Reponsible bodies

Since 2009 the National Employment Agency has been using a new methodology for evaluating the proposals for professional orientation and adult education. It assesses the three main factors for providing training: teaching curriculum, teaching staff and facilities. The evaluation of proposals for vocational training is made by external experts nominated by the social partners.

In order to ensure better quality of training, the Law on Promoting Employment provides options from the national budget for active policy on the labour market for subsidies for adult training and trainers, development of teaching materials and aids, activities related to organizing the selection and assessment of institutions for adult education organized and financed by the National Employment Agency.

In Bulgaria, besides the classical scheme for higher education and granting diplomas of higher education, there is a long tradition of organizing formal continuing education for adults in the higher schools. The official body responsible for external quality assurance of higher education institutions is the National Accreditation and Evaluation which follows the rules and procedures adopted in the European Higher Education Area. To date, almost in all universities under a different name function actively units for postgraduate studies. In accordance with state requirements and specifics of the training, universities issue the relevant professional qualifications. Continuing education can be financed both by the students and the labor offices, private and / or public organizations or companies-employers.

Approaches and Methods for Quality Assurance

The main challenge is to organize the education and training and align them towards attainment of the key competences by all adult learners. To achieve this objective and turn into a fundament of the educational process more focus should be placed on the acquisition of basic skills, which would evolve into permanently attained competences such as competences in the mother tongue to achieve functional literacy, literacy in the area of mathematics and natural sciences, technological and digital literacy, as well as foreign language communication skills. At the same time, higher quality of teaching must be ensured, a crucial prerequisite, which required effective basic qualification and ongoing, continued qualification of teachers and educators. Another important prerequisite is to transform the profession of teacher and educator for adults into an attractive career choice through all expedient means and tools. Governance of the education and training institutions must be improved in order for effective and flexible quality assurance systems to be elaborated. It is essential to upgrade the funding system as a tool to ensure the efficiency of primary and continuing education and training through the shared and balanced responsibility between the government, the employers, and the learners.
The National Coordination Group for AL (strategic support to NC) was adopted – chaired by NC/Ministry

The National Concept for promoting active life of older people in Bulgaria (2014-2030) was adopted – The main operational objective of this document in the context of quality of adult learning is to ensure conditions for access to education, lifelong learning, training and retraining of older people with a view to improving their mobility in the labour market.

National Council for Lifelong Learning was constituted in 2014.

National strategic documents in context of Quality assurance in Adult Education and Training:

In the beginning of 2014 the Bulgarian government with DCM № 12 of January 10, adopted the National strategy for lifelong learning for the period 2014 - 2020 whose headline targets are as follows:

- Raising the participation of the population aged 25 – 64 in education and training to more than 5% in 2020;
- Reduction of the share of the illiterate people aged 20 – 29 to 1.5% in 2020;

The national assembly with Decision of 26.02.2015 adopted a National strategy for Higher Education for period 2014-2020 in whose headline targets and expected results about adult learning are as follows:

- Expanding and strengthening of the network for lifelong learning;
- Widely applied of the various electronic forms of distance learning;
- An increased number of the courses offered and other forms of lifelong learning in the HEIs;
- An increased number persons who have graduated different forms of lifelong learning in the HEIs;
- National Strategy for Promotion and improve literacy skills (2014 - 2020) was adopted by the Council of Ministers with Protocol Decision № 44.5 from 22/10/2014. The strategy proposes policies to ensure access to quality and affordable courses for adult literacy and appropriate environment to compensate for the problems in literacy - in the workplace and beyond.

National strategy for the development of pedagogical staff was adopted in January 2014 by the Council of Ministers.

**Action plans**


Action plan to the measures under the Strategy for Development of Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2014-2020 was adopted by Council of Ministries in 2014. Action Plan is based on the objectives, challenges, measures and expected results set out in the Strategy for Development of Higher Education (2014-2020). The envisaged activities are allocated in accordance with the objectives and structure of the strategy by providing time for implementation of each activity. The financing will be provided from two sources - from the national budget and funds from the European Structural and investment funds (ESIS), mainly through the Operational Programme "Science and education for smart growth," OP "Competitiveness and Innovation" and the OP "Regional Development ".


National plan for the implementation of activities to the National strategy for the development of pedagogical staff (2014-2020) was adoptet in May 2014.

- Large scale programmes that bring about significant changes and impact the whole education system

In the end of 2014 the Bulgarian government and EC adopted the Operational Programme on Development of Human Resources

In the beginning of 2015 the Bulgarian government and EC adopted the Operational programme on science and education for smart growth

- Pilot projects with nationwide implications.

BG – Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning

EPALE National Support Services (NSS) - (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe)


The main / overarching aim of the national policy for adult learning is to enhance the participation of adults in the qualitative lifelong learning process through improved interaction and mobilization of all stakeholders. The National policy of adult sets out the strategic framework of the government’s policy in education and training during the period, which aims at achieving the European goal for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Adult learning is at present the weakest link in the development of the national system for lifelong learning in Bulgaria. Within the framework of the next period to the 2020 the efforts will be targeted at building of a multi-stage level of coordination of the stakeholders, improvement of the quality, monitoring and the data base and popularization of the importance of adult learning.

Taking actions to raise the levels of quality assurance in the lifelong learning sector in Bulgaria:

For this purpose problematic situations in the sector have been analyzed and the rights and responsibilities of the stakeholders have been identified – public institutions at national and regional level, the municipalities, organizations of employers and syndicates, non-government organizations, educational and training institutions etc.

Working meetings have been conducted on local, regional and national level with representatives from different state, educational and cultural institutions, social partners, civil society organizations. Was created a National Council for lifelong learning for the legislative assurance of the process.

The main goal for the implementation of a monitoring mechanism in Bulgaria is to turn it into a key tool for the implementation of the European plan for adult learning. As a part of the new priorities in the context of the quality of adult education and training, the monitoring of the adult training is of key significance at local, regional and national level, in order to produce better empirical evidences for an increase of the participation of adults and to present the efforts, made in the sector.

The expert from Ministry of Education and Science prepared a Communication plan. The goal of the document was to create a model of an effective communication environment to unite the efforts of all stakeholders to prepare, accomplish, monitor and evaluate policies that are directed to the adult learning sector, as well as aimed to raise the awareness of the population about the significance of

Development of mechanisms and tools for monitoring and scaling of the progress in the field of adult learning. The goal is to create conditions for decision making in the field of education and training for adults, by developing tools for monitoring and evaluation system for evaluation and analysis and national informational system with a database. These mechanisms are/constitute the bridge between the policy and practice in the adult learning sector. It will ensure the national and international trust through the interpretation of facts and numbers into conclusions and outcomes, which will help the decision-making process, considering the problems of the education and training of adults. An advisory process was set up, in which potentially engaged institutions of national and regional level taking part, as well as a wide range of participants in the field of adult learning, through organization of electronic forum. Trainings for implementation of the mechanism for policy monitoring was provided for representatives of ministries, agencies, district administrations and social partners.

Raising the public awareness about the significance of adult learning and the European agenda, defining the priorities in this sector. This is achieved through carrying out of Days promoting the Learning of Adults across the 5 regions for planning in Bulgaria and by dissemination of the relevant European and national documents in the field of adult learning. Throughout the recent months regional conferences/seminars take place, where people discuss the priority directions of the EU Program for lifelong learning, and formulate decisions for the development of national policies for the next programming period. A presentation of good practices for informal training is delivered in different places across the country.

The website of the Ministry of Education and Science publishes information for the general public about national and European events in this sector; it is constantly updated, adding European and national documents, and analysis, reports, good practices, methodological directions.

The results of this policy will impact and contribute for the specific benefits for different target groups – representatives of state, regional and municipal institutions, social partners, non-government organizations, as well as educational, cultural and sport institutions, employers, craftsmen and potential learners, by involving them into the process of development of a structured and officially regulated national system for adult learning.

The involvement of different stakeholders in the discussions about the existing problems in the sector of education and training for adults, the formulation of measures for improvement of its condition, the sharing of good practices, as well as the joint consultations for developing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, improved the interaction between the different participants and contributed to the increase of the shared responsibility for the further development of the adult learning sector in Bulgaria.

During the last two years the following results have been achieved:

Analysis of the condition of the adult learning sector in Bulgaria: This analysis was developed in order to snapshot the problematic situation in the adult learning sector in Bulgaria, to define the existing informational gaps, as well as to identify the stakeholders so that they could be engaged in the process of monitoring and evaluation of the policy for adult education and training. The analysis covers existing laws, strategies, concepts, plans, programs, reports, analysis, surveys and other documents as well as country practice. A first attempt was made to identify the reasons for the existing problems in the adult learning sector, as well as to group the possible solutions in terms of
conceptual, methodical and practical aspect. Another focus of the analysis is the identification of the rights and responsibilities of the stakeholders as well as the obstacles that need to be overcome in order to be mobilized for the implementation of the progress in this sector.

To identify the problematic situation in the adult learning sector, 7 focus groups have been conducted with stakeholders - trainers; school drop-outs; people that are involved in literacy courses; unemployed people that are studying in the formal education system; people deprived from freedom that continue their education in prison schools; refugees; people with disabilities.

The results of the analysis are being finalized by performing a SWOT analysis, which presents the objective evaluation of the current situation in the field of adult learning in Bulgaria - the strengths and weaknesses, the possibilities and threats. The SWOT analysis is a basis for the formulation of an approach to institutionalization of the cooperation between the stakeholders on one hand, and leads to improvement of the quality in the adult learning sector, on the other.

The team of Ministry of Education and Science researched the experience of different European counties in regard to the management, monitoring and evaluation of the adult learning sector. As a result, a Compendium, which presents the experience of 10 European counties in the adult learning sector, was prepared. It presents the legislative and strategic framework, the authorities and levels of administration, the different stakeholders and the instruments for monitoring and evaluation, which are being used in the adult learning sectors in these 10 European countries.

As a result of the researched European experience, the experts from the Ministry prepared a proposal for a structure and further steps to build up a National system for monitoring in Bulgaria. Its goals and principles are formulated, as well as key questions, which this system can help to answer. The Report with a proposal for a development of a National system for monitoring in Bulgaria is the link between the preliminary activities, necessary to develop a system for monitoring of the adult learning sector, and the actual activities for developing the model of the system.

The expert team prepared a package of documents to create a National Council for lifelong learning. Were adopted The Regulations for the organization of the activities of the Council, which were promulgated for a wide discussion on the electronic page of the Ministry of Education and Science.

The National Council for lifelong learning was proposed to the Council of Ministers.

Report to the European Commission about the condition of the adult learning sector in Bulgaria was prepared as a response to the European Union Adult Learning Program and reflects the situation of the adult learning sector in Bulgaria. The document encompasses an analysis of the statistical data, linked with the educational levels of the population and the participation of adults in the different forms of formal education and training, informal training and self-education. The motives and obstacles to participation of the population in the lifelong learning have been deduced. The legislative, strategic and institutional framework of this sector has been presented, together with an overview of the national policy and measurement in the execution of the five priority areas for implementation of the Adult Learning Program of the EU has been made. The report presents the situation of the sector for learning in Bulgaria up to December 2012.

Seminars to present the European priorities in Adult Learning was organized within few days and good practices of informal trainings in three planning regions across the country – South Central, Southeastern and Southwestern.

Many representatives of institutions and organizations from different places across 16 regions of Bulgaria took part in the events. The condition of the relevant regions was presented by basic indexes
referring to the education and training of adults.

Working groups discussed the five priorities set out in the EU Adult Learning Program and formulated prepositions for appraisal to, that should be taken in Bulgaria for the next programming period. Conclusions and recommendations were made that should be taken into consideration when developing the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning for the period 2014-2020.

As a part of the functions of the National coordinator for Adult learning multi-stage level of coordination was built up. District coordinators in all the 28 districts of the country were nominated. The schools for adults were unified in a national network.

A tool for the application of the Model of monitoring of the Adult learning sector, which was developed in 2012 – 2014 was developed.

Adult learning days and seminars were carried out in order to popularize the benefits of adult learning, topical news and documents were disseminated. Films, aimed at motivating drop-outs were developed.

Large scale programmes that bring about significant changes and impact of the whole education system for adults:

In the end of 2014 the Bulgarian government and EC adopted the Operational Programme on Development of Human Resources

In the beginning of 2015 the Bulgarian government and EC adopted the Operational programme on science and education for smart growth

Pilot projects with nationwide implications.

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Web links and references to official documents

All strategic documents can be found here:

http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/docs/indexstr.htm [1]


Project website: http://LLL.MON.BG [3];

BG – Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning.

A website was created, which presents all the results from the work of the project implementation team, as well as events, news, European and national strategic and legislative documents, methodical materials for the adult training, good-case practices, electronic forum for discussions etc.

As a result of the activities for popularization of adult learning in Bulgaria a media product was
prepared, which will be placed at disposal of national and local media and will be presented at the closing conference under the project. The film presents real flash-backs of events, carried out within the project framework. The film aims to raise the awareness and enhance the interest in the adult learning sector and in the project results as well as to stress on the EC contribution to the development of education and training.

Electronic bulletins website: [http://LLL.MON.BG](http://LLL.MON.BG) [3]

**Legislative References**

*Vocational Education and Training Act* [4]

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**Source URL:**

**Links**