



## EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA FOR 2015/2016 SCHOOL YEAR

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

- In the 2015/2016 academic year in kindergartens are enrolled 232.0 thousand children or with 3.8% less in comparison with the previous year.
- In primary education (I - IV grade) 262.0 thousand pupils were enrolled and in the lower secondary (V - VIII grade) - 216.4 thousand.
- In 2015, high school graduates in general and vocational schools are respectively 27.0 and 23.3 thousand students.
- Enrolled in the varying degrees of higher education in 2015/2016 academic year are 266.7 thousand.
- Continues the trend for increasing the number of Ph.D. students, as of 31.12.2015 for acquiring educational and scientific degree 'Doctor' in the country trained 6 750.

### Pre-primary education

As of 1.12.2015 in the country functioned 2 002 independent kindergartens with director or with 11 more in comparison with the previous year. In there were enrolled 232.0 thousand children, of which 120.0 thousand or 51.7% are boys. In comparison with the previous year the number of children decreased by 3.8%.

The coverage of children in this educational level estimated by the group net enrolment rate<sup>1</sup> for the school 2015/2016 year is 81.0% or with 1.9 percent point less in comparison with the school 2014/2015 year.

The average number of children in a kindergarten in the country was 116 as in the urban areas was significantly larger (156) than in the rural areas (57). A group was formed by average 23 children, respectively - 24 in urban and 19 in rural areas.

The teaching personnel employed in kindergartens were 20.4 thousand as in comparison with the previous school year decreased by 122 persons or by 0.6%. Out of personnel in kindergartens 19.1 thousand were kindergarten teachers.

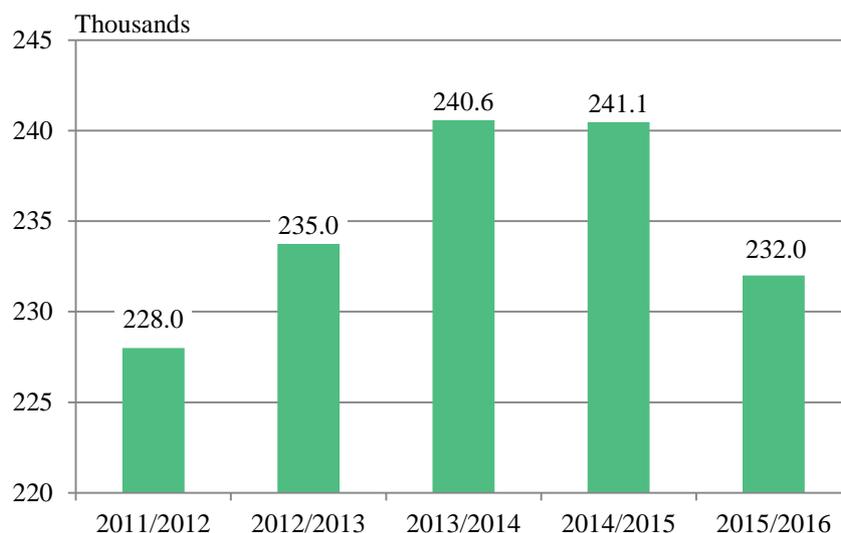
The number of licensed private kindergartens continued to increase but they are still alternative for a small part of the parent. In school 2015/2016 year in the country functioned 92 or 4 more than the previous year as there were enrolled 3 333 children or 1.4% of all pupils in kindergartens.

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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 1.10.2015 there were classes in 2 014 general education schools<sup>2</sup>. Out of these 151 were primary schools, 1 322 - basic schools, 7 - lower secondary schools, 133 upper secondary and 401 - secondary general schools. In comparison with the previous school year, because of closure or modification, the total number of general education schools decreased by 5. The students were 602.2 thousand, of which 102.0 thousand were enrolled in schools in the rural areas. In comparison with the previous school year the students in this educational programme decreased by 2.2 thousand or by 0.4%. There were 21 pupils on average for one class in the daily general education schools.

During the past 2014/2015 school year for different reasons 16.1 thousand students left the general education schools, of which 14.0 thousand were in basic education. The largest relative share was the share of the students who left because had gone abroad - 7.2 thousand or 44.7% of the total number of leaving students, followed by those who left because of family reasons - 5.8 thousand or 36.3% and those who left because of unwillingness to study - 10.1%.

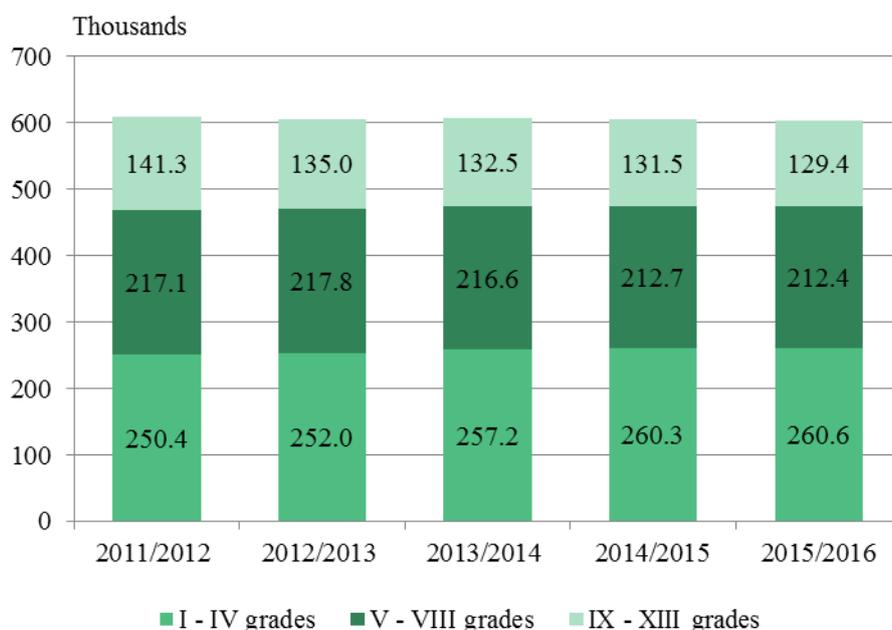
In 2015, 45.8 thousand students graduated from basic education and 27.0 thousand persons graduated secondary education in the general education schools.

The early teaching of foreign languages becomes more common for the beginning stages of the primary education. The relative share of children in general education schools who studied foreign languages in the primary grades (I - IV) was 83.1%, as the largest share was from those who studied English - 90.4%.

<sup>2</sup> Incl. the Bulgarian schools abroad, financed by state.



**Figure 2. Enrolments in general education schools by group of grades**



The total number of the teaching staff (incl. directors and deputy directors with teaching activity) employed in general education schools during the 2015/2016 school year was 45.3 thousand or 84 more than in the previous school year. Of which with high education (education-qualification degree of 'Bachelor' or 'Master') were 93.2%, 6.4% were with education-qualification degree - 'Professional Bachelor' or the equivalent degree in past and 0.4% were with secondary education. In the teaching profession women were predominant who constitute 84.8% of the total number of teachers.

As of 1.10.2015 there were 70 active private general education schools in the country. Out of these there were 7 primary schools, 31 basic, 1 lower secondary, 23 secondary schools and 8 secondary general schools. In there were total 7 603 students or 1.3% from the total number of students in general education.

In 2015/2016 school year in schools and classes for students with special educational needs were enrolled 3.4 thousand pupils or 5.5% less in compassion with the previous school year. 766 specialist teachers and 328 educators were taking care of their education and upbringing.

### Vocational education and training (VET)

Vocational education and training during the school year 2015/2016 was carried out in 22 art schools, 24 sport schools, 387 vocational gymnasiums and 36 vocational colleges with enrolment after secondary education. The total number of students in there was 135.6 thousand and in comparison with the previous year decreased by 5.5 thousand or by 3.9%.



Boys were predominant in vocational education and training and were 59.9% of the total number of students in this educational level.

The highest relative share in programmes for attainment of a third level professional qualification was for students who studied specialties in the field of 'Engineering and engineering trades' - 28.5%, followed by share of those in the 'Personal services' - 17.8%.

In the programmes for attainment of a second level professional qualification leading fields of education was the 'Engineering and engineering trades' (28.2%) and 'Personal services' (23.3%).

During the present school year the total number of teachers working in VET schools was 12.2 thousand, of which 94.2% were high educated with education-qualification degree 'Bachelor' or 'Master'.

In the past 2015, 23.3 thousand persons graduated with attainment of diploma for secondary education in art schools, sport schools, vocational gymnasiums and vocational schools. Level of professional qualification was acquired by the following number of student in the respective programmes:

- 378 students acquired first level of professional qualification in vocational schools and classes with enrolment after VI, VII and VIII grade;
- Second and third level of professional qualification in 2015 were acquired respectively by 3.7 and 14.7 thousand;
- 661 students acquired fourth level of professional qualification in colleges with enrolment after secondary education.

During the 2015/2016 school year 1 631 students were enrolled in 50 private VET schools, which was only 1.2% of the total number of students in the vocational education.

In programmes for vocational training against payment in Vocational Training Centres, vocational gymnasiums and vocational colleges the number of enrolments aged 16 or more years was 9.1 thousand. According to the level of professional qualification, their distribution was the following: first level - 4.6 thousand, second level - 2.1 thousand, third level - 2.4 thousand and forth - 13 persons.

### **Tertiary education**

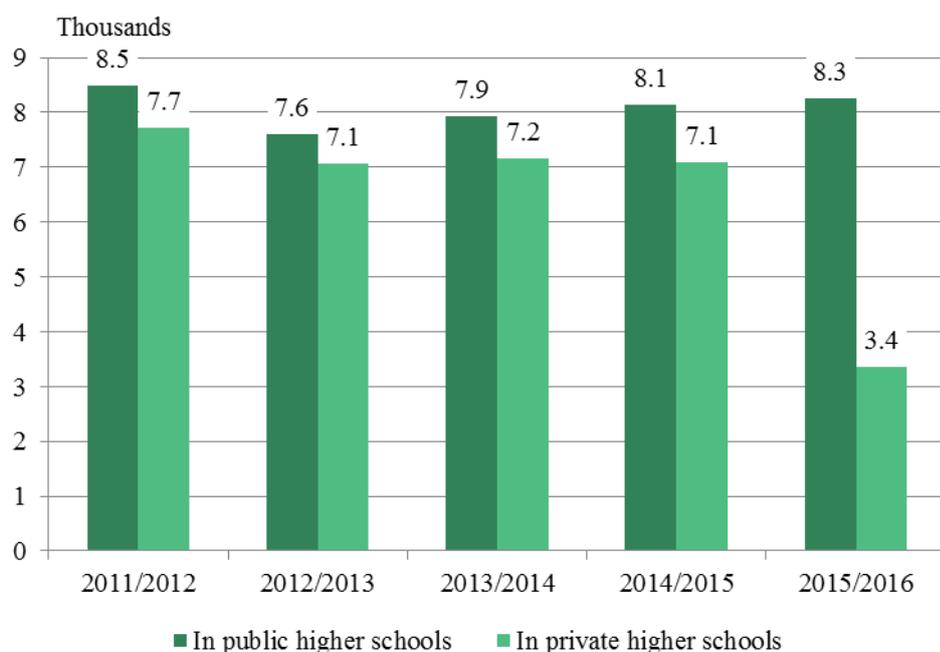
The total number of the students in Bulgaria enrolled in the four educational-qualification degrees ('Professional bachelor', 'Bachelor', 'Master' and 'Doctor') in the academic year 2015/2016 was 266.7 thousand, which is 12.2 thousand, or 4.4% less compared to the previous academic year.

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

During the 2015/2016 academic year, for acquiring of the degree 'Professional bachelor', in colleges were enrolled 11.6 thousand students totally, of which 11.4 thousand, or 98.0%, were Bulgarian citizens. The number of students decreased significantly in comparison with the previous year due to the conversion of independent private colleges in specialized higher schools and the transition of part of the students from educational-qualification degree "Professional Bachelor" to educational-qualification degree "Bachelor". From the total number of the students in colleges, 3.4 thousand or 28.9% were enrolled in private colleges.



**Figure 3. Students in colleges<sup>3</sup>**



In the structure of the students by narrow fields of education, the highest relative share was found in the Business and Administration - 24.6%, followed by Health - 23.5%, Personal services - 21.1% and Engineering and Engineering Trades - 18.6%.

In 2015 the degree 'Professional bachelor' was acquired by 2.5 thousand students of whom 98.1% were Bulgarian citizens. Among graduated students the highest number was found in the field of Health - 0.7 thousand, or 26.3% of the total, followed by the field of Business and Administration - 0.6 thousand, or 25.4%, Personal Services - 0.5 thousand, or 18.4%, and Engineering and Engineering Trades - 0.4 thousand or 16.2%.

The number of the teaching staff in colleges was 725 persons, of whom 374 or 51.6% were on a full time employment.

#### ***Universities and equivalent higher schools ('Bachelor' and 'Master' educational-qualification degrees)***

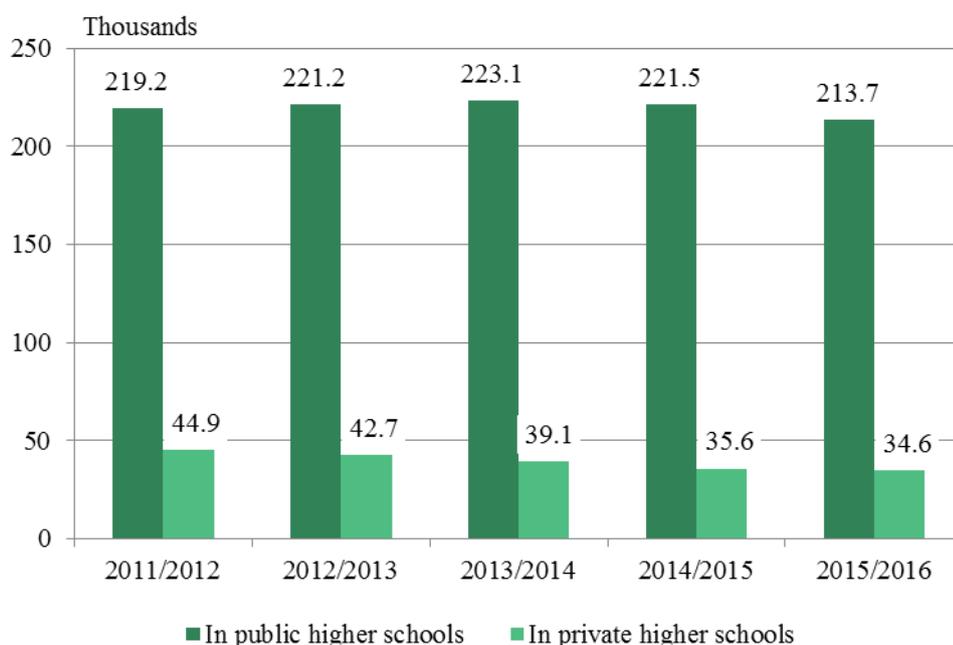
During the 2015/2016 academic year the number of students, in the two educational-qualification degrees 'Bachelor' and 'Master', in universities and specialized higher schools was 248.3 thousand. Of them in private higher schools were enrolled 34.6 thousand students or 13.9% of the total number. The number of

<sup>3</sup> In 2015/2016 school year the number of students studying in colleges decreased significantly due to the conversion of three independent private colleges in specialized higher schools and the transition of part of the students from educational-qualification degree "Professional Bachelor" to educational-qualification degree "Bachelor".



enrolled students in private higher schools declined with 0.9 thousand or 2.6% in comparison with the previous academic year.

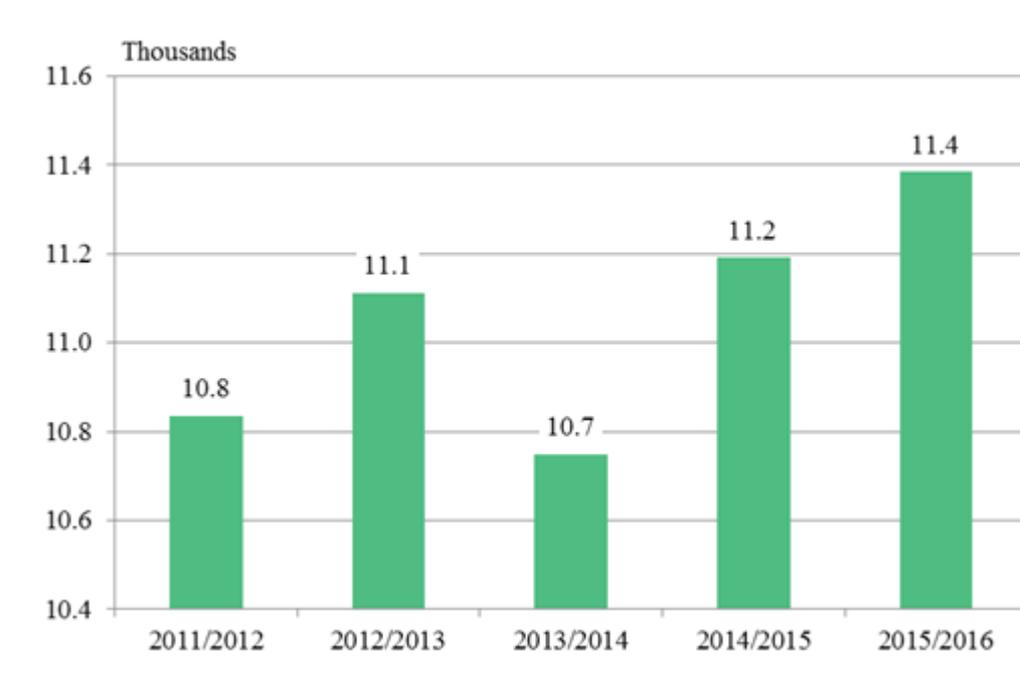
**Figure 4. Students in universities and specialized higher schools**



In the 2015/2016, students - Bulgarian citizens in universities and specialized higher schools were 237.0 thousand or 95.4%. Their number had decreased by 8.9 thousand in comparison with the 2014/2015 academic year or by 3.6%. The number of the foreign students in the country was 11.4 thousand, which is 1.7% more than in the previous 2014/2015 academic year.



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



Out of the total number of foreign student, the largest share was of the students that came from Greece - 26.8%, followed by Turkey - 21.0%, United Kingdom - 7.6% and Germany - 6.1% of the total number of foreign students.

A gradual increase in the number of students from Greece is observed - from 1.9 thousand in 2011/2012 to 3.0 thousand in the current academic year, or 1.6 times. At the same time students from Turkey decreased with 0.8 thousand (24.7%) in comparison with the previous academic year.

The number of mobile students<sup>4</sup> enrolled in universities and specialized higher schools had increased from 10.8 thousand in 2011/2012 to 11.5 thousand in the current 2015/2016, or by 11.5%.

In 2015/2016 the number of the academic staff in universities and specialized higher schools was 21.9 thousand, of whom 13.7 thousand or 62.7% were on a full time employment.

#### *'Bachelor' educational-qualification degree*

During the 2015/2016 academic year the number of students enrolled in the educational-qualification degree 'Bachelor' was 166.7 thousand, of whom 52.1% were women. Bulgarian citizens represented 97.5% of the enrolments and 14.9% were enrolled in private higher schools.

The structure of students by narrow fields of education showed that the highest proportion of students were studying in the field of Business and Administration (22.4%), followed by the field of Engineering and

<sup>4</sup> According to the Eurostat methodology the student mobility is measured by 'country of prior education' which means that mobile student is a student who has graduated secondary education abroad.



Engineering Trades (15.1%) and Social and behavioural science (12.0%). The lowest shares were registered in the fields Life sciences (0.7%) and Mathematics and Statistics (0.3%).

In the academic year 2015/2016, the number of newly enrolled students for acquiring the educational-qualification degree 'Bachelor' was 42.4 thousand. Out of them 41.4 thousand, or 97.8%, were Bulgarian citizens.

In the past 2015, in the country 31.6 thousand students graduated with the degree 'Bachelor', of which 30.6 thousand were Bulgarian citizens.

The relative shares of graduated students were highest in the fields: Business and Administration (28.7%), Social and Behavioural Sciences (17.1%) and Engineering and Engineering Trades (11.9%).

17.0% of all graduates in the degree 'Bachelor' had graduated in private universities.

#### *'Master' educational-qualification degree*

During the 2015/2016 academic year the number of students in the educational-qualification degree 'Master' in universities and equivalent higher schools was 81.6 thousands of whom 58.1% were women. Bulgarian citizens represented 91.1% of all enrolments and 9.8 thousand or 12.1% of students enrolled in this educational-qualification degree were in private higher schools.

The structure of students by narrow fields of education showed that the highest proportion of students were studying in the field of Business and Administration (21.0%), followed by the Health (19.8%) and Law (12.7%). The lowest shares were registered in the Journalism, mass communication and information (0.4%), Life sciences (by 0.3%) and Mathematics and Statistics (0.1%).

In the academic year 2015/2016, the number of newly enrolled students for acquiring the educational-qualification degree 'Master' after completed secondary education was 6.1 thousand. Out of them 4.6 thousand, or 75.4%, were Bulgarian citizens.

New entrants in master programmes after graduations of educational-qualification degree 'Bachelor' were 23.0 thousand of which 1.1 thousand, or 4.6%, were enrolled after graduation of level 'Professional Bachelor'.

In 2015, in the country 27.1 thousand students graduated with the degree 'Master', of which 96.8% were Bulgarian citizens.

The relative shares of graduated students were highest in the fields: Business and Administration (32.4%), Social and Behavioural Sciences (11.3%), Engineering and Engineering Trades (8.9%). The lowest relative shares were found in the fields: Environmental protection, Veterinary and Journalism, mass communication and information - by 0.6% of the total number of graduates in Master degree and Mathematics and statistics - only 0.1%.

13.7% of all graduates in the degree 'Master' had graduated in private universities.



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

As of 31.12.2015, 6 750 Ph.D. students were enrolled in Bulgaria, of which 51.3% were women. Compared to the previous year the number of Ph.D. students had increased by 133 persons or by 2.0%.

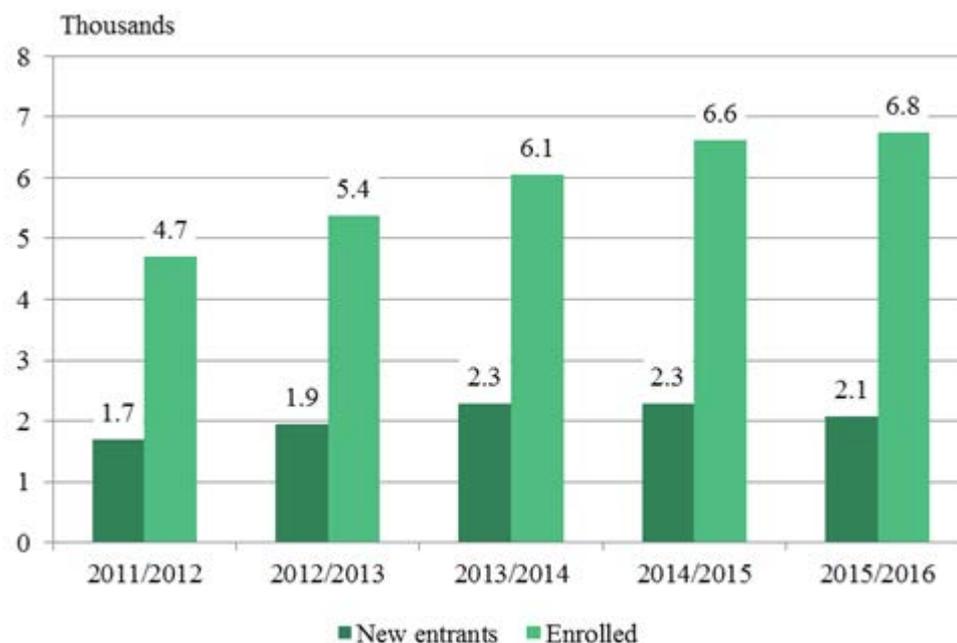
Out of the total number of the Ph.D. students trained in Bulgaria, the foreign citizens were 482 persons or 7.1% of the total Ph.D. students. Compared to the previous year their number had increased with 41.8%. The largest share is of the Ph.D. students coming from Greece - 24.7% of the total number of the Ph.D. foreign students enrolled, followed by those coming from Turkey (23.7%), Kazakhstan (7.5%) and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (7.1%).

According to the distribution by age, the share of Ph.D. students aged 30 - 39 was highest - 39.4%, followed by those aged 20 - 29 (32.2%) and 40 - 49 who represented 19.4% of the total number of Ph.D. students.

In 2015 in private universities and specialized higher schools were enrolled only 2.9% of the Ph.D. students.

Number of newly enrolled Ph.D. students in 2015 was 2 075, of which 1 054 or 50.8% were women.

**Figure 6. New entrants and enrolled in Ph.D. degree**



In 2015, a 'Doctor' degree was acquired by 1 442 persons of whom 719, or 49.9%, were women. The number of graduated males was highest in narrow field of education Engineering and Engineering Trades - 17.8% of the total number of graduated males, followed by the fields of Health (13.3%) and Social and Behavioural Sciences and Humanities (8.9%). In the structure of the graduated females by narrow fields of



education, the highest relative share was in the field of Health (14.2%), followed by the fields of Social and Behavioural Sciences (12.2%) and Humanities (9.7%).



## 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 2011 (ISCED 2011) and the concomitant methodological instructions.

ISCED is 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. ISCED 2011 was adopted at the 36st session of the General Conference of UNESCO and the current year was defined as the first year for obligatory dissemination of statistical data distributed by the revised classification.

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.

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.

For more information and data on education, visit NSI's webpage (<http://www.nsi.bg/en>), section 'Education and Lifelong Learning'.



## Annex

**Table 1**

### Educational institutions by type

(Number)

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Total</b>	<b>5164</b>	<b>5067</b>	<b>5060</b>	<b>4975</b>	<b>4964</b>
Kindergartens	2112	2070	2051	1991	2002
General and special schools	2144	2112	2097	2087	2078
Primary (I - IV grade)	156	153	150	150	152
Basic (I - VIII grade)	1431	1402	1393	1386	1381
Lower secondary (V - VIII grade)	12	11	8	7	7
Upper secondary (IX - XIII grade)	139	140	140	137	133
Secondary general (I - XIII grade )	406	406	406	407	405
Vocational schools	499	494	488	481	469
Art schools	22	22	23	23	22
Sport schools <sup>1</sup>	22	19	24	24	24
Vocational gymnasiums	414	416	402	394	387
Vocational colleges	36	37	39	40	36
Vocational training schools	5	-	-	-	-
Vocational Training Centres <sup>2</sup>	356	338	371	362	361
Higher schools <sup>3</sup>	53	53	53	54	54
Independent colleges	8	8	8	8	4
Colleges, at the universities	21	20	19	19	18
Universities and equivalent higher schools	45	45	45	46	50

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

<sup>2</sup> Includes universities and equivalent higher schools and independent colleges.



**Table 2**

**Pupils and students by level of International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011)**

	(Number)				
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1293961</b>	<b>1294682</b>	<b>1303836</b>	<b>1284910</b>	<b>1249109</b>
Pre-primary education (ISCED - 0)	227971	235015	240622	241123	232025
Primary education (I - IV grade, ISCED - 1)	252372	253675	258840	261793	261969
Lower secondary education (V - VIII grade, ISCED - 2)	221274	221839	220934	217155	216451
Vocational training for adults - first level professional qualification (ISCED - 2) <sup>1</sup>	11219	13637	11176	6509	4593
Vocational training - first level professional qualification, after VIII grade (ISCED - 3)	841	1011	831	988	992
Upper secondary education (IX - XIII grade, ISCED - 3)	281671	272487	268395	267540	260515
Vocational training for adults - second level professional qualification (ISCED - 3) <sup>1</sup>	4062	4272	7300	3789	2109
Vocational training for adults - third level professional qualification (ISCED - 3) <sup>1</sup>	6660	6323	10278	5417	2427
Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED - 4)	2804	2381	2001	1618	1308
Vocational training for adults - fourth level professional qualification (ISCED - 4) <sup>1</sup>	92	83	165	25	13
Tertiary education (ISCED - 6, 7, 8)	284995	283959	283294	278953	266707
Education in colleges - Professional bachelor degree (ISCED - 6)	<sup>2</sup> 16210	14688	15072	15244	<sup>2</sup> 11619
Education in universities and equivalent higher schools - Bachelor degree (ISCED - 6)	184069	180949	176344	171458	166746
Education in universities and equivalent higher schools - Master degree (ISCED - 7)	80013	82951	85823	85634	81592
Educational and scientific degree 'Doctor' (ISCED - 8)	4703	5371	6055	6617	6750

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

<sup>2</sup> The number of students decreased significantly due to the conversion of an independent private college into university and pass over the relative students from educational-qualification degree 'Professional Bachelor' into 'Bachelor' degree.



**Table 3**

**Teaching staff by level of International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011)**

	(Number)				
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Total</b>	<b>102925</b>	<b>102488</b>	<b>101828</b>	<b>102799</b>	<b>101294</b>
Pre-primary education (ISCED - 0)	19729	20015	20269	20542	20420
Primary education (I - IV grade, ISCED - 1)	14666	14565	14767	14940	15050
Lower secondary education (V - VIII grade, ISCED - 2)	19504	19315	19277	19179	19125
Upper secondary education (IX - XIII grade, ISCED - 3)	25539	24684	24121	23968	23735
Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED - 4)	532	453	382	427	260
Tertiary education (ISCED - 6, 7)	22955	23456	23012	23743	22604
Education in colleges (ISCED - 6)	1079	1091	1070	1018	725
Education in universities and equivalent higher schools (ISCED - 6, 7)	21876	22365	21942	22725	21879