REPORT

ON REFERENCING THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA TO THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND TO THE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
FOR THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Sofia
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The purpose of this national report is to present and explain in a manner transparent and comprehensible to all stakeholders how each level of National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria corresponds to a particular level from the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for Lifelong Learning and to a level from the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).


The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of the Republic of Bulgaria was developed in accordance with the effective national legislation in the field of education and training. It covers the whole education system of the Republic of Bulgaria in the context of lifelong learning.

For the purpose of informing all stakeholders about the process of referencing to EQF and self-certification with QF-EHEA, Chapter 1 of this report contains an introduction including the main concepts, objectives, principles and approaches related to the implementation of EQF and QF-EHEA, as well as information about the criteria for referencing to the EQF adopted at European level [5] and the criteria, recommendations and procedures for self-certification with QF-EHEA [6].

Chapter 2 provides information about the Bulgarian education system, including pre-school, primary, basic and secondary education (general and vocational), vocational training, higher education, and the qualifications acquired within the formal education system and also those acquired as a result of non-formal and informal learning. It also includes information about the national legislation in this area.

Chapter 3 contains information about the quality assurance and quality management within the education and training system in Bulgaria by sectors, within the context of the National Qualifications Framework.

Chapter 3 presents the responses of the Republic of Bulgaria to the criteria for referencing to the EQF and to the criteria, procedures and recommendations for self-certification to the QF-EHEA.
Chapter 5 pays attention to some issues arising in the course of national consultations involving the stakeholders.

The annex to this report presents the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria. Short vocabulary, a list of abbreviations and a list of references used are also included hereto.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This section presents the main definitions, objectives and structure of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and of the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area. It also contains a description of the main steps in the processes of referencing to those two European frameworks.

National qualifications frameworks should be developed by the respective national competent authorities of the countries. In order to ensure the success of the NQF the referencing processes should involve a wide range of stakeholders at national level in this area, including schools and higher education institutions, students, teachers, academic staff of the higher education institutions and employers. The inclusion and involvement in the referencing process of the competent authorities in charge of quality assurance in education is an essential element ensuring the quality of the whole process. In this regard, the elaboration of the NQF and of the national report/s on its referencing to the EQF and to QF-EHEA includes wide public consultations [7-11].

After the national qualifications frameworks have been elaborated, they should be tested and self-certified. In the referencing and self-certification process the competent authorities of the individual countries certify that the national qualifications frameworks are compatible with the EQF and QF-EHEA, preparing for that purpose one or two separate national referencing reports. The process also involves international experts who advise and assist the countries in the referencing, and also prepare written opinions for the purpose. Those opinions constitute a part of the national referencing report. Good practices show that most countries engage on average three or four international experts who specialize in the individual educational sectors, including higher and vocational education and training, and gave considerable experience in the referencing process in their countries.

After accepting the national report on referencing to the EQF, respectively to the QF-EHEA or to both, in accordance with the national traditions and the relevant national legislation, it should be published, including in Internet on the website of the national competent body and at European level. The national reports on referencing to the QF-EHEA are published on the official website of the Bologna process. The reports on referencing to the EQF are published on a dedicated Internet platform maintained by the European Commission, the so-called the EQF portal which is currently in a phase of merging with the Ploteus Portal. The EQF portal contains
specialized information about the progress in the implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the EQF for lifelong learning, including the national qualifications frameworks and referencing reports of the member states having completed the referencing processes at national level. It also allows comparison by countries (for the present pair-wise) by demonstrating the conformity of the individual levels of their NQFs through those of the EQF.

![National Qualifications Framework or System](image)

*Figure 1. Main issues arising in the process of referencing/self-certification*

The main issues (*Figure 1*) which arise in the process of referencing/self-certification relate to the following: the existence of a national competent authority or authorities with regard to the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, ensuring publicity, using the learning outcomes which are the building blocks of each qualification, ensuring transparency of the qualifications and improving the recognition of qualifications, including validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning which are alternative ways for acquiring a professional qualification, promoting mobility both for educational and for employment purposes, using the European systems for accumulation and transfer of educational credits, promoting cooperation with the stakeholders at national, regional and local level, and also at
European level and internationally [7]. An important element of the cooperation with stakeholders is communication in the process of consultations between them and the national competent authority so that they are attracted and to build mutual trust among them in the process of their active involvement. Then they should not only support but will gradually build a sense of ownership over the National Qualifications Framework. It has been created for all, not only for students but also for employees, employers, teachers and trainers, academic staff members, for the whole society.

As a result of a number of studies, the experts from the European Training Foundation have identified ten areas of benefits from the development and implementation of national qualifications frameworks [7], namely:

1. Better consistency of the qualifications content;
2. Improved transparency and comprehensibility of the qualifications for individual citizens and for employers;
3. Increased value of each qualification included in the national qualifications framework;
4. A wider range of recognized forms of learning;
5. NQF – a reference point for development and implementation of qualification standards;
6. Greater coherence of reforms at national level;
7. Clarified paths for learning and progression in the education system;
8. Increased transferability of the qualifications;
9. NQF – a platform for cooperation;
10. Stronger foundation for international cooperation, understanding and comparison.

The ten areas of benefits are in direct relation, as shown on Figure 2, with the following six most general objectives which most of the countries developing or having developed qualifications frameworks have set:

1. Support for lifelong learning;
2. Promoting access and improving the permeability of the education system;
3. Improved transparency of the qualifications;
4. Reforming the education system in accordance with the international standards;
5. Better employability;

These six common objectives are mutually connected with the ten areas of benefits in using the NQF, as the connections are of “each by each” type. This means that the impact of using the NQF could be seen only within the education and training system of the particular country, but also with regards to its comparability and cohesion with the educational and training systems of the other countries, including by means of international cooperation.
1.1. **The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning – Concept, Objectives, Structure, Implementation**

The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning was adopted on 23 April 2008 and was published in the Official Journal of the EU of 6 May 2008. It sets out two important recommended deadlines:

- 2010: the countries wishing to reference their national qualifications systems to the EQF should do so by the end of 2010. For that purpose, where applicable, the countries should elaborate national qualifications frameworks.
- 2012: by the end of 2012 all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents should contain a reference to the appropriate EQF level.

The EQF is a common European reference framework created for the purpose of ensuring a common European base (reference point) to relate the separate qualifications levels of the
national qualifications systems. It serves as a translation device relating any particular national qualifications system, through the EQF, to another.

The EQF encompasses the whole system of education and training in the context of lifelong learning, using an approach based on learning outcomes. The EQF consists of 8 levels in which the qualifications are placed. Descriptors are used for each EQF level to define the required knowledge, skills and competences of the learning outcomes to be acquired by learners. The top three levels (6, 7 and 8) correspond to the three cycles of the Bologna process (Bachelor, Master and Ph. D.).

The EQF contributes for improving transparency and understanding of the qualifications in Europe, facilitates the mobility of learners and workers and the recognition of qualifications, promotes quality assurance in education, validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning, as well as the development of national qualifications frameworks [2,7-11].

To date all EU Member States have stated their willingness to implement the EQF Recommendation. A part of them have already completed the referencing processes.

The benefits of the EQF are as follows:
- the EQF improves the transparency and comparability of the qualifications acquired both within and outside national education systems, e.g. acquired within individual sectors or of multinational companies);
- the EQF promotes the mobility of learners and workers by facilitating:
  - learners in the description of the knowledge, skills and competences which they have acquiring a certain qualification;
  - employers in the interpretation the applicants’ qualifications;
- the EQF contributes to improving citizens’ access to lifelong learning, respectively their participation in lifelong learning activities;
- acting as a common reference point, the EQF directs how learning outcomes may be combined in various aspects, e.g. formal education or workplace training, non-formal and/or informal learning. In this way the EQF contributes to lower barriers before organizations rendering services in the area of education and training, like, for instance, removing the need for repeating training courses.
- the EQF, by the description of the expected learning outcomes at the end of each level, facilitates the evaluation of the contents and practical focus of training, thus facilitating the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

For the purpose of certifying the conformity of their national qualifications frameworks or systems of qualifications to the EQF, countries prepare national reports on referencing to the
EQF. They shall respond in detail to each of the ten criteria for referencing to the EQF adopted in November 2008 by the EQF Advisory Group with the European Commission.

1.2. THE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

The Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) is a European reference framework comprising all qualifications in the system of higher education. It was adopted by the Ministers responsible for higher education in the participating countries of the Bologna process at the Bergen conference, which was held on 19-20 May 2005. In the Bergen Communiqué the countries from the European Higher Education Area are called upon to elaborate national qualifications frameworks compatible and coordinated with the QF-EHEA, by 2010.

In turn, the national qualifications frameworks for higher education should also be overarching, i.e. including all qualifications in the higher education system. They should be based on learning outcomes and should show what learners are expected to know, understand and be able to do in order to acquire a particular qualification, as well as the possibilities for transition and progression of learners among the separate qualifications in a certain education system.

10 steps were also defined in the process of elaboration of national qualifications frameworks for higher education, namely:

1. decision to start the process taken by the national body responsible for higher education;
2. setting the agenda;
3. organizing the process: identifying stakeholders, setting up a committee/working group;
4. designing the profile of the NQF project, defining the level descriptors (learning outcomes) and their binding with education credits;
5. conducting public consultations at national level and adoption of the NQF design by stakeholders;
6. approval of the NQF design in accordance with national traditions by the Minister/Government and the national legislation;
7. administrative set-up division of tasks and responsibilities regarding the implementation of the NQF among higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies and other bodies;
8. implementation of the NQF at institutional/programme level; reformulation of individual study programmes to learning outcomes based approach;
9. inclusion of qualifications in the NQF; accreditation or similar procedures as described in the Bergen Communiqué (2005);
10. self-certification of compatibility of the NQF with the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (alignment to Bologna cycles, etc.); development of pilot projects.

The steps in the process of referencing to the EQF are analogous.

Figure 3 illustrates schematically how, by the EQF and QF-EHEA, a parallel may be made between two different national qualifications systems or frameworks to show the correspondence between the qualifications placed at a certain level from the NQF of country A and the NQF of country B.

Figure 3. Parallel between two different qualifications systems made using EQF and QF-EHEA


The adoption of the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria puts the Bulgarian educational and training system in a stage of comparability with the educational and
training systems of the other EU Member States. In particular, this is a prerequisite for better mutual recognition of qualifications between the countries.

The National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria improves the transparency and the understanding both of the Bulgarian educational and training system, and of any particular qualification that is awarded there. It facilitates not only the recognition of diplomas, certificates and other documents for qualifications awarded abroad, but also the access to the labour market and the validation and recognition of prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning, and work-placed training.

The National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria includes nine levels, including zero level, as shown in Table 1. The zero (preparatory) level comprises the system of pre-school education. The eight levels above correspond to the eight levels of the EQF. The zero level has no analogue in the EQF levels. It is included for thoroughness, in view of encompassing in the NQF of the entire education system and all qualifications in it.

*Table 1. Scope and structure of the Bulgarian Qualifications Framework (BQF)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQF</th>
<th>The Bulgarian Qualifications Framework</th>
<th>QF-EHEA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Level 0 – Pre-primary education</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 1 – Primary stage of basic education</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Level 2 – Basic education (5-8 class) general/vocational education and training (I degree of a vocational qualification)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Level 3 – Secondary education – Lower secondary stage – general/vocational education and training (II degree of a vocational qualification)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Level 4 – Secondary education – Upper secondary stage – general/vocational education and training (III degree of a vocational qualification)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Level 5 – Vocational training (IV degree of a vocational qualification)</td>
<td>Short cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>Level 6 – Higher education – Bachelor’s degree, degree of “Professional Bachelor in ..”, continuing training</td>
<td>I cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>Level 7 – Higher education – Master’s degree, continuing training</td>
<td>II cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>Level 8 – Higher Education – Doctors’ degree, continuing training</td>
<td>III cycle</td>
</tr>
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</table>

All levels of the NQF of Bulgaria apply the learning outcomes based approach and are described in:

1. Knowledge – theoretical and/or factual;
2. **Skills** — **cognitive** (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and **practical** (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);

3. **Competences** — **personal and professional**. The competences are described in terms of responsibility and autonomy and are set in four main groups:
   - responsibility and autonomy;
   - learning competences;
   - communicative and social competences;
   - professional competences.

The descriptors of the BQF levels (Table 2) conform both to those of the EQF and to the relevant QF-EHEA descriptors. The description of the competences and their grouping in four groups also complies with the Recommendation № 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18th of December 2006 on the key competences for lifelong learning [12].

**Table 2. The National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria – learning outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Competences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of the learning outcomes based approach requires that learning outcomes reflect and describe the expected learner’s behaviour (activities which may be accepted as indicator of personalized knowledge, skills and attitudes) and the level at which this is essential. Behavioural
objectives concern descriptions of the observed students’ behaviour or their work and are used as a basis for evaluation of the learning outcomes. They ensure the building up of knowledge and skills and competences in the next levels. Learning outcomes are person-oriented and are therefore measurable and achievable. Their achieving is established by external evaluation or validation by a competent authority whereby it is certified that a person has achieved them.

According to the NQF the expected learning outcomes are described by summarized knowledge and skills for the relevant level which are a prerequisite for further qualification education or training. They provide an idea of what the learner knows and is able to do after completing the study process in a particular level but in view of future professional realization. For that reason the person-significant competences like autonomy and responsibility and communicative and social competences are defined separately.

The knowledge, skills and competences, which are defined in the Bulgarian Qualifications Framework are based on the State Educational Requirements (SERs) within the national school and higher education system and correspond to the expected learning outcomes that are defined in those SERs in terms of knowledge, skills and competences, as follows:

- Ordinance № 2 of 18.05.2000 on the study contents, issued by the Minister of Education and Science [13];
- The Ordinances on the unified state requirements for acquisition of a qualification by professions in the field of the vocational education and training (VET) system;
- Ordinance on the state requirements for acquisition of higher education at the educational and qualificational degrees of a Bachelor, a Master, and a Specialist, adopted by Council of Ministers’ Decree № 162 of 23.07.2002, publ. State Gazette, issue 76 of 6.08.2002, last amended and supplemented, issue 79 of 5.09.2003[14];
- The Ordinances on the unified state requirements for acquisition of a higher education in specialties, which lead to pursuing regulated professions on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

1.4. **THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA AND THE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA**

The three levels of the BQF, numbered from 6 to 8, comprising higher education degrees, have been developed in accordance with the three cycles of the Bologna process (the degrees of

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6 educational standards

2 Law, Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, Nurse of General Care, Midwife, Veterinary Medicine, Architecture, military officer for operative management level, military officer for tactical management level, military officer for strategic management of defence and armed forces, etc.
a Bachelor, a Master and a Doctor) and in accordance with levels 6 – 8 of the EQF.

The Bulgarian higher education excludes the so-called “short cycle” within the Bologna process. The educational and qualification degrees of “Professional Bachelor in...” and a Bachelor are placed at level 6 of the NQF, corresponding to level 6 of the EQF and to the first cycle of QF-EHEA. The educational and qualification degree of a Master is at NQF level 7 corresponding to EQF level 7 and to the second cycle of QF-EHEA. The educational and qualification degree of a Doctor is placed at 8 in the NQF, corresponding to EQF level 8 and to the third cycle of QF-EHEA.

The educational and qualification degrees of “Professional Bachelor in..”, “Bachelor” and “Master” apply education credits as follows:
- “Professional Bachelor in...” – 180 ECTS credits;
- “Bachelor” – 240 ECTS credits;
- “Master” after “Professional Bachelor” – 120 ECTS credits; education takes place in specialities only within the same professional sector in which the Professional Bachelor degree is acquired;
- “Master” after “Bachelor” in the same professional sector – 60 credits;
- “Master” after “Bachelor” in another professional sector – 120 ECTS credits;
- “Master” by specialities for which education is contemplated only in this degree – 300 ECTS credits.

The Doctor’s Degree continues for 3 years of formal and informal education and 4 years of extramural and distant learning. This scientific and educational degree excludes acquisition of education credits.

1.5. The process of referencing the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area

This section describes chronologically the process of referencing to the EQF and QF-EHEA in the Republic of Bulgaria and its relation to the national priorities and strategic documents.

The process of referencing to the EQF and to QF-EHEA in the Republic of Bulgaria started in 2007 when, by an Order of the Minister of Education and Science, an interinstitutional task force was formed involving representatives of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the Rectors’ Conference and of higher education institutions, with the task to elaborate a draft project of an NQF for higher education. The draft project developed by that task force served as
a basis for the elaboration of the overall NQF draft project compatible with the EQF and QF-EHEA. The elaboration of the NQF for higher education was set as an objective in the National Lifelong Learning Strategy of Bulgaria (2008 – 2013) [15]. That strategy defined the development of the NQF as a future step.

In April 2008, by an Order of the Minister of Education and Science, a new task force was set up to prepare a draft project of an integrated NQF, including representatives of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) and of the National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID), which is also the Bulgarian ENIC-NARIC centre. The chairperson of this working group was the head of the national EQF coordination point (EQF NCP): the Director of the International and European Cooperation Directorate at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science.

In 2009 the development of the NQF was set as a priority in the Government’s Programme and in the Programme for Development of Education, Science and Youth Policies of the Republic of Bulgaria (2009 – 2013) [16]. This strong political engagement of the Bulgarian government to continue the process of EQF implementation and to provide a meaningful contribution to its successful final is counted as one of the strongest sides of the referencing and self-certification process.

In January 2011 the NQF design working group was extended to include representatives of the Rectors’ Conference in the Republic of Bulgaria, the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, of the six nationally representative organizations of employers³, of the two nationally representative trade unions⁴, of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and of the National Statistics Institute. At that time the Deputy Minister of Education, Youth and Science who is responsible for the European matters and European educational programmes and projects became a chairperson of the task force. The Head of the National EQF/NQF Coordination Point became a deputy chairperson of the task force. The task force members also include the two Bulgarian representatives in the EQF Advisory Group, one out of which is also the EQF NCP national contact person.

The referencing process in Bulgaria also involves four international experts:

1. Dr. James Murray, Director of Academic Affairs of IOTI⁵, Ireland;

³ The Confederation of Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Industrial Association, the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association, the Union of Private Economic Enterprises and the Union of Private Bulgarian Entrepreneurs “Vuzrazdane”

⁴ The Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria and the Podkrepa Trade Union Confederation

⁵ the representative body of the Institutes of Technology Ireland
2. Dr. Joachim James Calleja, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Employment, Malta;

3. Mr. Wilfried Boomgaert, Deputy Head of Policy Coordination Directorate, Ministry of Education and Training of the Flemish Community of Belgium;

4. Dr. Maria Elisabeth Leegwater, coordinator for student issues, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Netherlands (up to 2012), then a private expert.

The above mentioned experts were selected according to the following criteria:

- Expertise and experience in different education and training sectors (general and vocational school education, vocational training and higher education);
- Expertise and experience of leading EU Member States in implementing EQF and QF-EHEA, with different education and training systems;
- Expertise and experience of international experts in EQF/QF-EHEA, and the referencing and selc-certification criteria, procedures and recommendations;
- Longlasting membership in the EQF Advisory Group and the Bologna Follow-up Group.
CHAPTER 2

THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK AND THE QUALIFICATIONS IN THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of the Republic of Bulgaria was created with the following objectives:

- NQF – a tool with a translating and bridging function to make the education and training system in Bulgaria more clear and comprehensible to everybody;
- Promoting the development of more qualifications based on learning outcomes;
- Strengthening the use of the lifelong learning approach;
- Promoting mobility in the education and training system and on the labour market;
- Support for the validation and recognition of prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning;
- Increasing cooperation with stakeholders.

The National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria comprises all educational stages and levels of education in the educational system, from pre-school education and training (preparatory (zero) level) to the highest degree of higher education (the educational and scientific degree of a Doctor\(^6\)), and all the existing qualifications according to the national legislation.

The education system in Bulgaria includes kindergartens, schools and ancillary units and provides education in accordance with state educational requirements. The state educational requirements determine the levels of the required general education and vocational education and training and refer to the different elements of the education environment: the education content, textbooks and teaching aids, the teaching capacity and qualification of teachers, the evaluation system, inspecting, the necessary equipment, health services, safety of education, training and labour, one-year maintenance of children and students, fixing and payment of labour, etc.

Education in Bulgaria is secular and free in state-owned and municipal schools. The right to education is implemented in observance of the principles for management transparency and predictability of the education system development. Bulgarian citizens have the right to education and may enhance continuously their education and qualification. No restrictions or privileges are allowed based in race, nationality, gender, ethnic or social origin, religion or social

\(^6\) Ph. D.
status. Children and students with special educational needs and/or chronic diseases are taught on integrated basis in kindergartens and in schools.

Figure 4. Diagram of the educational and training system in the Republic of Bulgaria
2.1. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Kindergartens are preparatory institutions for raising, upbringing and education of children from age of three to the age of entering first class. They are of all-day, half-day, weekly and special (for children with special education needs and/or chronic diseases) type. Half-day, preparatory or seasonal groups for children at pre-school age may be established to the kindergartens. Creche groups for children aged from 3 months to 3 years may be established to kindergartens of all-day and weekly type. Kindergartens with crèche groups are joint establishments for children aged from 3 months to the age of entering first class.

Upbringing and education of children at kindergartens is organized and conducted in accordance with the State Educational Requirement (SER) for Pre-school Education and Preparation and ensures children’ readiness for school. The children’ preparation for school is assessed at the end of pre-school education, through comparison between the achieved learning outcomes and the expected learning outcomes, which are laid down in the SER (the standards). These learning outcomes correspond to the expected learning outcomes for the preparatory (zero) level of the BQF. A certificate for school readiness is issued in a result.

Two-year pre-school education before the children enter school is mandatory in Bulgaria. It is performed in preparatory groups at kindergartens and schools. The parents pay fees for raising, upbringing and education of children at kindergartens. The mandatory 2-year pre-school education before first class is free of charge.

Pre-school education is covered by the preparatory (zero) level of the BQF. This level includes knowledge, skills and competences (responsibility and autonomy, communicative and social competences), which are defined in the SERs on pre-school education and preparation, which are laid down in the Ordinance № 4 of 18.09.2000 for pre-school education and preparation [17], issued by the Minister of Education and Science (publ., State Gazette, issue 80 of 3.10.2000, amended and supplemented, State Gazette, issue 70 of 26.08.2005).

2.2. SCHOOL EDUCATION

School education is mandatory from the age of 7 (or 6, at the parents’ choice) to 16 and provides education and training of students in accordance with the social needs and their individual abilities and expectations for successful realization in the civic society.

Schools are educational and upbringing institutions which ensure the completion of a class, the acquisition of an educational degree and/or of professional qualification. Depending on the stage and level, schools are primary (I-IV class), sixth form (V-VIII class), secondary (I-VIII class), high schools (IX-XII class), specialized high schools (VIII/IX-XII class), vocational high
Schools (VIII/IX-XII class), secondary general education schools (I-XII class), vocational schools (from VII/VIII class with length of training up to three years, from IX class - with length of training up to four years), vocational colleges (after completion of upper secondary education with length of training up to two years), sports schools, art schools, culture schools and special schools (for students with chronic diseases, with sensor disabilities, with language and speaking deficiencies, mentally challenged, having numerous disabilities, with behavioural deviations).

For persons at the age of 16 evening (shift) schools are opened. Religious institutions in Bulgaria may, with the authorisation of the minister of education, youth and science, open theological schools for their ritual needs for children having completed lower secondary education.

The forms of education are daily, evening, extramural, correspondent, individual, informal and distance.

School education is, according to the level, lower- and upper-secondary, and general and vocational according to the education contents.

The allocation of study time for achieving the general education minimum by classes, stages and levels is determined in the syllabus. It consists of three main sections: mandatory education, mandatory optional education and free optional education.

Mandatory education (ME) is essentially general education and ensures the achieving of the general education minimum.

The mandatory optional education (MOE) ensures additional education. For general schools this additional education includes the subjects of the cultural and educational fields of the general education.

For vocational schools and vocational high schools the mandatory optional education ensures the vocational training for acquiring qualification for the professions and specialties in the List of professions for vocational education and training.

The mandatory education and mandatory optional education constitute mandatory school classes which are defined at national level by the syllabus.

The free optional education (FOE) provides education in fields which are proposed by the school and chosen by students; they may also go outside the cultural and educational fields of the mandatory general education. The free optional education is not mandatory for students.

The contents and volume of the optional education (MOE and FOE) vary depending on the students’ choice and, respectively, on the type of school, and are defined in the school’s syllabus.

The knowledge and skills of students are evaluated by oral, written and practical examinations throughout the school year using qualitative and quantitative parameters according to a five-grade scale (poor 2, average 3, good 4, very good 5, and excellent 6). The marking of
learning outcomes ensures mastering the general education minimum and certifies the study time.

2.2.1. BASIC EDUCATION

General education is implemented through education in subjects grouped in the following cultural and educational fields: Bulgarian Language and Literature; Foreign Languages; Mathematics, Computer Studies and Information Technology; Social Sciences, Civil Education and Religion; Natural Sciences and Environmental Studies; Lifestyle and Technologies; Arts; Sports. The cultural and educational fields correspond to basic groups of key competences as set out in the Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, and transversal competences such as lifelong learning, sense of entrepreneurship, etc., are integrated in the education on all school subjects. General education ensures mastering the general education minimum: the knowledge, skills and attitudes which are necessary and adequate for passing from one education level to another and, if possible, specialized training. The expected learning outcomes in each subject at the end of the separate stages and levels of education are defined in the state educational requirements on the education contents. Their specification by years is implemented by the curricula, which set the education contents by themes and concepts and learning outcomes corresponding to the standards.

Basic education takes place in two stages: primary - from I to and including IV class, and lower secondary - from V through VIII class.

The training for completion of the primary stage of basic education is conducted in primary, lower- or upper-secondary general schools. The knowledge and skills of first-class students are evaluated by quantitative indicators only (excellent, very good, good, satisfactory), and those of students from the second and upper classes – by quantitative and qualitative indicators according to the general five-grade scale. A peculiarity of the primary education is that students pass from class to class without repeating classes, i.e. irrespective of their marks for the year.

The mandatory education for the primary stage of basic education includes the following school subjects: Bulgarian Language and Literature, Mathematics, Homeland (I class), The World around Us (II class), Man and Nature (III-IV class), Human and Society (III-IV class), Music, Drawing, Home Way of Living and Technology, Physical Education and Sports. The total number of mandatory training hours in I-IV class is 2986 hours, the mandatory education comprising 90 %.

At the end of IV class a national external evaluation is performed by the main subjects: Bulgarian Language and Literature, Mathematics, Human and Nature, and Human and Society,
aiming at measuring the learning outcomes in accordance with the requirements defined in the state educational requirements to education contents. Students who have completed the primary stage of lower secondary education receive a *certificate of completed IV class*. The certificate is issued by the school. The certificate received by students upon completion of the primary stage of education shows that they have achieved the knowledge, skills and competences set out in the state educational requirements to education contents by subjects and they correspond to the knowledge, skills and competences in level 1 of the BQF and of the EQF. This level may also be recognized by certificate of completed 4th class (for students with special educational needs) or of a certificate of recognition of learning outcomes of adults by subjects taught at school (with 600 teaching hours).

The mandatory education for the **lower secondary** stage of basic education includes the following school subjects: *Bulgarian Language and Literature*, *Mathematics*, *Foreign Language*, *(mandatory learning of one foreign language and students may choose from English, German, Spanish, Italian, French and Russian. At their option students may learn a second foreign language chosen from those listed above)*, *Information Technology*, *History and Civilization*, *Geography and Economics*, *Human and Nature* (V-VІ class), *Biology and Health Education* (VІ-VІІІ class), *Chemistry and Environment Protection* (VІ-VІІІ class), *Physics and Astronomy* (VІ-VІІІ class), *Home Equipment and Economics* (V-VI class), *Music, Fine Arts, Technology* (VІ-VІІІ class), *Physical Education and Sports*. The total number of mandatory teaching hours in V-VІІІ classes is 4080 teaching hours, the mandatory education comprising 90%. That number may vary depending on the syllabus in VIII class.

Training for completion of **basic education** is conducted in basic, lower secondary and upper secondary general education schools. The acquisition of basic education takes place after the completion of VIII class and is certified by a certificate of completed basic education which is final and gives the right to continue the education or to vocational training.

Students with special educational needs who are taught on integrated basis and have completed VIII class but have failed to meet the state educational requirements to basic education for objective reasons are issued a certificate of completed VIII class. The certificate indicates the learning outcomes according to the individual curricula.

Students with special educational needs who have completed VIII class but have failed to meet the state educational requirements to basic education for objective reasons may continue their education in IX class of schools which organize vocational training in part of a profession or in a profession for acquisition of the first degree of a vocational qualification.

Students who have completed VIII class in special schools for children with mental retardation are issued a certificate of completed VIII class according to the state educational
requirements on teaching children with special educational needs and/or chronic diseases and to the documents in the education system, and they also may continue their education in IX class of schools, which organize vocational training in part of a profession or in a profession for acquisition of the first degree of a vocational qualification.

The education of students in VIII class may also be conducted in schools where enrollment takes place after completion of VII class – specialized high schools, specialized classes in upper secondary general schools or in high schools, in vocational high schools and schools. Admission at such schools is regulated by the government and students are admitted on the basis of their results from admission tests in *Bulgarian Language and Literature* and in *Mathematics*, which include two modules: national external evaluation and an additional module, which takes place at the end of VII class. For the specialties of “Arts”, “Sports” and individual professions, tests are conducted to examine the capabilities in fine arts, music, choreography or sports. Such schools also issue certificates of completed basic education.

National external evaluation at the end of VII class is also performed, apart from *Bulgarian Language and Literature* and *Mathematics*, in the subjects of the culture and education field of *Social Sciences*, *Civic Education and Religion*, of the culture and education field of *Natural Sciences and Ecology* and the culture and education field of *Foreign Languages*, aiming at measuring the extent of achieving the outcomes set in the respective curriculum for VII class. Our country is in the process of conducting a reform aiming at changing the length of the lower secondary education stage and completion of lower secondary education after VII class instead of after VIII class, and the national external evaluation will aim at measuring the knowledge, skills and competences set out in the state educational requirements to education contents [13] in individual school subjects, which will correspond to the knowledge, skills and competences in level 2 of the BQF and of the European Qualifications Framework.

The creation of the state educational requirements to education contents implements the principles of measurability and achievability. For that purpose orientation has been adopted for clear formulation avoiding any ambiguity or vagueness. The state educational requirements to education contents are used to change the paradigm of the education objectives. They are now used to define the levels of students’ general education at the end of each education stage and level. The description of students’ achievements contains formulations relating not only to the knowledge and skills but also to value orientations and attitudes; however, their inclusion is subject to the condition that they are checked by the skills. The competences outline students’ ability to describe and analyze values, conflicts and problems, to make free and reasonable choice in particular real-life situations and to foresee the possible social and moral consequences from taking different decisions. The state educational requirements on education contents
formulate standards including key groups of skills which acquire identity in the context of the separate curriculums by subjects: language literacy; mathematical literacy; handling information; communicative skills; social and emotional competence; critical thinking and problem solving. Depending on the specifics of the subjects and of the cultural and educational fields, the requirements to education contents also include general and specific groups of skills, integral and inter-subject areas of education contents.

General education is built on the principles of respecting: 1. Basic human rights; 2. Children’s rights; 3. The traditions of Bulgarian culture and education; 4. The achievements of global culture; 5. The values of the civil society; 6. The free conscience and free thinking.

Presently the knowledge, the skills and competences set out in the state educational requirements on education contents at the end of VIII class by school subjects correspond to the knowledge, skills and competences in level 2 of the BQF and of the European Qualifications Framework, as shown in Chapter 4 in response to the referencing criteria.

Due to the education specifics, admission after examining the capabilities takes place at different times: in V, VI, VII or in VIII class in sports schools, in I and in VIII class in culture schools, in V, VI, VII or in VIII class in culture schools, in V and in VIII class in specialized high schools which provide education in the fields of the Natural Sciences and Mathematics or Humanities.

Admission to schools after completion of VIII class takes place based on the certificate of lower secondary education and examination of the capabilities and/or by documents.

2.2.2. UPPER SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION

Upper secondary education takes place in one stage, upper secondary, with a length of four years (IX - XII class) after completion of lower secondary education. Education is conducted in high schools, specialized high schools, upper secondary general schools, vocational high schools or vocational schools, sports schools, art schools and special schools.

The mandatory education for the upper secondary stage includes the following subjects: Bulgarian Language and Literature; Mathematics, Computer studies, Information Technology; History and Civilization; Geography and Economics, Biology and Health Education; Chemistry and Environment Protection; Physics and Astronomy; Philosophical Cycle: Psychology and Logic; Ethics and Law; World and Person; Music; Drawing; Technology; Physical Education and Sports, but their allocation in the years and the number of teaching hours depend on the school type. The total number of mandatory teaching hours in IX – XII class is 4448 teaching hours, and the mandatory education varies between 45 % and 80 % depending on class, preparation and type of school.
Completion of X class coincides with becoming 16: the mandatory education age. No separate document is issued at the end of that class; its completion is certified by a student’s book or a certificate of completed class. The knowledge, skills and competences acquired at the end of the mandatory education and set out in the curricula for the respective general education subjects correspond to the knowledge, skills and competences in level 3 of the BQF and of the European Qualifications Framework. The reform which is underway envisages the prospective division of the upper secondary level in two stages, the first comprising VIII-X class and its end will complete the main part of the general education the outcomes of which will relate to the knowledge, skills and competences set out in the state educational requirements on education contents in the respective subjects and they will correspond to the knowledge, skills and competences in level 3 of the BQF and of the European Qualifications Framework.

Upper secondary education is acquired after the successful completion of XII class and successful taking of the state matriculations by subjects or a cycle of subjects and is certified by a *diploma for completed upper secondary education*, which also indicates the grade point average.

State matriculations measure the achieved learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes or competences, of the education in the respective subject or cycle of subjects in the mandatory education at the upper secondary stage, irrespective of the duration of the stage or the teaching hours provided for the respective subject or cycle of subjects. State matriculations are two, one of them being in Bulgarian Language and Literature, and the other one optioned by the student from the following subjects: Foreign Language; Mathematics; Physics and Astronomy; Biology and Health Education; Chemistry and Environment Protection; History and Civilization; Geography and Economics, and the Philosophy subject cycle. In the diploma for secondary education completed for VET students, the average mark calculated from the marks obtained in a result of the state examinations for acquisition of a vocational qualification may be included upon a request.

State matriculations are mandatory and no release from them is allowed. At their option students may also sit for state matriculations in selected subjects or a cycle of subjects from those specified above. Individuals who have passed successfully the state matriculations may also be admitted to higher education institutions without entrance exams subject to a resolution of the academic council of the higher education establishment.

Students who have completed successfully XII class and who have not sit for and passed the state matriculations, may, at their option, receive a *certificate of completed upper secondary stage* which gives them the right to continue with vocational training for acquiring a vocational qualification.
The diploma for completed upper secondary education is final and gives the right to continue the education or to vocational training. It corresponds to level 4 of the European Qualifications Framework.

2.2.3. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vocational education ensures mastering the general education minimum and acquiring professional qualification according to the state educational requirements, and vocational training ensures the acquisition of a vocational qualification.

The system of vocational education and training in Bulgaria prepares citizens for realization in the economy and in the other areas of public life by creating conditions for acquiring a professional qualification and for its constant improvement. The organization, institutions, management and financing of the system for vocational education and training is regulated by the Vocational Education and Training Act (the VET Act) of 1999 [18]. This law regulates the public relations which are connected with ensuring the right to vocational education and training of citizens, with satisfying the requirements of the labour market and with providing conditions for the operation and development of the vocational education and training system. When in the vocational education and training system lower and/or upper secondary education is also acquired, apart from the vocational qualification, the process is regulated by the National Education Act [19], the Law on Education Level, the General Education Minimum and the Syllabus [20], and by the state educational requirements.

The vocational education and training system includes three main components: vocational guidance, vocational training and vocational education. Initial vocational education and training is concurrently an element of two of the system’s components:

- Of the vocational education component – as acquisition of a vocational qualification simultaneously with the mastering of the general education minimum for upper secondary education.
- Of the vocational training component – as acquisition of initial vocational qualification or part of a profession. Under definite, statutory terms, vocational training may also ensure the completion of lower secondary education or classes of upper secondary education.

Depending on it is an element of one component or the other, initial vocational education and training is conducted by professions and specialities regulated by the List of Professions in VET (LPVET). The list is approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science after coordination with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, with the respective line ministers and with the representative organizations of employers and of employees at national level. The
professions and specialities in that List are classified according to two main indications: professional sectors and degree of a vocational qualification. The second indication, a degree of a vocational qualification, is in turn bound with the education level. That circumstance determines the age at which initial vocational education and training may start.

The degrees of a vocational qualification are graded at four degrees depending on what professional competences need to be built in the trainees. The first degree of a vocational qualification requires the acquisition of professional competences for practicing professions including routine activities performed in unchanging conditions. Practicing professions with second degree of a vocational qualification requires the acquisition of professional competences which enable the performance of activities of complex nature in changing conditions. In order to practice professions with third degree of a vocational qualification, apart from the requirements to the second degree, trainees must also acquire competences related to skills for assuming responsibilities for other people’s work. The highest, fourth degree of a vocational qualification concerns practicing professions which include a wide range of activities of complex nature performed in changing conditions as well as assuming managerial responsibilities for other people’s work and for allocation of resources.

The ascending grading of the requirements in respect of each following degree of a vocational qualification determines the required minimum entrance education level and, respectively, the achievement of a particular learning outcomes level as a condition for acquiring each of the degrees of a vocational qualification.

The students’ minimum entrance education level for the first degree of a vocational qualification is completed VI class, and the outcomes level is completed lower secondary education. That results in the age at which students may start their initial vocational education and training which is 13.

Enrolment in vocational training for acquiring second and third degree of a vocational qualification required completed VII class or lower secondary education. The acquisition of the second level is subject to one of the following conditions: successful completion of X or XI class, acquired right to sit for state matriculations for completion of upper secondary education, i.e. successful completion of XII class or completed upper secondary education. The last two requirements determine the education level for the third level of professional qualification as well. Vocational training for fourth degree of a vocational qualification is conducted with persons having completed upper secondary education.

The institutions providing initial vocational education and training are vocational schools and high schools, art schools, vocational colleges, and vocational training centres.
Vocational schools implement the initial vocational training for acquiring the first and second degree of a vocational qualification and/or of qualification in a part of the profession. The length of training in vocational schools is up to 4 years and training there starts after VI class, i.e. students enrol at the age of 13. This is the earliest age at which initial vocational education and training may begin. At those schools, apart from the vocational education, students must also acquire lower secondary education, and may also complete a class/classes of the upper secondary stage.

Vocational high schools implement vocational education for acquisition of second and/or third level of professional qualification. The training for acquisition of second level is 4-year long and finishes after the successful completion of XII class. The length of the training for third level is 5 years: IX – XIII class. Students enrol in vocational high schools after completion of lower secondary education or of VII class. The typical age of learners is 14 – 19.

Apart from vocational education, vocational high schools may also implement vocational training for acquisition of first, second and third degree of a vocational qualification and of qualification in part of the profession for individuals who are no longer with the mandatory school age, i.e. 16 or older. Pursuant to an Order of the Minister of Education, Youth and Science and provided they meet the terms set by the state educational requirements, vocational high schools may also conduct vocational training for acquisition of fourth degree of a vocational qualification.

Art schools conduct vocational education for acquisition of third degree of a vocational qualification in professions and specialities from the Arts education field from the List of Professions for VET. Training is after lower secondary education or competed class of the upper secondary education and lasts for up to four years.

In order to acquire vocational education, apart from the two matriculations from the mandatory general education specified in Section 2.2.2 of the Report, students at vocational high schools also sit for two matriculations for an acquisition of a vocational qualification: Theory of the Profession and Practice of the Profession.

The completion of vocational education is certified by a diploma for completed upper secondary education, certificate of vocational qualification and/or certificate of capacity issued in respect of professions the practicing of which requires capacity, including capacity for practicing regulated professions.

2.2.4 VOCATIONAL TRAINING AFTER SECONDARY EDUCATION COMPLETED

Vocational colleges provide vocational training for acquisition of fourth degree of a vocational qualification. Persons enrol there after completion of upper secondary education.
Depending on whether initial vocational training is organized or continuing training for trainees having a lower degree of professional qualification, the training lasts for up to two years.

2.2.5 CONTINUING TRAINING WITHIN THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM

Vocational training centres (VTC) provide vocational training of persons at 16 or older. Their licensing is performed by the National Agency for VET (NAVET).

Since 2002 continuing vocational training is provided using the following Framework programmes for acquisition of a vocational qualification:

- **Framework programmes „A”** for initial vocational training for acquisition of I degree of vocational qualification;
- **Framework programmes „B”** for vocational training for acquisition of II degree of vocational qualification;
- **Framework programmes „C”** for vocational education for acquisition of II or III degree of vocational qualification;
- **Framework programmes „D”** for vocational training for acquisition of IV degree of vocational qualification;
- **Framework programmes „E”** for initial vocational training for acquisition of qualification in a part of profession;
- **Framework Programme „F”** for further vocational training for up-to-dating or extension of already acquired vocational qualification, as well as for acquisition of I, II, and III degree of a vocational qualification (since 2004).

The framework programmes for acquisition of a vocational qualification, which are regulated by the VET Act, are applicable both for initial VET (iVET) and continuing VET (cVET). They define the framework of training by provision with regards to the conditions for access to VET and the degrees of a vocational qualification (I-IV degree) and for a partial qualification, updating or improving already acquired vocational qualification.

The assessment of the students’ progress is based on SERs on Assessment. The final assessment of knowledge, competences and skills for completion of a vocational education is produced through sitting for state matriculation examinations for secondary education completion, and state examinations in Theory of Profession and Practice of Profession. The Regional Inspectorates for Education perform the evaluation of quality of training provided by the VET schools. The interest towards the school, the number of school drop-outs, the resource equipment, etc. are used as quality criteria.
2.3. HIGHER EDUCATION

The Republic of Bulgaria is also among the first countries which signed in 1999 in Bologna the Joint Declaration for European Higher Education Area. Some of the changes made in response to the Bologna process requirements are as follows:

- By the Higher Education Act of 1995, promulgated, State Gazette, issue 112 of 27.12.1995, last amended, issue 15 of 15 February 2013 [20], a three-level higher education system Bachelor – Master – Doctor was introduced;
- A Classifier of the Fields of Higher Education and Professional Sectors [21] was elaborated (2002) which introduces the fields and sectors generally accepted in the global education practice;
- For the purpose of regulation, monitoring and control of the processes in the system of higher education, in 1996 a National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency was established the purpose of which is to:
  - evaluate, based on unified criteria, the educational and research activities and quality management at higher education institutions;
  - accredit as educational institutions the higher education institutions and their training programmes by professional fields for acquisition of education and qualification degrees, and also Doctor’s programmes;
- mobility – conditions have been created for the active participation of Bulgarian students and the academic staff in the European mobility programmes;
- credit system – Ordinance № 21 of 30.09.2004 on the implementation of credit accumulation and transfer system, issued by the Minister of Education and Science [23] was elaborated in line with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and adopted;
- The Higher Education Act (HEA) regulates the issuance of European Diploma Supplement. According to Article 7, paragraph 1 of the Ordinance on the State requirements to the contents of the basic documents issued by the higher education institutions [24] European Diploma Supplement is issued in addition to the original diploma and does not replace the official higher education diploma supplement.

Today, the higher education system encompasses 51 higher education institutions, which by law are public and private, including universities, specialized higher schools and independent colleges.

The higher education governance is performed at state and institutional level. The state is responsible for the development and the implementation of a long-term national policy and establishment of conditions, which guarantee the academic autonomy of higher education.
institutions, the quality of education, and the provision of adequate conditions for performing scientific research. The institutional management is performed according to the rights for an academic autonomy of the higher education institutions, but the state assists for development of modern institutional governance through distribution of resources on a competitive basis.

Bulgaria works actively towards building up of a favourable environment for modernization of higher education, in line with the needs of the society and of the business. Good practices are studied and multiplied. Possibilities for introduction of new models, which are related to application of modern approaches for institutional governance leading to better financial management, are studied.

The regulatory framework in the higher education system comprises the Law on Higher Education (1995), the Law on the Academic Staff Development [25], promulgated, State Gazette issue 38 of 21.05.2010, last amended and supplemented, issue 101 of 28.12.2010, the Ordinance on the state requirements for acquisition of higher education of the educational and qualification degrees of Bachelor, Master and Specialist in … [14], adopted by government decree No. 162 dd. 23.07.2002 г. (promulgated, State Gazette, No. 76 dd. 6.08.2002, revised, No. 85 dd. 5.09.2002, supplemented, No. 79 dd. 5.09.2003), Ordinance on the state requirements to the contents of basic documents issued by higher education institutions [24], adopted by Council of Ministers’Decree № 215 of 12.08.2004 (promulgated, State Gazette, № 75 of 27.08.2004), Ordinance on the state requirements for organizing distance learning in higher schools, adopted by Council of Ministers’Decree № 292 of 02.11.2004 г. (promulgated, State Gazette, issue 99 of 09.11.2004), Ordinance № 21 of 30.09.2004 on the implementation of a credit accumulation and transfer system in higher education institutions, issued by the Minister of Education and Science, (promulgated, State Gazette, issue 89 of 12.10.2004, in force from 12.10.2004), Ordinances on the unified state requirements for acquisition of higher education by specialties leading to pursuing regulated professions, etc.

Some of the main features of the higher education reform in the Republic of Bulgaria are, as follows:

- Provision and guarantee of an academic autonomy for the higher education institutions;
- Development of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms in higher education;
- Provision of an equal access to higher education in lifelong learning context for all social groups within the society;
- Implementation of mechanisms for effective public funding and resource provision in higher education;

7 Since 2007 - Professional Bachelor in…
- Inclusion of stakeholders in higher education in the elaboration of policies and the quality assurance procedures;
- Building up partnerships between higher education institutions and the business.

2.3.1. CONTINUING TRAINING WITHIN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Higher education institutions may provide training for enhancing the qualification of specialists with higher education, which is performed according to academic documentation the requirements to which are set out in the rules and regulations of the respective institution. Such training may be ancillary or may be implemented after acquiring higher education, but is not in itself any ground for acquiring an education degree or speciality.

Conducting trainings for enhancing the workforce qualification may be organized at the business’ requests. They are implemented both at higher education institutions and in the form of workplace trainings without leading to the acquisition of any education and qualification degree. They are organized in modules and the curriculums are developed by the higher education institutions and are submitted for approval to the employers. Individual specializations may also be conducted.
CHAPTER 3
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM IN BULGARIA

3.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM

The quality in the school education system develops in two directions:

1. Development of the internal assessment system – wide use of tests both for assessment of students’ knowledge and skills during the academic year and as a form of entrance-exit assessment of students’ knowledge and skills at the beginning and at the end of the academic year. The process of wide introduction of tests as a form of examining in Bulgarian schools started from the 2006/2007 school year.

2. Development of the external assessment system, which includes tests for mandatory assessment of students’ knowledge and skills at the end of each educational stage (national standard assessment) after completing IV class and after completing VII class.

The tests after completing VII class are used not only for assessing the achieved respective level of the general education minimum but also as an entrance to the upper-secondary education system. The first national standard assessments after VII class took place in the 2008/2009 school year.

The mandatory national external assessments by subjects at the end of each educational level, and national maturation examinations are used to trace the processes in the system and to take measures for optimal support to students. Conditions are provided for maximum use of the teaching time by ensuring replacement teachers by subjects. Financing of individual work with students with expressed skills in a certain area is ensured, as well as conditions for additional work with students lagging behind.

➢ Qualification and career development of pedagogical staff

Improving the qualification of teachers and trainers in Bulgaria is organized at national, regional and municipal level. A “profile of the pedagogical specialist” (portfolio) of the teacher and the school headmaster was developed and tested as a tool of the system for managing the quality of pedagogical specialists’ training under the Qualification National Programme financed from the national budget.

The draft Law on Pre-school and School Education⁸, in Chapter 11, Pedagogical Specialists, Section III, Article 221 provides that raising the qualification of pedagogical specialists is a

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⁸ Currently the draft of the law is under deliberation on second reading in plenary room in the National Assembly
continuing process and is mandatory. That draft law comprises the fundamental principles and innovative aspects in the status and development of pedagogical specialists in Bulgaria, namely:

- Mandatory nature of trainings for raising the qualification of all pedagogical specialists;
- Introduction of a State Educational Standard for the status of pedagogical specialists and school headmasters defining basic terms and completely regulating fundamental issues regarding the related activities;
- Measuring the raising of pedagogical specialists’ qualification takes place by introduction of a qualification credits system;
- Raising the qualification of pedagogical specialists takes place under qualification training programmes approved and registered in an informational register published on the official website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science;
- The qualification system at all educational levels is regulated entirely, in conformity to European standards and promoting a professional development system;
- Optimizing the system for qualification of pedagogical specialists by creating a competitive market for providing qualification services;
- Providing information about the offered qualification trainings ensuring high-quality training, with free choice of qualification programmes and training institution;
- The mandatory qualification forms within 48 training hours are secured financially by the national budget.
- The competences achieved are recorded in the professional portfolio of the pedagogical specialist. The portfolio helps the attestation and self-assessment of the pedagogical specialist. The objectives, functions and contents of the professional portfolio are set by the national educational standard for the status and professional development of pedagogical specialists.

➢ Other measures for improving the quality of school education

Opportunities have been created for acquiring professional qualification by early school leavers through expansion of the planned enrolment for acquisition of first degree of a vocational qualification by students who have left school after VI, VII and VIII class; opportunities for acquisition of education and/or only of II or III degree of a vocational qualification in evening and distance forms of training. Simultaneously, teaching adults to read and write, training for acquiring professional qualification and/or re-qualification is organized under various projects.

A two-year project titled Improving the Quality of General Education with a budget of BGN 10 million⁹ started in early 2012 under the Human Resources Development operational programme co-financed by the European Social Fund. The main objective of the project is

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⁹ About EUR 5 million
reform of general education towards providing the key competences needed by present day’s students for their successful further career. Work is done on it for optimizing and improving the general education package paying particular attention to the modernization of standards for teaching content and of curriculums to direct learning outcomes to practical applicability. To date drafts for improved SERs for the primary stage; optimized SERs for the lower secondary stage and new SERs for general education at the two upper secondary stages have been elaborated within the project. An evaluation of the SERs drafts’ applicability has been made by teachers. The public consultations on the new general education package were completed in 2012. The change is towards achieving 60 % new knowledge and 40 % for exercises, for practical tasks, for summarizations.

Steps have been taken for improving the quality of vocational education and training towards decentralization of the system of vocational schools, introduction of systematic approach for assuring the quality of vocational education and training, development of a career orientation, making the training more attractive and activating the inclusion of social partners in the process of practical training. Agreement on the introduction of the credit system in vocational education and training has been achieved which will create prerequisites for building connections with the higher education system and will enable faster permeability from the education system to the labour market.

The specific measures in lower- and upper-secondary education by 2020 will consist in improving the system for external assessment of education quality, as well as introducing school mechanisms for increasing the role and commitment of parents and municipalities in schools’ management decisions.

3.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

The competences defined in the NQF correspond to the State Educational Requirements for acquiring qualification by professions and are related to the expected learning outcomes defined in them. According to the BQF the expected learning outcomes are described by summarized knowledge, skills and competences which learners should acquire upon completion of their education at the respective level of the framework and which are a prerequisite for their further education or training for acquiring qualification. The professional competences for the different levels of the framework correspond to the requirements to the relevant degree of a vocational qualification as per the VET Act. Achievement of the learning outcomes in view of acquiring a degree of a vocational qualification in respect of a particular profession after completing the education is established by assessment; the national examination panels also include
representatives of the organizations of workers and employees and representatives of employers in the relevant industry.

The national authority for quality assurance in the vocational education sector is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. Quality assurance in the VET school system is implemented by educational management in the educational institution based on application of the legislative and regulatory framework for achieving the learning outcomes: the VET Act, syllabi and curricula, national examination programmes, Ordinance № 3 of 15.04.2003 on the assessment system (amended, State Gazette, issue 73 of 2009, in force from 15.09.2009), issued by the Minister of Education and Science, promulgated, State Gazette, issue 37 of 22.04.2003, amended , issue 70 of 09.09.2011), etc., and by development and implementation of an internal system (rules) for VET quality assurance. The criteria and indicators for assessing the quality of vocational education were set by and order of the Minister of Education, Youth and Science in 2009, and annual self-assessment is made in vocational upper secondary schools based on them and thus transparency of the achieved results is met. A significant role for quality assurance in vocational education/training plays the internal and external partnership in the educational institution, including the relations with social partners. A complex of activities are implemented for developing quality assurance culture of key actors in the process of vocational education as a prerequisite for the practical application of the requirements of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training EQAVET, including in the phases of the quality assurance cycle: planning, implementation, assessment and review. The self-assessment process in vocational upper secondary schools is supported methodologically by the Manual for Self-assessment of Vocational Upper Secondary Schools and an online self-assessment tool developed in 2012 in accordance with the requirements and indicators of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training EQAVET.

In 2000 pursuant to the VET Act the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) was established with the Council of Ministers as a legal entity funded by the national budget seated in Sofia. NAVET is a specialized government authority for licensing activities in the system of vocational education and training (VET), for coordination of institutions concerned with vocational orientation, training and education, and since 2009 for control of the activities of licensed institutions in the vocational training system. Besides, NAVET develops and proposes to the Minister of Education, Youth and Science for approval a List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training (LPVET) and State Educational Requirements (SERs) on acquisition of a qualification by professions; takes part in the development of SERs to the documents for the national education system and for the assessment
system in their part regarding vocational education and training; analyzes the operations of Vocational Training Centres (VTC) and Information and Career Guidance Centres (ICGC) and makes proposals for improving the vocational education and training system; assigns studies in the field of vocational education, training and guidance; coordinates the activities regarding development of strategies for VET development and improvement; assists for the international recognition of vocational education and vocational training documents; creates and maintains a register of Vocational Training Centres and of Information and Career Guidance Centres and of the issued and revoked licenses; since 2009 it defines indicators for providing the annual information to VTC and ICGC.

NAVET is managed by a Managing Board and a President. The Managing Board is a tripartite body and is composed of a Chairman and 24 members of whom eight are representatives of ministries, eight are representatives of the employers’ organizations and eight are representatives of the organizations of employees at national level. The Managing Board forms expert commissions for the performance of its functions. The term of office of the Chairman and the members of the Managing Board is four years and no one may be a Board member for more than two consecutive terms. The President of NAVET is appointed by the Prime Minister on proposal by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science. The President of NAVET is also Chairman of the Managing Board.

The Expert Commissions are created by vocational areas from the List of professions in vocational education and training, and by vocational guidance. Each Expert Commission is tripartite and is composed of 9 members of whom one representative of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, one representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and of the respective industry ministry; three representatives of employers’ organizations from the relevant industry and three members from the industry trade-union organizations of employees from the relevant industry.

The Expert Commissions by vocational areas are the following:
1. Earth and yield sciences and mineral resources dressing
2. Mechanical engineering, metal working and metallurgical engineering
3. Electrical engineering and power engineering
4. Information and communication technologies, electronics and automation
5. Chemical products, technologies and environmental studies
6. Motor vehicles, ships and aircrafts and transportation services
7. Architecture and construction
8. Food and beverages production
9. Production of textile and goods from textile, leather and wood
10. Farming, forestry and fish husbandry and veterinary medicine
11. Hotel and restaurant management, catering, travelling, tourism and leisure activities
12. Business management and administration
13. Arts
14. Healthcare and sport
15. Social services, personality services, property and personality protection
16. Vocational guidance

The Expert Commissions prepare reports with proposals for issuing, refusing or revoking licenses of vocational training centres and of information and career orientation centres; they participate in the development and updating of the SERs for acquiring qualification by professions from the relevant professional field, as well as the SERs on the documents for the national education system and for the evaluation system in their part regarding vocational education and training; they participate in the development and updating of the LPVET.

The Expert Commissions are created as per vocational areas from the List of professions in vocational education and training, and according to the vocational guidance.

3.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Quality assurance in the higher education system in Bulgaria is regulated in the Higher Education Act, the Rules of Procedure of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency [26] and the regulations on the activities of higher education institutions. It is implemented in two directions:

- **Internal quality assurance**

According to Article 6, paragraph 4 of the Higher Education Act a higher school\(^\text{10}\) shall provide the quality of education and scientific research through internal system of assessment and maintenance of the quality of education and of the academic staff, including also student's opinion pools at least once in an academic year. The purpose of the system under paragraph 4 is to control, maintain and manage the quality of education in the offered higher education areas and professional fields, and of the academic staff. The functions and structure of the quality maintenance system under paragraph 4, as well as the procedures for studying students’ opinions and the manner of announcing the results are set in the higher school’s Rules of Procedure. A part of the internal university systems for education quality assurance are certified according to ISO 9001:2000. Pursuant to Article 30, Paragraph 1, Item 15 of the Higher Education Act, the

\(^{10}\) higher education institution
Academic Council is the body which approves a system of assessment and maintenance of the quality of the education of the academic personnel of the higher school in compliance with Article 6, paragraph 4 of the Higher Education Act and exercises control over its implementation and improvement. According to Article 32, Paragraph 1, Item 5 of the Higher Education Act, the rector prepares and proposes for approval by the Academic Council the results of the functioning of the internal system for assessment and maintenance of the quality of education together with the annual report of the higher school and the annual report of financial and physical indicators of the higher school. Pursuant to Article 73, Paragraph 1, Item 10 of the Higher Education Act, the Students’ Council has the right to participate by its representatives in the monitoring of the internal system for assessment and maintenance of the quality of education and of the academic staff of the higher school, and also in development of questions for students’ opinion polling.

- **External quality assurance:**

  In 1995, by virtue of the Higher Education Act, the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA) was established. It is a specialized government authority for evaluation, accreditation and control of the quality of the activities of higher schools and research organizations with regard to training specialists and raising their qualification, and also with regard to the development of science, culture and innovations. NEAA controls the ability of institutions, their main units and branches to provide high quality of education and scientific research by an internal system for evaluation and quality maintenance and regarding the performance of the recommendations given during the evaluation and accreditation. NEAA’s mission is to assist higher schools to maintain and improve the quality of the education they offer by upholding the high academic standards and traditions of higher education in Bulgaria. NEAA’s Rules of Procedure set the main directions in the Agency’s activities, outlines the evaluation and accreditation procedures and plan the procedures for post-accreditation monitoring and control. Since Bulgaria joined the Bologna Process NEAA has taken part in all initiatives for creating the European Area of Higher Education and for standardization of the criteria for evaluation and accreditation of European agencies for higher education evaluation.

  According to Article 75, Paragraph 1 of the Higher Education Act, an accreditation is acknowledgement by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency of the right of the higher schools to provide higher education programmes in education and qualification degrees in defined professional fields and areas of knowledge and in the specialities of the regulated professions by assessing the quality of the activities under Article 6 of the same Law. Article 72, Paragraph 2 of the Higher Education Act provides that the purpose of evaluation and accreditation is to stimulate higher schools to develop their potential and to improve and
maintain the quality of the education they offer. The results from the accreditation shall be taken into account when forming the government’s policy toward the higher school (Higher Education Act, Article 72, Paragraph 3).

According to Article 76, Paragraph 1 of the Higher Education Act, the accreditation of higher schools is institutional and programme. The programme accreditation can be required by the higher school after receiving institutional accreditation.

According to Article 77 of the Higher Education Act, the institutional accreditation is based on assessment of the way in which the higher school implements its mission and objectives as organisation in compliance with Article 17 of the same Law. It is the result of assessment of the efficiency with which the higher school controls, maintains and improves the quality of education in the offered higher education and vocational areas. The assessment at the institutional accreditation shall be directed to check of the efficiency of:

- the internal system for assessment and maintenance of the quality of the education;
- the procedures for approval, monitoring and renovation of curriculums and teaching programmes;
- the procedures for taking actions regarding and in respect of the results of the programme accreditation as well as other external independent inspections;
- the overall management and control of the processes of assessment in the higher school;
- the management of the system for accumulation and transfer of credits;
- the management of the co-operation with other higher schools and organisations;
- the maintenance, management and development of the facilities of the higher school;
- the scientific research and the artistic and creative activity of the academic staff and the participation of the trainees in this activity.

According to Article 78 of the Higher Education Act, programme accreditation is based on assessment of the quality of the education offered in a vocational area in the principal unit and/or branch of the higher school, of a major from regulated professions or a programme for acquiring a Doctor’s degree. The evaluation in this case is directed to checking the quality of students’ education in all offered forms of training by education and qualification degrees and the scientific degree of Doctor within a vocational area. Subject to assessment at the programme accreditation are:

- the structure, organisation and content of curriculums and teaching programmes;
- the profile and qualification of lecturers;
- the teaching facilities;
- the methods of teaching and assessment of students’ achievements;
- the education quality management;
the scientific research and the artistic and creative activity of the academic staff and the participation of students and doctoral candidates in it.

According to Article 79 of the Higher Education Act, assessment at institutional and programme accreditation is made according to a ten-grade system including grades from 0 to 10.00. The evaluation on each criterion for assessing institutions under Article 77, Paragraph 2 and Article 78, Paragraph 3 of the Higher Education Act is formed as the arithmetic mean of the grades received on all parameters in accordance with their ratio. For each criterion for institutional and programme accreditation the Accreditation Council of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency approves indicators with weight ratios. The scientific research criterion has the greatest relative weight. Projects for opening higher schools, as well as faculties, branches, colleges and professional fields and majors from regulated professions are evaluated by a positive or negative grade. The accreditation validity is:

- six years – when the grade received is from 9.00 to 10.00;
- five years - when the grade received is from 7.00 to 8.99;
- four years - when the grade received is from 5.00 to 6.99;
- three years - when the grade received is from 4.00 to 4.99.

If the grade received is from 0 to 3.99 accreditation is refused. Accreditation is also refused if at the institutional accreditation the higher school has received a grade from 0 to 3.99 on one or more of the following criteria:

- internal system for assessing and maintaining education quality;
- profile and qualification of the teaching staff;
- adequate technical facilities for the training.

A negative grade at programme accreditation is given to professional fields graded under 4.00 on one or more of the following criteria:

- teaching documentation and educational process of the professional field or major from regulated professions;
- profile and qualification of the teaching staff of the professional field or major from regulated professions;
- technical and information facilities dedicated to the training in the professional field or major from regulated professions.

According to Article 91, Paragraph 2, Item 3 of the Higher Education Act, the complex assessment of education quality and its consistency with the labour market requirements formed based on criteria defined by a government decree and including the results from the assessment in the accreditation of the higher school and its majors is one of the criteria used for
determining the state subsidy of higher schools for funding the training of students and doctoral candidates.

Pursuant to the Higher Education Act (§ 4e of the Additional Provisions) the quality of education is one of the criteria determining the capacity of the higher school, of the professional field and of a major from regulated professions.

The amendments to the Higher Education Act, which were made in 2004, established conditions for maintaining the quality of training in higher schools by institutional provision of post-accreditation monitoring by NEAA. The Agency is co-founder of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEN). It is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), too. The Agency is included in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) of the European quality assurance agencies in higher education.

By amendments and supplements to the Higher Education Act (Law Amending and Supplementing the Higher Education Act, promulgated, State Gazette, issue 61 of 09.08.2011) changes in the manner of accreditation of higher schools were introduced, including accreditation by external assessment made by an international European agency which is a member of the ENQA and/or is registered in the EQAR.

Work is done on the project titled Improvement of Management Systems in Higher Schools under the Human Resources Development operational programme co-financed by the European Social Fund (maximum grant amount BGN 15 million\(^\text{11}\)) for improving those systems, including quality management systems, process administration systems, systems for informational servicing of the academic activity, systems for collecting information for the scientific research, etc., for development of criteria, methods and procedures for improving the quality of higher schools’ activities and their results.

An incentive for improving the quality of education in higher schools is also provided by the ranking system of higher schools in Bulgaria which was launched in November 2010 and is available on-line in Bulgarian and English at [http://rsvu.mon.bg/](http://rsvu.mon.bg/). The system provides educational services for different users to facilitate them in the choice of a higher school by providing a wide range of information about the accredited higher schools and allows comparison between them based on various criteria. The updated version of the system from 2012 contains information about 51 accredited higher schools within Bulgaria which offer higher education for acquisition of all education and qualification degrees (Bachelor, “Professional Bachelor in…”, and Master) in 52 professional fields.

\(^{11}\) about EUR 7.5 million
Depending on individual priorities and needs of each user, the system allows ranking of higher schools for each professional field by using different criteria. Users may select from a range of 49 different indicators for comparing higher schools, and may also define weight ratios for each group of indicators. The indicators are grouped in 6 categories: Teaching and Learning, Science and Research, Teaching and Learning Environment, Welfare and Administrative Services, Prestige, and Career and Relevance to the Labour Market.
CHAPTER 4
CRITERIA, PROCEDURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFERENCING THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA TO EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND TO THE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In the EQF Recommendation Member States are called upon to reference the levels of their national qualifications frameworks or systems to the respective levels of the EQF by 2010. For the purpose of complying with that recommended deadline and in view of ensuring understanding of the referencing process and mutual trust in it on the part of all stakeholders at all levels (European, national, regional and local), in November 2008 the Advisory Group on implementation of the EQF Recommendation with the European Commission adopted Criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications levels to the EQF [5]. That document contains 10 referencing criteria and procedures comprising the various aspects of the process, including the functions of the respective national competent authorities. Their purpose is to ensure that the information and documentation existing in the public domain are validated by the relevant competent authorities and are practicable, comprehensible and transparent, that they are comparable and generate mutual trust. Thus the focus is on the fact that the success of the EQF depends on the countries’ ability to make the referencing to the EQF in a demonstrative, accurate and defendable manner.

With regard to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, at the conference of the ministers in charge of the higher education of the participating countries in the Bologna process held in Bergen in 2005, 7 criteria and 6 procedures were adopted, and in 2007 – recommendation s[6] in this regard to the countries participating in the Bologna process. They were all elaborated for the purpose of certifying the referencing of national qualifications levels in the field of higher education.

A part of the criteria, procedures and recommendations for referencing to either of the two European frameworks are compatible. Thus it is possible to make the referencing to them in a single national referencing report. It is the right of each country, depending on the progress so far and on its national perception, to choose whether to do so in a single national report or in two separate referencing reports. Good practices show that the latter approach was preferred by most countries which at the time of elaborating the national report on referencing to the EQF had already adopted a national report on referencing within the Bologna process.
4.2 Bulgaria’s responses regarding the criteria, procedures and recommendations for referencing the levels of the National Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning and to the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)

4.2.1. Criterion 1 for referencing to the EQF reads that the responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including the National Coordination Point, are clearly determined and published by the competent public authorities. This criterion is similar to the following criteria for referencing to QF-EHEA:

- Criterion № 1 for self-certification to the QF-EHEA, which reads that the National Qualifications Framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education;
- Criterion № 7 for self-certification to the QF-EHEA, which reads that the responsibilities of all relevant national authorities regarding the national framework are clearly defined and published.

The Republic of Bulgaria’s response regarding the requirements set in the criteria under paragraph 4.2.1:

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria is the national competent authority responsible for the elaboration of the NQF draft project and for its referencing to the EQF and QF-EHEA. The elaboration of the NQF is a national measure set in the Action Plans for 2010 and 2011 with the measures ensuing from Bulgaria’s membership in the EU with the responsible authority being the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science and subsequently having passed on as a measure in the 2012 Action Plan. This measure was implemented with the adoption of Council of Ministers’Decision № 96 of 02.02.2012 on the adoption of the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria. On the grounds of item 2 of this Decision, the Minister of Education, Youth and Science is authorised as a national competent authority for maintaining and updating of the BQF in line with the EQF for lifelong learning. Item 3 of the Decision sets 1-year deadline for alignment of the national legislation in the secondary and higher education systems with the BQF. Item 4 of the Decision sets 6-month deadline for the elaboration of the national referencing and self-certification report with respect to the EQF and the QF-EHEA. The national report is a subject of approval by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science after coordination with all stakeholders.
The public consultations procedure concerning the draft NQF was conducted in several stages:

1) Firstly, after approval of the first draft project of NQF on 02.02.2011 by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS), the draft project was published on the web page of the Ministry and public consultations were launched. In the course of consultations, two meetings of the task force responsible for the elaboration of the BQF and two out of four international experts total who are supporting Bulgaria in the referencing and self-certification process were held. They were supported by the 2010 NCP grant project for Bulgaria.

2) The draft project of the Council of Ministers’Decision on the adoption of the BQF was published on the Public Consultations Portal, maintained by the Council of Ministers'Administration, with a deadline for coordination 15.12.2011.

3) During the public consultations, the coordination procedure with the other ministries was conducted, on the grounds of Article 34, paragraph 1 of the Structural Regulations of the Council of Ministers and its administration. In a result, the draft project of BQF was agreed without remarks and suggestions concerning its text.

4) Being a measure within the Action Plan with the measures ensuing from Bulgaria’s membership in the EU, the BQF draft project and its accompanying documents concerning the adoption of the Concil of Ministers’Decision were coordinated under the framework of the Coordination Mechanism on the European Affairs on the grounds of the order and the conditions laid down in Council of Ministers Decree № 85 of 17.04.2007 on coordination with respect to the European issues. The coordination procedure was conducted within Working Group № 16 Education, Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications, Youth and Research”to the Council on the European Affairs to the Council of Ministers, which is chaired by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. Experts from the MEYS and representatives of stakeholders, including at ministerial level and organisations of employers and employees. Working Group № 16 unanimously agreed on the draft BQF project and provided very positive written statement.

After the adoption of Council of Ministers’Decision № 96/02.02.2012 the BQF was published on the web page of MEYS.

4.2.2. Criterion № 2 for referencing to the EQF provides that there is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework. This criterion is similar to Criterion № 2 for self-certification to the QF-EHEA – “there is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications
framework or system and the level descriptors of the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area”.

The Republic of Bulgaria’s response regarding the requirements set in the criteria under paragraph 4.2.2:

1. **Level 0 of the BQF**

   The BQF Level 0 (preparatory level) comprises the system of pre-school education and training before enrolment in first class. It has no analogue in the EQF. Level 0 is included so that the BQF could encompass the whole education system of the Republic of Bulgaria in the context of lifelong learning.

2. **Level 1 of the BQF**

   The BQF Level 1 corresponds to level 1 of the EQF comprising the primary stage of lower secondary education (general education). The competences defined for level 1 of the NQF in Bulgarian schools are achieved as a result of four-year schooling in the subjects included in the mandatory education. The correspondence between the knowledge, skills and competences for level 1 of the BQF and those for level 1 of the EQF is shown in Table 3.1, Table 3.2 and Table 3.3.

   ➢ **Knowledge**

   The EQF for level one defined “basic general knowledge” and therefore the NQF focuses on the integral knowledge significant for the primary education stage which provide a general view of the world and are at the basis of the subsequent education in subjects and lifelong learning. That basic general knowledge is clearly explicated in the SERs on education contents in all main subjects. Due to the fact that the entire system of primary education is built on the principle of conformity to nature, the BQF focuses on the personal needs relating to cognition, communication, various productive activities and in particular to the knowledge of the manner of behaviour.

   Table 3.1  **Semantic analysis of knowledge required for BQF Level 1 and EQF Level 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BQF Level 1 – Knowledge</strong></th>
<th><strong>EOF Level 1 – Knowledge</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has <strong>basic general knowledge</strong> of the world required for further training and lifelong learning</td>
<td>✓ <strong>basic general knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
✓ **knows basic rules** for wellbeing and environmentally friendly behaviour
✓ **has some basic general knowledge**

> **Skills**

Both frameworks include “basic skills which are applied to the performance of simple tasks. In the NBQF they are understood as a basic component for the application of the knowledge in solving routine problems in education. This involves intellectual skills relating to the use of information, formulation of assumptions, etc., and practical related to the use of knowledge to carry out particular tasks: learning, allocation of resources, adequate reaction in emergency situations, etc.

**Table 3.2**  **Semantic analysis of skills required for BQF Level 1 and EQF Level 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 1 – Skills</th>
<th>EQF Level 1 – Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has <strong>practical skills</strong> required to carry out identical and simple tasks</td>
<td>✓ <strong>basic skills</strong> required to carry out <strong>simple tasks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>ability to apply the acquired knowledge</strong> to carry out <strong>specific educational tasks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>makes plausible suppositions</strong> based on the information the child has gathered about the world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

> **Competences**

In terms of competence both frameworks include work or study under direct supervision in a “structured context”. The BQF competences are understood as an integrated group of abilities allowing to evaluate the situation and to act in accordance with the purposes. As a whole, the competences determine the potential abilities and capabilities of the individual and are reviewed in the context of the overall set of knowledge and skills.

**Table 3.3**  **Semantic analysis of competences required for BQF Level 1 and EQF Level 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 1 – Competences</th>
<th>EQF Level 1 – competences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy and Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>✓ <strong>work or study under direct supervision in a structured context</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>participates actively in simple, familiar</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As to the degree of correspondence between the learning outcomes set up in the BQF and the EQF, respectively with the State Educational requirements on study contents, as illustrative examples for Level 1 the following could be pointed out:

Pursuant to Article 2 of Ordinance № 2 of 18.05.2000 on study contents, the study contents for general education covers the achievable knowledge, skills, and competences, which are measured or monitored as student performance under the study subjects and the cultural-educational areas as per Article 10 of the Law on Degree of Education, General Education Minimum, and Syllabus. Pursuant to Article 3 of the Ordinance, the study content requirements under Article 2 cover general and specific key groups of skills, integral and interdisciplinary area of study content, depending on the specifics of educational subjects and cultural-educational areas. For greater clarity, the two examples are provided for the reader’s attention, which relate to the learning outcomes at Level 1 of the BQF and the learning outcomes stipulated in the State Educational Requirements to the study contents in Bulgarian Language and Literature for the primary stage of basic education.

**Example 1:**

*Pursuant to the State Educational Requirements on Study Contents in the cultural-educational area of Bulgarian Language and Literature, as set forth in Appendix № 1 to Article 4, paragraph 1 of Ordinance № 2 of 18.05.2000 on study contents, studying in Bulgarian Language and Literature at the secondary school aims to achieve a certain level of communication competence through:*

- **Activities**
  - ability to perform tasks under the supervision of an adult
  - knows the consequences/results of one’s own actions

  **Communicative and Social Competences**
  - can understand and communicate brief and simple oral information
  - works in a group, showing tolerance towards the other children in the group
  - begins to express own independence as a new social role
1. Acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes comprising lingual competence, namely:
   - mastery of the literary norm of the Bulgarian language;
   - mastery of the use of language means of expression in various communication situations;
   - mastery of skills to compose and perceive texts operating within the practice of communication.

2. Acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes comprising literary competence, namely:
   - mastery of the principles of structuring and functioning of the fiction work;
   - mastery of the main tools for communicating with the fiction work;
   - mastery of the main milestones in the historical development of the fiction process.

The studying of Bulgarian language and literature aims to achieve a certain level of sociocultural competence, namely:
   - adoption of general humanitarian values, which shape a socially responsible person;
   - creation of clear awareness of national identity, insofar as the Bulgarian language and literature are among the most important tools, through which such identity has been created, affirmed, and continues to be affirmed.

**Example 2:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 1 (a sample)</th>
<th>SERs on study contents:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has basic general knowledge of the world required for further training and lifelong learning</td>
<td>• The main principle of distribution of academic content in the early stage of the primary education degree is that the fundamental problems are to be put forward and be understood by the pupils;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has some basic general knowledge</td>
<td>• During the 1st – 2nd grade period the studying of knowledge and skills in the Bulgarian language is prevalent – basic literacy, training in reading, mastery of the basics of the written and spoken word etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has practical skills required to carry out identical and simple tasks</td>
<td>As a result of the training in Bulgarian at the end of the primary stage of basic education degree the pupil:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Retells, describes, asks questions, gives answers, and explains by using appropriately language means, characteristic of the communication situation, according to its participants, topic, purpose, and conditions. Has mastery of the courtesy formulas, and uses the courtesy forms;
3. **Level 2 of the BQF**

The BQF Level 2 corresponds to Level 2 of the EQF comprising general and vocational education and training (first degree of a vocational qualification). The correspondence between learning outcomes for level 2 of the BQF and those for level 2 of the EQF is shown in Table 4.1, Table 4.2 and Table 4.3.
Table 4.1  Semantic analysis of knowledge required for BQF Level 2 and EQF Level 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 2 – Knowledge</th>
<th>EQF Level 2 – Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has <strong>basic factual knowledge</strong> in a given field of <strong>study</strong></td>
<td>✓ <strong>basic factual knowledge</strong> of a field of <strong>work or study</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>knows how to extract, select and use simple information</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has <strong>basic knowledge</strong> of <strong>important social spheres</strong> (family, school, working environment, small community, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.  Semantic analysis of skills required for BQF Level 2 and EQF Level 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 2 – Skills</th>
<th>EQF Level 2 – Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has <strong>basic cognitive and practical skills</strong> required to carry out <strong>simple tasks</strong>, solve <strong>routine problems</strong> and do <strong>routine activities</strong></td>
<td>✓ <strong>basic cognitive and practical skills</strong> required to use <strong>relevant information</strong> in order to carry out <strong>tasks</strong> and to solve <strong>routine problems</strong> using <strong>simple rules and tools</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ applies a <strong>limited number of skills</strong> to carry out <strong>more complex tasks</strong> in familiar contexts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ establishes <strong>simple correlations</strong> according to a <strong>set of criteria</strong> in the various fields of work or study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ carries out <strong>simple operations</strong> by means of various <strong>instruments</strong> and <strong>easy-to-use machines</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>understands instructions similar</strong> to what has been previously taught</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>can explain the activities s/he has/not done</strong> and the <strong>reasons for this</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3.  Semantic analysis of competences required for BQF Level 2 and EQF Level 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 2 – Competences</th>
<th>EQF Level 2 – Competences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy and Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>✓ <strong>work or study</strong> under <strong>supervision</strong> with <strong>some autonomy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>works</strong> with a relative degree of autonomy in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>familiar contexts</strong>, taking responsibility for the performance of the assigned task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>works in unfamiliar contexts</strong> following the written or oral instructions of the task supervisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>knows</strong> the possibilities and risks of using the acquired technologies <strong>on one’s own</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning Competences**

| ✓ is aware of the possibility to continue his/her education and training |
| ✓ **acknowledges** the need to acquire some key competences (mother tongue, mathematics, computer literacy, etc.) |

**Communicative and Social Competences**

| ✓ **works in a group**, accepts and expresses an opinion and/or criticism |
| ✓ **orients oneself** and acts adequately **in a specific context** |
| ✓ **exchanges** oral and written **information** |
| ✓ **communicates successfully** in a diverse social and cultural environment |

**Professional Competences**

| ✓ carries out **routine tasks** under **unchanging circumstances** |

**Having regard to general education**

The competences set out for level 2 of the NQF in Bulgarian schools are achieved as a result of four-year schooling in the subjects included in the mandatory education.

**Knowledge**

The contents of “basic factual knowledge” of the EQF refers in the BQF not only to the basic material factual knowledge as such but also to the knowledge of the “know-how” type for ways of processing simple information, as well as to the knowledge about main elements of the immediate civic and social environment.
.skills

The “basic cognitive and practical skills” of the EQF are reduced to those necessary for carrying out simple and routine activities. At the same time there is an emphasis on the existence of the aggregate (although limited) of skills for performance of more complex tasks in familiar conditions and for establishing simple interactions in the relevant field of training and work.

.competences

The competences at this level of the BQF are presented in development, as a function of the relation between the conditions of action – familiar or unfamiliar school or work environment, and the level of responsibility and autonomy which corresponds to those conditions.

Communicative and social competences at this BQF level are the basic abilities for formal and informal communication in the immediate school, work and social environment.

having regard to vocational education and training

Knowledge

The knowledge, which is acquired within the VET system progress from factual knowledge about the types of objects and their relations “to perform certain non-complex activities” (first degree of a vocational qualification) to widespread and profound factual and theoretical knowledge about the types of objects, their specific features, structure, purpose and arelations “to perform different activities” (fourth degree of a vocational qualification).

Knowledge, which corresponds to the first degree of a vocational qualification, is in a certain area. The formulation “basic factual knowledge in a field of study” from Level 2 of the BQF fully corresponds to the requirement for “basic factual knowledge in a field of work or study” from Level 2 of the EQF.

Skills:

Learning outcomes relating to “solving routine problems ... and performing routine activities” from Level 2 of the BQF are directly related to “carry out tasks and to solve routine problems” of Level 2 of the EQF. Similarly, the expression “carries out simple operations using various tools and simple machines” from Level 2 of the BQF may be successfully related to “... by using simple rules and tools” from Level 2 of the EQF.

Competences

Autonomy: the formulations “work with some autonomy in familiar conditions ...” and “work in new conditions under written or oral directions...” from Level 2 of the BQF are referenced successfully to the descriptor “work or study under supervision with some autonomy” of Level 2 of the EQF, which means limited autonomy only in familiar conditions. BQF also
includes knowledge of “.... the risks in autonomous application of studied technologies”, which also limits autonomy competences.

Based on this comparison, the qualifications of first degree of a vocational qualification may be placed on BQF Level 2 and may be referred to Level 2 of the EQF.

As illustrative examples concerning the degree of correspondence between the learning outcomes on BQF level 2, and the EQF, respectively with the learning outcomes, which are laid down as requirements in the national legislation in force in the field of VET, the expected learning outcomes from the SERs on acquisition of first degree of a vocational qualification with regards to the professions of a planting layer-out worker [28] and a knitter [29].

Table 5  Comparison between learning outcomes on BQF Level 2 and those described by the SERs on acquisition of a vocational qualification with regards to the professions of worker in gardening and a knitter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 2 – Knowledge (a sample)</th>
<th>SERs „Planting layer-out worker“ – Knowledge:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has <strong>basic factual knowledge</strong> in a given field of study</td>
<td>(from the description of the profession)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ knows <strong>how to extract, select and use simple information</strong></td>
<td>✓ <strong>recognizes the main types</strong> of leaf-decorative and blossoming types of flowers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ <strong>recognizes and describes the inventory into the greenhouses.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERs “Knitter” – Knowledge:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(from the description of the profession)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>knows the major types</strong> of threads and wools used in knitting as well as their characteristics and designation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>knows the major types</strong> of structural elements – stitches (a face and a back one, bending (two stitches knitted together), wool over needle (over) etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>recognizes the graphic markings</strong> of the face, back stitch, wool over needle etc.;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>names the main terms</strong>, which are <strong>used</strong> for making of knit works;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>knows and uses the main stitch-forming elements</strong>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BQF Level 2 – Skills

✓ has basic cognitive and practical skills required to carry out simple tasks, solve routine problems and do routine activities
✓ establishes simple correlations according to a set of criteria in the various fields of work or study
✓ carries out simple operations by means of various instruments and easy-to-use machines
✓ understands instructions similar to what has been previously taught
✓ can explain the activities s/he has/not done and the reasons for this

SERs „Planting layer-out worker“ – Skills:
(from the description of the profession)
✓ takes care of the flowers including crops, spouts and seedings; Performs fertilizing under the supervision of an expert;
✓ takes care of the roses (cuttings, preparing for the winter, uncovering etc.);
✓ grows flower seedlings in compliance with the requirements for performance of the separate operations.

SERs “Knitter” – Skills:
(from the description of the profession)
✓ reads schemes of different types of knit works
✓ knits samples of various types of knit works according to an instruction or a specific scheme;
✓ processes the sample in compliance with the technological requirements.

BQF Level 2 – Competences
(a sample)

Autonomy and Responsibility

✓ works with a relative degree of autonomy in familiar contexts, taking responsibility for the performance of the assigned task
✓ works in unfamiliar contexts following the written or oral instructions of the task supervisor
✓ knows the possibilities and risks of using the acquired technologies on one’s own

SERs „Planting layer-out worker“ – Competences
(from the description of the profession)
✓ addresses the fulfillment of the task, assigned to him/her with the due sense of responsibility;
✓ performs a preliminary preparation of the areas, the processing of the soil; the gathering and collection of seeds, fruit and cuttings, takes out and plants samplings; seeding; processes and maintains lawns, waters etc.

SERs “Knitter” – Competences
(from the description and the aims of the profession)
✓ determines the dimensions of each detail of the article by using the technological card, a scheme or an instruction depending on the type of wool, the needles,
and the knit work.
✓ bears responsibility for the qualitative making of the article, and the material used;
✓ addresses the fulfillment of the task, assigned to him/her with the due sense of responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Competences</th>
<th>SERs “Planting layer-out worker“ – Learning Competences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ is aware of the possibility to continue his/her education and training</td>
<td>(from the aims of the profession)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ acknowledges the need to acquire some key competences (mother tongue, mathematics, computer literacy, etc.)</td>
<td>✓ realizes the need to enhance his/her qualification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicative and Social Competences</th>
<th>SERs „Planting layer-out worker“ – Communicative and Social Competences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ works in a group, accepts and expresses an opinion and/or criticism</td>
<td>(from the aims of the profession)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ orients oneself and acts adequately in a specific context</td>
<td>✓ helps the team members to fulfill their tasks and seeks support from them;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ exchanges oral and written information</td>
<td>✓ communicates efficiently with both his/her colleagues and with his/her direct superior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ communicates successfully in a diverse social and cultural environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Competences</th>
<th>SERs „Planting layer-out worker“ – Competences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ carries out routine tasks under</td>
<td>1. Observes the rules for healthy and safe working conditions and protects the environment while</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
unchanging circumstances performing his/her professional duties

2. Prepares the soil for planting;
3. Plants and maintains tree, bush and flower plants
4. Takes care of plants in decorative seed-beds
5. Takes part in the planting of flowers either in the open or in greenhouses
6. Prepares cut flowers for clients
7. Creates, forms and maintains flower beds
8. Plants and grows various coniferous and deciduous types of trees and bushes
9. Creates and maintains lawns

SERs “Knitter” – Competences

1. Knows and observes the rules for safe and healthy work (The Safe Working Conditions Act)
2. Produces samples of major types of knit works
3. Makes a sample of knit works having different colours
4. Performs completion operations (washing, drying, ironing, connecting of the details and overall formation of the ready article)
5. Prepares the article for the client
6. Produces a single colour or a multi-colour shawl, by hand
7. Knits, by hand, various details for different knitted articles (a jacket, a sweater, a blouse etc.) as per a pattern
8. Knits socks with 5 needles
9. Knits a cover with one knitting-needle
10. Works with the major types of table knitting machines
11. Knits details of knitted articles (a jacket, a sweater, a blouse etc.) at a table knitting machine according to a pattern prepared in advance
4. Level 3 of the BQF

Level 3 of the BQF corresponds to Level 3 of the EQF comprising general education and second degree of a vocational qualification. Table 6.1, Table 6.2 and Table 6.3 show how learning outcomes for BQF Level 3 correspond to those required for Level 3 of the EQF.

- **Having regard to general education**

The knowledge, skills and competences set out for level 3 of the EQF in Bulgarian schools are achieved as the outcome of three-year schooling in the subjects included in the mandatory education.

- **Knowledge:**

At this level, the definition provided in the EQF as “knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study” is presented in the BQF as “expanded knowledge” and is based, mostly, on horizontal expansion of the knowledge including the specified “facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study”. The variety of the types of information is related to the knowledge not only about “extraction, selection and application”, but also about “searching and processing” of information. Some of the basic knowledge in the BQF is the knowledge about human values, democracy and civil society which are the basis of the active citizen’s competences.

- **Skills:**

When presenting the skills, the limited totality of the preceding Level 2 of the BQF is broadened both in respect of the scope and in respect of variety, by type and complexity, of the tasks and problems. The skills for “selection and application of basic methods, tools, materials and information” from the EQF are based in the BQF mostly on the critical attitude to the set study or work situation and on the application of learned methods in new situations similar to familiar ones.

- **Competences**

At this level in the BQF the scope of “taking responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study” from the EQF is dynamically expanded to autonomous work in changing conditions and taking responsibility for completion of tasks in combination with seeking the support of the teacher and classmates in unfamiliar situations. The responsibility level rises both in the performance of tasks and in the autonomous use of information and communication technologies and in the choice of the future professional and personal realization.
Closely relating to the *responsibility and autonomy*, the “adaptation of own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems” from the EQF is developed in this level of the BQF to full-value participation in a group/team, tolerance and support combined with critical attitude to the self and to others. An essential element in the BQF is the ability to participate in civil initiatives at different levels.

❖ *Having regard to vocational education*

❖ *Knowledge*

The learning outcomes at Level 3 of the BQF they are defined as “expanded knowledge in a field of study or work”, as well as knowledge “about the types of objects from a field, their properties, purpose and relations, and sometimes their structure”. The knowledge descriptors for EQF Level 3 refer to “knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts”. Notwithstanding their more detailed description, the descriptors formulated in the BQF are included in the more general description of knowledge at Level 3 of the EQF. The level of knowledge included in this level of the BQF is higher than “basic factual knowledge” from Level 2 of the BQF and lower than “factual and theoretical knowledge in a broad context” of the EQF Level 4. On this basis acquired knowledge corresponding to level 3 of the BQF are successfully referenced to Level 3 of the EQF.

❖ *Skills*

The BQF formulation “upon change in work conditions takes a decision for change” corresponds to “solving problems by selecting and applying”, as per Level 3 of the EQF. The skills at this level include performance of “complex operations using various tools, machines, apparatuses, measuring devices” as per the BQF which corresponds to the definition in the EQF for “selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information”. Indisputably, this level of skills is higher than the level of skills at Level 2 of the EQF at which “routine problems” are solved “by using simple rules and tools”. The skills to “generate solutions to specific problems” defined for Level 4 of the EQF are higher than “takes a decision for change” upon change in work conditions as defined in Level 3 of the BQF. Based on the comparison it may be stated that the description of skills in Level 3 of the BQF correspond to the greatest extent to those in Level 3 of the EQF, despite the difference from their much more general description in the EQF. Notwithstanding the differences in the terminology, the descriptors for level 3 of the two frameworks are completely compatible.

❖ *Competences*
**Autonomy:** The wording “work autonomously in changing conditions” from Level 3 of the BQF correspond to the greatest extent to “adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems” from Level 3 of the EQF. Although “makes assessment of the performance quality ...” from the same BQF level may be related to “self-management skill” in Level 4 of the EQF, the level of this competence as a whole corresponds to the greatest extent to the competences from Level 3 of the EQF.

**Responsibility:** the concepts “bear responsibility for completion of the task” in the BQF and “taking responsibility for completion of tasks” in Level 3 of the EQF are completely identical.

Based on the overall comparison, the learning outcomes at Level 3 of the NQF acquired from vocational education and training correspond to Level 3 of the EQF, i.e. the professions with second-level professional qualification are fully and successfully referenced to Level 3 of the EQF.

*Table 6.1  Semantic analysis of knowledge required for BQF Level 3 and EQF Level 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BQF Level 3 – Knowledge</strong></th>
<th><strong>EQF Level 3 – Knowledge</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ possesses extended knowledge in a given sphere of training, the different spheres of training or job</td>
<td>✓ knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ knows ways of searching, extraction, processing and use of different types of information;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has knowledge about the universal values, the democracy, and the civic society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has knowledge of the type of objects (raw materials, materials, instruments, machines, apparatures and facilities) in a specific field, their properties, purpose and interrelation (technological sequence and requirements for performing various activities), sometimes their structure (composition) as well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ expresses oneself using the corresponding terminology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6.2  Semantic analysis of skills required for BQF Level 3 and EQF Level 3*

| **BQF Level 3 – Skills** | **EQF Level 3 –Skills** |
✓ independently carries out previously acquired tasks (behaviour);
✓ takes a decision for a change following rules and instructions in case the work conditions change
✓ carries out complex operations by means of various instruments, machines, apparatuses, measurement devices.

➢ a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information

Table 6.3 Semantic analysis of competences required for BQF Level 3 and EQF Level 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 3 – Competences</th>
<th>EQF Level 3 – Competences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy and Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>➢ take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ works independently under changing circumstances, takes responsibility to carry out the task assigned and evaluates own performance according to previously established criteria;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ takes a critical attitude in applying independently the acquired technologies;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Competences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ can take decisions about his/her own education and future career development by self-evaluating his/her own competences/qualification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ is aware of the possibility to continue his/her own education and training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ readiness to participate in trainings, recognizing the field in which it is necessary to acquire more knowledge, skills and competences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicative and Social Competences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ communicates effectively with colleagues, clients and direct supervisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ communicates in one’s first and second foreign language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Competences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As an illustrative example for the degree of coherence between the expected learning outcomes on BQF Level 3 and EQF Level 3, respectively, and the expected learning outcomes, which are set up as requirements in the national legislation in force in the field of VET, the expected learning outcomes according to the SERs on acquisition of a vocational qualification in the profession of a planting layer-out [30], with a second degree of a vocational qualification.

Table 7  Comparison between the expected learning outcomes on BQF Level 3 and those described in the SERs on acquisition of a vocational qualification for the profession of a planting layer-out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 3 – Knowledge (a sample)</th>
<th>SERs „Planting Layer-out“ – Knowledge:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ possesses extended knowledge in a given sphere of training, the different spheres of training or job</td>
<td>✓ recognizes the leaf and decorative blooming types of flowers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ knows ways of searching, extraction, processing and use of different types of information;</td>
<td>✓ explains the main environmental requirements applicable to the growing of the flower types;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ expresses oneself using the corresponding terminology</td>
<td>✓ observes the rules;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ observes the deadlines and the technology when feeding with organic and mineral fertilizers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ recognizes the basic groups of roses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ recognizes and describes the inventory in the greenhouses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ recognizes the types and specifics concerning the structure of hothouse and greenhouses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ describes the basic components needed for preparation of soil mixtures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 3 – Skills (a sample)</th>
<th>SERs „Planting Layer-out“ – Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ independently carries out previously acquired tasks (behaviour);</td>
<td>✓ takes care of the flowers including crops, spouts and seedlings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ takes a decision for a change following rules and instructions in case the work conditions change</td>
<td>✓ performs fertilizing observing the norms for the different cultures taking into account the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BQF Level 3 – Competences (a sample)</td>
<td>SERs „Planting Layer-out“ – Competences (from the description of the profession)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy and Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>✓ The planting layer-out may <strong>plant</strong> and <strong>take care</strong> of a tree, bush and flower plants either in the open or in greenhouses, prepares some material for seeding and <strong>performs</strong> propagating of the plants, arranges compositions of flowers, <strong>creates</strong> and <strong>maintains</strong> park architecture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ works independently under changing circumstances, <strong>takes responsibility to carry out the task</strong> assigned and <strong>evaluates own performance</strong> according to previously established criteria;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ takes a critical attitude in <strong>applying independently</strong> the acquired technologies;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Competences</strong></td>
<td><strong>SERs „Planting Layer-out“ – Competences (from the objectives of the profession)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ can take decisions about his/her own <strong>education and future career development</strong> by <strong>self-evaluating</strong> his/her own competences/qualification</td>
<td>✓ <strong>realizes</strong> the need to <strong>enhance</strong> his/her <strong>qualification</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ is aware of the possibility to continue his/her own <strong>education and training</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ readiness to participate in <strong>trainings</strong>, <strong>recognizing</strong> the field in which it is necessary to acquire more <strong>knowledge, skills and competences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communicative and Social Competences

✓ communicates effectively with colleagues, clients and direct supervisor
✓ communicates in one’s first and second foreign language

SERs „Planting Layer-out“ – Competences
(from the objectives of the profession)

✓ Helps the members of the team in the course of performance of their tasks and seeks support from them;
✓ Communicates effectively with colleagues, clients and his/her direct superior.

From the professional competences in the SERs:
✓ Consults the clients on the with reference to the cares, which need to be taken for the flowers (watering, fertilizing, conditions needed for growing, fight with the pests)

Professional Competences

✓ does comprehensive activities under changing circumstances

SERs „Planting Layer-out“ – Competences

1. Observes the rules for healthy and safe working conditions and protects the environment while performing his/her professional duties
2. Prepares the soil for planting
3. Plants and maintains tree, bush and flower plants
4. Performs propagating of the flowers
5. Provides protection of the plants available in the parks
6. Takes care of plants in decorative greenhouses
7. Finds information needed for construction and maintenance of the activities related to growing of flowers and the construction of parks contained into the technical and the technological documentation
8. Takes part in the planting of flowers either in the open or in greenhouses
9. Prepares cut flowers for clients
10. Creates, forms and maintains flower beds
11. Shapes and maintains flowers for decoration and interior greening
12. Takes care of the flowers in the flower shops
13. Arranges bouquets, wreaths, garlands, flowers into a vase
14. Consults the clients on the cares, which need to be taken for the flowers (watering, fertilizing, conditions needed for growing, fight with the pests).

5. Level 4 of the BQF

Level 4 of the BQF (upper secondary education and third degree of a vocational qualification) corresponds to Level 4 of the EQF. The correspondence between the learning outcomes for the two levels is shown in Table 8.1, Table 8.2 and Table 8.3.

❖ Having regard to the general education

➢ Knowledge

The “factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study” of the EQF are defined as “in-depth” in the BQF in view of the fact that it is possible, according to the specifics of the field of work or study, that certain theoretical knowledge has already been mastered at the preceding Level 3. The broad context here is also presented by “know the manner of processing and using complex information” and “have in-depth knowledge about democracy, the civil society and the international legal order”.

➢ Skills

The cognitive and practical skills of the EQF at this level of the BQF expand both in width (“wide range”, “apply alternative methods and ways of action”) and in depth (“solving complex problems”, “apply alternative methods and ways of action in familiar and unfamiliar situations and/or environment”). There is expansion of the skills for taking adequate decisions following in-depth, reasonable assessment of work or study situations and for successful transfer of knowledge and skills between the separate fields of work or study.

➢ Competences
At this level of the BQF autonomy is viewed as “show initiative and ability to set own tasks, to plan and reason own actions” relating to the ability for self-assessment when taking decisions of own personal development. Responsibility is interpreted in a wide range of behaviour and actions such as management and supervision of the work of others, using ICT and personal involvement in social life. Autonomy and responsibility are also at the basis of the skills for successful communication at different study and work levels with autonomous selection of the tools and means for the purpose, and also of the ability for successful practical application of civil literacy and social responsibility.

❖ Having regard to vocational education

❖ Knowledge

The learning outcomes concerning the knowledge at level 4 in both frameworks are described by “factual and theoretical knowledge in a broad context”; in the BQF they are also defined as “advanced”. Knowledge at this level in the BQF are defined in more detail regarding abilities for “… processing and use of complex information”, formulating “instructions, tasks…” and development of “evaluation criteria” which is a specification of the broad context of knowledge at Level 4 of the EQF.

❖ Skills

The cognitive and practical skills included in level 4 of the BQF “organize production process…”, “control and assist the staff…”, “make quality assessment…” and “develop an action plan…” correspond to a higher competence level than the use of a “range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods…” in Level 3 of the EQF, but definitely do not correspond to the skill to “develop creative solutions to abstract problems” in Level 5 of the EQF. The description of the cognitive and practical skills on Level 4 of the BQF correspond to the greatest extent to those in Level 4 of the EQF, despite the difference from their much more general description in the EQF.

❖ Competences

✔ Autonomy: The formulation “work autonomously in changing conditions” in the BQF corresponds to the “self-management skill” on Level 4 of the EQF. The concept of “changing conditions” sums up the defined “work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change” on Level 4 of the EQF. The NQF additionally specifies the learning outcomes related to this competence which are defined by “shows initiative” and “critically rationalizes and evaluates”.
✓ Responsibility: the wording “takes responsibility in supervision or management ...”, “shows ... responsibility in implementation...” and “makes reasoned evaluations both of the team members and of the performance quality” describes competences from BQF Level 4 corresponding to the wording “supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities” in Level 4 of the EQF.

✓ Learning competences and communicative and social competences in the BQF: the competence “evaluate the staff’s need of training and propose suitable options” in the BQF corresponds to “taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities” from the competences at Level 4 of the EQF.

Based on the overall comparison made, the leaning outcomes referring to Level 4 of the NQF acquired in vocational education and training correspond to Level 4 of the EQF, i.e. professions with third-level professional qualification are successfully referenced to Level 4 of the BQF and to Level 4 of the EQF.

Table 8.1  Semantic analysis of knowledge required for BQF Level 4 and EQF Level 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 4 – Knowledge</th>
<th>EQF Level 4 – Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has in-depth factual and theoretical knowledge in a broad context within the fields of study or work</td>
<td>➢ factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ familiarity with ways of processing and using complex information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ expresses verbal and written ideas, formulates instructions, tasks, explanations, using the corresponding terminology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ develops evaluation criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has in-depth knowledge of democracy, civil society and international legal order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2  Semantic analysis of skills required for BQF Level 4 and EQF Level 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 4 – Skills</th>
<th>EQF Level 4 – Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has a wide range of cognitive and practical skills to solve complex problems</td>
<td>➢ a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has creative thinking and employs alternative methods and ways in familiar and/or unfamiliar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>situations or environment</strong></td>
<td>✓ considers and views task and problem results within a field of work or study from different angles according to previously established criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ transfer of knowledge and skills between different fields of study or work in carrying out complex tasks and solving specific problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ organizes an industrial process according to conditions that have become known during study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ can carry out complex operations by means of instruments, machines, apparatuses, measurement devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ controls and helps staff, giving explanations or showing how to do a particular activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ evaluates the quality of the finished product and performance of the team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ develops an action plan using the available resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 8.3. Semantic analysis of competences required for BQF Level 4 and EQF Level 4*
**BQF Level 4 – Competences**

**Autonomy and Responsibility**
- shows initiative and ability to set oneself goals, to plan, justify own actions and take responsibility for them
- takes responsibility while monitoring or supervising the routine work of others
- expresses a critical attitude and takes responsibility while applying the acquired technologies
- overall attitude is one of responsibility and participation in public life
- works independently under changing conditions, taking responsibility to carry out both individual tasks and collective tasks entrusted to the team one is supervising
- makes a motivated evaluation of the team members and the quality of performance

**Learning Competences**
- can take decisions about one’s own education and future career development on the basis of one’s own competences /qualifications
- is aware of further education and training opportunities
- uses various ways of extending and updating his/her own vocational qualification
- recognizes the need for staff training and offers them suitable opportunities

**Communicative and Social Competences**
- works constructively in heterogeneous groups/teams, too
- can communicate in one’s first and second foreign language

**BQF Level 4 – Competences**
- exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change
- supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities
✓ effectively communicates with colleagues in different positions in the corporate hierarchy; negotiates orders
✓ independently decides on the ways of successful public presentation of different types of information in a field of study or work
✓ has mastered mechanisms for constructive social participation and change, applying them in various activities and initiatives

Professional Competences

✓ carries out complex tasks in changing conditions and takes responsibility for the work of others

As an illustrative example for the degree of coherence between the expected learning outcomes on BQF Level 4 and EQF Level 4, respectively, and the expected learning outcomes, which are set up as requirements in the national legislation in force in the field of VET, the expected learning outcomes according to the SERs on acquisition of a vocational qualification in the professions of a planting layer-out technician [31], with a third degree of a vocational qualification, and of a restaurateur [32] with a third degree of a vocational qualification.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 4 – Knowledge (a sample)</th>
<th>SERs „Planting Layer-out Technician“ – Knowledge:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has in-depth factual and theoretical knowledge in a broad context within the fields of study or work</td>
<td>✓ all the knowledge valid for the vocational qualification of a planting layer-out with 2nd degree of a vocational qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ familiarity with ways of processing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and using complex information
✓ expresses verbal and written ideas, formulates instructions, tasks, explanations, using the corresponding terminology
✓ develops evaluation criteria

✓ Uses and complies with the legislative documents, regulating the activities related to the flower growing industry and the construction of parks.
✓ Knows, used and complies with the labour regulation when performing the greening works in the field of construction.
✓ Takes part in the preparation of a cost sheet documentation using a computer installed with a software for creating of a text, a table, a graphic.
✓ Knows the main requirements related to the selection of a flower growing farm site
✓ Knows the structure and the requirements to the dimension of the open, closed and ancillary areas
✓ Knows technological schemes for construction of greenhouses

SERs „Restaurateur” with a 3rd degree of a vocational qualification – expected learning outcomes
✓ Describes the designation, the technical parameters and the requirements for use of the appliances and facilities in the kitchen.

---

**BQF Level 4 – Skills (a sample)**
✓ has a wide range of cognitive and practical skills to solve complex problems
✓ has creative thinking and employs alternative methods and ways in familiar and/or unfamiliar situations or environment
✓ considers and views task and problem results within a field of work or study from different angles according

**SERs „Planting Layer-out Technician“ – Skills:**
✓ Everything valid for the Second degree layer-out
✓ Investigates the market supply and demand and takes part in the drafting of a plan for developing of the enterprise.
✓ Develops and applies a technological scheme for construction of a wind protecting belts, which describes the suitable tree and bush types
✓ Determines the dimension of the open, closed and ancillary areas.
to previously established criteria
✓ transfer of knowledge and skills between different **fields of study or work** in carrying out complex tasks and solving specific problems
✓ **organizes** an industrial process according to conditions that have become known during study
✓ can carry out complex operations by means of instruments, machines, apparatuses, measurement devices
✓ controls and helps staff, giving explanations or showing how to do a particular activity
✓ evaluates the quality of the finished product and performance of the team members
✓ **develops** an action plan using the available resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 4 – Competences (a sample)</th>
<th>SERs „<strong>Restaurateur</strong>“ with a 3rd degree of a vocational qualification – expected learning outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Designs and applies technological schemes for construction of greenhouses.</td>
<td>✓ <strong>Selects</strong> the suitable appliances and kitchen inventory for performance of a specific task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Develops a project for construction of a flower growing farm.</td>
<td>✓ <strong>Elaborates</strong> instructions for using each of the appliances (facilities).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Takes part in the submission and acceptance of sites by preparing part of the documentation.</td>
<td>✓ <strong>Undertakes</strong> protection measures and takes decisions for repair in case of occurrence of problems concerning the functioning of any of the appliances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Manages the technical performance of the green construction sites.</td>
<td>✓ <strong>Controls</strong> the activities related the operation of the appliances in a warranty period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SERs „Planting Layer-out Technician“** (from the description and the objectives of the profession):
### Autonomy and Responsibility

- shows initiative and ability to set oneself goals, to plan, justify own actions and take responsibility for them
- takes responsibility while monitoring or supervising the routine work of others
- expresses a critical attitude and takes responsibility while applying the acquired technologies
- overall attitude is one of responsibility and participation in public life
- works independently under changing conditions, taking responsibility to carry out both individual tasks and collective tasks entrusted to the team one is supervising
- makes a motivated evaluation of the team members and the quality of performance

- The Technician layer-out takes part in the development and technical and technological documentation in the flower growing industry and the construction of parks.
- Organises and manages the effective use of the material and technical equipment.
- Allocates the work between the team members.
- Evaluates the work of each of the team members.
- Organizes the planting and the care for tree, bush and flower plants, either in the open or in greenhouses, prepares saplings and performs propagating of plants, works out projects and arranges and maintains flowers at various sites
- Makes proposals to his/her direct superior for giving awards or for enhancing the qualification of the workers.

### SERs „Restaurateur” with a 3\(^{rd}\) degree of a vocational qualification – from the description of the profession:

- The restaurateur is responsible for the work of the waiter-bartenders, the people responsible for the commercial hall, the cooks, the assistant-cooks, the people responsible for the hygiene and the technologists and reports to the manager and the owner of the place for eating and entertainment.
- In the course of performing his/her duties he/she must bear responsibility both for his/her actions and for those of the staff working at the place for eating and entertainment.

### Learning Competences

- can take decisions about one’s own

### SERs „Planting Layer-out Technician“ – from the objectives of the profession:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education and Future Career Development on the Basis of One’s Own Competences</th>
<th>Realizes His/Her Role in the Activities of the Enterprise and the Need to Enhance His/Her Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Is Aware of Further Education and Training Opportunities</td>
<td>✓ Finds Up-to-Date Information, Concerning the Contemporary Tendencies, New Technologies, Preparations, Machines and Instruments in the Field of Flower Growing and Construction of Parks, Contained in Specialized Editions, on Web Sites, Through Visits of Exhibitions, Trainings Etc., Both in Bulgarian and in a Foreign Language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Uses Various Ways of Extending and Updating His/Her Own Vocational Qualification</td>
<td>✓ Recognizes the Need for Staff Training and Offers Them Suitable Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Recognizes the Need for Staff Training and Offers Them Suitable Opportunities</td>
<td>✓ Realizes His/Her Role in the Activities of the Enterprise and the Need to Enhance His/Her Qualification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Communicative and Social Competences**

| ✓ Works Constructively in Heterogeneous Groups/Teams, Too | SERs „Restaurateur“ with a 3rd degree of a Vocational Qualification – from the Description of the Profession: |
| ✓ Can Communicate in One’s First and Second Foreign Language | ✓ Understands the Role of the Restaurateur in the Field of Service and Realizes the Need to Enhance His/Her Qualification; |
| ✓ Effectively Communicates with Colleagues in Different Positions in the Corporate Hierarchy; Negotiates Orders | ✓ Keeps Up with the Development of the Tourist Industry, Makes Proposals and Organizes the Introduction of Novelties in the Restaurant. |
| ✓ Independently Decides on the Ways of Successful Public Presentation of Different Types of Information in a Field of Study or Work | ✓ Has Mastered Mechanisms for Constructive Social Participation and |
| ✓ Has Mastered Mechanisms for Constructive Social Participation and | SERs „Planting Layer-out Technician“ – from the Learning Outcomes and the Objectives of the Profession: |

**SERs „Planting Layer-out Technician“ – from the Learning Outcomes and the Objectives of the Profession:**

| ✓ Helps the Newly Employed Workers. | ✓ Communicates Efficiently with Colleagues and Clients |

**SERs „Restaurateur“ – 3rd Degree of a Vocational Qualification – from the Description of the Profession:**

- The Restaurateur:
  - Communicates Both with the Guests and with His/Her Colleagues at the Place Eating and Entertainments;
  - Works in a Team with Representatives of the
| change, applying them in various activities and initiatives | other departments into the place for eating and entertainments;  
✓ possesses skills for speaking a foreign languages with the clients of the place for eating and entertainment;  
✓ shows patience, responsiveness, sympathy to the problems and wishes of the clients;  
✓ is tolerant to the gustatory tastes, culture and customs of the guests  
✓ in connection with the task to provide information he/she should have good articulation. |
| Professional Competences | SERs „Planting Layer-out Technician“ – Specialty “Floriculture” (Competencies) |
| ✓ carries out complex tasks in changing conditions and takes responsibility for the work of others | 1. Organizes the observation of the rules for healthy and safe working conditions and the environment protection at the enterprise  
2. Prepares the soil for planting  
3. Plants and maintains tree, bush and flower plants  
4. Performs propagating of the plants  
5. Provides protection of the plants available in the parks  
6. Takes care of plants in decorative greenhouses  
7. Takes part in the technical and technological documentation, finds information needed for construction and maintenance of the activities related to growing of flowers and the construction of parks  
8. Takes part in the management of a greening firm  
9. Organizes the growing of flowers either in the open or in greenhouses  
10. Prepares cut flowers for clients  
11. Creates, forms and maintains flower beds  
12. Shapes and maintains flowers for decoration |
13. **Knows and applies** the technologies for creating of a flower growing farm
14. **Takes care** of the flowers in a flower shops
15. **Arranges** bouquets, wreaths, garlands, flowers into a vase
16. **Consults** the clients on the with reference to the cares, which need to be taken for the flowers

From the objectives of the profession:
✓ **Allocates the work between the team members, evaluates** them.

**SERs „Restaurateur”– 3rd degree of a vocational qualification – Competences:**

1. **Maintenance of the hygiene in the place for eating or entertainment**
   1.1. **Establishes conditions for and controls** the observance of the rules for healthy and safe work as well as the sanitary and the hygienic requirements applicable to the hotel and restaurant management field
   1.2. **Control** the observance of the rules for preventing of the environmental pollution.

2. **Drafting and planning of menus, determining the prices of the products and services offered**
   2.1. **Plans** the menu together with the manager of the restaurant
   2.2. **Organizes** the introduction of new dishes in view of the periodical modification of the menu.

3. **Organization of the supply and storage of foodstuffs**
   3.1. **Makes** orders
   3.2. **Organizes and controls** the delivery of products and other goods
   3.3. **Organizes and controls** the storage of the
6. **BQF Level 5**

Level 5 of the NQF corresponds to level 5 of the EQF and only comprises vocational training – fourth level of professional qualification. The correspondence between the learning outcomes is illustrated in Table 10.1, Table 10.2 and Table 10.3.

➤ **Knowledge**

The factual and theoretical knowledge described as “advanced... in a broad context...” on Level 5 of the BQF are described as “comprehensive, specialised” knowledge on Level 5 of the EQF. The BQF includes knowledge related to “... processing, using and analyzing complex specific information”, to “…process planning, organization and control” and to development of “evaluation criteria” which essentially presuppose the existence of formed “comprehensive, specialised” knowledge, as per the description of knowledge as learning outcomes in Level 5 of the EQF.

![Table 10.1 Semantic analysis of knowledge required for BQF Level 5 and EQF Level 5](image)
organization and control of processes in a particular field of activity
✓ develops assessment criteria

**Skills**

“Make proposals for optimization of activities” in the BQF corresponds to skills to “develop creative solutions to abstract problems” in level 5 of the EQF. The cognitive skills to “plan, organize and control ... the production process”, and also to “develop an action plan...” from Level 5 of the BQF correspond to “a comprehensive range of cognitive skills...” described for Level 5 of the EQF, and “performs complex operations”, “controls and assists the staff” and “makes reasoned quality assessment” suggest the existence of a “comprehensive range of practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems” as per the description of skills as learning outcomes for Level 5 of the EQF. These skills are at a lower level compared to the skills “…to solve complex and unpredictable problems” formulated at Level 6 of the EQF.

**Table 10.2  Semantic analysis of skills required for BQF Level 5 and EQF Level 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 5 – Skills</th>
<th>EQF Level 5 – Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ plans, organizes and controls activities, including an industrial process</td>
<td>✓ a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ makes a motivated evaluation of the quality of performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ makes proposals for performance optimization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ possesses business communication skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ carries out complex operations by means of various instruments, machines, apparatuses, measurement devices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ controls and helps staff, providing explanations or demonstrating how to do a particular activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ evaluates product quality and the performance of the team members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ develops an action plan, using the available resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
makes proposals for improving the equipment, staff and the activities of the organization

- **Competences:**

  - **Autonomy and responsibility competences:**
    - “Work autonomously in changing conditions...” for this level of the BQF defines a high level of autonomy which is included in the meaning of “work or study activities where there is unpredictable change” on Level 5 of the EQF.
    - “Bear responsibility for the work of the team they are in charge of” and “bear responsibility for the proper use of equipment and facilities” defined in the BQF correspond to “exercise management and supervision...” on Level 5 of the EQF”.

  - **Learning competences:** – “Evaluate omissions in their knowledge, skills and competences and take measures for improving their qualification” and “use various ways to expand and update their professional qualification” from Level 5 of the BQF fully corresponds to “review and develop performance of self” on Level 5 of the EQF. The description of the competences “evaluate the need for staff training and propose suitable options” on Level 5 of the BQF fully corresponds to the description of the competences “review and develop ... performance of others” on Level 5 of the EQF.

Based on the comparison made between the descriptors of the two qualifications frameworks, the qualifications of the fourth-level professional qualification may be successfully referenced to Level 5 of the EQF and Level 5 of the BQF.

---

**Table 10.3  Semantic analysis of competences required for BQF Level 5 and EQF Level 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 5 – Competences</th>
<th>EQF Level 5 – Competences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy and Responsibility</td>
<td>exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ works independently under changing conditions, taking responsibility to carry out both individual tasks and collective tasks entrusted to the team one is supervising</td>
<td>✓ review and develop performance of self and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ bears responsibility for the performance of the team one is supervising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
- makes a motivated evaluation of team and the quality of performance
- takes responsibility for the appropriate use of the equipment
- feels a strong sense of responsibility and participates actively in public life

**Learning Competences**
- recognises the gaps in one’s own knowledge, skills and competences and takes the necessary actions to improve one’s own qualification by self-study and participation in seminars, trainings, etc.
- uses various ways of expanding and updating one’s own vocational qualification
- recognizes the need for staff training and offers them suitable opportunities

**Communicative and Social Competences**
- communicates effectively at different levels
- manages the performance of working groups/teams
- presents publicly different types of information
- makes analyses, oral and written presentations, formulates instructions, tasks, and explanations, using the corresponding terminology both in Bulgarian and in a foreign language

**Professional Competences**
- carries out comprehensive tasks under changing circumstances, takes managerial responsibility for the performance of others and allocation of recourses
As an illustrative example for the degree of coherence between the expected learning outcomes on BQF Level 5 and EQF Level 5, respectively, and the expected learning outcomes, which are set up as requirements in the national legislation in force in the field of VET, the expected learning outcomes according to the SERs on acquisition of a vocational qualification in the professions of a restaurateur [32] with a fourth degree of a vocational qualification.

Table 11: Comparison between the expected learning outcomes on BQF Level 5 and those described in the SERs on acquisition of a vocational qualification for the professions of a restaurateur with 4th degree of a vocational qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NQF Level 5 – Knowledge</th>
<th>SERs „Restaurateur” – 4th degree of a vocational qualification – learning outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has in-depth factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of study or work</td>
<td>✓ Describes the designation, the technical parameters and the requirements related to the use of the appliances and the facilities in the kitchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ knows how to process, use and analyze complex specific information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ is familiar with the principles of planning, organization and control of processes in a particular field of activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ develops assessment criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 5 – Skills</th>
<th>SERs „Restaurateur” – 4th degree of a vocational qualification – learning outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ plans, organizes and controls activities, including an industrial process</td>
<td>✓ Controls the use of appliances and kitchen inventory in the course of the performance of a specific task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ makes a motivated evaluation of the quality of performance</td>
<td>✓ Elaborates instructions for using of each of the appliances (facilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ makes proposals for performance optimization</td>
<td>✓ Makes evaluation of the efficiency of the use of the appliances and the facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ possesses business communication skills</td>
<td>✓ Undertakes protective measures and takes decisions for making repairs in case of occurrence of problems with the functioning of any of the appliances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ carries out complex operations by means of various instruments, machines, apparatuses, measurement devices</td>
<td>✓ Controls the activities related to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ controls and helps staff, providing explanations or demonstrating how to do a particular activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
✓ evaluates product quality and the performance of the team members
✓ develops an action plan, using the available resources
✓ makes proposals for improving the equipment, staff and the activities of the organization.

repair and operation of the appliances in a warranty period.
✓ Analyzes the work in the kitchen and makes proposals for purchasing of new equipment.

**BQF Level 5 – Competences**

**Autonomy and Responsibility**

✓ works independently under changing conditions, taking responsibility to carry out both individual tasks and collective tasks entrusted to the team one is supervising
✓ bears responsibility for the performance of the team one is supervising
✓ makes a motivated evaluation of team and the quality of performance
✓ takes responsibility for the appropriate use of the equipment
✓ feels a strong sense of responsibility and participates actively in public life

**SERs „Restaurateur”– 4th degree of a vocational qualification – from the description of the profession:**

The restaurateur:

✓ bears responsibility for the work of the waiter-bartenders, the persons responsible for the commercial hall, the cooks, and the assistant-cooks, the persons responsible for the hygiene and the technologists and, also, reports to the owner of the place for eating and entertainment.
✓ evaluates each of the staff members, makes proposals for premiums, penalties or enhancement of the qualification of separate workers.
✓ is responsible for the proper operation of the equipment in all rooms of the place for eating and entertainment.
✓ is responsible for the proper functioning of the equipment in all rooms of the place for eating and entertainments (a kitchen unit, a commercial hall, a lobby, toilets etc.).

**Learning Competences**

✓ recognises the gaps in one’s own knowledge, skills and competences and takes the necessary actions to improve one’s own qualification by self-study and participation in

SERs „Restaurateur”– 4th degree of a vocational qualification – from the description of the profession:

✓ Realizes the need to enhance his/her qualification;
seminars, trainings, etc.
✓ uses various ways of expanding and updating one’s own vocational qualification recognizes the need for staff training and offers them suitable opportunities
✓ independently informs himself/herself about the development of the tourist industry, organizes the introduction of novelties in the restaurant.

**Communicative and Social Competences**
✓ communicates effectively at different levels
✓ manages the performance of working groups/teams
✓ presents publicly different types of information
✓ makes analyses, oral and written presentations, formulates instructions, tasks, and explanations, using the corresponding terminology both in Bulgarian and in a foreign language

SERs „Restaurateur”– 4th degree of a vocational qualification – from the description of the profession:
The restaurateur:
✓ communicates both with the guests and with his/her colleagues at the place for eating and entertainments;
✓ works in a team with representatives of the other departments into the place for eating and entertainments;
✓ possesses skills for speaking a foreign languages with the clients of the place for eating and entertainment;
✓ shows patience, responsiveness, sympathy to the problems and wishes of the clients;
✓ is tolerant to the gustatory tastes, culture and customs of the guests
✓ in connection with the task to provide information he/she should have good articulation.

**Professional Competences**
✓ carries out comprehensive tasks under changing circumstances, takes managerial responsibility for the performance of others and allocation of recourses

SERs „Restaurateur”– 4th degree of a vocational qualification – Competences:
1. Maintenance of the hygiene in the place for eating or entertainment
1.1. Establishes conditions for and controls the observance of the rules for healthy and safe work as well as the sanitary and the hygienic requirements applicable to the hotel and restaurant management field.
2. Drafting and planning of menus, determining the prices of the products and services offered
   2.1. Plans the menu
   2.2. Organizes the introduction of new dishes in view of the periodical modification of the menu
   2.3. Keeps a record of the expense in compliance with the legislative requirements

3. Planning and control of the supply and storage of foodstuffs
   3.1. Plans the purchasing of foodstuffs, drinks etc.
   3.2. Organizes and controls the delivery of products and other goods
   3.3. Organizes and controls the storage of the foodstuffs, used for the preparation of culinary products

4. Working in the kitchen
   4.1. Organizes and controls the effective use of the kitchen appliances and facilities
   4.2. Organizes and controls the work of the staff in the course of preparing the food
   4.3 Controls the quality of the food while preparing and serving the latter.

5. Communication with clients
   5.1. Registers reservations
   5.2. Controls and takes part in the offering and serving of dishes and drinks, cigarettes and cigars.

6. Arranging of the place for eating and entertainments
   6.1. Controls the arranging of the environment
6.2. **Controls** the arranging of the utensils at the tables
6.3. Creates a hospitable atmosphere by arranging the tables in a functional and attractive way
6.4. **Controls** the availability of drinks in the winery and in the bar of the restaurant

7. **Developing of catering events**
7.1. **Researches the supply and demand of catering services**
7.2. **Develops (designs) and offers a catering event**
7.3. **Controls the realization of a catering event**

8. **Planning and management of the work in the places for eating and entertainments**
8.1. **Organizes the marketing activities of the place for eating and entertainments**
8.2. **Manages the budget** of the restaurant
8.3. **Controls the work of the staff in the restaurant**

7. **Level 6 of the BQF**

Level 6 of the BQF comprises the educational and qualification degrees of “Professional Bachelor in...” and ”Bachelor”. The qualifications acquired at those educational and qualification levels correspond to those at Level 6 of the EQF and to those acquired in the first cycle of the Bologna process.

The expected knowledge, skills and competences in the learning outcomes those in educational and qualification degrees are defined in the Law on Higher Education (1995) and in the relevant state requirements, and are bound with the required education credits and length of study according to the requirements of the Bologna process.

According to Article 42, paragraph 2 of the Law on Higher Education, study for a Bachelor’s degree under paragraph 1, subparagraph 1 (“**Professional Bachelor**”) in accordance with the curriculum provides **wide-profile education** or **specialized professional training** on professional fields and majors. According to Article 42, paragraph 3 of the Law on Higher
Education, study for a **Master’s** degree provides **profound fundamental education** combined with **profiling in a definite major (a specialty)**.

According to Article 2, paragraph 3, paragraph 4 and paragraph 5 of the Ordinance on the state requirements for acquiring higher education for the education and qualification degrees of Bachelor, Master and Specialist (Professional Bachelor since 2007), education in the mandatory subjects provides **fundamental education** of students in the chosen **wide-profile specialty** from the professional field; elective subjects provide **specific knowledge and competences from the field of the specialty**, and optional subjects allow obtaining **knowledge and skills in various scientific areas** in accordance with students’ interests.

According to Article 4, paragraph 1 of the same Ordinance the higher education institutions organize the training for obtaining a Bachelor’s degree which provides:

1. Obtaining an overall idea of the nature of the professional field and specialty;
2. Learning wide-profile theoretical knowledge and practical skills;
3. Adaptability skills in accordance with the changing conditions in specialist’s careers;
4. Obtaining skills for autonomous professional work and for teamwork;
5. Conditions for educational mobility and international comparability of obtained knowledge and acquired skills.

The education received enables graduates who have acquired a Bachelor’s degree:

1. To practice professions in accordance with the acquired knowledge and professional qualification;
2. To continue their training for higher education and qualification degrees;
3. To participate in various forms of lifelong learning.

**Knowledge:**

The advanced knowledge in a field of work or study required for Level 6 of the EQF involving a critical understanding of theories and principles are interpreted in the expected learning outcomes on Level 6 of the BQF, as is shown in Table 12.1, as follows:

- Has and uses detailed, theoretical and specific practical knowledge and makes critical analysis of principles and processes – “Professional Bachelor in..”;
- Has wide and advanced theoretical and factual knowledge in the field, including knowledge regarding the latest achievements in it, which also corresponds to the learning outcomes required for the first cycle of QF/EHEA in respect of showing knowledge and understanding in the field, and also including some aspects of modern and progressive knowledge in the field and autonomously **interprets** the obtained knowledge connecting it
to application of facts and by critical learning, understanding and expressing theories and principles (Bachelor).

Table 12.1  Semantic analysis of the knowledge required at Level 6 of the BQF, Level 6 of the EQF and 1st cycle of QF-EHEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 6 – Knowledge</th>
<th>EQF Level 6 – Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Bachelor</strong></td>
<td>➢ advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has and uses detailed, theoretical and concrete practical knowledge in the field of study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ makes a critical analysis of principles and processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bachelor</strong></td>
<td>КРЕПВО цикъл – знания</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has extensive and in-depth theoretical and factual knowledge in a field of study, including knowledge relating to the latest achievements</td>
<td>➢ have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ interprets the acquired knowledge independently, relating it to facts and critical perception, comprehension and formulation of theories and principles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example: A Bachelor in Primary School Pedagogy and a Foreign Language – Knowledge**

✓ has expanded theoretical, procedural and factual knowledge in the field of school education and school didactics; the general age, and pedagogic psychology; the subjects he/she is going to teach; the school subject didactics (methodologies), including the didactic of the foreign language teaching at the primary stage of the basic general school; the state documents, policies and requirements (standards) for school education.

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**Skills**

The “advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field of work or study” are interpreted in the expected
learning outcomes for Level 6 of the BQF as shown in Table 12.2. The “advanced skills” expected for this level of the EQF are specified in the NQF as follows:

✓ Has mastery of the methods and means in the field and applied professionally the knowledge and the acquired practical experience by new, non-standard approaches and well-reasoned solutions (“Professional Bachelor in.”);
✓ Has mastery of methods and means allowing the solving of complex tasks and applies logical thinking and innovation and creative approach when solving non-standard problems (Bachelor);

These fully correspond to the ability for application the knowledge and understanding in a manner showing professional approach in work as required for the first cycle of QF/EHEA.

Table 12.2  Semantic analysis of the skills required at Level 6 of the BQF, Level 6 of the EQF and 1st cycle of QF-EHEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 6 – Skills</th>
<th>EQF Level 6 – Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Bachelor</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has mastered the methods and means in the field of study</td>
<td>➢ advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ applies the acquired knowledge and practical experience in a professional way, adopting innovative, unconventional approaches and making well-justified decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bachelor</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ able to use methods and means which allow for the accomplishment of complex tasks</td>
<td>➢ can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ applies logical thinking, shows creativity and takes novel approaches in carrying out unconventional tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Example: A Bachelor in Pre-school and Primary School Pedagogy*

➢ has skills for: performance of governance functions related to the processes of education and upbringing in the kindergarten; of education and training in the class; application of the
contemporary technologies of pedagogical relations in the kindergarten; application of the contemporary technologies for education and training in the preparatory group and at the initial stage of the Secondary General School in compliance with the specifics of the primary school aged students; application of diverse strategies and resources for education and training; effective use of the monitoring and the specifics of supporting and assessing the children in the kindergarten, the preparatory group and the pupils at the primary stage of basic education; assigning home works and outdoor activities; working with children at an unequal social standing (including with special education needs); assessing the efficiency of the training and upbringing.

- demonstrates divergent and innovative thinking when solving problems related with the variable conditions of the environment.

- **Competences**

The competences required for Level 6 of the EQF to “manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts” are interpreted in the competences expected for Level 6 of the BQF as:

- taking responsibility for implementation teams and resources, including in extreme situations during operation of sites and management of structures, as well as taking responsibility during operation of sites and showing creative thinking and practical skills in the development and implementation of projects taking into account numerous factors (“Professional Bachelor in..”);

- Has ability for administrative management of complex professional activities, including teams and resources; takes responsibilities in decision-making in complex conditions, under the influence of various interacting and unpredictable factors; shows creativity and initiative in management activities (Bachelor);

The competences “take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups” required for the same level in the EQF correspond to the competences required for level 6 of the NQF for assessing the others’ need of training for improving the team’s efficiency.

The competences required for the first cycle of QF-EHEA related to gathering and interpretation of data (usually in the studied field) in order to form judgments, including reflection on social, scientific or ethical issues, are interpreted in the BQF as:

- Gathering, processing and analyzing data to optimization or final solutions or innovative ideas in order to form convincing opinions, by using qualitative and quantitative facts, arguments and criteria, with contribution when solving operating problems in standard and non-standard situations (“Professional Bachelor in..”);
Gathering, classifying, evaluation and interpretation of data from a field for solving particular problems, expressing attitude to and understanding of the issue, by applying methods related to qualitative and quantitative descriptions and evaluations (Bachelor). These also relate to application of acquired knowledge and skills in a wider or multidisciplinary context, and also by using new strategic approaches.

The social, scientific or ethical aspects for level 6 of the EQF are specified in the BQF as follows:

- Comprehensible presentation of views on private and global problems, assessing and accepting interlocutors’ arguments, showing of commitment and solidarity with others; finding solutions of problems of social, moral and ethical nature, especially in teamwork and training (“Professional Bachelor in..”);
- Demonstration of a broad personal outlook and expressing understanding and solidarity with others; formulating and expressing own opinion on problems of public and ethical character arising in the course of work (Bachelor);

In addition, the BQF also specifies the expected learning competences for the two education and qualification degrees. They relate to self-evaluation of the learner’s knowledge, skills and competences, formulation of educational needs, and to assessing the need of further training for raising the qualification or re-qualification. The duration of training in these two education and qualification degrees and the required educational credits correspond to those of the first cycle of the Bologna process.

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**Table 12.3  Semantic analysis of the competences required at Level 6 of the BQF, Level 6 of the EQF and 1st cycle of QF-EHEA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 6 – Competences</th>
<th>ЕКР Ниво 6 – компетентности</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy and Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>➢ <strong>manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility</strong> for decision-making in <strong>unpredictable work or study contexts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Bachelor</strong></td>
<td>➢ <strong>take responsibility</strong> for managing <strong>professional development</strong> of individuals and groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- takes responsibility for managing high performance teams and resources, including in extreme situations during site operation and structure
**management**

✓ has creative thinking and practical skills in project development and implementation, considering the influence of a variety of factors
✓ takes responsibility during site operation
✓ can evaluate one’s own and other people’s performance
✓ manages teamwork and provides professional trainings to staff

**Autonomy and Responsibility**

**Bachelor**

✓ possesses a capability for administrative management of complex professional activities, including teams and resources
✓ assumes responsibility for taking decisions in adverse circumstances under the influence of a variety of interacting factors which are hard to foresee
✓ shows creativity and initiative in management
✓ recognizes the need for staff training with the purpose of increasing staff effectiveness

**Learning Competences**

**Professional Bachelor**

**Example: A Bachelor in Social Pedagogy – competences for autonomy and responsibility:**

✓ Is able to: realize the effective personal and professional behaviour and envisaging its consequences; for reflection and self-governance of his/her professional activities; for inclusion of a socially responsible behaviour within the existing organizational strategies, systems, practices and processes; a conscientious (reasonable) attitude to the requirements of the social and moral needs, to his/her professional and civic duty, to the professional tasks; sense of initiative and creative approach to the solving of problems and conflicts within the context of the social and pedagogic and social institutions, as well as their internal environment; adequate reacting to various economic, cultural, social, educational, health and environmental issues; critical thinking and metacognitions.

**QF-EHEA 1st Cycle – Competences**

➢ have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study
➢ have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues

**Examples: A Bachelor in Pre-school and Primary School Pedagogy and A Bachelor in**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Primary School Pedagogy and a Foreign Language – Learning Competences</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Is able to: <strong>evaluate</strong> the level of his/her own schooling and qualification; for systematic independent <strong>training</strong>; a strive for <strong>continuous learning</strong>; planning of the venue and terms for enhancing his/her qualification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Example: A Bachelor in Social Pedagogy–Learning Competences</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ The above mentioned plus takes care of performing his/her professional activity with new social-pedagogic technologies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Communicative and Social Competences</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Bachelor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ analyses ideas, addresses problems and proposes solutions in professional contexts to equals and seniors higher up in the hierarchy as well as to non-specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ formulates a convicting opinions based on qualitative and quantitative facts, arguments and criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ presents one’s own views on particular and global issues clearly, judges and accepts the arguments of interlocutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ demonstrates commitment and solidarity towards others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ can communicate effectively in some of the most commonly used European languages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Example: Bachelor in Pre-school and Primary School Pedagogy</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ✓ Communicative competence: knowledge about the cultural norms and restrictions in the communication and interaction, orientation in the field of customs, traditions and etiquette related to them, use of verbal and non-verbal communication means, typical for the national and professional mentality, expressed within the framework of the teaching profession; application of the knowledge and views about the native, official and foreign language/s according to the relevant communication situation; mutual understanding, cooperation and listening; systematic and understandable presentation and dialogue related to a certain topic. Inclusion of the children from the kindergarten, from the preparatory group and/or
### Bachelor Competences

- **clear formulation and expression** of ideas, problems and solutions before experts and non-experts
- **expresses an opinion and shows understanding** of issues, using methods based on qualitative and quantitative descriptions and evaluation
- Has a broad outlook on life and shows understanding and solidarity towards others
- Can communicate effectively in some of the most commonly used European languages

### Professional Competences

**Professional Bachelor**

- **gathers, processes and analyses data** with the purpose of optimization and/or final solutions or innovative ideas
- **contributes** to the completion of operative tasks in conventional and unconventional situations
- **settles social, moral and ethic issues**, especially in teamwork and trainings

### Example: Bachelor in Social Pedagogy – Professional Competences

Motivates and creates adjustments for achievement of standard and challenging objectives of the social and pedagogic work; demonstrates confident and professional behaviour in the application of the social and pedagogic technologies; applies the theories of learning and teaching; uses diverse strategies, models and resources for social and pedagogic work; applies the technologies for upbringing in their diversity; uses Information and Communication Technologies; demonstrates effective skills for asking questions and maintenance of feedback; explains and replies to questions of the consumers; knows the requirements and uses the instruments for measurement and evaluation of the status and
or interdisciplinary contexts
✓ adopts new strategic approaches; formulates and expresses own opinion about social and ethical issues arising during work

the needs of the consumers of the social and pedagogic work; creates safe environment in the social or the social and pedagogic institution; encourages the diversity and the equity of the children; establishes a clear framework of the discipline and encouraging of the self-control, the self-evaluation and their independence;
works in a team and adopts efficient practices, knows and applies strategies for management of the groups of consumers; shows positive expectations to the children and undertakes the engagement to realize its personal potential and establishes fair, trustful and constructive relations with them; shows the positive values and attitudes, which the children expect; shows skills for resolving pedagogic and other conflicts; applies various forms of working with other institutions, including of parents, relatives, close family and friends and some other socially responsible people and organizations in view of enhancing the efficiency of his/her social and pedagogic activity.

Table 13 Analysis of learning outcomes for BQF Level 6 (Bachelor and Professional Bachelor degrees) and those described in the national legislation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 6 – Bachelor – learning outcomes (a sample)</th>
<th>Examples of expected learning outcomes for BQF Level 6 according to the national legislation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has extensive and in-depth theoretical and factual knowledge in a field of study, including knowledge relating to the latest achievements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ applies the acquired knowledge and practical experience in a professional way,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• According to Article 42, Paragraph 2 of the Higher Education Act training for acquiring a Bachelor degree according to Paragraph 1, item 1 in line with the syllabus provides a widespread profile preparation or specialized professional preparation within</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
adopting **innovative, unconventional approaches** and making well-justified decisions

✓ **applies logical thinking**, shows **creativity** and takes **novel approaches** in **carrying out unconventional tasks**

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 6 – Professional Bachelor – learning outcomes (a sample)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has and uses <strong>detailed, theoretical and concrete practical knowledge</strong> in the field of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has mastered the methods and means in the field of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>applies</strong> the acquired knowledge and <strong>practical experience</strong> in a <strong>professional way</strong>, adopting innovative, unconventional approaches and making well-justified decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ takes responsibility for <strong>managing high performance teams and resources</strong>, including in extreme situations during <strong>site operation</strong> and structure management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has <strong>creative thinking</strong> and <strong>practical skills</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**professional fields and specialties.**

- **Article 4, Paragraph 1 of the Ordinance on the state requirements for acquisition of a higher education at Bachelor, Master and Specialist degrees** stipulates that higher education institutions organize training for acquisition of a Bachelor degree, which ensures:
  1. a complete notion about the characted of the professional field and of the specialty;
  2. mastering **wide-spread profiled theoretical knowledge** and practical skills;
  3. skills for **adaptivity** in line with **changing circumstances** on the labour market;
  4. acquisition of **skills** for **independent professional work** and for a **team-work**.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 6 – Professional Bachelor – learning outcomes (a sample)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Article 4, Paragraph 1 of the Ordinance on the state requirements for acquisition of a higher education at Bachelor, Master and Specialist degrees</strong> stipulates that colleges organize training for acquisition of the educational and qualification degree of a Specialist (since 2007 – Professional Bachelor), which provides:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>theoretical training</strong> giving knowledge from the foundation of the professional field;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>specialized and technological training</strong> according to the specialities provided by the college;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>practical training</strong> for the concrete specialty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
in project development and implementation, considering the influence of a variety of factors
✓ analyses ideas, addresses problems and proposes solutions in professional contexts to equals and seniors higher up in the hierarchy as well as to non-specialists
✓ gathers, processes and analyses data with the purpose of optimization and/or final solutions or innovative ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. Level 7 of the BQF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 7 of the BQF comprises the educational and qualification degree of a Master. The qualifications acquired at this educational and qualification level correspond to those of Level 7 of the EQF and to those acquired in the second cycle of the Bologna process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The expected knowledge, skills and competences in the learning outcomes in those educational and qualification degrees are defined in the Higher Education Act (1995) and in the relevant state requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

➢ Knowledge

The highly specialized knowledge as a basis for innovative thinking and/or research defined for Level 7 of the EQF correspond to the highly specialized practical and theoretical knowledge defined for Level 7 of the BQF, from specialized to highly specialized in the respective field which build upon the achievements in the preceding level, specialize and extend the learning in the field, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge forming the basis for original thinking in the development and implementation of new ideas and solutions. Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field at the interface between different fields (level 7 of the EQF) in Level 7 of the BQF is related to the following learning outcomes: “makes critical analysis of principles and processes” and “shows critical awareness of knowledge in a field and the connections between the different studied fields”. These two learning outcomes under EQF and the BQF successfully refer to the requirement in the second cycle of QF-EHEA for demonstration of knowledge and understanding that builds upon the learning from the 1st cycle of the QF-EHEA and provides a basis for originality and applying ideas within a research context as shown in Table 14.1.
Table 14.1  Semantic analysis of the knowledge required at Level 7 of the BQF, Level 7 of the EQF and the 2nd cycle of QF-EHEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 7 – Master – Knowledge</th>
<th>EQF Level 7 – Knowledge</th>
<th>QF-EHEA 2nd Cycle – Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has a wide spectrum of theoretical and practical knowledge, part of which is specialized knowledge in the respective field, which serves to broaden the knowledge acquired during the previous education stage</td>
<td>✓ highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research</td>
<td>✓ have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ knows and expresses theories, concepts, principles and observation of certain laws</td>
<td>✓ critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has highly specialized practical and theoretical knowledge, incl. avant-garde knowledge, which serves as a basis for originality in developing and applying new ideas and solutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ demonstrates critical understanding of the knowledge in the field of study and interdisciplinary relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

➢ Skills

The “specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields” described at Level 7 of the EQF are defined in more detail in the BQF as a “wide range of practical and cognitive skills and approaches required for understanding abstract problems and development of creative solutions”. An important aspect of problem-solving is problem identification, and the learner relies on modern research by integrating knowledge from new or multidisciplinary fields and show ability for generation of new knowledge and procedures related to scientific research and innovations. This is a prerequisite for mastering the foundation of scientific research, applied research and/or artistic and creative activity, which are pointed out as a requirement in Article 9, Paragraph 2, Item 2 of the Ordinance on the state requirements for acquisition of a higher education at Bachelor, Master and Specialist degrees. The description of
the learning outcomes on BQF Level 7 corresponds to the requirements for the 2nd cycle of QF-EHEA relating to the skill to apply the knowledge and understanding and the problem-solving capacity.

The learning outcomes mentioned above should be achieved through profound fundamental preparation combined with profiling in a particular specialty (Article 42, Paragraph 3 of the Higher Education Act), including through an additional wide-spread profiled and interdisciplinary preparation for holders of a Bachelor or a Master degree in another specialty, as well as in a result of profound theoretical research and specialized training with respect to the particular specialty.

The extent of indefiniteness in problem solving in a new or unfamiliar environment according to the 2nd cycle of QF-EHEA is specified in the BQF as “work and study in a complex and unpredictable environment requiring solving problems with numerous interacting factors” and “forming adequate judgment in situations characterized by incomplete or limited information and unpredictability”, “demonstrating free application of innovative methods and instruments in solving complex tasks and unpredictable problems in a specialized field of work”. This corresponds to the development of abilities for adaptation under social, economic and technological changes, which are pointed out in Article 9, Paragraph 2, Sub-paragraph 4 of the Ordinance on the state requirements for acquisition of a higher education at Bachelor, Master and Specialist degree. The wider (or interdisciplinary) context, according to the 2nd cycle of the QF-EHEA, corresponds to the integration of knowledge from new or interdisciplinary fields, including with aim to conduct scientific research and to introduce innovations, which are included for BQF Level 7. In relation to this, the development of new and diverse skills in a response to newly coming knowledge and practices is essential. An important aspect considering the autonomous and responsibility competences in professional context is the demonstration of initiative in work and study in a complex and unpredictable environment requiring solving problems involving numerous interacting factors.

Table 14.2. Semantic analysis of the skills required at Level 7 of the BQF, Level 7 of the EQF and the 2nd cycle of QF-EHEA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BQF Level 7 – Master – Skills</strong></th>
<th><strong>EQF Level 7 – Skills</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has a wide range of practical and cognitive skills in different fields of study <strong>required to understand</strong> abstract problems and <strong>develop creative solutions</strong></td>
<td>✓ <strong>specialised problem-solving skills required</strong> in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ carries out problem diagnostics and solving, based on contemporary research through integrating knowledge from new or interdisciplinary fields, which are related to implementation of research and introduction of innovations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ makes an adequate assessment of situations with insufficient or limited data and unpredictability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ develops new and various skills as a response to emerging knowledge and practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>freely employs innovative methods and instruments in solving complicated and unpredictable problems</strong> in a specialized field of work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>finds and supports arguments</strong> in solving interdisciplinary problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>shows initiative</strong> in a field of work and study in complex unpredictable contexts which required <strong>finding solutions to problems with a number of interacting factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Competences**

The competences required for Level 7 of the EQF relating to managing and transforming work and study contexts which are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches are specified for Level 7 of the BQF as follows:
✓ Skills related to building administrative and organizational structures and autonomous team management for solving complex problems in an unpredictable environment involving numerous interacting factors and variable options;

✓ Demonstrating control in operative interaction in change management in a complex environment;

✓ Creativity and innovation in project development;

✓ Initiating processes and organizing activities requiring high level of coordination;

An important aspect of management, including change management, is the competences for making policies and demonstration of leadership quality for their practical implementation.

Taking responsibility to contribute to professional knowledge and practices and/or for analysis of teams’ strategic achievements required for Level 7 of the EQF is associated in the BQF with the skills for autonomous team management for solving complex problems in an unpredictable environment, with numerous interacting factors and variable options. The responsibility is also expressed in the initiation of processes and the organization of activities requiring a high level of coordination.

The skills to integrate knowledge and deal with complex situations, to formulate judgments with incomplete or limited information that include reflecting upon social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of the knowledge and judgments required for cycle two of QF-EHEA have found their analogue in the BQF in the definition of the professional competences to “gather, process and interpret specialized information required for solving complex problems from the studied field”, “integrate a wide range of knowledge and information sources in a new and relatively unfamiliar context”, “make well-reasoned judgments and find solutions in a complex environment of various interaction”, “ability to solve problems by integrating complex sources of knowledge in conditions of insufficient information in a new unfamiliar environment”. Moreover skills should be demonstrated for adequate conduct and interaction in professional and/or specialized environment, as well as skills for initiation of changes and for management of development processes in complex conditions. Graduates with this education and qualification degree should engage in important scientific, social and ethical issues arising in the course of work or study.

Communicative competences according to QF-EHEA which holders of Master’s degrees should have relate to the skill for communicate clearly and unambiguously, both to specialized and to non-specialized audience, conclusions, knowledge and rationale in support of the thesis. Those are specified in the BQF as skills to present clearly and plainly own views, problem formulations and possible solutions before specialized and non-specialized audience using a wide range of techniques and approaches; to develop and present reasoned opinions regarding
social policies and practices and to justify proposals for their improvement or change; excellent communication in some of the most widespread European languages.

As to learning competences, according to QF-EHEA Masters should have learning competences enabling them to continue to study with a high level of autonomy. In the BQF they are detailed as: systematic and profound evaluation of their knowledge and identified need of new knowledge; demonstrating a high level of autonomy and ability for easy orientation in a complex learning content, applying their own approaches and methods for its learning; using various methods and techniques for learning complex content; mastery of abundant terminology and skills for conceptual and abstract thinking.

As an example of concordance with the national legislation, a comparison between the expected learning outcomes for BQF Level 7 and the applicable law and sub-law legislation is made in Table 15. An illustrative example concerning the state requirements for training students in Architecture\textsuperscript{12} [33] is provided.

Table 14.3. Semantic analysis of the competences required at Level 7 of the BQF, Level 7 of the EQF and the 2nd cycle of QF-EHEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 7 – Master – Competences</th>
<th>EQF Level 7 – Competences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy and Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>➢ manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ can build administrative and organizational structures, independently manage teams to find solutions to complex problems in unpredictable contexts with a variety of interacting factors and possibilities</td>
<td>➢ take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ demonstrates operational mastery in managing change in complex contexts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ shows creativity and innovation in projects development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ initiates processes and organizes activities which require very good coordination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ formulates policies and demonstrates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{12} Ordinance on the state requirements for acquisition of a higher education in Architecture at the educational and qualification degree of a Master with a professional qualification of an architect (adopted by Council of Ministers’ Decree № 109 of 19.05.2003, promulgated, State Gazette, issue 49 of 27 May 2003)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>leadership skills for their implementation</strong></th>
<th><strong>QF-EHEA 2nd cycle – Competences</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Competences</strong></td>
<td>➢ have the ability to <strong>integrate knowledge</strong> and handle <strong>complexity</strong>, and <strong>formulate judgments</strong> with <strong>incomplete</strong> or <strong>limited information</strong>, but that include reflecting on <strong>social and ethical responsibilities</strong> linked to the application of their <strong>knowledge</strong> and <strong>judgments</strong>;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ systematically and thoroughly <strong>evaluates</strong> one’s own knowledge, <strong>recognizing</strong> the need for acquiring more knowledge</td>
<td>➢ can <strong>communicate</strong> their <strong>conclusions</strong>, and the <strong>knowledge</strong> and <strong>rationale</strong> underpinning these, to specialist and nonspecialist audiences <strong>clearly</strong> and <strong>unambiguously</strong>;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ demonstrates a high degree of <strong>autonomy</strong>, easily orients oneself to <strong>complex educational content</strong>, adopting <strong>own approaches and methods to master it</strong></td>
<td>➢ have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be <strong>largely self-directed</strong> or <strong>autonomous</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ uses a <strong>variety of methods and techniques to master complex subject areas</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ has a <strong>rich conceptual apparatus</strong> and is capable of <strong>conceptual and abstract thinking</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicative and Social Competences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>can express one’s own opinion</strong> in a <strong>simple and clear way</strong>, <strong>formulates problems</strong> and proposes possible <strong>solutions</strong> before expert and non-expert audiences, using a <strong>large number of techniques and approaches</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ develops and presents well-<strong>argumented opinions</strong> about social processes and practices, <strong>making justified proposals</strong> for their improvement or change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>can communicate effectively in some of the most commonly used European languages</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Competences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>gathers, processes and interprets specialized information</strong> required to find solutions to <strong>complex problems</strong> in a field of study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>integrates</strong> a wide spectrum of <strong>knowledge</strong> and sources in <strong>new and relatively unfamiliar contexts</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>make reasonable evaluations</strong> and <strong>finds</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Solutions in complex interactional contexts
  - Demonstrates adequate behaviour and interaction in professional and/or specialized contexts
  - Ability to solve problems by integrating comprehensive sources in unfamiliar contexts with insufficient information
  - Can initiate changes and manage development processes in difficult contexts
  - Becomes involved in important scientific, social and moral problems arising during work or study processes

Table 15. Analysis of expected learning outcomes at BQF Level 7 (Master’s degree) and those described in the national legislation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 7 – Master – learning outcomes (a sample)</th>
<th>Examples of expected learning outcomes for BQF Level 7 according to the national legislation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Has a wide spectrum of theoretical and practical knowledge, part of which is specialized knowledge in the respective field, which serves to broaden the knowledge acquired during the previous education stage</td>
<td>▪ According to Article 42, Paragraph 3 of the Higher Education Act, training for acquisition of a Master’s degree ensures profound fundamental preparation, combined with profiling in a certain specialty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Has highly specialized practical and theoretical knowledge, incl. avant-garde knowledge, which serves as a basis for originality in developing and applying new ideas and solutions</td>
<td>▪ According to the Ordinance on the state requirements for acquisition of a higher education at Bachelor, Master and Specialist degrees, the following could be pointed out:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Has a wide range of practical and cognitive skills in different fields of study required to understand abstract problems and develop creative solutions</td>
<td>- Article 2, Paragraph 3 stipulates that mandatory subjects provide fundamental training that corresponds to the chosen wider profiled specialty from the professional field;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Carries out problem diagnostics and solving, based on contemporary research</td>
<td>- Article 2, Paragraph 4 stipulates that the free eligible subjects provide specific knowledge and competences from the field of the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
through integrating knowledge from new or interdisciplinary fields, which are related to implementation of research and introduction of innovations

✓ freely employs innovative methods and instruments in solving complicated and unpredictable problems in a specialized field of work

✓ ability to solve problems by integrating comprehensive sources in unfamiliar contexts with insufficient information

✓ can initiate changes and manage development processes in difficult contexts

- Article 2, Paragraph 5 stipulates that the facultative subjects provide an opportunity for receiving knowledge and skills in different research fields in line with students’ interests.

- Article 9, Paragraph 1 stipulates that the education in Master’s courses provide:

1. Profiled and deeper preparation in accordance with the specialty of the acquired bachelor’s degree

3. Additional wider profiled and interdisciplinary preparation for students – holders of a Bachelor’s or a Master’s degree in other specialty.

- According to Article 9, Paragraph 2 the training in Master’s courses ensures:

Sub-paragraph 1: deeper research-theoretical and specialized preparation according to the specialty;

Sub-paragraph 2: mastering the foundation of scientific research, applied research and/or artistic and creative activity;

✓ Sub-paragraph 4: development of adaptative abilities in changing social, economic and technological contexts.

Example: SERs on acquisition of a Master’s degree in Architecture and a professional qualification of an Architect:

Article 5 (1) Training for acquisition of higher education in Architecture at Master’s degree ensures knowledge, practical skills and competences, which are necessary to acquire the professional qualification of an architect.

(2) By means of the training the following is acquired:

1. skills for development of architectural projects, which to respond simultaneously to the corresponding aesthetic, the functional and the technical requirements;

2. knowledge in History and Theory of Architecture, as well as in the corresponding Arts,
Technologies and Humanities;

3. skills to recognize the Fine Art as a factor, which takes effect on the quality of the architectural project;

4. knowledge in the structural planning and the investment design and skills to develop structural schemes and plans and investment projects;

5. skills to understand the relation between the human and the architectural creations on one hand, and the architectural creations and the environment on the other hand, and the buildings and spaces between them that should be built-up according to human needs and appropriate scale;

6. skills to acknowledge the profession of an architect and his/her role in the society;

7. knowledge about the methods for research and design of an architecture project;

8. knowledge on civil engineering design and solving civil engineering problems;

9. knowledge on the physical properties and phenomena that takes effect in exploitation of buildings and constructions, on technologies and products in the field of civil engineering, which provide conditions for living comfort, climate protection and economy of hot energy;

10. necessary designer skills to meeting the consumers’ requirements bearing in mind financial and legislative limitations in the field of civil engineering;

11. knowledge about the legal proceedings, competent authorities, rules and procedures for assigning, coordination and approval of structural schemes and plans and of investment projects, authorization, implementation and exploitation of building and construction;

12. sufficient volume of special knowledge and skills to create an environment that is accessible for individuals with injuries.

With regards to the example of the architect’s qualification:

✓ the wide spectre of theoretical and practical knowledge, a big share out of which are specialized and highly specialized knowledge, respectively, in the particular field and which build the foundations for originality in developing and implementing new ideas correspond to knowledge in History and Theory of Architecture, as well as in the related arts, technologies and humanitarian sciences; knowledge on the methods for research and development of an architectural project; knowledge on building and construction design; knowledge on the physical properties and phenomena that takes effect in exploitation of buildings and constructions, on technologies and products in the field of civil engineering; knowledge about the legal proceedings, the competent authorities, etc.

✓ The practical and the cognitive skills correspond to the skills to understand the relation between the human and the architectural creations on one hand, and the architectural creations
and the environment on the other hand, and the buildings and spaces between them that should be built-up according to human needs and appropriate scale; skills for development of architectural projects in line with the corresponding requirements; investment designer skills, skills to acknowledge the profession of an architect and his/her role in the society; special knowledge and skills to create an environment that is accessible for individuals with injuries.

✓ The competences for free application of innovative methods and tools, which are foreseen for BQF Level 7 correspond to the “sufficient volume of special knowledge and skills to create an environment that is accessible by individuals with injuries” and are related to the knowledge on the physical properties and phenomena that take effect during the exploitation of buildings and constructions, on the technologies and products in the field of civil engineering, etc.

- **BQF LEVEL 8**

Level 8 of the BQF comprises the educational and qualification degree of a Doctor (Ph. D.). The qualifications acquired at this educational and qualification level correspond to those at level 8 of the EQF and to those acquired in the third cycle of the Bologna process, as shown in Table 16.1, Table 16.2 and Table 16.3. For illustration, these tables contain also relevant expected learning outcomes for awarding Doctoral degree in Radiolocation and Radionavigation. Table 17 presents the concordance between the expected learning outcomes for BQF Level 7 and those, which are laid down in the relevant national legislation.

The educational and qualification degree of a Doctor is regulated by the Higher Education Act (1995), the Law on the Academic Staff Development (1995) and it’s Rules of Procedure [34]. According to Article 6, paragraph 3 of the Law on the Academic Staff Development, the doctoral thesis of the doctoral candidate should contain scientific or applied research results which are an original contribution to science. The doctoral thesis must show that the candidate has profound theoretical knowledge of the field and skills for autonomous research.

➤ **Knowledge**

According to EQF, Level 8 is characterized by knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields. Level 8 of the BQF is characterized by having and using specialized and systematic knowledge for critical analysis and for synthesis of new ideas, mastery of scientific research methods in the field, ability to extend and change the existing knowledge in the field, and its interaction with borderline scientific areas, demonstration of highest-level knowledge and understanding not only in the field but also in close scientific areas.
Graduates with qualifications placed at the level corresponding to the third cycle of the Bologna process demonstrate systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field. Those requirements are interpreted in the learning outcomes for Level 8 of the BQF as “has, demonstrates and uses special and systematic knowledge”, “masters the methods of scientific research in a field, including knowledge of highest complexity” and related to critical analysis, synthesis of new ideas and original research.

Table 16.1. Semantic analysis of the knowledge required at Level 8 of the BQF, Level 8 of the EQF and the 3rd cycle of QF-EHEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 8 – Doctor – Knowledge</th>
<th>EQF Level 8 – Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has and uses specialized and systematic knowledge to make a critical analysis and synthesize new ideas</td>
<td>✓ knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ proficiently employs the methods of scientific research in a field of study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ ability to broaden and improve current knowledge in a field of study as well as its interaction with close scientific areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ demonstrates knowledge with the highest degree of complexity and carries out original research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ demonstrates knowledge and understanding at the highest possible degree not only of chosen field of study but also in neighbouring scientific areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ demonstrates and applies knowledge through the degree of complexity of the conducted, recognized and well-founded academic research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QF-EHEA 3rd cycle – Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example: Doctor in Radiolocation and Radionavigation – Knowledge:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ possesses and demonstrates specialized and systematic knowledge on the basic principles and methods used in Radiolocation and Radionavigation, about the radar and navigation systems and equipment;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ knows and masters the methods and algorithms for scientific research, which are used in the practice in this field.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doctor’s degree graduates have and use specialised knowledge for making critical analysis and synthesis of new ideas, demonstrate knowledge and understanding at the highest level not
only in the relevant field but also in close scientific fields. This corresponds to the knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields as defined in Level 8 of the EQF.

➢ Skills

The improved specialized knowledge and techniques required for Level 8 of the EQF including synthesis and assessment necessary for solving key problems in scientific research and/or innovations which extend and give new definitions to existing knowledge or professional practices are specified in the BQF as having skills to create and manage networks and teams, to allot time and to manage human and financial resources, and to solve complex problems by new technological methods and instruments. The synthesis and assessment are related to the skill to quickly find, extract, arrange, synthesize and assess necessary information from different sources, whether detailed or scanty. They are also related to the skill for analysis, assessment and synthesis of new and complex ideas required according to the third cycle of the Bologna process. The skills to solve problems of considerable importance for Level 8 of the EQF are associated in the BQF with the skills to solve and overcome critical problems in research and/or innovation, development of innovative solutions by combing different original strategies and technologies, management of failures and moving on, improving standard models and approaches. The mastery of methods and means for foreseeing changes and problems, for disregarding the environment, for predicting technological and creative development and for innovative thinking are also a significant aspect of doctoral programmes in Bulgaria, as well as communication by different media to varied audience and drafting and presenting scientific and technical documents, including scientific publications. In the course of their study the doctoral candidates also acquire skills such as stamina, enterprise, tenacity, strictness, adaptability and intellectual flexibility.

➢ Competences

Table 16.2 Semantic analysis of the skills required at Level 8 of the BQF, Level 8 of the EQF and the 3rd cycle of QF-EHEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 8 – Doctor – Skills</th>
<th>EQF Level 8 – Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ ability to form and manage networks or</td>
<td>➢ the most advanced and specialized skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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teams, allocate time and manage human and financial resources, find solutions to complicated problems by employing new technological methods and instruments
✓ quickly gathers, extracts, classifies, synthesizes and assesses the required data both from detailed and scarce sources
✓ ability to solve and overcome serious problems in a research field and/or innovation, improve standard models and approaches, develop innovative solutions by combining a variety of original strategies and technologies, manage unsuccessful attempts and continue developing, improve standard models and approaches
✓ has methods and means to foresee changes and problems, disregard the context and think innovatively, develop and propose reasonable plans, put into effect new ideas, acquire quickly new skills and qualities, foresee technological and creative development, write and present new scholarly and technical documents (scientific articles, summaries, reports, figures, graphs, etc.); communicate through different media in front of diverse audiences
✓ has the following skills: resilience, entrepreneurial spirit, tenacity, strictness, adaptability and intellectual flexibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QF-EHEA 3rd cycle – Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example: Doctor in Radiolocation and Radionavigation – Skills:**

✓ possesses skills for solving complex problems, taking into account the influence of multiple factors, foresees changes and adapts to them;
✓ is capable to conduct independent and joint research in the field, including original research;
✓ is capable to think innovatively, improving the methods and approaches that are used in this field;
✓ prepares and presents research publications;
✓ successfully communicates before different audience, including performs teaching activity.

**Table 16.3** Semantic analysis of the competences required at Level 8 of the BQF, Level 8 of the EQF and the 3rd cycle of QF-EHEA
**BQF Level 8 – Doctor – Competences**

**Autonomy and Responsibility**
- creates and interprets new knowledge on the basis of own research or other scholarly activity
- uses the new knowledge to demonstrate an ability to expand the scope of existing scientific areas and recognizes the need for live publications
- ability to evaluate the merits of own research
- ability to make up, design, implement and adapt a contemporary research process in conformity with scholarly norms

**Learning Competences**
- has a capacity for a systematic acquisition and understanding of a considerable amount of knowledge about the latest scientific achievements or a field of professional practice

**Communicative and Social Competences**
- show qualities and transferable skills which require an enhanced sense of personal responsibility and self-initiative in complex and unpredictable circumstances as well as in professional or similar contexts
- ability to conceptualize, design and implement projects with the purpose of generating new knowledge, applying and understanding the latest achievements as well as to adapt the project design to unpredictable circumstances

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**EQF Level 8 – Competences**

- demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research

**QF-EHEA 3rd cycle – Competences**

- can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;
- have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication;
- can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.

**Example: Doctor in Radiolocation and Radionavigation – Competences:**

- is competent to create and understand new knowledge, including those obtained in a result of conducting own research;
- is competent to understand and assess critically the obtained results, synthesise and analyse new ideas, to adapt them to changes and to provide own contributions in the research area;
- knows in details and understands the
can communicate effectively in some of the most common European languages

Professional Competences

- has a profound understanding of the techniques used for scientific and complex academic research
- makes a thorough evaluation of complex issues in a field of study, often in the absence of extensive data, and presents one’s own ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively before experts and non-experts
- capacity to continue conducting fundamental or applied scientific research at increasingly complex levels, contributing to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches

methods and the means for scientific research in the area, including latest achievements;
- analyzes and syntheses data under conditions of statistical indefiniteness;
- develops software programmes for research purposes;
- presents and is able to defend one's own research results before specialists and non-specialists, including in foreign languages;
- is capable to continue own research with higher degree of complexity;

Demonstrating significant authority, innovative thinking, independency, research and professional completeness and durable commitment to developing innovative ideas in working or learning context, including research activities, are important learning outcomes, which are necessary for EQF Level 8. Professional completeness of the specialists at BQF Level 8 finds an expression both in independent professional behavior and in competences, which are connected to: creation and interpretation of new knowledge through own research or other scientific activity; demonstration of skills for expanding the range of the familiar research field; ability for self-evaluation of his/her own research results, and ability to continue the research at higher level, providing an input to development of new technologies, ideas or approaches.

As to the communicative competences, in the 3rd cycle of the Bologna process they are described as abilities to communicate in the field of expertise with colleagues, with wider research community and with the society in general. They correspond to those, which are described for BQF Level 8 (Doctor’s degree) and are related to presentation of ideas and conclusions clearly and effective before specialists and non-specialists, including communication in some of the most popular foreign languages.

Giving an input through original research, which expands the boundaries of knowledge, part of which finds an expression in research papers in national or international research magazines is typical for the Bologna process 3rd cycle qualifications. In BQF Level 8 it is expressed in
demonstrating skills to expand the range of the familiar research field and recognizing the need for live publications.

The generic competences for the 3rd cycle of the Bologna process that are related to the expected learning outcome the holder of Doctors’ degree to be able to promote, both in academic and professional context the technological, social and cultural achievements in the knowledge society in the BQF are connected to qualities and transferable skills, which require high degree of personal responsibility, attitude to initiate processes in complicated and unforeseen circumstances, in professional and equivalent environment, and capability to continue his/her own research at higher level in the corresponding research field providing a contribution to development of new technologies, methods and approaches.

The concordance between the expected learning outcomes for BQF Level 8 (Doctors’ degree) and those described in the national legislation is presented in Table 17.

**Table 17. Analysis if expected learning outcomes for BQF Level 8 (Doctors’ degree) and those, which are described in the national legislation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BQF Level 8 – Doctor – learning outcomes (a sample)</th>
<th>Examples of expected learning outcomes for BQF Level 6 according to the national legislation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ has and uses specialized and systematic knowledge to make a critical analysis and synthesize new ideas</td>
<td>♦ According to Article 14, Paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure for applying the Law on Academic Staff Development, training doctoral candidates includes the following activities:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ proficiently employs the methods of scientific research in a field of study</td>
<td>1. scientific research (or artistic and creative) activity;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ ability to broaden and improve current knowledge in a field of study as well as its interaction with close scientific areas</td>
<td>2. attendance and participation in training courses (seminars, tutorials at doctoral level);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ demonstrates knowledge with the highest degree of complexity and carries out original research</td>
<td>3. teaching and/or expert activity, participation in research forums (national and/or international);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ demonstrates knowledge and understanding at the highest possible degree not only of chosen field of study</td>
<td>4. Examinations for doctoral minimum;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ creates and interprets new knowledge on the basis of own research or other scholarly activity</td>
<td>5. Defence of a doctoral thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>♦ Article 6, Paragraph 3 of the Law on Academic Staff Development and Article 27,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
✓ uses **the new knowledge** to demonstrate an ability to expand the scope of existing scientific areas and recognizes the need for live publications
✓ ability to make up, design, implement and adapt a contemporary research process in conformity with scholarly norms
✓ has a profound understanding of the techniques used for scientific and complex academic research
✓ ability to conceptualize, design and implement projects with the purpose of generating new knowledge, applying and understanding the latest achievements as well as to adapt the project design to unpredictable circumstances
✓ capacity to continue conducting fundamental or applied scientific research at increasingly complex levels, contributing to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches

Paragraph 1 (new – State Gazette, issue 19 of 2011, in force since 8 March 2011) of the Rules of Procedure for applying the Law on Academic Staff Development stipulate that the dissertation paper should contain scientific research or applied research results, which are an original research contribution. The dissertation paper should show that the doctoral candidate possesses profound theoretical knowledge in the given scientific specialty and capabilities for independent research.

4.2.3. Criterion 3 for the EQF reads that the national qualifications framework or system and its qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and linked to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where these exist, to credit systems. This criterion corresponds to Criterion № 3 for self-certification to the QF/EHEA – the National Qualifications Framework and the qualifications in it are demonstratively based on the learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) or to ECTS-compatible credits.

The Republic of Bulgaria’s response regarding the requirements set in the criteria under paragraph 4.2.3:

The BQF was elaborated based on the learning outcomes for each of its levels described as
knowledge, skills and competences. This description is based on the detailed descriptions in the state educational requirements (standards) of the contents and expected learning outcomes in the national education system (general and vocational education and training) and in higher education, which are in turn bound with the procedures for validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Legislative regulating texts on validation of non-formal and informal learning (NFIL), as well as texts about the BQF are proposed in the draft Law on Pre-school and School Education. Validation-related texts are proposed in the draft Law for amendment and supplement of the VET Act.

To the moment, an integrated national system for validation of non-formal and informal learning does not exist in Bulgaria. There is a project under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme, which is co-financed by the European Social Fund, on elaboration of a pilot project of a national system for validation of NFIL. The project implementation was launched in 2012 and shall end in 2014. This pilot project of a national system will cover VET only. Its aim is to raise awareness among the wide audience at national level on the opportunities for validation and recognition of NFIL, the development and implementation of appropriate and effective methods and approaches for consulting, identification, assessment and certification of knowledge, skills and competences that are acquired through NFIL. In result of the project implementation, it is expected by the end of 2014 4000 Bulgarian citizens to gain recognition (full or partial) of a vocational qualification.

The qualifications placed at the levels for higher education of the BQF are in turn bound with the system for credit accumulation and transfer introduced into Bulgarian legislation by the Ordinance № 21 of 30.09.2004 on the implementation of a credit accumulation and transfer system in higher education institutions, issued by the Minister of Education and Science (promulgated, State Gazette, issue 89 of 2004). The corresponding minimum number of credit units for acquisition of higher education for each of the educational and qualificational degrees at Level 6 and Level 7 are noted in the BQF.

Some aspects of the validation of NFIL, including in the context of awarding credit units, are covered by the Higher Education Act. For example, its Article 44a, Paragraph 4 reads that credit units in each educational subject are formed from a horarium of lectures, practical exercises and tutorials, independent training work (in labs, libraries, course works, home works, etc.), results from examinations and other assessment methods, as the higher education institution defines. Credits could be awarded also for participation in practical trainings and for defended course work or diploma thesis, if such activities are included in the syllabus. Article 68, Paragraph 4 of the Higher Education Act stipulates that, at a decision of the Academic Board, higher schools may admit applicants without any entrance examination provided that the
applicants have successfully passed the state matriculation exams under the Level of Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum Act within the framework of the numbers set forth in Article 9, Paragraph 3, Item 6, letters (a) and (b) of the Act. According to Paragraph 5 (new − State Gazette, issue 48 of 2004, supplemented, State Gazette issue 41 of 2007) of the same Article, applicants who are winners at national or international competitions completing their secondary education in the year of the competition and medal winners at Olympic, worlds and European championships shall be admitted without any entrance examination and beyond the annual number of students to be admitted under Article 9, Paragraph 3, Item 6, letters (a) and (b) where the entrance examination for the specialty they apply for corresponds to the subject-matter of the competition or championship. Paragraph 56 to the same Article (New, SG No. 50/2010, effective academic year 2011/2012) reads that at the proposal of the Minister of Physical Education and Sports and following a decision of the academic council with the higher school medal holders from Olympic, World and European Championships may be admitted without entrance examination beyond the established under Article 9, para 3, item 6, letters (a) and (b) annual number of admitted students.

However, recognition of NFIL is not a mass practice among the Bulgarian higher education institutions. Higher education institutions that provide programmes in the fields of Arts and Engineering could be pointed out as examples of good practices in this respect.

By changes in the Higher Education Act, which were made in 2011, namely concerning Article 21, Paragraph 1, item 13 (new − State Gazette, issue 61 of 2011), the academic autonomy of the Bulgarian higher education institutions was expanded, as they acquired the right to recognize, in accordance with the state requirements, degrees of higher education that are awarded abroad and/or periods of study in foreign higher education institutions, which are recognized by law in the corresponding countries, aimed to continuation of training in the higher education institution, which performs the recognition procedure.

Considering the information provided in this section, Bulgaria believes that the requirements of the respective criteria for referencing to the EQF and to QF-EHEA are satisfied.

4.2.4. Criterion 4 for the EQF reads that the procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent. This criterion corresponds to Criterion № 4 for self-certification to the QF/EHEA, which in turn provides that the procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework are transparent.

The Republic of Bulgaria’s response regarding the requirements set in the criteria under paragraph 4.2.4:
The existing qualifications are placed in the separate levels of the NQF in accordance with the national legislation. The introduction of new qualifications also takes place in accordance with the national legislation. Therefore the inclusion of new qualifications in the NQF and the procedures for that purpose are conformed to the national legislation.

4.2.5. Criterion 5 for referencing to the EQF provides that the national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications framework or system and are consistent with the relevant European principles and guidelines (as indicated in annex 3 of the EQF Recommendation). This criterion is similar to Criterion № 5 for self-certification to the QF-EHEA, which reads that the national quality assurance systems for higher education refer to the National Qualifications Framework and are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any following Communiqué approved by the ministers within the Bologna process.

The Republic of Bulgaria’s response regarding the requirements set in the criteria under paragraph 4.2.5:

The effective system for external quality assurance in Bulgaria is to a great extent consistent with the quality assurance criteria and recommendations elaborated by ENQA. The requirements of this criterion will be fully satisfied after the implementation of the BQF at institutional level – in learning outcomes-oriented curricula in line with the generic expected learning outcomes of the BQF. On its turn, the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency should set it as a requirement for the accreditation of higher education institutions.

4.2.6. Criterion 6 for referencing to the EQF provides that the referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies. This criterion is similar to Procedure № 2 for for self-certification to the QF-EHEA, which provides that the self-certification process should include the stated agreement of the quality assurance bodies in the relevant country recognized through the Bologna process.

The Republic of Bulgaria’s response regarding the requirements set in the criterion and procedure under paragraph 4.2.6:

Experts from the two national bodies for quality assurance of education, namely the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, are involved in the working group for elaboration of the NQF design and for drafting the national report on its the referencing to the EQF and to QF-EHEA. This ensures the participation of those two competent authorities from design level. The two national agencies
will be asked to provide official opinions on the design for the NQF and the draft of the referencing report. The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency of Bulgaria is a member of ENQA which satisfies the second part of the procedure for compatibility with QF-EHEA.

4.2.7. Criterion № 7 for referencing to the EQF provides that the referencing process shall involve international experts. This criterion is identical to Procedure № 3 for self-certification to the QF-EHEA.

The Republic of Bulgaria’s response regarding the require set in the criterion and procedure under paragraph 4.2.7:

The EQF and QF/EHEA referencing and self-certification process in Bulgaria involves four international experts:

1. Dr. James Murray, Director of Academic Affairs of IOTI\(^{13}\), Ireland;
2. Dr. Joachim James Calleja, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Employability, Malta;
3. Mr. Wilfried Boomgaert, Deputy Head of Policy Coordination Directorate, Ministry of Education and Training of the Flemish Community of Belgium;
4. Dr. Maria Elisabeth Leegwater, coordinator for student issues, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Netherlands (up to 2012), then a private expert.

They were selected according to criteria for expertise and experience in EQF referencing and self-certification to the QF-EHEA, coming from various education and training sectors of leading EU Member States in implementing EQF and QF-EHEA, with different education and training systems. Last but not least, membership in the EQF Advisory Group and the Bologna Follow-up Group was also a selection criterion.

4.2.8. Criterion № 8 for referencing to the EQF provides that the competent national body/bodies shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications framework or system with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing and the evidence supporting it shall be published by the competent national body/bodies, including the EQF/NQF National Coordination Point, and shall address separately each of the criteria. The report must respond to each criterion separately. This criterion corresponds to Procedure № 1 for self-certification to the QF-EHEA: The competent national body/bodies shall certify the compatibility of the national framework with the European framework, and Procedure № 4: The self-certification and the evidence supporting it shall be published and shall address separately each of the criteria set out.

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\(^{13}\) the representative body of the Institutes of Technology Ireland
The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science of Bulgaria, in its capacity of national competent authority for the NQF and its referencing to the EQF, its self-certification with QF-EHEA, respectively, published this national referencing/self-certification report which responds consistently and comprehensively to each one of the criteria, procedures and recommendations for referencing to the EQF and QF-EHEA (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Scope of the national report on referencing the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and for its self-certification with the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area

The National Coordination Point responsible for the implementation of the EQF Recommendation in Bulgaria, namely the International and European Cooperation Directorate within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, takes active part in the work of the working group regarding the elaboration of the BQF and the draft referencing and self-certification report. After a formal approval by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science, the report will be published on the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science and the requirements of Criterion № 7 and procedures № 1 and № 4 will be completely satisfied.
4.2.9. **Criterion № 9** for referencing to the EQF provides that the official EQF platform shall maintain a public listing of member states that have confirmed that they have completed the referencing process, including links to completed referencing reports. This criterion is similar to **Procedure № 5** for self-certification to the QF-EHEA, which provides that the ENIC and NARIC networks shall maintain a public listing of States that have confirmed that they have completed the self-certification process.

The Republic of Bulgaria’s response regarding the requirements set in the criterion and procedure under paragraph 4.2.9:

After Bulgaria submits its national referencing report to the EQF Advisory Group, accepts and implements any received comments and proposals and the referencing report is finally approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science, it will be sent to the European Commission to be published at the EQF Portal and that of the Bologna process secretariat. Then the requirements specified above will be satisfied.

4.2.10. **Criterion 10** for referencing to the EQF provides that following the referencing process, and in line with the timelines set in the Recommendation, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents issued by the competent authorities contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications systems, to the appropriate European Qualifications Framework level. The requirement of this criterion is similar to the requirements of **Criterion № 6** for referencing to QF-EHEA – the national framework and each referencing to the European Framework is recorded in all diploma supplements, and of **Procedure № 6** for self-certification to QF-EHEA - the completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently by showing the link between the national framework and the European framework.

The Republic of Bulgaria’s response regarding the requirements set in the criterion and procedure under paragraph 4.2.10:

Bulgaria plans to fulfil the above requirements from the 2014/2015 school year. To this end, the required legislative changes are contemplated.
CHAPTER 5

ISSUES ARISEN DURING THE REFERENCING PROCESS

5.1. NATIONAL CONSULTATION WITH REGARD TO THE DRAFT NQF OF REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

During the period of June-December 2011 nationwide consultations were carried out with the involvement of stakeholders on a national, regional, and local level, during which the draft of the National Qualifications Framework of Republic of Bulgaria was presented and discussed. The four international experts assisting Bulgaria in this area also took part in these consultations through written and verbal comments. The draft BQF was published on the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Science for public discussion.

The National Coordination Point for implementation of the EQF Recommendation in Bulgaria organized two regional seminars for presentation and discussion of the draft project. More than 60 representatives of stakeholders took part in each event – Regional Education Inspectorates, secondary and higher education institutions, the Rectors’ Conference of the Republic of Bulgaria, six employer organizations, five of which are represented countrywide, and the two trade unions represented countrywide, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, and the National Center for Information and Documentation to the Minister of Education, Youth, and Science, which is the national authority for academic recognition. The international experts from Ireland and the Netherlands also took part in the seminars. The participants supported the presented draft BQF as well as the proposal of the international expert from Belgium’s Flemish community to have at level 7, instead of the four sublevels, where the four versions of Master’s degree qualifications were positioned, depending on the entry educational level, just summarized learning outcomes valid for all four versions of the Master’s degree in Bulgaria. The proposal was adopted by the task force and the required changes in the BQF draft project were made.

14The Confederation of Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Industrial Association, the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the “Vazrazhdane” Union of Private Entrepreneurs, the Industrial Capital Association, and the the Union for Economic Initiative
15 The Confederation of Independent Trade Unions and the Podkrepa Labour Confederation
16 „Master” following „Professional Bachelor in ....”, following „Bachelor ” in the same vocational direction, following „Bachelor ” in another professional field, and directly to Master’s degree after completion of secondary education
In pursuance of Article 10, Paragraph 1, item 7 of Council of Ministers’ Decree № 85 on the coordination of EU matters (promulg. State Gazette, issue 35 of 27 April 2007, title amended – SG, issue 65 of 2010, effective as of 20.08.2010, last amended State Gazette, issue 2 of 7 January 2011), the final draft of Republic of Bulgaria’s NQF was coordinated by Working Group № 16 on Education, Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications, Youth, Science, and Research to Council of the European Affairs to the Council of Ministers. As a result of the coordination process an opinion of this working group was elaborated [28] in support of the proposed draft.

Meanwhile, the draft NQF was also published on the Public Consultations Portal, which is supported by the Council of Ministers’ administrative staff.

Thereafter, on the grounds of Article 32 of the Structural Regulations of the Council of Ministers’ and its administrative staff, the Council of Ministers’ draft decision for adoption of the BQF draft was agreed with all ministers and other public authorities. In the process of interdepartmental coordination the Ministry of the Economy, Energy, and Tourism recommended that employers actively use the National Qualifications Framework of Republic of Bulgaria. On 02.02.2012 the BQF draft was adopted by means of Decision No 96 of the Council of Ministers.

5.2. NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE NATIONAL REPORT DRAFT PROJECT


The first stage was presentation and discussion of the document at an enlarged meeting of the task group involving task group members with advisory functions and the international experts assisting Bulgaria in the process, and was held on 4 April 2012 in Sofia. The significance of the topic concerning quality assurance of training on all levels and sectors in the Bulgarian educational system within the context of the National Qualifications Framework was emphasized and a decision was made to review this issue in greater detail and single it out in a separate chapter of the report. This task was accomplished by the MEYS experts.

At a later stage, in the fall of 2012, the draft report resulting from this endeavour was presented to and discussed with stakeholders and an expanded group of international experts. For the purpose the National Coordination Point for implementation of the Recommendation for EQF in Bulgaria arranged two regional seminars held on 19 September 2012 and 23 October
2012. These were attended by representatives of secondary schools from Sofia-city, Sofia-district, and the districts of Pernik, Kyustendil, Vratsa, Blagoevgrad, and Pazardzhik, representatives of nearly all university-level institutions within Bulgaria, the National Representation of Student Councils, representatives of employer- and labor organizations, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, the Rectors’s Conference of the Republic of Bulgaria, and the National Center for Information and Documentation. During the consultation process the question arose to what extent the disabled children, pupils, and students could achieve the expected learning outcomes, as embedded in the NQF of Republic of Bulgaria. Since the said summarized learning outcomes are based on the effective SERs, their achievement is not any harder than the achievement of the learning outcomes identified in the SERs. Even the state matriculation exams at completion of secondary education are constructed so as to be aligned to the abilities of the students with special educational needs, incl. various disabilities.

Overall, the public consultations took place amid huge interest and a clearly stated support by the stakeholders, as well as preparedness for further cooperation in this area.

The following should be pointed out as strengths of the process:

♦ the political support rendered by the MEYS leadership;

♦ the expertise of Bulgarian and international experts, incl. members of the Task Group under the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, the Bologna Process Follow-up Group, the Group for Qualifications Frameworks in the European Higher Education Area, etc.

♦ the expert and methodic support rendered by the Bulgarian National Coordinating Unit for EQF/NQF.

♦ the long-standing close cooperation with all stakeholders on a national, regional, and local level, incl. through participation of their representatives in the task group for the National Qualifications Framework of Republic of Bulgaria and in this draft national report.

♦ the grant under the Lifelong Learning Programme, horizontal program Activities of EQF National Coordination Points with a View to Its Implementation on a National Level – project agreements EAC-2010-0119 and EAC-2011-0592 during the period 2010-2012 for MEYS. Under the two projects the following events were arranged 1) a total of 4 workshops with international experts – two in June 2011 for discussion of the BQF draft project and two for discussion of the National Report draft project, held in April 2012 and October 2012, respectively; and 2) a total of 4 regional seminars with the participation of stakeholders and a total of six international experts – two for discussion of the BQF draft project (16.06.2011 and 23.06.2011, Sofia) and two for discussion of the National Report draft project (19.09.2012 and
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

In this National Report on the Referencing of the National Qualifications Framework of Republic of Bulgaria to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and its self-certification to the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area the main objectives of the process are clearly and accurately presented, the involvement of the national competent bodies and of stakeholders is described, and response is provided to the adopted criteria, procedures, and recommendations for referencing/self-certification to the two European qualifications frameworks.

The necessary background is provided with a view to introducing stakeholders on a European and international level to the education and training system in Republic of Bulgaria. Special attention is drawn to quality assurance of training in the various educational sectors. This matter is reviewed in a separate chapter since it is essential to the building of mutual trust in the system.

The main part of the report covers the responses to the referencing and self-certification criteria, procedures and recommendations with regards to the EQF and the QF-EHEA. The criteria, procedures and recommendations are systematically grouped with respect to similarity in order to avoid repetitions and to provide better understanding and single meaning answers. The greatest attention in the report is given to demonstrating the compatibility between the BQF and the EQF/QF-EHEA, the links between the BQF and the use of learning outcomes, the transparency of the processes, especially with regards to the issue on the inclusion of legislatively existing qualifications in the BQF. In relation to that, an analysis on the correspondence is made in the report, including a semantic analysis of the level descriptors and an analysis on the concordance with the respective national legislation.

The best-fit principle is used concerning the referencing and self-certification of the BQF levels to the EQF/QF-EHEA levels, aimed to demonstrate the most complete correspondence in learning outcomes context. To that end, illustrative examples of learning outcomes coming from the general education sector in Bulgaria, and of qualifications coming from the VET and higher education sectors are included in the report, including quotations from the national legislation, too.

The comments, which were received from the international experts supporting Bulgaria in the referencing and self-certification process both to the EQF and to the QF-EHEA were taken into account in the national report, together with those of the stakeholders.
It should be noted that the national competent authorities for quality assurance in the various education and training sectors took active part at all stages of the process, especially at the elaboration stage of the BQF and of the national report.

The referencing process to the EQF and the self-certification process to the QF-EHEA in Bulgaria should be perceived as inseparable parts of the work on the BQF. The work on the draft project of the national report started in the process of elaboration of the BQF. An essential element of the work on the BQF level descriptors was not only to demonstrate the correspondence with the EQF/QF-EHEA level descriptors, but also the concordance with the effective national legislation.

To conclude, it should be noted that the present national report provides a clear and fair picture of the referencing and self-certification process both to the EQF and QF-EHEA in Bulgaria. It contains justified and comprehensive, but also sincere and honest responses to the referencing and self-certification criteria, procedures and recommendations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BQF</td>
<td>The Bulgarian Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>CEEN</td>
<td>Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>EQAVET</td>
<td>the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQF</td>
<td>The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAR</td>
<td>European Quality Assurance Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOE</td>
<td>Free Optional Education</td>
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<td>FTC</td>
<td>Further Training Courses</td>
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<td>GE</td>
<td>General Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>IVET</td>
<td>Initial VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>IVGC</td>
<td>Information and Vocational Guidance Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>LLL</td>
<td>Lifelong Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>LPVET</td>
<td>List of Professions in VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>Mandatory Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Mandatory Optional Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEYS</td>
<td>The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>NACID</td>
<td>National centre for Information and Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAVET</td>
<td>National Agency for VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEAA</td>
<td>National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Education Needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>SERs</td>
<td>State Educational Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QF-EHEA</td>
<td>Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTC</td>
<td>Vocational Training Centres</td>
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</tbody>
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## VOCABULARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to education and training</td>
<td>Conditions, circumstances or requirements, stipulated in the regulatory framework and/or defined by the education/training institution governing admittance and participation to educational institutions or programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Any person of 16 and more years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>Process of teaching and acquiring knowledge and skills for a specific professional, social and personal sphere, which takes place both in and out of education institutions. It can lead to validation and certification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>The process of formally validating learning outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credit Transfer System</td>
<td>System which provides a way of measuring and comparing learning achievements (from a course, training or a placement) and transferring them from one institution to another, using credits validated in curricula. The credit transfer system supports the transparency and comparability of education and training pathways, curricula and systems. In a credit transfer system, a value is allocated to every learning unit (course, training or placement) that the learner is required to successfully complete, in order to pass a full training programme at a school or training centre, including examinations or other assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Institutionalised process of teaching and acquiring general, special professional knowledge and skills developing the intellectual abilities of the individual. This process usually leads to acquiring an education degree or a vocational/professional qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENQA</td>
<td>European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQAR</td>
<td>European Quality Assurance Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal learning/education</td>
<td>Learning that occurs in an organised and structured context (in a school/higher education institution/training centre) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or learning support). Formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view. It typically leads to officially recognised document (diploma, certificate).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal learning</td>
<td>Intentional learning, non-institutionalised, less organised or structured; can include learning activities resulting from daily work-related, family or leisure activities, self-, family- or society-directed. It could lead to validation and certification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key competencies: The set of basic knowledge, skills, aptitudes and attitudes supporting the professional and social realisation and integration. In the EU countries the following eight key competencies are defined: communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competencies in science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; social and civic competencies; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and cultural awareness and expression.


Learning: A cumulative process whereby individuals gradually assimilate increasingly complex and abstract entities (concepts, categories, and patterns of behaviour or models) and/or acquire skills and competencies.

Learning outcomes: Knowledge, skills and competences acquired as a result of formal education, non-formal and informal learning.

Literacy training: Education for acquiring reading, writing, mathematics knowledge and skills as well as elementary knowledge in the field of the humanities and sciences.

Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities inside and outside formal education institutions. It could include adult literacy programmes, social skills, work skills, common knowledge, etc. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view. It could lead to validation and certification.

Professional competencies: Ability to acquire knowledge, know-how and skills related to acquisition of a specific profession.

Recognition: A general term for validation and certification of knowledge, skills and competencies.

Training: Process of teaching and acquiring knowledge and skills for a specific professional, social and personal sphere, which takes place both in and out of education institutions. It can lead to validation and certification.

Validation: The process of assessing and recognising a wide range of knowledge, know-how, skills and competencies which people develop throughout their lives in different contexts, for example through education, work and leisure activities. It typically leads to certification – education degree of a vocational/professional qualification. Certain type of validation procedures allow recognition of key competencies obtained or developed through non-
formal and/or informal education. Knowledge and skills that are a part of vocation and/or individual modules can also be validated, which leads to upgrading competences and credit transfer. Validation is one of the main mechanisms ensuring qualifications mobility and transparency.

**Vocational guidance**

Vocational guidance provides information, counselling and advice to students and other persons with regard to the choice of profession and career development.
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30. Ordinance № 22 of 11.06.2010 on acquisition of a vocational qualification in the profession of a planting layer-out, issued by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science (promulgated, State Gazette, issue 60 of 03.08.2010, in force from 03.08.2010)


33. Ordinance on the state requirements on acquisition of higher education in Architecture at the educational and qualificational degree of a Master and a professional qualification of an Architect (adopted by Council of Ministers’ Decree № 109 of 19.05.2003, promulgated, State Gazette, issue 49 of 27 May2003)


35. Written statement of Working Group № 16 Education, Mutual Recognition of
professional qualifications, youth, research and science to the Council on the European Affairs to the Council of Ministers of the republic of Bulgaria concerning the Bulgarian Qualifications Framework draft project
ANNEX

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