



## EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA FOR 2017/2018 SCHOOL YEAR

The main results from the National Statistical Institute (NSI) annual comprehensive surveys characterizing the activity of educational institutions are as follows:

- In the 2017/2018 academic year in kindergartens are enrolled 220.9 thousand children or with 1.6% less in comparison with the previous year.
- In 2017, high school graduates in general and vocational schools are respectively 26.6 and 21.7 thousand students.
- Enrolled in the varying degrees of higher education in 2017/2018 academic year are 236.3 thousand.
- As of 31.12.2017 for acquiring educational and scientific degree 'Doctor' in the country are trained 6 564, of which 529 foreign citizens.

### Pre-primary education

As of 1.12.2017 in the country functioned 1 834 independent kindergartens with director or with 60 less in comparison with the previous year. In there were enrolled 220.9 thousand children, of which 114.0 thousand or 51.6% were boys. In comparison with the previous year the number of children decreased by 1.6% (Figure 1).

The coverage of children in this educational level estimated by the group net enrolment rate<sup>1</sup> for the 2017/2018 school year was 78.4% or with 1.0 percent point less in comparison with the 2016/2017 school year.

The average number of children in a kindergarten in the country was 120 as in the urban areas was significantly larger (156) than in the rural areas (62). A group was formed by average 24 children, respectively - 25 in urban and 19 in rural areas.

The teaching personnel employed in kindergartens were 19.6 thousand as in comparison with the previous school year decreased by 292 persons or by 1.5%. Kindergarten teachers were 18.4 thousand, or 93.6% of all personnel in kindergartens.

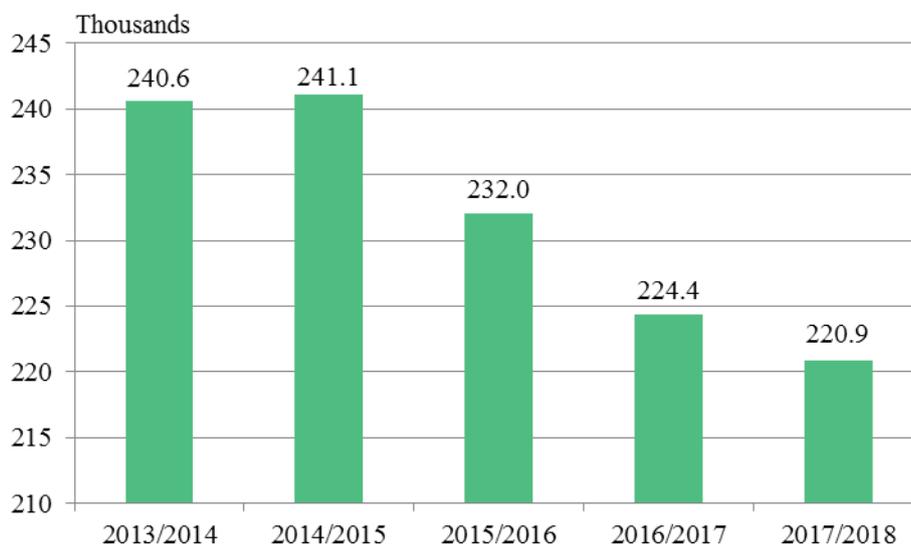
In 2017/2018 school year in the country had functioned 98 licensed private kindergartens, with 5 more than in the previous year. There were enrolled 4 007 children or 1.8% of all children in kindergartens.

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<sup>1</sup> The group net enrollment rate of children in kindergartens is calculated as a percentage of the number of children in kindergartens in the age group 3 - 6 years to number of population in the same age group.



**Figure 1. Children in kindergartens**



## General education

As of 1.10.2017 there were classes in 1 969 general education schools<sup>1</sup>. Out of them 137 were primary schools, 1 199 - basic schools, 58 - combined schools, 117 upper secondary and 458 - secondary schools. In comparison with the previous school year, because of closure or modification, the total number of general education schools decreased by 21. The students were 587.8 thousand, of which 90.2 thousand were enrolled in schools in the rural areas. There were 22 pupils on average for one class in the daily general education schools.

During the past 2016/2017 school year for different reasons 16.1 thousand students left the general education schools, of which 14.1 thousand were in basic education. The largest relative share was the share of the students who left because had gone abroad - 7.6 thousand or 47.3% of the total number of leaving students, followed by those who left because of family reasons - 5.9 thousand or 36.5% and those who left because of unwillingness to study - 9.5%.

In 2017, 101.3 thousand students graduated from basic education<sup>2</sup> and 26.6 thousand students graduated secondary education in the general education schools.

The relative share of children in general education schools who studied foreign languages in the primary grades (I - IV) was 84.5%, as the largest share came from those who studied English - 91.4%.

The total number of the teaching staff (incl. directors and deputy directors with teaching activity) employed in general education schools during the 2017/2018 school year was 49.0 thousand. Of which with education-qualification degree 'Bachelor' or 'Master' were 94.1%, 5.3% were with education-

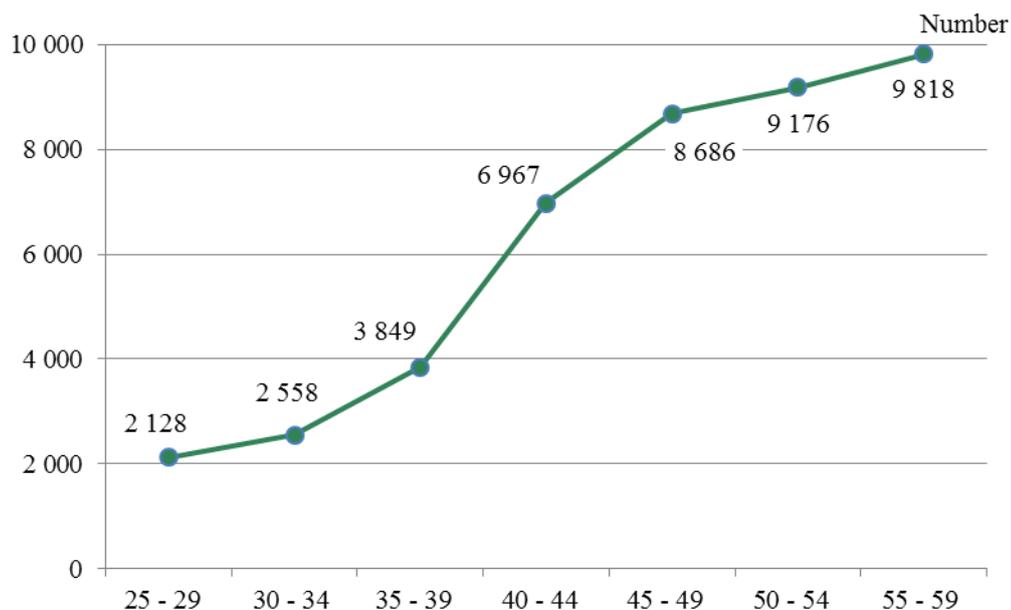
<sup>1</sup> Incl. the Bulgarian schools abroad, financed by state.

<sup>2</sup> In 2017, basic education acquired all grade VII graduates, grade VIII graduates from non-profiled classes and grade IX graduates from profiled classes with selection after VII grade (provisions of the Pre-school and School Education Act).



qualification degree - 'Professional Bachelor' or the equivalent degree in past and 0.6% were with secondary education. In the teaching profession women were predominant who constitute 85.3% of the total number of teachers.

**Figure 2. Teaching staff in general schools by age in 2017/2018 school year**



As of 1.10.2017 there were 76 active private general education schools in the country, out of them 6 primary schools, 27 basic, 18 secondary schools and 25 secondary schools. In there were enrolled totally 9 349 students or 1.6% from the total number of students in general education.

### **Vocational education and training (VET)**

Vocational education and training during the school year 2017/2018 was carried out in 22 art schools, 24 sport schools, 359 vocational gymnasiums and 29 vocational colleges with enrolment after secondary education. The total number of students in there was 142.0 thousand

Boys were predominant in vocational education and training and were 60.2% of the total number of students in this educational level.

In 2017, 21.7 thousand persons graduated with attainment of diploma for secondary education in art schools, sport schools and vocational gymnasiums. Level of professional qualification was acquired by the following number of students in the respective programmes:

- 413 students acquired first level of professional qualification in vocational classes;
- Second and third level of professional qualification in 2017 were acquired respectively by 2.9 and 13.2 thousand;
- 691 students acquired fourth level of professional qualification in vocational colleges with enrolment after secondary education.



From the total number of students who acquired third level of professional qualification, the highest relative share was of those who studied specialties in the field<sup>1</sup> of 'Engineering and engineering trades'(24.9%), followed by this of 'Business and administration' (20.4%).

The relative shares of students who acquired fourth level of professional qualification were highest in the fields of 'Business and administration' - 42.1% and 'Security services' - 37.8%.

During the 2017/2018 school year 1 048 students were enrolled in 38 private vocational gymnasiums and private vocational colleges with enrolment after secondary education, which was 0.7% of the total number of students in the vocational education.

During the present school year the total number of teachers (incl. directors and deputy directors with teaching activity) in vocational education was 11.8 thousand, of which 94.9% were with acquired educational qualification degrees 'Bachelor' or 'Master'.

In programmes for vocational training against payment for acquiring level of professional qualification in Vocational Training Centres, vocational gymnasiums and vocational colleges were enrolled 22.9 thousand students aged 16 years or more. According to the level of professional qualification, their distribution was as follows: first level - 10.4 thousand, second level - 6.3 thousand, third level - 6.2 thousand and forth level - 45 persons.

### **Tertiary education**

In the academic 2017/2018 year, the total number of the students in Bulgaria enrolled in the four educational-qualification degrees ('Professional bachelor', 'Bachelor', 'Master' and 'Doctor') was 236.3 thousand, which is with 13.6 thousand, or 5.4% less compared to the previous academic year.

#### ***Colleges ('Professional bachelor' educational-qualification degree)***

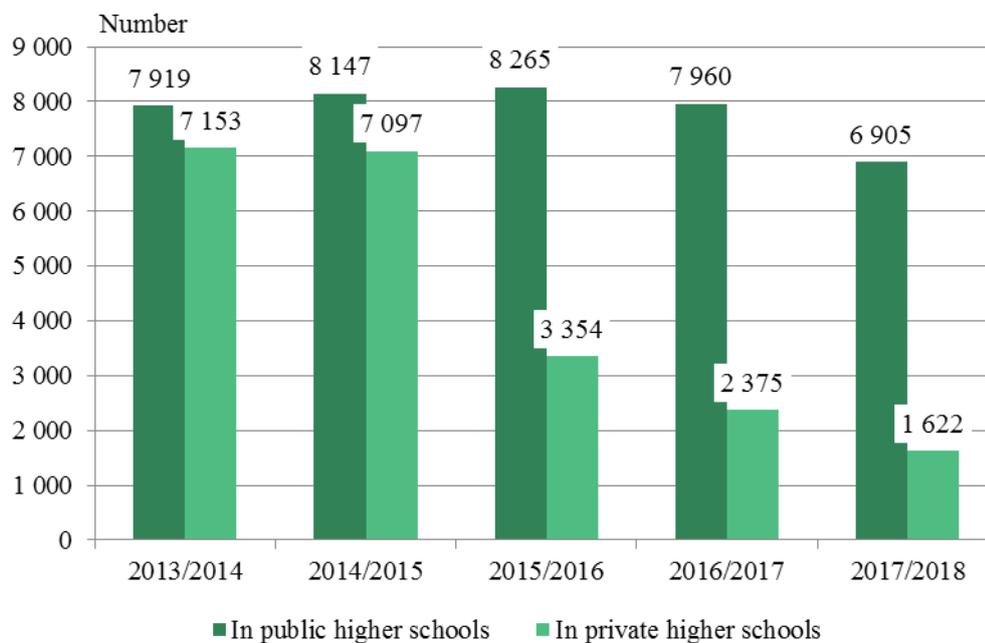
During the 2017/2018 academic year, for acquiring of the degree 'Professional bachelor', in colleges were enrolled 8 527 students. In comparison with the previous year their number decreased with 1 808 or with 17.5%. Out of the total number of the students in colleges, 1 622 or 19.0% were enrolled in private colleges (Figure 3).

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<sup>1</sup> For vocational education and training the fields of education are presented in accordance to the List of Occupations for Vocational Education and Training (approved by Order No. 09-413/12.05.2003 of the Minister of Education and Science).



**Figure 3. Students in colleges**



The number of the teaching staff in colleges was 707 persons, of them 325 or 46.0% were on a full time employment.

In 2017, educational-qualification degree ‘Professional Bachelor’ was acquired by 2 175 students, of which 57.4% were women. The highest number of graduates was in specialities in the following fields of education<sup>1</sup>:

- ‘Health’ - 746 persons;
- ‘Engineering and engineering trades’ - 444 persons;
- ‘Personal services’ - 386 persons;
- ‘Business and administration’ - 331 persons;
- ‘Education’ - 105 persons.

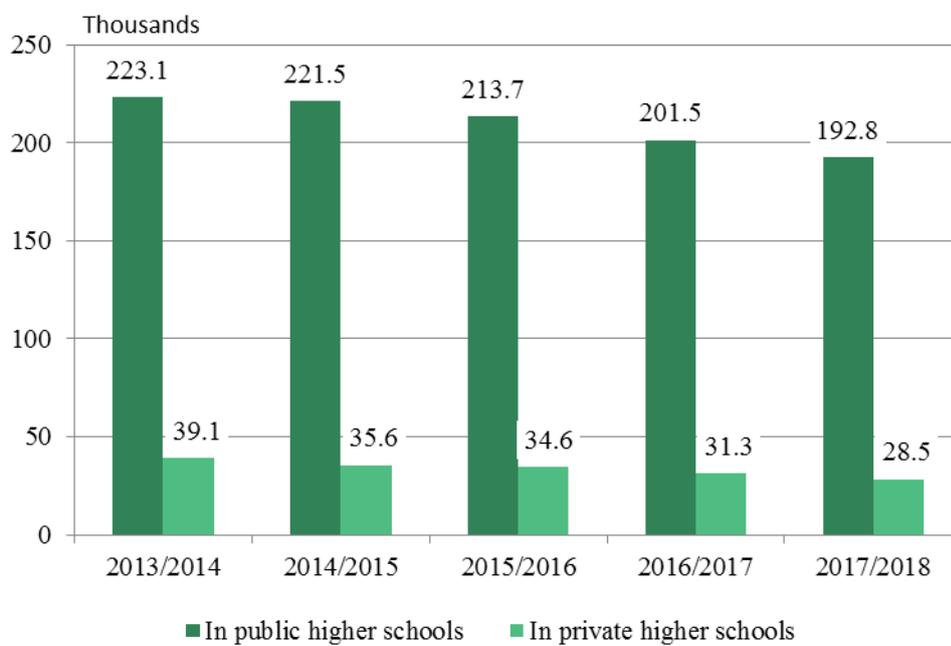
***Universities and equivalent higher schools (‘Bachelor’ and ‘Master’ educational-qualification degrees)***

In 2017/2018 academic year, for acquiring educational-qualification degrees ‘Bachelor’ and ‘Master’ in universities and specialized higher schools were enrolled 221.2 thousand students and in comparison with the previous year their number decreased by 11.6 thousand or by 5.0%. In private educational institutions were enrolled 28.5 thousand students or 12.9% of the total number enrolled in educational-qualification degrees ‘Bachelor’ and ‘Master’ (Figure 4).

<sup>1</sup> In the tertiary education statistics was implemented Classification of fields of education and training - 2015 (State Gazette, No. 46/17.06.2016)



**Figure 4. Students in universities and specialized higher schools**

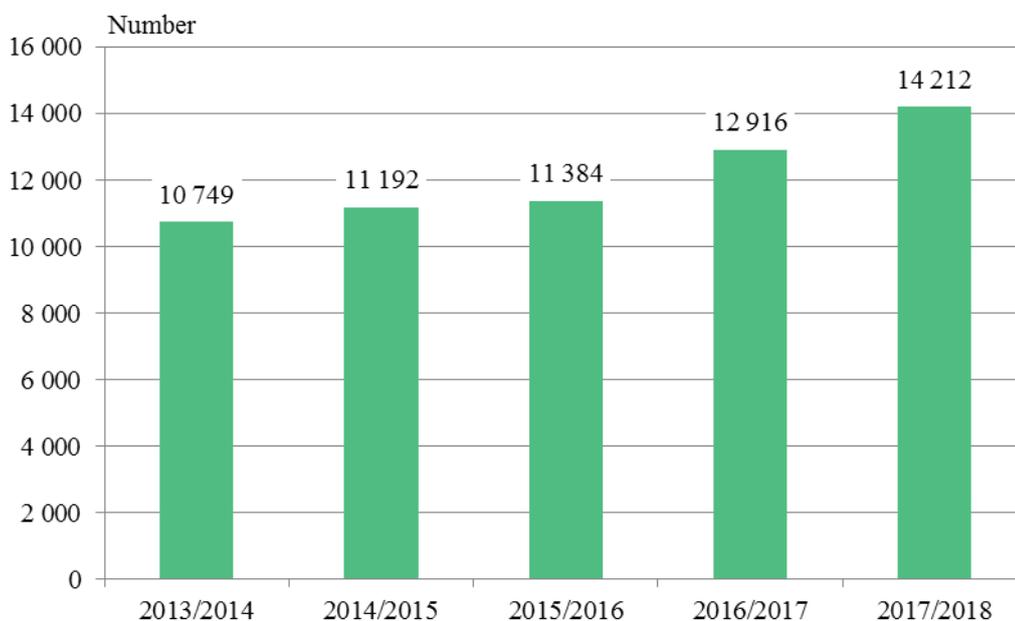


In the academic year 2017/2018, students - Bulgarian citizens were 207.0 thousand or 93.6% of all students in universities and specialized higher schools and in comparison to the previous year their number decreased by 12.9 thousand or by 5.9%. Foreign students were 14.2 thousand, which is 10.0% more than in the previous year and 32.2% more than in the academic year 2013/2014 (Figure 5).

The largest share of foreign students came from Greece (25.8%), followed by the United Kingdom (14.1%), Turkey (10.5%), Germany (8.6%) and Ukraine - 5.4% of the total number of foreign students.



**Figure 5. Foreign students in universities and specialized higher schools**

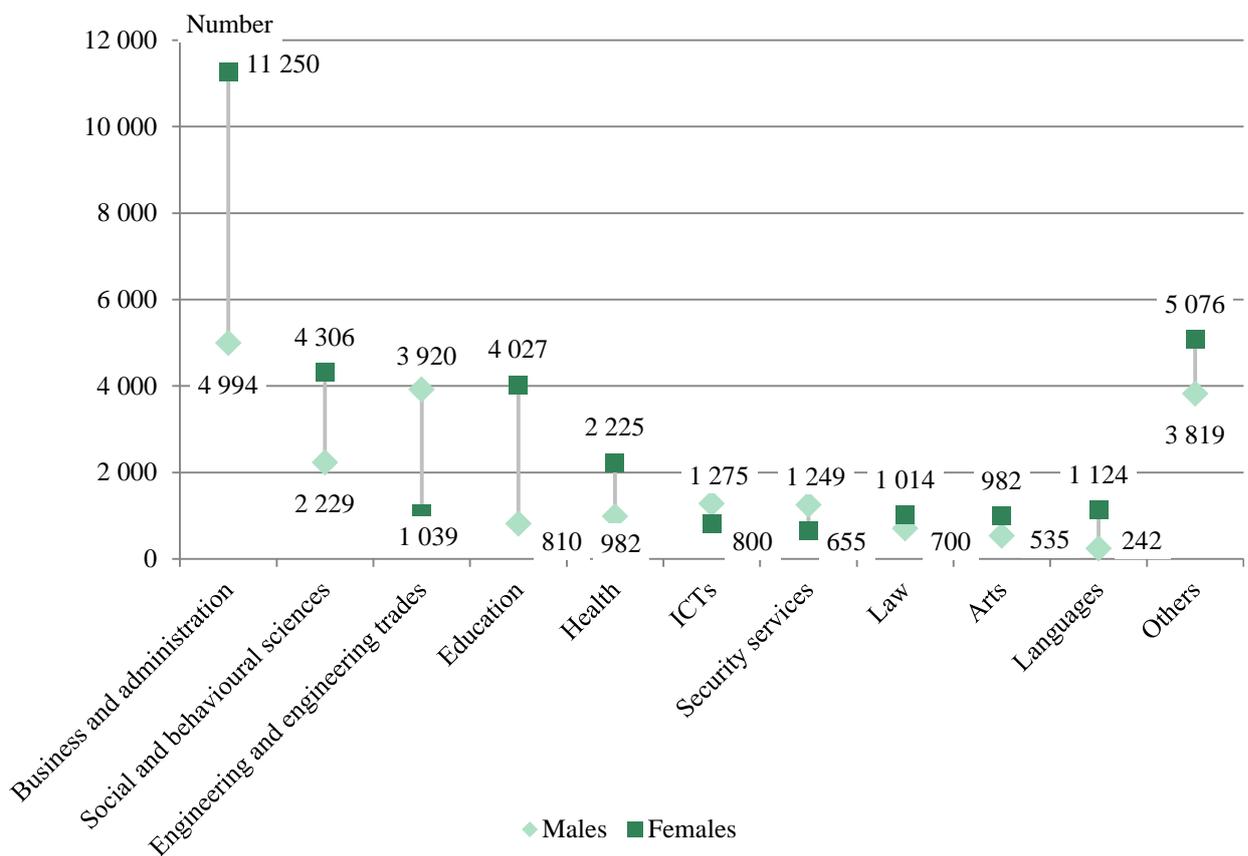


In 2017, in universities and specialised higher schools in the country graduated 53.3 thousand persons, of which 28.9 thousand obtained 'Bachelor' degree and 24.3 thousand - 'Master' degree.

The number of graduates was highest in fields of education 'Business and Administration' - 16 244 persons, 'Social and behavioural sciences' - 6 535 persons and 'Engineering and engineering trades' - 4 959 persons. Differences among graduates by fields of education and sex were observed (Figure 6).



**Figure 6. Graduates in universities and specialized higher schools by narrow fields of education and sex in 2017/2018 academic year**



In 2017/2018 academic year, the number of academic staff in universities and specialized higher schools was 21.2 thousand, of which 49.3% were women. On a full time employment were 13.2 thousand or 62.5% of the academic staff.



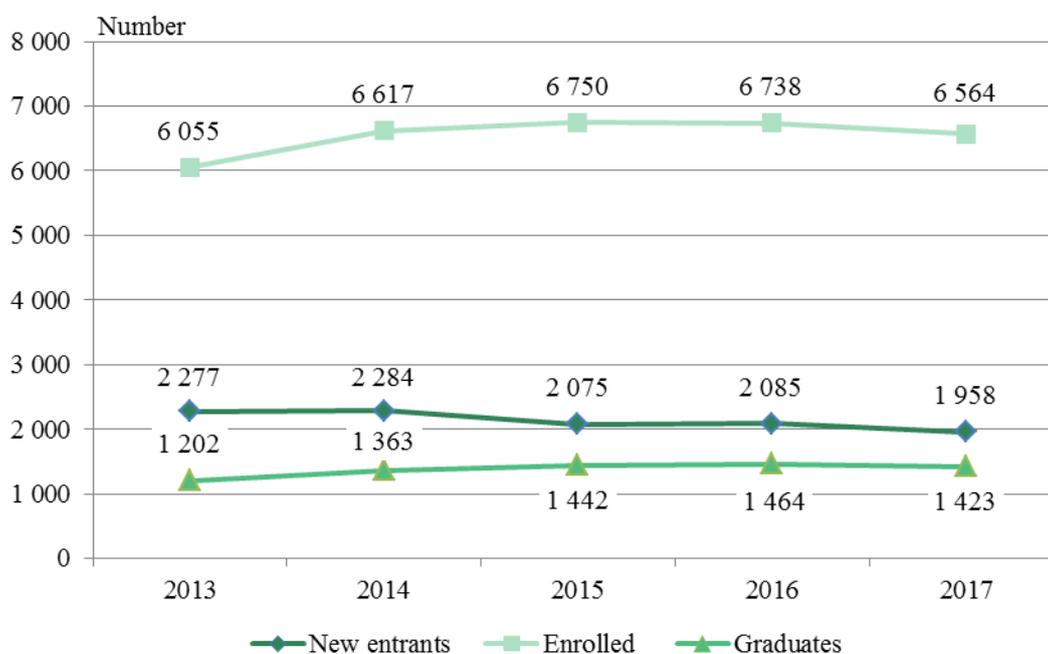
### *Educational and scientific degree 'Doctor'*

As of 31.12.2017, 6 564 Ph.D. students were enrolled in Bulgaria. In comparison with the previous year 2016 their number had decreased by 174 persons or by 2.6% (Figure 7).

The foreign Ph.D. students were 529 or 8.1% of the total number. The largest share came from Greece - 26.8%, followed by Turkey (14.0%) and Kazakhstan (8.9%).

In private institutions were trained 4.5% of the Ph.D. students. Out of them 112 persons, or 38.2% were foreigners.

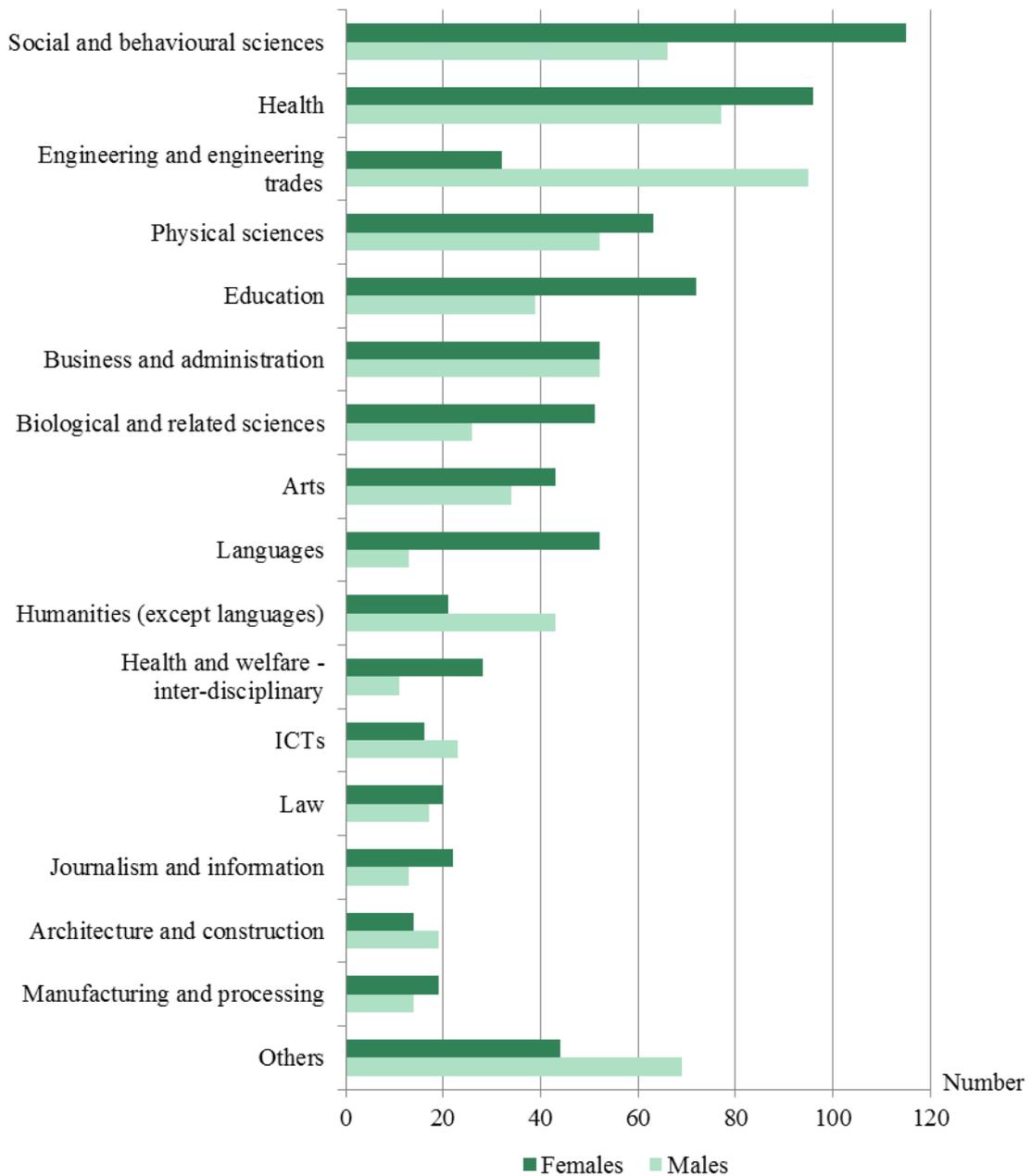
**Figure 7. New entrants, enrolled and graduates in Ph.D. degree for the period 2013 - 2017**



In 2017, a 'Doctor' degree was acquired by 1 423 persons of whom 760, or 53.4%, were women. A considerable difference in the structure of the graduated males and females by fields of education was observed (Figure 8).



**Figure 8. Ph.D. students by narrow fields of education and sex in 2017**





## Methodological notes

Education statistics was developed on the basis of the Regulation N 452/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning, the current legal basis in Bulgaria in the area of education, the International Standard Classification of Education - revision 2011 (ISCED 2011) and the concomitant methodological instructions.

ISCED was designed to serve as a framework to classify educational activities as defined in programmes and the resulting qualifications into internationally agreed categories. The basic concepts and definitions of ISCED are intended to be internationally valid and comprehensive of the full range of education systems. The classification rests on three components: internationally agreed concepts and definitions; the classification systems and mappings of education programmes and related qualifications in countries worldwide.

The National Statistical Institute conducts yearly exhaustive surveys that characterize the activity of the educational institutions.

Educational institutions - directly conduct teaching via educational programmes to the enrollments in organized classes (groups) or via distance mode of learning. Those programmes lead to attainment of the educational degree and/or level of professional qualification. Non-formal training and informal learning are not covered by the scope of the educational system according to the used definitions in ISCED 2011.

With its surveys NSI aiming to determine the number of students in the educational system as of a given date of observation. This is the basis for calculating the internationally accepted indicator 'Participation Rate of the Population in the Educational System', which represents the relative share of students enrolled from a certain age group in relation to the number of the constant population of the country in the same age group.

The current data presented on school education are not comparable to those for previous years because of considerable changes in the educational system structure resulting from Pre-school and School Education Act<sup>1</sup>.

For more information and data on education, visit NSI's webpage (<http://www.nsi.bg/en>), section 'Education and Lifelong Learning' as well as the information system 'Infostat' ([https://infostat.nsi.bg/infostat/pages/module.jsf?x\\_2=42](https://infostat.nsi.bg/infostat/pages/module.jsf?x_2=42)).

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<sup>1</sup> Prom. SG No. 79/13 Oct. 2015, amend. and suppl. SG No. 98/9 Dec. 2016, amend. SG No. 105/30 Dec. 2016, amend. SG No. 58/18 July 2017, amend. and suppl. SG No. 99/12 Dec. 2017, amend. SG No. 24/16 March 2018.