely risky not to have health insurance for yourself and your family; if you're uninsured or under-insured, you could be faced with some very high medical bills.

Visitors

If you have a holiday home and come to Bulgaria as a visitor (i.e. for less than 90 days at a time and less than 183 days in any year), you should check whether you qualify for free or subsidised health treatment in Bulgaria as part of a reciprocal health agreement between your home country and Bulgaria (see below). If you don't, you must choose between a private international health insurance policy and holiday/travel insurance.

Reciprocal Health Agreements

Citizens of the UK are entitled to free medical, dental and hospital treatment in Bulgaria, under a reciprocal healthcare agreement between the two countries. To access healthcare, you will need a UK passport and NHS card. UK citizens must pay for medicines, however.

WARNING

Most other countries don't have reciprocal health agreements, so if you aren't covered by Bulgarian social security you must have private health insurance or a holiday/travel policy that covers you in Bulgaria.

Since Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007, EU-citizens with health insurance in their home countries are entitled to reduced cost or free medical treatments covered by the Bulgarian social insurance (i.e. state-provided medical treatment only) on production of a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) – provided, their stay in the country is temporary (usually this refers to a period of up to 90 days).

However, take into consideration that the healthcare sector in Bulgaria is severely limited; therefore it's advisable that visitors to Bulgaria have private medical insurance.

Residents

If you plan to take up residence in Bulgaria and will be contributing to Bulgarian social security (called 'NOI') – e.g. if you will be working in Bulgaria – you and your family will be entitled to free or subsidised medical and dental treatment from the Bulgarian state system.

Once you have a residence permit you will pay contributions through the NOI to the Bulgarian state health system, currently around 15 lev per month. This entitles you to free treatment from a GP, free referrals to a specialist, and medicines at reduced prices or free.

SURVIVAL TIP

It's recommended that you take out private health insurance while in Bulgaria, even if you're a resident, as the standard of private health care tends to be much higher than that of the state system. You should also check your entitlements under the Bulgarian state health scheme and when such cover might become effective.

Residents who don't contribute to social security (e.g. retirees) and aren't covered by a reciprocal agreement should take out a private international health insurance policy.

SURVIVAL TIP

If you're planning to take up residence in Bulgaria, you should ensure that you and your family have full health insurance during the interval between leaving your last country of residence and obtaining health insurance in Bulgaria.

One way to insure yourself for this interim period is to take out a holiday/travel insurance policy. If you already have private health insurance, it's better to extend your present health insurance policy to provide international cover (which is usually possible) than to take out a new policy. This is particularly important if you have an existing health problem that won't be covered by a new policy.

LABOR MARKET ACCESS

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria all citizens shall be equal before the law. There shall be no privileges or restriction of the rights on the grounds of race, national or social origin, ethnic self-identity, sex, religion, education, opinion, political affiliation, personal or social status or property status. Hence, beneficiaries of international protection have the same employment rights as Bulgarian nationals.

Applicants are issued an official notice for their right to work by the State Agency for Refugees. The Labour office with jurisdiction over their residence address pursuant to the Employment promotion Act. The rights under this chapter may be exercised by

Registration as an unemployed at the Labour Office is an opportunity to find a job but is also a mandatory condition for application for monthly social assistance at the Social Assistance Directorate. In order to be registered as an unemployed you have to meet the following conditions simultaneously:

- ✓ not to work
- ✓ to be looking for a job and
- ✓ to be ready to begin work within 14 days after receiving notification from the Labour Office.

Foreigners who have been granted refugee or humanitarian status can register as an unemployed at the Labour Office according to their permanent or current address.

In case of difference between the permanent and current address, registration at two different Labour Offices is not allowed.

In case of change in the permanent and/or current address you are obliged to notify the Labour Office where you are registered within 7 days.

The applicable Labour office where you need to register used on your permanent or current address can be identified via the National Labour Agency website.

The registration with the Labour Ofrice is done in person on the basis of an application drawn up according to the model approved by the Executive Director of the Employment Agency an identity document (an ID card of a refugee or of humanitarian status holder or a card of a person granted asylum) documents attesting to acquired education and/or qualification.

- ✓ a document certifying address registration for the current address (in cases when the registration with EBD is done with an address other than the one indicated on the identity document)
- ✓ Documents attesting to general and/or years of employment, and/or contributory years of employment
- ✓ In case you have documents for years of employment and/or years of contributory employment, acquired in countries with which the Republic of Bulgaria has concluded agreements in the field of social security, you can turn to the National Social Security Institute (NSSI) to receive a certificate attesting to years of employment issued on the basis of the submitted documents.

Beneficiaries of international protection have equal access and enjoy all the employment and training rights laid down in the Employment Promotion Act; any direct or indirect discrimination, Privileges or restrictions for reasons of nationality, origin, gender, race, etc. Are prohibited in the process of employment mediation.

Following the registration with the Labour office, jobseekers are entitled to use:

- ✓ information about advertised job vacancies
- ✓ information about programs and measures for maintaining and promoting employment
- ✓ mediation for information provision and employment
- ✓ psychological counseling
- ✓ professional orientation
- ✓ inclusion in adult training

Motivation for active behavior on the market and participation in employment and training programs and measures scholarships for training, financial support for transportation and accommodation over the training period

Registration with the Labour Office is a precondition for applying for unemployment benefits, social assistance and services.

The services provided by the Labour Office and its territorial units are free-of-charge and are provided in the official language of the state-Bulgarian. Hence, if you don't have a good command of Bulgarian language, you are advised to have a Bulgarian speaker with you during the registration.

Once you are register at the Labour Oice they can assist in finding a job through the following process. An individual action plan and an obligatory schedule for visits to the Labour Office is

prepared for each foreigner granted refugee or humanitarian status registered as an unemployed. The dates of the visits are recorded in a special registration card.

The individual action plan is a type of contract between you and the employment mediator who represents the Labour Office. The implementation of the individual plan is assessed periodically, with additional measures being marked out to encourage looking for a job and beginning work.

Any person registered with the Labor office is obliged to to follow the recommendations of the employment mediator and the employment measures set down in the individual action plan:

- ✓ upon receiving a written Invitation from the Labour Office to be present on the date and In the hour stated
- ✓ to abide by the schedule of visits to the Labour Office - to notify within 7 working days of the change in any of the circumstances declared, Directorate "Labor Office" regardless of the address of their registration including changes in the address registration or employment
- ✓ accept appropriate work and / or inclusion in adult and adult employment programs and measures as well as in programs and projects funded by European and other international funds.
- ✓ to abide strictly by the requirements for participation in training courses for adults
- ✓ to also abide by other requirements set down in the indi-

For further information on the possibilities of vocational training check the website of the Labour Office.

JOB HUNTING

A part & f the Labor office assistance and consultation in the process of finding a job, you can search for a job through various public sourcES.

1. Some popular websites posting job vacancies on a daily basis are

- ✓ Jobs.Bg
- ✓ Zaplata.Bg
- ✓ Karieri.Bg
- ✓ Rabota.Bg
- ✓ Alo.Bg
- ✓ jooble.org

2. You can also turn to recruitment agencies

Most popular recruitment agencies in Bulgaria are

- ✓ Easy Consult
- ✓ HRS
- ✓ Adecco Bulgaria
- ✓ Balkan invest
- ✓ Horizons
- ✓ Correct Consult
- ✓ Manpower

One of the most important things while you are looking for a job is your cv!

There are various CV templates on the internet from which you can choose but whatever cv template you choose take into account the following tips:

- ✓ Main personal data and contact information-make sure you include your name, telephone, e-mail, education, experience and interests; put the contact information on the first page.
- ✓ Format-Select a format that allows you to highlight your knowledge, skills and experience. Stick to no more than 2 A4 pages CV templates.
- ✓ Presentation is the key-Successful CV is carefully arid clearly presented and well structured. Pay attention to all the details-grammar, punctuation and style. Use short sentences. Avoid making notes in your CV in relation to your social status (single, married, etc.)

Lack of experience-If you have little or no professional experience - focus on your education and training, mark traineeships and projects you have been involved in. Mark your language skills and degree of proficiency even if you don't have a certificate for them, but don't exaggerate your level of command of the language CV Language - make sure that the whole CV is written in:

- ✓ the same language – do not mix Bulgarian and English language, chose one of the two languages and also take into consideration the language of the job announcement
- ✓ photo - don't use selfies, photos with friends or animals as a photo for your CV better use a passport type of photo
- ✓ do not send old CV - make sure that the CV with which you apply contains all of your up-to-date information.

Good looking CV is the first step to getting a job, the next one will be the interview at which not only your qualifications and skills are looked at but also the general impression you leave at the recruiter!

Some tips for job interviews

- ✓ First impression - Use body language, smile is mandatory, look at people's eyes when you talk to them demonstrate interest in the position
- ✓ Greet the interviewers adequately - handshake is a standard greeting in Bulgaria
- ✓ Do not play / use your phone during the interview - switch it off or put it on mute
- ✓ Don't be arrogant at the interview - be polite, open and humble at the interview
- ✓ Research the company in advance - check the company, the interview, website and what it does, as you may be asked about it on
- ✓ Be prepared for some of the below standard questions
    - o Why did you apply for this job? - The goal is to reveal your degree of motivation; carefully check what the job focus on what you can offer implies, Identify the benefits you feel you can get, and
    - o Tell me about yourself? - The employer wants to get a quick idea about both your education and your past experience, as well as about who you are;
    - o What are your strengths and weaknesses? - This question affects self-esteem and self-awareness. Choose to identify weaknesses with less negative significance and try to turn them into strong ones. For example, "I'm a bit of a perfectionist, but on the other hand it's a good quality". "My financial skills are not as good as I would like, but I'm working on improving that"
    - o What is your biggest achievement? - This explains what motivates you and what matters to you (family, work, education, or holiday). Choose something that makes you stand out and includes positive features such as your purposefulness, strong character
    - o What is the biggest problem you have encountered? - Try to choose something that will show you in positive light. How did you overcome it? What did you learn? This will not only show you how you handle stressful situations but also your decision-making abilities
    - o What do you do during your free time? - There are two reasons why this is being asked : employer wants to make sure you have side interests and that your hobbies will not interfere with work
    - o What pay do you expect? - Specify remuneration ranges that are acceptable to you. Do a search through advertisements that show pay or statistics for the business sector you are applying for. Do not underestimate or overestimate.

Specify a non-exact figure, but a range to show that you are ready to negotiate.

Have some questions about the position or the company prepared in advance to ask during the interview-not asking questions is considered sometimes as lack of interest to the company or the position. When you receive a Job offer, confirm the type of contract that you have been offered.

There are two types of employment contracts, based on which you can be performing work a company/organization : a labour contract and a civil (service) contract.

Labour contracts can be permanent (open-ended) and fixed term, but regardless of the their length, they provide you with a number of economic and social rights (individual amount of the salary, social and health insurance, paid annual leave, additional leave pursuant to the Labour Code and other social acquisitions).

- ✓ On the other hand, if you are contracted to perform work based on a civil (service) contract, you do not enjoy the same rights and protection as an employee/worker contracted on a labor contract governed by the Labor Code.
- ✓ If you are contracted on a civil contract you need to confirm with your employer whether the coverage of your compulsory social security includes only the risks of general illness, old age and death or also coverage for work accident, occupational illness, maternity / paternity and unemployment.

Foreigners who have been granted international protection have equal rights and obligations as those of Bulgarian citizens at the conclusion, amendment and termination of a labour or civil (service) contract.

For starting work under a labor contract, you need to provide the following documents:

- ✓ a Bulgarian identity document-refugee card or a card of a foreigner with humanitarian status or a card of a person granted asylum
- ✓ a document attesting to acquired education, specialty, qualification, license, academic rank or academic degree, where such are required for the position or the job for which the person is applying