

# TNP LANGUAGES

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National Report on Curriculum Innovation (Revised Version, December 2001)

Republic of Bulgaria

## ***1. Introduction***

### **1.1. The system of higher education**

#### 1.1.1. Recent changes in the system of higher education

The wisdom of Bulgarian educational history holds three main ideas: legislative protection of the child from exploitation and violence, guaranteeing his or her right to study; connecting general and vocational education; internal consistency and dynamics, diversity and pluralism of the education system.

Bulgarian education originated in the 9<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> century. The two great Slavonic missionaries and scholars, Cyril (826-869) and his elder brother Methodius (815-885), created the Slavonic Script, called Cyrillic Script, in 855. According to the canons, Christianity had to be practised only in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Cyril also called Constantine Philosopher brilliantly defended the right of the Slavs to worship God in their own language (Old Church-Slavonic) before Pope Adrian II in 869. The disciples of Cyril and Methodius disseminated the new alphabet by translating and writing many books. One of them, Kliment (Clemente of Ohrid), settled in the town of Ohrid and started one of the earliest universities in Europe with more than 3 000 students. Another one, Naum, started the second literary centre in the capital of the country, the town of Pliska. During the reign of King (Tsar) Simeon the Great (893-927) Bulgaria developed as “one of the civilised powers of the earth” (Monroe 1914, 16). This period was the golden age of Bulgarian history. The kingdom expanded and Simeon’s title, “Tsar of all the Bulgars and the Greeks”, was recognised by the Pope. The Turkish conquest severed Bulgaria from Europe. In the course of the invasion during the 14<sup>th</sup> century, most of the aristocracy, the clergy and the intellectuals were massacred. The Ottoman period was a cultural and demographic catastrophe. Bulgaria was a province of the Ottoman Empire until 1878 when, after five centuries of Ottoman rule, it gained its independence.

Modern Bulgaria was created by the Treaty of Berlin on 13 July 1878. On the following year, a Constitutional Assembly adopted the first constitution for the independent Kingdom (Principality until 1908), the Turnovo Constitution of 1879. It was based on the constitutional law in the developed European countries, following in the main the Constitution of Belgium. The first higher school of the new state, the State University of Sofia, was founded in 1888. It was named after Saint Kliment Ohridski, the canonised disciple of Cyril and Methodius, in 1939. Education was democratised in the 1920s. In 1921, the new public education legislation passed during the government of the Bulgarian Agrarian Party introduced compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years. The general educational and cultural level of Bulgarian society was raised. There were 10 thousand university students in small Bulgaria in

1939. The years since 1989 have been a time of change. It has been a period of great expectations and even greater disappointments but the people of Bulgaria are determined to regain their position among the civilised Europeans.

In 1995, the Parliament passed a new Higher Education Act, promulgated in “State Gazette” # 112 of 27.12.1995 and amended and supplemented in 1996, 1998 and 1999 (Parliamentary Acts Library – APIS, volume 4). It regulates the structure, functions, governance and financing of higher education in Republic of Bulgaria. Higher schools are universities, specialised higher schools (academies and institutes) and colleges. They have academic autonomy. In higher education, the state exercises its functions of governance through the National Assembly (Parliament) and the Council of Ministers. The national policy for higher education is realised by the Ministry of Education and Science. It takes decisions on, for example, the numbers of places available at higher schools. The National Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation at the Council of Ministers, established in line with Article 10 of the Higher Education Act in January 1997, is a special state organ for the management of quality in higher education.

The main units of higher schools are the faculties, departments, institutes and branches. Their service units are the sectors, clinics, libraries, laboratories experimental stations, publishing complexes, production units, etc. The teaching and learning process is based on educational documentation, which includes qualification characteristics of the academic degrees, the curricula of the degree programmes, the curricula/syllabi of the disciplines and the timetables of classes for each academic year. The academic year lasts 9 months (October – June) and is divided into 2 semesters of 15 weeks each. Higher schools plan the timetable of the academic year.

At present, the system of higher education has three levels:

- (a) the first level with a minimal period of study of 4 years; the graduates are awarded the educational and qualification degree of Bachelor;
- (b) the second level with a minimal period of study of 5 years or no less than 1 year after the earning of the Bachelor’s Degree; the graduates are awarded the educational and qualification degree of Master;
- (c) the third level with a minimal period of study of 4 years after the earning of a Bachelor’s Degree or 3 years after the earning of a Master’s Degree; the graduates are awarded the educational and scientific degree of Doctor.

The educational and qualification degree of “Specialist in ...” is a separate level of the vocational trend in higher education. Colleges award this degree to graduates after finishing a programme of study of minimum 3 years.

Higher education is funded by:

- (a) Central state - subsidies from the state budget;
- (b) Regions - financial aid from the local municipalities;
- (c) Miscellaneous - donations, charities, inheritance, sponsorship;
- (d) Own income from research activities, consultant activities, creative artistic activities, therapy and sports, rights on industrial properties, copyright and other intellectual property rights, fees for application of candidates, undergraduate and post-graduate fees, etc.

All students pay tuition fees, which cover only a fraction of the cost of studies. Fees are fixed by the state and are related to the rate of the minimum wages. Foreign students pay the full cost of studies.

Student funding: there is an increasing system of student loans. Also, the universities provide scholarships. The major source of funding is the family. Many students have part-time jobs to support themselves.

In 1996, the relative share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 4.27%. Actual spending on higher education has been increasing although the relative share of the GDP has been decreasing in recent years (source: *national statistics*). In 1996/97, the total number of students in higher education was 223 thousand (13% of the total number of students) and the total number of university professors, associate professors and lecturers was 41 thousand (source: *Eurydice, The Information Network on Education in Europe, 1997*; <http://europa.eu.int>). 8% of the students are studying “humanities, applied arts and theology”; 7% of the graduates come from that same field of study (1996/97).

The number of language students has been increasing. This is a general tendency in the country, related to the emergence of new universities in regions where previously there were no institutions of higher education. There are no signs of an increased drop-out-rate. The number of university teacher has been increasing too – there is even a shortage of qualified university MFL teachers.

#### 1.1.2. The impact of the Bologna Declaration

The academic community has begun considering the issues arising from the Bologna Declaration. For example, its recommendations were discussed at the Meeting of Rectors from Central Europe, which was held at Sofia University on 24-26 November 2000. It has had a positive reception so far.

### **1.2. Identification of relevant changes in the social, political, cultural, professional and economic environments**

**Social.** All children receive free state education. New private schools at primary and secondary level and private universities (e.g. New Bulgarian University) have been established. They are licensed by the state.

Ethnic and religious tolerance is traditionally characteristic of Bulgarians. In addition, post-1985 ethnic issues are being successfully dealt with and resolved, e.g. a 15-minute news bulletin in Turkish is broadcast daily on the national television channel. Also, the Turkish language is being taught as a mother tongue in many regions of the country.

Since World War II, emigration has for the most part affected non-Bulgarians. Some 500 thousand Ethnic Turks have left the country. Of them, 155 thousand were expelled in 1949-1951 and another 250 thousand fled to Turkey to escape the campaign of forced assimilation of the communist regime in the summer of 1989. Large numbers returned to Bulgaria after the ouster of Zhivkov, the communist hard-liner who had ruled since 1956, and the cancellation of the discriminatory measures. Internally, migration has been from rural areas to larger towns and cities. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Bulgaria was almost 70% urban. In the 1990s, emigration for economic reasons intensified. About 500 thousand young people emigrated mostly to North America and Western Europe.

As a result of the introduction of free medical care and improved working conditions in the post-war period, the death rate, and especially the infant mortality rate, dropped significantly.

The birth rate has also dropped though. By the early 1990s, Bulgaria had a negative natural growth rate.

Unemployment is high. In 1998, 12,2 % of the total working population were unemployed. The number of the unemployed was 465202; of them 17821 people had higher education degrees (source: *national statistics*).

Political. Bulgaria is a parliamentary-governed Republic with a multiparty political system. The country has had a democratic government since early 1997. The ruling party, the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) is a Christian-Democratic party, which originated as an umbrella organisation of 16 opposition parties after the political changes of 1989. On 1 August 1990, the first leader of UDF, Dr. Zhelev, a former philosophy professor, became Bulgaria's first non-communist head of state in 43 years (Bulgaria was declared a republic on 15 September 1946 and 8-year old King Simeon II and his family left the country). In April 1990, the Bulgarian Communist Party renamed itself the Bulgarian Socialist Party. It depicted itself as a "modern party of democratic socialism". But the split between hard-liners and reformers has made this depiction unconvincing to many Bulgarians. Public support for the BSP declined steadily in the 1990s. The Movement for Rights and Freedoms is a primarily Muslim party. It picked up 23 seats in the first post-communist parliament (early 1997) despite limited access to the media and violent opposition from Bulgarian nationalists.

The head of state is the President who is directly elected by the people. Legislative power is vested in the President in conjunction with the National Assembly (Parliament). The executive power is vested in the Council of Ministers. It consists of Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, Healthcare, Education and Science, Finance, Justice, Defence, Commerce, Industry, Agriculture, Telecommunications and Transport. The Prime Minister is the head of the Council of Ministers.

The National Assembly is composed of 240 members and consists of only one chamber. A mixed election system of majority vote and proportional vote is used. The term of the National Assembly is four years. The members of parliament and cabinet ministers have legislative initiative. The National Assembly chooses its own officers, consisting of a chairman, two vice-chairmen and secretaries. Debates and votes are public but the chamber may decide to sit with closed doors. Bulgarian citizens have the right to petition the National Assembly. The state budget must be submitted annually for the approval of the National Assembly.

Bulgarian Constitution is a written document having a special legal sanctity. It is a body of legal rules after which ordinary laws are made and power is exercised. It sets out the principal functions of the organs of government within the state and declares the principles by which these organs must operate. The Constitution has overriding legal force. In Bulgaria, there is a Constitutional Court, which applies and interprets the text of the Constitution in disputed cases. Legislative or administrative acts may be held by the Constitutional Court to be without legal force where they conflict with the Constitution. The fundamental principles of the Constitution are: separation of governmental authorities into legislative, executive and judicial; equality of citizens as regards civil and political rights; inviolability of person, residence, property and correspondence; liberty of conscience, press and public meetings; local self-government.

In early 2000, the European Union started formal accession talks with Bulgaria (together with the other "second wave" of proposed enlargement countries, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Romania and Malta). The country receives pre-accession aid from the E.U. However enlargement creates certain hardships. New barriers are springing up around and among the

Eastern and Central European states, making a kind of “paper curtain” of visa requirements. For example, Bulgaria is introducing visas for Serbs and Russians in 2001. The E.U. introduced a visa-free regime for Bulgarians in November 2000.

Cultural. The government believes that improving the enterprise climate is a very important objective. This includes the harmonisation of the legislative system with the E.U. and the development of education. In December 2000, the Parliament ratified an agreement with the World Bank for a long-term financing of the modernisation of the education system.

The scope of use of ICT is expanding. Schools and universities are linked to the Internet, e.g. Sofia University provides free access to the Internet to all undergraduate and postgraduate students (see [www.nc.uni-sofia.bg](http://www.nc.uni-sofia.bg)). New mobile telephone companies (the second GSM company starts its operation in 2001), private TV channels (e.g. bTV was launched in September 2000) and cable TV networks are being established.

Orthodox Christianity is the traditional faith and the official language is Bulgarian. There is a revival of the Christian legacy in which Bulgarians have viewed themselves as ultimately free and responsible for 11 centuries. Most Bulgarians who profess religion are Eastern Orthodox Christians, with smaller numbers of Roman Catholics and Protestants. About 7% of the population is Muslim; most of Bulgaria’s Muslims are of Turkish ancestry, but there are also some ethnic Bulgarian Muslims known as Pomaks. By a formal edict, the Christian religion was adopted in Bulgaria in 864 and Prince (Knyaz) Boris I was baptised by the Byzantine Emperor Michael III. Soon after the adoption of Christianity in Bulgaria, the great schism broke out between the Eastern and the Western Churches. In 866, the Roman Pope sent his famous *Answers of Pope Nicolas I to the Inquiries of the Bulgarians* to Knyaz Boris I. Bulgaria accepted Catholicism for a brief period. But in 870, the Eighth Ecumenical Council held in Constantinople recognised the independence of Bulgarian Church and it assented to Christian Orthodoxy.

Professional. For Bulgarians, European co-operation and exchange in the domain of education became possible in the 1990s. Bulgarian educators have used the Tempus Phare programme effectively. The National Tempus Office in Sofia and the Educational Training Foundation in Turin have managed successfully many applied educational research and development projects in the area of languages.

Since April 2000, the country has been a member of the European action programmes, e.g. Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth. However effective co-operation on an associate membership basis had started two years before, e.g. the participation of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University in the *Exchange to Change Project* within the Socrates Lingua framework.

Economic. From 1997-1999, the increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was constant, reaching BGL 17055205 million in 1997 and BGL 21577020 million in 1998). According to forecasts this trend is likely to continue during 2001-2003. In 2000, per capita GDP was USD 1510 with an increase 5% (source: *Business Central Europe*, 2000). There has also been a substantial increase in capital investments; some foreign-owned companies have recently set up in the country. In the period 1990-2000, direct foreign investments were USD 3000 million. The government views the investment promotion programme managed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and a specialised national agency as a vital part of the national economic strategy. There has been consistent financial stabilisation since the establishing of the Currency Board in 1997. The legislation relates the national currency (BGL) to the Deutsche Mark

(DEM) - 1 BGL is equal to 1 DEM. However the standard of living is still relatively low. Albeit, Bulgaria is clearly trying to make up for lost time, pushing through the changes people believe are needed to get the country on the right track.

## Language Degree Programmes

### *2. Innovations in language degree programmes offered by universities*

#### 2.1. Traditional language programmes

##### 2.1.1. Content, Objectives and structure of programmes

Traditional language programmes are the 'Philology Studies', which have existed at the three 'old universities' in the cities of Sofia, Veliko Turnovo and Plovdiv since their foundation. They have been renewed since 1989. Also, many new universities have started similar programmes. At present, there are 3 university degrees in the area of classical and modern languages: BA, MA and PhD, which take 4 + 1 + 3 years to complete.

The first-degree higher education (Bachelor's Degree) is integrated with a teaching qualification (a concurrent model of teacher training). Language degree programmes are regulated, as any other undergraduate programmes in the country, by the legislation. By a decree of the Council of Ministers, accredited universities must base their curricula on the 'State Educational Requirements' (SER). In the area of languages, SER include several broadly defined foundation subject areas: practical language studies, linguistics, literature, translation and interpreting and language teaching methodology. SER lay down a certain minimum of content which must be covered, so *what* is taught is determined by the Ministry of Education and Science. SER do not however specify *how* things are to be taught. University teachers must devise an effective pedagogy for themselves. It has been assumed that the compulsory subjects will take up about 30% of school time; the remaining 30% of time will be for optional subjects. At the institutional level, objectives, contents and structure of degree programmes are specified in the *Teaching Plans* (curricula). They list the disciplines and the number of hours required for the completion of specific courses. Also, curricula indicate whether courses are compulsory or optional. Students are required to follow the foundation disciplines as compulsory subjects. For example, compulsory subjects include Linguistics and Literature. In addition, students should select a number of courses related to the foundation disciplines as optional subjects, e.g. ICT, Speech Processing, etc.

Philology Studies programmes have the following general format:

- Year One covers the following subject areas: Practical Language Study 1, General Linguistics, Society and Culture, Phonetics and Phonology, Theory of Literature, Latin, Practical Stylistics of Native Language;
- Year Two: Practical Language Study 2, Morphology, Syntax, Literature 1, Educational Psychology and Translation Theory;
- Year Three: Practical Language Study 3, Semantics, Stylistics, Historical Linguistics, Translation and Interpreting, Literature 2, Pedagogy;
- Year Four: Practical Language Study 4, optional courses in the main subject areas. Also, fourth year includes a teacher-training module. It covers: Language Teaching Methodology (compulsory lecture course) and ICT in language education; teaching practice with a mentor teacher at a school (60 hours), followed by block teaching practice (6 weeks); 2 optional subjects in educational psychology, pedagogy, CALL, language testing, curriculum design, second language acquisition, etc.

The academic degree is conferred on the basis of a successful state examination (a practical language test and papers in foundation disciplines) bestowing the title of, for example, *Bachelor of Arts*.

The postgraduate level degree (Master's Degree) is offered in a number of areas: linguistics, literature, translation, language teaching. Central government also determines the content of MA programmes by means of the SER. All MA programmes in the area of classical and modern languages require the writing and presenting a 15000 - 30000 word dissertation.

The Doctor's Degree (PhD) is offered in the same areas as the MA. It is a 'scientific degree' so the programmes are not taught – a research dissertation is required. A scientific council (currently appointed at national level) approves the dissertation through a viva examination procedure. The degree is conferred on the basis of the successful presentation of the dissertation and the publications of the candidate.

### 2.1.2. Career prospects for graduates

Career prospects of graduates of traditional language programmes are extremely favourable. There is no unemployment in this group of graduates. The major careers are, firstly, in translating and interpreting and, secondly, the teaching profession. There is a growing demand for language teachers at primary schools and there is a shortage of teachers of English at all levels of the education system. Many graduates work in the private sector in companies, international foundations, research and development units, etc. The tendency is not just to become a language teacher – language degrees enable people to do a variety of jobs.

Universities offer career guidance services, which furnish information and advice to help students move from higher education into the professional world. Work placements provide an opportunity to gain insight into working life and establish contacts with prospective employers. Also, they offer measures designed to encourage and prepare students for self-employment.

### 2.1.3. Recent changes in content, objectives and/or structure of programmes.

The traditional language programmes, as described above, were renewed during the post-communist period (the 1990s). The drive here comes from research. Universities from E.U. have supported the process of modernisation through the Tempus Phare scheme. For example, Tempus Project 11010-96 has produced new BA curricula in the area of modern languages for 2 universities (Sofia University and Plovdiv University); *LAC2000* Tempus Project 13533-98 has had an impact on language teaching through curriculum innovation at all universities in the country. Renewal has also been facilitated by the de-communisation legislation passed by Parliament in the 1990s. Major changes have been made:

- The new 3-tier degree structure (BA, MA, PhD) has substituted the former 2-tier format (a higher education diploma and postgraduate degrees).
- Ideological and conceptual monism in teaching content has been substituted by ideological and conceptual pluralism.
- Diverse forms of testing and assessment of academic achievement have been introduced, including 'alternative formats' or 'authentic tests' like portfolio assessment, self-assessment, etc.
- Practical language teaching, studying and learning has been reformed on the basis of the principles of autonomy, authenticity and language awareness.
- Modern Language Centres have been opened at higher schools.

#### 2.1.4. Examples of good practice

##### *LAC2000* Project – Language Curriculum for the Year 2000 (Tempus 13533-98)

The Project was initiated by a consortium of five universities from BG and three universities from EU: [www.lac2000.revolta.com](http://www.lac2000.revolta.com). For information on the coordinating institution, please visit the web site of the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University: [www.fcml.uni-sofia.bg](http://www.fcml.uni-sofia.bg). The Faculty was founded in 1888. Now, it has 200 teaching staff in 19 undergraduate degree programmes. In addition to the 19 major languages, over 20 other languages are taught as optional subjects. The Faculty has 3000 students. It is an institutional member of the European Language Council.

The project has designed a curriculum for the teaching of modern foreign languages, based on constructivist learning theory. The product is a "hypertext learning strategy". The link of that outcome and the area being covered is direct. The need for curriculum innovation in BG is profound.

This example of good practice is outstanding because of its entirely novel approach to the design of language curricula. Constructivist educational philosophy creates a framework for invention of knowledge in the classroom. The ideas could be applied in or transferred to any other context. In fact they have been implemented in the teaching of about 70 per cent of the university students in BG.

For further information, please contact Prof. Dr. Maya Pencheva who is the director of the NatNet (National Network of Language Teaching Institutions) in BG. Address for correspondence: 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd., Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Sofia 1000, Bulgaria.

#### 2.1.5. Reasons underlying these changes

The new socio-political and cultural environment has brought about the changes in higher education. Education has been democratised and equality of opportunity has been promoted. A system of accreditation of higher education institutions with detailed criteria for evaluation has been introduced.

#### 2.1.6. Identification of needs

The identification of needs was the first stage in developing the national foreign language teaching policy. In this respect, important work was done in the *VIR* project supported by the Ministry of Education and Science, which resulted in the design of a language curriculum for schools in 1991-1995.

##### 2.1.6.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

- Needed language awareness.

- Needed general progression of objectives on the different levels of the degree programme.

- Needed language teaching in harmony with general educational policy.

- Needed economy in the production of language knowledge.

- Needed independent learning environment providing authentic language input.

Needed international recognition of professional qualification or proficiency in languages.

#### 2.1.6.2. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

Needed practical knowledge of languages.  
Needed overall development of personality.  
Needed maturing of pluralistic conviction  
Needed general mental well being.  
Needed general material well being.  
Needed self-realisation.  
Needed possibilities for democratic participation.  
Needed development of stable economy and balanced economic growth.  
Needed development of national culture.  
Needed communication and co-operation between parties involved in language teaching.  
Needed international understanding and peace.

#### 2.1.7. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national and European level to meet the needs identified

##### 2.1.7.1. At first-degree level

At national/regional level, the following should be done:

- A national policy for modern foreign language teaching should be defined and an action programme should be set up;
- Central government should not control teaching content at Bachelor's level;
- The translation and interpreting component should be separated from the main undergraduate programme;
- The teacher-training component should be separated from the main undergraduate programme, i.e. a consecutive model should be adopted. That will help students concentrate on their professional formation and development;
- Language teaching services and language learning opportunities should be arranged to meet need and demand.

At institutional level, the following should be done:

- Open Learning Centres for independent learning should be provided for all students. They should offer satellite TV from the respective countries, daily and weekly newspapers and magazines in the languages taught, video viewing facilities, audio-cassette and CD listening facilities, a multimedia network for CALL, materials specially designed for self-study;
- Language teaching should become more practical and less academic. New subjects like *Intercultural Communication* or *Business Language* should be introduced in the practical language module. They should give insight into the life and culture of the people who speak the language, which is being taught. They should also help students, who live in a united Europe, understand what "European" means and "global" too, for that matter;
- Degree programmes should be linked to an internationally recognised professional qualification or proficiency in languages, so that the graduate will be able to list a distinct qualification on his or her curriculum vitae.

##### 2.1.7.2. At postgraduate level

National/regional level.

- The national policy for modern foreign language teaching should be defined and an action programme should be set up.
- Central government should not control teaching content at Master's level.

Institutional level.

- Quality enhancement procedures should be introduced.
- The principle of *modularization*, i.e. the structuring of the curriculum on the basis of teaching modules, should be tried out and implemented. It will introduce greater student self-direction and autonomy in learning.
- The principle of *content-based* language learning (Content and Language Integrated Learning) should be adopted. Integration between language teaching and other subjects should be strengthened so that foreign languages are used as a medium of studying subject matter. That is a means of enhancing the skills stated in the European Commission White Paper (1995).
- The principle of *topicalisation*, i.e. the provision of opportunity for the students to nominate and control the topic of discourse, should be applied.
- The principle of *whole language* teaching and learning should be adopted linking the teaching of language for 'general purposes' and 'specific purposes' into one continuum of language development.

## **2.2. 'Alternative' programmes (Applied Language Studies, Cultural Studies, etc.)**

### 2.2.1. Content, objectives and structure of programmes

This section describes two 'alternative' degree programmes. They represent recent developments in the area of languages. The drive here comes from social needs. The first one, type A, is a programme in Applied Linguistics. The second one, type B, focuses on 'language and culture'.

Type A. The new Applied Linguistics (AL) undergraduate programme started after the adoption of the new State Register of Specialisms in 1997. The main objective is to train teachers of modern foreign languages. The AL programme consists of two stages: basic (containing 2 qualification levels) and specialised (Bachelor's level). In the basic level studies, the first qualification level comprises 44 credits and the second one contains 40 credits. The Bachelor's level specialisation studies comprise 71 credits. The programme has a total of 155 credits and continues 8 semesters (4 years). At all 3 levels, there are compulsory studies and optional studies. Two languages are taught as major subjects. Teacher training courses, e.g. Language Teaching Methodology, begin as early as the first qualification stage. Thus, the model employed is the concurrent study of the language-related subjects and pedagogical subjects (a concurrent model). Altogether, future teachers have to take some 45 compulsory courses related to various aspects of Practical Studies of two foreign languages, General Linguistics, Pedagogy, Methodology, Teaching Practice, Morphology and Syntax, Discourse Analysis, etc.

Type B. The European Studies programme is representative of a range of 'language and culture' specialisms, e.g. Balkan Studies, Scandinavian Studies, Korean Studies, etc. Some of them are taught at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. They are all similar in objectives, contents and structure. Students master two foreign languages as major subjects. Apart from language-related subjects, the curricula include economics, politics, history, etc.

### 2.2.2. Career prospects for graduates

Type A. The professional realisation of the graduates is as teachers of two foreign languages at primary and secondary schools. The fact that all graduates have an advanced level of proficiency in at least two foreign languages significantly enhances their potential for employment.

Type B. Graduates' prospective careers are in international relations, public administration, government, etc.

#### 2.2.3. Recent changes in content, objectives and/or structure of programmes

Type A. The Applied Linguistics programmes are entirely new undergraduate degree programmes. The National Accreditation Agency has accredited them at several universities for a 5-year period.

Type B. The programme in European Studies started in 1999 and in Balkan Studies started in 1997.

#### 2.2.4. Examples of good practice

Modern Language Centre, Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski

At the Philological Faculty of the University of Plovdiv, both types of 'alternative' degree programmes, which lead to Bachelor's Degrees, are successfully implemented at the newly opened Modern Languages Centre. The aim is to raise quality of language education by streamlining organisation and administration. For more information, please visit [www.ff.uni-plovdiv.bg](http://www.ff.uni-plovdiv.bg).

The link with the area being covered is quite straightforward. All BG universities need downsizing and streamlining of administration in the area of language education. Therefore, the experience accrued at that Centre is quite outstanding for the national higher education system. The ideas could be applied in or transferred at regional and national level.

A contact person might be Dr. Irina Tchongarova, director of the Centre. Address: Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski, Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

#### 2.2.5. Reasons underlying these changes

The new socio-political environment has brought about the establishment of the 'alternative' degree programmes. Education has been democratised and equality of opportunity has been promoted. However, increasing democracy, movement towards market economy, globalisation in all domains of life, growing need to become competitive in the more and more open flow of capital, goods, services and manpower coupled with lack of sufficient financial resources are posing problems and challenges. One of the measures for quality management the government has undertaken is the initiation of a scheme for accreditation of higher education institutions with detailed criteria for evaluation.

#### 2.2.6. Identification of needs

##### 2.2.6.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

See 2.1.6.1.

2.2.6.2. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

See 2.1.6.1.

2.2.7. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national and European level to meet the needs identified

2.2.7.1. At first-degree level

See 2.1.7.1.

2.2.7.2. At postgraduate level

Not applicable.

## **Programmes for Language and Language Related Professions**

### ***3. Innovations in the training of language teachers***

#### **3.1. Language teaching and learning in primary and secondary school education**

Modern foreign languages are taught in primary and secondary education. The Ministry of Education and Science has adopted 7 European languages for mass study at schools: English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. Educational documentation and teaching materials for those languages are provided and teachers are trained at national level. In primary schools, pupils study one foreign language. In secondary schools, students take a course in a second foreign language along with the study of their first foreign language. Modern foreign languages, not adopted by the Ministry, e.g. Japanese, Arabic, may also be taught if the necessary conditions exist at the institutional level. Turkish as a mother tongue is an optional school subject in many regions of the country. Native Bulgarian language is taught as a compulsory subject during the whole 'K through 12' period.

Two kinds of programmes are in use: normal language studies (primary and secondary level) and intensive studies (secondary level). Foreign language medium schools provide intensive language study to 10-12% of the age group. They follow the principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The CLIL design of the foreign language medium schools combines two of a range of otherwise distinct subject areas, foreign language and non-language subjects, successfully. The curriculum model in which children learn through a foreign language has demonstrated that foreign language development superior to conventional teaching methods can be achieved through a number of combinations of the length and intensity of CLIL. The first year comprises an intensive language course (22 language lessons per week). This means that students have 700 hours of language study in the first year, altogether 1200-1300 hours during the entire school period. In addition, students have a number of non-language lessons in which the target language is used as the medium of instruction. Graduates are successful in gaining entry to university and are well represented in high civil service and in national decision-making bodies.

#### **3.2. Initial teacher training**

3.2.1. Institutions responsible for training

Universities give initial teacher training. Philological faculties are responsible for the education of 'general' language teachers. Primary and pre-school language teachers are trained at other faculties, for example, the Faculty of Primary and Pre-school Education at Sofia University organises programmes for teachers of modern foreign languages in co-operation with the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology.

Gender balance in ITT. Female students predominate. The number of male university teachers is almost equal to that of female teachers. At primary and secondary level there are almost no male teachers of foreign languages.

### 3.2.2. Content, objectives and structure of programmes

There are three types of language teacher training programmes at present.

Type A. Integrated Bachelor's Degree and Teaching Qualification programmes (a concurrent model of initial teacher training) are taught at first-degree level. There is a solid and broad coverage of disciplines with a traditional philological orientation, which gives graduates a good grounding in the theory and practice of language and language teaching. Also, programmes grant an advanced level of language proficiency. For details, please see section 2.1.1.

Type B. Master's Degree programmes in modern foreign languages are taught at postgraduate level. These programmes are new, having started in line with recent legislation in 2000/2001. The objective is to educate specialists who will teach language and language-related subjects at higher education level. State Educational Requirements set 700 contact hours of instruction in the postgraduate curricula and a 30000-word dissertation. Usually, the degree programmes cover one academic year of 2 semesters but it may also extend longer, e.g. 3 semesters.

The Winter Semester includes compulsory and optional courses in linguistics and language teaching methodology. The Summer Semester is devoted to optional studies but the focus of the work is on the dissertation. A certain number of contact hours of instruction are set for tutoring consultations on the dissertation.

The Master's Degree is conferred by the university on the basis of examinations and the presentation of the dissertation at a viva examination.

Type C. Postgraduate Certificate of Language Education programmes are taught at postgraduate level. The applicants are holders of non-language degrees of higher education. They have a defined level of foreign language proficiency before they start their postgraduate teacher training. The objective is to train language teachers who will be able to teach in CLIL environments (Content and Language Integrated Learning). The programme contents include subjects in the area of linguistics, literature and culture, language teaching. Also, students write a 20000-word dissertation. The practical language course grants an advanced level of proficiency.

The Certificate is awarded by the university on the basis of examinations and the presentation of the dissertation at a viva examination.

### 3.2.3. Career prospects for graduates

See 2.1.2.

### 3.2.4. Recent changes in content, objectives and structure of programmes

See 2.1.3.

See 2.1.4.

### 3.2.6. Reasons underlying these changes

See 2.1.5.

### 3.2.7. Identification of needs

#### 3.2.7.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

See 2.1.6.1.

#### 3.2.7.2. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

See 2.1.6.2.

### 3.2.8. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national and European level to meet the needs identified

#### 3.2.8.1. At first-degree level

See 2.1.7.1.

#### 3.2.8.2. At postgraduate level

See 2.1.7.1.

## **3.3. Continuing teacher education (in-service)**

### 3.3.1. Institutions responsible for training

In-service teacher training is carried out at three institutes in the cities of Sofia, Stara Zagora and Varna. Ad hoc workshops are organised by universities and international cultural institutions, e.g. the British Council, Institut Francais, Goethe Institut, etc.

### 3.3.2. Content, objectives and structure of programmes

In-service programmes vary in objectives and structure.

Type A. It is a one-year programme aiming to upgrade teachers' pedagogical knowledge and understanding. It includes extensive practical training through microteaching and in real circumstances at partner schools. The programme leads to a qualified teacher status so teachers are motivated to participate. During the time of their studies at the respective in-service training institute, teachers are on paid leave from their schools.

Type B. Short refresher courses on specific topics. These range from one-week to one-month courses focusing on different aspects of language teaching methodology, cultural studies, etc. They have recently been upgraded with the support of leading national cultural institutions experienced in foreign language teaching, e.g. the British Council.

### 3.3.3. Recent changes in content, objectives and structure of programmes

In the last decade, all in-service programmes have been renewed with the support in leading national cultural institutions experienced in foreign language teaching, e.g. the British Council.

### 3.3.4. Examples of good practice

All three in-service institutes are centres of good quality education.

### 3.3.5. Reasons underlying these changes

The changes were brought about by the changes in all spheres of life in the last decade. Most importantly, the political and economic shift has resulted in a new type of language needs (practical communication) and a new learning environment (open and democratic). That has had a pronounced impact on language teacher training.

### 3.3.6. Identification of needs

#### 3.3.6.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

The most important needs are related to practical language studies for specific purposes. Language studies have become both a tool to achieve a concrete aim (e.g. to become a good language teacher) and a mediator of extending one's cultural horizons and authority.

#### 3.3.6.2. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

The need for more language professionals, especially teachers, may be recognised as the most important necessity. In addition to the regular brushing up of their language skills, all language teachers should improve their ICT skills.

### 3.3.7. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national and European level to meet the needs identified

The Ministry of Education and Science should provide opportunities for all teachers to participate every year in various in-service training programmes in this country and in the country/countries of the respective target language.

## ***4. Innovations in the training of translators and interpreters***

### **4.1. Description and analysis of the current spectrum of professional activities**

Translators and interpreters are trained within the general language degree programmes. There do not exist any special programmes.

The professional association of translators and interpreters organizes specialisation seminars for practising professionals. The Association presents annually a national award in translation.

### **4.2. Institutions responsible for training**

Translators and interpreters are trained at the universities.

### **4.3. Content, objectives and structure of programmes**

#### 4.3.1. At first-degree level

Translation and interpreting are courses within the general language degree programmes. For a description, please see section 2.1.

#### 4.3.2. At postgraduate level

Not applicable (there do not exist any special programmes).

#### 4.3.3. At the level of continuing education

Please see section 4.1.

### **4.4. Career prospects for graduates**

Career prospects for graduates of general language degree programmes are extremely favourable. For a description, please see section 2.1.2. There is a great demand for high quality translation and interpreting services.

### **4.5. Recent changes in content, objectives and structure of programmes**

#### 4.5.1. At first-degree level

Some universities have restructured their undergraduate programmes (the general language degree programmes) so that the study of translation and interpreting has expanded. This has been done on the basis of offering specialised optional courses. This has been achieved with the support of EU action programmes.

#### 4.4.2. At postgraduate level

Not applicable (there do not exist any special programmes).

#### 4.4.3. At the level of continuing education

Please see section 4.1.

### **4.6. Examples of good practice**

Please see section 4.5.1. This has been successfully done at Sofia University. The Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology has recently installed new equipment for interpreting simulation, which is being used extremely successfully.

### **4.7. Reasons underlying these changes**

The reasons underlying the lack of change in this area of language studies are related to the prevailing “academic” type of HE language programmes.

### **4.8. Identification of needs**

#### 4.8.1. At first degree level

Please see section 2.1.6.

#### 4.8.2. At postgraduate level

Postgraduate training in translation and interpreting is needed.

4.8.3. At the level of continuing education

A system of in-service training in translation and interpreting is needed.

#### **4.9. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national and European level to meet the needs identified**

4.9.1. At first-degree level

Please see section 2.1.7.1.

4.9.2. At postgraduate level

Postgraduate programmes should be designed and implemented. Decisions are to be taken at all levels of governance.

4.9.3. At the level of continuing education

In-service programmes should be designed and implemented. Decisions are to be taken at all levels of governance.

### **Provisions for Students of Other Disciplines**

#### ***5. Innovations in language provision for students of other disciplines***

##### **5.1. Language studies integrated into non-language programmes**

5.1.1. Content, objectives and structure of programmes

Non-language degree programmes generally have modern foreign language courses integrated in the curriculum. There is great diversity in the content, objectives and structure of language courses. Usually, their design is subject-oriented (as opposed to general language courses) although recently there have been attempts to implement a new network-based approach (or 'hypertext' design).

5.1.2. Recent changes in content, objectives and structure of programmes

Non-language degree programmes have increased their language component in the last decade. The language courses have also changed. In most cases international course books and curricula are used. New course curricula have been designed with the support of the Tempus Phare Scheme (for examples, please see below).

New Modern Foreign Language Centres have been founded, e.g. at Plovdiv University ([www.ff.uni-plovdiv.bg](http://www.ff.uni-plovdiv.bg)). They provide high quality language teaching to all university students.

5.1.4. Reasons underlying these changes

Please see section 2.2.5.

5.1.5. Identification of needs

5.1.5.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

Please see section 2.1.6.1.

5.1.5.1. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

Please see section 2.1.6.2.

5.1.6. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national and European level to meet the needs identified

5.1.6.1 At first-degree level

Please see section 2.1.7.1.

At postgraduate level

Please see section 2.1.7.2.

## **5.2. General and subject-oriented language courses accompanying non-language programmes**

5.2.1. Content, objectives and structure of programmes

Please see section 5.1.1.

5.2.2. Recent changes in content, objectives and structure of programmes

The changes, mentioned in section 5.1.1, are related to the design a network-based curriculum for modern foreign languages, which is the outcome of an R&D project, coordinated by Sofia University, within the framework of Tempus. It is an attempt to get around the shortcomings of the dualistic model of language teaching for general versus specific purposes. A National Network of language teaching institutions has been set up for the dissemination of the new language curriculum.

5.2.3. Examples of good practice

The website of the project, mentioned in section 5.2.2, is [www.lac2000.revolta.com](http://www.lac2000.revolta.com). Please visit the website for further information. See also 5.1.3.

5.2.4. Reasons underlying these changes

Please see section 2.1.5.

5.2.5. Identification of needs

5.2.5.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies

Please see section 2.1.6.1.

5.2.5.2. Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

Please see section 2.1.6.2.

5.2.6. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national and European level to meet the needs identified

5.2.6.1. At first-degree level

Please see section 2.1.7.1.

5.2.6.2. At postgraduate level

Please see section 2.1.7.2.

### **5.3. Language provision and support for mobile students**

Large-scale mobility of students is a relatively recent development in this country. Only in the last decade students began to study abroad and national universities began to receive foreign students (mainly from the region of the Balkans, e.g. Greece, Macedonia, Turkey).

Before the political changes of 1989, a special institute for foreign students existed. It prepared future university students in Bulgarian language. The length of the course was one year and it had a “general” and a “subject-specific” language component.

#### 5.3.1. For incoming students

For incoming undergraduate students, Bulgarian language studies are provided at all universities. Many non-language programmes or parts of programmes are taught through one of the most widely spoken languages. Most incoming students do not take language courses but a need is felt that language teaching should be provided.

Postgraduate programmes for overseas students are offered in one of the most widely taught languages so no formal language teaching is provided. A need is felt that language teaching should be provided for postgraduate students.

#### 5.3.2. For outgoing students

No special language preparation is provided for outgoing students. One of the criteria for selection of outgoing students is language proficiency. The numbers of outgoing students are still small so the need for language preparation is still possible to mask. The situation is certainly changing at the moment.

### 5.4. Non-language programmes or parts of programmes taught through one or several other languages

#### 5.4.1. Disciplines involved

Many non-language programmes or parts of programmes are taught through one of the most widely spoken languages. For example, a range of mechanical engineering programmes at the Institute of Technology are taught through German; the MA programme in Modern Philosophy at Sofia University is taught through English; many programmes and parts of programmes at the Faculty of Economics (Sofia University) are taught through English.

Universities require that students in general take a foreign language (they tend to be English, French and German). Language courses tend to be compulsory. Usually there is a special language department or language centre responsible for teaching.

#### 5.4.2. Levels at which (parts of) programmes are taught

At first-degree level, non-language programmes are taught through a foreign language at Sofia University (e.g. Economics, European Studies), Institute of Technology in Sofia (e.g. Mechanical Engineering), etc.

At Master's level, non-language programmes are taught through a foreign language at Sofia University (e.g. Modern Philosophy), Institute of Technology in Sofia (e.g. Mechanical Engineering), etc.

At Ph.D. level, non-language programmes are offered in a foreign language at all HE institutions accredited to confer postgraduate degrees.

#### 5.4.3. Languages used

Please see section 5.4.1.

#### 5.4.4. Target groups (mobile students, home students, etc.)

The target groups of the non-language programmes taught through a foreign language consist mainly of home students. They may also include mobile students, both incoming and outgoing. Home students, graduates of foreign language medium schools find it natural to continue their studies through their second language.

#### 5.4.5. Policies and objectives underlying the practice described

The main objective is to train good professionals. It is believed that language proficiency is indispensable in the formation of the specialist. Modern ICT has boosted the use of English across all HE programmes.

#### 5.4.6. New measures proposed

The practice described should be expanded to new programmes and/or parts of programmes. The measures should be taken at all levels of governance of HE.

## **Continuing Education**

### ***6. Innovations in language studies in continuing education (excluding language specialists)***

#### 6.1. Target groups

Firstly, the major group targeted by language programmes in this category is the general public. Its motivation is varied and entirely individual. There is no policy of promoting language studies at national or regional level. Secondly, business people are a separate target group. They need both general and special language teaching, which is provided by various programmes, including volunteer teaching.

## 6.2. Content, objectives and structure of programmes and courses

The traditional forms of continuing education – private language schools and private lessons – have grown extensively recently. The international cultural institutions offer various language programmes, e.g. the British Council and the BBC. The usual practice is for the schools to use international curricula and course books – so the target levels of proficiency and the duration of the courses varies. Courses for preparation for the international examinations in English, French and German have proliferated, e.g. the TOEFL preparation course offered by the Fulbright Commission Bulgaria is now included in the programmes of many different private language centres.

## 6.3. Recent developments

Recently, the numbers of private schools have decreased because of the processes of institutional consolidation and quality enhancement. The general public has become more knowledgeable of the requirements granting quality and has begun to avoid purely commercial programmes. Many private schools have closed down their operations.

## 6.4. Identification of new needs

There is a great need for language programmes in this category. Recent developments, e.g. the EU accession talks, the abolition of the visas for the Schengen agreement countries and the spread of the Internet, have increased the need for communication skills. Modern foreign languages are indispensable now. There is a need for new effective teaching methods, including self-study programmes, e-learning opportunities, etc.

## 6.5. Measures proposed to meet the needs identified

A policy of promoting language studies at regional and national level should be adopted. It should be related to a development of e-learning opportunities and generally to media education practices in this category.