



Country information gathering template prepared for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2021 - Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia - Inclusion and education: All means all.

## Bulgaria

This profile has been commissioned by EASNIE as an input for the 2021 regional report on inclusion and education in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. This version is a working draft and will be subject to further copy-editing. Its content has not been edited nor verified by the GEM Report team. The views and opinions expressed in this paper, including anecdotal evidence from interviews, are those of the interviewees or researchers of this profile and should not be attributed to the Global Education Monitoring Report, to UNESCO or to EASNIE. The information in this document was current in June 2020. The profile can be cited with the following reference: “Profile commissioned by EASNIE for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2021 - Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia - Inclusion and education: All means all”. For further information, please contact [gemreport@unesco.org](mailto:gemreport@unesco.org).

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**2021**

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## Introduction

The template for the Profiles was a survey designed to collect information from countries in order to collect structured information to be used as the basis for the GEM Regional Report analysis work.

The survey respondents were specifically requested to not focus exclusively on children with disabilities, but include information on all of the groups considered to be vulnerable to exclusion or at risk of being marginalised, stereotyped or subject to discrimination, including for reasons such as gender, location, poverty, ethnicity, language, beliefs and religion, migration or displacement status, sexual orientation or gender identity expression.

The overall goal for the Profile was that the information provided in relation to each country identifies:

1. challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for the implementation of inclusion in education policies;
2. the ways in which countries monitor inclusion and exclusion in education (at individual and system levels);
3. challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for supporting inclusion in education created by sectors other than education and arrangements needed to co-ordinate work among government sectors, tiers of government and with other stakeholders to overcome overlapping dimensions of exclusion;
4. key policy solutions that are being implemented and key drivers of policy change.

The Profile begins with background information on the people completing the template.

The next section provides a short descriptive overview of the country's system of inclusive education.

This is followed by main sections presenting quantitative and qualitative data linked to each of the seven themes for the report:

1. laws and policies;
2. governance and finance;
3. data;
4. curricula, learning materials and assessment;
5. teachers and support personnel;
6. schools;
7. communities, parents and students.

Each section begins with a key guiding question (marked in italic text) that frames the overall information provided. This is followed by the specific questions on the main issues for the topic that should be answered.

Sections 1 and 2 focus on information relating to legislation and policies.

Section 3 focuses upon available data and the aims and procedures for data collection.

Sections 4 to 7 focus on information relating to policies and policy implementation in practice.

The information provided focuses on compulsory education (i.e. potentially -pre-primary, primary and lower secondary, and possibly upper secondary education). Only specific issues related to inclusion in early childhood education and post-compulsory education were considered when necessary.

## Survey reply and respondents

The following country representatives have contributed to and validated this profile:

Greta Gancheva, Director of the Directorate for Inclusive Education, Ministry of Education and Science;  
Representative Board member for the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education.

The main challenges for the preparation of the profile were seen as:

Monitoring and accountability data often not available

Special needs education system approach

The 5 most informative sources on inclusion in education (academic papers, policy reviews, evaluation studies etc.) for the country published since 2015:

1. Eurydice, [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/bulgaria\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/bulgaria_en)
2. UNCRPD, 2018. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Concluding observations on the initial report of Bulgaria  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/BGR/CO/1&Lang=En](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/BGR/CO/1&Lang=En)
3. UNESCO, 2016. National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020.  
<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/c56d45c03f5ca15b1db9749be97441675abe36fa.pdf>
4. UNESCO, 2016, National Report, Bulgaria.  
[http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National\\_Report\\_of\\_the\\_Republic\\_of\\_Bulgaria.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf)
5. European Agency National Overview <https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/bulgaria>

Internal, non-public or working documents used:

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, BULGARIA Country Background Report

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, BULGARIA UNCRPD ART 24

## Country system overview

### 1.1. Provide a brief (maximum 1 page) narrative of the country's compulsory educational system.

Specifically, provide information about:

#### a. the different types of schools, institutions and educational provision within the system

Provide a brief (maximum 1 page) narrative of the country's compulsory educational system. Specifically, provide information about:

The Bulgarian educational system provides for the acquisition of the basic foundations and principles of human knowledge; the formation of universal human and national values, virtues and culture; respect to others, compassion and civil responsibility; the development of the individual and stimulating artistic talents and gifts; spiritual, physical and social development and a healthy way of life; providing possibilities for needs and interest development for lifelong learning leading to self-development.

All schools are coeducational. With the exception of private schools all education is free of charge. Basic education (1st to 7th grade) can be acquired at primary schools (1st to 4th grade), lower secondary schools (5th to 7th grade), united schools (1st to 10th grade), upper secondary schools (8th to 12th grade), secondary schools (1st to 12th grade). Some schools offer lower secondary vocational education and training, as well as specialised education in profiled schools too. All students at grades 1 to 7 receive free textbooks. Upon completing 7th grade, and after sitting national standardised tests, students can enrol at vocational or profiled schools. Basic education is acquired after completion of grade 7. Compulsory school education is up to the age of 16.

Full-time compulsory education encompasses a single structure Primary education covering grades 1-7. It is divided in two stages: the elementary level Natchalno utchilishte (ISCED 1) and the pre-gymnasium Osnovno Uchilishte (ISCED 2). The secondary education covers grades 8-12 and is divided in two stages the lower gymnasium Gimnazia and the higher gymnasium Gimnazia (ISCED 3). The compulsory education concerns pupils aged 7 to 16 years old. The education is free of charge and state and municipal schools.

The right to education is regulated in Art. 53 of the Constitution. Present legislation creates conditions for equal access to education and training for all children and pupils, including children and pupils with special educational needs and / or chronic illnesses.

The Public Education Act (PEA) recognizes the right of every citizen to receive education and ensure its realization without discrimination while not allowing restrictions or privileges based on race, sex, ethnic or social origin, religion or social status. According to the Law on Integration of People with Disabilities, the Ministry of Education and Science provides a supportive environment for integrated education of children with special educational needs.

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and / or chronic diseases are trained in integrated schools that are obliged to accept them and as an exception when all other possibilities for training and education in public schools have been exhausted and upon written consent.

Bulgaria has several laws concerning education. The most recent one, [the Law on Pre-School and School Education](#), was adopted in 2015. Recent reforms were also applied at all levels: early childhood education and care, school and vocational education.

Pre-primary education mainly aims to prepare children for the school environment. It includes children from the age of three to the age of six or seven.

The legislation on pre-school and school education in Bulgaria shall guarantee equal treatment of the children and students with regards to their right to education and supports the cooperation and tolerance among people of different ethnic communities.

**b. the different authorities responsible for different types of provision etc.**

The administration of the school system is organised in four different levels, national, regional, municipal, and school level. The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) is a specialised body of the Council of Ministers for the administration of education.

Bulgaria has 28 regional education departments, responsible for the overall educational policy, set out by the Ministry of Education and Science, within the territory of the respective district. Regional education departments are territorial administration of the Ministry of Education and Science for management and control of the public education system. Regional education departments create conditions for the state education policy in the region. The Regional departments are also responsible for the inclusion in education.

**c. any major external support programmes provided in the past 5 years e.g. bilateral - GIZ (German Society for International Cooperation) and USAID; or multi-lateral e.g. UNICEF, European Union, ADB (Asian Development Bank).**

-The Centre for Inclusive Education developed a model of creating inclusive school environment in the Bulgarian context, in partnership with five schools. One School for All Model of organization of school processes enabling the presence of inclusive school setting. The model was designed in 2014-2016 during the first phase of the One School for All Programme implemented with the support of the America for Bulgaria Foundation. More information How to make schools more inclusive in Bulgaria

The model of inclusive education becomes part of the legislation through the adoption of the Pre-school and School Education Act, which defined inclusive education as an integral part of the right to education.

-The World Bank-supported Social Inclusion Project (2015) aimed to help children who were below the age of seven and from poor and disadvantaged families, as well as children with disabilities, to prepare for school by providing a combination of investments in both infrastructure (primarily kindergartens and children centers) and services, such as medical screenings, speech therapists, physiotherapists, pediatrician checkups, and parental training.

-European Social Fund - The Bulgarian Operational Programme "Science and Education for Smart Growth" (SESG) is the only Operational Programme in Bulgaria to be co-funded by both the ESF and the ERDF for the period 2014-2020. Over €673 million (of which €596 million from the EU budget) will be invested to help strengthen research and innovation, general and higher education, and vocational training in Bulgaria.

**1.2. Are there specific features of the compulsory education system that impact on inclusion that should be kept in mind when reading the country response?**

*The application of the principles of inclusive education is hindered by factors such as material resources, educational environment, human and financial resources that do not fully meet the requirements for inclusive education.*

Area	Yes/No	Description of the feature
Early tracking of learners into a particular educational pathway	Yes	Some schools offer lower secondary vocational education and training, as well as specialised education too. Upon completing 7th grade, and after sitting national standardised tests, students can enrol at vocational or profiled schools.
'Double-shift' patterns to the school day (i.e. learners attend for either a morning or afternoon session)	Yes	There are still schools in Bulgaria where students are taught on two shifts (morning and afternoon). The Ministry of Education and Science endeavoured to organize the one-shift school system in this regard, and the full-day training and activities for students' interests were introduced.
Grade retention	Yes	<p><u>Pre-school and School Education Act (PSEA)</u></p> <p>A student who has an annual grade of "poor (2)" by subject or module shall pass an examination for changing the grade for the subject or module under the terms and procedures established by the state educational standard for evaluating the learning outcomes of the students.</p> <p>A student who did not or did not pass the grade change exam repeats the class.</p> <p>Students cannot repeat successfully completed classes and retake the same education in schools, except in the cases provided for in a normative act.</p> <p>Students with special educational needs do not repeat the class.</p>
Multiple languages of instruction	Yes	<p><u>Pre-school and School Education Act (PSEA) Article 13.</u> (6) Pupils for whom the Bulgarian language is not their mother tongue shall have the right to study also their mother tongue in accordance with this Act and under the care and control of the state</p> <p>Article 16. Children and pupils for whom the Bulgarian language is not their mother tongue shall be provided additional conditions to assist their educational integration under the terms and conditions laid down in the state education standard for the mastering of the Bulgarian literary language.</p>
Policies on access to compulsory education in local schools	Yes	<p>The right to education is regulated in Art. 53 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria.</p> <p>Public Education Act (PEA) in Art. 4, Paragraph 1 acknowledges the right of every citizen to receive education and guarantees, Art. 4, Paragraph 2, its implementation without any discrimination. Restrictions or privileges based on race, sex, ethnic or social origin, religion and social status shall not be permitted.</p>



		<a href="http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf">http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf</a>  In the Public Education Act (PEA) it is clearly defined that for the minor and juvenile foreigners, seeking or granted international protection under the Law on Asylum and Refugees, who are subject to compulsory pre-school and compulsory school education, is provided free of charge education in the state and municipal schools in the Republic of Bulgaria.  <a href="http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf">http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf</a>
(others ... )		

**1.3. In the country's system which groups are considered to be vulnerable to exclusion from education? Who has identified these groups as being vulnerable to exclusion?**

According to §1, item 3 of the Ordinance on the financing of institutions in the system of pre-school and school education - "Children and students from vulnerable groups" are children and students in primary education who are at risk of dropping out of the system of pre-school and school education or whose access to education is at increased risk because of the low educational level of their parents / guardians and the associated disadvantage in the labour market and the risk of social exclusion.

**1.4. Please provide a brief (maximum 1 page) narrative overview of the historical development of inclusion of vulnerable groups in education in the country.**

Bulgaria's reforms concerning general education and special needs education are recent. European Union (EU) accession in 2007 transformed the old medical vision of special educational needs (SEN).

The Bulgarian Council of Ministers adopted a national plan for integration of children with SEN (2004–2007) in December 2003. A department in the Ministry for Education and Cultural Integration deals with learners with SEN and minorities (Turkish and Roma). A Consultative Council on Education of Ethnic Minorities was also created. In January 2004, the Ministry adopted a 'Strategy for Educational Integration of Children from Ethnic Minorities'. This 'gives Roma parents the right to choose their child's school, and the schools the duty to accept and assist them, with special assistants'.

Two separate National Plans existed in 2007. Their formulation was accelerated by Bulgaria's EU accession. The first one concerns the inclusion of learners with SEN and was adopted by the Council of Ministers. The second one was made for ethnic minorities and approved by the Minister of Education and Science. The Department for Educational Environment and Cultural Integration within the Ministry of Education implemented both plans. Several barriers to inclusive education existed in 2007: physical conditions in general schools; limited teacher training; lack of funding resources to ensure the quality of special needs education in mainstream, as well as special schools; and public attitudes towards children with SEN

In 2006, resource centres were created to support children with SEN inclusion. They are state units with additional curricula and activities like 'corrective' therapies and include consultation with parents and teachers. They function in each region and receive state funding, but can also have their own incomes.

In recent years, a number of measures have been implemented in the field of inclusive education. Within the framework of project BG051PO001-4.1.07-0001 "Inclusive training", funded under OPRD 2007-2013, a supportive environment is created for equal access to education and for the implementation of inclusive training in established pilot schools and kindergartens. Support to Equal Access and Personal Development Project BG05M2OP001-3.003 "Providing Conditions and Resources for Building and Developing a Supporting Environment in Kindergartens and Schools for Inclusive Learning - Phase 1", funded by OPEIR, builds on good practices and extends the inclusive learning model projects by focusing support on early assessment of the educational needs of pre-school children for the prevention and early intervention of their learning disabilities, and on crepe for inclusive education of children with sensory impairments, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, with specific disorders of learning ability, hyperactivity and attention deficit with children and students on the autism spectrum. Project BG05M2OP001-3.005-0004-C01 "Active inclusion in the system of pre-school education" focuses support for children from vulnerable groups to provide additional Bulgarian language education for children with a mother tongue other than Bulgarian, providing for the development of a specialized methodology for mastering in Bulgarian for children with different mother tongue.

Bulgarian educational institutions do not collect data on the ethnic origin of children and students. In connection with the right of self-determination of all Bulgarian citizens, such data cannot be formally provided. Unfortunately, this raises a number of speculations regarding both the quality of the educational process and the causes of poor educational outcomes for children and students, including ethnic minorities, including Roma.

It should be noted that in the last years many targeted measures have been taken by the Ministry of Education and Science to overcome the causes of reproduction of social inequality among vulnerable groups of persons, which is implied by the low educational status of parents with only a primary education or they have no education at all, and this in turn puts their children in a vulnerable social position and may affect their achievements in school, especially if their mother tongue is different from Bulgarian and non-Bulgarian. fluent Bulgarian language. In this regard, since 2017, active and consistent work has been undertaken to provide conditions for inclusive education and for differentiated care for children and students, including from vulnerable groups, by offsetting learning disabilities that lead to gaps. in the knowledge and subsequent lag, lack of motivation and inability to complete a class, stage or degree of education.

Systematic efforts are being made to develop the potential, including for those whose mother tongue is different from Bulgarian and who speak Bulgarian. It should be noted that insufficient command of the Bulgarian language significantly impedes not only the good representation of children and students, but also the exercise of the right to education and a better life for children and students from vulnerable groups. As a result of measures to reach and integrate children and students in primary and secondary schools, the number of students who have successfully completed the first and second upper secondary stages should be increased in the long term.

Indeed, the demographic structure of the population may be a prerequisite for the presence of children and students of a particular ethnic group in the educational institutions of the respective administrative area, but in transportation, a number of factors have to be taken into account, such as the age characteristics of children and students in terms of reducing travel time, especially for preschoolers and young students. Last but not least, it is necessary to respect the preference of those parents, including ethnic minorities, who do not wish their children to be separated from them for long by traveling to another settlement.

In 2019, the implementation of the National Program "Supporting Municipalities for the Implementation of Educational Desegregation Activities" by the Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities began. The purpose of the program is to provide municipalities with equal access to quality education through program funds for children in compulsory pre-primary education and students attending segregated educational institutions through the implementation of a process of educational desegregation.

Inclusive education is an integral part of the right to education, but it is necessary to change the principle of learning support, namely every child who at some point in life needs support should receive it. Individual support as a responsibility of kindergartens and schools is provided for all, not just for children with special educational needs. Thus the education system will be able to meet the emerging support needs in a faster, more flexible and adequate way, which will be harmonised and interconnected.

In 2016, the Pre-school and School Education Act reinforced the legislation framework regarding the SEN children.

Article 26. (1) The personality development support centre is an institution in the pre-school and school education system, where activities are organized to support the inclusion, instruction and upbringing of children and pupils, as well as activities to develop their interests and capabilities.

Article 27. Specialized auxiliary units are institutions for the implementation and promotion of activities related to the implementation of educational policies, including the support for the inclusive education process and the information and technical services provided to the preschool and school education system.

## Section 1: Laws and Policies

What is the framework of legislation, policy and guidelines for supporting the development of an inclusive education system?

**1.5. Have international/UN conventions/declarations to protect the rights of groups who are potentially vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion been integrated into national and/or regional law?**

Convention/declaration on	Law	Comments
Child rights (UNCRC)	<p>Article 53 of <u>the Constitution</u></p> <p>Public Education Act (PEA)</p> <p>Art. 7. (1,2) (<u>Pre-school and School Education Act</u>)</p>	<p>referring to BULGARIA UNCRPD ART 24</p> <p>Paragraph 1 “Everyone shall have the right to education.”</p> <p>The Public Education Act (PEA) recognizes the right of every citizen to receive education and ensure its realization without discrimination while not allowing restrictions or privileges based on race, sex, ethnic or social origin, religion or social status.</p> <p>Everyone has the right to education and to promotion education and training through lifelong learning.</p> <p>Inclusive education is an integral part of the right to education.</p>
Disability (UNCRPD)	<p>Decision No 467 of 25 June 2015</p> <p>Action Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria to implement the</p>	<p>“The Council of Ministers adopted a second Action Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with</p>



		related to the admission and training of pupils with disabilities.
<p>Gender (Convention on discrimination against women CEDAW)</p> <p>Signed 17/7/1980; ratified 8/2/1982</p>	<p>Law on Protection against Discrimination, enacted 01.01.2004.</p>	<p>The law regulates protection against all forms of discrimination and helps to prevent it.</p> <p>Any direct or indirect discrimination based on sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, human genome, nationality, origin, religion or religion, education, beliefs, political affiliation, personal or social status, disability, age, sexual orientation, family, is prohibited status, financial status or any other features established by law or in an international treaty to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party.</p>
<p>Ethnicity or language (UN Declaration on Rights of persons belonging to National, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities)</p>	<p>Law on Asylum and Refugees (LAR)</p>	<p>“...the minor and juvenile foreigners, seeking or granted international protection, have the right to primary and secondary education, including vocational education and training, under the terms and conditions for the Bulgarian citizens. This text guarantees equal rights to education of children and students seeking or granted international protection.” (Source: <a href="http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf">http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf</a>)</p>

	<p><u>Pre-school and School Education Act (PSEA)</u></p>	<p>Art. 62, Paragraph 4 of PSEA  ‘When in a kindergarten are enrolled children of different ethnic background, at the same age, under Paragraph 1, their differentiation in groups, on the basis of their ethnicity, is not permitted’ (Source: <a href="http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf">http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf</a>)</p> <p>Art. 99, Paragraph 4 of PSEA:  ‘When in the same class are enrolled students of different ethnic background, their differentiation into classes, based on their ethnicity, is not permitted’. ( Source : <a href="http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf">http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf</a>)</p>
<p>Other (e.g. Rights of indigenous people)</p>	<p>Ordinance No. 13 of 21.09.2016 for civic, health, environmental and intercultural education</p>	<p>The rights of students to acquire knowledge about the different dimensions of cultural identities and about the basic characteristics of intercultural interactions, forming a positive attitude towards diversity in all areas of human life, set out as principles in the law, are developed in the provisions of Ordinance No. 13 of 21.09.2016 for civic, health, environmental and intercultural education issued by the Minister of Education and Science. School education in civic, health, environmental and intercultural education is carried out in the process of acquiring all types of</p>

		<p>school preparation by studying individual subjects or integrated within general subjects by improving the acquired competences in the elective classes.</p> <p>Before being regulated, intercultural education was carried out under various European programs and projects, including projects of the Center for the Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities, one of the activities related to its creation being in the far 2005. year.</p>
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**1.6. Provide an overview of general education legislation impacting on the inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups:**

Name and link	Year and status (enacted, under preparation etc.)	Description of key content
Ordinance on inclusive education	2017, enacted	The Ordinance regulates the public relations related to provision of inclusive education for children and students in the system of pre-school and school education as well as the activities of the institutions in this system to provide support for the personal development of children and students.



<p><u>The Vocational Education and Training (VET) Act</u></p>	<p>2017, enacted</p>	<p>The Law regulates the vocational education and vocational training of pupils in special educational needs and / or chronic diseases, pupils from homes for children without parental care and deviant behaviour.</p> <p>The law also regulates</p>
<p><u>Pre-school and School Education Act (PSEA)</u></p>	<p>2016, enacted</p>	<p>Article 7. (1) Everybody shall have the right to education and may improve his or her education and qualifications through lifelong learning. (2) The inclusive education shall constitute an integral part of the right to education.</p> <p>The new law ensures new quality in education and regulates inclusive education as an integral part of the right to education, introduces the obligation to ensure support for personal development of children and pupils. In this regard a public educational standard will be introduced and will set out the manner and conditions for education of pupils with special educational needs.</p> <p>Art. 192. (1) Kindergartens and schools shall be obliged to accept children and students with special educational needs. (2) Up to three children and students with special educational needs may be trained in a group in kindergarten and in class at school. ... 4) In case of an increase in the number of children and students in a group or class, a teaching assistant is appointed...</p>
<p><u>Higher Education Act</u></p>	<p>2016, enacted</p>	<p>No privileges or restrictions shall be allowed in higher learning in connection with age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, social background, political convictions or religious denomination, except for the cases expressly stated in a particular higher school's Rules of operations on grounds relating to certain peculiarities of the training process and the future profession.</p>

<p>Ordinance No 1 of 23.01.2009 for training of children and pupils with special education needs and/or with chronic diseases</p>	<p>2009, enacted</p>	<p>It defines fundamental principles and objectives of complex pedagogical evaluation, imposed by practice additional functions of expert teams, coordination of activities of resource support in the process of education and training, cooperation with parents of disabled children, new functions of specialized schools in compliance with the new priorities in the activities of the Ministry of education youth and science, related to the development of integrated education.</p>
<p>PEA</p>	<p>2002, enacted Reinforced in 2003</p>	<p>Kindergartens are obliged to accept children with special educational needs and/or chronic diseases (Art. 21, Paragraph 2 of PEA). According to Art. 27, Paragraphs 1 and 2 of PEA, the children with special educational needs and/or chronic diseases are educated in integrated schools. Schools are obliged to accept children with special educational needs and/or chronic diseases.</p> <p>Rules for the Public Education Act Enforcement</p> <p>Changes in the rules in 2003 regulated practical enforcement of integrated training by defining children and pupils with special education needs, by formation of teams for complex pedagogical evaluation in regional inspectorates on education, by creation of a supportive environment for kindergartens and schools where these children and pupils are trained, by composition of teams of experts at the kindergartens and schools where children and pupils with special educational needs are trained on an integrated basis.</p>
<p>Ordinance No. 3 of April 6, 2017, on the Conditions and Procedures for Admission and Training of Persons Seeking or Received International Protection</p>	<p>2017</p>	<p>Art. 2. Persons seeking or receiving international protection shall be provided with free education in the state and municipal schools of the Republic of Bulgaria under the conditions and procedures for Bulgarian citizens.</p>

**1.7. Provide an overview of education policy or guidelines impacting on inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups:**

Name and link	Year and status (enacted, under preparation etc.)	Description of key content
Policy of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) for creating conditions for the development and promotion of inclusive education	2015, enacted	The policy of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) is aimed at creating conditions for the development and promotion of inclusive education, which is the process of adopting and supporting the individuality of each child or student by including resources aimed at removing barriers to learning. For this purpose, this process is expected to find its legal regulation in the draft new law on education, as well as in a number of regulations.
Regulations for use of dormitories and canteens in the campus of universities and of Students' Canteens and Dormitories EAD	1995, enacted	In accordance with the Regulations for use of dormitories and canteens in the campus of universities and of Students' Canteens and Dormitories EAD, where an accessible environment for people with disabilities was created, students and postgraduates from other universities too are accommodated. Students with 70 and over 70 percent reduced capacity are accommodated in dormitories without rankings and pay during the year 30 per cent of the monthly rent, and 30 percent of the semester deposit due.
Programme for Development of Education, Science and Youth Policies in the Republic of Bulgaria	(2009–2013)	Strategic priority directions of the MEYS are defined, one of which is equal access assurance to education.  Ordinance No 3/2004 for organization and conduct of state matriculation exams, Ordinance No 3/2003 for evaluation system, Ordinance for textbooks and teaching aids of 2003, Ordinance on the terms and conditions for protection of gifted children of 2003, Strategy for Educational Integration of Children and Pupils from Ethnic Minorities, National Strategy for Children 2008-2018, National Program for Child Protection, National program for safeguarding the rights of children with disabilities 2010 – 2013, Ordinance No 3/2009 on the terms and conditions for providing free education in Bulgarian language as well as for learning the mother tongue and culture of students at compulsory school age – children of citizens of member-states of the European union, European economic space and Switzerland

**1.8. Please describe any specific plans and strategies designed to support inclusion in education (e.g. national strategy on migrant learners):**

Name and link	Year and status (approved, under preparation etc.)	Description of the focus
<p><u>The Bulgarian Operational Programme "Science and Education for Smart Growth" (SESG)</u></p>	<p>2014-2020, approved</p>	<p>Ministry of Education and Science through the Operational Program 'Science and education for smart growth' proposed the following operations, where the seekers or beneficiaries of international protection are a target group: 'Support for pre-school education and training of disadvantaged children'</p> <p>The purpose of the operation is to create conditions to support children of the ethnic minorities and families seeking or granted international protection, to build up themselves as fully-valuable citizens, as well as for their successful professional, social and personal realization. Measures to support should be aimed at achieving real and lasting results in educational integration of children of the ethnic minorities and children, seeking or granted international protection, at pre-school age (3-6 years) before entry into school, by building working models which include: maximum coverage of kindergartens, focusing on those who are subject to compulsory education, retrieval and integration of Roma children in reception kindergartens and preparatory groups at local schools, support for entry into first grade, work with parents.</p> <p><a href="http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/c56d45c03f5ca15b1db9749be97441675abe36fa.pdf">http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/c56d45c03f5ca15b1db9749be97441675abe36fa.pdf</a></p>
<p>Strategy for Educational Integration of children and students of ethnic minorities</p>	<p>2015-2020, approved</p>	<p>In implementation of the Strategy Action Plan are set out measures aimed at ensuring access to quality education for children and students of vulnerable ethnic communities.</p>
<p>Strategy to reduce the share of the early school leavers It upgrades the existing policies and</p>	<p>2013-2020, approved</p>	<p>The Strategy laid out policies and measures for prevention, intervention and compensation for dropping out of the educational system. Special attention is given to policies for access to education and improving the quality of education</p>

measures to address early school leaving and combines and synchronizes the efforts of the institutions in this direction.		for children and students of vulnerable ethnic communities and those with special educational needs.  “The Strategy for reducing the share of early school leavers (2013–2020) contains measures to prevent early school leaving and to provide access to quality education for children with special educational needs; for the establishment and effective functioning of accessible support centers for each child and student; for developing the capacity of teachers in general education schools and kindergartens working with children with SEN, as well as of professionals working with children and students, for the application of a uniform methodology to assess their educational needs; creating pedagogical and specialized supportive environment for each child and student to ensure the inclusive education”.
The National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration (2011-2020)	2011-2020	The National Strategy provides Bulgaria’s policy framework on migration and integration and covers the issue of education.
‘National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the integration of Roma people 2012-2020’.	2012, adopted	The National Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy for the period 2015-2020, in the priority ‘Education’ has set out the operational objective ‘Coverage and retention of Roma children and students in the education system, provision of quality education in multicultural educational environment’.
National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2016 – 2020)	2016–2020, approved	The main objective of the National Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality for the period 2016 - 2020 is to create guarantees for equal treatment, equal access to the resources of society and equal participation in the decision-making process of women and men in the Republic of Bulgaria with a view to their successful personal and social realization and promotion of equality of women and men in all spheres of public, economic and political life of the country.

### 1.9. Is there a definition of inclusion in education?

✓ Yes

If yes, please provide the definition and give the official source:

In the Pre-school and School Education Act (PSEA) (2016) the definition is given § 1 (22): “Inclusive education is the process of understanding, accepting and supporting the individuality of each child or pupil and the variety of needs

of all children and pupils through involvement and inclusion of resources aimed at removing the obstacles to teaching and learning and creating opportunities for development and participation of children and pupils in all aspects of life in the community.”

### **1.10. Is there a definition of vulnerable groups?**

✓ Yes

**If yes, please provide the definition and give the official source:**

According to §1, item 3 of the Ordinance on the financing of institutions in the system of pre-school and school education - "Children and students from vulnerable groups" are children and students in primary education who are at risk of dropping out of the system of pre-school and school education or whose access to education is at increased risk due to the low educational level of their parents / guardians and the associated disadvantage on the labour market and the risk of social exclusion.

### **1.11. Is there a definition of special educational needs?**

✓ Yes

**If yes, please provide the definition and give the official source:**

Paragraph 1, Item 27 of the Law on Pre-school and School Education (PSET) defines "special educational needs": "special educational needs" of a child and a student are the educational needs that may arise in the case of sensory disabilities, physical disabilities, multiple impairments, intellectual disabilities, speech and language impairment, specific learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, emotional and behavioral disorders.

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/separate-special-education-needs-provision-early-childhood-and-school-education-9\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/separate-special-education-needs-provision-early-childhood-and-school-education-9_en)

### **1.12. Please provide information on any future developments planned for inclusion in education.**

No information available

### **1.13. Please provide information on any reports, evaluations and/or reviews of legislation and/or policy relating to inclusion in education, since 2015. This could include official and parallel reports on UNCRPD etc.**

-UNESCO, *The National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020*,

<http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/c56d45c03f5ca15b1db9749be97441675abe36fa.pdf>

-UNESCO, 2016, *National Report Bulgaria*,

[http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National\\_Report\\_of\\_the\\_Republic\\_of\\_Bulgaria.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/resources/file/National_Report_of_the_Republic_of_Bulgaria.pdf)

**1.14. What are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hindrances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to laws and policies in the country?**

**Main challenges**

The legislative work is a strength but implementation is a long-term objective.

The right of education is often reinforced in legislation but very rarely inclusion in education is addressed and developed especially for student with special needs.

**Opportunities**

A legislative change is expected in 2020 in the Pre-school and School Education Act to include 4-year-old children in compulsory pre-school education. This will improve the reach of children in education, especially targeting children from vulnerable groups, and increase educational outcomes.

Another change in the VET is aimed at expanding the opportunities for providing distance learning and remote support for the personal development of children and students through the active use of information and communication technologies.

## Section 2: Governance and Finance

*How far are inclusive principles underpinning policies at national and local levels effectively supported by governance and financing mechanisms?*

### 1.15. Is there formal collaboration across ministries on inclusion in education?

✓ Yes

If yes, in which areas does this take place and who is involved?

Area	Yes/No	Description: what mechanism, who is involved and how
Policy development, implementation and coordination	Yes	Decree No. 100 of the Council of Ministers of 08.06.2018 on the establishment and functioning of the Mechanism for the joint work of the institutions on the coverage, inclusion and prevention of dropping out of the educational system of children and students in compulsory preschool and school age. The mechanism applies to children and students who are not covered by the education system, who are at risk of dropping out of school and kindergarten or who have left the education system prematurely.
Identification of needs / referral for services	Yes	<p>Mechanism for joint work of the institutions for the coverage, inclusion and prevention of dropping out of the educational system of children and students in compulsory preschool and school age, adopted by Decree No. 100 of 08.06.2018 - through the teams for the joint work of the institutions for the coverage and inclusion in the educational system of children and students in compulsory pre-school and school age (outreach teams);</p> <p>Mechanism for joint work of the institutions for the coverage, inclusion and prevention of dropping out of the educational system of children and students in compulsory preschool and school age, adopted by Decree No. 100 of 08.06.2018 - through the teams for the joint work of the institutions for the coverage and inclusion in the educational system of children and students in compulsory pre-school and school age (outreach teams);</p> <p>Ordinance on inclusive education, adopted by Decree No. 232 of 20.10.2017. Additional support for personal development is provided by the kindergarten and the school through a support plan prepared for a child or a student with SEN, with chronic diseases, at risk or with severe gifts. The support plan identifies the resources - the specialists needed, the form of training, the need for individual training programs, the need for support from social services, the necessary technical means and</p>



		<p>equipment, etc., which are needed for the particular child or student. The parent is acquainted with the child or student support plan and is obliged to assist in its implementation. Working with a child and a student on a case-by-case basis is a method that seeks to ensure an individual approach while providing additional support for the personal development of the child or student. Case work is based on an assessment of the individual needs of children and students. Case work is carried out by the personal development support team in coordination and coordination of their actions with the case manager in the child protection department. Team members may engage in interdisciplinary teamwork with social service professionals when the child or student is using it or with other professionals, including medical professionals, who provide child or student health care.</p>
Data sharing	Yes	<p>Decision 644 of 2019 of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria</p> <p>Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Agency for People with Disabilities for the exchange of statistics on children and students with disabilities, for pedagogical professionals involved in the education of children and students, and for social services that assist parents of children and students with disabilities.</p> <p>Mechanism for the joint work of the institutions on the coverage, inclusion and prevention of dropping out of the educational system of children and students in compulsory preschool and school age, adopted by Decree № 100 of 08.06.2018 and the Information System for the implementation of the mechanism established under the Mechanism, which provides an integrated electronic environment and tools. The information system for the implementation of the mechanism provides an environment for the exchange of information and coordination between the persons involved and institutions under the Mechanism. This system includes an information card for schools and kindergartens, where the risk of dropping out is particularly high.</p>
Monitoring and evaluation	Yes	<p>Through the Information System for the Implementation of the Mechanism for Collaborative Work of the Institutions on Capturing, Including and Preventing the Dropout of Compulsory Preschool and School Age from the Educational System of Children and Pupils, adopted by Decree No. 100 of 08.06.2018.</p>
Quality assurance and accountability	Yes	<p>Through the Information System for the Implementation of the Mechanism for Collaborative Work of the Institutions on</p>

		Capturing, Including and Preventing the Dropout of Compulsory Preschool and School Age from the Educational System of Children and Pupils, adopted by Decree No. 100 of 08.06.2018.
(others ... )		

Two levels of collaboration within the Ministry of Education and Science have been identified:

At the national level:

The Directorate for Inclusive Education at the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for inclusion and support policies for the personal development of children and students with special educational needs, for educational integration and intercultural education for children and students from ethnic minorities, as well as for children and students seeking or receiving international protection (refugees).

Several barriers to inclusive education existed in 2007:

- inaccessible physical environment conditions in general schools;
- limited teacher training;
- lack of funding resources to ensure the quality of special needs education in mainstream and special schools;
- public attitudes towards children with SEN

At the Regional level:

-In 2006, resource centres were created to support the inclusion of children with SEN. They are state units with additional curricula and activities like 'corrective' therapies and include consultation with parents and teachers. They function in each region and receive state funding, but can also have their own incomes. With the entry into force of the Pre-school and School Education Act in 2016, resource centers have become regional centers to support the inclusive education process with more and more expanded functions to support the inclusion of children and students and to train teachers to train children and students with special educational needs.

-The municipalities are territorial administrative bodies that are not included in the management structure of the educational system, but pursuant to the Pre-school and School Education Act, they are authorized to perform a number of important functions and assume responsibilities for the education in the respective towns of villages. They provide and control:

- the compulsory school education of children up to 16 years of age;
  - health care and safety at kindergartens and schools;
  - funding for the maintenance, construction, furniture and repair of schools, kindergartens and obshchinskiye zvenya (servicing units);
  - appropriate conditions in canteens, boarding houses, recreation and sports facilities and transportation for children, pupils and teachers, as well as free transportation for pupils under 16 years of age if there is no appropriate school in the settlement;
  - all the scholarships and special assistance for pupils.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for all activities – he plans, organizes, manages, coordinates, motivates and monitors the work of the teachers and the school in general. The head teacher manages the school's funds – both budgetary and extra-budgetary.

**1.16. Are there shared responsibilities between central and local governments on inclusion in education?**

✓ Yes

If yes, in which areas does this take place and who is involved?

Area	Yes/No	Description: who is involved and how
Policy development, implementation and coordination	Yes	<p>Each municipality develops a municipal strategy to support personal development each year and sets out local inclusive education activities that are consistent with national policy in this area.</p> <p>Mechanism for the joint work of the institutions on the coverage, inclusion and prevention of dropping out of the educational system of children and students in compulsory preschool and school age, adopted by Decree No. 100 of 08.06.2018. The Minister of Education and Science: organizes the implementation of the Mechanism; ensures the participation in the Mechanism of regional education departments and institutions in the system of pre-school and school education; implements, creates, develops, maintains and manages an Information System for the implementation of the mechanism; organizes the preparation of regular analyzes of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Mechanism on the basis of information from the Information System for the implementation of the Mechanism; develops and proposes to the Coordination Unit a system of measures to optimize and improve the effectiveness of the Mechanism. The Minister of Labor and Social Policy, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works, the chairman of the Central Commission for Combating Juvenile and Minority, Mayors of Municipalities and Regional Governors ensure participation in the Mechanism of subordinates institutions and monitor the implementation of the Mechanism within their institutional competence. The mayors of the municipalities determine the areas of coverage within the territory of the municipality and inform the head of the respective regional education department accordingly; designate municipal staff to participate in outreach teams, including mayors and mayors of small towns, and representatives of</p>

		the local juvenile and juvenile anti-social commission; coordinate outreach teams at the municipal level; Familiarize with the appropriate ways and forms the parents of children of compulsory education age with their legal obligations to enroll children in education at home or abroad and the obligations to register under the Law on Civil Registration upon changing their current address in the country or abroad; they impose fines on parents who impede their children's education.
Identification of needs / referral for services	Yes	Through the Institutional Collaboration Teams for the Inclusion and Inclusion of Compulsory Preschool and School Age (Reach Teams) Children and Students in the Educational System of the Institutional Collaboration Mechanism for the Inclusion, Inclusion and Prevention of Dropout of Children and students in compulsory preschool and school age, adopted by Decree № 100 of 08.06.2018
Data sharing	Yes	Through the Information System for the Implementation of the Mechanism for Collaborative Work of the Institutions on Capturing, Including and Preventing the Dropout of Compulsory Preschool and School Age from the Educational System of Children and Students, adopted by Decree No. 100 of 08.06.2018.
Monitoring and evaluation	Yes	The municipal strategy is voted on by the City Council, which is directly elected by the local community. The municipal council can monitor the municipal strategy. Through the Information System for the Implementation of the Mechanism for Collaborative Work of the Institutions on Capturing, Including and Preventing the Dropout of Compulsory Preschool and School Age from the Educational System of Children and Students, adopted by Decree No. 100 of 08.06.2018.
Quality assurance and accountability	Yes	Through the Information System for the Implementation of the Mechanism for Collaborative Work of the Institutions on Capturing, Including and Preventing the Dropout of Compulsory Preschool and School Age from the Educational System of Children and Students, adopted by Decree No. 100 of 08.06.2018.
<i>(others ...)</i>		

Regional support centers for the inclusive education process are being set up by regional teams to support the personal development of children and students with special educational needs. The teams include resource teachers, special educators, including special education support centers, psychologists, speech

therapists and other specialists as needed, as well as representatives of regional education departments. The team leader is the expert on inclusive education from the relevant regional education management. The regional team welcomes the provision of additional support for children and pupils with special educational needs; assesses the individual needs for additional support for children and students with special educational needs when a personal development support team cannot be formed for the child or student in kindergarten or school, and proposes to the director of the regional support center for the process the inclusive education to approve or disapprove the provision of additional support; organizes a reassessment of the individual needs of children and students with special educational needs in the event of the parent's disagreement with the assessment carried out by the child support team at the kindergarten or school or with the proposed additional support and proposes to the director of the regional center for support the inclusive education process to approve or disapprove the provision of additional support to children and students with special educational needs; carries out an assessment of the individual needs of children and pupils with special educational needs following a request from a parent for referral for training in special schools for students with sensory disabilities; supports the process of providing additional support; proposes and organizes, where necessary, the provision of methodological support for work with children and students with special educational needs in kindergartens, schools and centers for personal development support; inform parents about opportunities for continuing education or for acquiring vocational qualifications of students with special educational needs after grades VII and X; postpones, for objective reasons, compulsory education in the first grade of children with special educational needs, but for no more than one school year.

The managing and control body of the state and municipal institutions in the system of pre-school and school education is the director. The director manages and represents the institution concerned. The director of a state and municipal kindergarten, a state and municipal school and a center for personal development support organizes and controls the overall activity of the institution in accordance with the powers determined by the state educational standard for the status and professional development of teachers, principals and other pedagogical specialists.

**1.17. Are non-governmental organisations and/or associations involved in governance processes?**

✓ No

If no, please give further information:

Non-governmental organizations are not directly involved in governance, but are involved in policy-making and in the piloting of various pilot models for inclusive education in educational institutions. Following on from the implementation of such pilot models, the legislation and documents that define inclusion policies are subsequently amended.

**1.18. Are there any accountability mechanisms to promote the inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups?**

✓ Yes

If yes, what is the focus of the mechanisms?

Area	Yes/No	Description of the focus/actors involved (e.g. state/non state)
Appeal process for rights violations	Yes	Commission on Protection against Discrimination
School inspection	Yes	<p>Ordinance No. 15 of 08.12.2016 on Inspection of Kindergartens and Schools (promulgated, State Gazette issue 100 of 16.12.2016), issued by the Minister of Education and Science, sets the state educational standard for the inspection of kindergartens and schools. This ordinance defines the state educational standard for inspecting kindergartens and schools. Inspection is the process of drawing up a comprehensive independent expert evaluation of the quality of education provided by the kindergarten or school at some point in their activity and determining the directions for improvement. The purpose of the inspection is to determine the degree of implementation of the state educational standards, by formulating an assessment of the strengths in the activities of educational institutions and of aspects in their activity that need improvement.</p> <p><a href="https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/legislation-9_en">https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/legislation-9_en</a></p> <p>To carry out the inspection, a National Education Inspectorate is established as a budget-supported legal entity within the Council of Ministers, with headquarters in Sofia. The National Education Inspectorate is managed and represented by a director, who is the authority for external inspection of kindergartens and schools. The Director of the National Inspectorate of Education is a civil servant and is appointed and dismissed by the Prime Minister. The Director of the National Inspectorate of Education: develops, approves and refines inspection criteria and indicators; organizes and conducts inspections of kindergartens and schools; provide the assessment and guidance from the inspection of the kindergarten or school director and the head of the relevant regional education department; notify the relevant regional management of education when: (a) violations of the regulatory framework of the pre-school and school education system are identified in the inspection process; (b) methodological support is needed to fulfill the inspection guidelines; (c) the level of teaching and learning acquired by the students does not guarantee access to quality education in the school concerned and measures are required to improve the results; provides the Minister of Education and Science and the Council of Ministers with an analysis of the</p>

		quality of education in inspected kindergartens and schools for a specified period, in a particular region or country.
Other quality assurance processes (e.g. standards for teaching, support services etc)	Yes	<p>The municipalities provide and control the resources for the maintenance, the construction, the furnishing and the major repair of the schools and kindergartens; the health servicing and the security of the kindergartens and schools; the resources for implementing the state education requirements, as well as the financial provision of all sections of the curriculum for the municipal kindergartens and schools; conditions for canteen catering, dormitories, recreation, sport basis and transport of the children, the learners and the teachers, as well as a free transport and full-day organization of the studies and canteen boarding; scholarships and special supports for learners (Eurydice, 2012d).</p> <p>The National Education Inspectorate shall provide the Minister of Education and Science and the Council of Ministers with an analysis of the quality of education in inspected kindergartens and schools for a specified period, in a particular region or country.</p>
Monitoring and evaluation (e.g. data collection on attendance, participation, achievement, funding)	Yes	Each region has its own regional department of education under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Science. Regional education departments are responsible for education policy and are also working on 'inclusion'. It is expected to report annually to the Ministry on the process of inclusive education in the region.
(others ... )		

**1.19. Please describe the general mechanisms for funding schools. Give details on: which institutions provide funding; what they provide; how they provide it and to whom, which mechanisms they use to allocate resources; and their respective roles and responsibilities.**

Funding mechanisms	Description of who, what, to whom and how
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National Funding “Uniform Cost Standards”	Funding for inclusive education policies is implemented at several levels. At the national level, it is adopted annually by a Government Decision "Uniform Cost Standards", which sets the amount of funds for additional personal development support for each child or student. These funds are delegated by the state through the Ministry of Finance of the municipalities throughout the country for children and students in municipal kindergartens and schools. For special schools, regional centers for inclusive education and centers for special educational support through the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science delegate funds.
Institutions in the system of pre-school and school education and Directorates "Social Assistance" of the Social Assistance Agency	An algorithm for interaction between institutions in the system of pre-school and school education and the Directorates "Social Assistance" in terms of providing support for the personal development of children and students. The algorithm has been approved by the Ministers of Education and Science and Labour and Social Policy for joint action regarding the allocation of resources and commitments of professionals in the system of pre-school and school education and in the system of labour and social policy.
National funding <u>2018 State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria Act</u>	<p>The state provides most of the funding (87%) for the education system in Bulgaria. The other 13% comes from private spending and it mostly concerns higher education. In 2010 and 2012, the allocated sources for education varied between 4.2% and 3.4% of GDP. In 2012, the education expenditure was 171.2 million Bulgarian lev (BGN). BGN 76.9 million came from the national budget, while BGN 94.3 million came from EU funds (national co-financing and European grants)</p> <p>Schools have financial autonomy through ‘delegated budgets’. The state budget covers social benefits, like dormitories and canteens</p>
Resources School textbooks	Decree No. 79 of the Council of Ministers of 13.04.2016 on providing for free use of cognitive books, textbooks and training kits - SG, issue. 31 of 19.04.2016, effective 19.04.2016; ed. and Suppl. 32 of 13.04.2018, effective as of 13.04.2018; amend. 34 of 23.04.2019, effective 23.04.2019, shall be provided for gratuitous use: educational books in all educational fields - for each child enrolled in the respective group in kindergarten or in school for the implementation of compulsory pre-school education ; one textbook or set for each general education subject - for each student from grades I to IV; one textbook for each general education subject - for each student from grades 5 to 7; one textbook or educational set for each general education subject, printed in Braille - for each pupil with impaired vision, grades I through XII; one textbook or training set for each special subject - for each student with sensory disabilities from grades I to XII. They are also provided for free use for the teaching of Bulgarian language to children and students in the European Schools: educational books in the educational field "Bulgarian language and literature" - for each child in compulsory pre-school age; one study set in the subject Bulgarian language and literature - for each student from I to IV grade 3. in the subject Bulgarian



	language and literature - a textbook in Bulgarian and a textbook for every student from grades 5 to 7.
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**1.20. Do schools have flexibility to use funding allocations to support the inclusion of learners from vulnerable groups?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please describe the flexibility:

State and municipal kindergartens and schools are provided with funds from the state budget for working with children and students from vulnerable groups through the budgets of the primary budget spending units. With this money, kindergartens and schools can cover the cost of basic and additional staff remuneration, as well as other out-of-work pay and benefits.

The amount of funds for work with children and students from vulnerable groups has increased significantly, with only 25 307 800 levs provided for work with children and students from vulnerable groups in 2019 through the state budget. provide not only in the elementary and upper secondary, but also in the high school stage, including in vocational schools. In addition, on February 28, 2019, an Administrative Grant Contract was signed under project BG05M2OP001-2.011-0001 "Support for Success" with a specific beneficiary - Ministry of Education and Science, with a total budget of 127 759 359 BGN. the project is 30 months from 28.02.2018. The main objective of the project is to promote equal access to quality inclusive education for the fuller coverage of students in school education through activities to overcome learning disabilities and gaps learning content, as well as developing their potential and opportunities for successful completion of secondary education and for future social, professional and personal realization.

**1.21. Please describe the specific mechanisms for funding the inclusion of vulnerable learners and their families in education (e.g. benefits, cash transfers, scholarships). Give details on: which institutions provide funding; what they provide; how they provide it and to whom, which mechanisms they use to allocate resources; and their respective roles and responsibilities.**

Funding mechanisms	Description of the who, what, to whom and how
Scholarships	<p>Decree No. 328 of the Council of Ministers of 21.12.2017 on the conditions and procedure for obtaining scholarships from students after completing primary education.</p> <p>Art. 1. (Supplemented, SG No. 12/2019, effective 08.02.2019) Under the conditions and in the order of the decree scholarships shall be granted to students in full-time, individual, combined form of education and in training through employment (dual training system) after completion of primary</p>

	<p>education, which are: Bulgarian nationals and nationals of a Member State of the European Union, or of a State party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, or of the Swiss Confederation - students in state, municipal and private schools as well as students with special educational needs, which are taught in the state and municipal centers for special educational support after the completion of VII grade; foreigners - pupils in public, municipal and private schools: with permanent residence permit in the country; have obtained the right to long or long stay in the country; adopted on the basis of an international treaty or act of the Council of Ministers; seeking or receiving international protection in the country. Under the terms and conditions of the decree, scholarships are also granted to students with permanent disabilities, as well as to students with special educational needs who have completed VII grade with a certificate for completed VII grade and have continued their education in the first or second high school grades</p> <p>The monthly scholarships are for: educational results achieved; promoting access to education and preventing dropping out; support for students with permanent disabilities; students without parents; students studying in a dual system of education in the first-grade grades; students who have been admitted to study in VIII grade in the state-protected occupations or professions in which there is an expected shortage of specialists in the labor market, and study in these specialties during the school year. Monthly scholarships for students with only one parent can be granted at the school and at the special education support center...</p>
<p>Means of support for equal access and support for personal development</p>	<p>Ordinance on the financing of institutions in the system of pre-school and school education, adopted by Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 219 of 05.10.2017 -</p> <p>the funds for organizing the transportation of children and students ... shall be provided to the municipalities and shall be spent under the conditions and in accordance with the Ordinance on the conditions and procedure for providing funds to compensate for the reduced revenues from the application of prices for public passenger transport by road provided for in the normative acts for certain categories of passengers, for subsidizing public passenger transport on unprofitable bus lines in urban transport and transport in mountainous and other regions and for issuing not of transport documents for the performance of the transportation, adopted by Decree No. 163 of the Council of Ministers of 2015 (promulgated, SG No. 51 of 2015; amend. and supplemented, No. 53 of 2017). At the proposal of the Minister of Education and Science, funds may be planned and provided from the state budget for bus support provided to kindergartens and schools to provide</p>

	<p>transport for children and students ... The funds are provided to kindergartens and schools where they are provided for use of buses on the basis of a supplementary standard ... The funds from the state budget for the whole day organization of the school day are distributed among the first spending units of the budget financing the schools, on the basis of the number of students in grades I through VII covered by a full-day organization of the school day... The standards for a full-day organization of the school day finance activities for: self-study; leisure and sports; interest activities. State budget funds for day-to-day organization of the school day are used to finance staff costs and to sustain the activities. The funds can also be used to reduce the cost of lunchtime for students involved in a full-day organization of the school day. ... Primary budget spending units allocate funds to schools on the basis of the formula... Funds from the state budget to support the nutrition of children in compulsory pre-school education and of students from grades I to IV in state and municipal kindergartens, schools and centers for special education support,..., is provided on the basis of a standard for a child or student...</p>
<p>State budget funds for the implementation of resource support activities for children and students with special educational needs</p>	<p>Ordinance on the financing of institutions in the system of pre-school and school education, adopted by Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 219 of 05.10.2017 they are provided for: assessment of the individual needs of children and students, methodological support for personal development support teams and training of teacher's aides in kindergarten or school, carried out by regional centers to support the inclusive education process; resource support; creating conditions for the inclusion of children and students in schools and kindergartens.</p>
<p>Financial support for ethnic minority and refugee children</p>	<p>Ordinance on the financing of institutions in the system of pre-school and school education, adopted by Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 219 of 05.10.2017 -</p> <p>Children and pupils of compulsory pre-school and school age, regardless of their nationality, are provided with free tuition in Bulgarian. Children and students seeking or receiving international protection in the country under the Law on Asylum and Refugees are provided with additional training in Bulgarian if necessary. The teaching of Bulgarian language to children and students is carried out under the conditions and in the order specified in the state educational standard for the acquisition of the Bulgarian literary language. Funds for the training are planned by the budget of the Ministry of Education and Science and are provided by the budget of the kindergarten, respectively the school, which conducts the training, on the basis of the normative for the conducted pedagogical situation, respectively spent hours</p>

determined by order of the Minister of Education and Science, and a report on the hours spent submitted by the Director through the Head of the Regional Office for Education. State and municipal kindergartens and schools provide funds from the state budget to work with children and students from vulnerable groups through the budgets of the primary budget spending units. Kindergartens and schools can use the funds to cover the cost of basic and additional staff remuneration, as well as other out-of-work wages and salaries. The costs may be for employees included in the enrollment and retention teams in the educational system of children and students in compulsory pre-school and school age, for the appointment of a social worker, educational mediator or teacher's assistant, for payment of additional lessons in Bulgarian. in schools and additional modules for non-Bulgarian children, in kindergartens, as well as for staff involved in measures to support access to education and prevent the risk of dropping out of systems Pre-school.

and school education for children and students from vulnerable groups. In cases where the kindergarten or the school is unable to ensure the implementation of the activity, outsourcing is allowed, with the funds being provided only for the labor costs of employees for the implementation of the specific activities. The funds are provided to kindergartens and schools with a concentration of children and students from vulnerable groups who have submitted information to the National Electronic Information System for Pre-school and School Education (NEISP) from the work cards "Environmental Characteristics - Educational Level and Family Employment "For not less than 80 per cent of children and students and in which the number of children enrolled in kindergarten or pupils in school is not less than 15. Based on information, kindergartens and schoolchildren State grouped by criterion 'education level of parents / guardians. " The amount of funding for work with children from vulnerable groups for the budget year for a child in kindergarten or student at school is determined by the group in which the educational institution falls. The allocation of funds for the budget year to kindergartens and schools is approved by the Minister of Education and Science after consultation with the respective heads of regional education departments and is published on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science

**1.22. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of funding and resourcing relating to inclusive education.**

No information available

**1.23. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to governance and finance issues in the country?**

**Challenges**

National guidelines to ensure inclusive education need further development.

Funding does not always follow the public policy that prioritises the inclusion of children with SEN.

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reports:

(49.) The lack of an independent mechanism to monitor and assess the implementation and effects of the Public Education Act and the Pre-school and School Education Act , especially for children with psychosocial disabilities and children still in institutions;

The uneven and unsystematic allocation of human and financial resources to ensure that sufficient teachers and auxiliary staff are trained in inclusive education

## Section 3: Data

*What data on inclusion in education is available to understand if progress is being made towards equitable learning opportunities for all learners?*

**1.24. Please indicate if the following frameworks are in place, provide a link and give a brief description of their aims and focus:**

Framework	Yes / No	Description
For monitoring and evaluating the implementation of national-level inclusion in education policy	Yes	National Electronic Information System for Pre-school and School Education; Information System for Implementation of the Mechanism for Collaborative Work of the Institutions on Capturing, Including and Preventing the Dropout of Compulsory Preschool and School Age from the Educational System of Children and Students, adopted by Decree No. 100 of 08.06.2018.
For quality assurance across all levels of the system (national, regional, school)	Yes	The National Education Inspectorate shall provide the Minister of Education and Science and the Council of Ministers with an analysis of the quality of education in the inspected kindergartens and schools for a specified period, in a particular region or in the country.  Ordinance No. 16 of December 8, 2016, on Quality Management in Institutions - SG, issue. 100 of 16.12.2016. The quality management process evaluation is carried out through self-assessment and inspection. Self-assessment is the process of making an internal assessment of the quality of education provided for two consecutive school years through activities, procedures and criteria set by the kindergarten or school. Self-assessment is carried out in the following areas: management of the institution, which includes: effective allocation, use and management of quality improvement resources in the institution, leadership, strategies and planning, interaction of all stakeholders; educational process, which includes: education, upbringing and socialization and their results, taking into account the individual progress of each child, support for children with special educational needs and prevention of dropping out of the education system. The quality management bodies of the institutions are the director and the pedagogical council.
Providing guidance on the use of a range of different data sources for evaluation and self-review at different levels (national, regional, school)	Yes	Guidelines are provided by the Ministry of Education and Science, regional education departments, the Center for Information Assurance of Education at the Ministry of Education and Science, etc.

## 1.25. What data is collected on learners from vulnerable groups, how and why?

The data are collected through the Information System for the Implementation of the Mechanism for Collaboration of Institutions for Coverage, Inclusion and Prevention of Dropout of Compulsory Preschool and School Age from the Educational System for Children and Students, adopted by Decree No. 100 of 08.06.2018. and under the Ordinance on the Financing of Institutions in the System of Preschool and School Education.

## 1.26. Please provide the available data relating to all learners in the compulsory education system and where they are enrolled for their education.

All questions can be answered using the country's own data sources as far as possible. Alternatively, the data can be provided from publicly available international sources e.g. UIS: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=216> or UOE: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Main\\_Page](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Main_Page)

Please give a clear reference to the Source in the column provided.

In the Learners column, as far as possible:

- provide actual numbers as far as possible and not estimates.
- only use 0 when the data is zero.
- use M to indicate missing data.
- use NA to indicate the question is Not Applicable (i.e. the country does not have that type of provision).

All questions refer to ALL learners in the education system, not just those formally identified as belonging to a group that is vulnerable to exclusion.

Please provide notes to clarify any issues with the data and include a specific note on the calendar year and/or school year the data refers to.

Data on learner access to compulsory education	Learners	Notes	Source
(i) What is the <i>potential population</i> of learners for the compulsory education system in the country (i.e. how many children are in the country that should, by law, be in some form of compulsory education)?	Total: 718,595 Male: 369,237 Female: 349,358	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2  School Year 2016-2017	<a href="https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-population-and-enrolment">https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-population-and-enrolment</a>  table 1  question 1
(ii) How many learners are enrolled in all forms of education (i.e. educational settings maintained by the ministry of	Total: 571,805 Male: 296,342 Female: 275,463	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2	<a href="https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-">https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-</a>

education or by other authorities such as health, welfare or labour ministries)?		School Year 2016-2017	<a href="#">population and enrolment</a> table 1 question 2
(iii) How many learners are out of any form of education (who by law should be in some form of education)?	Total: M Male: M Female: M	There is no data available on children and learners outside of formal education.  Please see note below *	<a href="https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-population_and_enrolment">https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-population_and_enrolment</a> table 1 question 3
(iv) How many learners are enrolled in mainstream schools (i.e. all learners, not just those with recognised needs or from vulnerable groups)?	Total: 569,358 Male: 294,856 Female: 274,502	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2  School Year 2016-2017	<a href="https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-population_and_enrolment">https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-population_and_enrolment</a> table 1 question 4
(v) How many learners are enrolled in mainstream schools and spend the majority of their time (i.e. at least 80% or 4 days of the week) in inclusive groups/classes with their peers?	Total: 568,976 Male: 294,620 Female: 274,356	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2  School Year 2016-2017	<a href="https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-population_and_enrolment">https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-population_and_enrolment</a> table 1 question 5
(vi) How many learners are enrolled in mainstream schools and spend the majority of their time (i.e. at least 80% or 4 days of the week) in separate, special groups/classes, away from their peers?	Total: 382 Male: 236 Female: 146	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2  School Year 2016-2017	<a href="https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-official_decision_on_sen">https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-official_decision_on_sen</a> table 3 question 3
(vii) How many learners are enrolled in totally separate, special units and/or schools, away from their peers?	Total: 2447 Male: 1486 Female: 961	EASIE data covering ISCED levels 02, 1 and 2	<a href="https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-official_decision_on_sen">https://www.european-agency.org/data/bulgaria/datatable-overview#tab-official_decision_on_sen</a>



		School Year 2016-2017	table 3 question 4
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\* Early school leaving is a complex phenomenon, which turns out to be serious influence on the individual destinies of those directly affected and their well-being families, the opportunities for development of their communities and the whole socio-economic development of a country in the medium and long term.

Preventing and overcoming the problem requires integrated policy and commitment to all sectors and institutions related to education and the personal professional development of children and young people in Bulgaria.

Bulgaria has adopted the Strategy for Prevention and Reduction of Dropout and Early School Leavers (2013-2020)

**1.27. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of data collection and monitoring for inclusion in education.**

No information available

**1.28. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to data collection issues in the country?**

**Challenges**

The lack of data on the number of children and youth with disabilities not currently enrolled in any form of education.

There is no data available on children and learners outside of formal education.

The databases between the different state and municipal institutions are still being synchronized

**Opportunities**

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reports:

(50.d) Collect data on the number of children and young people with disabilities not currently enrolled in any form of education, disaggregated by age, sex, type of impairment and place of residence, and develop a strategy to include these children in the mainstream education system.

## Section 4: Curricula, learning materials and assessment

*To what extent are curricula, learning materials and different assessment processes and procedures adapted to the principles of inclusive education?*

### 1.29. Curriculum

#### a. Does the curriculum content include and represent all learners?

✓ Partially

Curriculums on subjects are approved by the Minister of Education and Science. All students are trained in them. Students with special educational needs, for whom the assessment of individual needs has shown the need for training in individual curricula, are trained in such. Individual curricula are in accordance with the general curricula approved by the Minister of Education and Science in the respective subjects. With individual curricula also teach students who have chosen or have shown the need to study in an individualized form of study.

Access to the curricula and curriculum content is guaranteed by: 1. providing support for the personal development of children and students to ensure continuity in their transition through the various stages and levels of education; 2. adaptation of the educational content to the individual needs of children and students with special educational needs; 3. provision of aids and specialized technologies in the educational process; 4. providing therapeutic support and rehabilitation of children and students; 5. providing training in curricula on special subjects for children and students with sensory disabilities; 6. use of appropriate training materials and teaching aids.

Pre-school and School Education Act (PSEA)

Ordinance on Inclusive Education

#### b. Does the process of curriculum development involve the participation and contribution of different stakeholders?

✓ Yes

If yes, please provide information on stakeholder involvement.

Many current teachers, as well as university professors, are involved in the curriculum development process. For this purpose, working groups are created in the Ministry of Education and Science with orders from the Minister of Education and Science, in which, in addition to the experts on subjects from the Ministry of Education and Science, teachers in these subjects are involved, as well as lecturers from higher schools, preparing teachers in these subjects. Curricula in general subjects are approved by orders of the Minister of Education and Science.

ORDINANCE № 5 of 30.11.2015 on general education preparation Prom. - SG, no. 95 of 08.12.2015, in force since 08.12.2015; ed. and add., no. 80 of September 28, 2018, effective September 28, 2018; ed. and Suppl. 71 of 10.09.2019, in force since 10.09.2019. Issued by the Minister of Education and Science

Orders of the Minister of Education and Science

**c. Is there guidance/procedures for schools to ensure that the curriculum content takes account of all learners (e.g. using flexibility to address differences due to gender, culture, religions, the ethnicities/nations living in the country, their history and culture, differences related to disability and socio-economic background, LGBT community).**

✓Yes

If yes, please give a description and examples of this flexibility.

Training in special schools for students with sensory disabilities is also carried out through curricula in special subjects approved by the Minister of Education and Science. For example, curricula in special subjects for deaf students include:

-individual formation and development of verbal speech;

-development of speech, musical stimuli, phonetic rhythm and motor skills; speech and subject matter

For the blind students include:

-useful skills, visual support, guidance and mobility.

Eurydice, Bulgaria

**d. If individual education plans (IEPs) are used, please describe the procedure for developing (who is involved and how), what they focus on (specific curriculum areas; cross curricular competences; support strategies etc.) and how IEPs are implemented, used across the school?**

According to the Law on Preschool and School Education - Based on the school curriculum, an individual curriculum is developed for the students in individual form of education, as well as, if necessary, for: 1. pupils with special educational needs who study in day, evening, combined, distance form or dual training system; 2. students with outstanding gifts, who are taught in a combined, distance form or dual training system. The individual curriculum is approved by an order of the principal and its implementation is monitored on a monthly basis by the regional education department. The individual curriculum for students with sensory disabilities may also include a section D - lessons provided for the study of special subjects. The individual curriculum is developed for the school year except as provided in the state educational standard for the curriculum. The individual syllabus may determine the distribution of study time by one or more subjects, which is different from the framework, type and school curriculum. The individual curriculum of students with special educational needs may contain only a part of the subjects defined in the framework, type or school curriculum. For the training in each subject in the individual curriculum, the personal development support team develops an individual curriculum, which is approved by the headmaster. The individual curriculum for students with special educational needs is developed on the basis of the framework requirements set by the state educational standard for inclusive education.

The individual curricula are developed by the teachers in the respective subjects together with the specialists who are in the team to support the personal development of the particular student.

European Agency, country information, Bulgaria

Eurydice, Bulgaria

**e. Are there different curricula or programmes for specific groups of learners at risk of exclusion (e.g. ethnic minorities or minority language groups)**

✓Yes

Ordinance No. 4 of November 30, 2015 on the Curriculum:

- In the elective classes of the syllabus (previously called compulsory-elective classes), training may be provided for acquiring: mother tongue preparation; preparation in subjects of global, civic, health and intercultural education. Mother tongue training is carried out according to curricula approved by the Minister of Education and Science;

- The optional classes (previously called free-of-charge (EPA) classes) provide additional training through training in subjects, modules and / or activities that the school can offer and that respond to the interests of students and support the development of their education, and may be taught in their mother tongue, religion, choreography and in a foreign language other than those specified in the state educational standard for general education and in the state educational standard for profiled preparation. The number of elective classes in each class is up to 4 lessons per week, and their distribution between the different subjects, modules and / or activities is carried out in the school curriculum. The courses in the elective classes are carried out according to the curricula approved by the headmaster.

-Students have the right to choose 'Ethnic Folklore - Roma folklore' in the hours of elective training, and for this purpose have been developed teaching aids and exercise books, acquainting students with the history, customs and traditions of the Roma. Teaching aids tell about the Roma tradition and culture, and also about the different religions, ancient cultures and civilizations.

-Syllabuses of special schools for children with impaired hearing incorporate learning of gesture-and-mimic language as auxiliary means.

UNESCO, National Report of the Republic of Bulgaria, p.15

### **1.30.Learning materials**

#### **a. Is there autonomy for schools and teachers to select learning material/textbooks etc?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Cognitive booklets for children in kindergartens (from 3 to 6 years) and textbooks for students from grades 1 to 12 are approved by the Minister of Education and Science, after being developed by authors' teams of teachers and teachers at higher education institutions.

Knowledge books for 5- and 6-year-olds in compulsory pre-school education and textbooks for students in grades 1-7 are provided free of charge by the state.

Teachers have the right to choose educational books and textbooks from those already approved by the Minister of Education and Science.

Teachers have the right to choose the teaching aids they will use in teaching students. The study aids are not approved by the Minister of Education and Science, except for those which are in a unified educational set with the textbooks.

The textbooks are provided by the state.

Eurydice, Bulgaria

#### **b. Are there policies to ensure the availability of textbooks/materials that promote the inclusion of learners from different vulnerable groups? (e.g. resources relevant to different ethnic groups etc.)**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

-Students have the right to choose 'Ethnic Folklore - Roma folklore' in the hours of elective training, and for this purpose have been developed teaching aids and exercise books, acquainting students with the history, customs and traditions of the Roma. Teaching aids tell about the Roma tradition and culture, and also about the different religions, ancient cultures and civilizations.

UNESCO, National Report of the Republic of Bulgaria, p.15

-Kindergartens, schools of general education and vocational schools are obliged to enroll children and students with special education needs ensuring required for their integrated education environment support. That includes:

- architectural access;
- textbooks;
- technical means;
- facilities;
- didactic materials, etc.

Eurydice, Bulgaria

**c. Is there guidance/procedures to help schools to make learning materials accessible for all learners? (e.g. Braille/large print for learners with visual impairment, materials in other languages).**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Training of children and pupils with impaired vision is performed on the basis of textbooks, teaching aids and materials of Braille letters or larger font, or using a computer speech synthesizer. Braille's textbooks and materials are provided free both for the pupils at special schools and the pupils with impaired vision, who are trained in an integral way in the framework of the environment of general education.

Eurydice, Bulgaria

**d. Is ICT used to improve access to materials for vulnerable groups?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

To improve access to materials, synthetic speech synthesis software is used for visually impaired speech-to-speech platforms for the deaf, a variety of additional and alternative communication software, such as vision control software and others.

Ordinance on Inclusive Education

**e. Are there specific financial and practical resources available for textbooks/materials/ICT for different vulnerable groups?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

The following shall be provided from the state budget for gratuitous use: 1. cognitive books in all educational fields - for each child enrolled in the respective group in a kindergarten or in a school for the implementation of the compulsory pre-school education; 2. one textbook or educational set for each general educational subject - for each student from I to IV grade; 3. one textbook for each general education subject - for each student from 5th to 7th grade; 4. one textbook or study set for each general education subject, printed in Braille - for each student with

impaired vision from I to XII grade; 5. one textbook or study set for each special subject - for each student with sensory disabilities from I to XII grade.

Resolution № 79 of the Council of Ministers of 13.04.2016 for providing for gratuitous use of cognitive books, textbooks and study sets Prom. - SG, issue. 31 of 19.04.2016, effective 19.04.2016; ed. and Suppl. 32 of 13.04.2018, effective as of 13.04.2018; amended, no. 34 from 23.04.2019, in force from 23.04.2019

### **1.31. Assessment**

#### **a. Is there a national/local assessment framework that includes all learners?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Ordinance No. 11 of September 1, 2016, on the Evaluation of the Results of Student Education - SG, issue. 74 of 20.09.2016, effective 20.09.2016; ed. and Suppl. 78 of 29.09.2017, effective as of 29.09.2017; ed. and Suppl. 82 dated 5 October 2018; ed. and Suppl. 71 of 10.09.2019, effective 10.09.2019, issued by the Minister of Education and Science:

The assessment is an indicator of the degree to which the competences defined in the state educational standard for general education, in the state educational standard for profiled preparation and / or in the state educational standard for acquiring vocational qualification and / or in the curriculum of the respective curriculum have been achieved. a subject or module for that class. Depending on its function, the assessment can be: 1. ongoing assessment - establishes the degree of achievement of the specific learning goals and provides current information about the learning outcomes of the student; 2. term assessment - establishes the degree of achievement of the learning objectives at the end of the academic term and is generalizable to the results of the student's education in the subject and / or module during the relevant term; 3. annual assessment - establishes the degree of achievement of the school goals at the end of the school year and is generalizable to the results of the student's education in the subject and / or module during the year; 4. final assessment - establishes the degree of achievement of the learning outcomes at the end of the stage, is formed only at the end of the first and second upper secondary education stages and has a generic character for the results of the student's education in a given subject and / or module during the relevant stage.

Students have the right to change their current, term and annual assessments, as well as the assessment given after the exam, in one or more subjects, in cases where it is poor (2) / to be considered successful assessed in one subject the student must have a assessment in this subject, other than poor (2) – to have a assessment from intermediate (3) to excellent (6) /. The annual assessment for a subject (s) may also change if it is higher than poor (2) if the student passes an examination to change the assessment and show another exam result.

Students with special educational needs (SEN) who are taught under an individual syllabus are only given grades with a qualitative indicator, which may be: "meets the requirements", "copes" and "encounters difficulties". that the students with SEN have achieved the requirements of the curriculum for the curriculum subject of the school curriculum, a quantitative assessment is made and for that subject the training in the individual curriculum in that subject is terminated.

Ordinance No. 11 of September 1, 2016, on the Evaluation of the Results of Student Education

#### **b. Is there guidance for teachers on how to use curriculum-based assessment to identify all learning needs in the classroom?**

✓ No information available

**c. Is there guidance/procedures on providing access to tests/examinations when learners need additional support/reasonable adjustments?(e.g. adapted materials, extra time etc.)**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Ordinance on inclusive education:

The Headmaster declares to the Regional Commission for Organizing and Conducting the National External Assessment and to the Regional Commission for Organizing and Conducting the State Matriculation Exams in the Regional Management of Education, respectively under Art. 61 and 94 of Ordinance No. 11 of September 1, 2016 on the evaluation of the results of the students' education (SG, issue 74 of 2016), the necessary reasonable facilities for the students who need them to participate in the national external assessment and in state matriculation exams. (2) The facilities may include: 1. provision of an extended examination time; 2. conducting the exam using materials of Braille or enlarged font, using a computer or a computer with synthetic speech synthesizer or oral examination; 3. providing teacher consultants; 4. an independent room at the discretion of the personal development support team. Facilitations may also be provided for the participation of students in need of competitions in competitions and competitions.

For participation in the national external assessment of students from IV, VII and X classes, as well as for conducting the state matriculation exams of students from XII class, the legislation provides a number of specific measures aimed at supporting students with special educational needs – Braille exam materials font, enlarged font materials and use of "speaking programs" (computer with synthesizer speech) – for students with visual impairment, consultant teachers who own the Braille alphabet – for students with impaired vision we or sign language – for students with impaired hearing, oral examination for students who can not take an exam in writing (for example with physical disabilities), prolonged length of time the exam accordingly subject or series of subjects, etc.

Eurydice, Bulgaria

**d. Are there specific arrangements and/or formal procedures to support the assessment of the specific needs of learners who need additional support in their learning? (e.g. those with disabilities)**

✓ Yes

**If yes, please give a description, including clear information on the focus of needs identification procedures and who is involved in the procedures (learners, parents, professionals):**

Assessment of children and pupils at specialized kindergartens and schools is carried out in accordance with the requirements set out in the individual programs for early influence and early rehabilitation of children with impaired vision and children with impaired hearing, in the curriculum on special subjects for children and pupils with impaired hearing, and for children and pupils with impaired vision at the state education requirement for the assessment system, time-frames, responsible institutions and necessary funds as well as indicators for performance assessment of the goals.

Students with special educational needs, who have completed VII grade, respectively X class with a certificate, may continue their education in VIII grade, respectively in XI grade, of the schools that organize vocational education in part of a profession or in a profession for acquiring the first degree of vocational qualification, or in VIII grade, respectively in XI grade, of the schools with specialized education in individual curriculum. The referral to appropriate training is done by a commission in the respective regional department of education.

Pre-school and School Education Act

**e. Is ICT used in the assessment of vulnerable groups?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

It uses synthetic speech synthesizer software for the visually impaired, speech-to-speech platforms for the deaf, various software for complementary and alternative communication, such as view control software and more.

Ordinance on Inclusive Education

**1.32. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, studies, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 relating to issues around curricula, learning materials and assessment processes.**

**No information available**

**1.33. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to curricula, learning materials and assessment processes in the country?**

**Challenges**

A great development of tools, materials and guidelines have been framed for students from ethnic minorities background.

There is a need to develop teaching aids for students with SEN, adapting the curriculum content reflected in the textbooks. There is also a need for methodological guidance for teachers on how to adapt the content of the curriculum to the education of pupils with SEN.

**Opportunities**

The new Law on Pre-School and School Education, adopted by the Bulgarian National Assembly in October 2015, defines 24 types of curricula, depending on the type of school. Most of them are based on the type of studying a foreign language. The compulsory and the upper-secondary curricula include compulsory, core curriculum optional and free elective study courses.



## Section 5: Teachers and support personnel

*How are staff in schools prepared to accommodate students of all abilities and backgrounds, in terms of their initial training, continuing professional development and their attitudes to inclusion?*

**1.34. Please list type of staff, their numbers and required level of education for the position in different type of educational institutions**

Type of staff	Number	Required education	Comment
<b>Mainstream schools</b>			
Teachers	62 548	Teachers within the framework of school education have higher education and qualification degree of 'bachelor' or 'master' as well as administrative and pedagogical functions qualification.	<a href="https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/initial-education-teachers-working-early-childhood-and-school-education-12_en">https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/initial-education-teachers-working-early-childhood-and-school-education-12_en</a>
Professional staff (psychologists, pedagogues, social pedagogues, speech and other types of therapists)	2077		
Teacher Assistants (specify role and add rows as required)  A teacher's assistant is provided for more than 3 children or students with special educational needs in a group in kindergarten or class at school, when children and students have complex	20		

<p>needs due to emotional and behavioral problems with autism spectrum disorder or other disability , disorder or disease. The teacher's assistant is not a pedagogical specialist and shall be appointed by the director of the kindergarten or the school, when he / she is determined in the plan for support of the child or the student. The teacher's assistant must have competencies and / or experience in activities related to the work with children and students with special educational needs. The teacher's assistant performs his / her activity according to the instructions of the teacher of the child or the student with special educational needs and has the following functions: 1. participates in the work of the team for support of personal development of a child or a student with special educational needs; 2. provide technical assistance in the preparation of educational materials for children and students with special educational needs; 3. assists organizationally and technically to the teacher in conducting the class or the pedagogical situation at the discretion of the teachers in the individual subjects or of the teachers in the group in the kindergarten; 4. knows the individual curriculum of the student; 5. assists in the implementation of activities defined in the plans for support of children and students with special educational needs; 6. Supports the work of teachers to develop the adaptive abilities of children and students to the educational environment and to achieve their independence; 7. support the movement of children and students with special educational needs in the building of the kindergarten or the school; 8. assists in providing safe conditions for the education of children and students by supporting the teacher</p>			
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<p>in ensuring order in the group or in the classroom in case of problematic behavior of a child or student; 9. supports the mastering of hygienic habits and the self-service of the children and the students in the kindergarten or the school; 10. performs other activities provided for in his job description.</p>			
<p>Educational mediators</p> <p>The educational mediator is an intermediary between families, local communities, children, students, kindergarten and school, facilitating the coverage and quality of pre-school and school education and training of children and students from vulnerable groups in educational institutions and the full involvement of parents and the local community in the development of education, socialization and integration.</p> <p>The educational mediator supports the implementation of local and school policies to improve the quality and scope of pre-school and school education.</p>	727		
<p>Social workers</p>	110		
<p>Others (please specify and add rows as required)</p>			
<p><b>Kindergartens</b></p>			
<p>Teachers</p>	19 799	<p>Teachers within the framework of pre-school education have higher education and qualification degree of 'bachelor' or 'master' as well as</p>	

		administrative and pedagogical functions qualification.	
Professional staff (psychologists, pedagogues, social pedagogues, speech and other types of therapists)	515		
Teacher Assistants (specify role and add rows as required)	100		
<b>Special schools for students with sensory disabilities</b>			
Teachers and other pedagogical specialists	287	Teachers in the Special schools for students with sensory disabilities must have higher education and qualifications of 'bachelor' or 'master', as well as qualifications for administrative and pedagogical functions. Additional professional qualification in "special pedagogy" ("defectology") is applied when working with students with SEN.	<a href="https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/bulgaria/teacher-education-for-inclusive-education">https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/bulgaria/teacher-education-for-inclusive-education</a>

Special Education Support Centers			
Teachers and other pedagogical specialists	755	Teachers in the Special educational support centers must have higher education and qualifications of 'bachelor' or 'master', as well as qualifications for administrative and pedagogical functions. Additional professional qualification in "special pedagogy" ("defectology") is applied when working with students with SEN.	
Regional centers for support the inclusive education process			
Pedagogical specialists (resource teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, hearing and speech rehabilitators, teachers of visually impaired children, etc.)	923	Pedagogical specialists in the Regional centers for support the inclusive education process must have higher education and qualifications of 'bachelor' or 'master', as well as	

		qualifications for administrative and pedagogical functions. Additional professional qualification in "special pedagogy" ("defectology") is applied when working with students with SEN.	
<b>Other institutions offering education if they exist (i.e. children's homes, young offenders institutions etc).</b>			
Teachers			
Professional staff (psychologists, pedagogues, social pedagogues, speech and other types of therapists)			
Teacher Assistants (specify role and add rows as required)			
Others (please specify and add rows as required)			

At all kindergarten and schools where children with special educational need to undergo integrated education, as well as at special schools, a team is established by an order of the headmaster, which consists of chairperson-class teacher and members:

- psychologist, and/or pedagogical consultant;
- resource teacher;
- specialized pedagogue;
- speech therapist;
- teachers on different subjects.

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**1.35. Please indicate if education/training on inclusion in education is available for the following groups of professionals.**

Type of staff	Yes	No	No information	If yes please state if pre- or in-service, mandatory or optional, who provides education/training and summary of content
Head teachers/School directors	Yes			According to the Law on Preschool and School Education, it is obligatory to upgrade their qualifications annually.
Teachers	Yes			According to the Law on Preschool and School Education, it is obligatory to upgrade their qualifications annually.  All pedagogical specialists, including the heads of kindergartens and schools, have received inclusive education training in accordance with the Regulation on the Status and Career Development of Pedagogical Specialists.
Teacher Assistants	Yes			According to the Inclusive Education Ordinance, they are required to undergo a training course provided by the regional center.
Professional Staff	Yes			According to the Pre-school and School Education Law, it is obligatory to upgrade their qualifications annually.  According to Ordinance No. 15 of July 22, 2019 on the Status and Professional Development of Teachers, Directors and Other Pedagogical Specialists, issued by the Minister of Education and Science, the pedagogical specialists are obliged to increase their qualification: 1. under programs of: specialized service units, higher schools and scientific organizations; training organizations, whose training programs are approved by the Minister of Education and Science and are entered in an information register, in not less than 48 academic hours for each period of attestation (pedagogical specialists are attested every 4 years); 2. within the framework of the inter-institutional qualification - at least 16 academic hours per year for each pedagogical specialist.
Inspectors			No information	
Teacher Trainers			No information	
Others (please list add rows as required)				

**a. If you answered no to any of the above, please provide further information:**

Ordinance No. 15 of July 22, 2019 on the Status and Professional Development of Teachers, Directors and Other Pedagogical Specialists, issued by the Minister of Education and Science, prom. 61 of 2.08.2019, effective 2.08.2019. The ordinance defines the state educational standard for the status and professional development of teachers, principals and other pedagogical specialists in the system of pre-school and school education. The standard creates prerequisites for enhancing the authority and social status of pedagogical specialists, establishing a system of continuing qualification, for professional development and career development.

**1.36. Is education and training of teachers aligned with national policy goals on inclusive education?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

The National Qualification Program for Pedagogical Specialists, administered by the Ministry of Education and Science, contains training courses aimed at inclusive education.

All pedagogical specialists can benefit from this training. In addition to the National Qualification Program, pedagogical specialists can be qualified through various trainings on the project "Qualification of Pedagogical Specialists" under the Operational Program "Science and Education for Smart Growth" (2014-2020).

All teachers have access to qualification and advanced training.

In all pedagogical specialties in higher education there are compulsory training courses for the preparation of students, future teachers, for work with children and students with special educational needs, for intercultural education and for inclusive education.

In addition, under the Pre-school and School Education Act, higher education institutions have the right to organize training courses for already working teachers in order to increase their knowledge and skills of working with children and students with SEN and from various vulnerable groups. This qualification can also be provided by specialized service units of the Ministry of Education and Science, such as regional centers for supporting the process of inclusive education. Last but not least, non-governmental organizations whose training programs have been approved by the Ministry of Education and Science and included in the so-called Information Register of approved programs for the qualification improvement of pedagogical specialists may also provide training

**1.37. With respect to the main initial teacher education programmes, describe how inclusion in education is addressed in it (i.e. requirement for number of academic credits under European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), subjects and topics covered, focus etc).**

For the training of teachers in each pedagogical specialty in higher education, 30 compulsory hours have been introduced for theoretical and practical training for the preparation of students - future teachers, for working with children and students with special educational needs, for inclusive and intercultural education.

To work with children and students with special educational needs, teachers in special schools and centers for special educational support, as well as resource teachers from regional centers for support of the process of inclusive education, must have acquired professional qualification in the relevant field of specialty "special pedagogy "

("defectology").



Specialists – teachers in subject from the arts field (music, dancing, drawing etc.), sports and foreign languages teaching in education institutions should have been trained in the respective professional direction and education and qualification degree ‘specialist in...’, ‘bachelor’ or ‘master’.

**1.38. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) on any recent reports, evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 relating to initial teacher education and/or professional development issues.**

-OECD, 2018, Results from TALIS 2018, Bulgaria. [https://www.oecd.org/countries/bulgaria/TALIS2018\\_CN\\_BGR.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/countries/bulgaria/TALIS2018_CN_BGR.pdf)

- On average in Bulgaria, 8% of teachers work in classes with at least 10% of students with special needs (i.e. those for whom a special learning need has been formally identified because they are mentally, physically, or emotionally disadvantaged), which is lower than the average of OECD countries and economies participating in TALIS (27%).
- In Bulgaria, 42% of teachers were trained to teach in mixed-ability settings as part of their formal teacher education or training, while 37% of teachers on average felt prepared to teach in such settings when they finished their studies.

-Centre for inclusive education, One School for All Model of organization of school processes enabling the presence of inclusive school setting, <https://www.ela-bg.eu/cache/files/195.pdf>

The One School for All Model to arrange school processes in such a way that inclusive school setting is present is actually a work model, a structured approach based on organizational development. It is implemented at school level and managed by a school leadership team especially set up for this purpose, consisting of the school headmaster, his/her deputies and core teaching staff. It has been designed specifically with the Bulgarian context in mind and functions by considering the school as a system at all levels – culture, policies, practice, and by involving all stakeholders.

Key evaluation points of their programme:

1. Instead of ready-made solutions, schools need support to understand how to help themselves – in terms of awareness of their needs, taking responsibilities, discovering their resources. Schools are ready to initiate changes once they define their needs on their own.
2. An efficient teacher training programme is the one targeted at forming and developing analytical and self-reflexive skills.
3. The opportunities to improve teachers’ capacity, combined with opportunities to hold discussions and analyse existing and potential school practice with regard to embracing diversity result in improved teachers’ attitudes to classroom diversity.
4. There are types of career development different from traditional training, which could help educators teach and support children more efficiently – e.g. sharing classroom experience and observations with other teachers. Experience sharing is most beneficial if a topic and specific goals are set. If sharing occurs between teachers from different schools, then other school contexts may become familiar and more points of view may find common ground.
5. Any teacher is supportive only if s/he feels supported. By support and mental care in the Model’s context is meant any practice and conditions which have to do more with teachers’ emotional status and mental wellbeing than with teachers’ career development, the latter being only a part of teacher personality. Opportunities to cope with professional burnout, other than one-time team building event, opportunities to offer space for conversations where

teachers can see themselves as humans, and not just professionals, care for mental health, etc. are just few of the forms that the leadership team should offer to the teaching staff in terms of care for teachers' wellbeing.

6. A crucial factor that determines and builds on teachers' efforts to introduce inclusive education is the school managing body. Inclusive education is above all a philosophy of new relations. "The headmaster guides school management toward a culture of valuing and embracing diversity, s/he sets the model of relations"<sup>2</sup>; the managing body does what is necessary to make inclusion, as a priority, part of the school vision, it creates opportunities and conditions for teachers to share challenges and look for solutions as a team, and it recognizes that teachers need to be protected against professional burnout.

7. In order to be able to assert inclusive education as school practice and philosophy before parents, pupils and teachers, the managing body needs to build on a document that has been discussed, endorsed and communicated, and that asserts inclusion as part of the school commitment to provide quality education.

8. Whenever the management communicates openly with teachers and shares responsibilities with them, teachers become more confident and take on initiatives. Whenever the relations between teachers and management are only formal, teamwork is not valued and teachers believe that nothing depends on them, then responsibility is shed off and teachers lack initiative to trigger any type of change.

### **1.39. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to teachers and support personnel in the country?**

#### **Challenges**

Awareness and access to quality inclusive education training needs to be developed for teachers and other education staff.

TALIS results show that on average in Bulgaria, 18% of school principals report that delivery of quality instruction in their school is hindered by a shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students with special needs (compared to 32% across the OECD).

The TALIS country results reports that teachers in Bulgaria expressed a particularly high need for training in teaching students with special needs.

#### **Opportunities**

-Ministry of Education and Sciences provides constant support and cooperation in the conducting of seminars and trainings for teachers and specialists with educational functions considering the need to provide specialized training for work with children and pupils with special educational needs in general educational environment. Seminars and trainings for teachers and professionals with educational functions are conducted every year – psychologists, speech therapists, rehabilitation of hearing and speech, etc., who work with children and pupils with visual impairment in kindergartens and schools, as well as for resource teachers supporting children and pupils with visual impairments in general educational environment. In accordance with the approved curriculum in special subjects for children and students with impaired hearing the assessment and approval of draft textbooks on special subjects for students with sensory impairments – with impaired hearing, has started as follows: development of speech – textbooks on development of speech for students with hearing impairments from 1st to 10th grade, pronunciation – pronunciation textbooks for pupils with hearing impairments from 1st to 8th grade.

-In 2018, [the TALISS country results](#) show for Bulgaria that although 39% of teachers on average participated in professional development activities including teaching students with special needs in the 12 months prior to the survey, training in teaching special needs students is the professional development topic with the highest percentage of teachers reporting a high need for it – 27% in Bulgaria (compared to 22% across the OECD).

**-National strategy for development of pedagogical staff**

Adopted in May 2014, the strategy meets the requirements and priority directions of the National Programme for Development of the Republic of Bulgaria: Bulgaria 2020 for improving living standards through competitive education and training to create the conditions for quality employment, social inclusion and ensure accessible and quality education.

It is oriented towards the realization of these program policies and measures to achieve "a comprehensive, accessible and high quality education and training in school and pre-primary education", by synchronizing policies regarding the preparation, continuing qualification and professional development for teaching staff and it is in connected with the legal, institutional and social base of the education system.

Further information: [Eurydice, Bulgaria](#)

## Section 6: Schools

*How does the work of schools, school management and leadership impact on access, participation and provision of equitable opportunities for all learners?*

### **1.40. Who is excluded from attending any form of school?**

Please give reasons for this group being excluded from attending school and describe any form of alternative provision made for them?

No one is excluded from school education through the various forms of training - day, individual, evening, part-time, combined, distance, self-directed, work-based learning (dual training system).

The insufficiently high coverage of children in kindergarten in early childhood development increases the risk of difficulties in adapting to school. In the collection of UNICEF reports on Child Welfare in Early Childhood in Bulgaria 1 indicate that by 2009, approximately 26 thousand children miss at least one school year, since as their parents do not enroll them in the first kindergarten group, others - about 20 thousand children, they are not enrolled in the second kindergarten group and thus lose 2 years pre-primary education, and over 16,000 children do not attend kindergarten at all before compulsory pre-primary education.

The inclusion of children from vulnerable ethnic communities in pre-primary education is significantly lower than the national average. According to data from the National Representative Study "Equality - the Road to Progress" in 2011 the share of children attending the ethnic Bulgarians' garden is over 55% for children from 3 to 6 years of age, while it is almost twice as low for Roma children - only 30.9%. For much of

children who stay out of kindergartens and whose mother tongue is different from Bulgarian, another factor is imposed - insufficient Bulgarian language training,

which leads to difficulties in the learning process during the initial stage of education.

Difficulties in mastering the Bulgarian language and developing complete speech and communication skills among ethnic minority students lead to their social

isolation in the school community and are also a prerequisite for early school leaving.

### **1.41. Are there issues around the over- and under-representation of different vulnerable groups in different school settings?**

✓ No information available

### **1.42. Please give details on the main admissions criteria for schools.**

#### **a. Highlight any issues with the national policies.**

By law, everyone should have access to "basic schools"

There are no specific admission requirements for basic schools, besides schools with special programs and schools for gifted children, where pupils are admitted after an aptitude exam.

The right to choose a school allows pupils to apply for and attend schools of high prestige, good quality of instruction, interesting and diverse activities, thus meeting their interests and needs.

Ordinance No. 10 of 01.09.2016 on the organization of activities in school education - SG, issue. 73 of 16.09.2016, effective 01.09.2016; ed. and Suppl. 12 of 03.02.2017, effective as of 03.02.2017; ed. and Suppl. 46 of 09.06.2017, effective as of 09.06.2017; ed. and Suppl. 77 of 26.09.2017; ed. and Suppl. 48 of 08.06.2018, effective as of

08.06.2018; ed. and Suppl. 82 dated 5 October 2018; ed. and Suppl. 32 dated 16.04.2019; ed. and Suppl. 72 of 13.09.2019, issued by the Minister of Education and Science, defines the state educational standard (DOS) for the organization of activities in school education. The state educational standard for the organization of activities is a set of mandatory requirements for the organization of: 1. study and non-teaching time; 2. the forms of training; 3. the school, state and supplementary admission plans; 4. the aptitude tests for schools with the profile "Fine Arts", "Music" and "Physical Education and Sports" and for specialties in the professions in the field of education "Arts" from the List of vocations for vocational education; 5. admission and transfer of students; 6. education in the mother tongue and culture of the compulsory school-age students residing in the country whose parents are nationals of other Member States and who work in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. This regulation also regulates the requirements for innovative elements in the organization of activities in innovative schools.

**b. Where schools set their own admissions criteria, please outline any impact on inclusion.**

The Head of the Regional Directorate of Education approves, by order in writing, up to 5 students with chronic diseases and SEN who will be trained in profiled classes and in vocational classes after grade 7.

The director of the Regional Center for Support of the Inclusive Education Process approves by order the children and students with SEN who will be trained in a common educational environment with additional support for personal development, including resource support.

**1.43. Please provide information on the different forms of support that are available to learners in schools.**

**a. Inclusive pedagogy, personalised learning and universal design approaches**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Children and students are provided with personal development support at two levels - general and additional support. The overall support for personal development includes: 1. team work between teachers and other pedagogical specialists; 2. additional training in subjects under this Law; 3. additional modules for children who do not speak Bulgarian; 4. additional consultations on subjects, which are held outside the regular classes; 5. consultations on academic subjects; 6. career guidance of students; 7. interest activities; 8. library information services; 9. health care; 10. provision of a hostel; 11. promotion with moral and material rewards; 12. activities for prevention of violence and overcoming problematic behavior; 13. early needs assessment and prevention of learning disabilities; 14. speech therapy work.

Additional support for personal development includes: 1. working with a child and a student on a case by case basis; 2. psycho-social rehabilitation, rehabilitation of hearing and speech, visual rehabilitation, rehabilitation of communicative disorders and physical disabilities; 3. providing accessible architectural, general and specialized support environment, technical means, specialized equipment, didactic materials, methodologies and specialists; 4. providing training in special subjects for students with sensory disabilities; 5. resource support.

Additional support for personal development is provided to children and students: 1. with special educational needs; 2. at risk; 3. with outstanding gifts; 4. with chronic diseases. The type and forms of training, as well as the specific activities for additional support for personal development, are determined by a plan of support for the child or the student. The support plan for children and students under par. 2, item 1 also determines the hours for resource support. Additional support for personal development is provided by kindergartens, schools, centers for personal development support and specialized service units. Additional support is provided on the basis of an assessment of individual needs by a personal development support team in kindergarten or school. The team also

provides additional support. It is created by order of the principal for a particular child or student. The personal development support team must include a psychologist or pedagogical advisor, as well as a speech therapist. The team may also include other professionals, as well as representatives of the child protection authorities and the anti-social authorities of minors. The Personal Development Support Team works in partnership with parents and, where appropriate, regional support centers for the inclusive education process and / or personal development support centers. The support team for personal development in kindergarten or school: 1. Identifies the strengths of the child or the student, the difficulties associated with his / her development, training and behavior, as well as the reasons for their occurrence; 2. carry out an assessment of the individual needs of the child or the student; 3. prepares and implements a support plan; 4. carry out monitoring and evaluation of the development on a case by case basis; 5. performs other functions stipulated in the state educational standard for inclusive education.

Institutions in the system of pre-school and school education provide conditions for equal access to education for children and pupils and by providing accessible architectural and physical environment, accessibility of information and communication, access to curricula and curriculum content, reasonable facilities, technical means, specialized equipment and specialized support environment, didactic materials, methodologies and specialists.

A specialized support environment shall be provided by: 1. furnishing the premises in such a way as to enable the provision of training places for wheelchair students, as well as training places for hearing impaired students with sufficient illumination; 2. equipment, if necessary, in training places for hearing impaired students with appropriate equipment - FM systems and others compatible with personal hearing aids or cochlear implants of children or students; 3. providing, where necessary, specialized equipment for visually impaired students - braille machines, braille displays, computers with synthetic speech synthesizers and others; 4. providing eye-tracking devices and specialized use software, switches, voice control software, alternative keyboards, and mice for students with complex physical disabilities, as required; 5. provision of suitable rooms for hearing and speech rehabilitation rooms, speech and speech therapies, resource offices and other specialized rooms; 6. providing access to services for children and students with disabilities in other premises (libraries, administrative offices, etc.); 7. organizing, as required, teams to support the personal development of work and play areas for individual work or work on the floor, as well as rest areas in the classroom or in the group room. If no, please give further information:

#### **b. counselling and mentoring possibilities**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Psychological support is provided by the pedagogical counsellors or by in-house psychologists in kindergartens and schools, as well as by the regional centers to support the inclusive education process and school teams for support of education of children and pupils with special education needs. Guidance is a free-of-charge service within the school setting and can be initiated from all parties - parents, teachers, classmates or even the child himself.

#### **c. input from specialist teachers/therapists**

✓ Yes

Various specialists and therapists are appointed in kindergartens and schools to provide additional support for the personal development of children and students, such as psycho-social rehabilitation, rehabilitation of hearing and speech, visual rehabilitation, rehabilitation of communicative disorders, rehabilitation. Support is provided by a total of 4,557 specialists and therapists.

In kindergartens and schools, the education of children and pupils with special educational needs is necessarily supported by a resource teacher according to the needs of the child and the student. The number of resource

teachers is determined according to the number of children and students with special educational needs, the type of support and the number of hours of resource support under the state educational standard for inclusive education. A teacher's assistant may also be designated in the child and student support plan. The requirements for the assistant teacher and his / her functions are determined by the state educational standard for inclusive education.

**d. input from learning support assistants**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

A total of 120 teacher aides have been appointed in kindergartens and schools to assist teachers in teaching children and pupils with SEN in groups in kindergartens and classrooms.

**e. availability of ICT/ assistive technology**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Access to information and communication is to ensure: 1. access to the types of information and communication means (telephones, computers, the Internet and others); 2. access to information about the rights and obligations of children and students, of the proposed training activities and programs and their presentation in an accessible format; 3. accessibility of educational books, textbooks and training kits by providing reasonable facilities according to the individual needs of children and students; 4. accessible multimedia educational environment, specialized software products, audio-visual means, alternative forms of communication and for the transmission of information to children and students with hearing and impaired vision.

**f. Please describe any other forms of support available.**

The Headmaster declares before the Regional Commission for Organizing and Conducting the National External Assessment and before the Regional Commission for Organizing and Conducting the State Matriculation Examinations in the Regional Management of Education under Ordinance No. 11 of September 1, 2016, to evaluate the results of student learning (SG, issue 74 of 2016), reasonable reasonable facilities for the students who need them to participate in the national external assessment and in the state matriculation exams. Facilitations may include: 1. providing extended exam time; 2. conducting the exam using materials of Braille or enlarged font, using a computer or a computer with synthetic speech synthesizer or oral examination; 3. providing teacher consultants; 4. an independent room at the discretion of the personal development support team. Facilitations may also be provided for the participation of students in need of competitions in competitions and competitions.

**1.44. Please give a description of the strategies in place for practically supporting mainstream school staff teams to increase their capacity to be inclusive and to improve access, participation and achievement for all learners.**

Strategy	Description of the focus
...	

...	
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**1.45. Please provide information regarding school buildings and infrastructure.**

An accessible physical environment includes the provision of appropriate conditions, the use and application of innovative approaches and modern technologies for architectural and physical accessibility that most meet the needs of children and students. An accessible architectural environment shall be provided at least through: 1. entrance and communication spaces; 2. rooms and spaces for common use; 3. sanitary and auxiliary premises. The accessible architectural environment of the institutions in the system of pre-school and school education is ensured by taking into account the elements of buildings and facilities with the specific requirements for different types of disabilities. The public spaces in the buildings are connected through an accessible route.

**a. Are there schools that face infrastructure issues that are barriers to inclusion?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description and provide information on what barriers, how they are monitored and any data/evidence that is available.

Yes, there are schools where physical accessibility is not yet available and the design of the environment is not sufficiently tailored to the needs of the students.

**b. Are there strategies and/or initiatives to improve school buildings and infrastructure?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please describe the strategies, their aim and focus.

Strategy	Description of the focus
Ordinance on the Physical Environment and the Information and Library Provision of Kindergartens, Schools and Centers for Personal Development Support	<p>The draft regulation has been submitted for public discussion and is yet to be approved by the Minister of Education and Science. This ordinance defines the state educational standard under Art. 22, para. 2, item 12 of the Law on Pre-school and School Education.</p> <p>The State Educational Standard for the Physical Environment and Information and Library Security sets out the uniform minimum and mandatory rules and norms for the architectural and work environment necessary for the effective conduct of the educational process in kindergartens, schools and support centers for personal development.</p>

**1.46. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) from any recent reports, systematic evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of the school system, potentially drawing on information from school inspections and / or school self-review work.**

No information available



**1.47. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to schools in the country?**

**Challenges**

Collaboration from different educational institution needs to be improved and reinforced by a common framework on role and vision in inclusion in education.

**Opportunities**

In 2015 was realized an intensive process of integrated education of children and students with special educational needs: for comparison, in 2004, at the early integrated education, were educated only 717 children and students with special educational needs, in 2015 - 14 950 children and students, and in 2020, under the conditions of inclusive education, 20 010 children and students with SEN.

## Section 7: Communities, parents and students

*How far does the wider school community support learners to access and benefit from education opportunities?*

### **Introduction:**

Institutions in the system of pre-school and school education provide support for the personal development of children and students, together with state and local authorities and structures and providers of social services. Institutions in the system of pre-school and school education independently develop and implement comprehensive policies for: 1. support for the personal development of the child and the student; 2. building a positive organizational climate; 3. affirmation of positive discipline; 4. development of the school community. Building a positive organizational climate requires the creation of conditions for cooperation, effective communication and a relationship of concern between all participants in the education process. In working with children and students, institutions in the system of pre-school and school education base their activities on the principle of positive discipline, which is associated with measures and approaches that guarantee the hearing of the child and the student, awareness of the reasons for his problematic behaviour and providing an opportunity to absorb good behavioural patterns towards yourself and others. When working with students, institutions in the system of pre-school and school education base their activities on the principle of preventing learning disabilities and assessing them early. These measures apply to all students in a common classroom in the order specified in the state educational standard for inclusive education. Each school has a code of ethics for the school community, which is adopted by representatives of the pedagogical council, the public council, the board of trustees and the students' self-government in the order specified in the school's rules of procedure.

### **1.48. Have there been any campaigns to raise awareness of inclusion in education at national or local level?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

The programme One School for All has helped to raise awareness of inclusion in education in the school which benefited of the programme.

The Model reaches further than the definition provided by the law in its understanding of inclusive education and defines it as a process of receiving and ensuring support to all children and adults in the educational process. On the one hand, inclusive school setting is possible only if every child feels safe, welcome and supported in school, and has opportunities for personal development and expression. On the other hand, an equally important condition is that every teacher feels supported, because it is only the supported teacher who can be confident, motivated and supportive. On yet another hand, in inclusive schools every parent feels assured as to their child's safety and development, feels welcome in school and is fully aware of the opportunities to participate in school life attracted by a shared vision of school development.

Regional centers for inclusive education are organizing local awareness campaigns in the field of inclusive education. In addition, they also conduct parenting groups to share personal experiences and advocacy.

### **1.49. Does legislation/policy support parental involvement in schools?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

-School Board Act, promoting the participation of the whole community in the life of a particular school.

-In order to improve conditions for equal access to education, to promote the motivation of children and students of ethnic minorities and their parents to participate in the educational process and to improve the quality of education in schools, Ministry of Education and Science through the Operational Program 'Science and Education for smart growth'.

The Pre-school and School Education Act defines the establishment of public councils. They are formed in order to create conditions for active and democratically functioning communities to each kindergarten and a public council is created at each school. The Public Council is a body for supporting the development of kindergarten and school and for civic control of their management. The Public Council consists of an odd number of members and includes one representative of the funding body and at least three representatives of the parents of children and students from the institution concerned. A representative of the employers is included in the composition of the public council of a school providing training for the acquisition of professional qualifications. Parents' representatives are radiated from a parent meeting convened by the kindergarten and school principal. The number of parents' representatives is determined at the meeting and replacement members of the public council are also elected.

**1.50. Does legislation/policy support collaboration between schools and stakeholders in their local communities (e.g. services/employers)?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please give a description.

Educational institutions are working with the Social Assistance Directorates in the municipalities to provide specialist support and social services for children in the community. To this end, an Interinstitutional algorithm for interaction has been signed between the Ministers of Education and Science, Labor and Social Policy.

**1.51. Does legislation/policy support the development of learning communities in local/regional areas e.g. support for schools to work together; involvement with universities, support services to provide research evidence and development of innovative practice?**

✓ No information available

**1.52. Does legislation/policy set out a role for NGOs, DPOs, or other organisations representing vulnerable groups?**

✓ Yes

If yes, please describe the role. Specify which non-governmental actors are particularly active in inclusion in education and how they operate.

The Law on Integration of People with Disabilities stipulates that a National Council for the Integration of People with Disabilities, chaired by the Minister of Labor and Social Policy, is set up to cooperate in the development and implementation of policies in the field of integration of people with disabilities. The National Council for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities is an advisory body with representatives of: the state designated by the Council of Ministers, nationally representative organizations of and for persons with disabilities, nationally representative organizations of employees, nationally representative organizations of employers and the National association of municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria. The National Council for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities gives opinions on all draft legislation, strategies, programs and plans that affect the rights of persons with disabilities and their integration. The Council of Ministers adopts the Rules on the Structure and Activities of

the National Council for the Integration of People with Disabilities, which also defines the criteria for national representation of organizations of and for people with disabilities.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can participate in public councils at each kindergarten and school and thus contribute to improving the quality of education. All legislative changes are available to the non-governmental sector for suggestions and discussions.

**1.53. Please provide information (main conclusions, reference and a link if available) from any recent reports, systematic evaluations and/or reviews, since 2015 of parental and wider community involvement in the work of schools.**

No information available

**1.54. Overall, what are the perceived main challenges (barriers and hinderances) and opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusion in education in relation to communities, parents and students in the country?**

**Challenges**

- Some difficulties in cooperation between school and families of children from vulnerable groups
- Inclusion of family from ethnic minority in the school life

**Opportunities**

One of the point raised by One School For All programme was: In order to be able to assert inclusive education as school practice and philosophy before parents, pupils and teachers, the managing body needs to build on a document that has been discussed, endorsed and communicated, and that asserts inclusion as part of the school commitment to provide quality education.