This report reflects the point of view of literacy professionals assembled in this network. It is still a work in progress since we continue to gather and update information on literacy in Romania up to the year 2015. The contents of this publication may be reproduced in part, except for commercial purposes, provided the extract is preceded by a reference to “ELINET”, followed by the date of publication of the document.

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As Bulgaria did not take part in PIAAC the OECD’s Survey of Adult Skills, and has not carried out any recent national surveys of adult literacy, there is no data available on levels of literacy among the adult population.
B  LITERACY POLICY
1 Provision

1.1 What types of adult literacy provision are there? What do you consider to be adult literacy provision in your country?

The report “Education for All 2015 - National Review, Bulgaria” identifies some specific programmes for continuous/basic education organised in Bulgaria to provide adult literacy. For example, the project “Development and extension of the system for adult literacy provision” is aimed at access to the labour market. The project addressed persons over the age of 16 to pass courses for literacy provision (including curricula for Vth, VIth and VIIth grade)

In 2014 the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy initiated activities within the project “Training for Literacy provision through training for illiterate and low-literate persons” registered at the Employment Agency (EA). The project was planned for 2,000 people to pass literacy provision courses, motivation training, training for acquisition of key competencies and professional qualification. This measure contributed to raising the share of those employed among the individuals who have completed lower than secondary education.

Another scheme of the Ministry of Education and Science for direct provision of literacy to adults is called “New Chance for Success”. It developed an overall model for training of adults, including training methodology (training schemes, curricula, learning packages), training process, tests and certification of the achieved results. Training was conducted in courses for literacy provision and in master courses envisaged for pre-secondary level grades of basic education. The number of persons included in training for completion of primary level and grades from the secondary level was 16,386 (September 2014).

The main sources which comprise the regulatory framework for adult education and adult literacy include:

Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria

The Bulgarian Constitution of 1991 offers a pluralist frame of reference for education and training which is laid out under Chapter Two “Citizens’ fundamental rights and duties”. Various articles of Chapter Two recognise the right to education and training, incl. adult learning.

National strategy for life-long learning (2014 – 2020)

Adult learning and adult literacy is an important component of the National strategy for life-long learning (2014 - 2020). It comprises formal, non-formal, and informal learning for improving basics skills, obtaining new qualifications, up-skilling or re-skilling for employment of adults. It was adopted by the Council of Ministers on January 10, 2014.

The strategy defines the conceptual framework for lifelong learning in both European and national contexts. The Strategy identifies objectives and progress indicators as follows:

- Increase the share of the children covered by preschool education and training from the 4-year-olds to the first grade enrolment age from 87.8% in 2012 to 90% in 2020;
- Reduce the share of early leavers from the educational system at the age of 18-24 from 12.5% in 2012 to less than 11% in 2020;
• Reduce the share of 15-year-olds with poor achievements in:
  o reading – from 39.4% in 2012 to 30% in 2020;
  o mathematics – from 43.8% in 2012 to 35% in 2020;
  o natural sciences – from 36.9% in 2012 to 30.0% in 2020;
• Increase the share of those attaining professional qualification degrees in the broad areas of Informatics, Technical Equipment, Manufacturing and Processing, and Architecture and Construction to at least 60% in 2020;
• Increase the share of those completing higher education at the age of 30-34 from 26.9% in 2012 to 36% in 2020;
• Increase the employment rates of the population at the age of 20-64 from 63% in 2012 to 76% in 2020;
• Increase the participation of the population at the age of 25-64 in education and training from 1.5% in 2012 to more than 5% in 2020 (a 4-week reference period);
• Reduce the share of illiterate persons:
  o among persons at the age of 15-19 - from 2.0% in 2011 to 1.5% in 2020;
  o among persons at the age of 20-29 – from 2.3% in 2011 to 1.5% in 2020.

National strategy for the encouragement and increase of literacy 2014 - 2020

The Strategy was adopted by the Council of Ministers on October 22, 2014.

At the time of elaboration of the Strategy, no generally accepted concept of literacy exists in Bulgaria.

The traditional understanding of literacy is most often related to mastering reading and writing in the native tongue.

The Strategy refers to the definition of literacy adopted by UNESCO in 2003: “Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.”

The Strategy presents an analysis of the factors and trends for the development of literacy, provides a definition for the various types of literacy and clarifies the scope and content of the concept of "literacy".

Depending on the functions, objectives and age groups to which they relate, the following types of literacy are distinguished:

• basic literacy – skill of reading and understanding a text, writing and proper use of the language in a particular context (related to the competences which students are expected to possess at the end of grade IV);
• functional literacy – a skill of discovering, selecting, extracting and synthesising information from various sources and its use to achieve a particular goal both in learning of all subjects of study and in various real-life situations (it is related to the competences which the students are expected to possess at the end of their basic education);
• multifunctional literacy – ability to create, understand, interpret and critically assess written information (it is related to competences expected to be developed and demonstrated within training for acquisition of secondary education and of higher education degrees).
Achievement of functional literacy is the main focus of the Strategy, the specific policies presuppose stage-by-stage development of basic literacy and building on this until the multifunctional literacy is attained.

**Public Education Law**

The right to education and continuous participation of adults in the processes of life-long learning (LLL) and respectively, the right of literacy provision, is regulated by Art. 4, §1 and §2 of the Public Education Act.

It states that citizens are entitled to education and can continuously improve their education and qualifications. No restrictions and privileges are allowed on the grounds of race, nationality, gender, ethnic and social origin, religious freedom and social situation.

The right of access to educational institutions, respectively the right of access to literacy provision is regulated under Art. 9, §1 of the Law, which sets forth that every citizen can exercise his/her right of education at a school of his/her choice and a type of training in accordance with personal preferences and abilities.

The Law regulates the structure, functions and management of the educational system in Bulgaria.

It fixes the mundane character of education, explicitly specifies that it is free of charge in the state and municipal schools, gives opportunities for acquisition of basic and secondary education by people over 16 in evening and extramural forms of education in the formal education schools.

**The Law on Vocational Education and Training**

The law regulates the right to vocational education, vocational training and the acquisition of vocational qualifications in line with the state’s needs for a qualified and competitive workforce. In July 2014, amendments to the Law related to the validation of the skills acquired during the vocational education as well as credit transfer etc. were adopted by the Parliament.

**The Law on Enhancement of Employment**

The law introduces a definition of the notion of the “adult” and regularises the public relations in the field of enhancement and preservation of employment as well as improvement of employability through programmes and measures for vocational education of adults, enhancement of career information and guidance, motivation training, literacy education, stimulation of employers involved in training of employed and unemployed people.

**The Law on Public Libraries**

It defines the National library “St. St. Cyril and Methodius”, the regional and municipal libraries and those in the “chitalishta” institutions as educational, informational and cultural institutes of national and local significance, which collect, process, organise, preserve and make available to the general public publications and information, including e-information. The public libraries provide opportunities for each citizen to have equal and free access to library and information services.

**The Law on the People’s Chitalishta**

It regularises the establishment, structure, management, activities, property, financing and closing of the peoples’ chitalishta. The cultural centers “chitalishta” are an institution with a long tradition in Bulgaria. The chitalishta are original adult education institutions. They play an important part in non-
formal adult education. In many places, especially in villages, they are the only institutions, which provide non-formal educational opportunities for children and adults.

They were established in the 19th century, during the time of Ottoman rule, as educational facilities sponsored and funded by the local elite. They generally began with public libraries in towns and villages, but soon went on to organise theatrical performances and other events, such as film shows, which demonstrates their relatively progressive approach to culture and education. They also offered a wide array of courses.

Throughout Bulgaria there are presently around 3,500 cultural centres, with approximately 2,500 of them in rural areas. Many have their own building, while others take the form of local educational associations, which use local authority premises.

The Law on the Peoples' Chitalishta defines their main activities: maintaining libraries, reading rooms, collections of photos, music, films and videos, as well as electronic information networks. They develop and support amateur creative work; organise courses in music, dancing, etc; study groups; interest clubs; festivals, concerts and youth activities; collection and dissemination of knowledge about the home region; collection, preservation and presentation of museum collections, provision of computer and internet services etc.

The national network of cultural centres is of extreme importance for adult education, since it extends to practically every village. Furthermore, people are familiar with the cultural centres, they enjoy a good reputation, and they often have a strong emotive appeal.

Among strategic documents related to the regulation framework of the adult learning sector in Bulgaria are also:

- National Development Program: Bulgaria 2020
- National Reform Program 2011 – 2015
- National Youth Strategy 2010 – 2020
- National Action Plan on Employment
- The Labour Codex

The existing political framework is an appropriate basis for the development of a national policy for adult learning, but it still treats the problems of adult learning within the general political context of other socio-economic sectors. There is a need for specific policies focusing on the problems of adult learning. The existing general parameters of the political framework have to be further developed and simultaneously enriched with new dimensions, outlining the specifics of the adult learning sector in Bulgaria.

1.2 How is adult literacy provision funded?

The main sources of funding the activities related to adult literacy are:

- public funding,
- funding from the EU Structural Funds,
- financing provided by the employers and
- payment of learner’s fees.
Specific part in the Public Education Law is devoted to the funding of the activities in education:

- In addition to funds allocated from the state budget through the Ministry of Education and Science, other ministries and institutions, funds are also allocated from the local budgets through the municipal councils. (Art. 41)
- The training activities for adults, financed by the employers predominantly include non-formal training: workplace-based training, ICT courses, foreign language courses, etc. In some cases employers pay for the acquisition of vocational qualification in the formal training system. In these cases they determine the type, the scope and the duration of the training. These activities of the employers are based on their immediate needs; the training organisation develops and offers the respective training programme and proposes the organisational form of the training.
- There are some mechanisms allowing the employer to apply to the Employment Agency or the Regional Labour Service Directorate for funding from the state budget to finance a part of the training.

1.3 Is there a statutory entitlement to literacy provision up to a certain level?

The Public Education Law gives the statutory entitlement to literacy provision within Full-time education mandatory for all children at the age between 7 and 16.

1.4 What is the rate of participation in adult learning, workplace training, liberal adult education?

As per the results of the EUROSTAT survey, carried out by the NSI (LFS), in 2012 only 1.5% of the Bulgarian population participated in formal or informal learning during the 4 weeks preceding the interview.

In spite of the increase of 0.2 percentage points compared to 2011 the data is not quite optimistic, there is a lack of a lasting and sustainable trend in the last decades.

Margins between the average values for Bulgaria and the EU continue to be relatively high – 6.5 times in 2012.

Data from the 2011 Bulgaria Census indicate that the share of illiterate persons among those at the age of 15-19 is 2.0%, and among those at the age of 20-24 and 25-29 - 2.3% (according to the self-evaluation of the interviewees).

Bulgaria registers one of the lowest participation rates registered by the EUROSTAT survey:

Table 1: Lifelong learning, 2009 and 2014: % of the population at the age of 25 to 64 participating in education and training

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<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
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1.5 Are studies available on factors that inhibit or prevent participation in literacy education and in using literacy outside educational contexts? If yes, what are the factors?

The AES in Bulgaria (2013) indicates the following factors that inhibit and/or prevent participation in literacy education:

**The price of education as an obstacle for participation in LLL**

For 25% of the sample, the price of education is a leading reason for non-participation in LLL.

Among the people who highlighted the price as a main reason for non-participation, the highest share is in the group aged 25-34 – (28.7%).

A high share of the young people listed as reasons for non-participation "Lack of time due to work schedule or inconvenient timing" – 15.9% and "Lack of time due to family constraints" - 13.9%.

The price is the most important factor for the people with secondary education - 30.3%, followed by the people with basic and lower education - 26.8%.

The impossibility of meeting the entry requirements (17.4%), and distance to the venue (17%) are also a considerable obstacle for those with basic and lower education.

The training price is the least important factor for those with higher education - a little over 20% of them defined it as an obstacle. The share of those who have pointed out the lack of time due to work schedules or family constraints is respectively 27.3% and 15.2%.

The data clearly show that the price of training is among the main reasons for non-participation among all age groups as well as for the people with secondary and lower education.

**Poverty and low income as a factor for participation in LLL processes**

A number of international surveys come to the conclusion that there is a significant connection between educational achievements and the acquired educational degree in Bulgaria and the social and economic environment in the country.

The social and economic environment and the income of the households in particular prove to be one of the key factors, defining not only the level of completed education but also further participation in LLL processes.

This data evidences that unemployment, low living standards and the ensuing poverty lead to higher risk of leaving the educational system early, as well as to considerable reduction of their chances of being reintegrated at a later stage of their lives through participation in LLL.

1.6 What progression routes are there from adult basic education courses to VET/HE courses?

1.7 Does a right to advice and guidance regarding educational opportunities exist? If yes, who provides this advice?
2 Quality monitoring

2.1 Is there an inspection service to monitor the quality of adult literacy providers (including classroom practice)?

2.2 Are there national quality standards for the quality of adult literacy providers?

2.3 Are there national benchmarks/standards for adult literacy performance? How are adults’ progress in reading and writing assessed/monitored?

2.4 What accountability measures are in place for adult education institutions?

Although there is no comprehensive system for quality assurance of adult learning there are achievements related to the adult literacy providers:

- A national qualification framework has been developed and adopted;
- State educational standards for acquisition of vocational qualification by professions have been developed and endorsed;
- Measures for upgrading the qualification of teachers in the school education system, lecturers in the higher schools and directors of training institutions have been taken;
- An information system for assessment of the competences of the workforce is under development;
- A functioning system for accreditation, licensing and control over the providers of vocational education and training is in place - there are about 800 licensed centres for vocational education which provide training to the unemployed;
- The range of potential learners in the different geographic areas has been expanded and their effectiveness and employability improved; the centres for vocational education offer courses for training of adults in a wide range of professions, programmes and schemes for motivational training, literacy courses, professional guidance, and training in key competences;
- There is a national network of information desks for provision of information and consultations to employers and employees. Electronic platforms for adult learning have been constructed.

Based on the achievements and on the network of institutions and organisations, offering formal education and training and non-formal training in the different geographic areas, a system for quality assurance in the adult education sector will be developed and introduced.
3 Literacy curricula/reading instruction

3.1 Is there a national literacy curriculum for adults? How is this linked to school curricula?

3.2 What is the accepted methodology for the teaching of literacy to adults?

3.3 How do curricula and learning materials cater for diversity of learner groups and learning needs?

3.4 Is there a specific focus on literacy in VET provision for adults?

In 2006, a consortium led by the German consultancy company GOPA wrote an Adult Training Strategy for Bulgaria, aiming to “improve adult training as a contribution to the development of the economy, the society and the individual in the Republic of Bulgaria”.

This was a 1.3 million euro project under the Phare 2003 programme of the EU (EuropeAid/120163/D/SV/BG), co-ordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

The task was:

a) to develop a system for studying, identifying and monitoring employers’ and employees’ needs for vocational training and

b) to develop a strategy for adult learning, particularly including methodology and content for vocational training of adults.

The Strategy defines seven priorities in the field of adult training, including the respective activities, expected outputs, funding sources, deadlines and indicators of achievement for each of the priorities. The seven priorities are:

1) Improving the conditions for access to adult education and training and bringing training closer to adult learners

2) Improving the flexibility and relevance of adult training to the labour market

3) Improving the opportunities for personal development through training in key competencies: communication in the mother tongue, mathematical literacy and basic competencies in science and technology, information and communication technologies (ICT), learning-to-learn, interpersonal, intercultural and social skills, entrepreneurship and culture.

4) Improving adult training methodology

5) Developing the recognition/validation of knowledge and skills obtained as a result of non-formal or informal learning, evaluation, certification, and documentation

6) Improving the quality of adult education and training

7) Developing research and development (R&D) and applied activities in the field of adult training

A methodological guide for adult education was developed under the project that can be used by teachers and managers who need practical advice, for example on modern methods of teaching adult learners.

A Bulgarian-English glossary of key terms in the field of vocational education was developed as well as an attempt to overcome problems with different terminology.
4 Screenings/assessments/support

4.1 How are adults with literacy needs identified?

4.2 How are adults’ prior literacy knowledge and skills recognized and validated?

4.3 Are there any standard tests to assess literacy needs or learning progress in literacy programmes?

4.4 How are adults with dyslexia identified and supported?

Needs assessment remains one of the unsolved problems in Bulgarian adult education. At the moment adult education institutions do not receive enough reliable data on development and trends in the labour market, the school system and the universities.

- **National Statistics Institute** (NSI) conducts surveys of the labour market and the education system permanently, using the standards of the Eurostat.
- Other surveys, for example on vocational training in enterprises, are conducted periodically mostly in association with overall European surveys.
- Some data are collected by the **municipalities**.
- **The Employment Agency** through its branch offices is another data collecting institution. For several years now, the Agency has been assessing training needs at national and regional level.
- Information is collected also by direct surveys of **employers**.
- Only a few of the **adult education providers** are able to conduct their own needs assessments.

Data collection on labour market and training needs is not well co-ordinated. For example: every year the Ministry of Education and Science issues a plan that defines how many students in which occupations will be taught in the vocational schools. The Ministry is supposed to use and interpret labour market data. But at the same time many vocational schools provide education that does not correspond to the needs of the business. Many industries were shut down but at the same time the schools remained as they were.

All experts in the area call for a joint effort by all the institutions involved, to unify and co-ordinate the needs assessment activities. This would involve, at least, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Employment Agency, the Statistics Office, the Employers’ Unions and Chambers of Trade and Commerce, the Trade Unions and the training providers.

Adult learners apply targeted efforts to study when they have realised for themselves the benefit of that. This is the reason when conducting information campaigns for inclusion of low literate persons in training to orient them towards taking into consideration and recognising their experience and their values as being significant to them.

To raise the self-esteem and motivation of adults to improve their literacy, the development of a system for recognition and validation of informal and non-formal learning, is of great importance. The change of the status of the adult learner and his/her return to “literacy” learning presupposes broader
possibilities for offering forms of education, which correspond to the interests and abilities of employed persons – evening classes, distance learning, etc.

5 Special support for second-language learners/migrants

5.1 Is there provision for adult migrants whose home language is not the official language of the host country?

5.2 Who pays for this provision?

5.3 Does this provision employ specialist teachers?

5.4 Is there specialist provision for those who have poor literacy skills in their L1?

5.5 Is there a separate curriculum for this type of provision?

The State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers in Bulgaria is responsible for the management, coordination and control of the implementation of state policies relating to granting of refugee status and subsidiary protection/humanitarian status to aliens in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The Agency has territorial units in the country: the Integration Centers for Refugees (ICR). The Integration Centers support the integration of refugees in the Republic of Bulgaria in accordance with the 1951 UN Convention and the Asylum and Refugees Act by:

- Planning and organising training in Bulgarian;
- Organising and carrying out jointly with Regional Educational Inspectorates the activities for specifying the level of acquired knowledge in Bulgarian of the foreigners who are seeking or have received asylum and directing them to a certain educational establishment;
- Planning and organising the professional qualification of foreigners, who are seeking or have received asylum, via labour offices and through training at the centre's professional offices;
- Assisting the foreigners with provided status of refugees or humanitarian status to find work via labour offices;
- Carrying out programmes for social protection and integration of foreigners with special needs;
- Planning and organising sports and health and educational activities;
- Organising and carrying out activities for cultural adaptation of foreigners who are seeking or have received asylum;
- Providing consultations on social support issues and directing to municipal services for social support;
- Preparing and organising the publication of information materials on the rights and obligations of foreigners who are seeking or have received asylum.
The Integration Center has its own staff of lecturers as well as facilities for Bulgarian language courses; vocational training in sewing and clothes design, hair-dressing, cosmetics and computer literacy for adult migrants whose native language is not Bulgarian.

Main activities of the Integration Center are as follows:

Education and Training in Bulgarian:

- an important prerequisite for foreigners who are seeking or have received asylum in Bulgaria is mastery of the Bulgarian language. ICR has developed a programme and has organised courses in language training for both adults and children.

Vocational Qualification and Re-qualification:

- the vocational training at ICR takes into consideration the specific needs of the foreigners who are seeking or have received asylum on the one hand, and the current status of the labour market in Bulgaria, on the other hand.

The Centre’s experts carry out social consultancies and provide assistance in the labour and social offices, municipalities and other institutions. They organise meetings with the refugees who have received a status and clarify their rights and opportunities to continue their education and professional realisation in Bulgaria.

6 Reading environments to stimulate reading motivation

6.1 Are there schemes to promote reading for pleasure among adults?

6.2 Is there systematic cooperation with civil society – e.g. libraries, bookstores, literature institutions, theatres, media, newspapers, publishers etc. in reading promotion for adults?

6.3 Are there family literacy programmes with a focus on supporting adult literacy?

In 2006, the Bulgarian Library and Information Association (BLIA) launched a National Library Week (NLW). The idea was to focus the attention of politicians, media, the public, and - most of all - readers, on libraries. Every year, under a different motto, the BLIA organises an intense programme of discussions on the future of libraries, meetings with Members of the Parliament, mayors, members of city councils and the media.

During the NLW, many Bulgarian libraries and librarians organise and develop different initiatives encouraging librarians to work with local authorities and NGOs for the visibility of libraries in the community and for promoting reading for pleasure among different target groups, including adults. Exhibitions, meetings with authors, and numerous other initiatives aimed at specific target groups also take place.

One very interesting initiative was “Reading Bulgaria”, held for the first time in 2006. The primary goal of this campaign was to create basic structures for adequate and effective encouragement of reading.
In the days of the campaign, mayors, writers and other prominent figures, read parts of their favourite books in the library, schools and kindergardens or on the “literary tram”, which tours the streets.

Under the mottos “Kids read for kids”, “Kids read for grandparents”, “Grannies read for children”, readers of all ages, kids, and school classes read poems and short stories and participate in activities such as competitions for best reading performance and quizzes.

Based on this campaign, the BLIA started to organise every year the “Reading Marathons” – one of the most significant initiatives on a national scale.

In the last years the “Reading Marathon” stretches over three full weeks. Many libraries in the country, municipalities, NGOs, local and national media, schools and museums participate and hold a variety of programs for children and adults.

Another national campaign on encouragement of reading for pleasure “Read with me" was held in June 2015 in many cities in Bulgaria. This was a second edition of the campaign, organised at the initiative of the Bulgarian President.

The initiative was supported by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, the Bulgarian Book Association, the Union of community centres, the Bulgarian Library and Information Association, the websites I Read, Knigolandia, Love Theatre, BG-Mamma and others and many popular Bulgarian writers, musicians, artists, painters, journalists and politicians, who read extracts of their favourite books.

7 Digital environments/use of technology in education

7.1 Is there a digital gap? How are adults supported in acquiring digital skills / digital literacy?

7.2 Which population groups are excluded from access to ICTs?

7.3 Are there any web-based programmes for adults to improve their literacy & numeracy skills?

7.4 What classroom resources (E-books, notebooks, internet, mobile phones...) are used to support the development of adults’ literacy?

According to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2015, Bulgaria has an overall score of 0.34 and ranks 27th in the DESI rankings.

- 54% of Bulgarian households have a fixed broadband connection (26th in the EU) but almost half of them have a fast connection (47% of fixed Internet subscriptions);
- 54% of Bulgarians use Internet on a regular basis, but those who do engage in a broader range of online activities: communicate via voice or video calls (82%) and participate in social networks;
- 34% of the population have basic digital skills (sending e-mails, using editing tools, installing new devices, etc);
• Use of Internet is the DESI 2015 dimension where Bulgaria performs best from all five dimensions. Bulgaria scores 0.41 (up from 0.36 last year) and ranks 20th among EU countries.

Bulgarian Internet users engage in a broad range of online activities. They communicate via voice or video calls (82%) and participate in social networks. In these two activities engagement among Bulgarians is among the highest in the EU. Bulgarian Internet users also read news online (74%), listen to music, watch films and play games online (57%).

While Bulgarians are keen to engage in the above Internet activities, they are more reluctant to engage in on-line transactions. The shares of Bulgarian Internet users that use online banking (8.5%) or shop online (28%) are among the lowest of all EU countries. This is the key challenge for Bulgaria in terms of Internet use by its citizens, because a digital economy is partly fuelled by its citizens’ consumption in the online channel.

Digital Public Services is the dimension where Bulgaria performs the weakest. With a score of 0.24, Bulgaria ranks 28th among EU countries with a mild improvement in score but keeping the same rank as in the previous year.

There is a stable trend for growth of the regular internet usage by individuals as in comparison to the previous year an increase of 2.5% was registered and in comparison with 2010 - an increase of 12.1%. At the same time the relative share of individuals at the age of 16 - 74 who have never used the internet has decreased from 51.2% in 2010 to 37.1% in 2014.

Data from the so far conducted surveys on ICT usage by individuals showed that the most active web users are young people between 16 and 24 years, as 83.1% of them surfed in internet every day or at least once a week in 2014.

There is also a substantial difference in distribution of the regular internet users by educational level. While 86.3% from the individuals with tertiary education used the global network regularly, the relative share of those with basic education or below was only 23.4%.

Public libraries in Bulgaria are one of the most important institutions that support the development of adult literacy.

8 Teachers

8.1 What are the professional roles within adult education?

8.2 What is the status/reputation of teachers and other professionals who work in adult education?

8.3 What are their working conditions?

The final report “Key competences for adult learning professionals: Contribution to the development of a reference framework of key competences for adult learning professionals”, submitted by Research voor Beleid explicitly shows, that “[t]he professional development and the improvement of the quality of adult learning staff have been recognised as a priority at European level. However, at European and national levels there is not always a clear view of the competences needed to fulfil the professional
tasks in adult learning, partly due to the diversity of the field. In several European countries, competence profiles and standards for adult learning staff (referred to hereafter as adult learning professionals) have been developed and implemented, although their scope of application differs considerably between institutional and regional levels”.

Competences needed by adult learning professionals are described in job descriptions of individual organisations, the learning outcomes of specific educational programmes and where available, in qualification structures at national level.

8.4 How do salaries compare to the national average?

Bulgaria is among the countries with the lowest teachers’ salaries. However, due to the established system of delegated budgets, each school, depending on the level of successful management and savings of school budget, can afford additional payments to the teachers depending on their results during the academic year.

There are also some allowances for teachers i.e.: further formal qualifications, further CPD qualifications; positive teaching performance appraisal or students’ results; additional responsibilities, teaching pupils/students with special education needs or challenging circumstances, participation in extracurricular activities like additional hours, paid as lecturers; overtime.

8.5 What are the statutory qualification requirements?

The statutory requirements to gain a teaching qualification are defined in Public Education Law.

According to the Law, Article 39 (1) a citizen who holds a teacher’s certificate can be a teacher (tutor). (2) Teacher training shall be carried out within the system of higher education. (3) Persons educated in a given speciality shall also be able to engage in the professional training of pupils. (4) Conditions for enhancement of qualification of teachers and headmasters should be available.

In 1994 The Ministry of Education and Science published Instructions No 2 for the Requirements for occupying a job position of a “teacher” or “tutor” in compliance with the obtained certification, professional qualification or capacity.

According to the Instructions the job position of a teacher requires completed university education, college education or secondary pedagogical education in a relevant subject.

The Ordinance from 1997 on unified state requirements for the acquisition of the professional qualification of “Teacher” is an attempt to standardise the initial pedagogical qualification offered by numerous Bulgarian universities with diverse profiles. In this case the State Educational Requirement is limited to precise quantifiable parameters that can be easily controlled.

The Ordinance determines the following standards:

- Minimum number of obligatory and optional subjects;
- Minimum number of academic hours for each subject;
- Level of the academic staff;
- Requirements and types of practical training of students;
- Type of final exams for graduation.

In Bulgaria there is no public access to the teachers’ profiles - qualification, experience, skills etc. Every person who holds a teacher’s certificate and a relevant specialty can teach in public and private schools and in the centres for vocational training.
According to the requirements to be a teacher in a vocational school, it is required to have a completed qualification degree of Bachelor or Master in the relevant professional field and the acquired professional qualification of “Teacher”.

The qualification “Teacher” may be acquired in the course of studying for Bachelor or Master in higher school or after graduation. Those who wish to work as teachers and who have no professional qualification may acquire one after the completion of their higher education by participating in a specialised university course.

9 Teacher education

9.1 What are the statutory qualification requirements for adult literacy teachers?

9.2 Are there specialist qualification routes for adult literacy teachers?

9.3 What are the entry requirements for Initial Teacher Education?

9.4 Who pays for training?

9.5 Is there a curriculum for initial teacher training?

9.6 Are there compulsory (or optional) language and literacy modules in all adult education ITE?

9.7 What is the length of the required training?

9.8 Is there a curriculum/quality standards?

9.9 Is there continuous professional development (in-service training) for teachers which focuses on literacy development?

9.10 What is the take-up among teachers?

9.11 Who delivers this training?

9.12 How is it quality assured?

Teacher education may be organised in various ways, but usually includes a general and a professional component. The general component refers to general education courses and mastery of the subject(s) that candidates will teach when qualified. The professional part provides prospective teachers with both the theoretical and practical skills needed for teaching and includes in-class placements. It may be provided either at the same time as the general component or after it.

This means that students could be involved in specific teacher education right from the start of their tertiary education programme or after or close to the end of their degree. To undertake training in accordance with the first model, the qualifications required are the upper secondary school leaving certificate as well as, in some cases, a certificate of aptitude for tertiary and/or teacher education. In the second model, students who have undertaken tertiary education in a particular field proceed to professional training in a separate phase.
10 Policy-making

10.1 Who is involved in policy-making for adult literacy education?

10.2 How is inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial cooperation promoted and coordinated?

10.3 What financing mechanisms exist that facilitate inter-sectoral cooperation?

10.4 Which policies promote for the provision of broad and varied access to adult literacy education?

10.5 How are the motivation, interests and needs of adults taken into account in the policy-making processes?

10.6 Does government promote adult literacy in its lifelong learning policy?

The essential features of education and training policy in Bulgaria are laid down by the Parliament (legislation) and the Council of Ministers. The Parliament has a special Education and Science Committee which drafts the final versions of bills, and is responsible for the education and science budget. The Council of Ministers and Ministry of Education and Science is the leading institution in the field of education. Major documents - such as the policy strategies (for instance to combat poverty, to develop adult education and vocational training, etc.) are adopted by the Council of Ministers.

The Ministry of Education and Science is acting as a National Coordinator for Adult Learning in Bulgaria. The Ministry is involved in drawing up the policy guidelines for vocational training, and coordinates their implementation. It issues orders and prescribes appropriate methods for the formal education system (vocational schools and institutions of higher education). The Minister of Education and Science approves the national training requirements and the list of training occupations drawn up by subordinate agencies (mainly by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training). These apply to students in both formal and non-formal education and training system.

Regarding VET, there are two bodies responsible for Vocational Education and Training (VET): the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The Ministry of Education and Science has the overall responsibility for the entire school system and is the main policy-making body responsible for the budget and control of Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Education and Science are both responsible for adult education, often referred to as Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET). The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training works to assure and maintain the quality of the vocational education and training of young people and adults. It aims to do so according to the labour market needs, to develop the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy. The Agency also cooperates with social partners in implementing coordinated policies for lifelong learning, continuing vocational training, and in introducing successful European practices.

The main aim of the Agency is to provide access to work-related training for the unemployed, and expand the access to vocational education for all citizens, according to the needs of the labour market. It is currently also working to develop State Educational Requirements (standards) for acquiring qualifications.
C REFERENCES


