

EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA FOR 2019/2020 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 2019/2020 academic year in kindergartens are enrolled 217.9 thousand children or with 0.4% less in comparison with the previous year.
- In 2019, high school graduates from general and vocational schools are respectively 25.8 and 21.6 thousand students.
- In 2019/2020 academic year, 220.2 thousand persons were enrolled in the different tertiary education levels.
- As of 31.12.2019 for acquiring a 'Doctor' educational and scientific degree in the country were trained 6 440 persons, of whom 558 foreign citizens.

Pre-primary education

As of 1.12.2019 in the country functioned 1 840 independent kindergartens with director. There were enrolled 217.9 thousand children, of which 112.6 thousand or 51.7% were boys. In comparison with the previous year the number of children decreased by 0.4% (Figure 1).

The coverage of children in this educational level estimated by the group net enrolment rate¹ for the 2019/2020 school year was 78.7% and compared to the previous school year it increased by 0.3 percentage point.

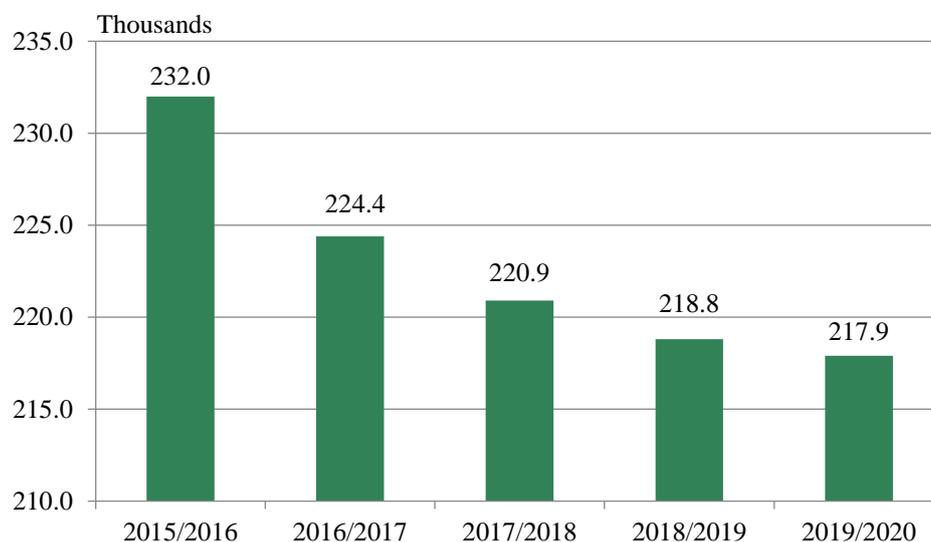
The average number of children in a kindergarten in the country was 118 as in the urban areas was significantly larger (153) than in the rural areas (61). A group was formed by average 23 children, respectively - 25 in urban and 19 in rural areas.

The teaching personnel employed in kindergartens were 20.1 thousand and in comparison with the previous school year increased by 251 persons or by 1.3%. Kindergarten teachers were 18.8 thousand, or 93.8% of all personnel in kindergartens.

In 2019/2020 school year in the country had functioned 106 licensed private kindergartens or with 5 more than in the previous year. There were enrolled 4 982 children or 2.3% of all children in kindergartens.

¹ 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 1.10.2019 there were classes in 1 963 general education schools². Out of them 133 were primary schools, 1 162 - basic schools, 70 - combined schools, 114 upper secondary and 484 - secondary schools. In comparison with the previous school year the total number of general education schools increased by 8. The students were 572.5 thousand, of which 82.5 thousand were enrolled in schools in the rural areas. There were 21 pupils on average for one class in the daily general education schools.

During the past 2018/2019 school year for different reasons 15.8 thousand students left the general education schools. The largest relative share was the share of the students who left because had gone abroad - 7.0 thousand or 44.4% of the total number of leaving students, followed by those who left because of family reasons - 6.4 thousand or 40.7% and those who left because of unwillingness to study 1.6 thousand - 10.2%.

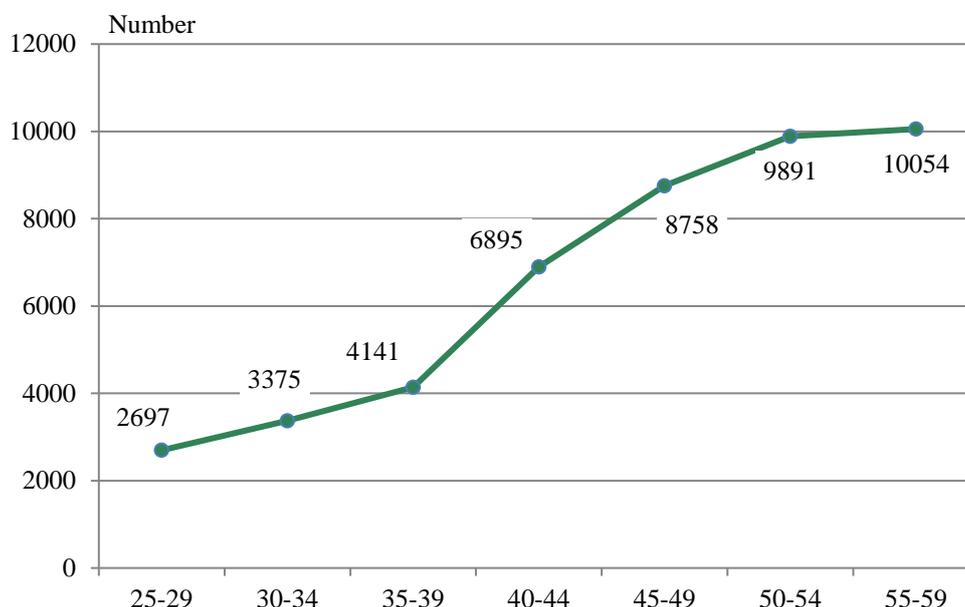
In 2019, 58.8 thousand students graduated from basic education and 25.8 thousand students graduated from secondary education in the general education schools.

The relative share of children in general education schools who studied foreign languages in primary grades (I - IV) was 83.6%, as the largest share came from those who studied English - 92.4%.

The total number of teaching staff (incl. directors and deputy directors with teaching activity) employed in general education schools during the 2019/2020 school year was 53.1 thousand. Of which 94.8% with education-qualification degree 'Bachelor' or 'Master', 4.6% were with education-qualification degree - 'Professional Bachelor' or an equivalent degree in past and 0.7% were with secondary education. In the teaching profession women were predominant and constitute 85.6% of the total number of teachers.

² Incl. the Bulgarian schools abroad, financed by state.

Figure 2. Teaching staff in general schools by age groups in 2018/2019 school year



As of 1.10.2019 there were 86 active private general education schools in the country, out of them 7 primary schools, 30 basic, 21 high schools and 28 secondary schools. There were enrolled totally 10 907 students or 1.9% from the total number of students in general education.

Vocational education and training (VET)

Vocational education and training during the school year 2019/2020 was carried out in 21 art schools, 25 sport schools, 358 vocational gymnasiums and 23 vocational colleges with enrolment after secondary education. The total number of students in there was 135.1 thousand

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

In 2019, 21.6 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:

- 273 students acquired first level of professional qualification in vocational classes;
- Second and third level of professional qualification in 2019 were acquired respectively by 2.6 and 13.2 thousand students;
- 544 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 field³ of ‘Engineering and engineering trades’(24.3%), followed by those in the field of ‘Business and administration’ (19.2%).

The relative shares of students who acquired fourth level of professional qualification were highest in the fields of ‘Security services’ - 63.2% and ‘Business and administration’ - 17.2%.

During the 2019/2020 school year 1 040 students were enrolled in 31 private vocational gymnasiums and private vocational colleges with enrolment after secondary education, which was 0.8% 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 12.3 thousand, of which 95.0% were with acquired educational qualification degrees ‘Bachelor’ or ‘Master’.

In vocational training programmes against payment for acquiring level of professional qualification in Vocational Training Centres, vocational gymnasiums and vocational colleges in 2019 were enrolled 13.4 thousand students aged 16 years or more. According to the level of professional qualification, their distribution was as follows: first level - 6.7 thousand, second level - 3.5 thousand, third level - 3.1 thousand and forth level - 103 persons.

Tertiary education

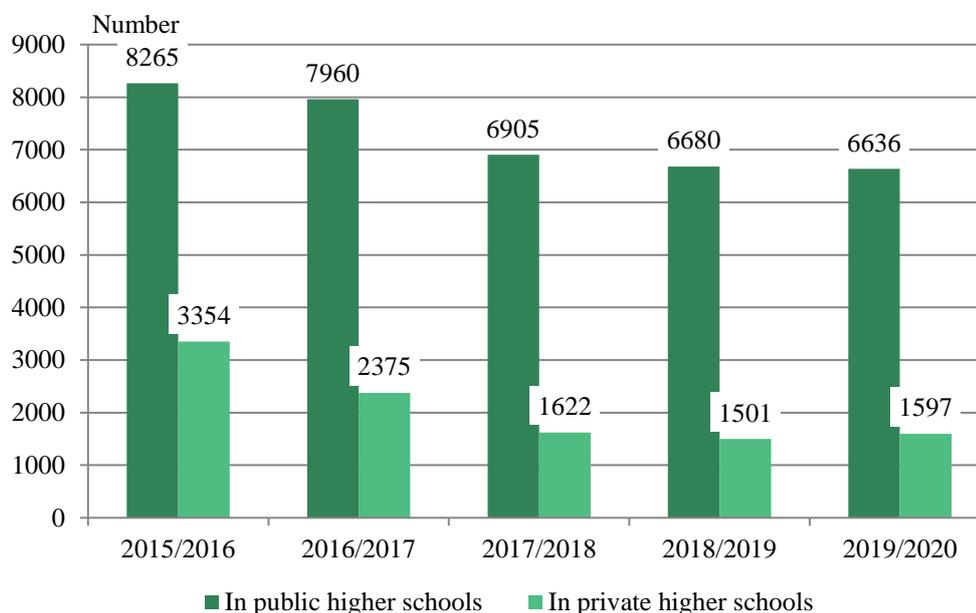
In the academic 2019/2020 year, the total number of students in Bulgaria enrolled in the four educational-qualification degrees (‘Professional bachelor’, ‘Bachelor’, ‘Master’ and ‘Doctor’) was 226.6 thousand, which is 2.9 thousand, or 1.2% less compared to the previous academic year.

Colleges (‘Professional bachelor’ educational-qualification degree)

In 2019/2020 academic year, for acquiring a professional bachelor’s educational-qualification degree, in colleges were enrolled 8 233 students and in comparison with the previous year their number remained almost unchanged. Out of the total number of students in colleges, 1 597 or 19.4% were enrolled in private institutions (Figure 3).

³ About 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 teaching staff in colleges was 676 persons, of them 307 or 45.4% were on a full time employment.

In 2019, with a professional bachelor's educational-qualification degree had graduated 1 843 students, of whom 60.9% were women. The highest number of graduates was in specialities within the following fields of education⁴:

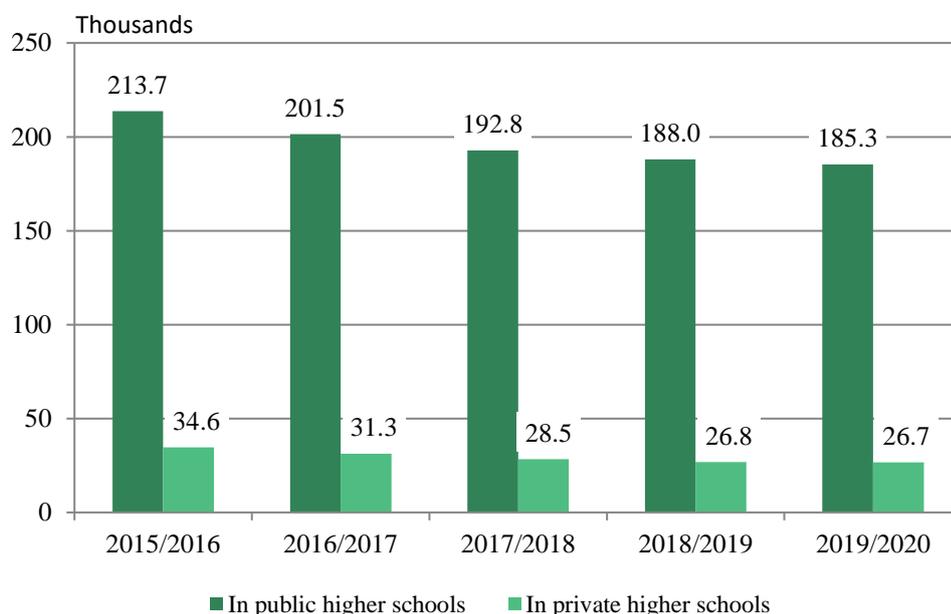
- 'Health' - 674 persons;
- 'Personal services' - 285 persons;
- 'Engineering and engineering trades' - 284 persons;
- 'Business and administration' - 269 persons;
- 'Education' - 136 persons.

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

In 2019/2020 academic year, 211.9 thousand students in universities and specialized higher schools were studying for bachelor's and master's educational-qualification degrees and in comparison with the previous year their number decreased by 2.9 thousand or by 1.3%. In private educational institutions were enrolled 26.7 thousand students or 12.6% of the total number enrolled for bachelor's and master's educational-qualification degrees (Figure 4).

⁴ According to Classification of fields of education and training - 2015 (State Gazette, No. 46/17.06.2016)

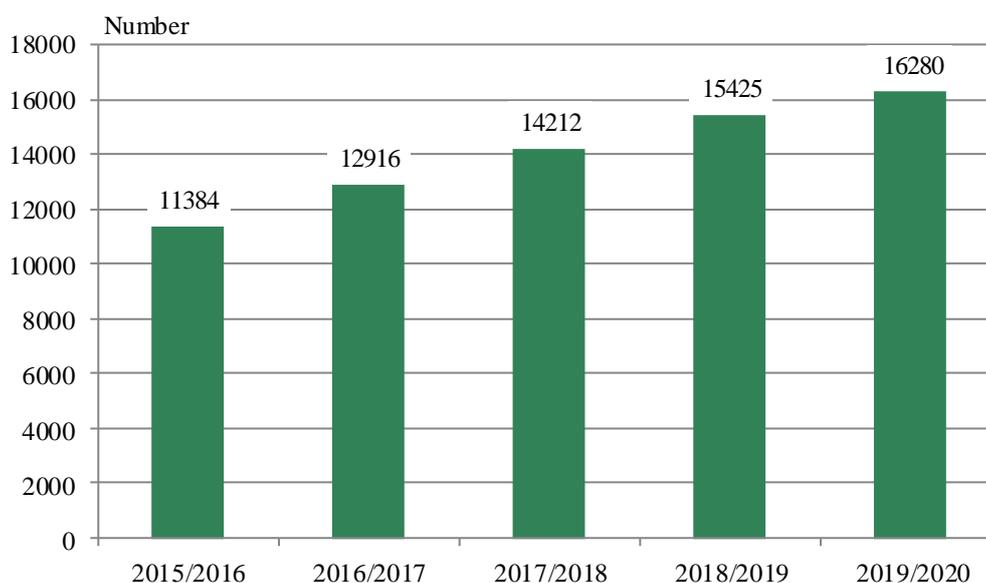
Figure 4. Students in universities and specialized higher schools



In the academic year 2019/2020, students - Bulgarian citizens were 195.7 thousand or 92.3% of all students in universities and specialized higher schools and in comparison to the previous year their number decreased by 3.7 thousand or by 1.9%. Foreign students were 16.3 thousand, which is 5.5% more than in the previous year and 43.0% more than in the academic year 2015/2016 (Figure 5).

The largest share of foreign students came from Greece (23.7%), followed by the United Kingdom (16.1%), Germany (8.8%), Ukraine (6.3%) and Turkey - 6.0% of the total number of foreign students.

Figure 5. Foreign students in universities and specialized higher schools



In 2019, a total of 48.3 thousand persons graduated from universities and specialised higher schools in the country of whom 25.8 thousand with a bachelor's and 22.5 thousand with a master's degree.

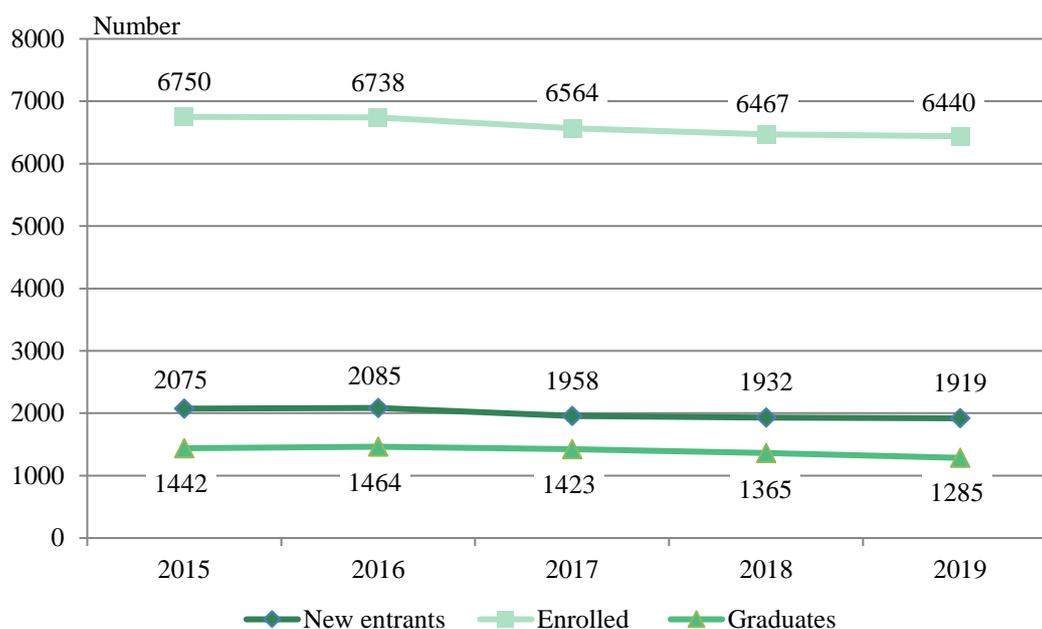
Number of graduates was highest in fields of education 'Business and Administration' (13 595 persons), 'Social and behavioural sciences' (5 715 persons) and 'Education' (5 063 persons).

In 2019/2020 academic year, the number of academic staff in universities and specialized higher schools was 20.2 thousand, of which 50.3% were women. On a full time employment were 12.7 thousand or 63.0% of the total.

Educational and scientific degree 'Doctor'

As of 31.12.2019, 6 440 Ph.D. students were enrolled in Bulgaria. In comparison with the previous year 2018 their number had decreased by 27 persons or by 0.4% (Figure 7).

Figure 6. New entrants, enrolled and graduates in Ph.D. degree

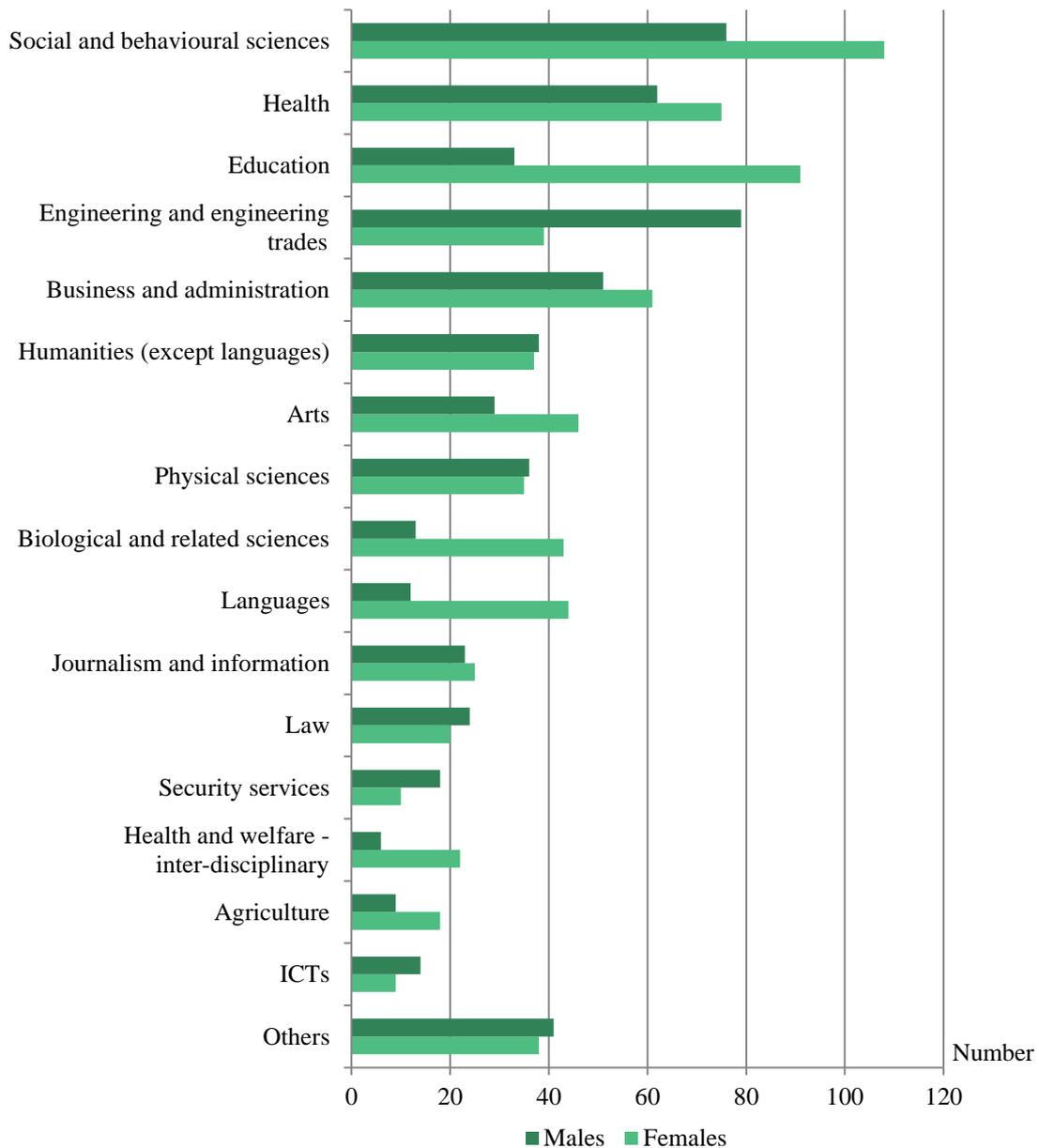


The foreign Ph.D. students were 558 or 8.7% of the total number. The largest share came from Greece - 19.2%, followed by Republic of North Macedonia (9.5%) and Albania (9.0%).

In private institutions were trained 4.1% of the Ph.D. students. Out of them 103 persons, or 39.0% were foreigners.

In 2019, a 'Doctor' degree was acquired by 1 285 persons of whom 721, or 56.1%, were women. A considerable difference in the structure of the graduated males and females by fields of education was observed (Figure 8).

Figure 7. Ph.D. students by narrow fields of education and sex in 2019



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.

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).