



## EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA IN 2011/2012 SCHOOL YEAR

The level of education of population determines every contemporary country and plays an important economic and social role of the present and the future. One of the main headline targets of the mutual European strategy 'Europe 2020' is to improve educational attainment levels of the population, especially to reduce the school dropout rate and to increase the number of young people with university degree or equivalent degree.

In 2011 compared to previous year educational structure<sup>1</sup> of population aged 7 years and more improves considerably, following the clearly expressed tendency of increase of the number and share of population with tertiary and upper secondary education and decrease of the number of people with lower secondary or lower education.

As of 1.02.2011 the Population census results show 1 348.7 thousand persons with tertiary education, or each fifth person (19.6%). With upper secondary education are 2 990.4 thousand persons (43.4%). The proportion of persons with primary or lower education is 13.9% (or every seventh in 100).

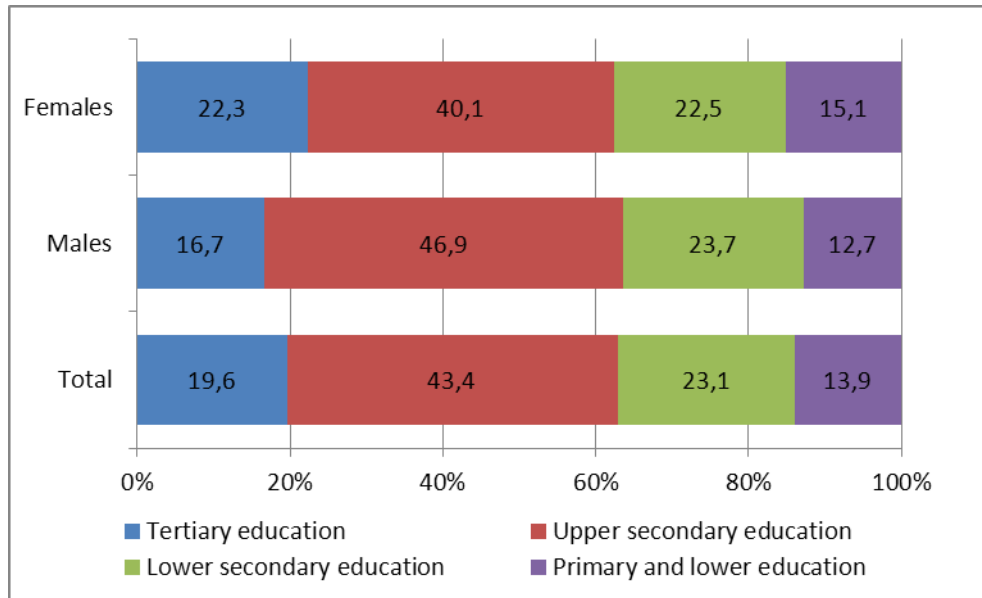
Generally, the education of male population is a little bit higher compared to the education of female -share of males with upper secondary and higher education is 63.6% compared to 62.4% for females. In return for it, the females complete tertiary education more often than the males and at the time of the census there are 791.8 thousand females (22.3%) with tertiary education, compared to 556.9 thousand males (16.7%).

Considerable differences are observed in the educational structure by place of residence - nearly 3/4 of the population in urban areas (71.6%) has at least upper secondary education completed, compared to hardly 40.3% in the rural areas.

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: Population and housing census in the Republic of Bulgaria 2011

Figure 1. Population aged 7 years and more by sex and level of completed education as of 1.02.2011



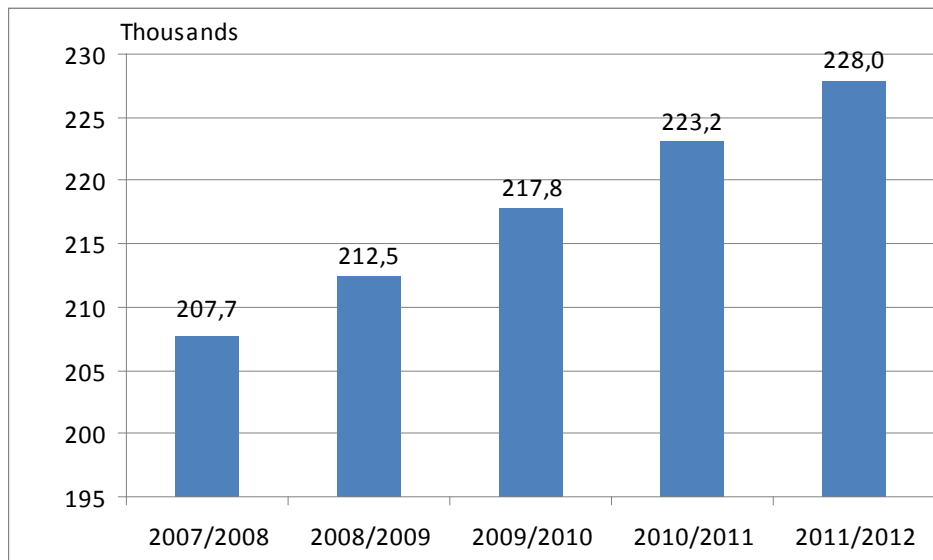
## PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

The number of kindergartens with director in 2011/2012 is 2 112 or 26 less than in 2010/2011, the decrease is mainly in the rural areas - 29. The number of children in kindergartens for 2011/2012 is 228.0 thousand, 20.3 thousand or 9.8% more than their number in 2007/2008 and increased with 2.1% in comparison with the previous school year. The coverage of children in kindergartens estimated by the group net enrolment rate increased<sup>2</sup>, from 74.9% in 2010/2011 to 81.5% in 2011/2012. A better coverage of the children in these institutions is achieved. This is an important indicator, which determinates the efforts of the municipality administrations to attain a better coverage of the children in pre-primary education.

<sup>2</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 2. Children in kindergartens



The average number of children per kindergarten is 108 - in urban areas their average number is larger - 154 and for the rural areas it is 53. The average number of children forming one group is 24, in urban areas - 25 and in rural areas - 20.

The teaching personnel employed in kindergartens are 19.7 thousand from which 18.5 thousand are kindergarten teachers. In comparison with previous school year the total number of pedagogical personnel has increased by 150 persons or by 0.8%.

Private kindergartens are an alternative for a very small number of parents. In 2011/2012 there are 50 licensed private kindergartens with 1 821 enrolled children. Their relative share is only 0.8% of the total number of children in kindergartens.

## GENERAL EDUCATION

In the beginning of the school year 2011/2012 there are classes in 2 091 general education schools<sup>3</sup>. Out of them 155 are primary schools, 1 365 - basic schools, 10 - lower secondary schools, and 161 upper secondary and 400 - secondary general schools. In comparison with the previous school year because of closure or transformation the total number of general education schools has decreased by 5.

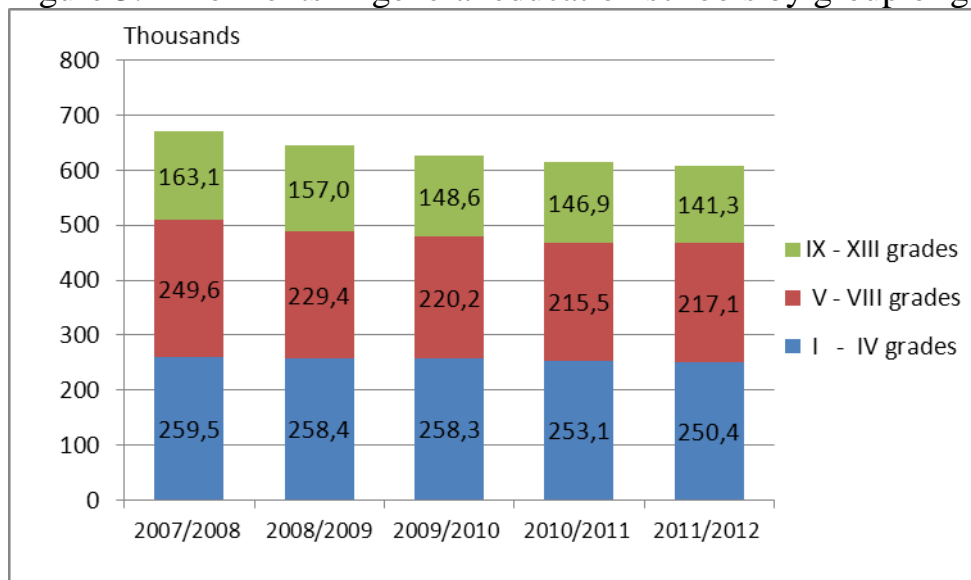
During 2011/2012 school year the number of students in all kinds of general education schools is 608.8 thousand, of which 109.3 thousand in rural areas. In comparison with the

<sup>3</sup> Incl. the Bulgarian schools abroad, financed by state.



www.nsi.bg  
previous school year the number of students in general education decreased by 6.7 thousand or by 1.1%.

Figure 3. Enrolments in general education schools by group of grades



During the previous 2010/2011 school year for different reasons 14.5 thousand students left the general education schools, of which 12.3 thousand are in basic education. The largest relative share is the share of students who left for family reasons - 6.9 thousand or 47.5% of all leaving students, followed by those who left because had gone abroad - 31.8%. The share of those who left because of unwillingness to study is also considerable - 14.9%.

The early teaching of foreign languages is becoming more common for the beginning stages of the primary education. The relative share of children in general education schools who study foreign languages in the primary grades (I - IV) is 82.5%. The largest is the share of students studying English - 88.4% of those who learn foreign languages.

In 2011, 45.4 thousand students graduated from basic education and 32.0 thousand persons graduated secondary education in the general education schools.

The total number of the teaching staff (incl. directors and deputy directors with teaching activity) employed in general education schools during the 2011/2012 school year is 46.2 thousand or 1.0 thousand less than the previous school year. Teachers are high educated - 91.3% of them are with tertiary education – an education-qualification degree of ‘Bachelor’ or ‘Master’ and 8.2% - with education-qualification degree - ‘Professional Bachelor’ (or the equivalent degree in past).

Women are predominant in the teaching profession (84.5% of the total number of teachers). There are 22 pupils on average for one class in the general education schools.

As of 1.10.2011 there are 68 active private general education schools in the country. Out of these there are 7 primary schools, 28 basic, 2 lower secondary, 27 secondary schools and 5



[www.nsi.bg](http://www.nsi.bg)

secondary general schools. 6 257 students are studying in private general education schools. The number of students in the private sector is only 1.0% from the total number of students. In schools and classes for students with special educational needs are enrolled 4.4 thousand pupils or 0.1 thousand (3.2%) less in compassion with previous school year. 940 specialist teachers and 427 educators are taking care of their education and upbringing.

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

Vocational education and training during the school year 2011/2012 is carried out in 22 art schools, 414 vocational gymnasiums, 5 vocational schools and 36 vocational colleges with enrollment after secondary education. The total number of the students in vocational education and training during the current school year is 145.7 thousand. Compared with the 2007/2008 school year it decreased by 33.8 thousand or 18.8% and compared with the previous year - decreased by 15.8 thousand or 9.8%.

Boys are predominant in vocational education and training and are 60.7% of the total number of students.

The highest relative share in programmes for attainment of a third level professional qualification is for students studying specialties in the field of 'Engineering and engineering trades' - 32.5%, followed by share of those in the field of "Business and administration" – 16.9%. In the programmes for attainment of a second level professional qualification the share of students is highest in the field of 'Engineering and engineering trades' (31.1%) and 'Personal services' (19.3%).

During the present school year the total number of teachers working in VET schools is 13.1 thousand, of which 93.4% are high educated with education-qualification degree 'Bachelor' or 'Master'.

In 2011, 30.4 thousand persons graduated with attainment of diploma for secondary education in art schools, vocational gymnasiums and vocational schools.

In 2011, second and third levels of professional qualification were acquired respectively by 8.3 and 18.6 thousand persons.

504 students acquired first level of professional qualification in vocational schools and classes with enrollment after VI, VII and VII grade.

In vocational colleges with enrollment after completed secondary education, 1 547 people have acquired fourth level of professional qualification.

During the 2011/2012 school year 3 299 students are enrolled in 58 private VET schools, which is only 2.3% of all enrollments in the vocational education.

In 2011/2012 significantly increases the number of enrolments aged 16 or more years in programmes for vocational training against payment in Vocational Training Centers, vocational gymnasiums and vocational colleges. According to the level of professional



www.nsi.bg

qualification, their distribution is the following: first level – 11.2 thousand, second level - 4.1 thousand and third and fourth - 6.8 thousand.

In comparison with the previous year the number of enrolled students has increased with 4.4 thousand persons or 25.2%. Significant is the number of people who wish to increase or to attain additional qualification that gives an advantage in the labour market.

## TERTIARY EDUCATION

The total number of the students in Bulgaria enrolled in the four education-qualification degrees ('Professional bachelor', 'Bachelor', 'Master' and 'Doctor') in the academic year 2011/2012 is 285.0 thousand, which is 20.5 thousand, or 7.8%, more than the number in the 2007/2008 academic year.

In 2007/2008 the total number of the PCs in higher schools, which are used for teaching purposes, was 17.4 thousand and 100 students from the regular form of education was using 10.1 PCs. In the 2011/2012 academic year the total number PCs for educational purposes is increased up to 22.4 thousand, 16.3 thousand of which are used for teaching students directly in classes and 100 students from the regular form of education are using 11.5 PCs. The share of PCs with Internet access has increased from 88.0% in 2007/2008 academic year to 93.7% in the last academic year.

### *'Professional bachelor' education-qualification degree*

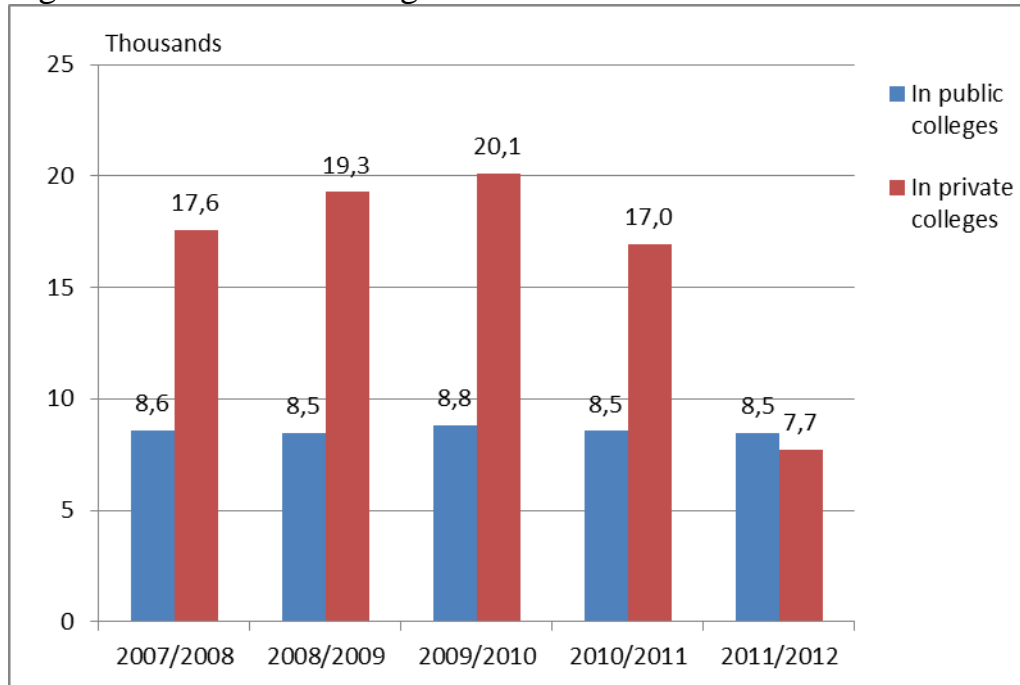
During the 2011/2012 academic year for acquiring of the degree 'Professional bachelor' there are 16.2 thousand students totally, of which Bulgarian citizens are 16.0 thousand, or 98.5%. From the total number of the students in colleges, 7.7 thousand or 47.7% students are enrolled in private colleges.

The number of the students in colleges has decreased with 9.3 thousand, or 36.5% in comparison with the previous academic year. The decrease in private colleges is 9.2 thousand, or 54.4%. Main reason for this is the conversion of an independent private Agricultural college into University of Agribusiness and Rural Development<sup>4</sup>. The relative students passed over from educational qualification degree 'Professional Bachelor' into 'Bachelor' degree. In 2010/2011 academic year the students from the reformed college set up nearly 47% from the total number of students in private colleges in the country.

<sup>4</sup> Decision of the National Assembly/06.07.2011 (promulgated in State Gazette, No 54/15.07.2011)



Figure 4. Students in colleges



In the structure of the students by narrow fields of education, the highest relative share is in the field of Business and Administration - 34.8%, followed by the field of Personal Services - 19.1% and Engineering and Engineering Trades - 18.6%.

In 2011 the degree 'Professional bachelor' was acquired by 7.6 thousand students of whom 99.1% are Bulgarian citizens. Among graduated students the highest number is that of the graduates in the narrow field of Business and Administration - 3.7 thousand or 49.1% of the total, followed by graduates in the field of Social and Behavioural science - 1.5 thousand or 20.1% and Personal Services - 0.7 thousand or 9.0% of the total number of graduates.

The number of teaching staff in the colleges is 1 079 persons, of whom 542 or 50.2% are on a full time employment.

#### *'Bachelor' and 'Master' education-qualification degrees*

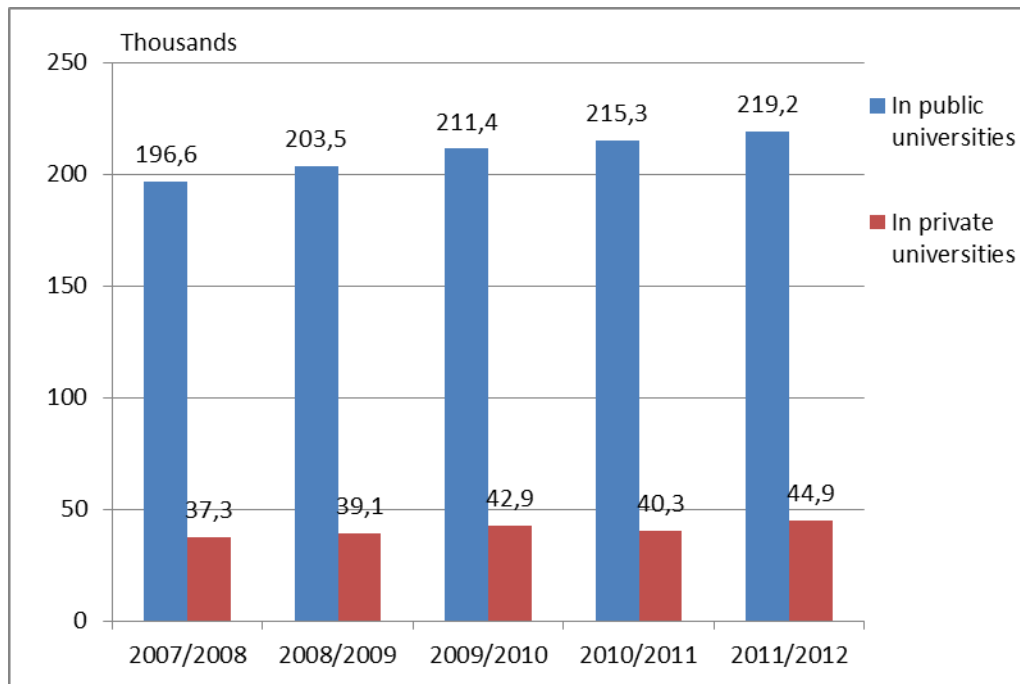
During the 2011/2012 academic year the number of the students, in the two education-qualification degrees 'Bachelor' and 'Master' is 264.1 thousand.

In private universities are enrolled 44.9 thousand students or 17.0% of the total number. The increase of the number of students in private universities is influenced by the conversion of the Agricultural college and passing over the students into Bachelor degree.



www.nsi.bg

Figure 5. Students in universities and specialized higher schools



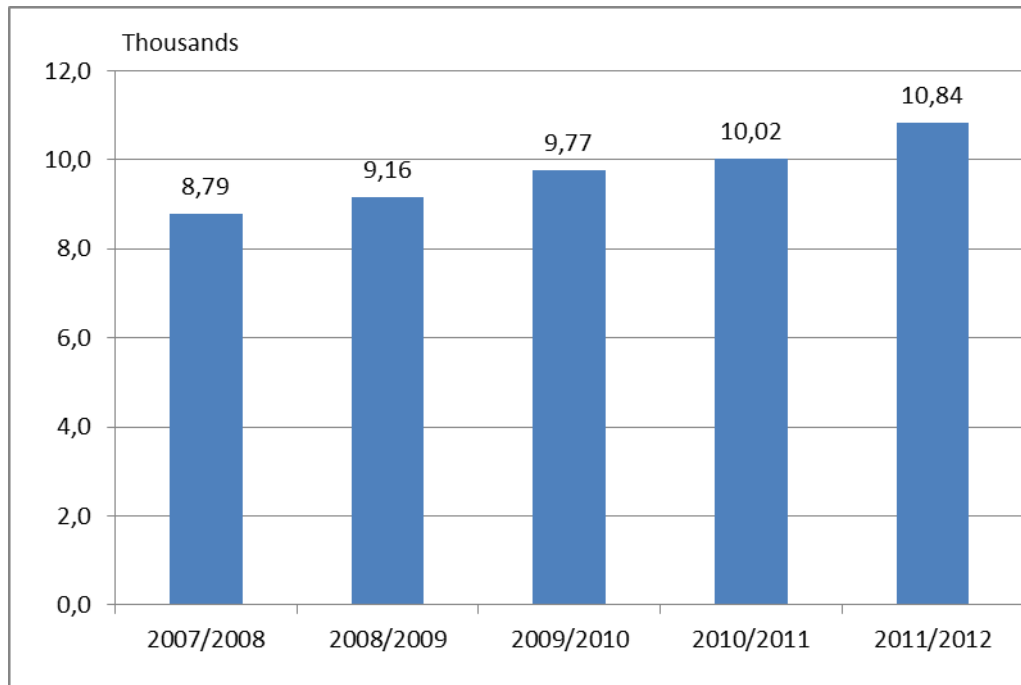
In 2011/2012, students - Bulgarian citizens in universities and specialized higher schools are 253.2 thousand, or 95.9%. Their number has increased by 7.6 thousand in comparison with 2010/2011 academic year or by 3.1%.

Since the beginning of the observed period, the number of foreign students has gradually increased. During the current year it is 10.8 thousand, or by 8.1% more than in the previous year.





Figure 6. Foreign students



The largest increase was observed in the number of students from Greece – from 0.6 thousand in 2007/2008 to 1.9 thousand in the present academic year, or 3.2 times, followed by students from Turkey, which has increased 1.8 times. In 2011/2012 the students from Turkey represent 44.7% of the total number of foreign students in Bulgaria, followed by the students from Greece - 17.5% and Macedonia - 7.8%. At the same time the number of students from Macedonia has gradually decreased - from 2.8 thousand in the beginning of the observed period to 0.9 thousand in 2011/2012 academic year, or by 69.9%.

International student mobility has gained an increased prominence in policy making in the field of higher education, which is accompanied by an increased need for statistical information. Since 2004/2005 academic year NSI has started collecting data and computing indicators on mobile students enrolled in Bulgaria, according to Eurostat methodology. The European Commission concept for mobile student is based on citizenship, country of residence and country of prior education. In Bulgaria the student mobility is measured by ‘country of prior education competed’ which means that mobile student is a student who has graduated secondary education abroad.

The number of mobile students enrolled for acquiring the educational qualification degrees Bachelor and Master increase slowly - from 8.8 thousand in 2007/2008 to 10.8 thousand in 2011/2012 or 22.6% and in comparison with the previous year the increase was 8.5%.



In the structure of the students by narrow fields of education, the highest relative share is this of students in the field of Business and Administration - 23.0%, followed by the field of Engineering and Engineering Trades - 13.9% and Social and behavioural science – 12.3%. The shares of students are lowest in the fields of Veterinary - 0.6%, Life sciences - 0.5% and Mathematics and Statistics - 0.2%.

In 2011/2012 academic year the number of newly enrolled students for acquiring the educational-qualification degrees Bachelor and Master after completed secondary education is 52.5 thousand as it was 50.4 thousand in the previous year. 50.3 thousand of them, or 95.9%, are Bulgarian citizens.

The students, who continuing their education in Master programmes after completed Bachelor educational-qualification degree is 24.5 thousand. 2.5 thousand of them, or 10.1%, enrolled in post Professional bachelor programmes.

In 2011, 55.9 thousand students have graduated with the degrees of ‘Bachelor’ and ‘Master’, of which 54.2 thousand are Bulgarian citizens.

The relative shares of students who have graduated are highest in the fields of Business and Administration – 30.6%, Social and Behavioural Sciences - 15.2%, Engineering and Engineering Trades - 11.8%. The lowest relative shares are found in the fields of Veterinary – 0.4% and Mathematics and Statistics – 0.3%.

In private universities have graduated 13.1% of all graduates in degrees ‘Bachelor’ and ‘Master’.

The teaching staff in the universities and specialized higher schools is 21.9 thousand during 2011/2012 academic year. Regularly employed are 13.5 thousand or 61.5% of the total.

#### *‘Doctor’ qualification and scientific degree*

As of 31.12.2011, 4 703 Ph.D. students are enrolled in Bulgaria, of which 50.9% are women. In comparison with the previous year 2010/2011 their number increased with 608 persons or 14.8%.

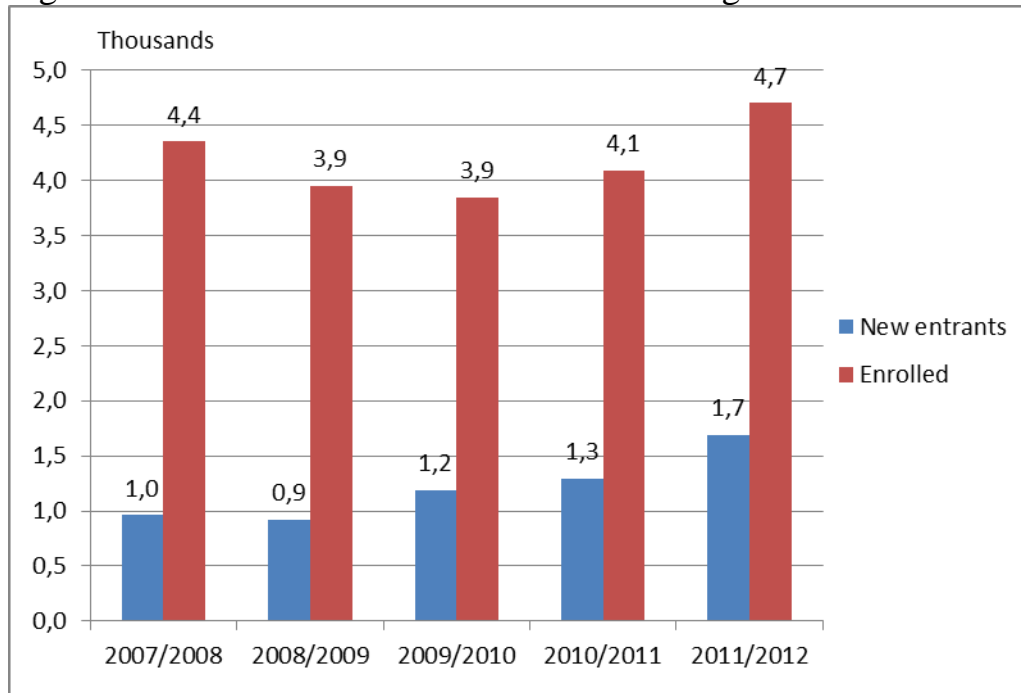
The Ph.D. foreign students enrolled in Bulgaria are 201 persons, or 4.3% of the total. The highest share of foreign students comes from Greece and Macedonia – by 16.4% of the total, followed by the students from Turkey – 12.4%.

During the 2011 the number of newly enrolled Ph.D. students is 1 688, of which 841 or 49.8% are women.

In the distribution by age the largest relative share is this of the students aged 25-29 or 35.1%, followed by the group of 30-34 with 25.0% and 23.4% of all Ph.D. students are aged 40 years and over.



Figure 7. New entrants and enrolled in Ph.D. degree



In 2011 a ‘Doctor’ degree has acquired 638 persons of whom 353, or 55.3%, are women. 37.6% of the total graduated students are aged 40 years and over.

The number of graduated males is the highest in the narrow field Engineering and Engineering Trades – 20.0% of the total, followed by the field of Health - 14.0% and Social and Behavioural Sciences - 8.1%. In the structure of the graduated females by narrow fields of education, the highest relative share is this of Social and Behavioural Sciences - 15.6%, followed by Life sciences – 10.5%.



## METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Education statistics is 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 1997 (ISCED '97) and the concomitant methodological instructions.

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

**Educational institutions** are those that 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, enterprises conducting courses for qualification, language courses and etc., are not covered by the definition educational institutions.

NSI with its surveys is 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.

More information and data on education can be found on NSI's web page: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=36>.



## ANNEX

Table 1

### EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS BY TYPE

	(Number)				
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5782</b>	<b>5303</b>	<b>5298</b>	<b>5200</b>	<b>5164</b>
Kindergartens	2456	2291	2262	2 138	2 112
General and special schools	2563	2254	2201	2175	2166
Primary (I - IV grade)	226	169	156	156	156
Basic (I - VIII grade)	1729	1487	1453	1429	1431
Lower secondary (V - VIII grade)	18	16	14	13	12
Upper secondary (IX - XIII grade)	176	167	165	166	161
Secondary general (I-XIII grade )	414	415	413	411	406
Vocational	503	487	487	484	477
Art schools	21	21	21	21	22
Vocational gymnasiums	449	433	422	422	414
Vocational colleges	28	28	39	36	36
Vocational training schools	5	5	5	5	5
Vocational Training Centres <sup>1</sup>	207	218	295	350	356
Higher	53	53	53	53	53
Independent colleges	10	10	10	9	8
Colleges, at the universities	31	28	23	22	21
Universities and equivalent higher schools	43	43	43	44	45

<sup>1</sup> Centres conducting programmes for attaining of professional qualification.



Table 2

**PUPILS AND STUDENTS BY LEVEL OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARD  
CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATION (ISCED - 97)**

	(Number)				
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1349508</b>	<b>1322952</b>	<b>1314836</b>	<b>1307705</b>	<b>1293961</b>
Pre-primary education (ISCED - 0)	207682	212454	217804	223186	227971
Primary education (I-IV grade, ISCED-1)	262701	261007	260340	255086	252372
Lower secondary education (V-VIII grade, ISCED-2A)	256231	235022	225055	219980	221274
Vocational training for adults - first level professional qualification (ISCED-2C) <sup>1</sup>	8615	5992	4640	8403	11219
Upper secondary education (IX-XIII grade, ISCED-3A, 3C)	337090	319813	306925	303375	282512
Vocational training for adults - second level professional qualification (ISCED-3C) <sup>1</sup>	5283	6441	4620	4737	4062
Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED-4C)	4020	4368	4716	3224	2804
Vocational training for adults - third and fourth level professional qualification (ISCED-4C) <sup>1</sup>	3423	3608	3650	4449	6752
Tertiary education (ISCED-5B, 5A, 6)	264463	274247	287086	285265	284995
Education in colleges (ISCED-5B)	26169	27724	28947	25511	16210
Education in universities and equivalent higher schools (ISCED-5A)	233941	242574	254289	255659	264082
Qualification and scientific degree 'Doctor' (ISCED-6)	4353	3949	3850	4095	4703

<sup>1</sup> Incl. students in vocational gymnasiums and colleges.



Table 3.

**TEACHING STAFF BY LEVEL OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION  
OF EDUCATION (ISCED - 97)**

	(Number)				
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115962</b>	<b>108305</b>	<b>106024</b>	<b>104078</b>	<b>102925</b>
Pre-primary education (ISCED - 0)	19456	19348	19466	19579	19729
Primary education (I-IV grade, ISCED-1)	16586	15259	15054	14780	14666
Lower secondary education (V-VIII grade, ISCED-2A)	24023	21132	20122	19867	19504
Upper secondary education (IX-XIII grade, ISCED-3A, 3C)	32202	29412	28169	26903	25539
Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED-4C)	488	482	551	517	532
Tertiary education (ISCED-5B, 5A, 6)	23207	22672	22662	22432	22955
Education in colleges (ISCED-5B)	1882	1566	1385	1375	1079
Education in universities and equivalent higher schools (ISCED-5A)	21325	21106	21277	21057	21876