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Education and Culture

**Socrates**

# **Bulgarian Paper** **on** **Educational** **and** **Teaching System**

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL  
INITIATIVES ASSOCIATION (CEI)

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## 1. Description of education system:

School education in Bulgaria is compulsory up to 16 years of age according to the Law on education from 1991. School education is general and vocational. The structure of the syllabus is based on three types of instruction: compulsory, compulsory chosen and optional. Compulsory (General) education in Bulgarian schools is provided through the teaching and training of subjects related to the following fields of culture and education:

- Bulgarian grammar and literature
- Foreign languages
- Mathematics, Computing, Information technology
- Social sciences and civic education
- Natural sciences and ecology
- Arts
- Culture and technology
- Physical education and sport

**1.1 Education population:** According to the statistic the number of people aged 29 or under is 3 242 600 (39% of the population), including children of compulsory school age (1 112 176).

**1.2 Language of instruction:** Bulgarian

**1.3 Planning functions and extent of public-sector funded education:** Almost all pupils (99.58%) attend public-sector schools, which are directly controlled and administered by the public authorities, and funded by the State. The administration of education is organized at four levels: national, regional, municipal and school. The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) lays down and applies national education policy, and plans and organizes the development of education by putting together long-term programmes and operational projects. The municipal bodies are responsible *inter alia* for the compulsory education of pupils up to the age of 16, pre-school education and funding. The autonomy of schools has been considerably extended in recent years. The teaching council, the board of management and the head teachers are administrative bodies of schools, and expected to meet the necessary conditions in the areas of teaching, organization, methodology, administration and management. The inspection of education and its results are handled by the relevant authorities, namely the MES, the regional inspectorate, head teachers and their assistants.

**1.4 Pre-primary education:** It is considered as to be the first level of the school system and caters for children aged between 3 and 6 or 7. The attendance at nursery schools (Detska Gradina) is optional.

### **1.5 Compulsory full-time education**

**1.5.1 Phases:** Primary school (Nachalno uchilishte) – 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade, age 7 to 11, General Secondary School (Progimnazia), Secondary technical school (different types of upper secondary schools), Secondary vocational school

**1.5.2 Admission criteria:** Basic (primary and lower secondary) education is free, except in private-sector schools.

**1.5.3 Length of the school day/week/year:** The school year comprises 160 days for primary education and 170 days for lower secondary education. The subject (minimum 22 lessons lasting 30 minutes at the start of primary education and 40-45 minutes at other levels) are spread over five days a week.

**1.5.4 Class size / student grouping (average):** The law stipulates that the minimum number of pupils per class is 17, and the maximum 26. Classes are mixed and made up of pupils of the same age.

**1.5.5 Curricular control and content:** There is one single school curricula for primary education, which is compulsory for all pupils in the first to fourth years of education. Teachers are free to use the textbooks and teaching materials of their choice (from a list approved by the Ministry of Education and Science).

**1.5.6 Assessment, progression and qualifications:** Pupil knowledge and skills are assessed throughout the school year (oral, written, practical forms of testing). Assessment is carried out regularly by the teacher and in cooperation with the state administrative bodies.

Types of certificates:

- Primary education certificate - at the end of fourth grade
- Basic education certificate – after successfully completion of the eighth grade, without final examination. This certificate enables pupils to enter upper secondary education.
- Technical/vocational classes end in vocational training examinations.

**1.6 Upper secondary and post-secondary education:** Upper secondary education in Bulgaria (ISCED'97 level 3A) can be divided into secondary comprehensive and secondary profile-oriented. Secondary comprehensive education can be attained at secondary comprehensive schools and profile-oriented schools. Students can enter the profile-oriented schools upon completion of grade 7 or 8 after passing entry examinations, according to the profile of the school (Bulgarian language and literature, mathematics, humanities **etc.**)

**1.6.1 Types of education:** General Secondary Schools including specialized sections (14/15 – 17/18 years of age; 4/5 years of education); technical/vocational secondary schools (15-17 years of age, 3 years of education); technical school (14-18 years of age, 4/5 years of education).

**1.6.2 Admission criteria:** The basic education certificate is sufficient for admission to this level of education. Nevertheless, in specialized schools (for example, language or technical schools), there are entrance examinations which vary according to the type of school.

**1.6.3 Curricular control and content:** Teaching syllabuses are set at national level. The general subject are the same and are compulsory for all pupils in general secondary schools. Compulsory and optional subjects are each selected and taught in accordance with the specialization of the school. The level of teaching secondary schools within the framework of general education is uniform for all secondary comprehensive schools. The subjects from the compulsory-elective and elective instructions are selected and taught according to the school's particular specialization.

At foreign language secondary schools (after grade 7), students pass a one-year course of intensive foreign language study, the so-called preparatory class, which ends with passing examination. There is no specific adaptation period provided for pupils in other schools. At each secondary school students may choose a set number of branches for more detailed study of a given subject (humanities, mathematics and physics, biology and chemistry, etc.). The teaching process is organized on a five-day week basis with the following workload:

<b>Classes</b>	<b>Compulsory Instruction</b>	<b>Compulsory-Elective</b>	<b>Elective instruction</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total per week</b>
<b>Year 9</b>	<b>29 h.</b>	<b>4 h.</b>	<b>4 h.</b>	<b>31 h.</b>	<b>35 h.</b>
<b>Year</b>	<b>26 h.</b>	<b>5 h.</b>	<b>4 h.</b>	<b>31 h.</b>	<b>35 h.</b>

<b>10</b>					
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>21 h.</b>	<b>11 h.</b>	<b>4 h.</b>	<b>32 h.</b>	<b>36 h.</b>
<b>Year 12</b>	<b>15 h.</b>	<b>17 h.</b>	<b>4 h.</b>	<b>32 h.</b>	<b>36 h.</b>

**1.6.4 Assessment, progression and qualifications:** At this level, pupil assessment is similar to the arrangements for basic education (oral, written and practical forms of examination). The control is performed by the teacher throughout the academic year. The marks are recorded for each term and also for the school year. The term and/or annual marks are calculated from at least three current marks. The secondary education certificate is required for admission to higher education.

The knowledge and skills of the students are evaluated according to a six-grade system comprising the marks: excellent (6), very good (5), good (4), fair (3) and poor (2). The mark of (1) is not used for evaluation. An examination evaluated at least with the grade fair (3) is considered successfully passed.

Examinations the end of upper secondary general education: Students sit written matriculation examination in:

- Bulgarian language and literature;
- An elective-comprehensive subject on their own choice (without Bulgarian language and literature) which is part of the compulsory-elective instruction in the last school grade.

Students at profile-oriented secondary schools sit written matriculation examinations in

- Bulgarian language and literature;
- The main subject related to the school profile; while the main subject is Bulgarian language and literature, students sit matriculation examination in the second main subject.

Students who have completed the last grade of secondary school with an average of at least "very good" (5.00) in a given subject included in the upper secondary comprehensive curriculum and an annual mark in the same subject (from the general compulsory elective instruction) of at least "very good" (5.00) for the last year of studies, are exempt from sitting the matriculation examinations.

2. **Education systems for people in special needs:** The ultimate goal of the special education policy is to provide an appropriate education and vocational training to children and young people with special needs. The regulation covering general education are deemed to apply to children and young people with special educational needs. Children with severe and multiple disabilities are excluded from the public education system. The 1992 Education Act provides for the establishment of special schools for pupils with a variety of special needs. A new regulation in 1994 gives the Ministry of Education primary responsibility for educating pupils with special educational needs. Six categories of special educational needs are defined: emotional and behavioural difficulties; mental retardation/severe learning difficulties; physical/motor disabilities; visual impairment; hearing impairment; and language disorders. The Ministry of Education is responsible for special education but shares some responsibilities with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Affairs, In particular, the Ministry of Health is responsible for the admission of pupils to special schools. There are 11,495 pupils (1,3% of the school age population) attending special schools (1993). The updates in Rules for Application of the Law of National Education suppose activities, norms and procedures t

o guarantee the access of children and students with special educational needs in the kindergartens and schools by forming teams to estimate their educational needs, to track the dynamics in their progress, and to prepare individual programmes for their training and future progress. The updates in legislate an opening to a workplace for the position of “resource teacher”, which to teach 5 children/student with special educational needs. In this moment, there are 670 children/students like these, who are trained by 123 resource teachers.

3. **Methods of teaching:** The legislative base offers daily study, extra-murally study, evening study and self-study forms.
4. **The use of ICT in the educational system:** Systematic computer education and use of computers in Bulgaria’s educational system first started in the 1986/1987 school year with the introduction of a course on informatics to the secondary schools’ curriculum. In 1998 Ministry of Education and Science developed a National Education Strategy on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Despite the financial impediments, there has been an increased interest in ICT and more consistent efforts – both by the Ministry of Education and by individual schools and local communities – for computerization of the schools since 1998.

Data from MES points to the availability of 12,199 PCs in all Bulgarian schools in 2001. The number of “modern” (CPU 386 or higher) computers capable of supporting Internet connection is 8,077. There is a total of 1,311 computer labs (in 2000/2001); 336 schools are connected to the Internet and around 120 have own websites. As of January 2001, around 50 percent of the secondary schools (154 out of 1023) were equipped with at least a single computer laboratory with at least 5 PCs (wit PCU 486 or Pentium processors). Overall the penetration of ICT in Bulgarian schools is still relatively low. Expert assessments suggests that the ratio students to computers is 66 students per PC.

There are two main channels of bringing ICT into Bulgarian classrooms. The first one – the centralized line of government support through the Ministry of Education, and the second one – associated with the efforts of individual schools.

Since July 1999, Bulgaria has a new Law on Educational Degrees, Educational Minimum and Syllabus, “Mathematics, Informatics and Information Technologies” is one of eight educational areas defined in this law. On August 30, 1999 the Syllabus Regulations were enforced and two obligatory academic disciplines relating to ICT were featured for the first time – Informatics and Information Technologies (IT). They were taught at secondary education level at all schools nationwide. On September 1, 1999 the new state-designed curriculum was first introduced to ninth graders.

A more in-depth assessment of the technical infrastructure at secondary schools, in particular, is provided by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, which commissioned a specialized survey in the second half of 2003. According to the findings of this study, Bulgarian schools had on average 3.6 telephone lines per school, with only 13% of the schools reporting more than 6 lines. About half of the schools had no digital phone lines, and only 4.6% used ISDN. These figures are rather discouraging, taking into account the fact that fixed telephone lines remain the most common means of Internet access.

The available computer equipment is very unevenly distributed among various schools. Due to significant differences in the size of the schools, their curricula and practical use of computers vary greatly from town to town, and from school to school.

In terms of software, most schools use Microsoft tools, but alternative operating systems exist as well-4% of the schools use Linux and 3% use MacOS.

The number of school websites is growing fast. Around 150 schools were reported to have their own websites in early 2004. Some schools have more than one websites (i.e. usually unofficial websites developed by the students). Internet is not yet used for presentation of systematic education resources, but it is more often used for research and information gathering, locating materials for college-acceptance exams, or international language tests.

**Ministry of Transport and Communication is currently implementing a project "E-class". The expectations are that till the February 2006 all Bulgarian schools will have high-speed Internet connection.**

5. **Ongoing reforms:** In the process of the ongoing socio-economic changes taking place in Bulgaria, the system of education and training experiences a process of wide development. Influenced by these changes, Bulgarian education makes efforts to answer the requirements of the new public and market mechanisms. The development of the national labour market depends directly on the successful implementation of a well-defined policy on schooling supported by a well-structured system of education. The reforms that had been recently undertaken by the Government in respect of organization and functioning of the national education system were elaborated on a twofold basis. On the one hand, they had to ensure the adaptability of the education system towards new challenges, on the other these reforms were generated to establish sustainable system of schooling harmonized with the European standards and capable to provide valuable knowledge and sound skills.

The process of reforms within the system of secondary general education is closely related to the implementation of the newly amended National Educational Act (last amendments, 1999). To the effect of assuring quality of education the Law on the Level of Schooling, the General Educational Minimum and Syllabus was also adopted and entered into force. This Law stipulates the introduction of the 12-years' schooling and the compulsory matriculation examination as well as the elaboration of standards concerning the syllabi and the assessment system.

The education is a national priority in the ruling program of the Bulgarian government (2001 – 2005). Its basic priorities are to ensure order and stability in the education and development of the system for vocational qualification, re-qualification, and life-long learning (LLL). During development the Bulgarian National Programme "Modernization of Education" are taken into account the main goal of Lisbon, its three coherent strategic goals of Stockholm 2001 and the 13<sup>th</sup> priority domains, the indicators and European reference levels of European average performance in education and training. The strategy for development of the education is connected with the Government Programme, the National Plan for Economic Development till 2006, and the National Plan for Development till 2013, the Strategy on Employment 2004-2010, etc.

**The Educational legislative framework comprises:**

- National Education Act / 1998
- Higher Education Act / 1995
- Academic Degrees and Titles Act / 1996
- Decree N 151/09.04.1997 of the Council of Ministers
- Decree N 127/07.06.1996 of the Council of Ministers
- Regulations N 1/12.02.1996, N 4/23.06.1993, N 2/29.07.1994 of MES

- Regulations of the Higher Education Institutions

In accordance with the priorities indicated in the government programme, MES is making great efforts and is investing to improve the quality of the teachers staff by organizing short-term and long-term courses for qualification of teachers as in new training contents as well as in new training methods; to work in multi-ethnics environment; investing by priorities in training the teachers in foreign languages and informatics, taking on account the need of such knowledge in EU; improving the teachers qualification by collaboration with scientific societies and foundations.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **History Education in Bulgaria**

The education system in Bulgaria was created following an imperative requirement of the Constitution from 1991 concerning compulsory and free primary and secondary education, until the age of 16, for all Bulgarian citizens. This text relates closely to the paragraphs of art. 6, stipulating that Bulgarian citizens have equal rights and privileges, regardless of race, nationality, ethnic affiliation, gender, origins, religion, education, beliefs, political affiliation, personal and social status and financial situation'. This democratic principle concerning free of charge and unrestricted access to education is confirmed by the Law on Public Education from 1991 and the Law on the level of education, minimum general knowledge and curriculum from 1999<sup>2</sup>. In Bulgaria, compulsory education concerns primary and pre-secondary school and includes a total of 8 years.

The national curriculum, for History teaching as well, is described in detail in the second law mentioned above. This law establishes the formal parameters for the teaching of History and other subjects. According to this law, school subjects are split into several cultural and educational fields. History shares the same field with Geography, Philosophy, Civic Sciences and Religion, the last subject being optional. Based on these state requirements, implemented during special exams that take place at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, the Government adopted state standards for various school subjects approved by the Minister of education and science and drawn up by special commissions made up of academic historians and method developers, assisted by experts from the Ministry of Education.

Curricula are drawn up for various subjects and present an approximate distribution of the teaching material content in classes according to a framework that was previously approved. Requirements for final examinations are also drawn up, establishing the type of tasks and assignments for the pupils.

This entire system is aimed at obtaining final results, rather than at setting a certain technology and intermediary stages, which are established by the teachers in accordance with the local conditions that are specific for every school and that can differ considerably. In addition, we must mention that, traditionally, there is a strict separation between national and universal History, the former being taught at the end of each education cycle.

The new national curriculum was developed in 1999 and started to be implemented beginning with school year 2000/2001. According to this curriculum, the structure of History teaching is as follows:

**1. Basic education, 1st – 8<sup>th</sup> grade** (age 7 to 15):

**a. Primary education, 1st – 4<sup>th</sup> grade** (age 7 to 11):

**3rd grade** - Native Country (History, Geography, Civic Education, Biology) - 32 weeks - 2 hours/week - 64 hours/year.

**4th grade**- Knowledge about the country (focused on important historical personalities from Bulgaria) - 32 weeks - 2 hours/week - 64 hours/year.

**b. Pre-secondary education – 5<sup>th</sup>– 8<sup>th</sup> grade** (age 12 to 15):

**5th grade** - History and Civilization (Ancient Thrace, Bulgarian Medieval State, until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) - 34 weeks - 1 1/2 hours/week - 51 hours/year.

Compulsory topics:

1. Bulgarian territories - home of the ancient civilizations.
2. State authority in the Bulgarian territories.
3. Church and faith in the Bulgarian territories.
4. Bulgarian society.
5. Middle Ages culture in Bulgaria.
6. The daily life of our forefathers.

**6 th grade** - History and Civilization (Bulgarian People and state 18-20 century) - 34 weeks - 1 1/2 hours/week - 51 hours/year. Compulsory topics:

1. Bulgarian society in the 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries: Bulgarian Renaissance.
2. Renaissance militants.
3. Bulgarian state authority until mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.
4. Modernization of the economic life until mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.
5. Changes in the Bulgarian Society until mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.
6. Bulgaria after the Second World War. The Communist Regime.
7. Bulgarian Culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**7nd grade**- History and Civilization (Ancient History and Antiquity) - 34 weeks – 1 1/2 hours/week - 51 hours/year. Compulsory topics:

1. Ancient History.
2. State authority in Antiquity.
3. Ancient Society.
4. Individual and war in Antiquity.
5. Ancient individual in front of the Gods - "I give, so you can give".
6. Spirit and culture of the Ancient World.
7. Daily life in Antiquity.

**8 th grade** - History and Civilization (Medieval World, 4<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century) - 34 weeks - 1 1/2 hours/week -51 hours/year. Compulsory topics:

1. Political development in Medieval Europe.
2. Religion and religious beliefs in Medieval Europe.
3. Medieval society.
4. Conflicts and contacts in Medieval Europe.
5. Ideas in Medieval Europe.
6. Between Heaven and Earth: medieval individual and his mentality.

**2. Secondary School, 9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> grade (age 16 to 19):**

**9 th grade** - History and Civilization (the New Regime) - 36 weeks - 1 1/2 hours/week - 54 hours/year. Compulsory topics:

1. Ideology of the New Regime.
2. State and political models of the New Regime in the New Europe.
3. Europe's expansion. Ways of achieving expansion.
4. Society in the New Regime.
5. Dynamics of European culture.
6. The new individual.

**Additional topics for specialized History education:**

7. In search of a different world: the project on the world during the New Regime.
8. Between Europe and Orient - Bulgarian projections in the New Regime.

**10<sup>th</sup> grade** - History and Civilization (Contemporaneity) - 36 weeks - 1 1/2 hours/week - 54 hours/year. Compulsory topics:

1. State - reality and Utopia.
2. Attempts to build world order.
3. A divided world - "The Cold War".
4. A unified Europe - new hopes of the old continent.
5. Society in the Contemporary Age.
6. Culture and technologies.
7. Everyday life.

**Additional topics for specialized History education:**

8. Socio-cultural changes in Contemporaneity.
9. One or two "Europes" - Bulgaria and Bulgarians in the contemporary age.

**11<sup>th</sup> grade**- History and Civilization (History of Bulgaria) - 36 weeks - 1 1/2 hours/week - 54 hours/year. Compulsory topics:

1. Political development.
2. Authority and institutions.
3. Society and public life.
4. Council of Bulgarian Citizens - environment and mentalities.
5. Culture and spiritual life.
6. Religion and Church.
7. Bulgarians and the world.

**Additional topics for specialized History education:**

8. • Places of remembrance.
9. From Europe to Europe - the drama of Bulgaria's option for civilization.

Goals of the education on History-and Civilisation for XI grade are:

- To present the development of the Bulgarian people as a complete and complex process.
- To overview the Bulgarian culture as a part of the Balkan and European culture.
- To reveal the role of the religion, state, ethnic and social communities for the development and preservation of the Bulgarian identity.
- To generate understanding of the active role of man in the historic process.
- To develop students' skills for working with different resources and abilities for expressing and defending a critical position.

Presenting the past in the context of the contacts between Bulgarians and other peoples, history in school confirms the concept of the Bulgarian cultural identity as traditionally European. A similar attitude has a significant role for the relation between the Bulgarian society and the European values. It supposes the formation of the civic society's exigency towards the policy of Bulgarian eurointegration.

**12<sup>th</sup> grade**- History and Civilization (History and its role - nations and national states in the Balkans in modern and contemporary age) - 36 weeks - 1 1/2 hours/week - 54 hours/year. Compulsory topics for specialized History education:

1. History and historical perspectives.
2. Nation and its institutions in Western Europe.
3. Historical heritage and ideology of the national state.

4. Institutions of remembrance and national state.
5. Cultural and historical development of the Balkans until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
6. History and creation of national states in the Balkans.
7. Modernization and state authority in the Balkans during the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
8. Tracing back the ideal borders of the state - History as a practice of the national state in the Balkans, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
9. War and the role of History in the Balkans, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
10. Totalitarian state and the role of Balkan History.
11. Europe and the role of Balkan History.
12. Balkan nations between history and mass-media.
13. The history of Europe's reunification - the Balkan perspective.

**In addition. History education must apply state requirements in the field and teaching standards for civic education. The last subject coincides with the subject "World and Personality" only in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, but is compulsory for the entire cultural-educational teaching, "Public Sciences and Civic Education".**

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Civic Education in Bulgaria**

#### **General Background**

In Bulgaria, civic education is based on a long tradition. This was a compulsory subject of study in the Bulgarian educational system from 1894 to 1944. The first book in this respect was called "Civic Teaching" and underlined that "it allows students to learn what they need to know and to do in order to become good and useful citizens. This textbook tells us about the location of our country, the rules that govern it, the rights and the obligations of its citizens and establishes a rule, the road we need to follow if we want to avoid evil and to do good; it also presents the rights valid for all of our citizens". (*Civic education Textbook. Secondary school, 2nd year of study*, First edition. Edited by N. Stanev, Plovdiv, 1984.)

At present, civic education is based on the International Charter of Human Rights, the UN Convention on Children's Rights; Art. 15, 16, 22 (2), 424(3) point 1 from the National Education Act; Art. 9 and 10 from the Law on the level of preparation, the minimum level of acquired general knowledge and the school programme; and on the state requirements for civic education content.

The European dimensions of civic education in Bulgaria are also connected to the Declaration and Programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship based on the rights and responsibilities of citizens adopted by the Ministerial Committee of the Council of Europe on 7 May 1999.

These documents are all based on the idea of civic education aimed at preparing young people for a social behaviour that is active, competent and responsible by helping them to know, master and use the basic human rights and freedoms.

The study of civic education is based on a concept that includes the philosophy, the objectives and the content of state requirements in the field of education focused on school content, curricula, teaching materials and textbooks and teaching methodics. All these synthesize, on one hand, the national customs and, on the other hand, the global experience in the field of civic education.

In compliance with art. 10 from the Law on the level of preparation, the minimum level of acquired general knowledge and the school programme and with Art. 4 from Ordinance no. 2 from 18 May 2002, the school content is distributed on subjects of study from corresponding cultural and educational fields. One of these fields is the field of "Social sciences, civic education and religion". The very name and presence of such cultural-educational field in the Bulgarian school proves the importance of civic education in young people's development and assertion as citizens, competent and free persons, who are aware of their rights, responsibilities and liberties and respect the rights of the others. School subjects

that create the "Social Sciences, civic education and religion" cultural-educational field are ruled by the general ^ ideas concerning the organic relationship between a person and his/her reputation, between civic education in young people and their autonomous and responsible behavior, and the civic mission of education in general.

### **State requirements concerning the Civic Education content**

State requirements concerning content in the field of civic education are approved by the Ministry of Education and Science and by Ordinance no. 2, published in the Official Journal no. 48 from 18 May 2000. State requirements concerning content in the field of civic education describe the most important knowledge and connections pupils can and should acquire from the education in the general knowledge field, at the end of the respective cycle. They represent the basis and the reference for:

- Providing civic education in compulsory school subjects;
- Civic education development and improvement during compulsory and optional classes, as well as through other types of activities in school and outside school;
- The planning and establishing, by teachers, of a calendar distribution of topics from the educational materials studied from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade;
- The proper training and qualifications of teachers;
- A co-operation at national and international level between the Ministry of Education and Science, schools, other state, governmental and non-governmental organizations in the field of civic education.

State requirements concerning civic education content include education in the field of general knowledge for pupils in 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade and are established according to the degrees and levels of education.

Based on national tradition and in compliance with the international practice, state requirements on civic education content describe civic education as an "interdisciplinary element of general knowledge education in schools", which includes the education of pupils from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. According to art. 15 (1) from the Law on national education, state requirements for education in the Bulgarian school must provide the necessary conditions for the "forming of a free, moral and proactive personality, in compliance with the laws, other people's rights, culture, lifestyle and religion". This also means that, in our country, all school subjects have the means enabling them to achieve the civic education's objectives - to a certain extent. This is why one of the ministerial requirements is that curricula for all school subjects should include elements of civic education that can help in achieving its objectives.

An important role in civic education teaching in schools (1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade) is played by the school subjects from the cultural-educational field "Social sciences, civic education and religion" - native country, neighboring countries, individual and society, History and Civilization, Geography and Economics, Psychology, Ethics and Law, Philosophy, Universe and personality.

In the initial stage of the basic education, pupils' teaching in the cultural-educational field: "Social Sciences, civic education and religion" starts with the following school subject: "Native country and neighboring countries", studied in the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Curricula are aimed at conveying to pupils notions and knowledge about the natural and social environment and at developing the basis for cognitive and communication skills.

The school subject "Individual and society" has a comprehensive nature. It provides pupils with knowledge in the cultural-educational field "Social Sciences, civic education and religion" during the primary cycle, namely the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Geography and Economics answers state requirements concerning the civic education content, aspects related to political and economic organization of society, study of contemporary global issues, the political world map, changes occurred in modern Europe and in the Balkans, and Bulgaria's place in this context. In this respect, studying Geography and Economics allows pupils:

- To become acquainted with political, economic and cultural contemporary events, from Bulgaria and worldwide;
- To have an active participation in the country's social life;
- To use the knowledge they acquired during Geography and Economics classes in the economic, political and cultural life;
- To acquire knowledge concerning their own social orientation and assertion;
- To discover relationships between nature and human society, by taking attitude towards environmental issues for a sustainable development;
- To express their well-argued personal opinion and their responsible civic attitude, as a result of a further study of global contemporary problems.

In what the civic education is concerned, the study of History and Civilization has a strong practical component and fulfils the mission of education - that of training personalities with an active civic position and a responsible attitude in the civil society. The most important thing is that pupils become aware of the priorities in contemporary Bulgaria's development, given the European Union integration process, as well as of the values that support modern Europe's development: respect for human rights, culture and ethnic identity and tolerance towards all religious affiliation.

Pupils have the possibility to acquire knowledge about the European Union's history, structure and activity, about basic documents concerning the protection of human rights and freedoms and of minorities' interests, the fight against racial and religious intolerance.

School subjects belonging to the "Philosophy" field - Psychology and Logic, Ethics and Philosophy - answer the state requirements concerning the civic education content, regarding the arguing and development of a common social life idea, the place, meaning and role of democracy, state of law, state authorities and institutions. In what civic education is concerned. Philosophy teaching allows pupils to:

- Determine the fundamental social groups and communities and comment on their respective interests and problems;
- Explain the role of language, religion and traditions in social commitment and the differences in society;
- Determine the sources of contradiction between ethnic and religious communities;
- Determine their place and consider their future in economic relations;
- Prove the availability to protect their civic rights and responsibilities, as well as others'.

Universe and Personality (12<sup>th</sup> grade), which concludes pupils' education in the cultural-educational field of "Social sciences, civic education and religion", is also comprehensive-it provides for the fulfillment of 13 civic education standards for secondary education, out of 32. The teaching of the "Universe and Personality" subject is highly practical, allowing pupils to apply their own knowledge about world and society, to develop their knowledge in view of creating the future, based on the respect of human rights and of democratic society's institutions.

The specialized education of pupils in the school subject "Universe and Personality" is accomplished according to the "Bulgaria in a United Europe" curriculum. This curriculum is aimed at:

- Developing pupils' knowledge and practice that they acquired for themselves, society and universe;
- Training pupils for their participation in public life, for their personal and professional assertion that is in accordance with democratic values and principles of the contemporary world;
- Allowing pupils to create and accomplish various studies, surveys and projects, exploiting extracurricular activities as well.

The specialized education for the subject Universe and Personality contributes to the creation of an independent and proactive attitude in pupils, in view of their involvement in social life, in the context of cultural diversity and globalization.

In Bulgarian schools. Religion became a school subject in 1997/1998. It's being taught in Bulgarian, one hour per week.

The teaching of Religion answers the following state requirements concerning the civic education content:

- Recognizing the role of language, religion and tradition in the preservation and development of the Bulgarian state;
- Identifying the emergence of the main religions and their impact on civilization;
- Determining the affiliation of a community, based on its linguistic and religious features;
- Distinguishing the differences in lifestyles, religious beliefs and ways of perceiving values in various societies;
- Explaining the role of language, religion and traditions in social commitment and the differences in society.

The module "Religions of the World", taught in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, for the Philosophy profile, also contributes to pupils' religious education. The curriculum for "Religions of the World" is a vital element for humanities. It helps forming a perspective on the world and on pupils' values, as well as their cultural identity.

The teaching of the module "Religions of the World" offers pupils the possibility of studying the creation and historical development of religions, as a cultural phenomenon, together with the diversity of religious experiences and science.

The teaching of the "Religions of the World" module is intended to allow pupils:

- To acquire knowledge about the traditional Orthodox religion, a certain way of thinking and perceiving the world, philosophy, values, morals, behavior and culture;
- To shape their own identity, values and perception of the world;
- To create prevention methods against the invasion of religious groups, new religious cultures and destructive groups;
- To show tolerance towards other Christian Churches and Slav religions.

Considering the spiritual premises and the conditions that led to cultural diversity and variety of values/as well as their connection with religion and traditions, the teaching of the "Religions of the World" module is strictly related to state requirements concerning the civic education content.

The subjects included in the other cultural-educational fields are also important in achieving the objectives of civic-education, through their educational content and through the implementation of the basic principles - pluralism and tolerance, respect for human dignity and equal and irrevocable human rights, practical orientation, relations, arguments and persuasion, critical and creative thinking, access to crucial performances of universal culture and interdisciplinarity.

Civic education is not completed during teaching of various subjects alone. State requirements concerning textbooks and curricula content also include a practical component of education, which is explicitly stated. This implies that part of the course should be employed for research and outside of class/school activities. The recommendation for teachers is that they guide pupils towards independent activities, during which they can:

- Explore various types of social experience;
- Study official documents of national and international importance, governing the relation of citizens with the society and its institutions;
- Establish connections with the management of national and local institutions and take various social initiatives;
- Participate in the international dialogue with representatives of various ethnic groups;
- Carry out field work;
- Draw up and carry out individual and group projects.

Therefore, civic education encompasses school community life and social environment, helps school culture development and pupils socialization for an active civic involvement and for the democratization of the society.

### **Teachers training and qualifications**

Teachers training and qualifications in civic education teaching is one of the priorities of the Ministry of Education and Science. The "Modernization of Education." project, financed by the World Bank, requires interdisciplinary training and qualifications of teachers in the field of civic education, universe and personality.

The University "Kliment Ohridski" in Sofia and other higher education institutions propose master degree studies in the field of Civic Education. The department for teachers' information and training at the University "Kliment Ohridski" in Sofia undertakes various training seminars and programs (a total of 11) for experts of the Ministry of Education and Science, school headmasters, school counselors and teachers. A study seminar was organized in co-operation with the "Foundation for an Open Society", intended for the teachers from Sofia, teaching the school subject "Universe and Personality". Such seminars are to be organized in other parts of the country as well. A national conference was held (7 and 8 November, 2003), focused on the topic "Situation and perspectives in teaching "Universe and Personality" was held upon the initiative of the philosophic foundation "Minerva", the University "Kliment Ohridski" in Sofia, the "Foundation for an Open Society" and the Ministry of Education and Science. The actual topic indicates the practical nature of the conference. The Association of Philosophy Teachers has a web site with the address:

<http://apf.webbg.com>, containing the education and training curriculum: "Political culture and civic education for young people in Bulgaria." In 2003, the Ministry of Education and Science created a web-site dedicated to civic education. The site is intended for persons with interests in civic education. It contains information about the teaching of civic education and provides assistance for anyone interested in such issues.

### Appendix 1: STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, 1999

		HIGH SCHOOLS					4 3 2 1		Stage 3 PhD	3 2 1	Stage 3 PhD		HIGH EDUCATION
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University</li> <li>• Specialised High School</li> <li>• College</li> </ul>					5 4 3 2 1		Stage 2 Master	1 Master		Bachelor	
		3 2 1		4 Stage 1 3 2 1		4 Stage 1 3 2 1		Bachelor		Master			
		Completed secondary education											
		GENERAL EDUCATION					VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS					2 1	SECONDARY EDUCATION
20	19	Secondary (gymnasium) stage										L	
18	17												
16	15												
14	13	Primary stage		VIII VII VI V IV		VIII VII VI V IV		VIII VII VI V IV		VIII VII VI V IV			
12	11			B		C		D		E			
10	9	IV III II I				IV III II I		IV III II I		IV III II I		Elementary stage	
8	7	A				C		D					
6	5	KINDERGARTENS											PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION
4													
Age of children													

- A – elementary (basic) school
- B – junior school
- C – primary school
- D – secondary school (general education)
- E – specialised secondary school
- F, G, H, I – vocational training school
- J, K – vocational secondary school
- L – vocational college

I - XIII - grades  
1 - 5 - Duration of the education (years)