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TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE OF THE SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Monograph

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INTRODUCTION

Social systems have their characteristics and cannot exist by themselves. Even though there are different definitions and different interpretations in the scientific and popular literature, they form the social attitudes of individuals in the environment. States can be seen as social systems, even the world can be seen as one such social system. The process of active and overwhelming influence of public leaders is historically known. The dominant influence of strong public leaders was also evident after the end of the two world wars. Social systems are under a number of strains and the current form of existence shows signs of collapse. The study of impact processes is becoming increasingly complex and challenging, and their management is subject to counterintuitive influences. This suggests a great variety and different influences that lead to similar changes in various directions. The challenges are related to the speed of future research, as well as the complex use of different approaches to provide accurate and truthful information and reach correct conclusions.

Processes of successive crises lead to the deepening of imbalances in social systems. The different scales and intensity of the impacts on them subject them to a series of cyclical tests. Determining the scale of changes occurring at the macro- and micro-level is difficult, and the consequences are almost unpredictable. A standard set of methods and approaches proves insufficient to define and characterize all of this. Studying these processes requires a full-scale effort and diverse experience. This is also necessary from the point of view of forecasting

and planning transformation processes and effective solutions for getting out of the critical state in which the social systems are.

In this research we set an objectively complicated task to analyse the opportunities of strategic decision-making during crisis by attempting to make a partial analysis of the ongoing crisis caused by the COVID 19 pandemic and the emerged military conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Crisis circumstances require societies to quickly rethink and develop adequate strategies and respectively to formulate strategic goals and plan processes. In many cases preliminary analysis and assessment are practically impossible (especially when it comes to natural disasters or crises) and this requires a different operational order of problem solving, which includes formulating new unconventional goals and then implementing planning not objectified by a particular and accurate analysis. All this puts whole systems and societies to the test, and those who are empowered to manage the process – under high pressure from unforeseen circumstances and not always objective judgments. Which, in turn, creates a number of subsequent critical issues in the management process. The role of socially dominant leaders is of particular importance in societies, as well as in making various decisions. Their role in strategic decision-making is also examined.

This study attempts to analyze the ongoing processes in social and educational systems and their changing characteristics. A significant problem is the divergence in action between those who manage social

systems and those who participate in social systems. When the expectations of one and the other are in different directions, the rupture in this social system is completely predictable and expectedly possible. All the elements of a state of tension of existing social systems are present. The internal and external environments function in a series of defect processes. This, in addition to creating a sense of failure of their existence, also foreshadows many transformations to come. The rules created for the normal functioning of these social systems have exhausted their essence and must be replaced by other rules that satisfy the existence of the new social systems. The groups of people who are placed in a difficult social situation in Bulgaria are examined. A brief analysis of the possibilities for influencing social systems, as well as the possibilities of social entrepreneurship specifically, has been made.

CHAPTER ONE. THE NEW SOCIAL SYSTEMS

1.1. The new social systems - myth or reality

Setting goals and planning process actions in process management, and on a larger scale – strategic management during crisis is even more challenging. In accordance with the definitions of "crisis", in the broadest sense, crisis management is of strategic importance, as it is always a matter of rescuing and surviving of people, territories, sites, etc. On the one hand, crisis management corresponds to the principles of general management, but on the other hand, it is complex enough, which derives from the fact of rapidly and dynamically changing environment – both national and international. This is most often and clearly observed during crisis circumstances that affect a very large part of the population of a country, region, continent or even the whole world. Crises have a diverse nature, both in scope and in nature, and their management is correlated with this. Different options are considered for the development of strategies in crisis situations, depending on whether they relate to one administrative area, country, group of countries or cover the world.

Overcoming crises, as well as liquidating their consequences, represent a particular challenge. Managing processes in such complex and unpredictable situations requires the preparedness of the heads of the different countries. Social systems are subject to particular stresses, and this even calls into question their existence as such. These are extremely interesting processes from a scientific and research point of

view. Their analysis, study, and modeling would create conditions for a strategy for their management.

1.1.1. The formation of the new social systems

Social systems have their own characteristics and they cannot exist by themselves. Regardless of the fact that different definitions and different interpretations are found in the scientific and popular literature, they are those that form the social attitudes of the individuals (people) in the environment. Countries can be seen as social systems, even the world can be seen as one social system.

A welfare state is a form of government in which the state (or a well-established network of social institutions) protects and promotes the economic and social well-being of its citizens, based upon the principles of equal opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for citizens unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life[1].

There is substantial variability in the form and trajectory of the welfare state across countries and regions[2]. All welfare states entail some degree of private–public partnerships wherein the administration and delivery of at least some welfare programs occur through private

[1] *https://www.britannica.com/money/topic/welfare-state, (2024). Retrieved 29 November 2024.*

[2] *Béland, D., Morgan, K.J., Obinger, H., & Pierson, C. Introduction, The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State, Oxford University Press, pp. 1–20, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198828389.013.1, ISBN 978-0-19-882838-9.*

entities[3]. Welfare state services are also provided at varying territorial levels of government[4].

Early features of the welfare state, such as public pensions and social insurance, developed from the 1880s onwards in industrializing Western countries[567]. World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II have been characterized as important events that ushered in the expansion of the welfare state[89]. The fullest forms of the welfare state were developed after World War II[10].

The German term sozialstaat ("social state") has been used since 1870 to describe state support programs devised by German sozialpolitiker ("social politicians") and implemented as part of Otto von Bismarck's conservative reforms[11].

The literal English equivalent "social state" did not catch on in Anglophone countries[12]. However, during the Second World War, Anglican Archbishop William Temple, author of the book Christianity

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[3]*Béland, D., & Morgan, K.J. Governance, The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State, Oxford University Press, pp. 172–187, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198828389.013.10, ISBN 978-0-19-882838-9.*

[4]*Béland, D., & Morgan, K.J. Governance, The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State, Oxford University Press, pp. 172–187, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198828389.013.10, ISBN 978-0-19-882838-9.*

[5]*Skocpol, Theda. Protecting Soldiers and Mothers, Belknap Press, 1995, ISBN 9780674717664, https://www.hup.harvard.edu/books/9780674717664, Retrieved 29 November 2024.*

[6]*Béland, D., Morgan, K.J., Obinger, H., & Pierson, C. Introduction, The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State, Oxford University Press, pp. 1–20, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198828389.013.1, ISBN 978-0-19-882838-9.*

[7]*Koehler–Derrick, G., & Lee, M.M. War and Welfare in Colonial Algeria. International Organization. 77 (2): 263–293. doi:10.1017/S0020818322000376. ISSN 0020-8183. S2CID 256724058.*

[8]*Skocpol, Theda. Protecting Soldiers and Mothers, Belknap Press, 1995, ISBN 9780674717664, https://www.hup.harvard.edu/books/9780674717664, Retrieved 09 March 2024.*

[9]*O'Hara, P.A., ed. Welfare state. Encyclopedia of Political Economy. Routledge, 1999. p. 1247. ISBN 978-0-415-24187-8.*

[10]*Béland, D., Morgan, K.J., Obinger, H., & Pierson, C. Introduction, The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State, Oxford University Press, pp. 1–20, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198828389.013.1, ISBN 978-0-19-882838-9.*

[11]*Fay, S.B. Bismarck's Welfare State. Current History. XVIII (101): 1–7. 1950. doi:10.1525/curh.1950.18.101.1.*

[12]*Smith, M. Four German Jurists. IV. Political Science Quarterly. 16 (4): 641–679. 1901.*

and the Social Order (1942), popularized the concept using the phrase "welfare state"[13]. Bishop Temple's use of "welfare state" has been connected to Benjamin Disraeli's 1845 novel Sybil: or the Two Nations (in other words, the rich and the poor), where he writes "power has only one duty – to secure the social welfare of the PEOPLE"[14]. At the time he wrote Sybil, Disraeli (later a prime minister) belonged to Young England, a conservative group of youthful Tories who disagreed with how the Whigs dealt with the conditions of the industrial poor. Members of Young England attempted to garner support among the privileged classes to assist the less fortunate and to recognize the dignity of labor that they imagined had characterized England during the Feudal Middle Ages[15].

Before looking in detail at the ongoing processes in social systems, it is good to clarify the concept of social structure.

Social structure is a term used in sociology and the social sciences to denote characteristically constructed social formations that make society as a whole and that determine to some extent the actions of individuals socialized in that structure.

The meaning of the term social structure has different applicability. In macro sociology, it is a system of socioeconomic stratification, social institutions, or certain relations between large social groups. In meso-sociology, it is a social network structure that

[13]*Gough, I. The Welfare State, The New Palgrave Social Economics, New York: W.W. Norton, 1989, pp. 276–281.*

[14]*Disraeli, B. Chapter 14. Sybil. Vol. Book 4 https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3760/3760-h/3760-h.htm, Retrieved 11 March 2024.*

[15]*Alexander. M. Medievalism. pp. xxiv–xxv, 62, 93.*

creates connections between individuals or organizations. In macro sociology, it can also be how norms determine the behavior of individuals in a social system.

Social systems function under the organization of certain rules. These rules are created to satisfy certain needs of the individuals who participate in a given social system. The development of social systems leads to a distortion of the set of existing rules, which becomes unacceptable to individuals. This is one of the prerequisites for implementing change in social systems or their destruction. The period of transformation of one social system into another is usually accompanied by cataclysms that societies experience.

Historians speak of cyclicality in the change of social systems, which has only some accuracy in such logic. However, it should be emphasized that the changes that occur in social systems are caused by certain circumstances and factors that have an impact on the system itself. The turbulence that precedes certain transformations in the social system is a signal that the period of system change is soon.

Signals of changing social systems are a large set of events and actions that occur in a certain sequence. Such can be the frequent regional military conflicts and tensions in certain communities that create discomfort in the coexistence of a certain group of people and many others.

A significant problem is the divergence in action between those who manage social systems and those who participate in social systems.

When the expectations of the one and the other are in different directions, the rupture in this social system is completely predictable and expectedly possible.

All the elements of a state of tension of existing social systems are present. The internal and external environments function in a series of defect processes. This not only creates a sense of failure in their existence but also foreshadows many transformations to come. The rules created for the normal functioning of these social systems have exhausted their essence and must be replaced by other rules that satisfy the existence of the new social systems.

Even a basic survey of the behavior of the leaders of the existing social societies speaks unequivocally that a dramatic change is coming, in which all participants will be subjected to certain loads, even tensions during this period of active transformations.

The changes that will have to be accepted by the individuals participating in these new public social systems may turn out to be overwhelming for some of them, for others - unacceptable, and for others - an objective impossibility to physically survive this transformation.

They are looking for the creation of new social systems, which will condition new rules of interaction in them, which will also form new types of social relations. Undoubtedly, the newly formed social leaders will play a key role in these transformations.

This process of active and preferential influence of social leaders is known historically. The dominant influence of strong social leaders was also evident after the end of the two world wars. Their decisions affect both large and small social systems. The rules of functioning of the transformed social systems are set and partially shaped by the new social leaders of the historical moment.

The inevitability of such a process is almost impossible to predict with absolute accuracy, but considering that such processes take approximately several years, it can be said that we are already in a stage of the period of active social transformations.

The lack of research in this direction and the possibility of planning and forecasting these processes is puzzling. Even if we assume that some of them are under the guise of protecting national security, the deepening of research in this direction must happen quickly enough and with the possibility of the participation of researchers with high expertise in various fields.

1.1.2. Formation of the new social centers

The changes that are taking place of a geopolitical nature also imply social changes in social systems. Many analysts predict drastic changes in social relations, which will lead to the formation of new spheres of influence. Whether this will happen and especially when it will happen is a question from the point of view of a specific strategic analysis. Despite the impossibility of analyzing with a certain precision the multidirectional information in this plane, it can be concluded with

a great deal of objectivity that several main centers of influence. These centers have the economic, financial, military, political, and cultural capacity to influence social systems. They have a high power of influence that they can even model them. To a certain extent, this gives us an objective possibility of predictability, and on the other hand, it also predicts uncertainty in the direction of development of these processes.

1.1.2.1. World financial centers formed

We can consider financial centers as one of those that can significantly influence the ongoing transformations in social systems.

New York retains the top spot in the ranking of global financial centers by the Z/Yen Group. London and Singapore also retain their positions in second and third place respectively in the 33rd edition of The Global Financial Centers Index (GFCI).

The 33rd edition of the Global Financial Center Index (GFCI 33) provides future competitiveness assessments and rankings for 120 financial centers around the world. GFCI serves as a reference for policy and investment decision-makers.

The China Development Institute (CDI) in Shenzhen and Z/Yen Partners in London are collaborating on the development of the GFCI. GFCI is updated and published every March and September and receives considerable attention from the global financial community.

130 financial centers are surveyed for GFCI 33, of which 120 are in the main index. The GFCI is compiled using 153 instrumental

factors. These quantitative measures are provided by third parties, including the World Bank, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations.

Instrumental factors are combined with financial center ratings provided by respondents to the GFCI online questionnaire. GFCI 33 uses 61,449 ratings from 10,252 respondents[16].

1.1.2.2. World economic centers formed

The formed world economic centers, even in the presence of divergent assessments of their capacity, define the USA, the European Union and Asia as such. Usually, the main indicator that is predominantly used is the Gross Domestic Product per capita. However, this only shows part of the economic picture in determining these centers.

1.1.2.3. World military centers formed

The military power of the states is determined by a number of indicators, with a significant advantage given by high-tech armament and preparedness. Five countries have the largest armed forces, as follows: China (2,255,000), USA (1,420,000), India (1,414,000), Russia (1,120,000), Democratic People's Republic of Korea -1,106,000 The countries - South Korea, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Vietnam - also have a large number of armed forces[17].

[16] *https://www.longfinance.net/programmes/financial-centre-futures/global-financial-centres-index/, Retrieved 09 December 2024.*

[17] *https://www.globalfirepower.com/, Retrieved 09 December 2024.*

1.1.2.4. World political centers

The influence on the formation of public relations on a global scale is undoubtedly exerted by several political centers. Washington (USA), which in the last decades was the undisputed leader in almost all respects and had an irresistible opportunity to determine to a large extent the public policies of many countries, even to change them and redirect them to different spheres of its influence. The forceful imposition of certain policies was part of this hegemon behavior. Of course, it has always been limited or contested by other contenders.

The dynamic development of the processes determines the definition of several main centers, such as Moscow (Russian Federation) and Beijing (People's Republic of China). In no case can their influence be defined as only regional. Their behavior in the last few years has determined that they hold major political influence. We should note that both countries in different historical periods had one.

Several more political centers can be identified on the various continents, whose influence exceeds their regional importance.

This is only a brief analysis of the factors that can and do significantly influence the determination of several major centers of influence that will be instrumental in the formation of the new social systems. It is indisputable that they will not give up exerting their all-round influence on the social transformations that have already begun, they will even try to define and single out larger spheres of influence.

1.1.3. The role of socially dominant leaders in the emergence of crises

The fear of happening realities turns out not to be exaggerated not only in our realities but also in our accompanying being. The confusion of conflicting and ambiguous messages that put us in a state of disarray as people who have clear and coherent logical thinking increasingly feeds our fears. Although we are used to the half-baked and even sometimes lyrical political messages that are thrown as messages on the political market in Bulgaria and Europe, lately we feel more and more a strong concern from the more balanced and more diplomatic political leaders. Their personal and political prudence has put us in the extremely unattractive position of waiting a long time for something to happen, and this against the background of their becoming public knowledge of their wanderings in search of certain solutions for which they have proved to be quite unprepared.

Personal and collective living in yet another political system has exhausted its significance both for those who consume it and for those who observe it from the outside. The inability to self-preservation and to react to the changing world is an unequivocal answer that she is looking for her new and completely different transformation. These periods of transformation are usually accompanied by severe and painful transitional states, which are accompanied by many and varied conflicts. No matter how simplistic all this sounds, it has a definite and strong logical, and not only, basis - we should not underestimate our

historical memory in this direction, which would prove these statements of ours with a high degree of relativity.

The immediate question would be - how and what happens to the political reality? The next one is not at all useless - but what happens to ourselves? And if the answer to the second question is relatively easier, then the answer to the first is of a much more complex nature, both in substance and process nature. Eventually, we will have to go through periods of active transformations of our entire social system in one way or another, which will also include a change in political models of existence. If by a social system, we understand the whole set of relations, it would be practically more grounded and more realistic.

The failures and ups and downs of existing political realities are many and have their essential differences. Comparing and explaining them is important, as it can bring some benefits in our movement forward, as well as explaining the new processes taking place. These processes will bring elements that we know well and even read and explain well, but also elements that will surprise us and will be new with their high sensitivity.

The defective political reality will try to preserve some of its elements, which it will successfully carry over into future periods. This is of course quite uncertain, even unlikely, because these elements exist in one relationship with all others, and even if some of them survive in one form or another, they will have a different relationship with others that are now created.

If we are in the position that the defects in these political realities have already passed the possibility of being repaired or tamed in the sense of the accumulated grievances of the people, then their destruction will occur at an avalanche speed. The consequences of the defective political reality will be felt with different strengths and to different degrees. This is quite reasonable because they will be at different distances from the source of these processes. These influences will have a set of fluctuations that will be misunderstood by those involved because they are new and unpredictable in nature and consequences.

Giving organic examples of these processes in specific concreteness as signals of what is happening can be found even now. We have built up a certain sensitive tolerance to different processes because we do not know them, and we do not have enough time to explore them.

All of this comes against a background of numerous emerging signals from different places. Their power is increased by the ability of those who create them and those who transmit them. Certainly, those with the best array of active elements are the best and fastest at creating and transmitting these signals. Their creators are in a process of struggle not for survival, but for dominance. This process will form groups that will try to create new dependencies that will define the new social reality. Determining the zones of influence will also give rise to the social importance of those who are contenders for certain leadership in this environment. More important will be how these new socially

dominant leaders will determine or create the system of social relations that will determine the creation of new social systems. Political realities or systems will be the consequence of these new social relations.

Turbulences in these formed new social systems will last from a historical point of view for a very short time and from the point of view of the participants in them - for a very long time.

These processes have a high complexity and are almost unpredictable as a final result. Even if we have information and sufficient data about their progress, the power of influence of certain elements cannot be accurately and faithfully defined and measured, which will generate frequent and unpredictable changes.

That the social system is changing under the pressure of the multitude of social defects is almost visible to all, and is felt in certain and varying degrees. Much more interesting is how we will manage to pass through this long and sufficiently unpredictably difficult period, which we can unequivocally define as a process. It is unlikely that we will be able to have the kind of preparedness that would put us in a sufficiently favorable position so that everything happens in a certain acceptability for all participants. Anxiety grows with the constant multi-directionality of signals and with the succession of emerging social defects in the system.

We know that a system - whatever it may be - must have a certain efficiency, which is also associated with a particular financial significance. Whether those trying to be the leading elements in the

creation of the new social system have the knowledge and willingness to accept the dependencies that have existed so far is difficult to predict. It is obvious that this system of social efficiency also creates problems in its existence. The problems that can be defined are behavioral. As unacceptable as all this may sound, all too often the behavioral patterns of a particular individual have so altered a particular social system that it has been preserved long enough without interest in any effective relationships. It is possible that certain behavioral elements again sensitively influence the already started process and bring it to a certain stage in which the new realities will have a different meaning.

The easiest conclusion would be to wait and see what happens in the end. But whether and how we will have this opportunity and whether as direct participants we will be able to evaluate this process? It is best to make some effort to ensure some preparedness for all of this. Even if we appreciate and realize that the signals that we will create and transmit will be relatively small in strength, perhaps we should consider that it would be much greater if there is an essential content that is a response to these ongoing processes.

Historians with a dose of authoritative academic conviction argue that history always moves forward. There is a certain timidity in their current messages, combined with an unintended sense that history may be repeating itself in one form or another. If you answer at least part of the questions asked, or at least think deeply and unprejudiced about

them, it can protect us from those repetitions that we would not like to happen[18][19][20][21][22][23][24].

From a historical point of view, there are enough examples in which transformations and changes in social systems were mostly influenced by new social leaders. This has drastically changed the social systems themselves and created qualitatively new and different conditions for their existence and development. Another issue is their sustainability over time. A characteristic example is the social system of socialism. Despite the knowledge of its theoretical foundations, its leaders in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics exerted a major influence. Such are Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin - General Secretary of the Central Committee of

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[18]*Terziev, V. Strategic management in times of global crisis. 80th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The Essence of Organisational Well-Being" (X. OFEL) – Dubrovnik, 01-02 April, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.139-143, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[19]*Terziev, V. Strategic management in times of global crisis. Fourth International Thematic Scientific Conference "Fundamental (basic) research and its importance for the progress of the global community and the prosperous development of modern states", 14 October 2022, Belgrade, Serbia, International Association of Methodologists of Social Sciences, Belgrade Institute for Serbian Culture, Priština – Leposavić, MB University, Belgrade, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, ISBN 978-86-920023-4-2.*

[20]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Shared knowledge and changes in the higher education system in Bulgaria. 79th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Rabat, 25-26 March, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.228-237, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[21]*Terziev, V. Academic examples in times of post crisis social isolation. 78th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Aveiro, 24-25 February, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.221-224, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[22]*Terziev, V. Social dimensions of democratic changes through the eyes of Bulgarian ethnopsychology. 78th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Aveiro, 24-25 February, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.52-57, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[23]*Terziev, V., & Solovev, D.B. Analysis of the Management of Sector "Security" as Part of the Strategic Management of Bulgaria. In: Solovev D.B., Savaley V.V., Bekker A.T., Petukhov V.I. (eds) Proceeding of the International Science and Technology Conference "FarEastCon 2021". Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies, 2022, Vol 275. Springer, Singapore. 95-111, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-8829-4_9, ISBN978-981-16-8829-4 (Online), ISBN978-981-16-8828-7 (Print).*

[24]*Terziev, V. Youth unemployment and providing conditions for employment and entrepreneurship in Bulgaria. 76 th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – "Building Resilient Society" – Zagreb, 17-18 December, 2021, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2021, pp.56-60, ISSN 1849-7535.*

the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Socialist Republics (from March 15, 1946), Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev - First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev - General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, etc.

Socialism is a political philosophy and movement encompassing a wide range of economic and social systems[25] which are characterised by social ownership of the means of production[26], as opposed to private ownership[272829]. As a term, it describes the economic, political, and social theories and movements associated with the implementation of such systems[30]. Social ownership can be public, community, collective, cooperative[313233], or employee[3435]. While no single definition encapsulates the many types of socialism[36], social ownership is the one

[25]*Busky, D.F. Democratic Socialism: A Global Survey. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger. 2000, ISBN 978-0275968861.*

[26]*Busky, D.F. Democratic Socialism: A Global Survey. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger. 2000, ISBN 978-0275968861.*

[27]*Horvat, B. Social ownership. In Michie, Jonathan (ed.). Reader's Guide to the Social Sciences. Vol. 1. London and New York: Routledge. 2000, pp. 1515–1516. ISBN 978-1135932268.*

[28]*Arnold, N. Scott. The Philosophy and Economics of Market Socialism: A Critical Study. Oxford University Press. 1994, ISBN 978-0195088274.*

[29]*Hastings, A., Mason, A., & Pyper, H. The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought. Oxford University Press. 2000, p. 677. ISBN 978-0198600244.*

[30]*The Free Dictionary. https://www.thefreedictionary.com/, Retrieved 09 December 2024.*

[31]*Sherman, H. J., & Zimbalist, A. Comparing Economic Systems: A Political-Economic Approach. Harcourt College Pub. 1988, p. 7. ISBN 978-0-15-512403-5.*

[32]*Rosser, M.V., & Rosser, J.B. Comparative Economics in a Transforming World Economy. MIT Press. (23 July 2003), p. 53. ISBN 978-0-262-18234-8.*

[33]*Badie, B., Berg-Schlosser, D., & Morlino, L., eds. International Encyclopedia of Political Science. SAGE Publications. doi:10.4135/9781412994163. ISBN 978-1-4129-5963-6.*

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[35]*O'Hara, P. Encyclopedia of Political Economy. Vol. 2. Routledge. 2003, p. 71. ISBN 978-0415241878.*

[36]*Lamb, P., & Docherty, J.C. Historical Dictionary of Socialism (2nd ed.). Lanham: The Scarecrow Press.2006. ISBN 978-0810855601.*

common element[3738]. Socialism is traditionally placed on the left-wing of the political spectrum[39]. Different types of socialism vary based on the role of markets and planning in resource allocation, on the structure of management in organizations, and from below or from above approaches, with some socialists favouring a party, state, or technocratic-driven approach. Socialists disagree on whether government, particularly existing government, is the correct vehicle for change[4041].

Socialist systems are divided into non-market and market forms[42]. Non-market socialism substitutes factor markets and often money with integrated economic planning and engineering or technical criteria based on calculation performed in-kind, thereby producing a different economic mechanism that functions according to different economic laws and dynamics than those of capitalism[43]. A non-market socialist system seeks to eliminate the perceived inefficiencies, irrationalities, unpredictability, and crises that socialists traditionally associate with capital accumulation and the profit system in capitalism[44]. Market socialism retains the use of monetary prices, factor markets and in some

[37]*Arnold, N. Scott. The Philosophy and Economics of Market Socialism: A Critical Study. Oxford University Press. 1994, ISBN 978-0195088274.*

[38]*Hastings, A., Mason, A., & Pyper, H. The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought. Oxford University Press. 2000, p. 677. ISBN 978-0198600244.*

[39]*"Left". Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/left, Retrieved 09 December 2024.*

[40]*Nove, A. "Socialism". New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics (Second ed.). Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.*

[41]*Docherty, J.C., & Lamb, P., eds. Historical Dictionary of Socialism. Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements. Vol. 73 (2nd ed.). Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press. 2006. pp. 1–3. ISBN 978-0810855601.*

[42]*Kolb, R. Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society, First Edition. SAGE Publications, Inc. 2007. p. 1345. ISBN 978-1412916523.*

[43]*Bockman, J. Markets in the name of Socialism: The Left-Wing origins of Neoliberalism. Stanford University Press. 2011, ISBN 978-0804775663.*

[44]*Nove, A. The Economics of Feasible Socialism Revisited. Routledge. 1991. ISBN 9780044460152.*

cases the profit motive, with respect to the operation of socially owned enterprises and the allocation of capital goods between them. Profits generated by these firms would be controlled directly by the workforce of each firm or accrue to society at large in the form of a social dividend[454647].

Socialist parties and ideas remain a political force with varying degrees of power and influence on all continents, heading national governments in many countries around the world. Socialist politics have been both internationalist and nationalist; organised through political parties and opposed to party politics; at times overlapping with trade unions and at other times independent and critical of them, and present in both industrialised and developing nations[48].

Social democracy originated within the socialist movement[49], supporting economic and social interventions to promote social justice[5051]. While retaining socialism as a long-term goal[52], since the post-war period social democracy came to embrace a mixed economy based on Keynesianism within a predominantly developed capitalist market economy and liberal democratic polity that expands state

[45]*Marangos, J. (2004). Social Dividend versus Basic Income Guarantee in Market Socialism. International Journal of Political Economy. Taylor & Francis. 34 (3): 20–40. doi:10.1080/08911916.2004.11042930.*

[46]*O'Hara, P. Encyclopedia of Political Economy. Vol. 2. Routledge. 2003, p. 71. ISBN 978-0415241878.*

[47]*Pierson, C. Socialism After Communism: The New Market Socialism. Pennsylvania State University Press. 1995, p. 96. ISBN 978-0271-014784.*

[48]*Newman, M. Socialism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press. 2005, ISBN 978-0192804310.*

[49]*Ely, R.T. French and German Socialism in Modern Times. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1883, pp. 204–205.*

[50]*Merkel, W., Petring, A., Henkes, C., & Egle, C. Social Democracy in Power: The Capacity to Reform. Routledge Research in Comparative Politics. London: Routledge. 2008, ISBN 978-0415438209.*

[51]*Heywood, A. Political Ideologies: An Introduction (5th ed.). Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan. 2012, p. 128. ISBN 978-0230367258.*

[52]*Roemer, J.E. A Future for Socialism. Harvard University Press. 1994, ISBN 978-067433946-0.*

intervention to include income redistribution, regulation, and a welfare state[53]. Economic democracy proposes a sort of market socialism, with more democratic control of companies, currencies, investments, and natural resources[54].

The socialist political movement includes a set of political philosophies that originated in the revolutionary movements of the mid-to-late 18th century and out of concern for the social problems that socialists associated with capitalism[55]. By the late 19th century, after the work of Karl Marx and his collaborator Friedrich Engels, socialism had come to signify anti-capitalism and advocacy for a post-capitalist system based on some form of social ownership of the means of production[5657]. By the early 1920s, communism and social democracy had become the two dominant political tendencies within the international socialist movement[58], with socialism itself becoming the most influential secular movement of the 20th century[59]. Many socialists also adopted the causes of other social movements, such as feminism, environmentalism, and progressivism[60].

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[53]*Badie, B., Berg-Schlosser, D., & Morlino, L., eds. International Encyclopedia of Political Science. SAGE Publications. doi:10.4135/9781412994163. ISBN 978-1-4129-5963-6.*

[54]*Smith, J.W. Economic Democracy: The Political Struggle for the 21st century. Radford: Institute for Economic Democracy Press. 2005, ISBN: 1933567-015.*

[55]*Lamb, P., & Docherty, J.C. Historical Dictionary of Socialism (2nd ed.). Lanham: The Scarecrow Press. 2006, ISBN 978-0810855601.*

[56]*Gasper, P. The Communist Manifesto: A Road Map to History's Most Important Political Document. Haymarket Books. 2005, p. 24. ISBN 978-1931859257.*

[57]*Giddens, A. Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics (1998 ed.). Cambridge, England, UK: Polity Press. 1998, p. 71.*

[58]*Newman, M. Socialism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press. 2005, ISBN 978-0192804310.*

[59]*Kurian, G.T., ed. The Encyclopedia of Political Science. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. 2011, p. 1554.*

[60]*Sheldon, G.W. Encyclopedia of Political Thought. Facts on File. Inc. 2001, p. 280.*

While the emergence of the Soviet Union as the world's first nominally socialist state led to socialism's widespread association with the Soviet economic model, several scholars posit that in practice, the model functioned as a form of state capitalism[61][62][63]. Several academics, political commentators, and scholars have noted that some Western European countries have been governed by socialist parties or have mixed economies that are sometimes called "democratic socialist"[64][65]. Following the end of the Cold War and the revolutions of 1989, many of these countries have moved away from socialism as a neoliberal consensus replaced the social democratic consensus in the advanced capitalist world[66], while many former socialist politicians and political parties embraced "Third Way" politics, remaining committed to equality and welfare, while abandoning public ownership and class-based politics[67]. Socialism experienced a resurgence in popularity in the 2010s, most prominently in the form of democratic socialism[68][69]. A vivid example of a new social leader who, through his personal views, changes and even helps to cease the existence of a social system. This is Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev - General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President

[61] *Chomsky, N. The Soviet Union Versus Socialism. Our Generation. Spring–Summer 1986, (Retrieved 10 June 2020 – via Chomsky.info).*

[62] *Howard, M. C., & King, J. E. (2001). 'State Capitalism' in the Soviet Union. History of Economics Review, 34(1), 110–126. https://doi.org/10.1080/10370196.2001.11733360.*

[63] *Fitzgibbons, D.J. USSR strayed from communism, say Economics professors, (11 October 2002).*

[64] *Barrett, W., ed. Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy: A Symposium. Commentary. (1 April 1978). Archived from the original on 19 October 2019. Retrieved 14 June 2020.*

[65] *Sanandaji, N. Nordic Countries Aren't Actually Socialist. (27 October 2021). Foreign Policy.*

[66] *Sanandaji, N. Nordic Countries Aren't Actually Socialist. (27 October 2021). Foreign Policy.*

[67] *"Socialism". Encyclopedia Britannica. (Retrieved 25 November 2023).*

[68] *Judis, J.B. The Socialist Revival. American Affairs Journal. (20 November 2019).*

[69] *Cassidy, J. Why Socialism Is Back. The New Yorker. ISSN 0028-792X. (18 June 2019).*

of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In implementing his domestic policy, Mikhail Gorbachev tried to implement economic reforms that would contribute to a change in the standard of living. This is the so-called “perestroika” policy. His reforms were ineffective and failed to achieve substantial direct results and change the existing system of planned and command economy.

The existence of the socialist social system is characterized by its peculiarities. The specific architecture of socialism (Photo 1-6) as well as the propaganda posters have their specific messages (Photo 7-9).



Photo 1: *Palace of Culture Mangalia, Mangalia, Romania,built in 1963. Architect: Nicolae Vlădescu. Large mural: Primordial elements of life, on a large mosaic by Jules Perahim entitled “Genesis”, on the facade of the Palace of Culture, built 1958-63 in Romanian People's Republic.*

Source: *B.A.C.U (Birou pentru Artă și Cercetare Urbană)/ Photo Dumitru RUSU*



Photo 2. *The former Hotel Sport (today: Spa Hotel), Estonia, Tallinn, built between 1975-1980. Architect: Avo-Himm Looveer, Henno Sepmann, Peep Jänes, Ants Raid et al.*

Source: *B.A.C.U (Birou pentru Artă și Cercetare Urbană)/ Photo Dumitru RUSU*



Photo 3. *Hotel Traian (Now: Hotel Roman). The hotel complex includes a museum entitled "Imperial Roman Thermal Baths" and functional Austrian Imperial Baths built in the 1850s on the roman thermal baths ruins, both located in the lower levels of the hotel. Baile Herculane, România. Built 1974-76. Architects Sulamiţa Mureşan, A. Mureşan.*

Source: *B.A.C.U (Birou pentru Artă și Cercetare Urbană)/ Photo Dumitru RUSU*



Photo 4. *Blocks 61-64 (Officer blocks or Panonian Sailboats), Belgrade, Serbia, Built in sistem RAD-BALENCY - between 1974-80, Architect Milan Miodragovic. Urban design Josip Svoboda.*

Source: *B.A.C.U (Birou pentru Artă și Cercetare Urbană)*



Photo 5. *Restaurant of the Hotel Powiśle (former Communist Party canteen) 1972-1974. Ul. Szara 10a, Warsaw.*

Source: *B.A.C.U (Birou pentru Artă și Cercetare Urbană)*



Photo 6. *The State Circus, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, built in 1976. Architect Gennady Masyagin et al. Tashgiprogor.*

Source: *B.A.C.U (Birou pentru Artă și Cercetare Urbană)*



Photo 7. *Poster from the time of socialism from the USSR.*



92. Ефимов Б.
Капитан Страны Советов ведет нас от победы к победе! 1933

Photo 8. *Poster from the time of socialism from the USSR.*



220. Клуцис Г.
Выше знамя Маркса, Энгельса, Ленина и Сталина! 1936

Photo 9. *Poster from the time of socialism from the USSR.*

It would be important to study the ongoing modern processes that require rapid and sudden changes in social systems. Whereas in the recent past, there were certain indications of the changes taking place that could be examined and analyzed, now the changes that are occurring are sudden and rapid. The emergence of new social leaders creates conditions through their behavior, ideas, interests, and even a set of irrational views to transform the existing social systems. The influence of the new social leaders can be presented as sensitive and in many cases decisive for the transformations taking place. It is necessary

to identify a new criterion apparatus that objectively and quickly enough gives us true and accurate information. The reliability of this venture is rather difficult to determine.

Social processes in a period of severe crisis situations are accompanied by a high speed of their progress. Their detailed and systematic description and subsequent analysis are almost impossible. The search for specific research approaches is mandatory in these situations. The study of the behavioral patterns of dominant social leaders is of particular importance. Here any researcher would face two sets of problems. The first is related to obtaining sufficiently accurate and true information, which is handled by statistical methods of analysis, as well as sociological methods. This will create a particular difficulty in using both of them. The accessibility of this type of information and data is difficult to collect, but even if they succeed somewhere, it will be filtered in a special way by the relevant state-engaged security services. The second group of problems will arise when assessing the development of the behavioral model of the respective individual who has acquired the role of a socially significant and dominant leader. Knowledge and his personal characteristics will have undergone various transformations during the period of his rule, namely, these characteristics will not have been public enough, and the information we will get will be from the mass media or other public meetings.

Overcoming the two groups of difficulties may in certain situations be insurmountable and the use of similar approaches for the implementation of research activity – is impossible.

Regardless of the research situation in which we will find ourselves, it is necessary to look for opportunities to study the influence of socially dominant leaders on social processes.

Similar and analogous examples from a historical point of view can be cited with quite success. Even if we conditionally accept the two world wars as such severe crises, the actions of the leaders who participated in these processes cannot always be explained logically and do not carry their economic, political, and other arguments. Conditionally, these are also social processes that have changed both their direction and their speed as a result of socially dominant leaders. Here we should make one important clarification, namely, that they took place too slowly, according to the current social processes. The factors of the external and internal environment have changed both in their essential characteristics and their quantitative dimensions. Some of the researchers would pay particular attention to the study of environmental factors that undoubtedly have and will continue to have an impact on ongoing social processes. Another question is to what extent they influence the decisions and behavior of the new socially dominant leaders. This can be established too late and only at the end of a certain stage of a certain social process.

The tendency but socially dominant leaders who are empowered to make decisions and have sufficient resources (political, economic,

financial, etc.) tend to make decisions of an operational nature in crises, in which decisions exclude consideration of the environment but rather represent motives other than political and economic logic. Usually, when a crisis occurs, the power tools focus on a small group of people who follow and have to bear the burden of decision-making in an extreme situation.

In a cursory analysis of the social processes that are taking place in the world at the moment, one can make a relatively true conclusion that they are predominantly managed by the new socially dominant leaders. The use of the concept “the new socially dominant leaders” has a sacred convention, because the individuals we now define as dominant social leaders may have been leaders of states, corporations, unions, etc. in previous periods, but only now have acquired such importance.

Undoubtedly, ongoing social processes are due to active changes in recent decades in political, economic, military, and financial aspects. The results of all this will be manifested to the greatest extent in the imposition of new social rules in the new social systems. The inevitability of imposing new regulatory functions in the structure of new social systems is almost obvious. Resistance to change is also evident. Evolutionary social processes currently dominate revolutionary social processes. Perhaps we should make a stipulation that these social processes are inevitably associated with local military conflicts, financial cataclysms, or political instability of certain regions, but not with a continental or worldwide presence of social discomfort.

The imposition or the possibility of the establishment of a new social system with new rules cannot help but be accompanied by certain negative actions as well as consequences.

Unfortunately, the scientific community will study, analyze, and predict all this too late. The utility of such an undertaking at a later stage of time will have its significance, but it will be far less than if it happened now.

The importance of such action and research in this direction is of particular importance to each human individual as well as to different communities. Even if these studies mark little progress at the present stage, they must seek their place, serving as an element for the preparation of our societies for a new interaction in the new social environment.

The understanding that everything should be left at the current level of preparedness could prove disastrous for some of our societies. Moreover, there is sufficient reason to believe that some of the leaders of the smaller communities, or those who will not play a dominant role, will prove to be too unprepared, even unsuited to the new social situation.

1.1.4. Dysfunctions of social systems

Social systems function according to certain rules and have their internal dependencies. Their main purpose is to serve the requirements of the participating individuals in these social systems. Tensions in social systems create an objective danger to their existence. This leads

to significant discrepancies between the expectations and needs of those participating in social systems and their objective reality. All this can be caused by the new expectations or new needs that have arisen as a result of the social development of the systems, but it can also be a result of the internal tensions that have arisen in the systems themselves. These stresses can be classified in different ways and according to different criteria, but this is not the subject of the present analysis. Rather, it is important that the tensions in social systems that occur or are created by crises cause changes. These changes can be both desired and undesired. They will ensure the further existence or transformations of a social system. The impossibility of preserving their functioning in this form is more than obvious. Attempts to preserve them in this form will continue, but this is unlikely to be possible. The elites of the societies have raised new claims, which must be realized in some kind of social development, which will lead to serious transformations and changes in the social systems.

The objective prerequisites for significant changes in social systems are present. New paradigms and new social claims are announced, numerous crises of different natures arise, as well as the fact that the leading social leaders create expectations for changes through their behavior.

Social leaders in their communication in the social environment use the full range of means to impose their emerging desires. They do not always directly correspond with the wishes and expectations of those participating in a certain system. The environment in the social

system becomes unstable and this further leads to the creation of future expectations of change.

Objective scientific and research approaches provide only a small part of the answers for managing change in social systems, and they can even be misleading and even wrong in some cases.

Social systems begin to obey the managerial views and specific decisions of social leaders who have a dominant influence. Historical retrospect provides some answers to these new expectations. They are not always related to the logic and correctness of the subsequent decisions, but rather to objectification in some reality of the strategic decisions of the dominant social leaders. Dominant social leaders begin to create social systems according to new rules and new requirements. If objectively possible, they try to transform them, or rather adapt them to their views, demands and intentions. In other extreme situations, they try to destroy them and recreate them. This version of the existence of social systems is the most critical from the point of view of the individuals participating in them, but sometimes the most pragmatic from the point of view of the dominant social leaders. Naturally, during the transformations or the creation of new social systems, various factors of the environment will have a significant and undetermined influence. They will be carriers of both progressive and regressive ideas. Support for both will change and gain different importance over time. It will be illusory to claim that the sustainability of the newly created or transforming systems will pass into an acceptable conditionality for all participants. The emergence of new demands and

new conditions will put them to trials that they have not experienced at any other time in their human existence. Objectively, a larger part of the participants in the social systems will try to adapt to the new social conditions, but a significant part will find it impossible to do so. Here it is perhaps correct to divide them into two groups - those who have a complete or partial disagreement with the imposed new social rules and others who, due to their social nature, will be unsuitable for the new social conditions. This mass of individuals, however, will be appreciably small to withstand the forward movement of social systems. Rather, change will only register the occurrence of such fluctuations, and new social systems will attempt to extinguish or ignore their existence.

The process of successive crises leads to the deepening of imbalances in social systems. The varying scale and intensity of the impacts on them put them through a series of cyclical trials. Establishing the scale of the changes that occur at the macro and micro levels is difficult to measure and the consequences are almost unpredictable. The standard toolkit of methods and approaches turns out to be insufficient to define and characterize all of this.

The main factor is the speed of the processes and the lack of effective time for precise and objective analyses. This presents us as participants in transforming social systems with a set of challenges and tests of our fitness to be able to accept and adapt successfully to the changes that are occurring. The study of these processes requires a full-scale effort and different expertise. This is also imperative from the

point of view of forecasting and planning the transformation processes and an effective solution for getting out of the critical state in which social systems fall[70717273747576777879808182838 4].

[70]*Terziev, V. Strategic management in times of global crisis. 80th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The Essence of Organisational Well-Being" (X. OFEL) – Dubrovnik, 01-02 April, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.139-143, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[71]*Terziev, V. Strategic management in times of global crisis. Fourth International Thematic Scientific Conference "Fundamental (basic) research and its importance for the progress of the global community and the prosperous development of modern states", 14 October 2022, Belgrade, Serbia, International Association of Methodologists of Social Sciences, Belgrade Institute for Serbian Culture, Priština – Leposavić, MB University, Belgrade, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, ISBN 978-86-920023-4-2.*

[72]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Shared knowledge and changes in the higher education system in Bulgaria. 79th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Rabat, 25-26 March, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.228-237, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[73]*Terziev, V. Academic examples in times of post crisis social isolation. 78th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Aveiro, 24-25 February, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.221-224, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[74]*Terziev, V. Social dimensions of democratic changes through the eyes of Bulgarian ethnopsychology. 78th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Aveiro, 24-25 February, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.52-57, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[75]*Terziev, V., & Solovev, D.B. Analysis of the Management of Sector "Security" as Part of the Strategic Management of Bulgaria. In: Solovev D.B., Savaley V.V., Bekker A.T., Petukhov V.I. (eds) Proceeding of the International Science and Technology Conference "FarEastCon 2021". Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies, 2022, Vol 275. Springer, Singapore. 95-111, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-8829-4_9, ISBN978-981-16-8829-4 (Online), ISBN978-981-16-8828-7 (Print).*

[76]*Terziev, V. Youth unemployment and providing conditions for employment and entrepreneurship in Bulgaria. 76 th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – "Building Resilient Society" – Zagreb, 17-18 December, 2021, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2021, pp.56-60, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[77]*Terziev, V., Georgiev, M., & Ivanov, I. Model of overcoming the crisis in Bulgaria caused by the pandemic. 76 th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – "Building Resilient Society" – Zagreb, 17-18 December, 2021, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2021, pp.318-323, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[78]*Terziev, V. COVID-19 pandemics and its impact on Bulgarian universities in the context of the new challenges to social system and labour market policies. Internauka Publishing House CUL, Kyiv, 2022, 138 p., ISBN 978-611-01-2647-2.*

[79]*Terziev, V. Higher education system and labour market policies in Bulgaria in COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis periods. Internauka Publishing House CUL, Kyiv, 2022, 168 p., ISBN 978-611-01-2645-8.*

[80]*Terziev, V. K. (2023). Innovation Development of Industrial Business Organizations. In M. Okur Dinçsoy & H. Can (Eds.), Optimizing Energy Efficiency During a Global Energy Crisis (pp. 282-306). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-0400-6.ch016.*

[81]*Terziev, V. Strategic Management in the Conditions of Global Crises and the New Social Leaders. 17 th SCF International Conference on "Sustainable Development in a Global Perspective", October 6-7, 2023, Istanbul, Turkiye, 2023, pp. 162-170, ISBN: 978-605-72639-6-4 (e-book).*

[82]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

[83]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. The Labor Market Policies and Social Development in Bulgaria. Optimizing Energy Efficiency During a Global Energy Crisis, 2023, DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-0400-6, aISBN13: 9798369304006, EISBN13: 9798369304013.*

[84]*Terziev, V. (2024). Global transformations and formation of new social systems. Revista Gestão e Secretariado (GeSec), São Paulo, SP, v. 15, n. 1, 2024, p. 1109-1127, ISSN 2178-9010.*

1.2. Processes in changing social systems

The setting of objectives and the planning of process activities in management, and hence strategic management in times of crisis, are complex and multifaceted. In accordance with the definitions of “crisis”, in the broadest sense, crisis management is of strategic importance, since it is always about saving and surviving people, territories, objects, etc. Crisis management corresponds to the principles of general management, on the other hand, it is quite complex, which stems from the rapidly and dynamically changing environment - both national and international. This is most often and clearly observed in crisis circumstances that affect a huge part of the population of a country, region, continent, or even the entire world. Crises are diverse in both scale and nature, and their management is related to this. Different options for developing strategies in crises are considered, depending on whether they concern an administrative region, a country, a group of countries, or the whole world.

Overcoming crises, as well as eliminating their consequences, represent a particular challenge. Managing processes in such complex and unpredictable situations requires the readiness of leaders from different countries. Social systems are subject to specific stresses, and this even calls into question their existence as such. These processes are extremely interesting from a scientific and research point of view. Their analysis, research, and modeling will create conditions for an appropriate strategy for their management.

1.2.1. Identity and cultural transformations

Identity is a general term used in the social sciences to describe one's understanding of oneself as a distinct entity. Although the term is general, it can be said that it most refers to psychology and sociology and especially to social psychology.

Psychological identity nurtures an individual's sense of self-wholeness. It helps him feel a sense of identity, permanence, perspective, and continuity. Identity is what makes an individual a whole self, distinct from others yet connected to them. Individually, identity implies a realistically developed self-concept related to the mastery of the environment at various levels and the social recognition of the individual in society. The different dimensions of identity imply the sense of unity of different ego-states and the sense of belonging to a given community. Since the individual does not exist independently, he constructs his identity through his belonging to different groups.

Identity is the set of qualities, beliefs, personality traits, appearance, and/or expressions that characterize a person or a group[85][86][87][88].

Identity emerges during childhood as children start to comprehend their self-concept, and it remains a consistent aspect throughout

[85] *Compare Collins Dictionary of Sociology, quoted in Covington, Peter (2008). "Culture and Identity". Success in Sociology. Dublin: Folens Limited. 2008, p. 12. ISBN 9781850082606.*

[86] *Schwartz, S.J., Luyckx, K., & Vignoles, V.L., eds. (2011). Handbook of Identity Theory and Research. New York, NY: Springer New York. doi:10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9. ISBN 978-1-4419-7987-2.*

[87] *Herman, W. E. (2011). Identity Formation. Encyclopedia of Child Behavior and Development. Boston, MA: Springer US. pp. 779–781. doi:10.1007/978-0-387-79061-9_1443. ISBN 978-0-387-77579-1.*

[88] *Franco-Zamudio, J., & Dorton, H. (2014). Collective Identity. Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology. New York, NY: Springer New York. pp. 256–259. doi:10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7_381. ISBN 978-1-4614-5582-0.*

different stages of life. Identity is shaped by social and cultural factors and how others perceive and acknowledge one's characteristics[89]. The etymology of the term "identity" from the Latin noun identitas emphasizes an individual's mental image of themselves and their "sameness with others"[90]. Identity encompasses various aspects such as occupational, religious, national, ethnic or racial, gender, educational, generational, and political identities, among others.

Identity serves multiple functions, acting as a "self-regulatory structure" that provides meaning, direction, and a sense of self-control. It fosters internal harmony and serves as a behavioral compass, enabling individuals to orient themselves towards the future and establish long-term goals[91]. As an active process, it profoundly influences an individual's capacity to adapt to life events and achieve a state of well-being[9293]. However, identity originates from traits or attributes that individuals may have little or no control over, such as their family background or ethnicity[94].

In sociology, emphasis is placed by sociologists on collective identity, in which an individual's identity is strongly associated with role-behavior or the collection of group memberships that define

[89]*Schmeck, K., Schlüter-Müller, S., Foelsch, P. A, & Doering, S. (2013). The role of identity in the DSM-5 classification of personality disorders. Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health. 7 (1): 27. doi:10.1186/1753-2000-7-27. ISSN 1753-2000.*

[90]*The term identity comes from the Latin noun Definition. Law Insider. Retrieved May 30, 2023.*

[91]*Schwartz, S.J., Montgomery, M.J., & Briones, E. (2006). The Role of Identity in Acculturation among Immigrant People: Theoretical Propositions, Empirical Questions, and Applied Recommendations. Human Development. 49 (1): 1–30. doi:10.1159/000090300. ISSN 0018-716X.*

[92]*Laliberte-Rudman, D. (2002). Linking Occupation and Identity: Lessons Learned Through Qualitative Exploration. Journal of Occupational Science, 9(1), 12–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2002.9686489.*

[93]*Unruh, A.M. Reflections on: "So… What Do You Do?" Occupation and the Construction of Identity. Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy. 2004;71(5):290-295. doi:10.1177/000841740407100508.*

[94]*Identity: Definition. Types, & Examples. The Berkeley Well-Being Institute. Retrieved June 21, 2023.*

them[95]. According to Peter Burke, “Identities tell us who we are and they announce to others who we are.”[96]. Identities subsequently guide behavior, leading “fathers” to behave like “fathers” and “nurses” to act like “nurses”[97].

In psychology, the term “identity” is most commonly used to describe personal identity, or the distinctive qualities or traits that make an individual unique[9899]. Identities are strongly associated with self-concept, self-image (one's mental model of oneself), self-esteem, and individuality[100101]. Individuals' identities are situated, but also contextual, situationally adaptive and changing. Despite their fluid character, identities often feel as if they are stable ubiquitous categories defining an individual, because of their grounding in the sense of personal identity (the sense of being a continuous and persistent self)[102].

Erik Erikson (1902–94) became one of the earliest psychologists to take an explicit interest in identity. An essential feature of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development was the idea of the ego identity (often referred to as the self), which is described as an individual's

[95]*Burke, P. Identity. In: Kivisto P, ed. The Cambridge Handbook of Social Theory. Cambridge University Press; 2020:63-78.*

[96]*Burke, P. Identity. In: Kivisto P, ed. The Cambridge Handbook of Social Theory. Cambridge University Press; 2020:63-78.*

[97]*Burke, P. Identity. In: Kivisto P, ed. The Cambridge Handbook of Social Theory. Cambridge University Press; 2020:63-78.*

[98]*Cheek, J.M. (1989). Identity Orientations and Self-Interpretation. In: Buss, D.M., Cantor, N. (eds) Personality Psychology. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4684-0634-4_21.*

[99]*Identity. dictionary.apa.org. Retrieved November 5, 2024.*

[100]*Weinreich, P. (1986). „14: The operationalisation of identity theory in racial and ethnic relations“. In Rex, John; Mason, David (eds.). Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations. Comparative Ethnic and Race Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (published 1988). pp. 299ff. ISBN 9780521369398.*

[101]*Leary & Tangney, 2003.*

[102]*Kurzwelly, J. (2019). Being German, Paraguayan and Germanino: Exploring the Relation Between Social and Personal Identity. Identity, 19(2), 144–156. https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2019.1604348.*

personal sense of continuity[103]. He suggested that people can attain this feeling throughout their lives as they develop and is meant to be an ongoing process[104]. The ego-identity consists of two main features: one's personal characteristics and development, and the culmination of social and cultural factors and roles that impact one's identity. In Erikson's theory, he describes eight distinct stages across the lifespan that are each characterized by a conflict between the inner, personal world and the outer, social world of an individual. Erikson identified the conflict of identity as occurring primarily during adolescence and described potential outcomes that depend on how one deals with this conflict[105]. Those who do not manage a resynthesis of childhood identifications are seen as being in a state of 'identity diffusion' whereas those who retain their given identities unquestioned have “foreclosed” identities[106]. On some readings of Erikson, the development of a strong ego identity, along with the proper integration into a stable society and culture, lead to a stronger sense of identity in general. Accordingly, a deficiency in either of these factors may increase the chance of an identity crisis or confusion[107].

The “Neo-Eriksonian” identity status paradigm emerged in 1966, driven largely by the work of James Marcia[108]. This model focuses on the concepts of exploration and commitment. The central idea is that an

[103]*APA Dictionary of Psychology. dictionary.apa.org. Retrieved November 5, 2024.*

[104]*Erikson, E.H. (1968). Identity: Youth and Crisis. W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN 978-0-393-31144-0.*

[105]*Weinreich, P., & Saunderson, W. (Eds.). (2002). Analysing Identity: Cross-Cultural, Societal and Clinical Contexts (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203988800.*

[106]*Weinreich & Saunderson. 2003.*

[107]*Cote & Levine. 2002.*

[108]*Marcia, J.E. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3(5), 551–558. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0023281.*

individual's sense of identity is determined in large part by the degrees to which a person has made certain explorations and the extent to which they have commitments to those explorations or a particular identity[109]. A person may display either relative weakness or strength in terms of both exploration and commitments. When assigned categories, there were four possible results: identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, identity moratorium, and identity achievement. Diffusion is when a person avoids or refuses both exploration and making a commitment. Foreclosure occurs when a person does make a commitment to a particular identity but neglected to explore other options. Identity moratorium is when a person avoids or postpones making a commitment but is still actively exploring their options and different identities. Lastly, identity achievement is when a person has both explored many possibilities and has committed to their identity[110].

Although the self is distinct from identity, the literature of self-psychology can offer some insight into how identity is maintained[111]. From the vantage point of self-psychology, there are two areas of interest: the processes by which a self is formed (the "I"), and the actual content of the schemata which compose the self-concept (the "Me"). In the latter field, theorists have shown interest in relating the self-concept to self-esteem, the differences between complex and simple ways of

[109]*Schwartz, S. J. (2001). The Evolution of Eriksonian and, Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory and Research: A Review and Integration. Identity, 1(1), 7–58. https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532706XSCHWARTZ.*

[110]*Marcia, J.E., Waterman, A.S., Matteson, D.R., Archer, S.L., & Orlofsky, J.L. (2012). Ego Identity: A Handbook for Psychosocial Research. Springer Science & Business Media. ISBN 978-1-4613-8330-7.*

[111]*Cote & Levine. 2002.*

organizing self-knowledge, and the links between those organizing principles and the processing of information[112].

Weinreich's identity variant similarly includes the categories of identity diffusion, foreclosure and crisis, but with a somewhat different emphasis. Here, with respect to identity diffusion for example, an optimal level is interpreted as the norm, as it is unrealistic to expect an individual to resolve all their conflicted identifications with others; the refore we should be alert to individuals with levels which are much higher or lower than the norm – highly diffused individuals are classified as diffused, and those with low levels as foreclosed or defensive[113]. Weinreich applies the identity variant in a framework which also allows for the transition from one to another by way of biographical experiences and resolution of conflicted identifications situated in various contexts – for example, an adolescent going through family break-up may be in one state, whereas later in a stable marriage with a secure professional role may be in another. Hence, though there is continuity, there is also development and change[114].

Laing's definition of identity closely follows Erikson's, in emphasising the past, present and future components of the experienced self. He also develops the concept of the "metaperspective of self", i.e. the self's perception of the other's view of self, which has been found to be extremely important in clinical contexts such as anorexia nervosa[115].

[112]*Cote & Levine. 2002.*

[113]*Weinreich & Saunderson. 2003.*

[114]*Weinreich & Saunderson. 2003.*

[115]*Weinreich, P., & Saunderson, W. (Eds.). (2002). Analysing Identity: Cross-Cultural, Societal and Clinical Contexts (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203988800.*

Harré also conceptualises components of self/identity – the "person" (the unique being I am to myself and others) along with aspects of self (including a totality of attributes including beliefs about one's characteristics including life history), and the personal characteristics displayed to others.

1.2.2. Cultural identity and cultural transformations

Svetlana Kuyumdzhieva makes interesting generalizations about the concept of cultural identity and presents it as follows: Cultural identity can be formulated in hundreds of different ways. It is usually associated with belonging to a certain nation, group, race, religion... However, national and cultural identity nowadays are concepts that do not easily find their boundaries. Today, a person builds his cultural identity thanks to his social experience and the individual choices he makes and has to make constantly. Cultural identity is a concept with an almost unlimited capacity to define possibilities. Perhaps this is exactly what makes it an extremely convenient occasion for many different artists to gather in one place[116].

The ongoing cultural transformations that are part of our social experience are the result of the so-called diffusion processes that have taken place to one degree or another throughout our human existence. The dominant influences were of the greatest importance in this process, and from there, the consequences were of the greatest

[116]*Kuyumdzhieva, Svetlana. Cultural Identity, Culture - Issue 29 (2733), 2007.*

consequence. In every society, there are established regulatory mechanisms that encourage some and limit other influences.

Visits to the cinema, library, theater, and various television programs are things that are a donor of cultural influence and they enable the penetration of knowledge about different cultures in the local communities. The National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria made similar observations, disclosing statistical data in this direction, which well and clearly define the groups of different users and their characteristics (Table 1-3).

	Total number	Less than 5 books in the last 12 months		5-10 books in the last 12 months		More than 10 books in the last 12 months	
		number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	1623802	961555	59.2%	439542	27.1%	222705	13.7%
By gender							
Men	641449	421223	65.7%	155464	24.2%	64762	10.1%
Women	982353	540332	55.0%	284078	28.9%	157943	16.1%
By age							
25 - 34	354165	217452	61.4%	105209	29.7%	31504	8.9%
35 - 44	424002	253818	59.9%	117169	27.6%	53015	12.5%
45 - 54	440427	266121	60.4%	111606	25.3%	62700	14.2%
55 - 64	405208	224164	55.3%	105558	26.1%	75486	18.6%
By education							
Primary and lower education	37156	30849	83.0%	3854	10.4%	2452	6.6%
Secondary education	738 693	554577	75.1%	135618	18.4%	48499	6.6%
Higher education	847953	376129	44.4%	300070	35.4%	171753	20.3%
By place of residence							
In the cities	1404157	805324	57.4%	401712	28.6%	197121	14.0%
In the villages	219645	156231	71.1%	37830	17.2%	25584	11.6%

Table 1: *Persons by number of books read and by gender, age, educatıon and locatıon of resıdence (2022)*

Source: *National Statistical Institute*

	Total number	1-3 times in the last 12 months		4-6 times in the last 12 months		More than 7 times in the last 12 months		Not visited in the last 12 months	
		number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	3381922	1013190	30.0%	210987	6.2%	88116	2.6%	2069630	61.2%
By gende									
Men	1698457	456431	26.9%	59894	3.5%	32703	1.9%	1149430	67.7%
Women	1683465	556759	33.1%	28151093	9.0%	5510.	3.3%	920200	54.7%
By age									
25 - 34	662421	233686	35.3%	43783	6.6%	15909	2.4%	369043	55.7%
35 - 44	888571	263245	29.6%	42626	4.8%	25186	2.8%	557514	62.7%
45 - 54	995403	313560	31.5%	73461	7.4%	20679	2.1%	587703	59.0%
55 - 64	835527	202700	24.3%	51116	6.1%	26342	3.2%	555369	66.5%
By education									
Primary and lower education	508414	24455	4.8%	4663	0.9%	1637	0,3%	477659	94.0%
Secondary education	1858722	493543	26.6%	54090	2.9%	35423	1.9%	1275667	68.6%
Higher education	1014785	495192	48.8%	152234	15.0%	51055	5.0%	316304	31.2%
By place of residence									
In the cities	2510155	890227	35.5%	192358	7.7%	82261	3.3%	1345309	53.6%
In the villages	871767	122963	14.1%	18629	2.1%	5855	0.7%	724320	83.1%

Table 2: *Persons by attendances to live performances by gender, age, education and residence (2022)*

Source: *National Statistical Institute*

	Total number	1-3 times in the last 12 months		4-6 times in the last 12 months		More than 7 times in the last 12 months		Not visited in the last 12 months	
		number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total	3381922	890113	26.3%	301778	8.9%	117299	3.5%	2072732	61.3%
By gende									
Men	1698457	474956	28.0%	148153	8.7%	58479	3.4%	1016869	59.9%
Women	1683465	415157	24.7%	153625	9.1%	58821	3.5%	1055863	62.7%
By age									
25 - 34	662421	230425	34.8%	109240	16.5%	37030	5.6%	285726	43.1%
35 - 44	888571	268274	30.2%	94963	10.7%	41617	4.7%	483717	54.4%
45 - 54	995403	255092	25.6%	72443	7.3%	24422	2.5%	643446	64.6%
55 - 64	835527	136322	16.3%	25132	3.0%	14231	1.7%	659842	79.0%
By education									
Primary and lower education	508414	22615	4.4%	7310	1.4%	4609	0.9 %	473880	93.2%
Secondary education	1858722	483259	26.0%	115647	6.2%	53749	2.9%	1206068	64.9%
Higher education	1014785	384239	37.9%	178821	17.6%	58942	5.8%	392784	38.7%
By place of residence									
In the cities	2510155	754904	30.1%	266426	10.6%	110687	4.4%	1378138	54.9%
In the villages	871767	135209	15.5%	35352	4.1%	6612	0.8%	694594	79.7%

Table 3: *Persons by cinema visits by gender, age, education and location (2022)*

Source: *National Statistical Institute*

On the one hand, the interest is determined by the attitudes of the generality, and on the other hand, by the variety of the offered product. Different groups that define their interests in a certain way can be differentiated and the consequences of this traced.

The existence of such a culture of exchange of knowledge and information is accepted as normal in modern societies, as various scientific and research organizations periodically ascertain the changes in the ongoing processes.

Far different is the impact, which is a consequence of processes and phenomena that are not predictable and give a clear reflection on the cultural identity of a certain community.

For Bulgaria, those that are caused by the influence of the external environment and those that take place in the internal environment can be established.

A significant contribution to the changes of this process is the presence of an active migration process in both directions, as well as the establishment of permanently or temporarily living people who have other cultures, habits, traditions, and in the most general sense of this interpretation - another way of life. This significantly changes the cultural traditions of the local communities and puts them to certain tests, which are related to a change in their overall way of life and existence.

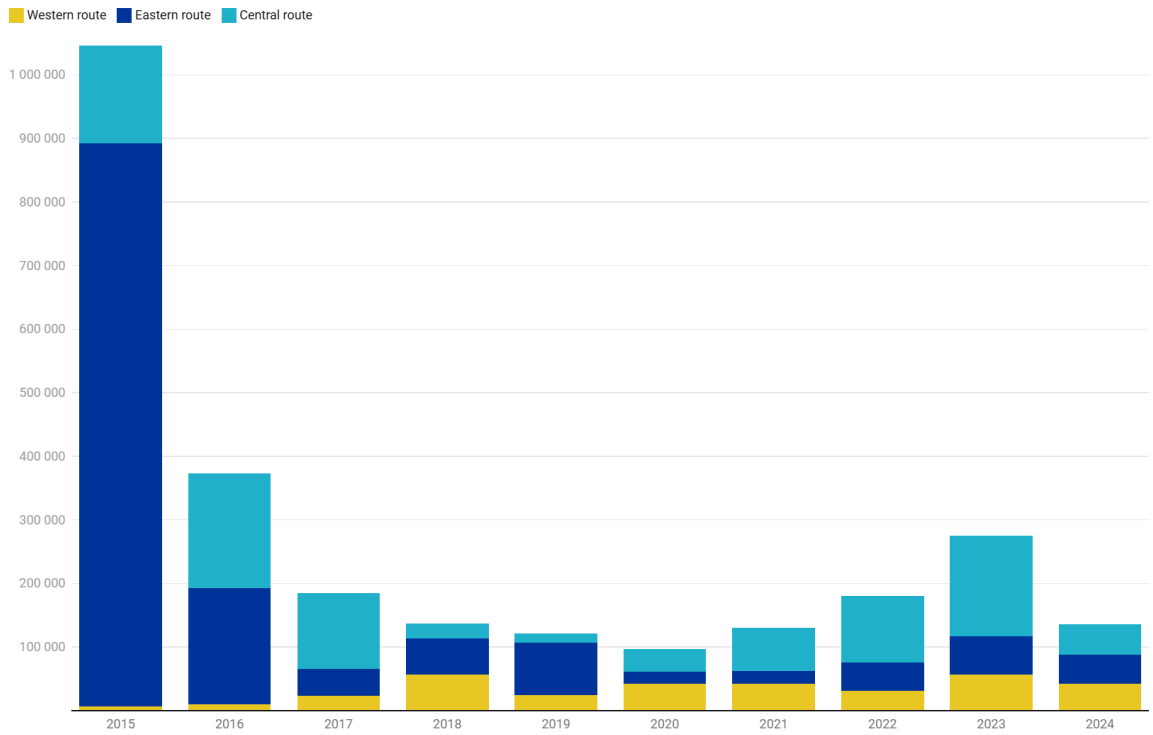


Diagram 1: *Yearly irregular arrivals (2015-2024). Migration flows: Eastern, Central and Western routes. Western route refers to Western Mediterranean and Western African routes (September 2024)*

Source: *Frontex and Spanish Ministry of Interior*

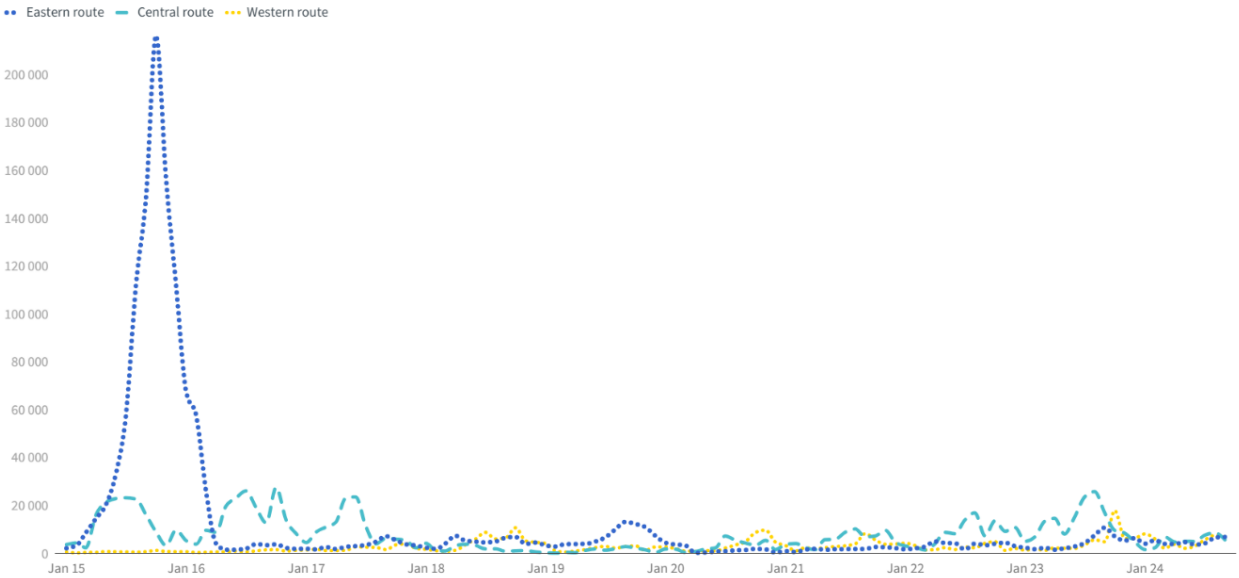


Diagram 2: *Monthly irregular arrivals (2015-2024). Migration flows: Eastern, Central and Western routes. Western route refers to Western Mediterranean and Western African routes (September 2024)*

Source: *Frontex and Spanish Ministry of Interior*

It can be said without exaggeration that these processes of cultural transformations take place relatively slowly, but their consequences are more stable and long-lasting in terms of time.

The data for Europe are disturbing and lead to drastic changes in some of the European societies. Empowered governing bodies try to create regulatory mechanisms, taking into account the humanitarian nature of these actions. Unfortunately, these processes are chaotic, unpredictable, and quite intensive. All of this creates additional stress on social systems that are constantly being tested (Diagram 1-3).

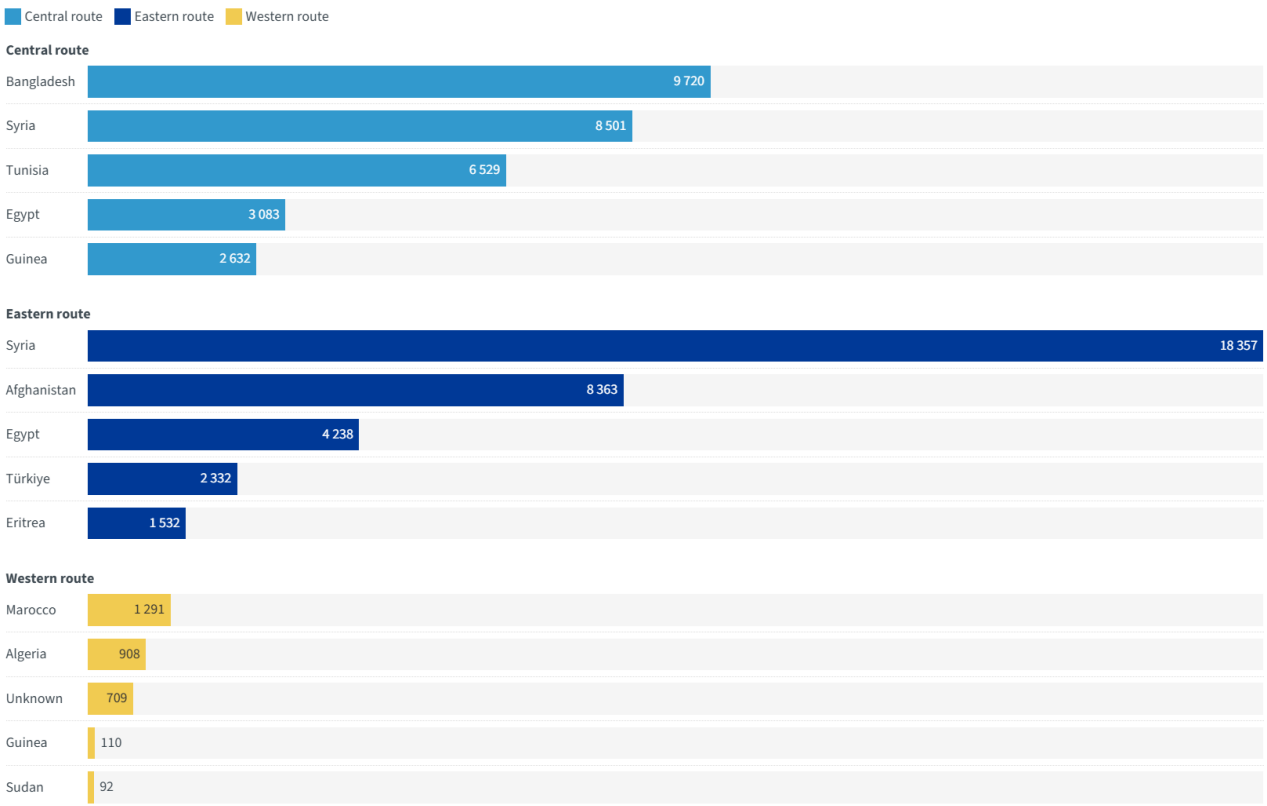


Diagram 3: *Top nationalities per route (2024). Western route arrivals exclude arrivals to Canary Islands (September 2024)*

Source: *Frontex*

Processes of successive crises lead to the deepening of imbalances in social systems. The different scales and intensity of the impacts on

them subject them to a series of cyclical tests. Determining the scale of changes occurring at the macro- and micro-level is difficult, and the consequences are almost unpredictable. A standard set of methods and approaches proves insufficient to define and characterize all of this. The main factor is the speed of the processes and the lack of effective time for accurate and objective analysis. This places us, as participants in the transformation of social systems, in front of a set of challenges and tests of our suitability to be able to accept and successfully adapt to the changes that are coming. Studying these processes requires a full-scale effort and diverse experience. This is also necessary from the point of view of forecasting and planning transformation processes and effective solutions for getting out of the critical state in which social systems are[117].

[117] *Terziev, V. (2024). Global transformations and formation of new social systems. Revista Gestão e Secretariado (GeSec), São Paulo, SP, v. 15, n. 1, 2024, p. 1109-1127, ISSN 2178-9010.*

CHAPTER TWO. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION

2.1. Social enterprise is often a part of the strategic development of a country

The present study aims to clarify and explore the needs regarding the understanding of the essence of social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria, as well as to attempt to analyze the relationship: Education - Business Environment - Social Environment. We can already define at the beginning that social entrepreneurship is an unknown area for young people, and they essentially do not put any meaning in this concept. Establishing a deficit of such knowledge in young people leads to a search for an opportunity to be familiar with social entrepreneurship. The more essential problem is their preparation for carrying out similar social activities in this direction. All this is related to the development of new models for career development and the realization of a good professional and life perspective. The problems are clear from the outset, as they relate to low awareness, educational deficits, and lack of receptivity. This further complicates the tasks and creates additional obstacles.

The main elements of the present study are related to establishing the attitudes and awareness of young people, what young people need and what the opposite view is, the subjective view of young people - reflection on the personal, how they relate to public opinion, how they understand public attitudes, ready are they to reflect the attitude towards social entrepreneurship in their personal development and others.

The main objectives of the study are the following:

- The attitude of young people towards social entrepreneurship;
- Young people's assessment of the social significance of social entrepreneurship;
- What needs to be done to make social entrepreneurship appealing to young people?
- What will the research help for?

The respondents are aged between 30-60 years. Male and female persons who declared that they live in the capital and in a large city were included. Graduates and workers in the capital and in the big cities. The marital status of the study participants was wide-ranging. There are both married (married) and single (not married). All people, without exception, are employed.

This research will not answer all the problematic questions, nor does it have a prior expectation to attract all young people to the cause of social entrepreneurship, but rather to get true and reliable information about - what young people think about social entrepreneurship and what are their interests in ongoing social processes. The opinions of those already involved in this process are also interesting - what are their attitudes and whether society needs it.

2.1.1. Strategic framework for the development of social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria

The social economy and social entrepreneurship have been the subject of special attention by the European Commission (EC), especially in recent years. This is due to their potential to find solutions to society's problems related to the creation of sustainable jobs, the facilitation of social and labor integration, the provision of social services, and the improvement of the quality of life, including the fight against poverty and social isolation.

Social enterprises and social entrepreneurship occupy a central place in the EC's agenda and in particular in its Europe 2030 Strategy for “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”. They are also a key element of the European social model and contribute to the implementation of the socially significant goals of the strategy. Their growing importance - especially in the context of the economic and financial crisis - is primarily the result of Europeans' need for a more ethical and social dimension to their work, consumption, savings, and investments. In recent years, the EC started the creation of a political framework in support of the social economy and social entrepreneurship, which found expression in many political documents outlining the boundaries and opportunities for their development.

Among the specific goals that Europe sets for itself are ensuring employment for 20-60-year-olds, reducing school dropouts, and ensuring at least fewer people are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Social entrepreneurship is recognized as a measure of achieving the

stated goals and as a “tool for achieving sustainable development”. The analysis of social policies shows that when direct support decreases, the effectiveness decreases accordingly, and the sustainability of “successful” models remains reciprocal to the invested resource. This trend can only be stopped by promoting innovative social models that overcome unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion permanently. Social payments and services, promotion of education, qualification, and skills in various fields, and improvement of access to public services as impact measures should be complemented by targeted efforts and resources to maintain forms that for socially vulnerable groups would serve as a bridge to the primary labor market. It is precisely as a successful solution for achieving effective long-term results that the role of social entrepreneurship is recognized.

Support and promotion of social enterprises can contribute to the maximum use of their growth potential and capacity to create social added value, expressed through job creation, creative approaches to small business, new opportunities for social inclusion, and income for the development of the activity of civil organizations. The social economy already plays an important role in the European Union, and its contribution can be illustrated as follows:

- Over 2 million active social enterprises in the member states of the European Union;
- Employer of 11 million people or nearly 6% of all employed persons;

- Accelerated growth of new social enterprise creation – 1 out of every 4 new companies are social enterprises.

Based on the above, the following wording is required: Social enterprises cover a wide range of enterprises with different legal forms that provide social services or goods to vulnerable or marginalized persons. These services include access to housing, health care, assistance for the elderly or disabled, childcare, access to employment and training, and addiction management. Social enterprises also include enterprises that use a method of producing goods or services with a social purpose, but whose activity may be outside the scope of providing social goods or services. This activity includes social and professional integration through means of access to employment for disadvantaged people, in particular, due to insufficient qualifications or social or professional problems leading to exclusion and marginalization.

The strategic objectives to support the Commission's response to unemployment and low labor market participation rates in the EU with cutting-edge and innovative policy ideas are:

- giving a “new impetus to the mix of flexibility and security” by engaging all stakeholders in strengthening the elements of this mix and by strengthening the control mechanisms of national agreements in the area of the mix of flexibility and security;
- self-employment.

Despite the rapid development of the social economy sector in the European Union and the growing role of social enterprises in combating poverty and social exclusion, social entrepreneurship remains almost invisible in Bulgaria. Although still modest in scale, social enterprises in Bulgaria carry the charge of changing attitudes towards the so-called "welfare state" and provide opportunities for mobilizing additional resources in the social sphere through the development of entrepreneurial potential and innovation.

Each member state of the European Union has adopted its strategy for reforms, which identifies key national goals and actions for their achievement within the framework of common European ones. According to the National Reform Program of Bulgaria, some of the main areas of structural reforms concern the modernization of services for access to the labor market, social support, health care, and education. The introduction of active employment measures, including for persons from vulnerable groups, through mechanisms to ensure sustainable employment, incentives for employers to open new jobs, programs for qualification, retraining and acquisition of key skills, etc. is foreseen.

Four priority areas are identified:

- better infrastructure;
- competitive youth (decreasing the share of early school leavers, increasing the number of young people who have completed higher education, stimulating young scientists, realization of young people in Bulgaria);

- better business environment (higher employment, more investments, including R&D innovations);
- greater trust in state institutions (protection of the interests of citizens and businesses, social justice, and security).

In 2011, the Bulgarian government adopted a political document – "The National Concept for Social Economy", which presents the vision and priorities for the promotion and development of the social economy in the country. This concept is an expression of the social commitment of the state to create and strengthen a favorable environment for the implementation and development of models and practices in the field of social economy in Bulgaria. The social economy is perceived both as a part of the real economy and of civil society, in which natural and/or legal persons, associations of volunteers, or other organized entities carry out economic activity for the public benefit and reinvest profits to achieve social goals.

The national concept of social economy is an expression of the social commitment of the state to create and strengthen a favorable environment for the implementation and development of models and practices in the field of social economy in the Republic of Bulgaria. It is an expression of the intention and determination to affirm awareness, culture, and values related to enterprises and organizations in the social economy sphere. The national concept is a document that presents a vision and priority goals for promoting the development of the social economy in the country. In this way, the active position of the state, formed as a result of the joint efforts of a wide range of interested

parties, is presented. As a result of the activity of forming a national position on social economy issues through the National Concept, it is expected that policies will be developed that will improve the quality of life and well-being of vulnerable groups of citizens in society. It is expected that a sustainable sector will be formed, which will help to overcome the social exclusion of disadvantaged groups of people. Expectations are also for changes in the model of social inclusion of a wide range of citizens in society who have fallen into a difficult situation in terms of access to work, services, and resources.

The national concept refers to the understanding of the social economy reflected in European Union documents and other international documents. It is also in line with national strategic documents, which are directly or indirectly related to the tasks resulting from the objectives defined in the concept.

This document is a contribution to achieving the goals of the strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, which offers a vision for a social market economy of Europe for the 21st century. In the context of what is indicated in the strategy, economic realities develop faster than political ones. The concept concretizes mature processes from the real economy, which should be separated into an independent sector of development in order to become visible both to the government in the context of the policy to increase the life level of the people, as well as for the general public, which sympathizes with the social situation of marginalized groups from the labor market.

The national concept provides an anticipatory vision regarding future changes in the regulatory framework and practice of state bodies, as well as a vision for the integration of sectoral policies. It is a document for the development of which an approach based on good national and international practices in this field was applied, systematized, and analyzed within the framework of an interdepartmental expert working group and with the broad participation of representatives of state and international institutions, organizations of social partners, non-governmental organizations.

The state strives to create a harmonious society by promoting the development of the social economy in the country to achieve sustainability, economic growth and increase the quality of life of people and especially disadvantaged groups. The establishment of a favorable environment for the development of the social economy sector is achieved through adequate policies and partnerships at international, national, regional, and local levels. All stakeholders are actively involved in this process.

In the process of establishing a social economy model in the country, the state plays an active role in popularizing, promoting, and supporting the introduction of successful practices of social enterprises, including those based on voluntary activities developed within civil society. For the realization of these commitments, the state creates an appropriate legal and institutional environment and coordinated sectoral policies for accelerated implementation of successful models of social enterprises. In fulfillment of this, the state will implement

measures to increase the productivity and competitiveness of these enterprises, as well as monitor the correct acquisition and observance of the “Product of a social enterprise” mark.

A prerequisite for the development of the Concept is the achievement of a general agreement within a wide range of interested parties on key issues related to the nature, scope, limits, and possibilities of the social economy in the country to achieve better chances for the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups; pooling resources to increase the employment of groups of society with limited access to services and resources or outside the labor market; development of territorial and local cohesion.

The concept has the following specific objectives:

- To serve as a starting point when introducing criteria for the identification of enterprises and organizations from the social economy;
- To serve as an ongoing “standard” helping to support the development of the social economy and to stimulate implementers and supporters to apply and spread the spirit of social solidarity;
- To serve as a basis for the creation of a favorable administrative and legal environment for the development of social economy enterprises (access to financing, social clauses in public procurement, tax benefits, etc.).

The development and establishment of a sustainable social economy sector in the country will be achieved by applying the leading

principles of good governance and the specific principles related to the implementation of good practices and models of social enterprises.

The specific principles on which the good practices and models of social economy enterprises are based are related to ensuring unity between economic efficiency and specific social goals, developing activity in conditions of public transparency, and applying solidary principles of internal management and decision-making.

The state introduces the brand "Product of a social enterprise" with an appropriate logo and procedure for awarding business entities whose activity results correspond to the indicators introduced with this Concept. The brand is used by the awarded enterprise to designate goods from its product specification, production sales areas and sites, documents, advertisements, production clothing, etc.

The purpose of trademark appropriation and its application is to draw public attention to the cause for which such enterprises work in order to attract the sympathy of the mass customers of consumer goods and services in the form of preferred purchases from preferred outlets.

Social economy enterprises with an assigned brand are considered users of a public resource and should provide statistical information upon request.

Within the framework of the National Concept, the social enterprise is defined as the basic economic unit of the social economy, which stands between the private and public sectors. Activities carried out by social enterprises include:

Promotion of employment opportunities and career development of unemployed people, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable persons, as well as assistance in finding or returning to work;

Encouraging opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, and starting an independent business.

The objectives of the Concept are to introduce criteria for the identification of enterprises and organizations from the social economy and to serve as a basis for the creation of a favorable (administrative and legal) environment for the development of social enterprises (access to financing; social clauses in public procurement; tax reliefs, etc.).

Although the Bulgarian legislation lacks a definition of a social enterprise, as well as norms governing the status, form, and activity of social enterprises, in real life and practice there are many examples of functioning social enterprises that, on the one hand, pursue social goals, and on the other another - apply economic mechanisms and market principles in their activities. The dynamic processes of social and economic development in recent years have clearly shown the following trends, which strengthen the role and importance of the social economy in Bulgaria:

- First of all, the inability of the state to cope with the growing social needs of the population, as well as the ever-increasing number of the population that need support;

- The debunked myth about the ability of the market economy to solve all the problems of society through the application of market principles;
- Strengthening the role of local communities and civil organizations in the development process and provision of innovative social services to support the most vulnerable part of the population.

Reforms and the implementation of innovative measures are needed to develop new approaches and models to tackle poverty and social exclusion. Social economy and entrepreneurship are the key tools to supplement the currently implemented state policy for social support and smart and sustainable growth.

There is a lack of a comprehensive and systematic policy for the promotion of the social economy, including a legal framework and financing, as well as concrete sustainable measures for starting and supporting social enterprises and creating an environment conducive to the development of the social economy.

The monitoring of the available practices from recent years in Bulgaria gives reason to conclude that the structures operating in the social economy sector receive an incentive for development when there is a targeted program for their support, financing, and development at the national level. There is still a lack of recognition of social enterprises as an innovative model for creating employment for disadvantaged groups in the labor market, as well as a new form of active social inclusion. It is important to define the areas and policies

where the potential of social enterprises is still highly underestimated and untapped:

According to the National Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2020, lack of employment is one of the main causes of poverty and social exclusion. That is why the main priority is the promotion of the active inclusion of persons remote from the labor market - economically inactive, young people, long-term unemployed, persons on social assistance, with primary or lower education and without professional qualification or lack of key competencies, people with permanent disabilities, elderly workers and others. Through the development of viable social enterprises, access to employment can be facilitated and support for the social inclusion of vulnerable groups can be provided by creating appropriate conditions for their professional integration in the sphere of the social economy.

In addition, social enterprises can be a key tool for the implementation of the European Employment Strategy, as they combine measures to increase suitability, access to the labor market, support social services and the provision of adequate incomes and thus contribute to the prevention of the transmission of poverty between generations. While it is important to provide services to help people "enter" the labor market, it is equally important to integrate people with complex needs into society, even if it is difficult to offer them employment opportunities. Despite their potential to reduce poverty and include the chronically unemployed and inactive in the labor market, social enterprises are hardly recognized at the policy and

program level and thus remain undervalued and underutilized. There is a huge deficit in this area of organizations that can provide integrated services necessary for the social inclusion of groups furthest from the labor market with an emphasis on social skills and improving individual social work with these individuals [118][119][120][121][122][123].

2.1.2. What do social entrepreneurs who have already started with such a business think?

According to the respondents, the reasons for starting a social entrepreneurship are mainly personal interest and, to a high degree, the interest aroused by friends. The respondents are categorical that the provocation is not a factor to be interested in the topic of social entrepreneurship. They also do not believe in the power of family tradition.

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[118] *Andreeva, O.V., Vovchenko, N.G., Galazova, S.S., Sukhoveeva, A.A., & Kravchenko, E.V. (2023). Benefits and Risks of Digitalization of Providing Social Services by the State. In: Popkova, E.G., Sergi, B.S. (eds) Anti-Crisis Approach to the Provision of the Environmental Sustainability of Economy. Approaches to Global Sustainability, Markets, and Governance. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-2198-0_14.*

[119] *Vovchenko, N.G., Andreeva, O.V., Dmitrieva, V.D., Zaruk, N.F., & Sulzhenko, S.A. (2023). Financial Aspects of Decarbonization of the Russian and Central Asian Economies in the Context of Climate Change: Comparative Analysis. In: Popkova, E.G. (eds) Smart Green Innovations in Industry 4.0 for Climate Change Risk Management. Environmental Footprints and Eco-design of Products and Processes. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-28457-1_51.*

[120] *Muratova, E., Muratov, D., Kravchenko, E., Sukhoveeva, A., & Andreeva, O. (2023). Forecasting the Technical and Economic Parameters of the Combine Harvester Operation Using Pneumatic and Inertia Separator. In: Beskopylny, A., Shamtsyan, M., Artiukh, V. (eds) XV International Scientific Conference "INTERAGROMASH 2022". INTERAGROMASH 2022. Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, vol 575. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-21219-2_154.*

[121] *Ivanova, O.B., Vovchenko, N.G., Andreeva, O.V., Chernobay, O.S., & Kostoglodova, E.D. (2023). Innovative Green Finance Tools. In: Popkova, E.G. (eds) Smart Green Innovations in Industry 4.0 for Climate Change Risk Management. Environmental Footprints and Eco-design of Products and Processes. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-28457-1_52.*

[122] *Vovchenko, N.G., Andreeva, O.V., Dmitrieva, V.D., Kaptsova, V.S., & Terziev, V.K. (2023). Technological, Economic, and Social Changes: The Role of End-to-End Technologies. In: Makarenko, E.N., Vovchenko, N.G., Tishchenko, E.N. (eds) Technological Trends in the AI Economy. Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies, vol 625. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-7411-3_2.*

[123] *Vovchenko, N.G., Andreeva, O.V., Dmitrieva, V.D., Galazova, S.S., & Terziev, V.K. (2022). Modelling of Economic Clusters in the Russian Regions in the Context of Formation of the Industry 4.0. In: Trifonov, P.V., Charaeva, M.V. (eds) Strategies and Trends in Organizational and Project Management. DITEM 2021. Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, vol 380. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94245-8_91.*

Regarding the facilities that are in favor of starting a social entrepreneurial initiative, the respondents ranked the presence of the following factors as priorities: the appropriate economic environment; a higher degree of confidence; support from the family. However, they do not exclude start-up capital and the necessary knowledge and skills as important factors for motivation towards social entrepreneurship.

There are no definite answers to the question related to obtaining basic information about social entrepreneurship. The respondents consider it of great importance to provide initial knowledge on the subject at the university, on social networks, on specialized sites, or at narrowly profiled events. The possibilities of the non-governmental sector and print media follow the logic of the respondents in order of importance. The institution: The school is at the bottom of the respondents' preferences.

The reluctance to start a social entrepreneurship initiative, according to the respondents, is due to the low level of awareness of the essence of social entrepreneurship and insufficient knowledge and skills. The next place is the deficit of the subject in the curricula, the fear of the new, and the lack of interest that would bring a certain kind of benefit.

Regarding the profit from starting a social entrepreneurial initiative, the respondents are hesitant. Although they prioritize the opportunity for creating and personal development, they put the opportunity for profit and a great career in the background. The prestigious position is not only at the bottom of the ranking of

preferences, but it is marked as part of the negative aspect by the respondents.

One important issue related to skills, respondents ranked as follows. According to them, the most important skill is teamwork, followed by initiative and communication. One unnecessary element for them is critical thinking, followed by empathy and creativity.

The opinion of the respondents about the attitude towards social entrepreneurship is primarily related to the different types of thinking towards social problems and processes; the support of the local community in the effort for this individual challenge that can develop within the framework of big business. The respondents manage to distinguish social entrepreneurship from other entrepreneurial initiatives and equally believe that as much as this type of initiative is accepted, it is not accepted by the community and/or by the closest circle.

The respondents see the directions for developing social entrepreneurial initiatives mostly in solving the problems of the local community and the problems of people with limited opportunities. Next, they pointed out the environmental problems and the problems of people from vulnerable groups.

The prerequisites for the development of this type of initiative are contained, according to the respondents, in financial incentives combined with education and training and understanding of the issue.

They put legislative issues, people's motivation, and the development of the IT structure in a lower position.

The respondents see institutional support for social entrepreneurship only at the European level, where there is also good regulation, according to them. The disagreement is that there is good support and regulation at the national and local levels.

The figure of the social entrepreneur in the perceptions of the respondents is that of a “profit maker”. However, in subsequent positions, they note that the social entrepreneur is a developer of new ideas, and only then that he is an innovator with a high culture and sensitivity to social problems and processes.

The social entrepreneur's capability capacity, according to the respondents, includes the necessary professional qualification, the habit of learning continuously with a built-in model for maintaining competencies, and the habit of learning continuously. Next comes the knowledge in his professional field and the hard skills required. In the last place, the respondents put the amount of necessary soft skills.

2.1.3. The business of social entrepreneurship

The surveyed social entrepreneurs categorically state that they engage in social entrepreneurship because they were provoked. To a very low degree, personal interest had an influence, and family tradition and being intrigued by friends fell as a negative choice in the eyes of the respondents.

Acting social entrepreneurs determine that the important factors that would facilitate their initiative are: the economic environment; the starting capital; confidence and the required knowledge and skills. For them, support from the family does not appear as a significant factor, while a personal problem to solve is a negative aspect for the respondents - it is not decisive.

The location of obtaining basic information on social entrepreneurship for respondents is evenly distributed as follows; school; university; Published editions; Internet; social media; and specialized events related to entrepreneurship. According to the surveyed social entrepreneurs, the role of the non-governmental sector is too small.

The reasons that determine the low level of desire to start social entrepreneurship, according to the respondents, are due to the following factors: low level of awareness of the essence of social entrepreneurship; absence of social entrepreneurship in curricula and programs; insufficient knowledge about social entrepreneurship; fear of the new and unpreparedness to deal with difficulties; insufficient skills; education (secondary or higher education) does not offer the necessary knowledge and skills to start social entrepreneurship. Lack of interest (benefit) does not take place among the main reasons.

The profit for social entrepreneurs implementing social entrepreneurial initiatives is contained equally in the possibility of a good career; personal development; the opportunity to create and participate in the transformation of the economy. Next is the prestigious

position and the profitability does not participate in the effectiveness of an activity of this type.

The most important skills that the surveyed social entrepreneurs believe they possess are more evenly distributed in terms of importance as follows: initiative; communicativeness; quick decision-making; teamwork and empathy. Not so important to them are skills such as flexibility, critical thinking, and creativity.

According to the respondents, their attitude towards social entrepreneurship varies in their assessments from extremely positive to extremely negative. They believe that social entrepreneurship needs the support of the local community, adopted by the close social circle, and can develop within the framework of big business. At the other pole is the disagreement that social entrepreneurship is an individual challenge and is associated with a different type of thinking about societal problems.

The respondents' opinion is unanimous about the direction of social entrepreneurship development. They noted all the proposed options as current and priority-risk groups of people; people with disabilities; environmental issues; pressing problems of the local community.

Social entrepreneurs see that the development of successful initiatives is dependent on the development of the IT infrastructure; financial mechanisms; motivation of people; social receptivity, and

education and training. Legislative changes are important but not a priority, according to their answers.

Based on the opinion of the respondents about the institutional attitude, there is regulation and support at the European level. On the contrary, at the national and local level, it is neither well regulated nor does it exist as a support for social entrepreneurship.

The figure of the social entrepreneur, according to the respondents, is anything but a "profit maker" or a person with additional income. On the other hand, they define themselves as highly cultured innovators who are sensitive to social issues and develop new ideas.

According to the respondents, they absolutely possess all the listed skills - sufficient knowledge in their professional field; qualification; availability of the necessary hard and soft skills; habits of continuous learning; availability of competence in several areas; own model for maintaining competencies.

The research was conducted using the interview method in an informal setting with a separate focus group. The group is composed of individuals engaged in various business initiatives with more than 10 years of experience in this direction. The participants in the focus group are aged 40-50 years, one person is female, and the others are male. The spheres of employment are of a different nature. During the talk, no discrimination was allowed, and the persons were informed about the purpose, subject, and tasks of the talk. In the course of the communication, interesting perspectives emerged, some of which are

typical of the Bulgarian reality, and others outlined unforeseen directions for entrepreneurship.

In an overall aspect, there is unanimity regarding the motive for starting one's own initiative in Bulgaria. Entrepreneurs start an initiative because it's a “mostly - no one tells me what to do” way. It can be assumed that self-interest from the point of view of occupying a kind of leadership position in life is a guiding principle. Another analysis is the ability of a person to have independence and to be able to act alone (in the sense of being one's own boss). Obviously, the action is important, for something to happen, but for this action to be “in the field of control” of the person. Another element stated by the group that is highly motivating is the hobby. This can serve as the start of an initiative.

An important factor that is also key when starting initiatives is the environment. However, the majority of participants in the focus group determined that support from other people (social environment) rather than family is decisive for starting initiatives. It is particularly successful when it is implemented in informal ways and is composed of people who have a certain experience. This important trait that “a person needs to help and be in a group” allows Kropotkin's ideas to be used to some extent. Support from the environment turns out to be in a better position than the availability of start-up capital. This is natural because, in recent times, financing has not had such a great value from the point of view of “there are already ways to and of financing”. The support of the close environment, combined with intensive and trusting communication in it, can result in an idea for starting a business

initiative. Information, a kind of start for a business idea, is obtained in an informal setting, which leads to the conclusion of a kind of requirement for an informal source of information. However, regardless of when, where, and how the business idea will arise and how it will be launched, the group is unanimous that it is important to "know how to do the math".

Regarding knowledge and skills, it is clear (to the participants) that they are acquired and, in this sense, do not matter so much to them. However, it is important for them to have a certain confidence, to have an idea and know-how. This fact may be due to the age characteristics of the focus group. Bearing in mind that it is organized by middle-aged people with a certain life experience, it can be assumed that for them, knowledge and skills are not of primary importance. However, this should be considered as an exception and considered only as a characteristic of the studied group. In addition to the problem that "literate people are out", there is also the opinion that there is an urgent need for retraining, especially in the present time, which in turn is directly related to lifelong learning.

At the same time, a very important skill is important for starting a business - discipline, as far as it can be considered as a skill. In the Bulgarian context, the skill "flexibility" is also a priority to possess. Overall, the requirements for qualities to possess are discipline, initiative, creativity, and persistence. An entrepreneur, in order to achieve its goals, needs enthusiasm. And the evolution is based on the experience gained during the small steps taken. One opinion makes an

impression, and it largely describes the characteristics of an entrepreneur, as well as the (Bulgarian) environment in which he is - “you must be ready to tremble - that is being an entrepreneur”.

Gender does not have a significant impact on starting a business initiative, but it is important to have mathematical skills (in the sense of being able to do the math). However, one specific feature is noticeable in females - they have a clear idea and vision of the goal. That is, they need clarity about the pursued goals and desires in order to launch an initiative. Those of the female gender think that how we look from the side is defining (a kind of competition). Because “success is measured by the opinions of others.” Also, for the female gender, success matters, and it ranks among the leading motivating factors. They pursue it intuitively, combined with self-interest. However, what is important for both sexes is the opinion that “having a business so as not to work is harmful”.

The main profit for a person engaged in business is the time he earns and the hobby he realizes. But this is related to the basic presence of priority, a good social environment (friends), and having many conversations in an informal setting and of an informal nature. A new factor emerges when it comes to the success of an initiative. This is the pedantry combined with trust between the partners with whom one works and interacts and the presence of partners in general to support the achievement of the goals. This condition is valid for a group with similar characteristics, such as the focus group participants.

The participants also state something very important. It is tied to the opinion that entrepreneurship is associated with speculation. This opinion deserves attention, and the participants for this definition reason that it is fast-acting in the field of entrepreneurship and is likened to commerce. An important conclusion that arises from the last finding is that social entrepreneurship needs a clear and precise definition that is consistent with the linguistic and essential characteristics of the population. Social entrepreneurship itself is more about helping a group and/or groups of people than it is about a cause.

The group emphasizes that in Bulgarian conditions the state is unnecessarily burdensome. Moreover, extreme opinions such as “the state is better off not helping” are expressed. Although there is unanimity regarding the need for adequate legislation. The obstacle to the initiative is bureaucracy and the aspect of conservative bureaucracy. What the state can and should provide is the infrastructure to have a suitable business environment according to the participants. Of course, there must be competition. It is appropriate to implement the so-called good practices in business. For example: “mentorship”, implies the presence of a person to help you in the process of starting an initiative. This initiative is not new and some European countries have some experience in this direction. This and other practices, however, need to be tested for Bulgarian conditions and then implemented in the business environment. Last but not least, the need for political will to provide certainty for the future of each initiative is categorical. The lack of a

suitable environment for business allows the power (central or local government) to fail.

The opinion about the topic of folk psychology is unanimous. It is believed that there is more and more differentiation at the regional level (areas on a national scale). According to the participants, “Bulgaria is already parceled out into clear and bright zones”. This identification can serve in the definition of mechanisms to involve the local community in the implementation of a certain idea. In Bulgaria, the creation and maintenance of traditions was the duty of the state. The power of the local community was isolated (removed). One solution option is to reverse this process with appropriate mechanisms. As a resource for increasing initiative, the power of propaganda and/or the so-called informational radiation can be used. Last but not least, it is good to research the interests of the local community. It turns out that the informal approach to presenting information is more effective, according to the participants. In this way, trust, and hence the tendency to listen, grows. Social entrepreneurship affects and differentiates as well as determines the relationship between the environment and the group with defined problems. The problem to be solved needs to clearly give the link between the one helping to solve problems and its benefit.

A good mechanism for growth when starting an initiative is to have a competitive environment. In addition, the availability of sufficient information turns out to be important. Social entrepreneurship must be realized in relation to the social conditions in

the current environment, taking into account all the available factors of the environment.

The findings of the results are intriguing and can serve as a basis for the different directions towards the different groups that will and/or are engaged in social entrepreneurial initiatives.

Obviously, provocation is the real mechanism by which the impetus for initiative is given. This motivating mechanism intuitively leads to a form of independence regarding the life and professional path of a given individual. This statement is reinforced by the result, which demonstrates that the family as an institution has no influence on the initiative decision expressed in the answers of all the studied groups. The opposite is the opinion that the main motivating factor is personal interest. It can be perceived as a boundary line between business and social entrepreneurial initiatives. When an initiative is to a greater extent under the influence of self-interest, then it is business in its essence. In cases where the initiative has a purpose other than personal interest, it is socially entrepreneurial in nature.

A key element that is important not only for social entrepreneurial initiatives is the right environment. This includes many factors, for example, fair competition, friendly support, trust in partners, etc. Of course, the description of the majority of factors that relate to a suitable environment for starting a social entrepreneurial initiative is subject to another in-depth analysis.

It is the categorical opinion of all participants in the studies that schools, universities, and specially created thematic events are the main information carriers of knowledge on the subject. This position determines the importance of these institutions and obliges us to take immediate measures in this direction. Experience-enforced programs such as those at Stanford and Cambridge universities can be used as relevant examples. An important circumstance that needs to be taken into account is the factor of informality in obtaining knowledge. This topic implies a serious academic discussion about the organization of a curriculum, as well as a deepening of the interrelationships and interactions between the acquisition of knowledge and its practical transformation. The last finding is confirmed by the unanimous answers of the respondents that the reason for the low desire to start initiatives of a social entrepreneurial nature is due to both a low level of awareness about the essence of social entrepreneurship and insufficient knowledge about social entrepreneurship. This issue can be solved with the introduction of specialized programs that offer information about this kind of initiative in an appropriate way. And at the same time, to give an idea of the possibilities provided by the future university programs.

The prospects for profit from starting a social entrepreneurial initiative are clearly outlined. They are mainly expressed as an opportunity for personal growth, which inevitably leads to a good career. All this is combined with the ability to create a good end product or offer a good service.

The need for a set of certain skills to engage in social entrepreneurship is unquestionable. Although there are differences in the ranking of respondents' answers, they are negligibly small. In addition, other skills appear on the horizon that need to be properly offered for a future social entrepreneur, such as initiative, decision-making, teamwork, and communication. These are the skills that the surveyed groups consider important. Such skills as flexibility, critical thinking, and creative approach are not in the field of view of the respondents. However, discipline, persistence, enthusiasm, and creativity emerge. The development of precisely these skills has been underestimated until now. Until now, they have been acquired on the basis of life and professional experience.

There are fluctuations in the answers of the respondents, which refer to the attitude towards social entrepreneurship. Despite everything, they are united around the opinion that social entrepreneurship is perceived by the close circle and the family and local community, and it is possible to develop social entrepreneurship within the framework of big business. The difference is that those who do not engage in social entrepreneurship believe that social entrepreneurship is an individual challenge, while those engaged in this kind of initiative strongly disagree. A diametrical opposite is also observed in the relationship that emerges that social entrepreneurship is associated with a different type of thinking about societal problems and processes. While the current social entrepreneurs do not agree with this, the other group of respondents absolutely agree with this opinion.

However, there is unanimity among both groups - they distinguish social entrepreneurship from other types of entrepreneurial initiatives.

The emphasis on the direction of development of social entrepreneurship is an important nuance in the study. From the answers, the perspective is outlined, and a future framework is created for the transfer of necessary knowledge. Observing unanimity in the responses of all respondents rather gives a higher level of complexity to the task for the required knowledge framework. Let's note that, unanimously, as a priority for the direction of development of social entrepreneurship, risk groups, people with disabilities, environmental problems, and urgent problems of the local community are noted.

The contrast in the answers regarding what is most necessary for the successful development of social entrepreneurship among the respondents is understandable. The point of view of non-entrepreneurial respondents is that there is a need for financial instruments, education, and training. For those who deal with entrepreneurial initiatives, the most important thing is to provide a good environment, know-how, and an idea with which to start. All are unanimous in the low degree of influence of the legislation. This opinion is reinforced and emphasized in the answers to the next question, which refers to the attitude of institutions towards social entrepreneurship. There are even statements like “It's best if the state doesn't help”. This sentiment is supported by the responses to the survey, which noted the huge weaknesses in the legislation, both nationally and insufficient support at the local level. These weaknesses

require urgent and competent intervention because they are a significant obstacle to the development of social entrepreneurial initiatives.

Regarding the figure of the social entrepreneur, there are extreme assessments. Those who have not implemented social entrepreneurship, associate this activity and the operator with profit-making. However, true social entrepreneurs are of the opinion that they are innovative, highly cultured, and sensitive to societal issues. These differences imply not so much an intensive information campaign to reduce social distance, but an information campaign to spread the understanding of the essence of social entrepreneurship, its specific characteristics, and differences from other types of entrepreneurship. Understandably, those who are social entrepreneurs noted that they have all the listed skills. However, this needs to be specified and introduced into the framework that, for example, Radulov proposes. According to V. Radulov, it is particularly important for adolescents and young people to acquire special professional skills that are required for initial entry into the working society. The person, according to him, must master three groups of skills: general work skills; adaptive skills, and productive skills.

Another researcher provides a detailed reading of the skills situation. According to K. Hoyt, everyone must reach several types of skills:

- Basic academic skills related to oral or written communication and mathematics;

- Productive work habits, including coming to work on time; doing things the best way possible, and following directions given by management;
- A sincere desire to work, which is due to the acquisition of personal significance of the imposed work values as part of the general system of personal values of the person;
- Basic understanding and appreciation of the system in the given country by private enterprises;
- Skills related to job search and finding;
- Skills for productive use of free time;
- Skills for humanizing the workplace for yourself.

The survey results point to the need for career development specialists to supervise and support the skills-building process. Their mission will be to favor the choice and practice of a profession. These specialists need to know well the needs and specifics of each person participating in the program. Also, in terms of skills that need to be mastered for successful implementation are most often teamwork skills and communication skills. These findings lead to an indisputable conclusion of universality in the necessary skills for professional realization. The deficit of the so-called “flexible skills” is the same for everyone and needs to be filled with appropriate forms. With this feature, the delivery of the learning material to different individuals has features dictated by different levels of knowledge, skills, gender, religion, or disability.

Expectations for a different attitude of young people towards social entrepreneurship have their reasons. But above all, they shape and give meaning to the understanding of the environment and direction for development. Surprisingly, young people are not guided by recommendations, opinions of society, other people's evaluations, and recommendations to like or not social entrepreneurship. Not even as a phenomenon but as a real economic process. Young people ask questions but do not find answers to all of them. They would engage in social entrepreneurship for personal success because it will bring them successful personal development. Approximately 52.00% are ready to do so under certain conditions (Diagram 4).

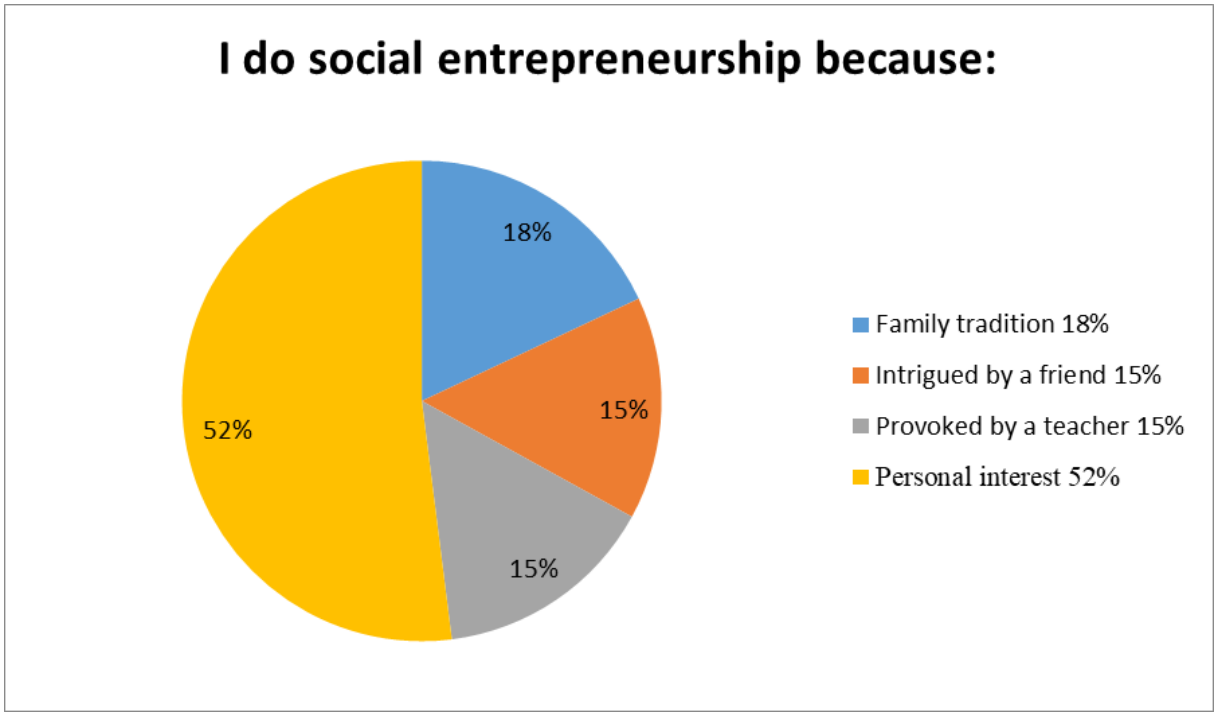


Diagram 4: *I do social entrepreneurship because*

Source: *Authors' elaboration*

They engage or would engage in social predominance out of personal interest, 15.00% would follow a family tradition, and another 15.00% provoked by someone. Even in the unknown social

entrepreneurship, neither the school nor the university gave them enough information. They look for this information, and above all from universities, but they also rely heavily on social networks, various Internet platforms, and others. Generation Z has its idiosyncrasies, perhaps quirks, but with a trusting attitude towards digital tools. The question here is whether there are these digital possibilities to a sufficient extent. To obtain sufficient information assessing the school's deficits in terms of awareness, they treat non-governmental organizations with higher trust, which is indicative of the relationship of young people with society.

Young people hide that their lack of awareness hinders them in the "social entrepreneurship" endeavor, but they are frank enough to admit the deficits in their knowledge and skills. They unequivocally talk about fear of the unknown, about fears that they will not cope, they emphasize that they are not prepared for this undertaking. It is obvious that if the school and the university lend a hand to the idea of entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship, the picture is likely to be quite different. "The absence of curricula and the fact that education does not offer enough knowledge and skills to start social entrepreneurship" makes a serious assessment of existing deficits in our education system. To what extent it meets public needs, certain priorities and strategies and market interests is another question.

Young people have their own opinions built into the way they observe social processes and the immediate environment, but they are also willing to share them to seek a solution. They already know that

social entrepreneurship is not ordinary entrepreneurship it involves a different type of thinking, and it has a cause and its mission. They still do not dare to engage because they consider that it does not have sufficient support, and the external environment is not yet so favorable for this undertaking. There is an expectation of development, perspective, and even optimism, which is evident from the responses received from the respondents. Most of the respondents have the understanding that social entrepreneurship is different from the ordinary one and that it has a clear social need. Social entrepreneurship is a tool through which such business models can be created, which are according to new and different standards. By participating in social entrepreneurship, young people become participants in the transformation of the economy.

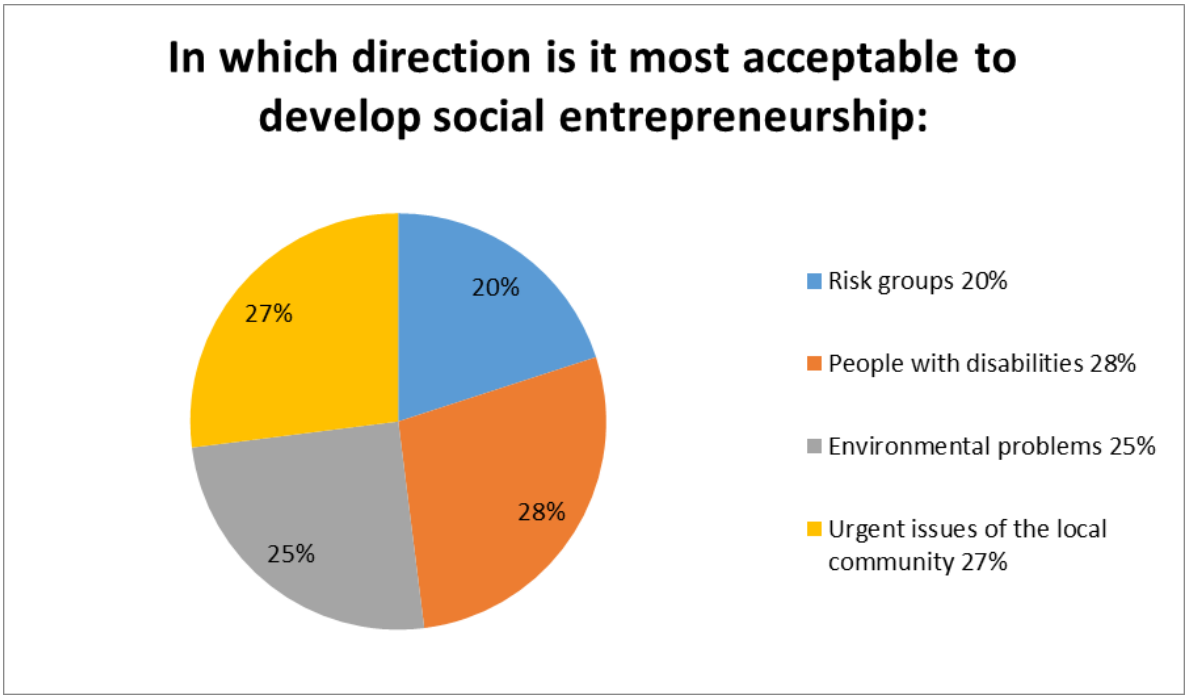


Diagram 5: *In which direction is it most acceptable to develop social entrepreneurship*

Source: *Authors' elaboration*

Undoubtedly, even with a favorable environment, there is fear – of the unknown, of the new, fear of themselves, whether they will succeed or fail in these new circumstances. The most frequently missed questions are related to this - what will happen to the dream career? Support is sought - in the answer to the question "Does social entrepreneurship need support" the need for personal support for young people to start this new venture is apparent. Support is needed for your different thinking and understanding of societal issues (Diagram 5).

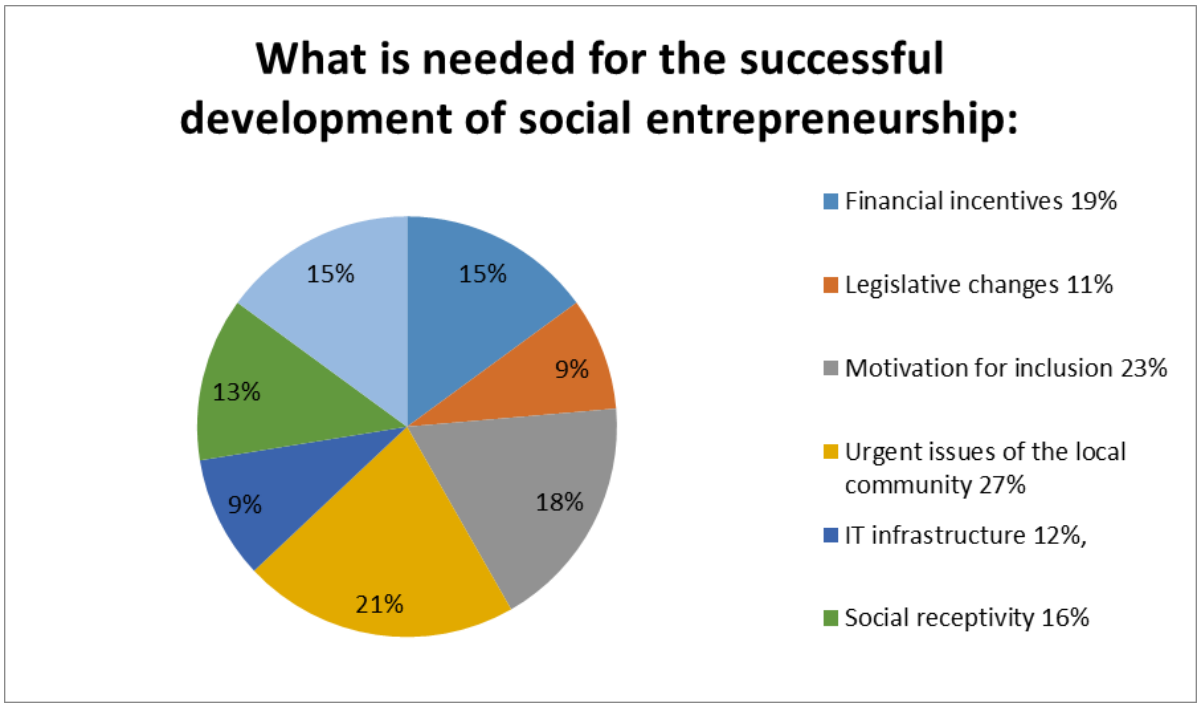


Diagram 6: *What is needed for the successful development of social entrepreneurship*

Source: *Authors' elaboration*

However, insufficient awareness does not prevent young people from considering that social entrepreneurship is not intended only for risk groups and people with disabilities, as is the understanding in society. They, by their logic, link social entrepreneurship with environmental issues, which may seem strange at first glance. Environmental protection is an issue that has an extremely social

presence in people's lives, reaching security and safety, and they have realized this. It is a matter of future development that this idea of theirs finds development. Even more so, it refers to “pressing issues of the local community” - this is of high social importance, and young people appreciate this (Diagram 6).

The environment for the development of youth social entrepreneurship includes many problems, and their solution can also change the understanding of social economy. Each zone needs to be “liberated” to a level of familiarity and opportunities for inclusion. The environment for the development of social entrepreneurship includes several factors and resources that young people value as important to support social entrepreneurs in their work and efforts to solve social problems. The provision of educational programs, courses, and training in social entrepreneurship would play an important role in the preparation of future social entrepreneurs. Bearing in mind the deficits assessed by young people in the previous elements of the survey, it is more than clear that non-formal education and training should be relied upon. Here, the resourcefulness of non-formal education will connect with the non-governmental sector and the opportunities it creates. This can include formal education at universities and informal training and workshops. Financial incentives are associated with various financial resources and investments designed specifically for social entrepreneurs, which is essentially a financial investment for the future. This area, apart from being a social investment received from foundations, grants, and other sources, can also be connected to

personal development and investment in one's career. Two of the areas - “information resources” and “legislative changes” are an important part of the national support that young people “dream about”. Without them, social entrepreneurship will move at a very slow pace and develop with difficulty. Young people see the role of the state as particularly important - in support and in the regulations that are created. Even though only 10% of the respondents answered the question “attitude of the state towards social entrepreneurship”, the reference point is there - the national level is best known, the local level is in second place and the European Union is in third place. This is probably related to the lack of sufficient information or young people's understanding that social entrepreneurship is an issue that also has a national and local understanding and receptivity.

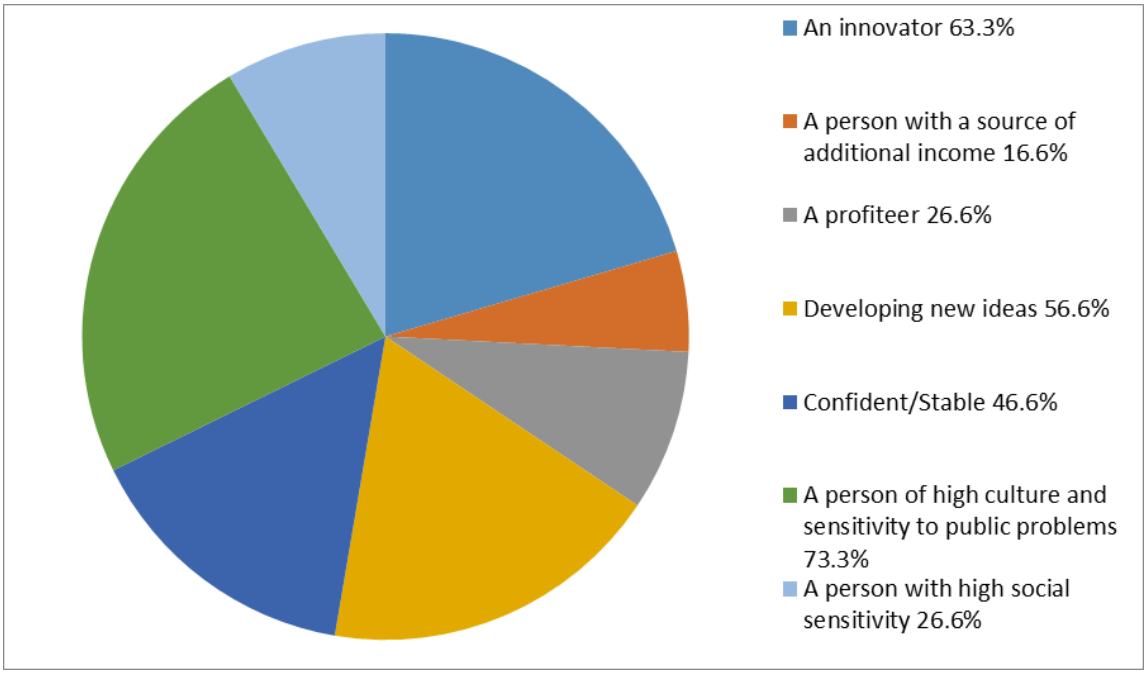


Diagram 7. *The social entrepreneur is..*

Source: *Authors' elaboration*

The power of social entrepreneurship lies in the power of personal cause, empathy, and personal social sensitivity. Sometimes to the point of giving up any financial result, but with a definition that satisfies the idea or cause with which it is developed. And often, ignoring the negative energy that some social entrepreneur definitions carry, such as "profit maker". The imperative positivism towards the adoption of social entrepreneurship can concentrate much of this energy in the direction of creating new business models subject to high culture and social sensitivity (Diagram 7).

All this can also be understood as a synergy between pure social entrepreneurship helping certain groups in society with big business generating social sensitivity. Therefore, many skills are needed that young people recognize, understand, and try to generate. It is no coincidence that when answering the question "The social entrepreneur has the following skills", more than 50% of the respondents put all the mentioned skills in the first position, i.e. necessary and most important.

A final emphasis in the survey, which was also answered by very few respondents, "I would easily become an entrepreneur if I had..." gives precedence to the right economic environment and personal confidence, followed by family support, the availability of start-up capital, as well as the availability of knowledge and skills.

Many opportunities for the young generation require rethinking choices and starting a career path that corresponds to intrinsic motivation based

on sufficient awareness that is guided by knowledge and skills[124][125][126][127][128][129][130].

2.2. Exploring social inequalities and social entrepreneurship opportunities

We live in dynamic times, with increasing social problems. Social entrepreneurship is a mechanism that could successfully solve some of the problems accompanying society. Perspectives and opinions on social entrepreneurship are sometimes opposed. A set of factors and different understandings make them so - some are positive, others extremely negative.

The topic of the emergence, development, and various substantive features of social entrepreneurship is considered to gain an adequate idea of the essential characteristics of this "phenomenon".

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[124] *Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., & Solovev, D. The interaction: business- education- investment for development. // Proceedings of INTCESS 2020- 7th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences 20-22 January, 2020 - DUBAI (UAE), International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2020, pp. 865-869, ISBN: 978-605-82433-8-5.*

[125] *Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., Andreeva, O., & Georgiev, M. Revolution in industry and evolution in education or development of intelligence. // 63rd International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – "Building Resilient Society" - Zagreb, 11-12 December, 2020, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2020, pp. 133-142, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[126] *Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., & Mihailova, M. The necessity of changes in the higher education in Bulgaria. // Proceedings of INTCESS 2021 8th International Conference on Education and Education of Social Sciences 18-19 January, 2021, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2021, pp. 646-657, ISBN: 978-605-06286-1-6.*

[127] *Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., & Georgiev, M. Domestic and international challenges in higher education. // 7 th ITEM Conference – "Innovation, Technology, Education and Management" and 67th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Sveti Martin na Muri, 29-30 April, 2021, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2021, pp.88-97, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[128] *Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., & Georgiev, M. The contemporary strategic challenges facing higher education. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2021 8th International Conference on Education and Education of Social Sciences 14-15 June, 2021, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2021, pp. 134-141, ISBN: 978-605-06286-2-3.*

[129] *Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Shared knowledge and changes in the higher education system in Bulgaria. // 79th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Rabat, 25-26 March, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.228-237, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[130] *Terziev, V.K., Lyubcheva, M.I., Andreeva, O.V., & Simeonov, S.V. (2024) Creating an analytical model for the study of social entrepreneurship. // Economics & Society: Contemporary Models of Development. 14. (2). pp. 91–112. Doi: 10.18334/ecsoc.14.2.121514.*

The ambition is to create a clear perspective to point out directions in which involvement in social entrepreneurial initiatives will be effective and efficient. The interweaving of economic theories in socially entrepreneurial and purely entrepreneurial initiatives is inevitable. There are differences between “business entrepreneurship” and “social entrepreneurship” and they are in a substantive aspect, but mostly in a result-oriented direction.

Entrepreneurship is defined as the process by which motivated individuals recognize and exploit business opportunities regardless of the resources available to them. Social entrepreneurship is a form of entrepreneurial activity that has an orientation towards social problems. Ambiguities still exist regarding the definition of social entrepreneurship, which is why it is considered easier to describe than to define.

The ongoing social processes in modern societies are of particular interest, not least because they directly or indirectly affect a large part of the planet's population. Similar processes, accompanied by global social transformations, have occurred in various historical periods of humanity's existence. They have a kind of cyclicity, but also a high specificity. Their study, as well as the behavior of the formation of new social leaders, is essential for the strategic management of these processes.

According to the respondents, the reasons for starting a social entrepreneurship are mainly Social systems have their characteristics and cannot exist by themselves. Although there are different definitions

and different interpretations in the scientific and popular literature, they are the ones that form the social attitudes of the individuals (people) in the environment. Countries can be seen as social systems, and even the world can be seen as one social system.

2.2.1. Social systems and social inequalities

Social inequalities in societies continue to deepen and create prerequisites for changes in existing social systems. Processes that remain unchanged towards deepening disparities are deeply troubling, for all involved. Regardless of improving the economic indicators of the respective societies, and development opportunities, as well as observing the positive trends in the labor market, the social problems are so strong and difficult to overcome. Mechanically overcoming them is not possible, even with the creation of good opportunities for the environment. This raises important questions about the nature of their occurrence and the impossibility of their successful regulation.

For example, in Bulgaria in the second quarter of 2024, the unemployment rate was 4.3% of the country's economically active population between the ages of 15 and 64 based on the national census in 2021.

These are relatively low levels, according to global trends. This circumstance should provide positive information for overcoming existing social inequalities. Regardless of these positive levels, social inequalities in Bulgarian society exist and have deepened in recent years. The Bulgarian National Employment Service has defined several

groups of unemployed persons, which, following their average monthly dynamics, can be found to have a permanent tendency to remain in an unequal position in the labor market and society in general. These are persons with primary and lower education, long-term unemployed persons who have been out of work for more than 12 months, persons who have not acquired a professional qualification, persons with a certain reduced ability to work, and those who are under 29 years of age (Table 4).

Average monthly number of registered unemployed persons					
With primary and lower education	Persons over 50 years of age	Long-term unemployed persons	Persons without qualifications	Persons up to 29 years of age	Disabled
71 777	69 791	35 954	93 107	18 970	11 178

Table 4: *The labour market in the first quarter of 2024 in Bulgaria*

Source: *Employment Agency*

Bulgaria conducts an active promotion policy, helping employers to hire persons from these vulnerable groups. In this regard, a National Action Plan in the field of employment is adopted annually by the government. Some of these measures are defined in the special law for the promotion of employment.

Regardless of the institutional support, the actions taken, and the conditions created, social inequalities remain a permanent trend that cannot be overcome.

The existing social system fails to meet the requirements of all its participants on the one hand, and on the other hand to influence or

support those who have permanent problems to be included in this system. Some scientists and researchers believe that in every society there is a certain minimum of people who fail to join the social system and remain excluded from it. This is observed in almost all social systems and recorded over a long period and can be taken as a relatively true statement. Regardless of this condition, the presence of such groups of people who constantly experience problems with their social inclusion is a problem for the social system itself and its functioning.

The set of impacts is well-known and used in different countries with varying success rates. Part of the measures that are applied are called a complex of active labor market policies. They are usually combined with so-called passive labor market policies. Passive policies are related to financial support through monetary benefits to certain groups of persons according to certain criteria. The two sets of policies in different social situations are reinforced to quell certain social tensions that are caused by social inequalities.

This to a certain extent shows the defects of the existing social systems and their crises. Determining these defects is not always an easy task, and this leads to a certain cyclicality and repetition of the critical situations that arise.

Undoubtedly, social systems experience difficulties in overcoming a series of critical situations, and from there all participants in social systems are to one degree or another exposed to certain negative impacts.

2.2.2. Social entrepreneurship and its social mission

Social entrepreneurship creates a good opportunity for positive intervention in social systems. This impact can be expected to have a lasting and positive effect.

The Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy in Bulgaria was adopted in 2018[131]. It regulates public relations related to the social and solidarity economy, the types of entities and measures for their promotion, as well as the terms and conditions for the activity of social enterprises and has as its main objective to promote the development of the social and solidarity economy as an economic branch with special rules with the following objectives:

- Improving access to employment and training for acquiring or improving professional qualifications to raise the standard of living of people from vulnerable groups;
- Creating conditions for providing support to persons from vulnerable groups for social inclusion and an independent lifestyle;
- Reduction of social inequality and sustainable territorial development.

With the adoption of this law, conditions are created for increasing the recognition of social enterprises, increasing consumer demand for their goods and services, creating a Register of Social Enterprises in Bulgaria, and a special certification mark denoting the goods and

[131] *Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy, Pub. DV. No. 91 of November 2, 2018, amended DV. No. 17 of February 26, 2019, amended and add. DV. No. 24 of March 22, 2019, add. DV. No. 17 of February 25, 2020, https://lex.bg/bg/laws/ldoc/2137187968, Retrieved 23 October 2024.*

services produced and provided by social enterprises. The law also includes a specially created Methodology for assessing the social impact of the activities of social enterprises, which measures the achieved social contribution and impact:

- enterprises that employ persons from vulnerable groups and provide them with employment and social inclusion;
- enterprises whose financial result (realized profit), the greater part of which (after taxation) is redistributed to achieve social goals.The Report on the Ex-post Impact Assessment of the Law on Social and Solidarity Economy Enterprises[132] defines several main groups of problems, namely[133][134][135]:
- Problem 1

As a concept, the social economy is similar to others such as solidarity, and cooperative economy based on the social and public interest, characteristic of them. The presence of diverse practices in the field of social economy and their unification in a single framework necessitates their regulation through a legal instrument, such as The Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy. In this

[132]*Report on the follow-up assessment of the impact of the Law on Enterprises, Social and Solidarity Economy, MLSP, https://www.mlsp.government.bg/posledvashchi-otsenki-na-vzdeystvieto, Retrieved 23 October 2024.*

[133]*Terziev, V. & Georgiev, M. Social development and the contribution of science. 112th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – "Creating a unified foundation for Sustainable Development: Interdisciplinarity in Research and Education" – Varazdin, 4-5 June, 2024, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2024, pp.209-231, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[134]*Terziev, V. & Georgiev, M. Social transformations and social programming. 112th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – "Creating a unified foundation for Sustainable Development: Interdisciplinarity in Research and Education" – Varazdin, 4-5 June, 2024, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2024, pp.251-256, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[135]*Terziev, V. & Georgiev, M. New social transformations and changes in societies. 112th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – "Creating a unified foundation for Sustainable Development: Interdisciplinarity in Research and Education" – Varazdin, 4-5 June, 2024, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2024, pp.311-319, ISSN 1849-7535.*

context, one of the essential challenges is the creation of a single, comprehensive system of rules, related and consistent with the principles of the social and solidarity economy, defining the conditions, organization, and order in which social enterprises as its main subjects function and interact with the state and the municipalities. The legal framework provides the legal grounds to separate the social economy sector as an independent one, functioning according to rules.

- Problem 2:

At the time of the adoption of the law, there was no explicit legislative regulation of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise as a separate entity of the social economy.

In 2012, the Council of Ministers adopted a National Concept of Social Economy, which indicates the characteristics of social enterprises that distinguish them from other economic entities as a different type of business, but they are not legally enshrined, which gives rise to opportunities for “misuse” of the meaning and significance of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises, with consequences for misdirecting resources for their development and promotion in society as creating, in addition to economic and social added value. To overcome this unregulated approach to social entrepreneurship and social enterprises, as well as to the existing regulatory deficit, the Law introduces formal criteria and procedural rules that are the basis for the objective identification of the main subjects of the social and solidarity economy, especially concerning social enterprises. The criteria are in

line with current European practice and the practice of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

- Problem 3:

Adequate statistical information is required for analytical purposes and to provide periodic and accurate information about the subjects of social and solidarity. Its content and adequacy for justifying political decisions and for a better description of specific measures require a rethinking of the way of collecting data and reference to clearly defined criteria for distinguishing social enterprises from other economic enterprises, as well as from other subjects of the social and solidarity economy. In this regard, actions have been taken to create a Register of Social Enterprises at the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, in which social enterprises are entered according to previously, legally prescribed procedures and criteria.

- Problem 4:

Social enterprises implement a hybrid business model that combines economic and social goals. The identification of the social added value of their activity is related to distinguishing their social contribution. The draft law provides that the measurement of the social added value will be carried out using a methodology that is also one of the conditions for entering the enterprise in the national register of social enterprises, thus emphasizing the importance of social enterprises in achieving an additional, in addition to the economic, social value added. For the first time in the practice of the social economy in Bulgaria, through the draft law, a method for measuring the

added social value is legally introduced, and in this way, the social change that occurs in the target group can be tracked. This is necessary for the better market positioning of social enterprises.

The upcoming changes in social systems will force all participants in them to adapt to the new conditions. Knowing the reasons for the changes occurring, as well as the ongoing processes, will enable adequate and accurate corrective actions to be taken. This is a challenge both to scientists and researchers and to those who are actively involved in the management of social systems.

It finds innovative solutions to significant social problems to which society has no adequate answer, through entrepreneurial behavior, and financially independent and sustainable organization.

Social entrepreneurship is not just a management goal. It seeks a balance between economic goals and the needs of society. And this makes it necessary for a well-developed nation, social entrepreneurship is defined as an activity through which social problems are solved in various areas - education, social security, environment, poverty reduction, human rights, etc.

Social entrepreneurship is a means of social change using entrepreneurial practices. Social entrepreneurs are aware of social problems in their community and find solutions to these problems.

To understand the details, we look for a logical sequence in information bases and build an analytical model for studying social entrepreneurship. It is necessary to clarify the existing legal framework

through an analysis of policies and measures for participation in initiatives. Does this give an idea of real circumstances and do they fit into the patterns created by government agencies?

Is social entrepreneurship social?

Can entrepreneurship be social?

- Social entrepreneurship builds innovative business models that are fully subordinated to the ultimate goal of creating value by solving a socially significant problem;
- Social entrepreneurship is carried out without seeking profit or emphasizing the profit they can get.

Is social entrepreneurship entrepreneurship. Can social problems be solved through entrepreneurship?

- Entrepreneurship is a key factor in economic development and improving the welfare of society;
- Entrepreneurship solves important economic and social problems, such as reducing unemployment, increasing innovation activity, accelerating structural changes in the economy, regional development, etc.;
- Entrepreneurial activity leads to the emergence of new business models that increase the productivity of economic agents in particular and the competitiveness of the economy in general.

Who do we want to attract to social entrepreneurship? Why is it important?

– What are the reasons? Where are the young people? What are the theories? What are the practices? (Table 5-6).

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP – REGULATION AND PRACTICE				
1. Theory of social entrepreneurship	2. Social entrepreneurship as a phenomenon	3. The social environment of social entrepreneurship	4. Support for social entrepreneurship	5. Does social entrepreneurship have a future?
1.1. Models of social entrepreneurship	2.1. Is social entrepreneurship social?	3.1. What do young people think about social entrepreneurship	4.1. Social economy	5.1. Best practices
1.2. Legal regulation	2.2. A look at the development of social entrepreneurship	3.2. What do young people do for social entrepreneurship	4.2. Social entrepreneurship in the financial system	5.2. The future of social entrepreneurship

Table 5: *Analytical model for studying social entrepreneurship*

Source: *Authors' elaboration*

MARKETING		CRITICAL COMPARISON		MEASURES	
Goal setting		Research		Conclusions	
Search	Observation	Analysis	Decomposition	Good practices	New reading
Relationship Management in Social Entrepreneurship					
Theory of social entrepreneurship	Social entrepreneurship as a phenomenon	Social environment of social entrepreneurship	What do young people think?	Does social entrepreneurship have a future?	Can social entrepreneurship have great potential to mobilize young people?

Table 6: *Analytical model for the study of social entrepreneurship and its application to practice*

Source: *Authors' elaboration*

The genesis of the term “social entrepreneurship” is difficult to trace. Opinions about its first appearance in economic literature date back to 1830. Then the French liberal economist Charles Dunauer published “Treatise on Social Economy”, in which he advocated a more moral approach to the economy. In the period 1820-1860, a core of social economists formed in France. They began a structural

reorientation under the influence of John Stuart Mill and Leon Walras and provided an alternative to the changes (inequality, poverty) brought by the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. The practical foundations were laid in the 1970s when French cooperatives were in full bloom and received the collective name – "social economy". Economist Peter Drucker sees the mission of this "social sector" as a response to social challenges. He believes that in modern society, social entrepreneurship is as important as economic entrepreneurship. Today, Ken O'Neill analyzes the nature and characteristics of the social economy. According to him, it works to achieve social goals by building mutual relationships between people and organizations. Social economy is created by organizations that primarily seek to reinvest all their profits back into the implementation of the organization's social goals. The latter should not contradict social principles, since they are mutually exclusive.

There are two trends in social economics: - "European", developing the concept of collective entrepreneurship (cooperatives, mutually supportive companies); and "American", which is more closely associated with services and an individual approach (foundations, charities, and trusts). In search of the place and role of the business model on which the social economy is built, Dees analyzes the ideas of Say, Schumpeter, Drucker, and Stevenson. According to him, they can easily be applied both in the social sphere and in business. Dees insists that the understanding of social entrepreneurship should be based on a strong tradition of entrepreneurship theory and research.

Social entrepreneurship is currently developing in Bulgaria. However, entrepreneurs rarely take into account the specific features of the Bulgarian context. From a theoretical point of view, the problem of "social entrepreneurship" has been poorly studied in the context of Bulgarian reality. This makes it difficult to form trends or forecast prospects. Insufficient commitment from the state and local government is also a factor limiting the spread of entrepreneurial practice. A significant problem is the lack of highly qualified entrepreneurs willing to develop such initiatives. Large businesses are also not actively involved in such initiatives. Researchers in this sector come to the conclusion that social enterprises need additional opportunities, both in developing projects to attract additional funding and in developing organizational capacity, and strategic and business planning. There is a need for additional training in business planning, accounting, financial management, marketing, building partnerships and coalitions, fundraising, etc. Not least of all, this is a misunderstanding of this form, coupled with the activities of potential social entrepreneurs is also located.

The current Bulgarian legislation regulating relations in the social sphere does not provide a legal definition of a social enterprise. However, definitions can be found in a number of strategic European and Bulgarian documents. The preamble to the draft Regulation on European Funds for Social Entrepreneurship contains the following wording: "Social enterprises cover a wide range of enterprises with different legal forms that provide social services or goods to vulnerable

or marginalized persons. These services include access to housing, health care, assistance to the elderly or disabled, childcare, access to employment and training, and the fight against addiction. Social enterprises also include enterprises that use a method of producing goods or services for a social purpose, but whose activities may go beyond the provision of social goods or services. These activities include social and professional integration through access to employment for people in a disadvantaged situation, in particular, due to insufficient qualifications or social or professional problems leading to exclusion and marginalization".

A number of studies report that many social enterprises in Europe have achieved greater impact through development strategies based on the expansion of social capital and the implementation of social change strategies. In this respect, social enterprise development strategies are relevant for Europe but still have unproven effectiveness in the Bulgarian context. It is clear that connectivity and social capital are key factors in the development of social enterprises. It specifies that effective combinations of business strategies and strategies based on social approaches should be linked to the strengths and capabilities of social enterprises. At the same time, each social entrepreneur should also be aware of the possible risks in the implementation of various strategies, especially strategies related to new products and markets, as well as strategies based on the use of information and communication technologies, which require a lot of initial resources, and insufficient planning can lead to serious financial risks.

A serious problem of social entrepreneurship is its almost restrictive connection with people with disabilities. This deprives it of a much larger idea of implementing the mission of social orientation of economic entities outside specific social groups /disabled, marginalized, etc./. Particular attention is drawn to the limitation of the law in that a social enterprise arises in the form of a commercial legal entity created on the basis of the Commercial Law or the Law on Cooperatives. Thus, an enterprise can exist in the form of a joint-stock company, a limited liability company, a limited partnership, a limited partnership with shares, and a general partnership, as well as a cooperative. In practice, more common forms are joint-stock companies and limited liability companies, since they are commercial capital companies with a clear delineation of the scope of liability. Another possibility for registering a social enterprise in accordance with a special law is a cooperative of people with disabilities, regulated by the Law on Cooperatives. To establish it, it is sufficient to express the will of at least seven individuals. The second requirement is that the social enterprise is engaged in the production of goods or provision of services, which makes it an active participant in the economy. In addition, quantitative measurements of the employed personnel have been introduced.

Who are the users of social entrepreneurship? Socially weak, marginalized groups? Can social entrepreneurship be equated with social economy, i.e. in the economy, which, along with making a profit, also solves social problems? Despite the diversity of business strategies

that are used to achieve business growth and competitive advantages, they are of particular importance in social enterprises - this is the use of tools that guarantee the fulfillment of the social mission. The use of heterogeneous business strategies to ensure the economic growth of social enterprises largely depends on the level of development and the phase of the life cycle they are in. According to Marina Stefanova, the most popular business strategy is the development of a new market. This can be a completely new geographic area or an expansion of the territorial coverage of services.

The main product strategy of a social enterprise is the differentiation of products or services. In the main practice of most social enterprises, there are a number of ways to differentiate a product or service against the backdrop of growing competition. One of the ways to develop such a new market for social enterprises is to educate the audience. This is a longer-term public relations strategy than a one-time advertising campaign. One of the popular tools used in marketing when making strategic choices about products and markets to work in is the so-called Ansoff matrix. This approach can also be used to launch social entrepreneurial initiatives.

An important and key characteristic of social entrepreneurship innovation is its flexibility, informality, and adaptability to changes in the environment. A deep look at social enterprises suggests that they operate as an intersection of talent and entrepreneurial drive, combined with informal communication and a long-term vision for development. Recently, rapidly developing information and communication

technologies have dramatically changed the environment in which social enterprises operate. These technologies allow social enterprises to expand their market beyond the geographic region in which they operate. Additional social impact is created by providing services in underdeveloped regions at an acceptable cost level. Social enterprises can use new technologies to improve traditional business practices, thereby creating new opportunities and challenges. A serious issue related to financial independence can be discussed here. Many proponents of the concept of generating income in the social sphere speak of it as a form of financial independence, and of other sources of funding as a form of "dependency".

Financial independence is understood as something that can only be achieved when a person relies entirely on the income they receive. This can be seen as the ultimate goal of the most ambitious social entrepreneurs. When we talk about financial strategies in social entrepreneurship, it is useful to clarify the terms used, especially the understanding of "income generation". For those unfamiliar with this economic term, it is income that comes from the sale of goods or services. This is in stark contrast to the widely popular methods of raising funds in the non-governmental sector through charity, donations, or government grants, and is one of the most widely discussed concepts in social entrepreneurship. In addition, many researchers view income generation strategies as a powerful tool for social entrepreneurship.

The most common financial strategy for social enterprises, or one that can ensure their financial sustainability over time while taking advantage of the dual nature of these structures, is to diversify their revenue sources, i.e., move away from or reduce their reliance on free funding and donations. When a social enterprise is focused on generating revenue to become less dependent, it must understand that generating revenue depends on customers choosing its products and services over others in the market. In addition, this type of social enterprise is often dependent on key suppliers, specific expertise and labor markets, and access to capital, which may require other types of business strategies. The financial independence, freedom, and flexibility of a social enterprise are only important if they lead to achieving greater positive social impact. Focusing on the financial aspects of social entrepreneurship should not be done at the expense of social impact. Instead, when applying financial strategies to generate revenue, follow the so-called dual track, which focuses on both financial and social impact. Regardless of the outcome of the debate on this topic, one thing is clear and indisputable: the main indicator of the difference between a “market” and a “social” economy is the degree of “social added value”.

Social added value can be defined as achieving a social effect for the target group as a result of the social enterprise's activities as a whole - its positive and negative changes, and collateral effects as a result of other actions or inactions. On the part of the social enterprise. Theories of social-added value offer a way to recognize the role of social

entrepreneurs in society and their contribution to social change. Jed Emerson, a researcher on the topic of the added value of social entrepreneurs, notes that social benefit cannot be easily decomposed into separate elements - social, economic, and public benefits, but, on the contrary, it is necessary to consider the overall combined effect. Social added value can also be characterized as the benefit of the activities of an organization or enterprise in terms of the achieved social and/or environmental effect.

In Bulgaria, with the adoption of the Regulation on the Implementation of the Law on Social and Solidarity Economy Enterprises, a methodology for assessing social added value was created. It is a mechanism for studying the effects of the activities of social and solidarity economy enterprises in terms of costs, benefits, and effects for a wide range of stakeholders, as well as in terms of direct benefits for society and communities in which social enterprises operate. The additional provisions of the law define “Social Added Value” as the achieved social effect for the target group as a result of the activities carried out by a social enterprise. After all, regardless of the choice of strategy, the achievement of added social value is mainly realized by “social capital” in all its meanings.

The characteristics of social enterprises and their strong connection with people and social problems, that is, their focus on achieving social impact and social change, in most cases predetermine the need to implement strategies related to social capital. According to

one of the leading researchers of social capital, R. Putnam, there are four main components of social capital, namely:

- Networks (groups of people connected by many and different types of connections);
- Values, norms, and sanctions (common standards of behavior and expectations); This may include beliefs, traditions, rituals, and laws;
- Reciprocity (people helping each other, with a clear awareness and conviction that this will contribute to the development of the group or someone in the future will respond in kind);
- Trust (the expectation that other members of the community will be honest and willing to cooperate).

Social capital helps entrepreneurs to "get their foot in the door." This provides broad access to investment capital and potential customers. The relationship between social capital and social entrepreneurship has been explored by several authors, who have concluded that social entrepreneurs create their social capital. This is believed to be one of the reasons why some social entrepreneurs are more successful than others who do not invest enough in social capital. Gregory Dees believes that a social entrepreneur should also focus on social relationships, as they are essential to the operational potential of a social enterprise and are the basis for innovative solutions to social problems. Social capital can also be defined as resources that are embedded in social networks and can be accessed or mobilized through relationships in existing networks. In general, through such social

relationships or social networks, an entrepreneur can access or use the resources of other partners. Networks and sharing as components of social capital can stimulate innovation while facilitating the process of knowledge dissemination in social enterprises.

Several studies in the social economy sector show that social enterprises have an advantage in using informal networks as an element of social capital – through networks and industry partnerships they can achieve a greater competitive advantage than through business skills or specialized business support. Very often, social enterprises operate in a particular territorial community, which provides many opportunities for the development of their activities, while simultaneously representing a major market for the products and services of social enterprises. This is a successful strategy for the development of social enterprises linked to the local community: on the one hand, the social economy sector brings its benefits to the community, and on the other hand, the community creates a market for the sale of the products and services of social enterprises. Social capital is a particularly important element of social entrepreneurship. Its importance increases in the context of achieving specified social change. Social change itself can be characterized as a systematic transformation of modes of action, behavior, social relations, and social structures over a long period. Businesses can change the behavior of individuals and groups in various areas, for example, those related to the environment, health, social exclusion, and civic participation. Social enterprises typically commit to achieving

social change that may be linked to long-term social impact in a particular area.

Many researchers point to four main areas for achieving social change: environmental behavior; healthy behavior; social and economic inclusion; trade participation. The social benefits of social enterprises vary widely, with a number of studies of social enterprises in Bulgaria showing a preference for the following social areas and/or goals: supporting low-income individuals; improving health and quality of life; creating employment opportunities and integration in the labor market; addressing social exclusion; integrating children and young people in vulnerable situations; improving services in underdeveloped rural areas. A key prerequisite for the implementation of this type of goals is the existence of clearly defined principles and measurable indicators for assessing the social impact, as well as adopted approaches and methodologies for assessing the social added value.

Recently, there has been activity in Bulgarian academic circles on this issue. In her analysis, Maria Ilcheva examines a diagnostic tool for social entrepreneurship policy. The data obtained by the author show the following: social effect, as well as the adopted approaches and methods for assessing social added value[136]. Recently, there has been activity in Bulgarian academic circles on this issue. In her analysis,

[136]*Ilcheva, M. Social economy and social entrepreneurship – views and fragmentary approbations, Publishing house Faber, Veliko Tarnovo, 2019, ISBN 978-619-00-1070-8.*

Maria Ilcheva examines a diagnostic tool for social entrepreneurship policy. The data obtained by the author show the following[137]:

- The areas with the lowest scores are entrepreneurship culture and – access to finance. This is due to the insufficient activity of social entrepreneurship entities in Bulgaria. Including civil society organizations and educational institutions to promote the sector as an effective tool for employment and social inclusion;
- "Access to finance" – there is no single source of information on funding programs and financial instruments. Insufficient number of specialized countries with private funding actively targeting social enterprises. This is also reported in a number of strategic documents on the social economy of Bulgaria. There is a need for specialized sources of financial support in combination with business consulting or technical assistance;
- The highest score was obtained for "Institutional framework". The result is based on serious steps taken to approve and implement the national strategy for the social economy, linked to two-year action plans;
- "Legal framework" has a high rating and the reason for this is the special law on social economy enterprises adopted in 2018. It is being prepared with the active participation of all stakeholders;
- With a good title – "Impact Management, Measurement, and Reporting". This is due to the availability of social impact assessment

[137] *Ilcheva, M. Social economy and social entrepreneurship – views and fragmentary approbations, Publishing house Faber, Veliko Tarnovo, 2019, ISBN 978-619-00-1070-8.*

indicators. For example, an adopted methodology for measuring social added value and the development of awareness-raising initiatives on impact measurement and reporting of social enterprises;

- Another important component is “Skills and Business Development”. Its assessment shows the lack of specialized structures to support the development of social enterprises’ businesses. Lack of resources for broad support and limited access to support networks and coaching programs. The main conclusion for the future development of the sector is related to expanding opportunities for participation in European networks, clusters, and consortia, which can facilitate the exchange of experience and best practices, having a direct impact on improving business skills and implementing successful strategies;
- “Access to Markets” is rated low, since there are no regulated social provisions when concluding public contracts. Insufficient support for submitting competitive offers and qualified participation in tenders and assignments; A positive step in addressing this deficit is the introduction of a certified brand “Social Entrepreneurship Product”. Each social enterprise registered in the register of social enterprises will receive it.

It has been established that the term “social economy” arose in connection with the flourishing of French cooperatives. The mission of this “social sector” is a response to social challenges. A detailed analysis, supported by various opinions of our and foreign researchers, shows that the ideas of the business sector can easily be applied in the field of social entrepreneurship.

2.2.3. Strategies used in business are also applicable to social entrepreneurship

This means that marketing strategies are relevant to social entrepreneurship. A successful strategy at the European level, as revealed by a number of studies, is that many social enterprises in Europe have achieved greater impact through a development strategy based on the expansion of social capital, as well as the implementation of social change strategies. These social enterprise development strategies are relevant for Europe but still have unproven effectiveness in the Bulgarian context.

One of the main indicators of the difference between the "market" and "social" economy is the degree of "social added value". Social added value can be described as the benefit of the activities of an organization or enterprise in terms of the achieved social and environmental effect. The goal is social change. Social change itself can be described as a systematic transformation of modes of action, behavior, social relations, and social structures over a long period. The Bulgarian reality of social entrepreneurship is still unclear. Some of the reasons for this situation are low entrepreneurial culture; lack of a single source of information on funding programs and financial instruments; lack of specialized structures to support the development of social enterprises' businesses; lack of resources for broad support and limited access to support networks and coaching programs. Lack of clearly regulated social provisions when concluding public contracts. There are also positive steps, for example: serious steps have been taken to

approve and implement a national strategy for social economy, linked to two-year action plans; a special law on social economy enterprises has been adopted; the presence of social impact assessment indicators.

In our opinion, the biggest problem remains with public attitudes. For the attitude of a successful person, "it is extremely or very important that he or she has good health, is ambitious, has a good (high) education, works hard for his or her success, has connections and, if possible, is younger." At the same time, in the public space, through the images of certain groups, such as people in need of social assistance, disseminated by print and electronic media, their initiative is harmed. Thus, certain groups of people are stigmatized. Bulgaria is still working on solving these problems. It is envisaged to introduce various tools (job search seminars, work with psychologists and curators, training, etc.). Reaching inactive and unemployed youth through a comprehensive approach and combining the efforts of intermediaries, institutions, social partners, and local authorities. Improving data exchange, holding information days, using modern information channels, and developing electronic services. It is expected that the focus will be on counseling oriented towards the needs of individuals, their strengths and potential, motivation, career guidance, and consideration of the status of the entire family of the long-term unemployed person. Stimulation and outreach to individuals include inclusion in labor exchanges, subsidized employment, and support at the workplace. A corresponding mechanism for the involvement and outreach of young people is the

launch of the services “Family Consultant” and “Counseling and Mentoring after Return to Work”.

Based on the analysis of the topic, the following areas can be identified that require intervention for the favorable development of social entrepreneurship. The social entrepreneurship initiative expands the scope of positive solutions and at the same time can give meaning to the life of a small local community. Unfortunately, there is no specific mechanism for promoting this form, and the consolidation of policies and funding mechanisms is lagging. There is also a lack of resources aimed at supporting social entrepreneurship initiatives. The problems can be solved if specific and targeted initiatives are taken. Urgent measures are needed:

- Policy development – based on the deficit in the systemic aspect of social entrepreneurship initiatives;
- It is necessary to create a flexible financial mechanism following the needs of financing such initiatives;
- There is a need to develop specific resources to support the process of social entrepreneurship from start-up to sustainable development;
- It is necessary to set up an active and accessible information flow on the topic.

To take measures, a large-scale and targeted media campaign is needed, aimed at:

- Changing public opinion;

- Implementation of an accessible physical and media environment;
- Promoting the possibilities of social entrepreneurship initiatives;
- Policy development – based on the deficit in the systemic aspect of social entrepreneurship initiatives;
- It is necessary to create a flexible financial mechanism in accordance with the needs of financing such initiatives;
- There is a need to develop specific resources to support the process of social entrepreneurship from start-up to sustainable development;
- It is necessary to set up an active and accessible information flow on the topic.

A large-scale and targeted media campaign aimed at:

- Changing public opinion;
- Implementing an accessible physical and media environment;
- Promoting the possibilities of social entrepreneurial initiatives.

Social entrepreneurship is a philosophy that can help solve many problems in the social environment, focusing primarily on those problems that are the most significant and most acute for society. The accumulated set of problems and the identification of various, most

vulnerable groups of the population require specific approaches and the search for adequate and correct solutions. Social entrepreneurship is a good opportunity to implement various social policies aimed at at-risk groups.

The implementation of this opportunity for the successful implementation and implementation of the idea of social entrepreneurship is a long and difficult process, but it is expected to give good and effective results. Approaches to its implementation should be well analyzed and understood, and the use of the methodology of its practical implementation should be well-tested on various social problems[138139140141142143].

[138]*Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., & Solovev, D. The interaction: business- education- investment for development. // Proceedings of INTCESS 2020- 7th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences 20-22 January, 2020 - DUBAI (UAE), International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2020, pp. 865-869, ISBN: 978-605-82433-8-5.*

[139]*Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., Andreeva, O., & Georgiev, M. Revolution in industry and evolution in education or development of intelligence. // 63rd International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – "Building Resilient Society" - Zagreb, 11-12 December, 2020, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2020, pp. 133-142, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[140]*Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., & Georgiev, M. Domestic and international challenges in higher education. // 7 th ITEM Conference – "Innovation, Technology, Education and Management" and 67th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Sveti Martin na Muri, 29-30 April, 2021, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2021, pp.88-97, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[141]*Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., & Georgiev, M. The contemporary strategic challenges facing higher education. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2021 8th International Conference on Education and Education of Social Sciences 14-15 June, 2021, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2021, pp. 134-141, ISBN: 978-605-06286-2-3.*

[142]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Shared knowledge and changes in the higher education system in Bulgaria. 79th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Rabat, 25-26 March, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.228-237, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[143]*Terziev, V.K., Lyubcheva, M.I., Andreeva, O.V., & Simeonov, S.V. (2024) Creating an analytical model for the study of social entrepreneurship. // Economics & Society: Contemporary Models of Development. 14. (2). pp. 91–112. Doi: 10.18334/ecsoc.14.2.121514.*

CHAPTER THREE. INNOVATION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

3.1. Social innovations as an object of research in finance theory

Social innovations are the subject of research not only because of their specificity but also because of their special importance for the development of societies. They are a mechanism that is used as an element of various strategies, programs, and projects. The development of modern societies is impossible without the application of social innovations.

This study attempts a brief analysis of social innovation as an element of financial theory. To form a comprehensive idea of the essence of social innovation, the origin and interpretation of this term from the point of view of etymology have been examined. The following interpretation of the concept is proposed: social innovations are new ideas, solutions, and technologies, the implementation process of which allows level the transformational changes caused by failures of the market and the state, and to more effectively satisfy social needs as a result of qualitative transformations of existing socio-economic systems at the expense of complete financial security. The financial component is highlighted within the research and includes further research into the issues of financial support for social innovations, including the principles and sources of their funding in the context of various entities (commercial enterprises, non-profit organizations, the state, citizens), forms, methods, tools of the mechanism for financial

support, social innovations, interpenetration of financial, social and innovation policies, etc.

The issues of meeting the social needs of citizens are in the field of view of various institutions, and state regulation is decisive here. In this regard, the development of theoretical concepts that analyze the role of these institutions and seek optimal solutions for determining social and personal responsibility, and duties of the state, business, and citizens themselves, which is implemented through appropriate proportions of redistribution of created value, including through financial relations, is of interest. In our opinion, for the most effective solution to social problems of society, one should turn to the theory of social innovations, which includes finding the most promising directions for financial regulation, since the financial aspect of the problem often becomes decisive in the implementation of social policy.

Social innovations are the object of scientific interest of a fairly large number of authors, however, the points of application of such interest are mainly limited to the sociological or philosophical context. From an economic point of view, social innovations are considered mainly within the framework of such a scientific field of research as “Economics and Management of the National Economy”, for example, within the framework of labor economics or innovation management, while the financial aspects of social innovations are practically outside the field of interest of both domestic and foreign authors, which causes the separation of financial science from the existing practice of financing social innovations.

In general, at present, the features of the formation and use of financial resources in the sphere of social innovations have not been sufficiently studied from a theoretical standpoint, the methodological aspects of constructing their financial mechanism have not been covered, and its model that meets modern challenges in the economy and social sphere has not been formed. There are practically no works studying state and market methods of regulating the financial mechanism of social innovations. The instruments for financing social innovations, implemented, among other things, within the framework of new formats of cooperation between the state, business, and non-profit organizations, need to be systematized and assessed. Of course, the fruitfulness of the above-mentioned scientific developments largely depends on the clarity of understanding and defining the essential features of social innovations, the prerequisites for their emergence, and specific characteristics.

To form a holistic view of the essence of social innovation, it is advisable to consider the origin and interpretation of this term from the point of view of etymology.

Everything that is connected with the life and relationships of people in society is identified with the social. Social (from Latin socialis) means public, connected with the life and relationships of people in society. Social is generated by the conditions of social life, a certain environment, and a system, which indicates not only the social development of a person but also his orientation to social values, norms, and rules of the environment of life in which a person lives and realizes

himself as an individual. This concept is not scientific but only supplements the characteristics, and definition of the content of such concepts as “social state”, “social system” and others.

The concept of “innovation” (from the Latin innovatio) is no less multifaceted, denoting the introduction of any innovations into practice. Representing a complex organizational and economic mechanism, innovations include scientific and intellectual potential, thereby ensuring the possibility of their implementation at all stages of the reproduction process. Of course, the most important aspect of this mechanism is the attraction and reasonable use of financial resources. According to the authors, in a broad sense, innovations should be considered new technologies, types of goods and services, new organizational and technical solutions in the production, financial, social, and other spheres. The term “innovation” first appeared in the works of the famous economist I. Schumpeter proposed a theory of economic development, which designated a “new concept of resources” as the basis of this theory[144]. The scientist believed that the implementation of this concept involves the discovery and development of new markets for the sale of goods, new sources of raw materials for its production, and an effective reorganization of the market and enterprise, which gave the concept of “innovation” a broader meaning

[144]*Abernathy, W.J., & Clark, K.B. Innovation: mapping the winds of creative destruction // Research Policy. 1985. N 1 (14). pp. 3-22.*

in contrast to “innovation”. The scientist also identified the term “social value”, which denoted the conscious need of society[145].

In the theory of creative destruction, which he developed later, it was noted that the vector of social development should be directed toward an economic system in which social value occupies a central place. It is in the space around “social value” that the field of social innovation and social entrepreneurship is formed and developed, where the main focus is on income that will bring social benefit, and not just individual value[146] while transforming and improving socio-economic systems that are unable to satisfy the primary needs of society.

A significant contribution to the development and understanding of I. Schumpeter's theory of innovation was made by S. Kuznets, who singled out the social aspect as the most important component of innovative development. The scientist believed that social innovations, together with technological ones, determine each economic era, calling this the term “epochal innovations”. He outlined the role of social innovations, which consists of maximizing the usefulness of technological innovations, and proved that social innovations can be created not only at the macro level but also, most importantly, at the micro level, forming standards of behavior of economic agents that serve as the basis for the process of forming social innovations[147].

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[145]*Shumpeter, Y.A. Theory of Economic Development. Moscow: Direct-Media Publishing, 2008. pp. 277-350.*

[146]*McNeill, J. Through Schumpeter: Public Policy, Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship // The International Journal of Sustainability Policy and Practice. 2012. N 1 (8). pp. 81-94.*

[147]*Kuznets, S. Economic Growth and Income Inequality // The American Economic Review. 1955. Vol. XLV. pp. 2-28.*

One of the founders of modern theoretical sociology, American scientist T. Parsons believed that social innovations should be considered new forms of building human activity in society as a whole or within certain subsystems, for example, the economic subsystem of society[148].

J. Mulgan, S. Tucker, R. Ali, and B. Sanders, based on the fact that "innovations" are new ideas that work, consider the concept of "social innovations" as new ideas aimed at achieving social goals, giving this term potentially broad boundaries without reflecting the essential characteristics that distinguish social innovations from innovations in general.

Later, scientists proposed a narrower interpretation of this concept, defining "social innovations" as innovative activities and services motivated by the need to meet social needs, implemented mainly by organizations whose main goals are social[149]. This interpretation allows us to specify the concept of "social innovation" and reflects its main difference from "business innovation", which is motivated in its activities, as a rule, by profit maximization[150].

At the same time, one should not agree with the authors on this point, since some business innovations, despite the fact that their initial

[148]*Parsons, T. The Concept of Society: The Components and Their Interrelations // T. Parsons. Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives. Englewood Cliffs (N. J.): Prentice-Hall, 1966. pp. 5-29.*

[149]*Mulgan, G., Tucker, S., Ali, R., & Sanders, B. Social Innovation: What It Is, Why It Matters and How It Can Be Accelerated, 2007, ISBN 1-905551-03-7 / 978-1-905551-03-3.*

[150]*Solovyeva, T. S. Support of social innovations as a vector of regional social policy / T. S. Solovyeva // Strategy and tactics of implementation of socio-economic reforms: regional aspect: Proceedings of the VIII international scientific-practical conference, Vologda, December 12-14, 2018. – Vologda: Vologda Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2019. pp. 338-343.*

goal is to make a profit and increase competitiveness, ultimately lead to the development of new social services and the creation of public goods, which is especially evident in modern conditions, characterized by active technologization of all spheres of public life. In this case, social innovations should be considered as a result of the actions of economic agents, which include politicians, intellectuals, businessmen, public representatives, etc., and the values created by them - as factors that set the vectors of the development of social innovations. According to J. Phils, social innovations, like any new and useful solution, are aimed at society as a whole, namely, the satisfaction and development of social needs or problems[151]. However, in our opinion, in this definition, the presentation of the requirement of usefulness is not entirely correct, since the effect of the introduction of social innovations is unpredictable and may not always be positive or is of a short-term nature, and then can bring negative effects[152].

The Italian scientist E. Manzini believes that social innovations are changes that occur as a result of the process of transformation of existing assets (social capital, historical heritage, available advanced technologies), the vector of which is the achievement of important social goals in a new way[153]. In the context of this definition, social innovations are a natural component of social life and, like any other

[151]*Phills Jr., J. A., Deiglmeier, K., & Miller, D. T. Rediscovering Social Innovation. Stanford Social Innovation Review, 6(4), 34–43. https://doi.org/10.48558/GBJY-GJ47.*

[152]*Popov, E.V., & Omonov, Zh.K. The essence and typology of social innovations // Innovations. 2016. №1 (207) [Electronic resource] / Access mode: https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/suschnost-i-tipologiya-sotsialnyh-innovatsiy (Retrieved 03 October 2024).*

[153]*Manzini, E. Making things happen: Social innovation and design // Design issues. 2014. N 1. Vol. 30. pp. 57-66.*

innovations, contain elements of novelty and contribute to the improvement of any processes, social innovations may not be completely new, but must necessarily be aimed at increasing the efficiency of these processes[154]. The scientist, considering social innovations, divided them into two groups:

- arising "from below" - initiated, relying mainly on their resources, by local communities or associations of people who implement and manage the new solutions and ideas they have found;
- social innovations initiated "from above" – when the state, state organizations, and high-level government institutions record the existence of a problem and identify the public resources needed to solve it, orienting local initiatives toward further solving social problems by activating the identified resources and establishing interactions and relationships between the initiators.

Often, social innovations "from below" and "from above" are transformed and combined into "hybrid" ones under the influence of the increasing complexity of interactions between participants in the social innovation process[155].

In domestic scientific literature, "social innovations" are considered one of the functional types in the general model of innovations, together with technological, organizational and managerial information, and other types of innovations. Thus, according to

[154]*Social innovations in the urban context. / Ed. by T. Brandsen, S. Cattacin, A. Evers, A. Zimmer. – Cham; Heidelberg; New York; Dordrecht; London: Springer, 2016. 313 p., DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-21551-8.*

[155]*Manzini, E. Making things happen: Social innovation and design // Design issues. 2014. N 1. Vol. 30. pp. 57-66.*

Polyakova E.V., social innovations are the transformation of social resources of economic systems following the civilizational trajectory of development, which are a necessary prerequisite for the successful implementation of technical and technological innovations[156].

Ivanovsky B.G. defines social innovations as "new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes, etc.), simultaneously satisfying a social need with the greatest effects in contrast to existing solutions and leading to new or improved opportunities and relationships, more efficient use of assets and resources"[157].

An increasing number of domestic researchers, under the influence of those significant transformation processes occurring in socio-economic systems in recent years, consider the concept of social innovations by analogy with the interpretations of foreign authors, focusing on their capabilities in the social sphere.

Popov E.V., Omonov Zh.K. understand social innovations as new ideas, opportunities, and actions in the social space that increase the possibilities of using resources to solve economic, social, cultural, and environmental problems. At the same time, the authors emphasize that social space should be understood as a multi-faceted and interconnected system of social processes, as well as social relations, positions, and practices. Consequently, based on the above, the essence of social innovations consists in expanding the possibility of using various

[156]*Polyakova, E.V. The essence and classification of social innovations // Actual issues of economic sciences. 2009. №5-2 [Electronic resource] / Access mode: https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/suschnost-i-klassifikatsiya-sotsialnyh-innovatsiy (Retrieved 03 October 2024).*

[157]*Ivanovskiy, B.G. Social innovation as a factor in achieving sustainable socio-economic development // Economic and social problems of Russia. 2020. № 1(41). pp. 104-126, DOI 10.31249/espr/2020.01.05.*

resources to solve existing problems in public life, the main ones of which are social, and improving its quality[158].

Panteleeva T.S. considers social innovations as a result of scientific development, organization, and application of something new that satisfies the needs of a person and society and at the same time causes social changes[159].

A.V. Negorzhina, N.V. Lazareva define social innovations as "new ideas, strategies, technologies that contribute to the solution of socially significant problems that cause social changes in society"[160]. According to Romashchenko T.D. and Kisova E.V., social innovations act as "a set of qualitative changes in the areas of formation, development, and implementation of human and social capital with the aim of increasing the level of personal and public well-being"[161].

Thus, at present, there are quite a large number of different views on the definition of social innovation, the content of which depends, among other things, on the breadth of the research conducted by the authors, the field of scientific knowledge, the goals and objectives set. At the same time, in our opinion, almost all existing points of view can be grouped within the framework of three theoretical and

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[158]*Popov, E.V., & Omonov, Zh.K. The essence and typology of social innovations // Innovations. 2016. №1 (207) [Electronic resource] / Access mode: https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/suschnost-i-tipologiya-sotsialnyh-innovatsiy (Retrieved 03 October 2024).*

[159]*Panteleeva, T. S. Features of innovations in the field of social work // Domestic journal of social work. 2003. № 2. pp. 24-29.*

[160]*Negorozhina, A.V., & Lazareva, N.V. Management of social innovations // Humanitarian foundations of social progress: Russia and modern times: collection of articles of the International scientific and practical conference. 2016. pp. 291-295.*

[161]*Romashtenko, T.D., & Kisova, A.E. Social innovations: content, subject forms and classification // Proceedings of Voronezh State University. Series: Economics and Management. 2020. № 3. pp. 25-33. https://doi.org/10.17308/econ.2020.3/3102.*

methodological approaches. Thus, within the framework of the first approach, it is possible to combine opinions that define social innovation as new ideas, solutions, technologies, etc., that is, considered by the authors as a result of creative, intellectual, and scientific research activities. In our opinion, this is a rather "narrow" vision of social innovation, since it is limited only to the initial stages of their life cycle.

A broader approach to understanding social innovations is demonstrated by their interpretations in the context of transformation processes that transform established structures, connections, and relationships. Often, within the framework of such a process approach, a certain line is drawn between social and technological innovations, however, a significant drawback of such positions is that they can lead to a substitution of cause-and-effect relationships for the implementation of social innovations. Within the framework of the third approach, social innovations are defined as new forms of influence on the social space as a whole or its specific structural components, i.e. the emphasis in such definitions is not on the essence of social innovations as such, but on the assessment of the results of their dissemination.

Thus, the following interpretation of the concept is proposed: social innovations are new ideas, solutions, and technologies, the implementation process of which allows to level out transformational changes caused by market and state failures, and to more effectively satisfy public needs as a result of qualitative transformations of existing socio-economic systems due to full financial support. The financial

component is highlighted within the framework of the study conducted by the authors and suggests further study of issues of financial support for social innovations, including the principles and sources of their financing in the context of various entities (commercial enterprises, non-profit organizations, the state, citizens), forms, methods, instruments of the mechanism of financial support for social innovations, the interpenetration of financial, social and innovation policies, etc.

3.2. The labor market in Bulgaria in a period of social transformations

Social transformations are determined by a certain sequence of different actions and processes that characterize the development of societies. The most sensitive element in this process of social transformations is the labor market. The societies of the so-called socialist camp, which are part of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and part of the Soviet space at the end of the last century, fall into severe political changes, leading to changes in society. The research and study of the processes that lead to drastic and significant fluctuations in labor markets are interesting, both of scientific and practical importance. An interesting dependency in these markets is that they all go through the regulation of the primary labor market, through different instruments that are applied by governments. The accompanying severe consequences of the transition from a planned to a market economy lead to a large amount of the economically active population being left without a job and without the opportunity to find

one on the primary labor market. The restructuring of the various industries or their closure leads to the impossibility of the workforce with the acquired qualification to secure a suitable job. All this leads to multiple crises that are overcome over a long period. The present study presents and analyzes this period of social transformations in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The processes of political and economic transformations at the end of the 20th century caused a series of crises that significantly changed the social structures of a number of countries, as they led to the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Political transformations last a certain period, which from a historical point of view is too short. The significance of these transformations has particular social implications. These social consequences are experienced to one degree or another by all countries of the socialist camp. The main political and economic ties cease to exist and this leads to the occurrence of severe crises in the economies of these countries. Strong fluctuations in economies lead to social insecurity and the occurrence of phenomena such as mass unemployment and others, which are not characteristic and unknown in the planned mode of functioning of the national economy. All these circumstances make the local communities look for short-term but effective solutions to solve the severe crisis. This all leads to the implementation of not quite popular measures to protect national economies and even more severe consequences for people.

3.2.1. The circular economy as an opportunity for the development of the European Union

The European Union produces over 2.1 billion tonnes of waste per year. It is updating its legislation to encourage the transition to a more sustainable model, known as the circular economy[162].

The circular economy is a model aimed at extending the life cycle of products. In practice, this means sharing, borrowing, reusing, repairing, and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible[163].

When a product reaches the end of its life, the materials it is made of can continue to be used in other ways. This can be done over and over again, minimising waste disposal.

The concept of a circular economy is built on the traditional linear model, in which raw materials are used, things are made from them, they are consumed, and the rest is thrown away. This model relies on large quantities of cheap and accessible materials and energy sources.

Part of the traditional model is to build defects into appliances so that they stop working on a certain date or after a certain number of

[162] *European Parliament. Climate and environment, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/bg/article/20151201STO05603/krghovata-ikonomika-kakvo-predstavliava-tia-i-zashcho-e-vazhna, Retrieved 25 December 2024.*

[163] *European Parliament. Climate and environment, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/bg/article/20151201STO05603/krghovata-ikonomika-kakvo-predstavliava-tia-i-zashcho-e-vazhna, Retrieved 25 December 2024.*

cycles, forcing consumers to buy new ones. The European Parliament is speaking out against this wasteful practice[164].

Reusing and recycling products reduce the need to extract natural resources and limits the associated damage to ecosystems that threaten biodiversity.

The circular economy also contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Designing more efficient and sustainable products would help limit the consumption of energy and other resources. It is estimated that over 80% of a product's environmental impact is determined in the initial design phase. Switching to reliable products that can be reused, improved, and repaired would lead to less waste. Packaging is becoming an increasingly big problem – each European generates around 190 kg of packaging waste per year. Improving packaging design should be linked to promoting reuse and recycling[165].

The world's population is growing, which is driving demand for raw materials. However, raw material extraction faces natural constraints. Many EU countries do not have enough raw materials. Eurostat data shows that every European consumed 14.9 tonnes of raw materials in 2022. The EU's total imports and exports of raw materials

[164]*European Parliament. Climate and environment, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/bg/article/20151201STO05603/krghovata-ikonomika-kakvo-predstavliava-tia-i-zashcho-e-vazhna, Retrieved 25 December 2024.*

[165]*European Parliament. Climate and environment, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/bg/article/20151201STO05603/krghovata-ikonomika-kakvo-predstavliava-tia-i-zashcho-e-vazhna, Retrieved 25 December 2024.*

in 2023 were worth €165 billion. The EU continues to import more than it exports, resulting in a trade deficit of €29 billion[166].

Recycling raw materials reduces the risks associated with their supply – the EU becomes less dependent on global crises, price fluctuations, and geopolitical pressures. This is particularly true for key raw materials needed to develop technologies to meet climate goals, such as batteries and electric motors.

Resource efficiency is key to boosting the competitiveness of the economy, creating growth, and creating new jobs. It is estimated that the transition to a circular economy could create 700,000 jobs in the EU by 2030. Designing products and materials in a way that allows for multiple uses and recycling will stimulate innovation in different sectors of the economy. Consumers will also have access to more sustainable and economical products, which will save them money in the long term and improve their quality of life[167].

The European Union wants to build a circular and climate-neutral economy by 2050. To achieve this, the EU has adopted many new measures to reduce waste and improve products on the market. New or updated rules concern ecodesign, packaging, the right to repair products, waste management, and misleading environmental claims (Diagram 8) .

[166] *European Parliament. Climate and environment, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/bg/article/20151201STO05603/krghovata-ikonomika-kakvo-predstavliava-tia-i-zashcho-e-vazhna, Retrieved 25 December 2024.*

[167] *European Parliament. Climate and environment, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/bg/article/20151201STO05603/krghovata-ikonomika-kakvo-predstavliava-tia-i-zashcho-e-vazhna, Retrieved 25 December 2024.*

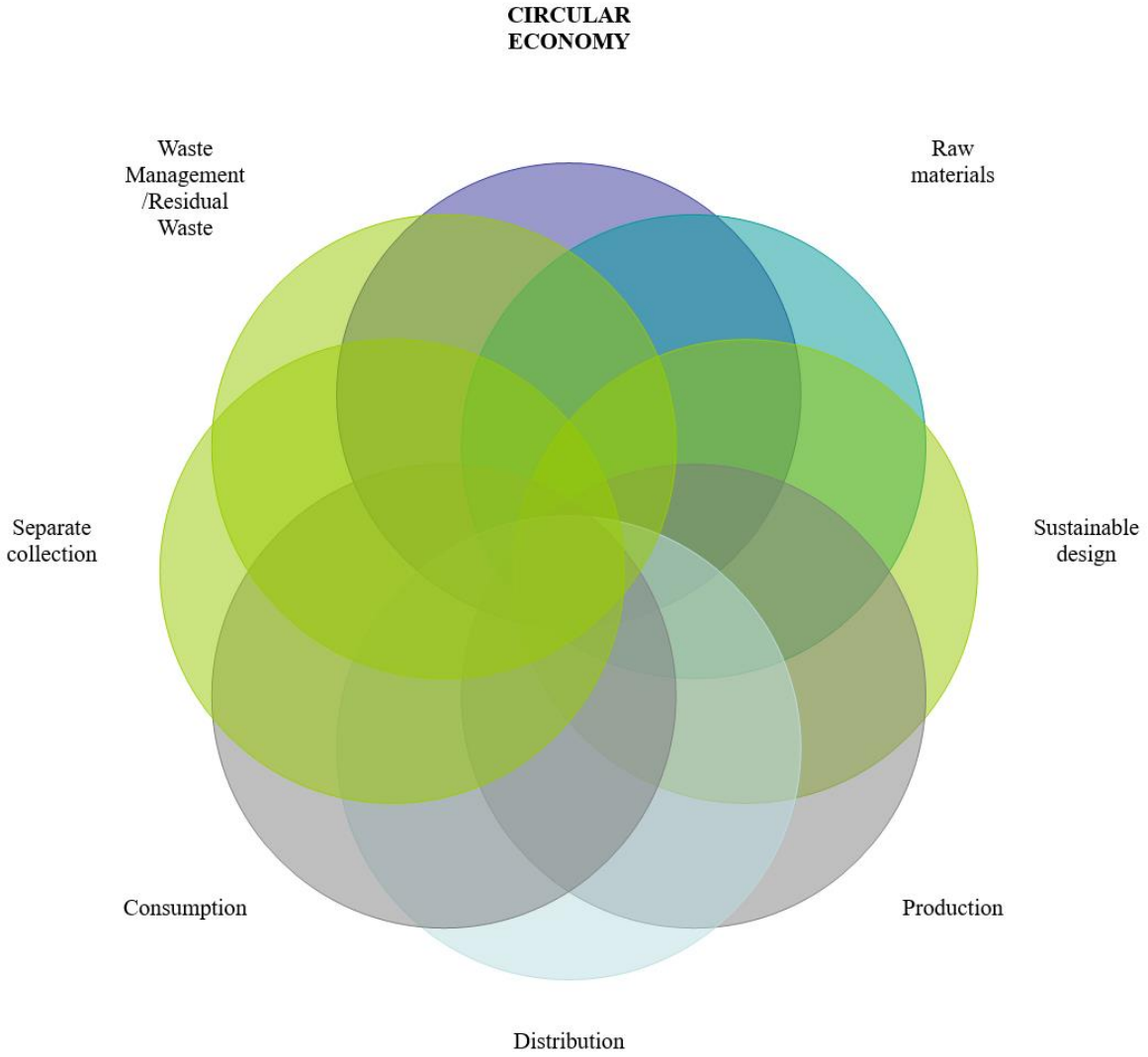


Diagram 8: *The circular economy model: fewer raw materials, less waste, fewer emissions*

Source: *https://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/bg*

3.2.2. Reconstruction – political and economic transformation

Perestroika (in Russian: Перестройка) is the general name of the reforms and the new ideology of the leadership of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which means the radical changes in the economic and political structure of the state in the second half of the 1980s. According to Nikolay Rizhkov, they were developed by order of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Yuri Andropov, and were announced by Mikhail

Gorbachev in 1985[168]. April 1985 is considered the beginning of perestroika when a plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was held[169], and in January 1987, at a plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, perestroika was officially announced as a direction for the development of the state.

In November 1964, after a decade marked by attempts at reform and condemnation of Stalinism, the moderate-conservative wing in the top party leadership of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics elevated Leonid Brezhnev to the head of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. From the very beginning, his rule was characterized by the strengthening of the authoritarian-bureaucratic system, the cult of his personality, and gradual restalinization, i.e. softening criticism of the Stalinist model of government and Stalin's personality. With this, the country is slowly but irreversibly entering a period of political, social, and economic stagnation.

The party nomenclature is asserted as a hereditary political oligarchy following the Iron Law of Oligarchy, which usurps all levers of power and shows minimal, if not almost no, inclination for reform in any sphere of public life. The members of the Politburo, whose average age in the late 70s is 75, are incapable of changing their thinking and working methods. They live isolated from society and have no real idea of the situation of the majority of people.

[168] *Ryzhkov, N. About the "fathers of perestroika", the party's gold and betrayal, September 26, 2014.*
[169] *April Plenum. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), 1985.*

The status quo in the country's political system seems frozen and with no prospect of change in the near future. It rests on the privileges and benefits given to relatively broad sections (up to 10 percent) of society that provide sufficient social support to sustain the political system. This status quo invariably blocks the further development of the economy and society as a whole.

Leonid Brezhnev himself surrounds himself with modern-minded advisers (such as the scientists G. Arbatov, N. Inozemtsev, M. Keldish, the journalist A. Bovin, etc.) and has at least the declared desire to push through certain reforms, obviously does not have enough power over events, as all but one of these reforms fail. In addition, the drastic absurdities of the economic policy further worsen the situation and slow down the pace of economic growth. Examples of such a policy are the costly construction of the unnecessary Baikal-Amur highway, the ruinous irrational activity of the Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Management and its projects to change the direction of the current of some large Siberian rivers, the senseless plans to build 90 large hydroelectric plants, which their economic essence is almost indistinguishable from the Egyptian pyramids, as well as the maintenance of 3 million administrative apparatus to control the activities of the rural population, etc. When, in the spring of 1968, the communists in Czechoslovakia tried to weaken ideological control, this was perceived as a counter-revolutionary threat. In August, the armed intervention of the Warsaw Pact in Czechoslovakia was reached. Thus, in real life, the new foreign policy doctrine of the Union of Socialist

Republics is forcibly imposed. Named after its creator, Leonid Brezhnev, this doctrine means “limited” national sovereignty of the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe, who are obliged to follow not only Moscow's foreign policy line but also the ideological dogmas imposed by it in their domestic political development.

Thus, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics entered the 80s of the 20th century with an outdated structure of industrial production and outdated technologies, an inefficient allocation of raw materials and capital, and an inertial extensive course of development. Despite the provision of employment and social guarantees for almost all, the standard of living of the population is falling, and the shortage of consumer goods is an unequivocal, visible sign for Russians of the blocking of the Soviet system as a whole.

Economic problems are combined with moral decay and the delegitimization of the political system. “The power of the functionaries, summarizes the political scientist Migranyan, leads to intoxication with power, bribery, corruption, and theft from the budget, to the decay of morals and morality, to the alienation of the broad masses of the people from the political system.” Prof. Hristina Mircheva, for her part, writes: “Brezhnevism is not Stalinism, nor is it totalitarianism. It is authoritarianism. In this regime, the nomenclature has deep interests for which it exploits the rest of society at the risk of stagnation and decline. Oppression strengthens the power of this rather large ruling group of people (18 million people), which, together with their families and intimates, amounts to 10% of the entire population.”

Repressions, although not as massive as during Stalin's time, were still present under Brezhnev's rule. Economic and spiritual stagnation, censorship, restriction of human rights, suffocating authoritarian atmosphere, and the feeling of lack of freedom provoked sharp criticism from prominent intellectuals and public figures throughout the Brezhnev period. Among them are the names of Andrei Sakharov, the inventor of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, the singer Vladimir Vysotsky, as well as other famous scientists and writers such as P. Kapitsa, K. Paustovsky, Anna Akhmatova, P. Yakiro, Zh. Medvedev, R. Medvedev, E. Ginzburg, Andrei Tarkovsky and others. The dissident movement became massive, informal groups of human rights defenders were created in many Soviet cities, and the so-called proliferated "samizdat" - publications on the initiative of the authors, and without the permission of the authorities. All these forms of criticism of the system of society and power call for respect for human rights, freedom of speech, and the abolition of censorship, as well as for reforming the economic system. The massification of the dissident movement and the various associations and programs demanding changes did not have a decisive role in the political life of the country, but they contributed to the creation of a public climate that prepared the conditions for the actual changes in the mid-1980s.

At the beginning of the 1980s, a severe economic, political, and moral-social crisis developed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The delegitimization of the political elite, caused by corruption, lawlessness, and state arbitrariness, is combined with an

acute financial deficit and lack of income of the population. After the death of Leonid Brezhnev (November 10, 1982), for a short period, the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet state were Yury Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, who are a new illustration of the unviability of the system. The foreboding of the general crisis towards which the huge country was heading made the party and state leadership gradually realize and accept the need for reforms, and in March 1985, after decades of gerontocracy, a young apparatchik (the youngest in the Politburo) was elected general secretary, which has time to establish itself and push through the necessary changes. This is 54-year-old Mikhail Gorbachev, who was one of Andropov's confidants.

Gorbachev was born in 1931 in Stavropol. At the age of 20, he became a member of the Soviet Communist Party. He graduated from the Moscow State University, and since 1971 he has been a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. From 1978 he was in charge of agriculture, and after Yuri Andropov headed the party in 1982, he was appointed to lead economic planning in the large country. His indisputable merits since coming to power in 1985 are his contribution to the reduction of international tensions, the limitation of the military budget of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the end of the arms race, and, in early 1989, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. With his overall policy, Gorbachev helped bring about the end of the Cold War. For this, in 1990, he received the Nobel Peace Prize.

An ambitious and energetic leader, Mikhail Gorbachev was convinced of the need for deep reforms, which he began with the self-confidence that he would transform the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics into a leading world state. Already at his first major political manifestation - the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in April 1985, he spoke about the need to accelerate modernization. A strategy was adopted to accelerate the social and economic development of the country, for changes in the economic mechanism, and for broad publicity, which would give wider freedom to the press and speech in general.

In the field of economics, the strategy remains vague enough not to be implemented in practice, but the announced "glasnost" stirs the public and arouses enthusiasm among the intelligentsia. It gave rise to a veritable boom in the publication of newspapers and magazines, books, publications, and studies, including those on the recent and more distant past of the communist regime, as well as on the present. The liberalization of the Soviet system was also expressed in the release of political prisoners, among whom was the exiled Nobel Peace Laureate Andrei Sakharov.

Glasnost is an effective tool for managing society and catalyzing public support for reforms. The increase in Gorbachev's authority and influence that glasnost generated allowed him to free himself from uncomfortable political leaders and the grip of the party nomenclature and to undertake a decisive course of change.

Thus, in 1987, Gorbachev expanded the scope of the reforms, announcing the beginning of the so-called “perestroika”, i.e. restructuring of the Soviet political system and democratization of society.

In the economic sphere, perestroika is expressed in the provision of greater independence to enterprises and cooperatives, which can plan their own production, realize it directly on the market, and use the resulting profit themselves, as well as greater freedom for the private small business.

However, it soon became clear that the established party and administrative system, which seemed to have frozen for decades, did not allow the practical implementation of the planned measures. They create fear among party functionaries that they will lose their positions and they accordingly boycott the reforms.

Gorbachev tried to deal with this problem by waging a battle with the entrenched local party apparatus. As Zbigniew Brzezinski writes, “Gorbachev's perestroika sought to take advantage of the acceleration that glasnost nevertheless gave. It must move and blow out the stagnant economic bureaucracy, revive economic growth.” Glasnost is an effective way of fighting the Soviet leadership with the middle echelon of the administration. In this situation, however, the very foundations of Soviet power are called into question. It is about to lose its footing, which brings to the fore the question of whether a serious change in the economic field is possible without a radical change of the political system: the introduction of the principles of democracy and political

pluralism. Gorbachev gradually realized that only a truly democratic society was able to give the Soviet government the support it needed to carry out the vital reforms.

In response to this need, an All-Union Party Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was convened in Moscow from June 30 to July 3, 1988, which adopted a state reform project. According to him, a presidential institution and a new type of representative body - the Congress of People's Deputies - are being created in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. On March 26, 1989, the first elections were held in which Soviet citizens could choose between more than one candidate for a parliamentary seat.

In the course of these elections and the subsequent political development, Gorbachev encountered two main difficulties. The first is related to the emerging internal party opposition, which insists on more radical reforms and the immediate introduction of the principles of democracy and multipartyism. Publicity creates high expectations for change in the public, and once released, the genie from the bottle cannot be stopped. This opposition is headed by Boris Yeltsin, head of the Moscow Party Organization, and in the elections, it receives considerable support.

The other difficulty of a political nature that the Soviet leader faced was the appearance in the circles of the higher party nomenclature of an influential current insisting on more moderate reforms. It is headed by Yegor Ligachev and is of the opinion that the course of

changes threatens the integrity of the state. There is also a circle of supporters of the traditional Soviet system.

The success of Yeltsin and his movement in the elections further sharpened the criticism of the reactionaries and strengthened their position in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Thus, although it repealed the constitutional text regulating the leading role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the general spirit of the Congress of People's Deputies remained conservative, and the division in the party and society deepened. On June 12, 1990, the Parliament of the Russian Federation adopted a Declaration on the Sovereignty of Russia. With this move, Boris Yeltsin, who had meanwhile been elected President of Russia, sought to free himself from the control of Gorbachev and the Soviet authorities.

Forced to maneuver between the two currents and not fully aware of the type, scope of reforms, and the manner in which they should be carried out, Gorbachev gradually lost control of events and power slipped from his hands. The lack of determination and a clear vision does not allow him to unite the democratic forces in the country to undertake the implementation of the reconstruction. He subsequently admitted that his essential mistake was the misunderstanding of the need and the moment when society should be freed from the totalitarian system. However, the truth is that he does not have the necessary courage and determination to complete what he started and to turn the balance of the Soviet political scene in one fell swoop. And the question remains whether this was possible at all. While the struggles are going

on in the party leadership, the hour is striking for the nations that are determined in the decade of changes and in the conditions of the general crisis of the Soviet state to take their own.

Apart from the repeal of Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution (on the leading role of the CPSU in Soviet society), the only other significant decision of the Congress of People's Deputies was the election in March 1990 of Gorbachev as President (first and last) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. However, he has no chance to carry out the planned reconstruction of the country, as he is faced with a new challenge - the resurrected international conflicts in the Baltic States, Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia, Chechnya, Abkhazia, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, etc., which for decades have been successfully suppressed, but which in 1990 erupted with a new, unstoppable force and could not be met with the traditional methods of the Soviet state.

These contradictions have existed since the beginning of the century, and after 1945 they intensified. Initially, during Stalinism, they were suppressed by the methods of brute force, such as whole people being subjected to deportation, as well as other repressions. Subsequently, the authoritarian Soviet regime achieved a certain balance with the union republics, granting them certain privileges without interfering with the way of exercising power by the local leadership, i.e. by the carrot and stick method. However, with the economic crisis, the possibilities of this policy are exhausted, and in the conditions of a political crisis at the top, every nation seeks its legal rights without choosing legal means. The revolutions in Eastern

European countries that took place in the fall of 1989 were an additional factor that stimulated separatism in the Soviet Union.

The first signals of the disintegration of the Soviet state came from the Baltic republics. In Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, the nations demanded an end to the Soviet occupation. As early as November 16, 1988, the Supreme Council of Estonia adopted a Declaration of State Sovereignty, according to which the laws of the republic received supremacy over the federal ones. The following year, the parliaments of Lithuania and Latvia also adopted similar declarations (May 18 and September 23, respectively).

On March 11, 1990, one day before the opening of the extraordinary session of the Congress of People's Deputies, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia declared their full independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. On this day, the parliaments of the three republics adopted Declarations for the restoration of their independence, which was taken away in 1940. At the beginning of May 1990, they created the so-called Baltic Council, which held its meetings at the beginning of June of the same year, the Baltic region was irretrievably lost to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

A turning point in the history of the Soviet Union was the Declaration of the Sovereignty of Russia on June 12, 1990. Apart from the struggle for power in the party hierarchy, the declared Russian sovereignty made no sense, since it was Russia that was the center of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and limited sovereignty of the other Union republics and not vice versa. This declaration effectively

decentralizes the vast multinational empire and renders its existence meaningless for the rest of the republics as well.

After the declaration of Russian sovereignty, the process of disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics became unstoppable. On June 20, Uzbekistan declared independence, on June 23, Moldova declared its independence, on July 16, Ukraine, and on July 27, Belarus. The process continues – on August 23, Armenia follows the European republics, on October 30, Kazakhstan announces a declaration of sovereignty, and on November 12, Kyrgyzstan.

Gorbachev expressed agreement in principle with the republics' declarations of sovereignty but defended the thesis that the preservation of the common state would benefit everyone. On March 17, 1991, a referendum was held in the country to preserve the common state - 77% of those who voted supported the proposal for a “renewed federation of sovereign republics”, but Armenia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Moldova boycotted the referendum.

In the spring and summer of 1991, the president and representatives of 9 republics prepared a Union Treaty that would democratize their relations within the Union of Sovereign States and strengthen its democratic processes. The declaration for the creation of the new federation was prepared by the nine leaders of the union republics and the president on April 25, 1991. The signing of the treaty establishing the Union of Sovereign States is scheduled for August 20 of the same year. The next day, a session of the Federation Council is

expected to open, which must make decisions on radicalizing reforms and solving current economic problems.

3.2.3. The transition in Bulgaria

The Bulgarian transition to democracy and market economy is the general name of the historical, political, and economic processes for the establishment of democracy in Bulgaria in the years after the November Plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1989. Often, for brevity, it is simply called "The Transition" or "The Bulgarian Transition".

Some authors place the beginning of the transition on November 10, 1989, when a plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party was held and Todor Zhivkov was deposed. According to others, it was January 19, 1990, when Article 1 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria was repealed for the leadership role of the BKP in the state[170].

There is also a lack of official agreement on whether this transition is complete and what its stages are[171]. According to some authors[172], the first stage was the change of power (from 1989-90 until the convocation of the VII Great National Assembly), followed by the periods 1991-1996, 1997-2001, 2001-2006, and for the end of the transition is considered the admission of Bulgaria to the European Union. The

[170]*Dimitrova, D., & Georgiev, E.L. "Ivan Kostov, I am absolutely free", Interview with Ivan Kostov // Slaveykov Square. April 18, 2019, Retrieved 17 October 2024.*

[171]*Discussion on the Bulgarian transition. Media Times Review, 2003.*

[172]*Kalinova, E. et al. The Bulgarian transitions 1939 – 2010. Sofia, Paradigma, 2010, pp. 239 – 395, ISBN 978-954-326-034-8.*

previous totalitarian system with the universal dominance of the Bulgarian Communist Party has been successfully replaced by a system of political pluralism. From 1990 to 2007, 12 governments were replaced with the participation of a large number of political parties. A new constitution and numerous laws were adopted. Membership in the European Union and NATO was achieved. The Bulgarian economy is moving from a state-centralized planning system to a market economy based on private ownership. Deep social changes are taking place in society.

According to Ivan Kostov's opinion from 2019: “it will end when the rule of law is established in Bulgaria. When there are strong institutions that are able to deal with corruption, oligarchy, organized crime, and abuse of monopoly position. And above all, when Bulgarian citizens become true defenders of democracy in their homeland”. Interview for media portal “Slaveykov Square”[173].

Bulgaria's economy is planned. The economic structure in 1989 (according to modern data) includes the following sectors: 59.4% industry (with developed mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and electronics), 29.7% services, and 12.9% agriculture. However, foreign trade is mainly with the countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (75%), of which 55% is with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, although in the 1980s the import of raw materials and materials from Western countries grew. Until the

[173]*Dimitrova, D., & Georgiev, E.L. “Ivan Kostov, I am absolutely free”, Interview with Ivan Kostov // Slaveykov Square. April 18, 2019, Retrieved 17 October 2024.*

beginning of the 80s, the trade balance was positive, but in 1985, the trade balance was already negative with a deficit of about 1 billion dollars[174]. By the end of the 1980s, Bulgaria entered an economic crisis related not only to a chronic shortage of convertible currency but also to commodity deficits, which naturally led to rising inflation. The external debt has been growing at a dizzying pace since the mid-1980s, already in 1987 it exceeded the Gross Domestic Product[175] and at the end of 1988 it reached 10.7 billion dollars[176] and attempts to obtain external credits failed[177] and the country entered a Debt Crisis that lasted from 1987 to 1994[178]. At a meeting with the Ministry of the Interior on November 25, 1989, Petar Mladenov described the situation in the economy as very difficult[179]. The economic growth figures were incorrect and from 1983 to 1988 the economic situation was getting worse every year. After the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the market of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (1989 – 1992), the Bulgarian economy turned out to be uncompetitive with other markets[180][181].

[174]*Hristov, H. The Secret Bankruptcies of Communism. Ciela, 2007, p. 269, ISBN 978-954-280-162-7.*

[175]*Danov, R. The Bulgarian liberations. The lost lessons. Sofia, 2014, p. 412, ISBN 978-954-389-274-7.*

[176]*Avramov, R. Money and de/stabilization in Bulgaria 1948 – 1989. Sofia, Siela, 2008, p. 220, ISBN 978-954-28-0339-3.*

[177]*Lakov, K. The transition that didn't go as planned. Sofia, 2014, ISBN 978-954-8624-38-1.*

[178]*Ivanov, M. The Economy of Communist Bulgaria (1963 – 1989) // Znepolski, Ivaylo (ed.). History of the People's Republic of Bulgaria: Regime and Society. Sofia, "Siela Soft and Publishing", 2009, pp. 326 – 332, ISBN 978-954-28-0588-5.*

[179]*Secretly! Speech of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the BKP and Chairman of the State Council of the NRB Petar Mladenov at the meeting with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which took place on 25.11.1989, p.105, http://www.desehistory.com/2013/10/25111989.html, (Retrieved 17 October 2024).*

[180]*Foundation "Institute for Market Economy". Collective. Anatomy of transition. Economic policy in Bulgaria from 1989 to 2004 through the eyes of the Institute for Market Economy, Ciela, 2004, p. 22, ISBN 9546496901.*

[181] *National assembly. Transcript of the Second Session of the 9th National Assembly of March 29, 1990, p. 6.*

With the election of Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985, “Perestroika” began in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - economic reforms to raise the standard of living. It exerts a great influence in the countries of the socialist camp and especially in the Eastern European ones. It is accompanied by “Glasnost” - after many years of restriction of freedom of speech, people are allowed to freely express their opinion, independent media appear, and hundreds of books are published, which remain unpublished due to the presence of censorship. The opinions of the dissidents and the intelligentsia are beginning to be heard more and more. These changes marked the beginning of the collapse of the socialist system in Eastern Europe.

3.2.4. The social environment

The social environment turns out to be most sensitive during this period. The consequences that occur in the labor market are so palpably acute that they cannot be compared to any other period, except the periods of the First and Second World Wars. Bulgarian society is facing deep trials that lead to acute social problems. The planned economy practically ceases to function and this leads to the suspension of the activity of industrial enterprises, and some sectors cease to function altogether. All economic ties have been terminated, with only a certain volume of the service sector existing.



***Photo 10**: "Bulgaria is practically bankrupt and the government of Andrei Lukanov, who ruled for months after 1989, had to impose a moratorium on foreign debt payments."*

***Source:** КАПИТАЛ*



***Photo 11.** "In the second half of 1990, the crisis of public finances entered a much more visible phase: inflation and soaring prices (as far as they were liberalized), empty shops and queues, and growing unemployment."*

***Source:** КАПИТАЛ*



Photo 12. *"People are in the squares or queues for oil and milk."*

Source: *КАПИТАЛ*



Photo 13. *"A coupon system for basic foods and fuels was introduced on August 20, 1990, by the decision of Andrey Lukanov's resigned government."*

Source: *КАПИТАЛ*



Photo 14. *"In 1996-1997, 17 banks went bankrupt. The financial system is in collapse, which began with the closure in May 1996 of one of the giants of the time, using a political umbrella - First Private Bank, lists of credit millionaires, and decades-old lawsuits."*

Source: *КАПИТАЛ*



Photo 15. *"In 1996-1997, the BNB issued new banknotes every month with an increasingly large denomination due to the sharp devaluation of the lev."*

Source: *КАПИТАЛ*



Photo 16. *"Under the government of Zhan Videnov in Bulgaria, an acute grain crisis occurred, leading to a lack of traditional grains and products. People are forced to queue for kilometers. The reason for the situation is a bunch of wrong decisions over the years - a poorly functioning agricultural sector, bad harvest, and uncontrolled export of grain in the same year. However, Videnov's office first denies the problem, and then, in a controversial transaction, imports grain at a much higher than market price."*

Source: *КАПИТАЛ*



Photo 17 *"January 1997. Wages are $7 and pensions are $4. "Mass bankruptcies, widespread poverty. And a crisis - total and complex. First financial. It gave birth to economics. The two caused social, and the three together – political", recalls Muravey Radev, finance minister in Ivan Kostov's office, in a text for "Factor.bg".*

Source: *КАПИТАЛ*

The consequences are close to a national catastrophe, with labor markets being the most sensitive. The primary labor market, which exists in new political and economic realities, is unable to cope with the growing number of persons of working age. Mass layoffs are commonplace during this period. In Bulgaria, the absolute number of persons who are dismissed by an economic entity is defined as a mass reduction of the workforce. In some regions of the country, unemployment rates are close to the entire economically active population, which creates deep social inequalities and problems. Governments are forced to look for quick decisions to contain the social tensions that are growing enormously (Photo 10-17).

The discontent of certain communities is taken to the streets and squares, organizing hundreds of demonstrations and strikes. The country begins a complex of problems, such as high inflation and the inability to regularly service its external debt. Certain periods of this period of social transformations, it was accompanied by problems related to feeding the population due to an insufficient amount of necessities. This necessitates the introduction of a coupon system, which until now was known only for the period of the war years.

Employment services begin to register more and more unemployed persons, and they become a center for communication on employment mediation. The specialists who are engaged in this activity are not sufficiently prepared, because this process has existed until now under a planned mode of employment. The number of vacancies is smaller than the number of those who could fill them. The number of

unemployed persons with high qualifications and enough work experience is such that the natural market principle hardly succeeds in calming the local labor markets (Diagram 9-12; Table 7-8).

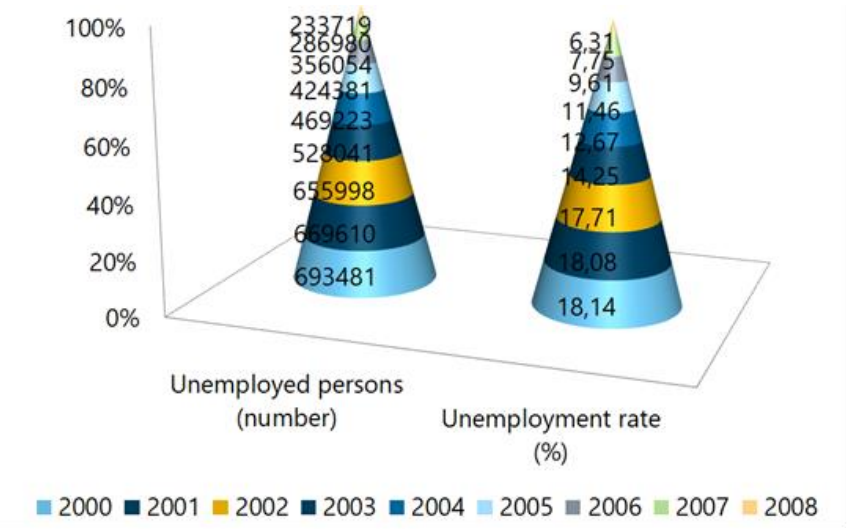


Diagram 9: *Average annual number of unemployed persons and average annual unemployment rate in the period 2000-2008 according to data from the administrative statistics of the Employment Agency*[182]

Source: *Employment Agency*

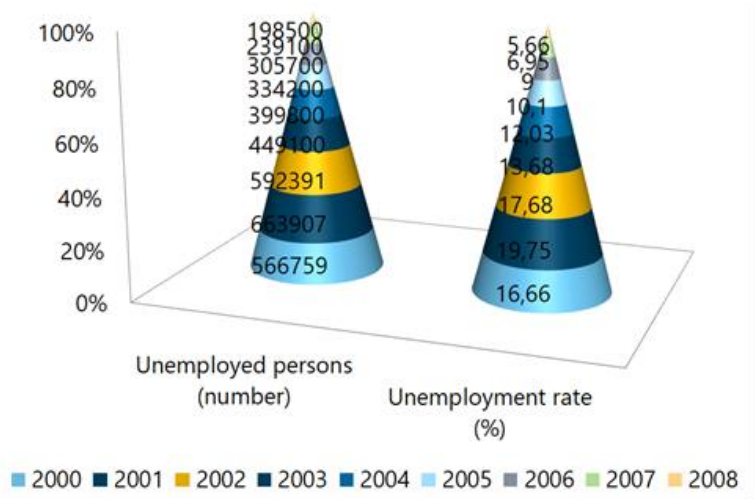


Diagram 10*: Average annual number of unemployed persons and average annual unemployment rate in the period 2000-2008 according to data from the Labor Force Survey by the National Statistical Institute*[183]

Source: *Employment Agency*

[182]*Employment Agency, https://www.az.government.bg/en/pages/za-nas/, (Retrieved 17 October 2024).*
[183]*Employment Agency, https://www.az.government.bg/en/pages/za-nas/, (Retrieved 17 October 2024).*

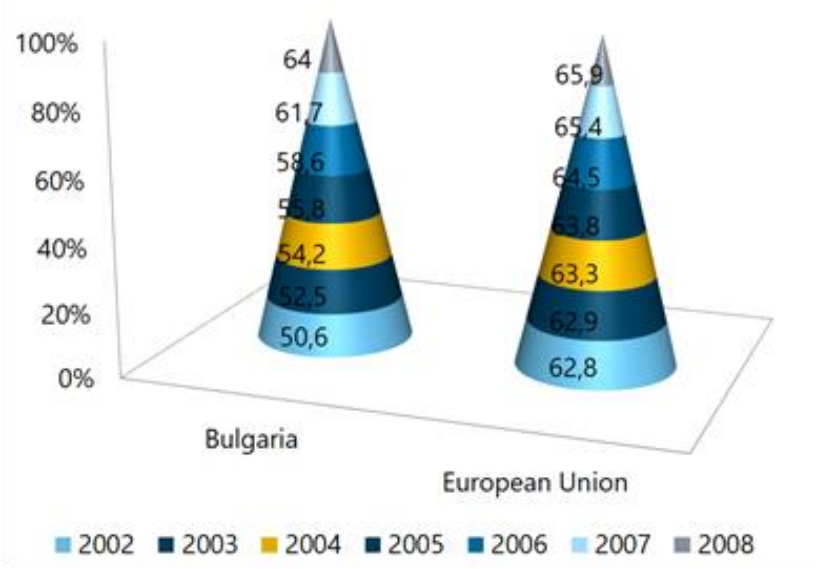


Diagram 11: *Employment rate 2002-2008 г. (15-64 years, %)*[184]

Source: *Employment Agency*

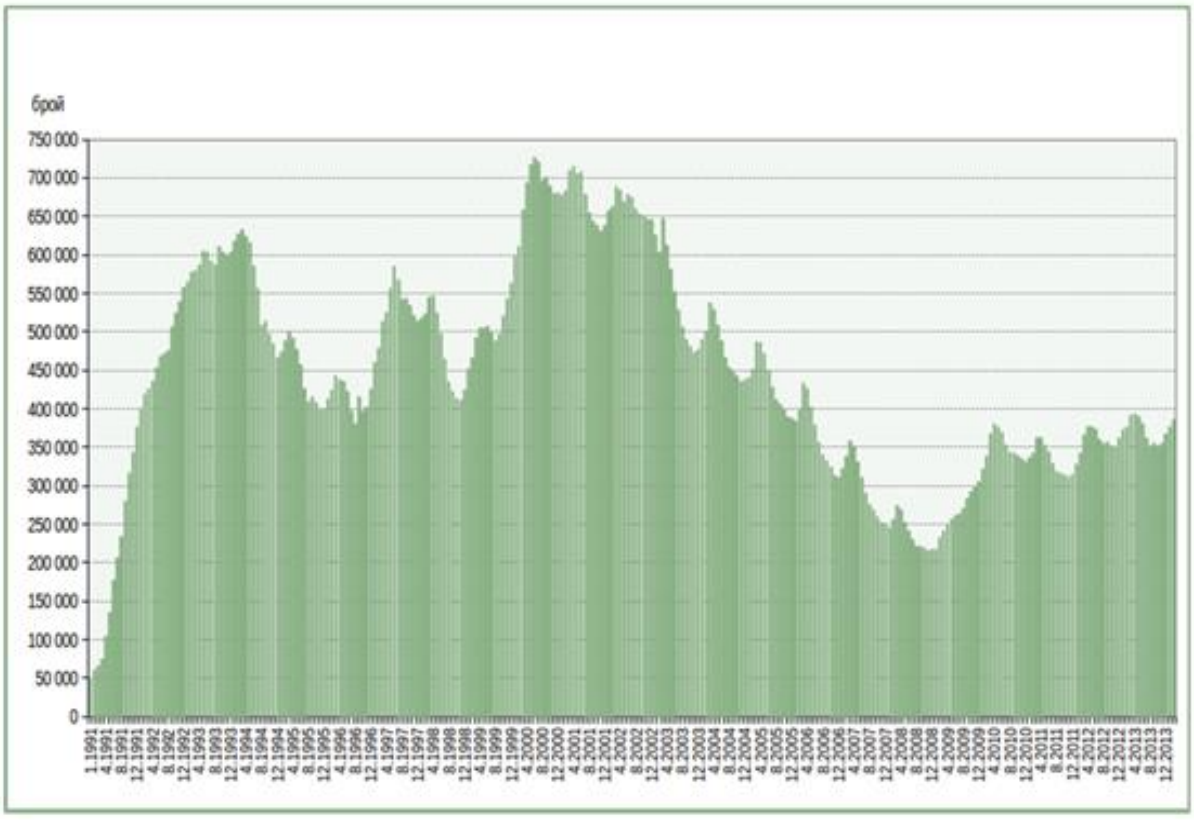


Diagram 12: *The dynamics of unemployment in Bulgaria during the period October 1990 - December 2013*[185]

Source: *Employment Agency*

[184]*Employment Agency, https://www.az.government.bg/en/pages/za-nas/, (Retrieved 17 October 2024).*
[185]*Employment Agency, https://www.az.government.bg/en/pages/za-nas/, (Retrieved 17 October 2024).*

TIME	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
BULGARIA	64,4		66,5		67,0		70,6		71,7		74,3		72,7		73,2		75,9	b	76,2	
Czechia	73,5		74,8		76,7		78,5		79,9		80,3		79,7		80,0		81,3		81,7	
Denmark	74,7		75,4		76,0	b	76,6	b	77,5		78,3		77,8		79,0		80,1		79,8	b
Germany	76,7		76,9		77,6		78,2		78,9		79,6		78,2	b	79,4		80,6		81,1	
Estonia	75,0		76,7		77,0		79,2		79,7		80,5		79,1		79,3		81,9		82,1	
Ireland	68,1		69,8		71,3		72,9		74,0		75,0		72,1		74,9	b	78,2		79,1	
Greece	53,1		54,8		55,9		57,4		59,0		60,8		58,3		62,6		66,3		67,4	
Spain	59,9		62,0		63,9		65,5		67,0		68,0		65,7		67,5	b	69,3	d	70,5	d
France	70,0		70,3		70,7		71,3		72,0		72,3		72,1		73,2	d	74,0	d	74,4	d
Croatia	59,2		60,6		61,4		63,6		65,2		66,7		66,9		68,2		69,7		70,7	b
Italy	59,5		60,2		61,4		62,3		63,0	b	63,5		61,9		62,7		64,8		66,3	
Cyprus	67,6		67,9		68,7		70,8		73,9		75,7		74,9		75,9		77,9		78,9	
Latvia	70,6		72,5		73,0		74,6		76,8		77,3		76,9		75,3		77,0		77,5	
Lithuania	71,8		73,3		75,2		76,0		77,8		78,2		76,7		77,4		79,0		78,5	
Luxembourg	72,1		70,9	b	70,7		71,5		72,1		72,8		72,1		74,1		74,8		74,8	
Hungary	68,7		70,9		73,7		75,4		76,7		77,6		77,5		78,8		80,2		80,7	
Malta	67,9		69,0		71,1		73,0		74,9		75,6		76,0		77,8		80,1		81,7	
Netherlands	76,3		77,2		77,9		78,9		80,0		81,0		80,8		81,7		82,9		83,5	
Austria	74,2		74,3		74,8		75,4		76,2		76,8		74,8		75,6		77,3		77,2	
Poland	64,9		66,3		68,2		70,0		71,4		72,6	b	72,8		75,5		76,7		77,9	
Portugal	66,1		67,9		69,5		72,5		74,7		75,5		74,2		75,5		77,1		78,2	
Romania	58,0		59,2		60,3		62,7		63,9		65,1		65,2		67,1		68,5		68,7	
Slovenia	67,3		68,6		69,5		72,9		74,9		75,9		74,8		76,1		77,9		77,5	
Slovakia	67,8		69,6		71,8		73,2		74,5		75,6		74,6		74,6		76,7		77,5	
Finland	72,2		71,8		72,4		73,2		75,3		76,2		75,5		76,8		78,4		78,2	
Sweden	79,6		80,1		80,8		81,4		82,0		81,7		80,2		80,4		82,0		82,6	
Iceland	84,9		86,5		87,8		87,6		86,5		85,9		82,3	b	81,4		84,8		85,3	
Norway	80,1		79,7		79,4		79,2		80,0		80,2		79,7		80,0		80,9		80,4	
Switzerland	81,1		81,7		82,0		82,1		82,5		82,9		82,5		81,8		81,9		83,0	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	:		:		:		:		:		:		:		52,6		53,9		55,9	
Montenegro	55,6		56,7		57,1		58,2		59,8		60,8		55,2		:		:		:	
North Macedonia	51,3		51,9		53,3		54,8		56,1		59,2		59,1		:		:		:	
Serbia	53,5		54,7		57,6		60,0		61,6		63,6		64,3		66,7		69,3		69,6	b
Türkiye	53,2	b	53,9		54,4		55,3		55,6		53,8		51,0		53,9	b	56,5		57,3	

Table 7: *Employment and activity by sex and age - annual data (20-64 years), b- break in time series; d- definition differs*[186]

Source: *Eurostat - European Commission*

[186]*Eurostat - European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat, (Retrieved 17 October 2024).*

TIME	2023-10		2023-11		2023-12		2024-01		2024-02		2024-03		2024-04		2024-05		2024-06		2024-07	
BULGARIA	4,1		4,2		4,4		4,9		5,0		5,1		5,0		4,7		4,5		:	
Czechia	2,9		2,3		2,8		3,2		2,7		3,1		2,7		2,6		2,8		:	
Denmark	6,1	b	5,9		5,7		6,3		6,2		5,5		5,6		5,4		5,3		:	
Germany	3,2		3,1		2,9		3,2		3,6		3,5		3,2		3,6		3,4		:	
Estonia	6,1		6,3		6,9		7,7		7,8		7,7		7,6		7,6		7,5		:	
Ireland	4,2		4,1		4,3		4,2		4,0		4,2		4,4		4,5		4,8		5,2	
Greece	10,2		10,8		10,5		12,6		12,6		11,2		10,9		10,4		8,2		:	
Spain	11,9		11,7		11,7		12,3		12,4		12,2		11,6		11,2		11,0		:	
France	7,7		7,7		7,7		7,8		7,6		7,3		6,9		6,9		6,9		:	
Croatia	6,0		6,1		6,2		6,3		6,1		5,8		5,1		4,6		4,4		:	
Italy	8,1		7,6		7,0		7,6		8,1		7,4		6,8		6,5		6,8		:	
Cyprus	4,7		6,5		6,6		6,7		6,1		5,2		4,0		3,6		4,4		:	
Latvia	6,6		6,8		7,1		7,2		7,3		7,2		6,9		6,6		6,5		:	
Lithuania	6,7		7,3		8,5		8,4		8,1		8,1		7,3		7,1		7,7		:	
Luxembourg	5,6		5,8		5,9		5,9		5,9		5,6		5,5		5,4		5,3		:	
Hungary	4,1		4,2		4,2		4,5		4,6		4,4		4,4		4,3		4,2		:	
Malta	2,9		2,8		2,8		2,9		2,9		3,0		3,1		3,3		3,2		:	
Netherlands	3,6		3,4		3,3		3,8		3,9		3,7		3,6		3,5		3,7		3,5	
Austria	4,8		4,7		5,4		5,5		5,5		5,4		4,6		5,1		4,9		:	
Poland	3,0		3,1		3,1		3,2		3,2		3,1		2,9		2,8		2,7		:	
Portugal	6,8		6,7		6,7		6,8		6,9		6,6		6,4		6,2		6,4		:	
Romania	5,7		5,8		6,0		5,5		5,2		5,1		5,1		5,2		5,3		:	
Slovenia	3,5		3,3		3,3		3,6		3,5		3,3		3,2		3,1		3,0		:	
Slovakia	5,7		5,6		5,6		5,7		5,6		5,5		5,4		5,4		5,4		:	
Finland	6,8		6,8		7,1		8,3		7,8		9,0		9,2		10,2		8,3		7,9	
Sweden	7,4		7,1		7,7		8,5		8,5		9,2		8,9		8,7		9,4		:	
Iceland	3,1		2,8		3,8		4,5		3,6		:		:		:		:		:	
Norway	3,6		3,7		3,3		4,5		3,5		4,2		4,3		4,2		4,3		:	
Switzerland	4,0		3,8		4,0		4,2		4,3		4,3		:		:		:		:	
Türkiye	8,2		8,8		8,9		9,8		9,2		8,8		8,4		7,7		:		:	

Table 8: *Employment and activity by sex and age - annual data (20-64 years), b- break in time series; d- definition differs*[187]

Source: *Eurostat - European Commission*

There are also transformations in the Bulgarian army, which is changing from conscription to mercenary military service. Its strategic goals have been changed and its composition has been drastically reduced, leaving only 1/3 of the previously employed persons. The socialization of persons who have specific skills and habits is almost

[187]*Eurostat - European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat, (Retrieved 17 October 2024).*

impossible and a process of retraining is necessary so that these unemployed persons have a chance to find a new job.

A significant problem is also the young people who at that moment are completing their higher education. They are without any professional experience and getting them a job in the primary labor market is almost impossible.

The whole complex of problems creates a primary importance for society, and this necessitates taking measures to quell social discontent and provide time to solve multifaceted problems.

The definition of the target groups is of particular importance, which also determines the measures that will be taken. Determining an adequate policy regarding the risk groups in the labor market is important from the point of view of determining what the relevant measures should be aimed at.

The following groups of unemployed persons are defined:

- unemployed young people up to 29 years of age without work experience in the acquired specialty;
- unemployed persons over 55 years of age;
- unemployed with primary, primary, and lower education;
- unemployed without professional qualification;
- unemployed persons with permanent disabilities;
- persons benefiting from temporary protection with registration at the labor office.

- Long-term unemployed persons - those who have been unemployed for more than 12 (twelve) months.

Each group of the defined groups is treated differently with respect to the subgroups within it. People from these groups are included in training, programs, and measures, according to the Law on Unemployment Protection and Employment Promotion in force at that time.

Special attention to this period of crisis is given to the passive policy of the labor market. Different groups of unemployed persons who receive social assistance in the form of cash compensation are defined. A methodology for determining the amount has been determined, which is based on the amount of the remuneration received so far, and the period of receipt is determined by the years of work experience. The minimum period for receiving monetary compensation is 4 (four) months, and the maximum period is 12 (twelve) months. For persons who have no work experience in the last period, the minimum wage established for the country is defined as the base. Those who have just completed their higher education also receive social assistance.

The most widespread measure that is applied is related to the engagement of unemployed persons in general useful activities, which are related to cleaning the spaces in cities and villages, landscaping, or guarding public buildings. These programs are temporary employment programs that provide minimum benefits to participants for different periods, the longest period being 12 (twelve) months.

Another alternative is employment companies, which are essentially commercial companies. The German model of their creation is used. They only employ unemployed persons who are registered with the employment services. The remuneration of these unemployed persons is financed from the state budget.

In areas with a mixed population, a literacy program is implemented for all unemployed persons who do not speak the official language, and they can also participate in various qualification courses. The program has the following name “Literacy, qualification and employment”.

The regulated measures implemented during this period are related to providing employers with the amount of insurance payments on the wages of employed unemployed persons. Employers, however, undertake an obligation to commit them to a longer period of work, which would provide them with the possibility of permanent employment.

Calming labor markets is becoming difficult as more and more unemployed people leave their previous jobs. This process of severe fluctuations continued until the end of the last century. Governments have repeatedly been forced to resort to temporary employment measures and increases in cash benefits and welfare benefits.

All these processes are characteristic of all countries of the post-socialist space and have been going on for about twenty years.

At a much later stage, actions and programs are undertaken to ensure the stimulation of employment by creating Employment Action Plans. These plans envisage and implement a whole complex of programs and measures to respond to the demands and changes of the labor markets. Disparities in local labor markets are still observed, resulting from the severe and prolonged changes of the transition from a planned to a market economy[188][189][190][191][192][193][194].

Political transformations are always accompanied by economic transformations. All this has a serious impact on social processes. The social environment is most sensitive at this stage. Labor markets are experiencing significant fluctuations, with unemployment levels becoming high and unable to be regulated by the natural mechanisms of a market economy. There is a dominance of the primary employment market, which is provided through financial instruments from state

[188]*Terziev, V. K. (2023). Innovation Development of Industrial Business Organizations. In M. Okur Dinçsoy & H. Can (Eds.), Optimizing Energy Efficiency During a Global Energy Crisis (pp. 282-306). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-0400-6.ch016.*

[189]*Georgiev, M. P. & Terziev, V. K. (2023). The Labor Market Policies and Social Development in Bulgaria. In M. Okur Dinçsoy & H. Can (Eds.), Optimizing Energy Efficiency During a Global Energy Crisis (pp. 239-281). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-0400-6.ch015.*

[190]*Terziev, V. (2020). The Bulgarian labor market in a period of extraordinary crisis from the COVID-19 pandemic. // 18th RSEP International Economics, Finance & Business Conference – Virtual/Online 26-27 August 2020, Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey, pp.111-115, ISBN: 978-605-06961-5-8/September 2020.*

[191]*Terziev, V. Theoretical basis of development of labor market and social policy in the Republic of Bulgaria. // INTCESS 2019- 6th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences, 4-6 February, 2019, Dubai, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, pp. 715-726, ISBN: 978-605-82433-5-4.*

[192]*Terziev, V. Social policy and labor market development in Bulgarian transition period. // INTCESS 2019- 6th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences, 4-6 February, 2019, Dubai, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, pp. 703-714, ISBN: 978-605-82433-5-4.*

[193]*Georgiev, M., & Solovev, D. Applications of the Balanced Scorecard concept in relation to social development. // 107th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Economic and Social Survival in Global Changes – Zagreb, 16-17 February, 2024, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2024, pp.73-82, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[194]*Georgiev, M., & Solovev, D. Evolution of the concept of the balanced Scorecard. // 107th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Economic and Social Survival in Global Changes – Zagreb, 16-17 February, 2024, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2024, pp.83-93, ISSN 1849-7535.*

budgets or other attracted resources. In practice, the state becomes the main employer, which can be allowed to distort local labor markets. Drastic deviations from real processes are obtained, which leads to incorrect analysis and wrong conclusions. All these manifestations are a fact and can be observed in almost all countries that are making a political and economic transition. The dynamic development of the processes does not allow for an adequate and precise analysis, and decisions are made due to the necessity. This leads to a temporary suppression or deterrence of social tension but does not contribute to solving the crises that have arisen. Even though various social technologies and mechanisms have been developed in this direction, their implementation at the local level is not easy and requires their adaptation.

3.3. Essential problems in implementing demographic policies in Bulgaria

Social processes in recent years have confronted societies with various challenges, mainly related to the ongoing negative demographic processes. These characteristics are significant for almost all European countries, with indicators deteriorating dramatically in recent years. In countries undergoing active political and economic transformations, these processes have particularly negative fluctuations. The implemented policies fail to improve the situation in this direction and lead to a decrease in the active economic population and, therefore, to serious problems in societies and their development.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in Bulgaria defines the main demographic challenges facing Bulgarian society according to the latest 2021 population census, which are expressed in negative natural growth, deepening territorial disparities in the number of the population, deepening trends in the deterioration of the age structure of the population, decreasing birth rate and aging of the population[195].

Trends for change in the structure and balance of the population in Bulgaria are recorded by the data for the 2021 population census, carried out by the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria. According to its data, as of September 7, 2021, the population in our country was 6,519,789 people. Over the 10 years between the last two censuses, it decreased by 844,781 people, or by 11.5%. The factors that influence the country's population are natural movement (births and deaths) and external migration. The population decrease as a result of the negative natural increase is - 501 thousand, or 59.3% of the total decrease. The natural increase for all years of the period between the censuses in 2011 and 2021 is negative, with the largest decrease in the population in 2021 (-90,317 people). The remaining 40.7% of the decrease is due to external migration, or this is the number of people who left the country during the period 2011 - 2021 (344 thousand people).

The most significant demographic trend in the development of the population is the aging process. According to NSI data, the negative trends in the change in the age structure of the population continue to deepen. There is an ongoing process of demographic aging, which is

[195] *Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. https://www.mlsp.government.bg/, Retrieved 27 December 2024.*

expressed in an increase in the absolute number and relative share of the population aged 65 and over. As of September 7, 2021, the population aged 65 and over was 1,532,667, or 23.5% of the country's population. Compared to the previous census in 2011, the population in this age group increased by 171,270, or 12.6%. In 2021, the percentage share of the population over 65 years of age was 23.5% of the total population, while in 2011 it was 18.5%.

The aging of the population over the years leads to an increase in its average age, from 40.4 years in 2001 to 45.2 years at the end of 2022. The average age of the population in Bulgaria is among the highest not only in the European Union but also in the world[196].

The trend in the reproduction of the working-age population is alarming. The reproduction of the working-age population is best characterized by the demographic replacement rate, which shows the ratio between the number of people entering working age (15 - 19 years) and the number of people leaving working age (60 - 64 years). According to data from the 2021 Census, this ratio is 61. For comparison, in 2011, every 100 people leaving the working age were replaced by 70 young people, and in 2001 by 124. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy leads, coordinates, and controls the implementation of state policy in the field of demographic development, as well as the activity of analyzing, assessing, and forecasting demographic processes in cooperation with other state bodies, social partners, and non-governmental organizations. The

[196]*Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. https://www.mlsp.government.bg/, Retrieved 27 December 2024.*

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy carries out activities for the organization of coordination and monitoring of demographic policy, which is expressed in maintaining an institutional framework and a national mechanism for policy implementation. Here, the coordination and management of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Demographic Issues is carried out, in which representatives of key state departments, the National Statistical Institute, the National Social Security Institute, the Bulgarian Red Cross, the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria, and non-governmental organizations participate. Annual monitoring reports are prepared, which integrate information from national statistics, administrative information, and data from sociological surveys. The national mechanism for coordination and monitoring of the implementation of horizontal, inter-institutional, and inter-sectoral demographic policy was improved by establishing a National Council on Demographic Policy under the Council of Ministers.

The priority areas and tasks in the field of demographic policy are formulated in the Updated National Strategy for Demographic Development of the Population in the Republic of Bulgaria (2012 - 2030) and are aimed at achieving the following strategic goal - slowing down the rate of population decline with a tendency to stabilize it in the long term and ensuring high quality of human capital, including people with their health status, education, qualifications, abilities, and skills. An integrated approach is applied to maximize coverage of demographic problems. The main goal of work in the field of

demographic policy is to limit the negative impacts of demographic imbalances on public finances and social systems.

Special emphasis on meeting the demographic challenges of population aging is also placed through the National Strategy for Active Living of Older People in Bulgaria (2019-2030). The long-term goal of the Strategy is related to creating conditions for an active and dignified life for older people by ensuring equal opportunities for their full participation in the economic and social life. The Strategy defines four main priorities - Promoting the active life of older people in the field of employment; Promoting the active life of older people in the field of participation in society; Promoting the active life of older people in the field of independent living; Creating capacity and a favorable environment for the active life of older people at the national and regional levels. Two-year implementation plans for the Active Ageing Strategy are being implemented, which provide the operational framework for undertaking and reporting on comprehensive actions and measures in response to the challenges posed by the ageing population.

According to the European Commission's main monitoring mechanism for examining the potential for promoting active ageing, namely the Active Ageing Index, Bulgaria has significant untapped potential for real improvements in the participation of older people in employment, independent living, and social participation in general. More significant efforts are needed at national, regional, and local levels to fully mobilise the valuable potential of older people. According to the EC Active Ageing Index, generating greater capacity

and creating a favourable environment for active ageing is a prerequisite for development, especially in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria.

3.3.1. Main institutions for the implementation of demographic policies

The institutions are as follows[197]:

2.1. The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria – reviews, approves, and adopts regulatory acts relating to the balanced demographic development of the population and the development of the quality of human capital.

2.2. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has a leading role in the formation of the country's budgetary policy and in maintaining the stability of public finances. The MoF coordinates the programming, management, and monitoring of the implementation of the state budget and the financial assistance provided to the Republic of Bulgaria under the financial instruments of the European Union, taking into account their effect and impact on the balanced demographic development of the population and the development of the quality of human capital.

2.3. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is responsible for the development, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of progress in the field of demographic policy. The Ministry manages, organizes, coordinates, monitors, and reports on the implementation of the state

[197] *Council of Ministers. https://www.strategy.bg/strategicdocuments/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=778, Retrieved 27 December 2024.*

demographic policy, given that the aging of the population has the strongest impact and impact on the state and profile of the labor market, the stability of the pension system, the system of social assistance and care, the policy for families and children, and equal opportunities for all. In partnership and jointly with other state bodies, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy develops regulators and mechanisms for improving the country's demographic indicators and human capital development indicators. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy organizes, coordinates, and participates in the development of annual National Plans for Demographic Development and monitors their implementation; participates in the development of financial estimates and forecasts for an active policy in the field of demographic development; maintains a System of indicators and metrics for monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy for Demographic Development; coordinates the work of the Interdepartmental Working Group for Demographic Development; coordinates the country's participation in European demographic initiatives; prepares an annual report to the Council of Ministers on the implementation of the demographic strategy; is responsible for the ongoing coverage of new guidelines for the development of demographic policy, proposed by European Union institutions and by authoritative international centers and institutes with competences in the field of demographic development of the population.

2.4. The Ministry of Health has a leading role in implementing programs and measures for health promotion, prevention of socially

significant diseases leading to high mortality - general, child, maternal, and premature and permanent disability of people; improving the health of women of childbearing age; creating conditions for improving the health status of the population and prolonging the life of women and men in good health, including by ensuring food safety; developing programs to reduce child and maternal mortality; preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and diseases of the reproductive system among adolescents and young people; developing measures aimed at restoring and strengthening the school health care system; investing in the development of medical personnel and introducing high technologies in health care. By fulfilling these functions, the Ministry contributes to improving the demographic balance of the population; reducing the negative natural increase, and developing the quality of human capital.

2.5. The Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Youth and Sports have a leading role in implementing those elements of the demographic development strategy that are related to education and training, including: limiting the dropout of children and adolescents from the education system; adult literacy and lifelong learning; acquiring necessary and higher qualifications and additional skills; determining the future needs for a workforce with the necessary qualifications and directing the capabilities of the education system towards the training of specialists, following the needs of the economy and business; introducing a master's degree in demography or other appropriate specialized forms of training in demography in higher education, to meet the needs of the administration for the

implementation of the demographic policy. By performing these functions, they contribute to the development of the quality of human capital; increasing the mobility and competitiveness of the workforce on the labor market; reducing the negative social effects of disruptions in the reproduction of the workforce caused by the aging of the population and the long-term decline in the birth rate.

2.6. The Ministry of Culture has a leading role in creating conditions for the intellectual and spiritual cohesion of society and for the development of an individual, family, and public culture of knowledge, determining the way of life of the population in the 21st century. The Ministry of Culture contributes to reducing regional differences in the population's access to achievements and works of art and culture, including through the support and introduction of new and innovative functions of community centers throughout the country. By performing these functions, the Ministry contributes to the development of the quality of human capital; assists in increasing the mobility and competitiveness of the workforce on the labor market; reduces the negative social effects of disruptions in the reproduction of the workforce, caused by the aging of the population and the long-term decline in the birth rate.

2.7. The Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works has a leading role in implementing activities related to overcoming regional differences and territorial imbalances, caused by unfavorable demographic trends in the development of the population and giving rise to such; implements the state housing policy taking into account the

needs of the aging society; manages the management of the state building stock in settlements with a decreasing population; implements methodological guidance, coordination and control over the development, improvement, normal functioning and use of the civil registration and administrative service system. MRDPW allocates the largest investment potential in the country and is thus an important domestic investor with a flexible dislocation of the sites taking into account the needs for balanced demographic development of the population.

2.8. The Ministry of Economy and Industry, the Ministry of Energy, and the Ministry of Tourism have a leading role in improving the living standards of the population and increasing the quality of human capital by encouraging investments, especially investments in high technologies and the development of small and medium-sized businesses. They have a leading role in achieving balanced socio-economic development of the regions in the country, and thus also for the balanced demographic territorial development of the population. They contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the workforce and the country's economy by maintaining a clear connection between the needs of business and the economy with the education system to achieve better coordination between the demand and supply of labor. They contribute to the development of a knowledge economy; they create conditions for the development of social entrepreneurship, for the provision of services for the elderly, and for sectors of the economy

with the potential for opening new jobs, adequate to the capabilities of the available potential workforce.

2.9. The Ministry of Environment and Water has a leading role in protecting the environment and limiting pollution of land, water, and air that is harmful to human health from various sources. By performing these functions, the Ministry contributes to improving the health status of the population, prolonging people's lives in good health, and developing the quality of human capital.

2.10. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has a leading role related to the development of rural regions and the control of food of plant and animal origin, raw materials, animal by-products and products derived from them, and specific plant products, by monitoring compliance with food requirements, measures and conditions to ensure their hygiene and safety for human health and the environment. By performing these functions, the Ministry contributes to overcoming the differences in living conditions between the city and the countryside; to the economic and demographic renewal of rural regions; to overcoming territorial disparities and geographic demographic imbalances; to improving the health status of the population.

2.11. The Ministry of Justice has responsibilities regarding the normative regulation of relations in the Bulgarian family through the Family Code; organizes the implementation of the procedures related to Bulgarian citizenship and the adoption of Bulgarian citizens by foreigners, and performs functions under the Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in the Field of Intercountry

Adoption (ratified by a law adopted by the XXXIX National Assembly on January 31, 2002, State Gazette, No. 78 of 2002). By performing its functions, the Ministry contributes to creating conditions for balanced demographic development of the population, respect for human rights, and the development of the quality of human capital.

2.12. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs protects the rights and interests of Bulgarian citizens abroad; protects the rights and freedoms of persons belonging to Bulgarian communities abroad, in accordance with international legal norms in this area and with the interests of the country. By performing these functions, the Ministry of Internal Affairs contributes to the observance of human rights and the development of the quality of human capital.

2.13. The Ministry of Internal Affairs plays a key role in reducing road mortality, limiting the negative social effects of cases of human trafficking, domestic violence, prostitution, drug distribution, and reducing crime among minors and juveniles. By performing these functions, it contributes to reducing mortality and attacks on people's lives and health, observing human rights, and developing the quality of human capital.

2.14. The Ministry of Youth and Sports plays a leading role in developing forms of mass sports and sports for all ages, intending to maintain good physical and health status of the population. By performing these functions, it also contributes to improving the quality of human capital.

2.15. The Ministry of Transport and Communications assists in overcoming regional and territorial disparities by ensuring equal access of the population to convenient transport and advanced information and communication technologies. By performing these functions, it contributes to the even territorial distribution of the population, to the normalization of internal migration flows, the improvement of the standard of living and quality of life, thereby influencing the demographic behavior of the population.

2.16. The National Health Insurance Fund has a leading role in ensuring equal access of the population to health services, thereby contributing to improving the general health and reproductive status, prolonging people's lives in good health, and increasing the quality of human capital.

2.17. The National Statistical Institute performs a leading methodological and coordination role in the collection and processing of statistical information and in the development of forecasts and comparative analyses for the demographic development of the population. Another essential function of the National Statistical Institute is the dissemination of information on demographic events and processes. National Social Security Institute - is responsible for the development of short-term, medium-term, and long-term actuarial estimates and forecasts for maintaining the financial stability of the pension system. It maintains an administrative statistical database on the state and development of social security relations in the country.

2.18. The National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria assists in the development of regional and/or municipal demographic strategies depending on the regional specificities of the demographic development of the population and in connection with the general philosophy, strategic goal, priorities, directions, and tasks of the National Strategy for Demographic Development of the Population. The Association creates conditions for the development of public-private partnerships for the active and coordinated participation of authorities, citizens, and businesses in the implementation of demographic policy.

2.19. State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad (has a leading role in creating conditions for maintaining the integrity and involvement in social processes in the country of Bulgarian communities living outside Bulgaria.

2.20. General Labor Inspectorate exercises specialized control over compliance with the Law on Healthy and Safe Working Conditions, thereby contributing to the reduction of occupational accidents leading to death or permanent damage to health and disability. In this way, the Inspectorate contributes to protecting the health of the population and creates favorable conditions for extending working life in good health.

3.3.2. Population number and structures

As of December 31, 2023, the population of Bulgaria was 6 445 481 persons, representing 1.4% of the EU population . Compared to

2022, the country's population decreases by 2 229 persons or by 0.03%[198].

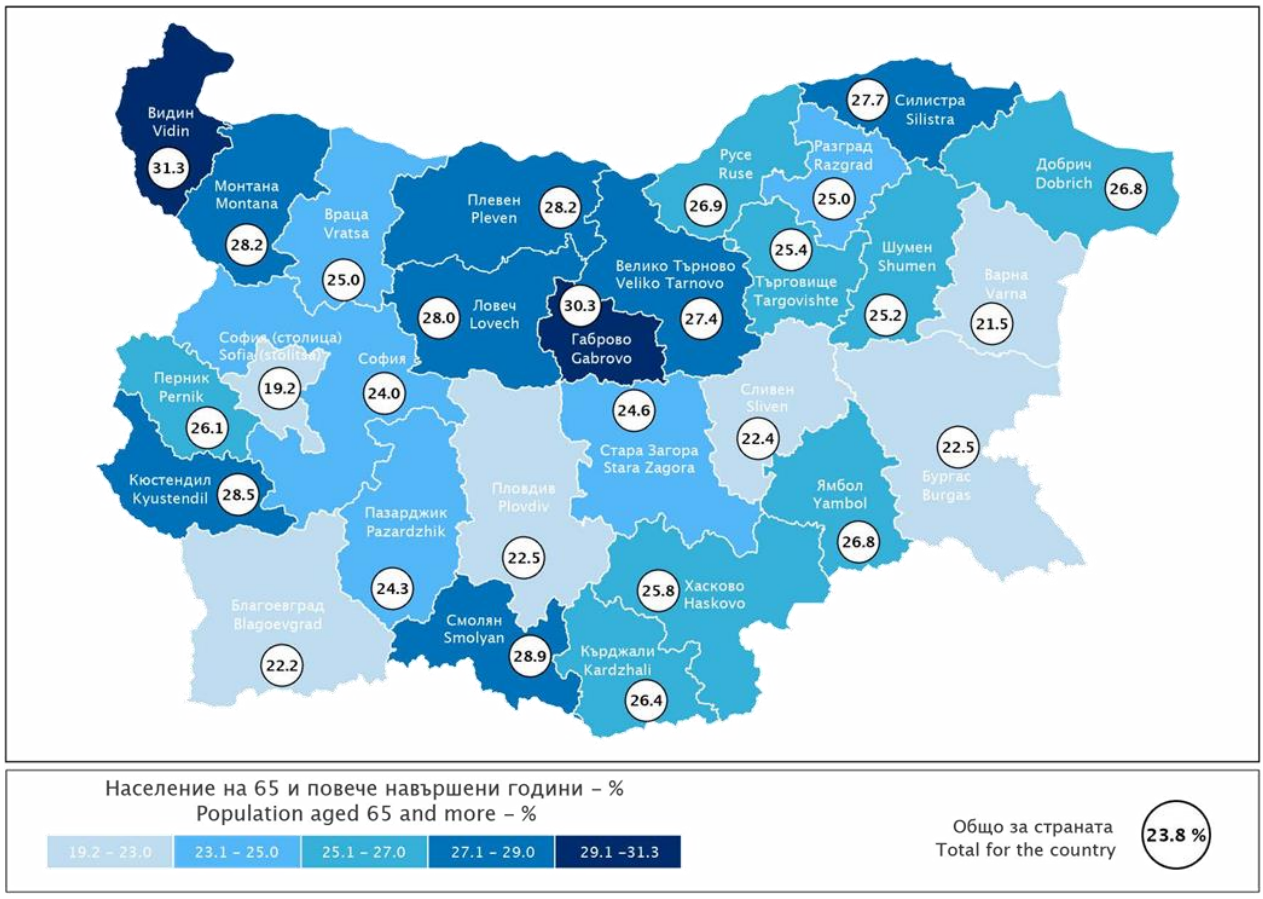


Figure 1: *Share of population aged 65 and over by district as of 31.12.2023*[199]

Source: *National Statistical Institute*

Male population was 3 097 698 (48.1%) and female - 3 347 783 (51.9%), or 1 000 males corresponded to 1 081 females. Males prevail among the population, aged up to 55 years. The number and share of females in the total population have increased among the elderly[200].

By the end of 2023, the number of persons aged 65 and over was 1 530 909, or 23.8% of the country's population. Compared to 2022,

[198]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

[199]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

[200]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

the share of the population aged 65 and over increases by 0.3 percentage points (Figure 1)[201].

The share of females aged 65 and over is 27.7%, compared to 19.5% of males. The difference is due to the higher mortality among the male population and consequently - lower life expectancy[202].

The share of persons aged 65 and over is highest in districts Vidin (31.3%), Gabrovo (30.3%) and Smolyan (28.9%). In 22 districts, the share of people aged 65 and over is higher than the country's average. The lowest is the share of the elderly population in districts Sofia (Sofia city) - 19.2%, Varna - 21.5% and Blagoevgrad - 22.2%[203].

The share of the population aged 65 and over for EU-27 is 21.3%. The highest is the share of the elderly population in Italy (24.0%), followed by Portugal (24.0%). In seventeen EU member states, including Bulgaria, the share of the elderly is above 20.0%[204].

As of 31.12.2023, children up to 15 years of age in the country are 911 025, or 14.1% of the total population number[205].

The share of the population under 15 years of age is highest in districts Sliven - 18.9%, Yambol - 15.2% and Burgas - 14.9% of the district population. As a total, in 17 districts the share of children up to

[201]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

[202]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

[203]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

[204]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

[205]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

15 years is lower than the country's average. The lowest is the share registered in districts Smolyan - 10.6%, Vidin - 11.5% and Gabrovo - 11.7%[206].

The share of the youngest EU-27 population in the beginning of 2022 is 14.9%. The lowest shares are observed in Italy - 12.4%, Portugal - 12.9% and Malta - 12.7%, and the highest - in Ireland - 19.3%, Sweden - 17.4% and France - 17.3%[207].

As of 31.12.2023, the age dependency ratio1 in the country was 61.0%, or to each person in "dependent" ages (under 15 and over 65 years) corresponded less than two persons in 'independent' age. The ratio in urban areas is 57.6%, and in rural - 71.3%. As a total, in all districts, the age dependency ratio is over 50.0%. The lowest is the ratio in districts Sofia (Sofia city)-51.5%, and the highest is in Vidin (74.8%), Gabrovo and Yambol - 72.3% each[208].

The population ageing over the years lead to an increase of the population mean age. It has increased from 40.6 years in 2002 to 45.2 years at the end of 2023. The mean age of the population is 44.4 years in urban areas, compared to 47.5 years in rural areas[209].

The number of population and relative share of population under, at and over working age changes. The last two are influenced not only

[206]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

[207]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

[208]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

[209]*Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

by the population ageing, but also by legislative changes1 concerning the retirement age.

In 2023, at working age were women up to completion of 62 years and men up to completion of 64 years and 6 months.

The number of the population at working age as of 31.12.2023 is 3 769 thousand persons, or 58.5% of the total population, of which males are 1 971 thousand and females - 1 798 thousand persons. By the end of 2023, the number of the population over working age was 1 698 thousand persons, or 26.3%, and under working age were 977 thousand persons, or 15.2% of the country's population[210].

The reproduction of the population at working age is characterized by the coefficient of demographic replacement, showing the ratio between the number of persons entering working age (15 - 19 years) and the number of persons exiting it (60 - 64 years). As of 31.12.2023, the coefficient of demographic replacement was 69[211].

Most favourable was the value of the indicator in districts Sliven - 92, Sofia (Sofia city) - 87 and Varna -79. The lowest was the ratio in districts Smolyan - 44, Kardhzali - 47 and Silistra where 100 persons exiting working age are replaced by 53 persons entering it[212].

[210] *Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

[211] *Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

[212] *Petkova, K., Karlezhova, N., Popcheva, D., Ilieva, S., & Shehebar-Daneva, M. Population and demographic processes 2023. National statistical institute, 2023, ISSN 1313-1915.*

3.3.3. Analysis of the updated national strategy for demographic development of the population in the Republic of Bulgaria (2012 – 2030)

The Updated National Strategy for Demographic Development of the Population in the Republic of Bulgaria (2012 – 2030) has formed 12 main directions[213].

In connection with slowing down negative demographic processes and reducing the number of

the population, activities have been formulated in the following directions:

– Promoting the birth rate by creating an environment favorable for the raising and upbringing of children;

– Improving the reproductive health of the population and preventing sterility;

– Improving the general demographic awareness and sexual and reproductive culture of the population;

– Improving the general health of the population and reducing total, premature, infant, and maternal mortality;

– Developing an adequate migration and immigration policy;

– Significantly reducing the number of emigrating young people of reproductive age.

[213]*Council of Ministers. https://www.strategy.bg/strategicdocuments/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=778, Retrieved 27 December 2024.*

In order to overcome the negative consequences of population aging and improve the qualitative characteristics of human capital, activities have been formulated in the following areas:

– Adoption of a comprehensive intersectoral approach for the active and productive life of older people in good health. Adaptation of social systems to demographic changes and population aging - labor market, pension system, social assistance and care, healthcare, education, culture, etc.;

– Development of solidarity between generations;

– Increasing the general educational, spiritual, and cultural level, qualifications, abilities, and skills of the population of all age groups.

In connection with achieving social cohesion and creating equal opportunities for a full social and productive life for all social groups, activities have been formulated in the following areas:

– Creating conditions for equal opportunities for a full social and productive life for all social groups.

In connection with limiting the disparities in the territorial distribution of the population and depopulation in some regions and villages, activities have been formulated in the following areas:

Limiting the disparities in the territorial distribution of the population and depopulation in some regions and villages.

In connection with adapting and synchronizing the regulatory framework with public needs for balanced demographic development of the population and development of the quality of human capital, activities have been formulated in the following areas:

Introducing a mandatory assessment of the impact on the demographic development of the population and the quality of human capital of each new, amended, or supplemented regulatory act of the state.

The demographic development strategy sets the following main priorities:

– Slowing down negative demographic processes and the reduction of the population;

– Overcoming the negative consequences of population aging and improving the qualitative characteristics of human capital;

– Achieving social cohesion and creating equal opportunities for a full social and productive life for all social groups;

– Limiting the disparities in the territorial distribution of the population and depopulation in some regions and villages;

– Adapting and synchronizing the regulatory framework with public needs for balanced demographic development of the population and the development of the quality of human capital.

The implementation of the first priority is carried out through the implementation of a set of measures and means to promote the birth

rate, increase the average life expectancy, reduce infant and premature mortality, establish the two-child family model, create prerequisites for reversing migration processes and strengthening repatriation processes among the Bulgarian diaspora. The implementation of this priority is expressed in specific quantitative indicators, established in world practice as measures of the general demographic situation of the population in individual countries.

The implementation of the second priority includes the undertaking and implementation of measures to meet the challenges posed by the aging of the population. The measures are aimed at overcoming the negative consequences of the deepening of unfavorable age changes, such as the reduction and aging of the working-age population; increasing the burden on the social security system and the state budget. The measures contribute to increasing the requirements for the quality and expanding the scope of health and social services for the elderly. Providing greater opportunities for education and formal and informal learning as a basis for professional realization in the labor market and a means of developing human resources in the process of lifelong learning, as well as implementing a consistent policy to promote the labor activity of older people.

The implementation of the third priority provides for measures and mechanisms to create equal opportunities for the realization of the desired productive and reproductive behavior and equal access to all information, health, education, and other services related to demographic development for all social groups. The main components

of the policies for achieving social cohesion in society are ensuring conditions for the full integration of vulnerable groups (children at risk, social groups at risk, people with disabilities, etc.) strengthening solidarity between generations, and to developing, and maintaining equality between generations.

The fourth priority is aimed at achieving a more even territorial distribution of the population and at approximating the socio-economic conditions and quality of life between individual regions, as well as

between the city and the countryside. Efforts and measures will be aimed at slowing down the processes of depopulation taking place in border regions and a number of villages; optimizing the concentration of the population in the capital and some larger regional centers, and optimizing the natural and environmental living environment. The implementation of this priority is inextricably linked to the strengthening of the role of regional policy and the linking of socio-economic development plans with the goals and objectives of the demographic strategy.

The implementation of the fifth priority provides for the introduction of an assessment of the impact on the demographic development of the population and the quality of human capital of each adopted regulatory act of the state.

The full implementation of the priorities of the country's demographic development by 2030 is possible in the conditions of macroeconomic stability, sustainable economic growth, increasing

economic activity, employment, and incomes of the population. The proposed measures and actions for demographic development are considered an element of the general concept of sustainable development, according to which the population, the environment, and the economy are mutually conditioned and are in continuous interaction. It can be expected that future favorable changes in the environment will lead to favorable changes in the reproductive processes of the population.

The planned activities on the priorities and the relevant directions have not yet yielded positive results. The trends of demographic indicators in Bulgaria are negative. This creates a set of challenges for the institutions that implement policies in this area. It is necessary to take the appropriate corrective actions that will lead to positive change. All this is related to a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the current situation, which will create prerequisites for making correct and correct decisions[214][215].

3.4. Circular economy - a revolutionary model or an upgrade

The circular economy is a model aimed at extending the life cycle of products. In practice, this means sharing, borrowing, reusing, repairing, and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible. When a product reaches the end of its life, the materials it is

[214]*Terziev, V. K. (2023). Innovation Development of Industrial Business Organizations. In M. Okur Dinçsoy & H. Can (Eds.), Optimizing Energy Efficiency During a Global Energy Crisis (pp. 282-306). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-0400-6.ch016.*

[215]*Georgiev, M. P. & Terziev, V. K. (2023). The Labor Market Policies and Social Development in Bulgaria. In M. Okur Dinçsoy & H. Can (Eds.), Optimizing Energy Efficiency During a Global Energy Crisis (pp. 239-281). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-0400-6.ch015.*

made of continue to be used in other ways, thus minimizing waste generation. The demand for raw materials and energy resources is growing, but many of them are limited in quantity. Resources are often not available within the European Union and European countries are becoming dependent on imports from other countries. The effect on the environment should not be underestimated - the extraction and consumption of raw materials increases energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. More reasonable use of raw materials is also a measure against climate change[216].

The creation and destruction of value inherent in the linear economy leads to an increasing amount of waste, which means resource and financial losses, as well as the depletion of non-renewable and scarce resources and the deterioration of the state of the environment.

The transition from a linear economy to a circular economy is a significant change in the economic order. This change must encompass the entire production cycle - product design, the movement of material flows, and the creation of the right incentives and legal structures to stimulate business ideas. A change in the way consumers think is essential for these business ideas to be realized. This change requires the joining of efforts of the executive branch, business, financial, and educational institutions.

[216] *Terziev, V., Georgiev, M., Simeonov, S. The Labour Market in Bulgaria in a Period of Social Transformations. // ISRG Journal of Arts Humanities & Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS), Volume – III Issue-I (January-February) 2025, pp. 33-45, ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14615015.*

In essence, the circular economy is a systemic change that builds sustainability in the long term, stimulates business, generates economic opportunities, and creates social benefits with a neutral footprint on nature. Breaking the link between economic growth and waste generation is the goal of Bulgaria's policy and the adopted National Strategy.

The circular economy is based on the following guiding principles:

– Designing and manufacturing products in a way that does not lead to waste and pollution;

– Most products are designed to become obsolete too quickly. The efforts of the European Union countries are aimed at changing this model by regulating the design and manufacturing of products in a way that increases their durability and makes them reusable, repairable, and recyclable. Products in the circular economy contain a significant proportion of recycled materials, which in turn creates conditions for secondary production and high-quality recycling;

– Extending the life cycle of products and materials;

– The way products are designed and manufactured can prevent up to 80% of their environmental impact, but some products can remain in the economy instead of being landfilled;

– Restoring natural systems;

– Applying a circular approach will allow the restoration of natural systems and the achievement of a harmonious relationship between humans and nature.

The new business models that are implementing the circular economy are deployed through:

– Design - Products should be designed in such a way that they allow for longer use, and be easy to maintain, repair, overhaul, remanufacture, or recycle. The new design model should include the production of renewable materials, less resource-intensive or fully recyclable;

– Optimal use - increase the value and use of the product during its life cycle. Such models represent the provision of a service instead of selling a product, as well as taking responsibility for the product throughout its useful life;

– Value recovery - maximum recovery and recycling of products and materials after their use in new products or useful resources. The aim is to reduce material losses and preserve resources for new production;

– Circular support - the coordination of networks with circular value and resource flows. These include the development or implementation of enabling technologies that facilitate other business models.

3.4.1. European Union policies for the circular economy

The European Green Deal (2019) focuses on taking action to ensure that environmental and climate-related issues are addressed, thus ensuring a sustainable future for future generations. Achieving climate neutrality by 2050 is the most important priority.

By moving towards a circular economy, which is one of the focuses of the Pact, the aim is to strengthen the competitiveness of the economy and increase the gross domestic product of the community by 0.5% by 2030. In March 2020, the European Commission published a new Circular Economy Action Plan with measures to accelerate the transition to a sustainable model and the recovery of natural resources, thus reducing the impact on the environment and society. The new action plan aims to: establish a framework for sustainable product policy; key product value chains; a more effective waste policy aimed at preventing, reusing, and recovering waste; creating circular models for the benefit of people, regions, and cities.

Key strategic documents at the European level supporting the circular economy include:

– The Plastics Strategy in a Circular Economy (2018) guides the use of plastics, highlighting the need to increase the recycling and recovery of plastic materials. By 2030, all plastic packaging must be recyclable or reusable. Member States also have targets to achieve a 25% recycled content of plastic in PET bottles by 2025, and all bottles must be made of at least 30% recycled materials by 2030. In addition,

plastic products such as forks, knives, spoons, plates, and straws are banned;

– The European Industrial Strategy (2020) envisages reorganising industry, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in the transition, preserving Europe's resilience and competitiveness, based on the green transition, digitalisation, and setting global standards;

– From Farm to Fork (2020) is a strategy to build sustainable food chains to protect nature, ensure healthy food, support farmers, and reduce the use of chemicals, pesticides, and fertilisers in growing crops. Among the main objectives of the Strategy is the reduction of food loss and waste. The Commission is committed to halving food waste per capita at the retail and consumer level by 2030.

3.4.2. National context for implementing the circular economy strategy

Bulgaria has set the circular economy as a long-term priority of its development policy. The National Development Program: Bulgaria 2030 prioritizes the “circular and low-carbon economy”. The Strategy for the transition to a circular economy is the first and most important step in this direction. The transition to a circular economy will provide the country with economic growth and a better environment. The necessary institutional, financial, and human resources have been mobilized for this purpose.

In April 2020, an Advisory Council was established in Bulgaria in connection with the European Green Deal. Among the main roles of the Council is to advise and assist the Council of Ministers in achieving a balance and reconciling national priorities in the field of energy security, accelerated economic development, social justice, and environmental protection.

With the Strategy, the Government of Bulgaria takes decisive action in this direction, committing to providing resources and funds for their implementation. The measures set out in this document are aimed at increasing resource productivity and leading to connectivity in the economy by introducing new business models. Waste is beginning to be considered as a resource for the economy. The aim is to keep materials in production for as long as possible and recycle them with high quality, to produce better quality raw materials, and to reduce the country's economy's dependence on raw material imports.

The strategy is also in line with the National Strategy for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises 2021-2027 (Environment priority), the Innovation and Competitiveness Program 2021-2027 (Circular Economy priority), the National Waste Management Plan 2021-2028, and the Environment Program 2021-2027.

The circular economy needs a new and more active role for consumers. Consumer awareness and interest in the circular economy are crucial for the success of the transition to a circular economy. Consumers need to be provided with the most objective information possible for decision-making, including the social and environmental

footprint of products. Consumers also play an important role in waste prevention and recycling. The measures in the Strategy are aimed at an informed, responsible, and active society. The high public attitudes towards the need to protect the environment can be used to increase engagement in such activities leading to a circular economy, such as buying second-hand products, repairing, sharing, or renting products.

The transition of production to a circular economy is assessed by a set of indicators such as resource productivity, the contribution of recycled materials to the demand for raw materials, the amount of investment and added value in sectors related to the circular economy, innovation, eco-innovation, and their results, etc., and small and medium-sized enterprises are the basis of the circular economy. In Bulgaria, there is significant potential for extraction and recycling of many of the raw materials of critical importance for the European Union, in addition to the development of innovation and particular eco-innovation, recycling and repair and reuse, environmentally friendly products or services, higher quality of eco-labeled products and industrial symbiosis are among the key actions that will transform entire sectors of the economy.

The public sector, through the application of “green” criteria in public procurement procedures, could stimulate the market for ecological products in the country. To increase knowledge in this area, training can be organized for central and local government employees regarding the inclusion of “green” criteria by product groups in public

procurement, as well as the creation of a virtual space for the exchange of good practices.

Separate waste collection is also included in the Strategy, as studies show that citizens have positive attitudes towards separate waste collection, but their actual actions do not confirm them. The weak motivation of citizens can be corrected through financial instruments if the household waste fee is tied to the actual quantity and volume of the waste disposed of. Effective separate collection can also be achieved by improving the infrastructure, providing an opportunity for the separation of biological waste, and promoting the activities of separate collection sites (Table 9).

Country	Year		Unit of measurement
2015		2020	
Recycling of household waste			
Bulgaria	29,4	34,6	%
Germany	66,7	69,6	%
Malta	10,9	10,5	%
EU(27)	44,9	48,6	%
Recycling of all waste, except for basic mineral waste			
Bulgaria	17(2016)	23(2018)	%
Belgium	81(2014)	87	%
Malta	27(2014)	25	%
EU(27)	54(2014)	53	%
Recycling of packaging waste by packaging type			
Bulgaria	64,1	61,2(2019)	%
Belgium	81,5	79,7	%
Hungary	37,1	40,0	%
EU(27)	66,6	64,3	%
Recycling of electronic waste (e-waste)			
Bulgaria	96,5	66,7(2018)	%
Liechtenstein	127,1	89,8(2018)	%
Iceland	47,2	24,7(2018)	%
EU(27)	35,7	38,9(2018)	%
Biowaste recycling			

Bulgaria	43	34	Kilogram
Luxembourg	111	183	Kilogram
Cyprus	21	6	Kilogram
EU(27)	75	93	Kilogram
Utilization of construction and demolition waste			
Bulgaria	96 (2014)	96	%
Netherlands	100(2014)	100	%
France	77(2014)	64	%
EU(27)	87(2014)	89	%
Use of recycled materials			
Bulgaria	3,.1	4,9	%
Netherlands	25,8	33,8	%
Romania	1,7	1,4(2021)	%
EU(27)	11,3	11,7(2021)	%
Trade in recyclable raw materials			
Bulgaria	141606	200602	Tones
Netherlands	7384951	8928527	Tones
Malta	2190	1247	Tones
EU(27)	42766932	46838227	Tones
Metal	Year		Units of measurement
	2013	2019	
Contribution of recycled materials to raw material demand — End-of-life recycling rates (EOL-RIR)			
Iron	22	31,5	%
Yttrium	0	31,4	%
Zinc	0	31	%
Aluminum	35	12	%
Nickel	32	17	%
Platinum	35	25,3	%

Table 9. *The place of the Republic of Bulgaria for the implementation of the circular economy according to Eurostat research*

Source: *Eurostat/ https://www.eufunds.bg/bg*

Note: 1. The EOL-RIR indicator measures for a given raw material what proportion of its input into the production system comes from the recycling of "old scrap" (or "end-of-life scrap"), i.e. scrap and waste resulting from the processing of products at their end-of-life

(EOL). EOL-RIR does not take into account scrap that originates from production processes (i.e. “new scrap” or “process scrap”);

2. In second place is the country with the highest percentage, in third place is the country with the lowest percentage, and in fourth place is the average value for the countries of the European Union.

3.4.3. Priority areas

3.4.3.1. Polymers

The production of plastics in primary form in Bulgaria in 2019 amounted to 175 thousand tons, while the production of plastic products is significantly larger and exceeds 500 thousand tons. The significant production of plastic products and articles in the country provides an opportunity for the use of recycled plastics. The available recycling capacity is estimated at over 150,000 tons, which allows for the recycling of the entire amount of plastic waste collected in the country and at the same time provides opportunities for the processing of the main categories of materials - LDPE, HDPE, PET, PE. Additional efforts should be made to reduce the amounts of plastic waste generated, improve separate collection in households, and reduce unwanted impurities in the plastic products and packaging produced and offered on the market, which make their subsequent recycling difficult.

3.4.3.2. Construction and demolition waste

The analyses show that the requirements of the Regulation on construction waste management and the use of recycled construction

materials, which determines the percentage of recycled construction materials that should be used in certain construction activities, are partially implemented. The construction sector needs to take a leading role in the prevention and reuse of construction waste in partnership with local authorities. Public institutions should also play a much more serious role by using public procurement for the design of construction sites with the use of recycled construction materials. The lack of a platform for the exchange of information and good practices does not allow for a connection to be made between the sources of different types of construction and demolition waste, the availability of different types of recycled construction materials at regional recycling facilities, and the construction sector in the country.

3.4.3.3. Food waste

The total amount of food waste generated in Bulgaria is significant – around 500 thousand tons – and improvements in production processes and their overall management could lead to increased resource efficiency and a significant reduction in carbon emissions. The country is in the process of preparing a National Program for the Prevention and Reduction of Food Losses, which will cover all stages of the food chain: primary production; processing and manufacturing; retail and other distribution; restaurants and catering services; and households. Concerning food waste from households, a very small part of it is currently diverted from landfills. Introducing mandatory separate collection of bio-waste from households, simultaneously with the completion of municipal bio-waste treatment

systems, will allow the recovery of around 200 thousand tons of food waste per year.

3.4.3.4. Biomass and bio-based products

Energy produced from biomass exceeds 1 million tons, which represents over 10% of the total energy consumption in the country. In Bulgaria, households consume 70% of the energy produced from biomass. Although the potential for using waste wood for energy production allows for an even higher share of biomass in the country's energy balance, the priority should be its processing, not energy recovery. The strategy confirms that there is a very large untapped potential in the recovery of solid agricultural waste from corn stalks for grain, sunflower, and others. The quantities of solid agricultural waste in the country are estimated at over 2 million tons per year. The current practice of not recovering a large part of this agricultural waste represents a waste of resources for processing and production.

3.4.3.5. Major raw materials

The mining, processing, and metallurgy industries in Bulgaria are very well developed and provide a major contribution to the national economy. Some of the raw materials of critical importance for the EU are present on the territory of the country as major minerals, while other components are found as isomorphic impurities in the minerals of other minerals. Exploring the potential for the extraction of critical raw materials in the exploitation of existing deposits and future exploration activities can lead to significant economic benefits.

3.4.4. Vision for the development of the circular economy in Bulgaria

The transition to a circular economy will provide Bulgaria with economic growth, a clean environment, social well-being, and a society with a high level of environmental awareness that thinks about future generations. Bulgaria's policy for the transition to a circular economy will be implemented through a green and competitive economy, less waste and more resources, and an economy for the benefit of consumers. Individual productions will be connected so that they exist in symbiosis, with the state committed to supporting this process. The country will contribute to the provision of critical raw materials in the European Union. The amounts of landfilled waste will be reduced to a minimum, and the rest will be returned to the production cycle or recycled.

The preparation of the Strategy and Action Plan for the Transition to a Circular Economy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2027 is in implementation of measure 589 "Preparation of a National Strategy in Relation to the Circular Economy Package" of the Management Program of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2017-2021, as one of the set goals (Goal 147) to achieve resource efficiency by applying the hierarchy in waste management, preventing its formation, promoting its reuse and recovery through recycling, reducing landfilling and limiting its harmful impact on the environment and human health.

3.4.4.1 Main objectives of the plan/program of Bulgaria

The transition to a circular economy will provide Bulgaria with economic growth, a clean environment, social well-being, and a society with high ecological awareness that thinks about future generations. The country's policy for the transition to a circular economy will be implemented by setting the following strategic objectives in the draft Strategy for the Transition to a Circular Economy: green and competitive economy; less waste and more resources; an economy that benefits consumers. Specific objectives have been proposed for each of the strategic objectives.

As a result of the transformation of the economy, it is expected that resource efficiency will be increased and the added value of industrial production will increase. The consumption of some products is expected to be replaced by services, and others to become suitable for longer use. It is expected that individual productions will have the opportunity to be connected so that they exist in symbiosis. In this way, our country is expected to contribute to the provision of critical raw materials in the European Union. It is expected that the quantities of landfilled waste will be reduced to a minimum, and the rest will be returned to the production cycle or recycled.

3.4.4.2. Financing of the plan/program (state, municipal budget or international programs, other financial institutions)

The preparation of the Strategy and Action Plan for the Transition to a Circular Economy of the Republic of Bulgaria is financed through

funds provided within the budget line under priority axis 6 “Technical Assistance” of the Operational Program “Environment” 2014-2020. The financing of the implementation of the measures included in the Action Plan for the Transition to a Circular Economy is planned to come from various sources, including owned and attracted funds of enterprises, from programs financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds for the period 2021-2027, state and municipal budgets, etc.

Due to its nature, the Action Strategy for the Transition to a Circular Economy is a cross-sectoral strategy. It builds on and builds on the measures set out in the drafts of new sectoral strategies and programs, the main ones being in the fields of economy, environmental protection, and regional development.

The Strategy and Action Plan for the Transition to a Circular Economy do not fall into hierarchical dependence with other plans and programs at the national and local level, but are consistent with and do not contradict existing plans, programs, and other strategic documents at the European and national level, such as the European Green Deal, the New Circular Economy Action Plan of 2020 of the European Commission, the Plastics Strategy in the Circular Economy of 2018, the National Development Program Bulgaria 2030.

The transition to a more circular economy, where the value of goods, materials, and resources is retained in the economy for as long as possible and waste generation is minimised, is a key contribution to the EU's efforts to build a sustainable, low-carbon, and competitive

resource-efficient economy. The circular economy is expected to increase the competitiveness of the European Union economy, protect businesses from resource scarcity, and help create new business opportunities for innovative and efficient ways of production and consumption. At the same time, the circular economy will help save energy and prevent irreversible damage caused by the use of resources at a rate that exceeds the earth's capacity to renew them - this is about the climate, biodiversity, and air, soil, and water pollution. The transition is expected to have a positive impact on reducing carbon dioxide emissions. By promoting more sustainable activities in key sectors and new business opportunities, the preconditions will be created for harnessing the potential of the circular economy to create growth and jobs. Actions at the European Union level support the circular economy along the entire value chain - from production to consumption, repair and recycling, waste management, and secondary raw materials that are reused in the economy. These guidelines are reflected in the draft Strategy and Action Plan for the Transition to the Circular Economy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2021-2027.

3.4.4.3. Environmental issues relevant to the plan/programme

About half of total greenhouse gas emissions and over 90% of biodiversity loss and water scarcity are due to resource extraction and processing of materials, fuels, and food. The European Union industry has initiated certain activities to reduce the negative impact, but it still accounts for 20% of greenhouse gas emissions in the region. Change is

possible if the current “linear” form of management in industry is replaced, in which raw materials are extracted, traded, and processed into goods, and finally disposed of as waste or emissions. The solution is to increase the use of recycled materials, increase the efficiency of the resources used, extend the life of products, etc.

The problem of difficulties for enterprises in adapting environmental legislation to the activities of the specific organisation arises due to two reasons. On the one hand, this may be due to a lack of knowledge of the individual processes in the production cycle, and on the other hand, to a lack of knowledge in the field of environmental legislation and environmentally friendly practices. This leads to a lack of environmental expertise. This, in turn, in addition to the lack of motivation and interest in implementing ecodesign practices due to low demand, can also be attributed to a lack of knowledge and human resources.

In 2008, the Council approved an Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy. It includes a number of proposals for sustainable consumption and production that will contribute to improving the environmental performance of products and support the demand for more sustainable goods and production technologies. At the same time, industry is encouraged to take advantage of innovation to meet the challenge. The main element of the Action Plan is the preparation of a dynamic framework for improving the energy and environmental performance of products and promoting their acceptance by consumers. The

challenge is to create an environmentally friendly product cycle by: improving the overall environmental performance of products throughout their life cycle, encouraging and stimulating the demand for better products and production technologies, and supporting consumers to make better choices through consistent and simplified labelling.

The new European Union Circular Economy Action Plan, adopted in 2020, aims to create a well-functioning market for secondary raw materials. Secondary raw materials face a number of challenges arising from their competition with primary raw materials, with aspects of this competition covering both the safety of raw materials and their efficiency, availability, and price. Bulgaria is a relatively small market for secondary raw materials. Recycling and the use of secondary raw materials in production are significantly lower than the European Union average. There is significant potential for the use of secondary raw materials in production and the replacement of natural raw materials, which is a prerequisite for growth in the sector.

Water scarcity has increased in some parts of the European Union in recent decades, which is damaging to the environment and the economy. In addition to measures to use water more efficiently, the reuse of treated wastewater under safe and cost-effective conditions is a valuable but underused way to increase water supply and relieve pressure on overexploited water resources in the European Union. Water reuse in agriculture will also contribute to nutrient recycling by acting as a substitute for solid fertilisers. The decline in groundwater levels is one of the main threats to the water environment of the

European Union, in particular for agricultural irrigation, but also for industrial use and urban development. Member States may also use reclaimed water for other purposes, such as industrial, public works, and environmental purposes.

Since joining the European Union, Bulgaria has increased its spending on environmental protection and restoration and has achieved improvements in its environmental performance, but some significant challenges remain. The generated municipal waste has been on a steady downward trend, with an increase in the share of treated waste and an increase in the coverage of the population with organized waste collection systems, but reducing the share of landfilled waste remains a challenge. Good waste management is a building block of the circular economy and contributes to preventing the negative impact of waste on the environment and health. Significant results have been achieved in recent years, but some challenges remain. In January 2018, a European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy was published, which aims to protect the environment from plastic pollution while promoting innovation in the sector. As fundamental measures to achieve the above-mentioned goals, the European Union wants to reduce the consumption of single-use plastics, limit the use of plastic microparticles, and make all plastic packaging recyclable by 2030. Microplastic pollution is also a key target of the strategy, to reduce it through the application of REACH principles in products where microparticles are added, through regulations to minimise

microparticles released from tyres, textiles, and paints, the provision of information on the condition of products, or a combination of both.

The volume of construction and demolition waste is one of the largest among the different types of waste in Europe. Although existing estimates show that the share of construction and demolition waste generated is lower than the average for the European Union, its quantity remains significant and comparable to that of municipal waste generated. Construction waste management is relatively well-regulated in Bulgaria, but there are insufficient measures to enforce legislation and encourage recycling.

3.4.4.4. Significance of the plan/programme for the implementation of Community environmental legislation

The concept of a circular economy is embedded in a number of European Union documents, including the Commission Communication of 2 December 2015 on Closing the loop – an EU action plan for the circular economy. The action plan focuses on actions at the European Union level that have high added value. As part of the European Green Deal, in March 2020 the European Commission published a new Circular Economy Action Plan with measures to accelerate the transition to a sustainable model and the recovery of natural resources, thereby reducing the impact on the environment and society. The new action plan aims to: establish a framework for sustainable product policy; key value chains in the field of products; a more effective waste policy aimed at their prevention, reuse, and

recovery; create circular models for the benefit of people, regions, and cities.

3.4.5. Specific objectives and main measures in Bulgaria

By using natural resources more efficiently, society can live healthier lives, save money, create jobs, boost its economy, and respect the planet's boundaries. Resource efficiency and the wise use of natural resources are key factors for the competitiveness of the economy in a new circular model of production and consumption. Businesses play a major role in the transition to a more resource-efficient economy by adapting their business models and value chains, but the pace and scale of these changes will depend on the extent to which an enabling policy framework can be put in place.

Resource efficiency makes economic sense. By using fewer resources more efficiently, Bulgaria can maintain a competitive advantage, create green growth, and sustainable jobs, and better protect the environment. The green economy is about managing the scarce resources of the environment. Therefore, the country aims to reduce resource consumption, promote the introduction of circular business models, ensure the conditions for connectivity between enterprises in the economy, and focus on the extraction of critical raw materials.

To achieve the goal, the Strategy proposes to achieve the following specific goals, along with the measures to them:

3.4.5.1. Specific goal 1.1. Higher resource productivity

In essence, the goal focuses on ways to effectively use natural resources and increase their productivity in industry, prioritizing key value chains in the production of electronics and ICT, food, textiles, batteries, and automotive parts, and in construction.

Main measures:

– Creation of a center to support businesses in the transition to a circular economy;

– Technologies for increased resource efficiency;

– Extension of the application deadline for projects that envisage the implementation of new ones;

– Analysis of the legislation on issuing production permits;

– Analysis of complex permits to unify the approach to similar waste from production and their possible subsequent use as resources in other production;

– Financing small and medium-sized enterprises for the introduction of resource-efficient technologies in the processing industry, with priority given to food, textile, production of plastics and plastic products, accumulators, and batteries, will have a direct effect on increasing resource productivity;

– Promoting water reuse;

– Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in carrying out an analysis of the points of intensive water use in the production process and demonstrating the economic benefit of water reuse;

– Improving the awareness of small and medium-sized enterprises about the available technologies for closing the water use cycle;

– Analysis of the effect of water reuse on various agricultural crops;

– Analysis of the possibilities for applying price incentives for water reuse in enterprises.

3.4.5.2. Specific objective 1.2. New business models

Circular business models serve to reduce the extraction and use of natural resources. As a result, the generation of industrial and household waste also decreases. Circular business models use already existing materials and products as input materials and therefore their environmental footprint is significantly smaller than that of traditional business models.

The strategy focuses on assessing and introducing incentives for more efficient use of natural resources, supporting enterprises in financing the costs of switching to new models and eco-design of products, as well as analyzing the possibilities for increasing the requirements for mandatory content of recycled materials in certain product groups.

Main measures:

– Financing small and medium-sized enterprises in the processing industry for the introduction of eco-design, with priority in key value chains - electronics, information and communication technologies, textiles, and plastics, as well as for the introduction of models that allow the use of services instead of products;

– Creation of a mechanism for subsequent financing of eco-design project proposals through a financial instrument

– Conducting information training campaigns for businesses;

– Preparation of specialized training programs for “green” management and “green” business in vocational schools or as an additional qualification in vocational training centers;

– Analysis of the possibilities for increasing the requirements for mandatory content of recycled materials in certain product groups and ways to strengthen control in construction.

3.4.5.3. Specific objective 1.3. Connectivity in the economy

The transition of heavy industry and manufacturing to a circular economy can be a challenging task. Creating partnerships, joint work and exchange of materials between enterprises can increase sustainability and economic profits while reducing environmental impact and costs. To achieve connectivity in the economy, resource market platforms will be created and promoted. Areas in industrial zones and parks will be provided with priority to groups of enterprises participating in industrial symbiosis. The utilization of biomass from agriculture in the economy will be stimulated.

The implementation of the Strategy for the transition to a circular economy seeks connectivity between all chains and participants in the transition process: Research centers to create resource efficiency technologies for business, institutions to initiate voluntary agreements with businesses for better management of different types of waste, waste from one production to be used as a resource by another (industrial symbiosis).

Main measures:

– Development and implementation of innovations related to the circular economy, namely recycling, energy and resource-efficient technologies;

– Development and implementation of innovations related to the circular economy, namely recycling, energy and resource-efficient technologies;

– Creation and maintenance of a Platform for the results of implemented technologies for resource efficiency, ecological products, and industrial symbiosis;

– Promotion of the application of environmental criteria, where possible, in public procurement documentation for the award of activities under projects for which it is appropriate, financed by programs;

– Adoption of a decision on the priority provision of areas in industrial zones and parks to groups of enterprises participating in industrial symbiosis;

– Structuring of a financial instrument for industrial symbiosis for large processing enterprises in the sectors identified in the previous analysis;

– Study of the applicability of technologies for processing agricultural waste into resources for other productions;

– The construction of installations for recycling and utilization of biomass of agricultural origin.

3.4.5.4. Specific objective 1.4. Bulgaria contributes to the supply of critical raw materials

The Strategy specifies that the country has the potential to extract and recycle many of the raw materials of critical importance for the European Union, as a result of which economic benefits can be realized. In addition, additional mineral raw materials such as copper, lead and zinc - from metallic minerals, as well as zeolites, kaolin-quartz sands and bentonites - from industrial minerals and rocks, are of particular importance for the economy of Bulgaria.

The Strategy gives priority attention to the raw materials of critical importance and to strengthening the role of the country in the extraction, production and recycling of certain raw materials of critical importance within the European Union, taking into account the leading role of the extractive and processing industries and metallurgy in the country's economy, the presence of a significant number of deposits, proven reserves, including in closed deposits and the potential for finding new mineralizations of economic interest for a significant

number of metallic minerals and industrial minerals and rocks, the presence of experience in the extraction and processing of raw materials, the presence of scientific and technical potential for their exploration, development, processing and recycling.

The extraction and recycling of critical raw materials will be considered a matter of paramount national interest and will receive the necessary political and administrative support from state institutions. Future legislation should ensure acceleration and facilitation of the implementation of investment projects, removing existing obstacles to their implementation and at the same time ensuring compliance with high environmental protection standards.

Bulgaria has good potential for the extraction of some of the raw materials of critical importance for the European Union. On the territory of the country there are deposits of graphite, barite, fluorite, manganese, tungsten, etc. Another part of these materials appear as isomorphic impurities of the main minerals and can be extracted along the way, such as molybdenum, titanium, antimony, germanium, strontium, cerium, etc. In addition, additional mineral raw materials such as copper, lead and zinc - from metallic minerals, as well as zeolites, kaolin-quartz sands and bentonites.

Main measures:

– Preparation of a national list of critical raw materials;

– Amendments to national legislation to give priority to the exploration, extraction, processing, and recycling of raw materials included in the national list of critical raw materials;

– Ensuring appropriate institutional organization and capacity of institutions ensuring the availability of geological information and the management of exploration activities, the extraction and processing industry in the country;

– Studying the potential for extraction of critical raw materials in the exploitation of existing deposits and future exploration activities;

– Reviewing the available information and conducting additional studies on the content of critical raw materials in accumulated waste in closed sites;

– Identifying projects and investment needs in the field of extraction and processing of critical raw materials;

– Implementing solutions to increase circularity and reduce the amount of mining waste.

– The aim is to generate less and less waste by promoting activities for the reuse, repair, refurbishment, and processing of products. Incentives will be provided for the construction of reuse centers in cities. New liability schemes are planned to be introduced to encourage the environmental behavior of enterprises. High-quality recycling will be promoted by encouraging the separate collection and providing more and better quality secondary raw materials for processing enterprises. Landfill waste will be minimized by expanding

separate collection systems and new technologies and installations for processing remaining waste. Landfill waste will also be reduced by changing the way municipal waste is collected and introducing fair payment for services depending on the amount of waste.

3.4.5.5. Specific objective 2.1. Less waste

The specific objective mainly focuses on waste prevention as the most preferred option in the national waste management policy. Since municipalities will play a key role in the transition to a circular economy, they will need to develop municipal programs for the transition to a circular economy as stand-alone documents or as part of their development programs. More rational use of material resources and improvement of supply and distribution logistics should contribute to reducing waste generation in production processes.

Main measures:

– Implementation of new business models aimed at extending the useful life of the product, providing more repair and maintenance options, and using sharing platforms by consumers;

– Reduction of food waste and some categories of single-use plastic products and packaging;

– Introduction of measures at the municipal level for waste prevention and transition to a circular economy;

– Possibilities for introducing additional higher deductions for generated waste for municipalities reporting levels of municipal waste generation significantly exceeding the national average;

– National legislation in the field of single-use plastics;

– State institutions, public organizations, and local authorities should be leaders in implementing sustainable consumption models, being the first to limit the use of single-use plastic products in public administration and introducing a ban on the use of single-use plastic products and packaging no later than 2026;

– Measures to increase the quantities and improve the quality of separately collected plastic packaging waste;

– Measures adopted to provide information to consumers aimed at preventing and sustainable consumption of plastics and promoting opportunities for reuse and recycling through coordinated and continuous actions to increase public awareness and engagement;

– Funding and support for scientific organizations and businesses in the development of technologies and products leading to the prevention of plastic waste, the development of alternative replacement materials, new methods for recycling plastics, the development of new types of plastics with better environmental performance, including bio-based plastics and biodegradable plastics.

3.4.5.6. Specific objective 2.2. More opportunities for sustainable use

The strategy emphasizes the need for more products to be designed for longer life, ready to be disassembled, repaired, and eventually recycled.

Systems for separate collection of bulky waste, especially in large municipalities, should take into account the possibilities for the reuse of old furniture and electrical equipment, as well as other categories of products used in the household. The will of construction entrepreneurs will be relied on to reach a voluntary agreement with the central and local administrations concerning their commitments to the use of sustainable materials.

Main measures:

– Municipalities should set measures in their municipal waste management programs for the next programming period for sustainable use and reuse of products;

– Municipalities should provide sites for free delivery of separately collected waste from households;

– Strengthening the role of the construction sector in the management of construction waste;

– Pilot project for a regional installation for the treatment and recycling of construction and demolition waste.

3.4.5.7. Specific objective 2.3. More recycled waste, better quality raw materials

The specific objective pays special attention to the separate collection of waste, which should become a common and conscious practice and way of behaving. In addition, the separate collection of recyclable fractions, bio-waste, and hazardous waste from households will become mandatory. A complete change in the way of collecting

mixed household waste and a transition to paying for services proportional to the quantity and/or volume of waste is also necessary.

Main measures:

– New, more ambitious recycling targets should be considered for the different waste categories, as well as the introduction of new innovative management models;

– Necessary and comprehensive change in the way mixed household waste is collected and the gradual introduction of collection with individual containers;

– Transition to payment for services proportional to the quantity and/or volume of waste;

– Construction of waste transfer sites from households;

– The scope of requirements for documentation and reporting of packaging placed on the market and the quantities of separately collected, reused, recycled, and recovered packaging waste will be expanded;

– Additional measures to increase the quantities and improve the quality of separately collected plastic packaging waste;

– Additional, stricter requirements for mandatory separate collection of plastic waste generated in industry, commercial, and administrative facilities. The requirements for extended producer responsibility will also include plastic films used in agriculture;

– The trade and service sector should play a greater role in implementing measures for plastic waste prevention, reuse, take-back, separate collection and recycling;

– Analysis of the existing system for separate collection of packaging waste and assessment of the potential for achieving the new higher recycling targets;

– Introduction of a system for mandatory deposit and take-back of plastic containers made of PET and possibly other plastics is one of the possible measures for achieving the new higher recycling targets;

– Support for the construction of additional recycling capacities for certain categories of plastics for which there is no recycling option in the country;

– Inclusion of new product and waste categories in the requirements for extended producer responsibility, such measures will be considered initially for textile clothing and footwear, as well as some plastic products and single-use items;

– Improving the interaction between recovery organizations and municipalities with the aim of expanding separate collection systems, especially in small settlements;

– Access to financing and support for the introduction of new technologies for the treatment, recycling, and recovery of widespread waste in order to provide technological solutions and markets;

– Requirements for the use of recycled construction materials in public procurement for the design, construction, and maintenance of roads, as well as the design and construction of buildings;

– Coverage and proper reporting of products and packaging placed on the market as a result of internet sales and coverage of the relevant quantities by extended producer responsibility systems;

– Stricter requirements for auditing and control of the quantities of packaging placed on the market, declared by the obligated parties.

3.4.5.8. Specific objective 2.4. No landfilled waste

To achieve the specific objective, actions will be taken towards achieving high levels of reuse and recycling and the construction of new installations for the treatment of municipal waste will require additional and higher costs. The construction of new ones implies an increase in the quantities of sludge formed and requires the implementation of measures to limit the hazardous substances contained in them and to ensure appropriate recovery options. Increasing the quantities of secondary raw materials used in the production of products and articles, expanding the market for secondary raw materials by including new materials and production, effective implementation of national end-of-waste criteria for certain categories of materials and other measures to improve the quality of secondary raw materials are also part of the planned actions.

Main measures:

– Mandatory separate collection of bio-waste, predetermine the leading role of composting and anaerobic digestion in future regional waste management systems;

– Expansion of the capacity for mechanical-biological treatment of mixed waste and waste incineration with energy recovery will contribute to minimizing the amount of landfilled waste;

– Assessment of the necessary capacity for municipal waste treatment;

– Involving the private sector in achieving municipal waste recycling targets and the construction of municipal waste treatment facilities should provide additional investments;

– New sectoral Sludge Management Plan. The plan should consider the potential for using sludge in the reclamation of sites in the extractive industry, exploring the possibilities for applying phosphorus recycling techniques or biogas production in a joint anaerobic digestion process with other suitable biodegradable waste, providing opportunities for the separate and joint incineration of sludge for the purpose of energy production. Water and Sewerage Companies should provide for sludge treatment measures;

– The use of sludge in agriculture will be limited only to compost produced from sludge, meeting the end-of-waste requirements;

– Financing for projects related to the development and implementation of new technologies for separation, processing, and

treatment of waste ensuring a higher degree of separation of secondary raw materials;

– Platforms for the exchange of information related to the demand and supply of secondary raw materials, recycled construction materials, and biomass;

– Additional financing for the completion of regional waste management systems;

– Additional indicators introduced for monitoring the costs of municipal waste;

– A ban on spending the revenues from the "household waste" fee for other activities in municipalities and control over the spending of funds will be strengthened, including through inspections by the National Audit Office;

– Clear rules and criteria for spending the funds from deductions for waste disposal.

The spending of the funds from deductions should be prioritized for financing investment costs related to prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling, and recovery, as well as for measures and incentives related to prevention and separate collection. Financing of operating costs for pre-treatment, recycling, and recovery should be eligible only for municipalities where the amount of the household waste fee exceeds 80% of the eligibility threshold, calculated in relation to the income of households in the municipality. Financing disposal activities, as well as the purchase of containers and equipment for the collection of mixed

household waste, will not be eligible. Municipalities where the amount of accumulated deductions exceeds the deductions due for a period of two years should submit a plan for spending the collected funds.

The strategy foresees a periodic assessment of the results achieved and the infrastructure built for separate collection, preparation for reuse, recycling, and recovery by municipalities. In case the first such assessment provided shows unsatisfactory results, the possibility of partial or full replacement of the waste landfill levy with a landfill fee, payable and spent at a national level, will be considered.

The strategic objective foresees the application of more "green" criteria in public procurement; consumption models based on renting and sharing of goods and services, or the choice of reusable products that are subject to repair, to be supported, as long as they are truly sustainable and affordable; the circular economy will stimulate consumers to take advantage of the opportunity to make informed choices and to take an active part in the ecological transition.

3.4.5.9. Specific objective 3.1. Better informed consumers

The transition to a circular economy requires that citizens make informed choices about products that are safe and have the lowest possible environmental impact. In this regard, the focus along the supply chains of such products will be on ecodesign.

Manufacturers will be encouraged to design, produce, and advertise products that have been assessed for their environmental impact at all stages of the life cycle. Retailers will offer these products

in an appropriate manner, providing reliable and useful information. Consumers will be informed about the rules for the use of eco-labels and the certification schemes applied.

Key measures:

– Additional information and training on eco-labels, certification schemes, and their role in building a circular economy;

– Training should be targeted at different age and social groups;

– All actors along the supply chain should take action to appropriately present eco-friendly products in retail outlets;

– Financing of small and medium-sized enterprises in the processing industry, which receive funding for eco-design, as well as for the promotion of ecological products and new consumption models, with priority in key value chains - electronics, ICT, textiles and plastics;

– Provides for a study of the mechanism and applicability of voluntary agreements as a tool to stimulate retail chains to provide ecological products in an appropriate manner.

3.4.5.10. Specific objective 3.2. Sustainable consumption patterns

The circular economy means sustainable patterns of behavior of the administration, business, and consumers. The promotion of opportunities for repair, rental, and sharing of products or purchasing a service instead of a product through electronic platforms and information campaigns, the creation of reuse centers in key locations in

cities in order to facilitate access for citizens, familiarization with the requirements for "green" criteria, will stimulate the production of environmentally friendly products.

Changing behavior patterns towards sustainability is possible and necessary by raising consumer awareness of the market for second-hand products, rental/leasing, and repair through communication campaigns, as well as activities focused on the education of young people, such as including appropriate topics in the curricula of schools and universities. This measure can be divided into communication campaigns and activities focused on education.

The practice of mostly small private companies carrying out repairs of a number of goods - electrical appliances, clothes, shoes, furniture, bicycles, etc. is popular in our country. The creation of electronic registers on the website of the respective municipality/district municipal administration would provide additional opportunities for improving citizen awareness.

Main measures:

– Creation of reuse centers in key locations in cities. These centers can even be designed as temporary markets. State and especially municipal authorities can support the logistical and/or organizational activities of reuse centers, for example by providing municipal premises/areas specifically for such centers and promoting the positive effects of reuse;

– Public engagement should be increased in terms of preventing food waste and participating in separate bio-waste collection systems. The participation of the population in separate bio-waste collection systems will be of key importance for reducing their amount;

– Research on behavior patterns can be the subject of joint projects between scientific organizations and consumer protection organizations;

– Introducing the concept of “green” public procurement in the additional provisions to the Public Procurement Act will provide a clearer opportunity for contracting authorities to use this tool;

– Periodic updating of the Practical Guide for Awarding “Green” Public Procurement and training of municipalities is planned.

3.4.5.11. Specific objective 3.3. Social green economy

The transition to a circular economy will have a positive effect on job creation. There is potential in this area for companies engaged in repair and refurbishment activities, which will be supported to be present in key locations and in reuse centres in cities. The benefits of the circular economy will be expanded by promoting social entrepreneurship and strengthening social inclusion.

Main measures:

– Opportunities are envisaged to support companies engaged in repair activities to be present in reuse centres in cities. This can be implemented through public-private partnerships or implemented as

municipal centres, financed from municipal budgets through landfill levies or other sources of funding;

– Repair activities can extend the life of products and are an example of sustainable behaviour models. Companies in the sector can operate as social enterprises;

– The activities of these enterprises can be further supported by financing qualification courses for people from vulnerable groups involved in repair activities.

3.4.6. Analysis of the state and development of the circular economy in Bulgaria

High-tech economic development poses a challenge to humanity by reducing the resources available for its maintenance. The recent use of cheap resources, their availability, as well as relatively less care for the environment, have led to serious problems related, on the one hand, to general environmental pollution and the accumulation of an incredible amount of waste, and on the other hand, to the physical depletion of conventional resources. The new paradigm for sustainable development, defining the trinity between economy, environment, and social activities, requires a categorical and new attitude toward raw materials, technologies, and waste management. The transformation of thinking and actions towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, saving fossil fuels, and increasingly using renewable energy sources is gaining momentum in the period 2010 - 2015. The chronology in the order Agenda for Sustainable Development, greenhouse gases, and

renewable energy sources caused many changes in several directions: attention to climate change, the occurrence of which is still controversial among scientists, experts, and politicians; reduction of production and regulation of the use of fossil fuel products; closure of coal-fired power plants; debate on the nature of nuclear power plants; bans on the production and use of plastic products; emphasis on waste management and treatment technologies. In addition, the era of the circular economy began. The concept itself has been developed since the 1970s.

3.4.6.1. Evolution of terminology, revolution of technologies. Zero-waste technologies of the 20th century versus the circular economy of the 21st century

The industry of the 20th century, designed to meet the needs of various sectors – mechanical engineering, transport, road construction, agriculture and forestry, maritime industries, etc., focuses on product lines with less attention to the environment, on the one hand, because nature is still able to absorb various types of pollution, science has not yet identified the connection between pollution and climate change, the discovery and widespread use of plastics is perceived as an extremely progressive achievement. To extract more oil and coal, to produce more metal, mineral fertilizers, and gasoline, to provide the necessary asphalt for roads and building materials with diverse applications is almost equivalent to a directive. In this hectic product age, it is still realized that efficiency requires saving materials and resources and this is a necessary condition for progress. “Zero-waste technologies” is a term

that precedes “Circular economy”. It is known that there are no zero-waste technologies in the world – waste is generated at different stages of each technology – technological (when establishing or changing technological regimes), production (defective and poor-quality products), consumer (loss of purpose). Each technology seeks to reduce the volume of technological waste, introducing a requirement for their reuse in the technology itself or another related use. Here, science enters the role of creator of new technologies or products. Technologies are being born for the recovery of discarded rubber products, glass (glass crumbs), the return of paper to technological production lines, and the recovery of plastic products (technological and consumer waste). Special lines are being created for collecting paper, processing plastic waste (specially created technological lines), and production lines for grinding glass are being created. Plastic tomato pegs, bricks, tiles, and other irresponsible plastic products appear. Various inert materials are being tested as fillers in the production of plastic products on a massive scale (including phosphogypsum, fly ash, bentonite, and ground waste from thermosetting resins), and new plastic products based on polymer mixtures are being created. However, these technological solutions cannot cancel the linear nature of the economy and overcome the ever-growing consumer demand and mass disposal of obsolete goods and products, filling landfills (for which there is still enough land). A limit has been reached that causes. Accumulating waste causes pollution, metal waste is a pure loss for the economy, plastic does not decompose and enormously increases the volume of landfills, indiscriminate waste

disposal and poor management of landfills or the presence of “illegal dumps” are becoming threatening. Soil, air, and water are polluted. In addition, the overproduction of goods, and the rapid change of household appliance models increase waste flows, even without the life cycle of the objects having expired, but also without being ready for their disposal. The focus of the economy continues to be production. Technologies focus mainly on the optimization of production processes in order to reduce waste. These technologies often work within the linear model of the economy, where resources are extracted, used, and then discarded. Technological innovations introducing elements for the recycling and reuse of materials have not been widely distributed or integrated into the overall economic system. “Zero-waste technologies” have failed to cope and thus the new paradigm of “circular economy” is born, which must bring order. The circular economy is a development of zero-waste technologies but with significantly higher political, economic, and social responsibility. The statement about the purely linear model of the economy of the 20th century, i.e. a model in which raw materials are used, things are created from them, they are consumed and the remains are thrown away, is not entirely true. The change was caused by the technological revolution, which was a result of overconsumption and overproduction, the accelerated implementation of new technological and technical models, a change in the paradigm of quality of life, the digital transition, of the saturation of the environment with traces of all this. Progress, of course, is on the side of the circular economy, which must find solutions to the already global problems of

inconsistencies between the over satisfaction of certain groups of the population with products and goods and the growing need for new resources.

3.4.6.2. The Circular Economy Model

The circular economy is an innovative model of production and consumption that aims to minimize waste and maximize the use of resources. This approach is important for sustainable development and environmental protection. The circular economy offers a comprehensive model that includes not only production but also consumption, with an emphasis on minimizing waste and maximizing resource efficiency. It seeks to create a closed resource cycle, where waste from one process becomes raw material for another. The circular economy is closely linked to sustainable development and social responsibility, encouraging innovations that are environmentally friendly and economically viable.

The main characteristics of the circular economy include:

– Waste minimization – the aim is to reduce the amount of waste generated during the production process and after the use of products;

– Resource maximization – the aim is to preserve the value of products, materials, and resources for as long as possible;

– Repair and recycling – products are designed so that they can be easily repaired and recycled, rather than thrown away;

– Innovation and new business models – it includes new approaches, such as the sharing economy and services instead of ownership, which reduce the need for new resources.

The key terms of the circular economy “reduce”, “reuse”, “repair”, and “recycle” contain the philosophy, which is already becoming leading in terms of production and consumption and in part of the research work on sustainability, durability and specific qualities of materials and products.

The main steps to implement the circular economy paradigm in the European Union include:

– 2015 The European Commission presented an Action Plan for the Circular Economy, which laid the foundations for a new strategy for sustainable development and resource management.

– 2018 New legislative proposals aimed at increasing recycling and reducing waste were adopted.

– 2020 The European Union continued to develop initiatives related to the circular economy, including new rules on packaging and e-waste.

The circular economy is important because it aims to minimize waste and extend the life cycle of products, which is essential for sustainable development. In practice, this means sharing, borrowing, reusing, repairing, and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible. When a product reaches the end of its life, the materials it is made of can continue to be used in other ways. This can

be done over and over again, minimizing waste disposal. This model relies on large quantities of cheap and accessible materials and energy sources.

3.4.6.3. Circular economy - a revolutionary model or an upgrade

The zero-waste technologies of the 1980s are part of the linear model, while the circular economy offers an integrated approach. Zero-waste technologies focus primarily on production, while the circular economy covers the entire life cycle of products. The circular economy encourages broader innovations and new business models that not only reduce waste, but also create new economic opportunities. The circular economy provides a full production - consumption - waste cycle and provides a new serious raw material resource for the economy. The circular economy is simultaneously an accelerated development of the concept of zero-waste, an analytical model and a new approach to using the planet's raw material base while adhering to the principles of sustainable development and implementing high-tech solutions.

The not-so-perfect solutions in development and the accelerated movement towards the accumulation of waste problems and loss of resources is associated with the abandonment of traditional products and products, the replacement of a number of glass packaging with single-use plastic, the abandonment of the collection and processing of glass products, the production and use of single-use plastic products, the too rapid change of models, product designs and aggressive advertising to replace those that are already "out of fashion", the imposition of an aggressive design model in the packaging and sale of

goods - designer packaging has an extremely short life, but on the other hand produces serious amounts of waste.

3.4.6.4. Education and science and the movement towards a circular economy

The transition from waste-free technologies to a circular economy has its reflex to education and science, which change their course both conceptually and technologically. The problem of recycling materials is present in quite old textbooks in some technological disciplines (for example: paper recycling) in textbooks from the beginning of the plastic era (aging, stabilization, and recycling of polymers). The question is how quickly and adequately a problem “enters” education. Waste management is still not sufficiently represented (waste is different for different types of materials and needs specific consideration in different specialties). The circular economy is still only a concept in education. Even sustainable development. Here and there, topics related to sustainable development sneak in, and we need to seriously talk about “education for sustainable development”. For science, this is also a permanently treated problem, it's just that the movement is not as fast as it is at the moment. Science is also guided by modernity and has always preferred the creation of new, rather than the treatment of old (discarded) materials. Science is the one that discovers and promotes, for example, the wonderful characteristics of plastics as a material and discovers the contradiction in the use of plastic products - between one of its most important qualities - sustainability and the need for degradation after use. Flooding the market with single-use plastic

products, and replacing traditionally used glass and metal packaging with plastic polymers are part of the solution and are also a product of science. The question of the participation of education and science is related not only to their professional attitude. Policies, social dimensions, and the environment in which they develop play a significant role. Today, they need new tools and prerequisites to be adequate both thematically and as a dynamic of compliance with the problems.

Under the SMART Project, BG05SFOP001-2.025-0037-C01, funded by the Operational Program “Good Governance” 2014-2020,

co-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund, a survey was conducted on the applicability of the circular economy in Bulgaria.

The survey surveyed 161 respondents (0.03% of all 412,878 non-financial enterprises in the Republic of Bulgaria). The surveyed employees work in 143 enterprises of different sizes:

– micro (average number of employees less than 10 people, and annual turnover not exceeding 3,900,000 BGN, and/or value of assets not exceeding 3,900,000 BGN);

– small (average number of employees less than 50 people, and annual turnover not exceeding 19,500,000 BGN, and/or value of assets not exceeding 19,500,000 BGN);

– medium (average number of employees less than 250 people, and annual turnover not exceeding 97,500,000 BGN, and/or value of assets not exceeding 84,000,000 BGN);

– large (average number of employees exceeds 250 people annual turnover exceeds 97,500,000 BGN, and/or the value of assets exceeds 84,000,000 BGN).

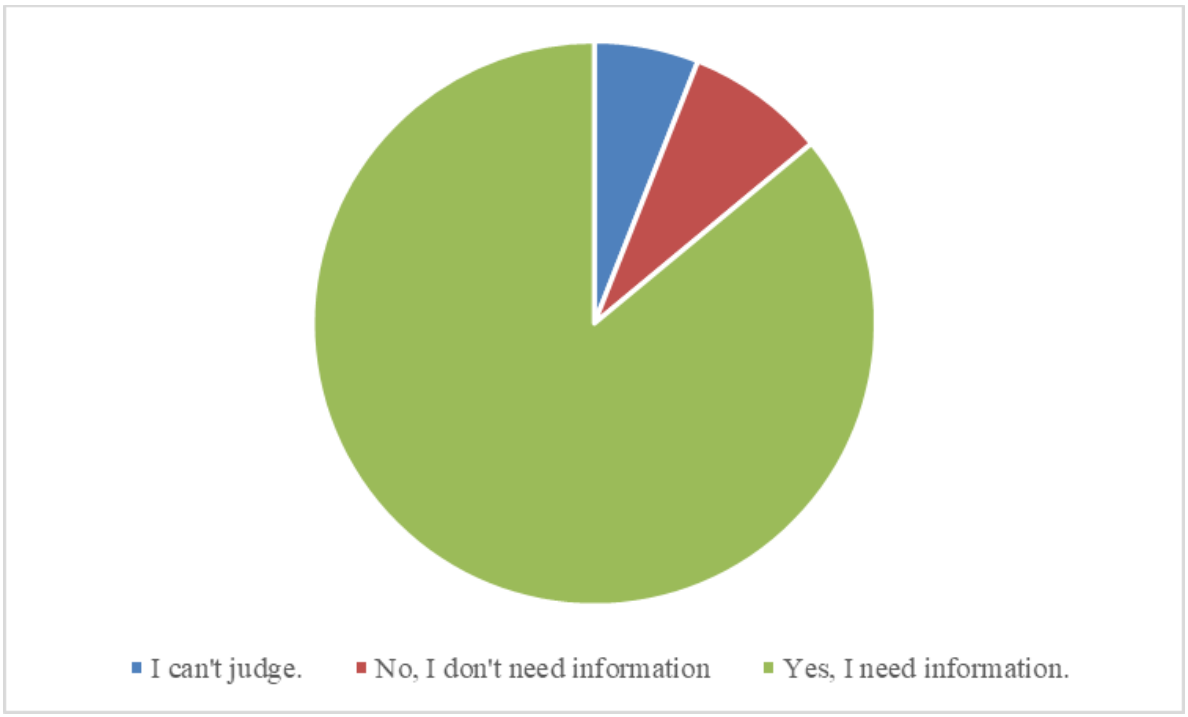


Diagram 13: Need for more and regular information

Source: https://www.eufunds.bg/bg

We will illustrate only some of the results through the following diagrams, which give a clear answer to the questions asked and do not even need a detailed comment, but they do need a thorough analysis (Diagram 13).

Of the respondents, 124 (77%) declare that they have no implemented projects in the field of circular economy. This is a true

reflection of the situation in this sector. The remaining 37 respondents have implemented 47 projects in the circular economy with the following distribution:

– in the field of industrial production, 24 projects have been implemented;

– in the field of household waste, 13 projects have been implemented; Micro - 45%; Small - 31% Medium - 15% Large - 9%.

Types of enterprises by size:

– in the field of agriculture, 7 projects have been implemented;

– in the field of construction, 3 projects have been implemented.

These results are far from even modest and the reasons for this are specified by the respondents as follows:

– there are no incentives for its implementation according to 75% of the respondents;

– the principles of the circular economy and the Strategy of Bulgaria 2021-2027 are not known, according to 72% of the respondents;

– bureaucratic and regulatory obstacles, such as a lack of instructions from relevant departments and developed guidelines for the implementation of real projects according to 61% of respondents;

It is also interesting to note the number of negative responses: 8% of respondents do not believe that there is a lack of incentives for its

implementation; according to 9%, there is sufficient awareness of the issue; and only 3% of respondents believe that there are no bureaucratic obstacles to the implementation of projects in the circular economy[217][218][219][220][221].

Bulgaria is still in the initial phase of implementing the principles of the circular economy. The National Strategy and the Action Plan, adopted by Decision No. 832 of the Council of Ministers on 26.10.2022, are still a draft and have not been approved by the parliament (submitted for public discussion on the platform of the Council of Ministers on 4.11.2022), from which it follows that: the institutions responsible for its implementation cannot plan the relevant events and tasks, as well as that there is no funding provided for both the institutions and the other measures provided for in the Strategy for the Accelerated Implementation of the Principles of the Circular Economy. Without an approved Circular Economy Strategy and Plan, we cannot utilize the funds from the National Recovery and Sustainability Plan, is the conclusion of a study by the World Bank and the Circular Economy Council at the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2021. The current situation has not changed, respectively, the activities set out

[217] *Circular economy: what it is and why it matters, publication in the EP, Brussels, Publication date 24-05-2023.*

[218] *Nozharov, S. The social costs of the circular economy in the EU. Prof Marin Drinov Publishing House of BAS, Sofia, ISBN - 978-619-245-199-8*

[219] *Special Report 17/2023: Circular economy. Slow transition by Member States despite EU action. https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications?ref=SR-2023-17. (Retrieved December 15, 2024).*

[220] *UMG "St. Ivan Rilski". Project "Rethinking sustainable development in European regions through the use of circular economy business models". (Retrieved December 18, 2024).*

[221] *Ministry of Environment and Water. Strategy and Action Plan for the Transition to a Circular Economy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the Period 2021-2027. (Retrieved December 18, 2024).*

in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Transition to a Circular Economy 2022-2027 are no longer being implemented.

Bulgaria is significantly lagging behind in the implementation of the strategy and the planned activities, which is a result of the political crisis in the last few years and the inability to elect a regular government. All this and a complex of economic and other social factors further complicate the situation and create obstacles to the implementation of the national strategy[222223224225226].

[222] *Circular economy: what it is and why it matters, publication in the EP, Brussels, Publication date 24-05-2023.*

[223] *Nozharov, S. The social costs of the circular economy in the EU. Prof Marin Drinov Publishing House of BAS, Sofia, ISBN - 978-619-245-199-8*

[224] *Special Report 17/2023: Circular economy. Slow transition by Member States despite EU action. https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications?ref=SR-2023-17. (Retrieved December 15, 2024).*

[225] *UMG "St. Ivan Rilski". Project "Rethinking sustainable development in European regions through the use of circular economy business models". (Retrieved December 18, 2024).*

[226] *Ministry of Environment and Water. Strategy and Action Plan for the Transition to a Circular Economy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the Period 2021-2027. (Retrieved December 18, 2024).*

CHAPTER FOUR. SOCIAL CHANGES AND EDUCATION

4.1. Social transformations and changes in the educational process

Preparation and educational standards in the various stages of the educational process are undergoing development. Public development and the ongoing social transformations in societies require a rethinking of the main educational paradigms, technologies and tools.

At this stage, the main form of implementing the educational process in Bulgaria (as well as in most countries) is the classroom-based form of training. The lesson is the main organizational form for this realization and represents a unity between the activity of the teacher and that of the students in the individual classes, where a specific topic from the curriculum (program) is developed for a specific learning time. The lesson is a logically complete element of the educational process. It shows the complex interaction between the goal, content, methods and means of education.

Labor markets place ever higher and more diverse demands on the workforce, which must be prepared for successful implementation in the primary labor market. In the modern school, different in nature and nature innovative approaches are being sought to improve the class-lesson format. These are: interactive lessons, using virtual reality technology, using AI in education, blended learning, 3D printing, use the design thinking process, project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, puzzle, cloud computing learning, flipped classroom, peer

learning, peer feedback, crossover teaching, personalized learning, and more.

All this gives certain results, but cannot meet the entire set of requirements that appear so quickly due to the particular dynamism of the processes. Various results of research, studies and analyzes give a clear picture of insufficient preparation of all countries involved in this process.

If in the preparatory and initial course of study from the first to the fourth grade the changes that are made give sufficiently good results, then in the subsequent stages they are rather unsatisfactory. Changes in this process should be made after a thorough and in-depth analysis, because the results are available at a later stage.

The middle course of study from the fifth to the seventh grade, as well as the upper course of study - from the eighth to the twelfth grade, need changes that the class-lesson form cannot provide, and even its improvement will not be able to cover the new requirements that have arisen.

The long-known technology of social programming is a good opportunity that will allow the changes to be effective in a short enough time.

4.1.1. State of education in Bulgaria

Evaluating the educational process is a difficult and difficult task in its essence and characteristics, which by its nature has a number of conditionalities. They all need to be accounted for, noted and presented.

In Bulgaria, various systems for evaluation and analysis of this process are applied, which have certain shortcomings and can be defined and accounted for even with a cursory analysis. The view from the outside gives certain reasons for greater objectivity, but also a reasonable assumption of a lack of detailed knowledge of the internal environment.

The interpretation of Lyuba Yordanova's results from the Bulgarian educational portal "Together in an Hour" is interesting[227].

More than half of Bulgarian students lack the skills for personal and professional fulfillment in the modern world. It hurts our society and our economy.

Half of the Bulgarian students do not have skills such as analytical and critical thinking, making logical connections, reading with understanding, making sense of events, arguing, and solving everyday problems. Bulgaria is among the countries with the greatest educational inequalities in the world – the achievements of students depend on the financial status of their parents, the place where they live, on the type of school they attend.

We hear these conclusions every three years since 2001 when the results of the International Student Assessment Program of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) - PISA - were released. Thus, for 22 years, Bulgaria has been ignoring

[227] *zaednovchas.bg. https://zaednovchas.bg/rezultatite-ot-pisa-znak-koyto-balgaria-veche-22-godini-ne-vizhda/, Retrieved 26 October 2024.*

the clear signs that its education system is not working and wasting generation after generation of students.

The results of the PISA 2022 study, which came out today, are even more alarming and one of the lowest since Bulgaria participated in the OECD program. The share of functionally illiterate 15-year-old students in the areas of reading literacy and mathematics already exceeds 50%. When in three years these students enter the labor market, they will not be able to realize themselves in the highly competitive environment in which the rules of new technologies dictate. They will not be able to compete with their peers from the EU - Bulgaria is in last place among the countries in the union in mathematics and second to last in reading literacy and natural sciences (before Cyprus). And the students from the countries that occupy the top places in the entire PISA ranking - the East Asian countries, Estonia, Switzerland, Canada, the Netherlands, Ireland, etc., are whole school years ahead of the Bulgarian 15-year-olds in their skills[228].

4.1.1.1. Half of Bulgarian students are functionally illiterate

These results do not only affect the students and their future realization. They also affect the society in which we live and which in a few years will wait in vain for active citizens with the desire and skills to change the environment around them for the better. They also affect our economy, which suffers from a lack of quality human resources (Diagram 14).

[228] *zaednovchas.bg. https://zaednovchas.bg/rezultatite-ot-pisa-znak-koyto-balgaria-veche-22-godini-ne-vizhda/, Retrieved 26 October 2024.*

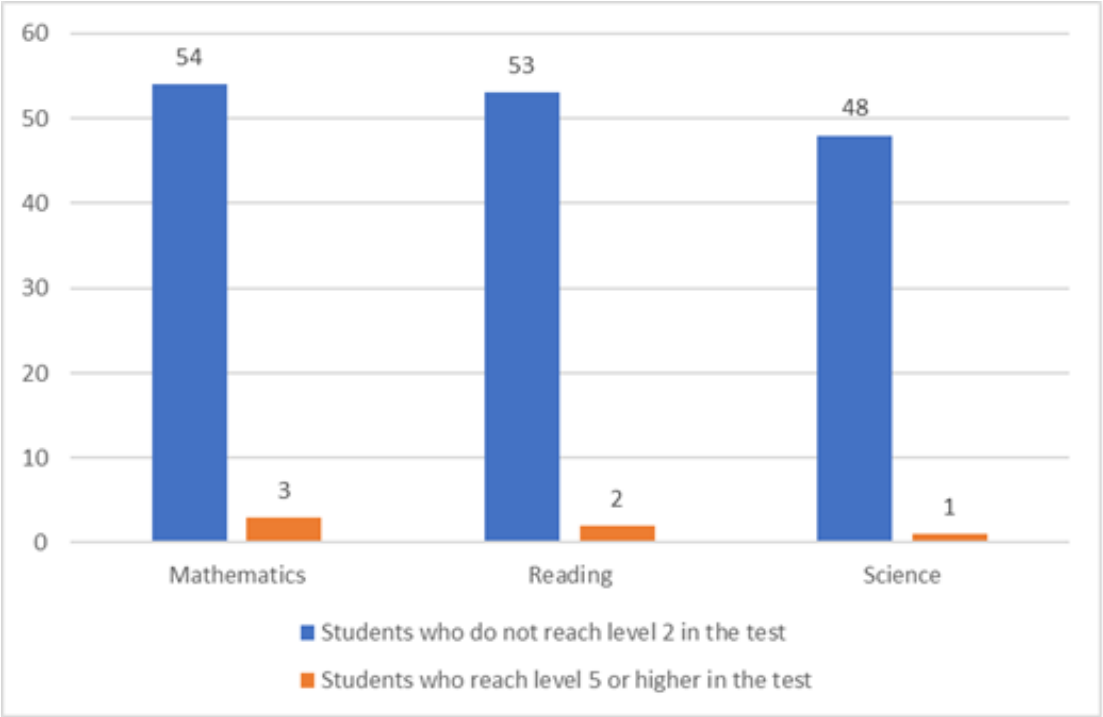


Diagram 14: *A worryingly high percentage of Bulgarian students are below basic level 2 in all directions of PISA 2022*

Source: *zaednovchas.bg*

4.1.1.2. What PISA tells us

PISA is not a test that measures what students have learned from their theoretical study material or after solving a certain number of problems of a similar type. PISA is a complex tool that assesses how well the Bulgarian education system has prepared young people to apply what they learn at school in their lives. PISA tasks are linked to everyday cases in which students have to apply key 21st-century skills. Therefore, the PISA is much more indicative of how well students are prepared for life than the Bulgarian national external assessments and matriculation exams, which mainly measure concepts learned by heart.

This year, the results of Bulgarian students are worrying in all three areas of study - reading literacy, mathematics, and natural sciences. 53% of 15-year-olds have not reached the PISA baseline

reading literacy skills, making them functionally illiterate. In mathematics, the corresponding share is 54%, and in natural sciences – 48%. If we add the lessons that drop out of school before the 9th grade, when PISA is conducted, the share of functionally illiterate Bulgarian citizens jumps even more.

Bulgaria also has a very small proportion of students who reach the highest levels of skills - only 2% in reading literacy, 3% in mathematics and 1% in natural sciences. In 2022, the results of even the best-performing Bulgarian youth are decreasing - which shows that when an educational system is not effective, it affects all students.

Bulgaria's results have been bad since we participated in the research, but this year the decline is particularly serious. PISA shows that today's 15-year-olds are one academic year behind 15-year-olds in 2012. This can be explained by the lack of positive changes in two of the most important factors for student success - the quality of teaching and curricula that in today's highly technological world do nothing to help students[229].

PISA also shows that Bulgaria is failing to compensate for the negative effects of students' socio-economic family environment. The gap between young people who study in so-called elite schools in big cities and come from families of higher economic status and their peers from vocational high schools in smaller towns and disadvantaged socio-economic strata is huge. According to the OECD report, Bulgaria is one

[229] *zaednovchas.bg. https://zaednovchas.bg/rezultatite-ot-pisa-znak-koyto-balgaria-veche-22-godini-ne-vizhda/, Retrieved 26 October 2024.*

of only ten countries in the entire study where at least 50% of the difference in student achievement is explained by differences between schools. (As here we should note that the success of profiled high school students is often not due to their school teachers, but to those from their private lessons.) This scissors are proven every year also by our national exams, but Bulgaria does not make any efforts to close them.

Student outcomes are generally a function of two factors – the way of teaching (which depends on who becomes the teacher, how he is prepared, and how he is supported) and the content of the curricula.

Our educational system, and our society, do not have high requirements for the skills, attitudes, and motivation of people who become teachers. The criteria are low already at the entrance to the pedagogical faculties, they do not increase either when the future teachers graduate or when they apply for the vacant positions in the schools. The selection is mainly based on administrative criteria. The situation is the same with principals, and they are the people on whom it depends how a school will work and what its staff will be like[230].

Teachers (and principals) do not receive quality training - both in universities and in their continuing education. Curricula and teaching methods in higher education are largely outdated and out of line with current theories of learning. Most of the additional training that should build and update the skills of principals and teachers after they are

[230] *zaednovchas.bg. https://zaednovchas.bg/rezultatite-ot-pisa-znak-koyto-balgaria-veche-22-godini-ne-vizhda/, Retrieved 26 October 2024.*

already in school happens pro forma and has no impact on the quality of teaching of teachers and the management skills of principals.

Principals and teachers do not receive support during their work. The mentoring system does not work effectively, the regional education authorities cannot assist schools to improve their performance. The other specialists who have a role in the students' learning - psychologists, resource teachers, assistant teachers, mediators, social workers, etc. - are neglected in terms of working conditions and cannot provide quality support to teachers.

Principals and teachers also do not have fair and objective incentives for professional development – the quality of their work does not affect their career development, the certification of their work is not carried out according to objective standards, and this demotivates and refuses many teachers from the profession. According to data from the World Bank, 90% of newly appointed teachers in Bulgaria leave school within the third year after starting work.

Curricula, on the other hand, are not tailored to the different needs of students and the requirements of the modern world and do not form thinking skills. They continue to encourage memorization of study material and learning for learning's sake rather than for life application.

If curricula do not change—but truly, as a philosophy and a concept, not just by moving material from one class to another—and do not refract academic knowledge through its life application, their use will bring diminishing returns. Firstly, because they do not develop the

skills that society and the economy are looking for, and secondly because today's students (thankfully) are much less inclined to study "for six" without seeing where they will use what they learn.

In addition to the quality of teaching and curricula, Bulgaria must also seriously rethink the structure of the education system and the early profiling of students. PISA unequivocally shows that countries where students are profiled later – after grade IX – show better results. Such reforms have been made by countries such as Estonia and Poland, which have also led to an increase in the skills of their students. In Bulgaria, students start taking exams for so-called elite schools as early as the 4th grade, and the selection after the 7th grade and the huge investment of parents in private lessons completely reinforces the uneven quality of education that Bulgarian children receive[231].

4.1.1.3. Let's experience our PISA shock

When the results of the first edition of PISA came out in 2001 and Germany realized that its education system was not preparing its students as well as the institutions and society thought, the country started talking about "PISA shock". The shock did not end with a few days of media talk but became the engine of a comprehensive reform of German schools, and nine years later the positive results are visible.

Although Bulgaria has already failed in eight editions of the international study, our country continues not to experience its PISA shock. Neither the institutions, the education system, nor our society are

[231] *zaednovchas.bg. https://zaednovchas.bg/rezultatite-ot-pisa-znak-koyto-balgaria-veche-22-godini-ne-vizhda/, Retrieved 26 October 2024.*

shocked and we do not admit that we have a huge problem - we are failing more than half of the students and with it our country.

It's time to panic. To analyze in depth the data that PISA gives us, to learn from the experience of other countries, and to act boldly with decisive big steps. PISA 2025 results will not be better. But for PISA 2028 and PISA 2031, we have a chance if we start the real reforms now – if we improve teacher training, change the philosophy and concept of curricula, end the selection of students, and ensure quality education for all children regardless of where they study. Real reforms will cause great discomfort. But we have to prepare to bear it - not to get ahead in the PISA ranking but for the sake of the future of Bulgarian children[232].

4.1.2. Social programming as an opportunity for change

The modern treatment of the term "programming" defines it as a general principle of management, on the basis of which the subject carries out his actions with certain means in the direction of the goals, according to the dynamic changes of his surrounding environment. In other words, on the specific content, structure and dynamics of the goal, the actions to achieve it are influenced by the challenges of the environment in which the system functions, by the degree of their knowledge and the dependence of the subject, his value orientation, priorities, opportunities, with available, the chosen forms and methods to achieve the desired result. This, more than ever, determines the need

[232] *zaednovchas.bg. https://zaednovchas.bg/rezultatite-ot-pisa-znak-koyto-balgaria-veche-22-godini-ne-vizhda/, Retrieved 26 October 2024.*

for alternative solutions and choosing the optimal option, contributing to management by results.

In the modern social, economic and political space, the phenomenon called social programming has gained popularity. To clarify its essence and significance for the theory and practice of management in the public sector, we refer to the etymology of the term “programming”, the roots of which have ancient Greek origins (“pro” - in advance, before and “gram” - write, denote). From here and its manifestation is in the noun “program”, which means “prescription”, “announcement”, “plan of work, activity... main tasks and goals of a political party, public organization, public actor and others... short an exposition of the content... of a subject of study...”.

In its development, the concept of “programming” in its classical form became established in mathematics as a set of methods for creating an algorithm for the operation of an electronic computing machine... a complete computational process that aims to optimize a certain mathematical expression under given mathematical conditions. Applicable in its varieties of linear programming (a method of finding the maximum or minimum of a linear constraint function in the presence of linear constraint conditions) and nonlinear programming (a set of mathematical methods for determining the largest and smallest value of nonlinear functions in the presence of restrictive conditions), in the modern world of information technology this concept is key to the computer field (identified with coding). Moreover, in its broad interpretation, the term “programming” is associated with a range of

actions in written form expressing prediction, foreshadowing, warning, declaring, proclaiming, prescribing, commanding.

In this set of meanings of the term “programming”, the common thing is that it expresses a certain side of human activity, namely the pre-planning of future actions and activities, indicating their limitations. It is this country that is distinguished by a public character, the manifestation of which is the need, on the one hand, to make a decision, and on the other hand, to prepare a program expressing a certain prescription, a public announcement. In this sense, programming is a process of developing programs, understood as a specific model for purposeful activity to achieve a given goal of social, economic and political development in a period of active social transformations.

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approach of management arises, which is manifested in the “Planning-Programming-Budgeting-System” (PPBS).

Originating in the mid-1960s in the United States as a system of planning, programming, and budgeting, the program-objective approach to management was first applied in the US military. Based on the idea of accelerating the processes of revealing the potential in a system with pre-set goals, the program-target approach quickly entered in the late 1960s and early 1970s and in civil life (initially in non-material, but in consequence also in the material sphere). This is why PPBS is seen as a progress in budgeting and a management 'miracle'. In confirmation of this are the words of the then President of the United States Johnson, according to which: This system must ensure the execution of new tasks faster, better and cheaper, through more and better information, an opportunity must be generated for better decisions... Our decision-making process must be at the same level as that related to armaments and defense. To put it briefly and plainly, we must replace our donkey carts with trucks and our old cannons with new missiles.

What makes the approach unique for application is precisely the integration of its three main components - goals, programs, program-goal structure. And if the goals are connected with the mission (strategy) and hence the need for “unity of goals within an organization and the provision of a basis for the distribution of organizational resources”, therefore also revealing the organizational potential, then the programs are the concretization of the ways, according to which the

resources should be used for the realization of the goals. For this purpose, each program contains certain tasks, distributed over time and assigned to the respective contractors. From here, each of the PPBS components expresses certain management phases. Thus, planning defines long-term goals by stating what is firmly intended to be done. Programming is associated with the analysis and evaluation of the ways and possibilities for the realization of the goals (design and selection of alternative programs) in accordance with the "cost-effect (benefit)" analysis and the application of quantitative management methods. In other words, a program is a plan with definite terms (dates), thus indicating the time when what is firmly intended to be done will be done. Budgeting (financing) is associated with the selection of the most profitable and most effective programs and their inclusion in the budget for financing and implementation. And since the budget is nothing but a program of estimated prices, it gives an idea of how much money is needed and when it should be provided to ensure that what is firmly and at the right time intended to be done can be done. done

Through the systemic approach, the mentioned management phases are integrated into a single system on an interconnected basis and in a certain relationship and dependence with funding. This is the reason why one of the most authoritative specialists in the field of program management - Charles Hitch (former president of the University of California and former assistant secretary of defense of the USA) defines PPBS as "program funding" based on the principles

characteristic of modern management practice. Of primary importance are the principles of:

- long-term goals and expected final results;
- prioritization and sequencing of activities and gradation of resources in the conditions of their limitation;
- complexity when studying any problem - considering each issue or separate field of activity as a system. From here is the treatment of each;
- system as a constituent part of one of a higher order and subordinating the goals and tasks of individual subsystems to the general goal of the system;
- multivariate decisions, ways and means of reaching a given goal, which requires the development of alternative decisions for action;
- evaluation and comparison of the effectiveness of individual alternatives on the basis of objective criteria and with the help of system analysis and its tools (modeling, economic-mathematical methods of research and value analysis, value-efficiency or value-utility, the method of operational research, machine and game imitation, etc.);
- continuity of planning or implementation of the so-called continuous planning horizon and making necessary adjustments to plans and programs in the process of their implementation;

- combining the program-target approach in management with financing of the programs in accordance with the degree of achievement of the goals.

From here, the basis for the functioning of PPBS are the application of the economic approach to each activity- object of management, management based on the system approach and analysis, financing on a program-target basis, which by their nature are three fundamental theoretical-methodological positions. This is what defines PPBS as a management concept with specific goals and objectives. The most important of them are:

- specification of national goals;
- coordination of activities at different levels with these goals;
- analysis and value assessment of possible action alternatives;
- increasing the role and effectiveness of control through financing.

It is the coordination of the activity of the management apparatus and its direction for the realization of the predetermined goals, which is the content of the programming. The value assessment of possible alternatives and their analysis, as well as increasing the role, importance and effectiveness of control, is related to the provision of funds, financing, which is also the most essential element of the system. On this basis, the positive characteristics of PPBS are also derived, the expression of which is in:

- the ability to coordinate planning and preparation for budgeting;

- the application of the continuous planning horizon method, on the basis of which the subordination and centralization of the decision-making process becomes possible;

- conducting a multi-year analysis, which allows to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each possible solution (global and rational), and from here the choice of the alternative adequate to the goals;

- the economic justification of the decisions taken from chap. of the usefulness and expediency of expenses;

- the commitment of the implementation of the decisions made to their financing, which is an expression of the simultaneous economization and efficient use of resources.

It is noteworthy that the PPBS presents the budget as a statement of basic policy that sets out the resources required to fulfill the ultimate management objectives. At the same time, the system considers activities as an intermediate stage of transforming resources into services and utility of each program. And this, by its very nature, is an expression of the "cost-effect" dependence, which is the basis of management by results.

Of course, PPBS is not without its weaknesses. Given that some of the goals and tasks have a specific nature, the opinion of the specialists is "that the great difficulty and the main weakness of the

overall system consists in the general and generally recognized culturally specific values such as peace, freedom, security, justice, education and health care it is difficult to formulate such sub-goals that can serve as effective operational instruments of current policy".

Hence, programming is an important element in goal-oriented systems, a particular variety of which organizational systems are. By its very nature, the organizational system is such a system, the purpose of which is to coordinate the actions of goal-oriented parts, such as social groups and individuals, and goal orientation (means and objects of activity) with the global goal, namely obtaining a certain result (main end product).

In other words, programming in a certain image and manner connects the purposeful part of the organizational system with the means and objects of activity. In this way, a hierarchy arises in the organizational system, a distribution of power-distributive and executive functions between the subjects of the program.

The strong interrelationship between organizational system forms and programming should be taken into account. The "hard" (conditionally called "administrative-command") organizational system, as a rule, determines the corresponding forms of programming and the types of programs of the type of directive plan. The "soft" ("liberal-democratic") system defines only the general orientations and recommendations for reaching them. In practice, however, we can also

encounter different symbioses between “hard” and “soft” systems in the diverse combinations of programming[233234235236237238239240].

This is one side of the relationship between organizational system forms and programming. The other side is not to be neglected, where the manifestation is in the opposite impact of the form of programming and its product-programs on the organizational system. A program developed and fixed in a certain way can determine a certain form of the system.

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[233]*Terziev, V., Kanev, D., & Madanski, V. Social programming as an alternative in front of small business or small business a challenge to social programming. // Proceedings of ADVED 2017- 3rd International Conference on Advances in Education and Social Sciences 9-11 October 2017- Istanbul, Turkey, 2017, ISBN: 978-605-82433-0-9, pp.711-718.*

[234]*Terziev, V. Social entrepreneurship as an opportunity to model an active social program. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2017- 4th International Conference on Education, Social Sciences and Humanities 10-12 July 2017- Dubai, UAE, 2017, ISBN: 978-605-82433-1-6, pp.654-660.*

[235] *Terziev, V., Georgiev, M., & Solovev, D. Management control in implementation of the social program. // Proceedings of INTCESS 2020- 7th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences 20-22 January, 2020 - DUBAI (UAE), International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2020, pp. 870-879, ISBN: 978-605-82433-8-5.*

[236]*Terziev, V. Management control as an effective instrument in implementation of the social program. // 30th Eurasia Business and Economics Society Conference, Eurasian Business and Economics Perspectives, Eurasian Studies in Business and Economics 17, 2021, pp. 87-100, ISSN 2364-5067, ISSN 2364-5075 (electronic), ISBN 978-3-030-65146-6, ISBN 978-3-030-65147-3 (eBook), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65147-3.*

[237]*Terziev, V. Management control as an effective instrument in implementation of the social program. // 30th Eurasia Business and Economics Society Conference, Eurasian Business and Economics Perspectives, Eurasian Studies in Business and Economics 17, 2021, pp. 87-100, ISSN 2364-5067, ISSN 2364-5075 (electronic), ISBN 978-3-030-65146-6, ISBN 978-3-030-65147-3 (eBook), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65147-3.*

[238]*Terziev, V. The role and place of social programming in public governance. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2019- 6th International Conference on Education, Social Sciences and Humanities 24-26 June 2019- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2019, pp. 354-362, ISBN: 978-605-82433-6-1.*

[239] *Terziev, V. Social programming in the context of social economy development in Bulgaria. // 51st International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development (Rabat, 26-27 March 2020), Economic and Social Development, 2020, pp. 387-396, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[240]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Social transformations and social programming. // 112th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – “Creating a unified foundation for Sustainable Development: Interdisciplinarity in Research and Education” – Varazdin, 4-5 June, 2024, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2024, pp. 251-256, ISSN 1849-7535.*

4.1.2.1. Changes in the program (corrections), as a rule, also lead to corresponding changes in the system

Programming is also directly related to another historically crafted approach to managerial impact. It's about the culture. Here, too, a deep interrelation is found, rooted in the essence of culture. It, culture, is seen as a“specific human way of activity”, as a “set of sustainable forms of activity”. It is the basis of the life activity of the individual or personal culture, the culture of the social group or class culture, or the culture of society as a whole. Such an approach is complemented by the axiological or value essence, the manifestation of which consists in the fact that culture is considered as a “set of human values”, as everything that exalts, ennobles, humanizes life and human relations.

In recent years, the sociological approach to culture has been increasingly developed, according to which it is understood as “a specific, genetically non-inheritable set of means, methods, forms, patterns and orientations for interaction between people with the living environment, which they create in the joint one's life to maintain certain structures of activity and communication”.

In the sociological approach, culture is considered as “a system of collectively accepted values, beliefs, patterns and norms of behavior inherent in a certain group of people... Culture is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of a given group from another. ”

It should be taken into account that the general level and characteristics of culture in a given society have a significant impact on the forms and content of social programming.

Social programming in its cultural expression (aspect) is based on the fact that only social relations contributing to the development of the human personality can create all the necessary “prerequisites for the “algorithmic nature of culture”, as a way of activity, to become consistently rational, overcoming stochastic subjectivity, elemental uncontrollability and the prerequisites for free human activity to constantly provide the output of these “algorithms”, the ascent to the modes of activity renewed by the own human manifestations of creative abilities”.

This concludes the full manifestation of the essence of social planning in its creative impact on social reality, ensuring its practical transformation in accordance with adequately known values of the human world.

The approach to culture as a codified system (and, as a rule, reflected in carriers of a different kind), patterns and norms of behavior, activity, communication and interaction between people, carrying a regulatory and control function in society, deepens the understanding of its interrelationship with social programming .

The creation of an image and a way of acting, the manifestation of which is in the programs in all elements, starting from the disclosure of the goal and ending with the verification of the achieved result,

becomes the basis of the value orientation of the subjects, the awareness and choice of the most significant needs and these or those ways to satisfy them. This, in turn, is related to the normative side of culture, which through programming receives a regulatory-management solution. And here is the manifestation of the ambiguous relationship between programming and the market, with its "invisible hand".

At first glance, the contradiction between the two categories is imposed. Programming, with its immanent property to introduce systematicity, structuring processes, formalizing the impact on them and the market, with its classic property of spontaneous interweaving and collision between different social forces.

Upon a deeper insight into the nature of these two categories, a number of points that connect them stand out. First of all, social programming through the market, as a social institution, and state programming of the market economy, and through it the social sphere, should be distinguished.

The first of them appears as social programming, by means of the "invisible hand of the market", discovered by Adam Smith. The "invisible hand of the market", programming the selfish interests of producers and consumers, directs them to a goal beyond their intentions. Pursuing their own interests, they take actions that serve the interests of society.

Accordingly, effective social programs should anticipate the benefits of investments in this or that of their constituents. Entirely

financed from the state budget, state programs are not efficient, neither economically nor socially, since the economy as a whole determines the well-being of society by definition.

Programmatically, Adam Smith expresses this statement in the principle of “Laisser faire”, according to which individuals and enterprises are obliged to act in the economy without the intervention of the state. In the practice of socio-historical development of that time, this situation was not realized in an absolute form in any country. However, state intervention in the economy until the 20th century was “passive”, incidental, and in most cases took the form of emergency measures during wars or indirect regulation, through legislation and the monetary system.

Unsatisfactory results in the educational process have their subsequent manifestations, such as a lack of sufficient skills and habits, an inability to meet certain minimum requirements for preparation in the higher education system, as well as the presence of sufficient work skills to realize the labor market. This objectively raises questions about the need for changes in the entire educational process, as well as in specific educational technologies. The improvement of the existing educational technologies only partially succeeds in responding to the ever-present new requirements, as well as to the dynamically changing environment.

The classroom system fails to satisfy the new requirements of the environment or the change happens too slowly, which leads to a set of crisis situations.

Social programming is a good opportunity that has its history and implementation. Social programming in much more detail can read and establish the requirements, plan the process, as an opportunity, and control its implementation. Of course, the preparation for this undertaking requires certain and targeted efforts in order to have some confidence in a good result. Some of the educational systems of countries in Asia much earlier and faster reconfigured their systems in a different way, which can be borrowed and tested, according to the internal environment. The ongoing processes of social transformations in societies are an objective fact, which should be studied in the necessar comprehensiveness, and societies prepared for the upcoming changesy[241][242][243][244][245][246][247][248].

[241]*Terziev, V., Kanev, D., & Madanski, V. Social programming as an alternative in front of small business or small business a challenge to social programming. // Proceedings of ADVED 2017- 3rd International Conference on Advances in Education and Social Sciences 9-11 October 2017- Istanbul, Turkey, 2017, ISBN: 978-605-82433-0-9, pp.711-718.*

[242]*Terziev, V. Social entrepreneurship as an opportunity to model an active social program. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2017- 4th International Conference on Education, Social Sciences and Humanities 10-12 July 2017- Dubai, UAE, 2017, ISBN: 978-605-82433-1-6, pp.654-660.*

[243]*Terziev, V., Georgiev, M., & Solovev, D. Management control in implementation of the social program. // Proceedings of INTCESS 2020- 7th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences 20-22 January, 2020 - DUBAI (UAE), International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2020, pp. 870-879, ISBN: 978-605-82433-8-5.*

[244]*Terziev, V. Management control as an effective instrument in implementation of the social program. // 30th Eurasia Business and Economics Society Conference, Eurasian Business and Economics Perspectives, Eurasian Studies in Business and Economics 17, 2021, pp. 87-100, ISSN 2364-5067, ISSN 2364-5075 (electronic), ISBN 978-3-030-65146-6, ISBN 978-3-030-65147-3 (eBook), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65147-3.*

[245]*Terziev, V. Management control as an effective instrument in implementation of the social program. // 30th Eurasia Business and Economics Society Conference, Eurasian Business and Economics Perspectives, Eurasian Studies in Business and Economics 17, 2021, pp. 87-100, ISSN 2364-5067, ISSN 2364-5075 (electronic), ISBN 978-3-030-65146-6, ISBN 978-3-030-65147-3 (eBook), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65147-3.*

[246]*Terziev, V. The role and place of social programming in public governance. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2019- 6th International Conference on Education, Social Sciences and Humanities 24-26 June 2019- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2019, pp. 354-362, ISBN: 978-605-82433-6-1.*

[247]*Terziev, V. Social programming in the context of social economy development in Bulgaria. // 51st International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development (Rabat, 26-27 March 2020), Economic and Social Development, 2020, pp. 387-396, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[248]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Social transformations and social programming. // 112th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – "Creating a unified foundation for Sustainable Development: Interdisciplinarity in Research and Education" – Varazdin, 4-5 June, 2024, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2024, pp.251-256, ISSN 1849-7535.*

4.2. An innovative approach to the Bulgarian school

The forces causing change in the organization are numerous and different. Only a few key categories of forces of change can be deduced to be summed up and explored to offer effective models for change management, namely: population, technology, information processes, communications, competition, and social prerequisites.

With the changes that occurred in the first decade of the XXI century concerning the accession of Bulgaria into the European Union, the governance of the learning processes at school has become increasingly important for guaranteeing the quality of education. Managing these processes is also becoming more crucial with the increased integration of new educational and information technologies. Key aspects within the learning processes are the individual capabilities and peculiarities of each pupil, the latter's adaptability to the environment at school aiming to gain the maximum amount of knowledge, and the development of skills useful for the future employability of the student.

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environment at school aiming to gain the maximum amount of knowledge, and the development of skills useful for the future employability of the student.

The meaning of innovation is when it is tied to the economic growth of the society, and the improvement of the standard of living. Innovation creates competition, and competition is the basis of progress. Innovation and education are the engines for successful development and progress. At first glance, innovation in education is not directly related to economic growth. Very often the implementation of an innovation is met with resistance. This action requires additional investment of time, additional efforts, and additional funds and the result is not always positive. This is the main obstacle to innovation in the school, and not only there. An important task is to motivate the team to implement the innovation, and to provide the necessary material and expert base to ensure success.

4.2.1. Innovations in education

Innovation is the practical implementation of ideas that result in the introduction of new goods or services, or improvement in offering goods or services[249]. ISO TC 279 in the standard ISO 56000:2020 defines innovation as "a new or changed entity, realizing or redistributing value"[250]. Others have different definitions; a common

[249] *Schumpeter, J.A. The theory of economic development: an inquiry into profits, capital, credit, interest, and the business cycle. Opie, Redvers, Elliott, John E. New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1983. ISBN 0-87855-698-2.*

[250] *"ISO 56000:2020 (EN). Innovation management — Fundamentals and vocabulary". ISO. 2020.*

element in the definitions is a focus on newness, improvement, and spread of ideas or technologies.

Innovation often takes place through the development of more effective products, processes, services, technologies, artworks[251], or business models that innovators make available to markets, governments, and society.

Innovation is related to, but not the same as, invention[252]: Innovation is more apt to involve the practical implementation of an invention (i.e. new/improved ability) to make a meaningful impact in a market or society[253], and not all innovations require a new invention[254].

Technical innovation often manifests itself via the engineering process when the problem being solved is of a technical or scientific nature. The opposite of innovation is exnovation.

Surveys of the literature on innovation have found a variety of definitions. In 2009, Baregheh et al. found around 60 definitions in different scientific papers, while a 2014 survey found over 40[255]. Based on their survey, Baragheh et al. attempted to formulate a multidisciplinary definition and arrived at the following: “Innovation is the multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into

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[251]*Lijster, T., ed. The Future of the New: Artistic Innovation in Times of Social Acceleration. Arts in society. Valiz, 2018. ISBN 978-94-92095-58-9.*

[252]*Bhasin, K. This is the Difference Between “Invention” and “Innovation”. Business Insider, https://www.businessinsider.com/this-is-the-difference-between-invention-and-innovation-2012-4, Retrieved November 18, 2024.*

[253]*Morgan, J. What's The Difference Between Invention And Innovation?, Forbes, 2015. https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2015/09/10/whats-the-difference-between-invention-and-innovation/, Retrieved November 18, 2024.*

[254]*Schumpeter, J.A. Innovation is possible without anything we should identify as invention, and invention does not necessarily induce innovation, Business Cycles, 1939, Vol. 1.*

[255]*Edison, H., Ali, N.B., & Torkar, R. Towards innovation measurement in the software industry. Journal of Systems and Software 86, 2013, pp. 1390–1407.*

new/improved products, service or processes, to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace"[256].

In a study of how the software industry considers innovation, the following definition given by Crossan and Apaydin was considered to be the most complete. Crossan and Apaydin built on the definition given in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Oslo Manual[257]: Innovation is the production or adoption, assimilation, and exploitation of a value-added novelty in economic and social spheres; renewal and enlargement of products, services, and markets; development of new methods of production; and the establishment of new management systems. It is both a process and an outcome.

American sociologist Everett Rogers, defined it as follows: "An idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption"[258].

According to Alan Altshuler and Robert D. Behn, innovation includes original invention and creative use. These writers define innovation as generation, admission, and realization of new ideas, products, services, and processes[259].

Two main dimensions of innovation are the degree of novelty (i.e. whether an innovation is new to the firm, new to the market, new to the

[256]*Baregheh, A., Rowley, J., & Sambrook, S. Towards a multidisciplinary definition of innovation, Management Decision, 2009, Vol. 47 No. 8, pp. 1323-1339. https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740910984578.*

[257]*Edison, H., Ali, N.B., & Torkar, R. Towards innovation measurement in the software industry. Journal of Systems and Software 86, 2013, pp. 1390–1407.*

[258]*Rogers, E.M. Diffusion of innovations (5th ed.). New York: Free Press, 2003. ISBN 0-7432-2209-1.*

[259]*Innovation in American Government: Challenges, Opportunities, and Dilemmas. Brookings Inst Pr. 1 June 1997. ISBN 978-0-8157-0358-7.*

industry, or new to the world) and kind of innovation (i.e. whether it is process or product-service system innovation)[260]. Organizational researchers have also distinguished innovation separately from creativity, by providing an updated definition of these two related constructs:

Workplace creativity concerns the cognitive and behavioral processes applied when attempting to generate novel ideas. Workplace innovation concerns the processes applied when attempting to implement new ideas. Specifically, innovation involves some combination of problem/opportunity identification, the introduction, adoption, or modification of new ideas germane to organizational needs, the promotion of these ideas, and the practical implementation of these ideas[261].

Peter Drucker wrote: Innovation is the specific function of entrepreneurship, whether in an existing business, a public service institution, or a new venture started by a lone individual in the family kitchen. It is how the entrepreneur either creates new wealth-producing resources or endows existing resources with enhanced potential for creating wealth[262].

In general, innovation is distinguished from creativity by its emphasis on the implementation of creative ideas in an economic

[260]*Edison, H., Ali, N.B., & Torkar, R. Towards innovation measurement in the software industry. Journal of Systems and Software 86, 2013, pp. 1390–1407.*

[261]*Hughes, DJ., Lee, A., Tian, A.W., Newman, A., & Legood, A. (2018). Leadership, creativity, and innovation: A critical review and practical recommendations. The Leadership Quarterly. 29 (5): 549–569. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2018.03.00.*

[262] *Drucker, P.F. The Discipline of Innovation. Harvard Business Review. 2002. Retrieved November 18, 2024.*

setting. Amabile and Pratt in 2016, drawing on the literature, distinguish between creativity ("the production of novel and useful ideas by an individual or small group of individuals working together") and innovation ("the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization")[263].

In 1957 the economist Robert Solow was able to demonstrate that economic growth had two components. The first component could be attributed to growth in production including wage labour and capital. The second component was found to be productivity. Ever since, economic historians have tried to explain the process of innovation itself, rather than assuming that technological inventions and technological progress result in productivity growth[264].

The concept of innovation emerged after the Second World War, mostly thanks to the works of Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950) who described the economic effects of innovation processes as Constructive destruction. Today, consistent neo-Schumpeterian scholars see innovation not as neutral or apolitical processes[265][266]. Rather, innovation can be seen as a socially constructed process. Therefore, its conception depends on the political and societal context in which

[263]*Amabile, T.M., & Pratt, M.G. (2016). The dynamic componential model of creativity and innovation in organizations: Making progress, making meaning. Research in Organizational Behavior. 36: 157–183. doi:10.1016/j.riob.2016.10.001.*

[264]*Dudley, L. Mothers of Innovation: How Expanding Social Networks Gave Birth to the Industrial Revolution. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 2012, p. 4. ISBN 9781443843126.*

[265] *Jasanoff, S., & Kim, S-H. (2015). Dreamscapes of Modernity. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 978-0-226-27652-6, doi:10.7208/chicago/9780226276663.001.0001.*

[266]*Papaioannou, T. (2020). Innovation, value-neutrality and the question of politics: unmasking the rhetorical and ideological abuse of evolutionary theory. Journal of Responsible Innovation. 7 (2): 238–255.*

innovation is taking place[267]. According to Shannon Walsh, "innovation today is best understood as innovation under capital"[268]. This means that the current hegemonic purpose for innovation is capital valorization and profit maximization, exemplified by the appropriation of knowledge (e.g., through patenting), the widespread practice of Planned obsolescence (incl. lack of repairability by design), and the Jevons paradox, that describes negative consequences of eco-efficiency as energy-reducing effects tend to trigger mechanisms leading to energy-increasing effects[269].

4.2.2 The technology of innovative schools in Bulgaria

Innovative schools are a model for building a new educational paradigm, through which students will improve their educational results and increase critical thinking and creativity through innovative educational processes, teaching methods, school leadership, and learning strategies.

To be defined as innovative, the school must prove that by introducing innovative elements, by developing a new way the educational content, curricula, and programs, increase the quality of education, i.e. innovative schools have more freedom in applying new, modern, innovative methods of teaching the learning material.

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[267] *Robra, B., Pazaitis, A., Giotitsas, C., & Pansera, M. (2023). From creative destruction to convivial innovation – A post-growth perspective. Technovation. 125: 102760. ISN 0166-4972, doi:10.1016/j.technovation.2023.102760.*

[268] *Walsh, S. (2023). Marx, subsumption and the critique of innovation. Organization, 30(2), 345-360. https://doi.org/10.1177/13505084211015377.*

[269] *Lange, S., Pohl, J., & Santarius, T. (2020). Digitalization and energy consumption. Does ICT reduce energy demand?. Ecological Economics. 176: 106760. Bibcode:2020EcoEc.17606760L. doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2020.106760. ISSN 0921-8009.*

From the point of view of educational management, we can consider the school as a company, where the final product is a built personality. In the entire process of education and upbringing from the child to the completed young man (girl), we form certain knowledge, skills, and competencies, i.e. a personality is formed with a certain creative and constantly critical thinking.

The Bulgarian education system has not yet reached the level of change. Traditional reproductive education still dominates. Knowledge is taught that students must learn and then reproduce. This suggests that innovations in school occur under the pressure of ongoing processes.

However, with the adoption of the new Law on School and Preschool Education in 2016, the stereotype is gradually breaking. An opportunity is given to the idea-oriented, functional education-seeking teachers to come forward. Accompanying documents to the law Ordinance No. 9 of August 19, 2016, for the institutions in the preschool and school education system; Section II of Ordinance No. 5 of November 30, 2015, on general education, Ordinance No. 4 of November 30, 2015, on the curriculum, Ordinance No. 10 of September 1, 2016, on the organization of activities in school education enable schools to switched to a new way of development or these are different types of innovative solutions. An opportunity is given to create innovative schools that will become a model of the modern school. A school where students will develop the competencies necessary for their social adaptation, develop critical thinking, and create thinking leaders.

For a school to be defined as innovative, it must undertake purposeful planned change. It is necessary to introduce innovative practices that can be implemented both in the form of an educational product and in the organization of the educational process. And this introduction must be done following certain principles.

In order to be defined as such, a Bulgarian school must meet certain characteristics. Some of the most important characteristics of an innovative school are presented without claiming that the list is exhaustive:

– The pedagogical specialist is above all a partner in the educational process;

– Pedagogical specialists use modern pedagogical techniques in their direct work;

– Takes into account the individuality of each student, his needs and seeks the best solution for adaptation in the modern social environment;

– Educates in a spirit of criticality and creativity;

– Changes the learning environment by making it as close as possible to the real world (moved classroom, flipped classroom, etc.);

– Removes boundaries between subjects by stimulating students to make causal connections between them;

– Actively involves parents and the public in the process of upbringing and education.

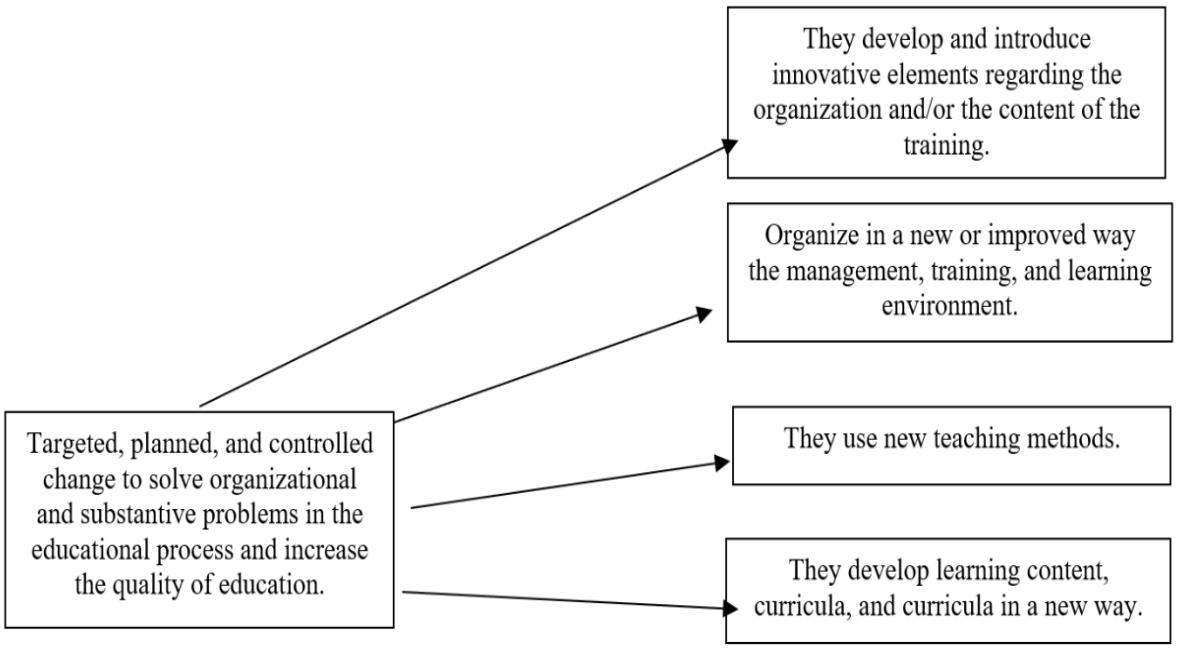


Figure 2: *Model of an innovative school*

Source: *Authors' elaboration*

However, our task is not to give grades on which school is innovative and which is not. The task facing education in Bulgaria is to create conditions for schools to be innovative, if not all, for the most part. No framework can be created in which to place innovative schools. This would mean predetermining their creative capabilities. An example model of an innovative school (Figure2).

4.2.3. Innovative schools: learning and teaching in the digital era

The European Parliament has published a report on “Innovative Schools, Teacher & Learning in the Digital Era”. The report analyses new ways of social-digital participation and argues that schools need to adapt to new technologies. It evaluates new practices of knowledge creation, asks how to implement new technologies in schools, and assesses what pedagogic creations are required from teachers.

People who are born after 1980 are often called digital natives, although the term is critically analysed, the authors argue that education systems need to recognise that young people use ICT in everyday life. Schools, teachers and education authorities need to accept this and implement new teaching practices. Pupils need to be prepared for the challenges of the 21st century, such as the digitalisation of the working and private life. Hence it is necessary to teach them a responsible use of ICT, which enables them "to regulate their own use of mobile devices inside and outside of schools."

According to the report, a teacher is required to give "strategic guidance" to pupils, as teachers have an "understanding of the long term objective of learning". "Technical innovations are not necessarily pedagogical innovations", which means that teachers have to face the challenge to accompany pupils in their learning process and to sort out techniques that are not useful. To enable teachers to do this, the report proposes to improve teacher training. ETUCE highlights that the challenges to address these topics cannot be solved by teachers alone. The digital revolution relays additional responsibility to everyone involved in the education system.

4.2.3.1. Change is driven by people, not by technology

Although it seems as if everyday lives are different "because" of certain technologies, the reality is that everyday lives are different because people have chosen to use those technologies. Technologies do not, of their own accord, predetermine social or organizational

change[270][271]. Rather, technologies provide occasions for people to experiment and attempt to reconcile present conditions with understandings about the past. In the context of schooling, successful technology use is thus influenced by the norms, expectations, and personal experiences of the users (i.e., educators and students)[272][273]. Viewed through this lens, it becomes evident that many "technology problems" might actually be "people problems." For example, the problem of successful engagement in OERs might involve issues of motivation, sense of investment, and the ability to selfregulate one's learning. Similarly, a successful 1:1 program might depend also upon issues of having enough staff to support technology use, teacher's understandings about how to integrate technology into instruction, and student's choices about when (and when not) to use a particular device. The effective use of computer data systems might also depend upon issues involving teachers' knowledge about assessment and instruction, confidence in the data at hand, and local cues from leaders about how and why data ought to be used.

Altogether, these "people problems" highlight the importance of conversation, talk, and training to technology adoption[274][275]. Rather

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[270]*Markus, M.L., & Robey, D. (1988). Information technology and organizational change: causal structure in theory and research. Management science, 34(5), 583- 598.*

[271]*Orlikowski, W.J., & Barley, S.R. (2001). Technology and institutions: What can research on information technology and research on organizations learn from each other? MIS quarterly, 25(2), 145-165.*

[272]*Cho, V., & Wayman, J. C. (2014). Districts' efforts for data use and computer data systems: The role of sensemaking in system use and implementation. Teachers College Record, 116(2). http://www.tcrecord.org/library/Abstract.asp?ContentId=17349, Retrieved November 18, 2024.*

[273]*Ertmer, P.A. (2005). Teacher pedagogical beliefs: The final frontier in our quest for technology integration? Educational technology research and development,53(4), 25-39.*

[274]*Ertmer, P.A. (2005). Teacher pedagogical beliefs: The final frontier in our quest for technology integration? Educational technology research and development,53(4), 25-39.*

[275]*Leonardi, P.M. (2009). Crossing the implementation line: The mutual constitution of technology and organizing across development and use activities. Communication Theory, 19(3), 278-310.*

than expect OERs to produce learning in and of themselves, people might need to be trained and supported in getting the most out of their online experiences. Similarly, teachers might need increased time to explore and opportunities to collaborate around new technologies. Engaging in such activities helps teachers to innovate new teaching and apply new knowledge[276][277]. Unfortunately, teachers in Europe may vary greatly when it comes to time and opportunities to connect with colleagues[278]. Accordingly, future investments in technology might benefit from similar investments in helping people to understand and envision how to get the most out of the tools at hand.

4.2.3.2. The importance of media and multimedia resources

The value of the focus technologies described in this brief is premised on the capacity for technologies to deliver information to learners or to teachers. For example, OERs and 1:1 initiatives assume that users will find value in text, audio, and video materials. Similarly, computer data systems do not simply provide educators with raw data about students. Rather, data is analyzed and displayed via some form of visualization, such as a color- coded graph, matrix, or map of learning objectives. It is important to realize, however, that not all media or presentations of information carry the same value for recipients.

[276] *Bredeson, P.V. (2002). Designs for learning: A new architecture for professional development in schools. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.*

[277] *Putnam, R.T., & Borko, H. (2000). What do new views of knowledge and thinking have to say about research on teacher learning? Educational Researcher, 29(1), 4–15. http://doi.org/10.2307/1176586.*

[278] *OECD. (2014). TALIS 2013 results: An international perspective on teaching and learning. Paris: OECD Publishing.*

Different forms of media may communicate with varying degrees of richness[279][280].

Thus, it might be important to question whether particular media are suited to the challenge. For example, people who attempt to learn via video might pay more attention to the likability of the presenters, rather than to the content of the knowledge presented[281]. Similarly, the design and aesthetics of graphs or other visualizations influence how well people comprehend the information presented[282]. In other words, people are not simply passive recipients of media. Instead, people must work to interpret and to make sense of the information before them. Consequently, one next step may involve designing and refining what users experience when attempting to learn using computers. Some content might be best shared using one form of media (e.g., text, audio, video), while at the knowledge might best be shared using several at once. Further, the experience of these media should be personalized and interactive. These measures could include the use of quizzes, simulations, online discussion, or face-to-face conversations. For example, a student in a traditional classroom attempting to learn via technology might be asked to reproduce knowledge, apply it, or reflect about it with other learners. Similarly, a non-traditional student, such as an early school leaver attempting to regain credits, might have similar

[279]*Carlson, J.R., & Zmud, R.W. (1999). Channel expansion theory and the experiential nature of media richness perceptions. Academy of Management Journal, 42(2), 153–170.*

[280]*Daft, R.L., & Lengel, R.H. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media richness, and structural design. Management Science, 32(5), 554–571.*

[281]*Ferran, C., & Watts, S. (2008). Videoconferencing in the field: A heuristic processing model. Management Science, 54(9).*

[282]*Purchase, H. C. (2002). Metrics for graph drawing aesthetics. Journal of Visual Languages & Computing, 13(5), 501–516. http://doi.org/10.1006/jvlc.2002.0232.*

experiences through an online environment. A teacher attempting to learn about students' performance might be asked to summarize, make predictions, or converse with other educators about the data.

4.2.3.3. The assumption of networked communications

The value of the technologies in this brief is also premised on the availability of satellite- based or Internet communications. The promise of OERs is to connect people to the information they need, whenever they need it. Digital devices provide students with points of access to information. Computer data systems can ensure that student data flows from school to school, grade to grade, and teacher to teacher. Although it might seem obvious that geographically remote areas might benefit fromincreased communications infrastructure, it is also important to bear in mind that many students living in poverty face a similar digital divide. These students may see their peers interacting with digital worlds, but themselves have neither devices nor plans for accessing such worlds themselves. Thus, addressing inequities in education is a matter both of geography and of socioeconomics. The potential of OERs is limited if learners must hunt, beg, or borrow for Internet access. Similarly, 1:1 computing might contribute to a few classroom lessons, but the potential value of devices drops when students cannot bring them home or cannot communicate with outside worlds. Further, the observation of trends in student data and the ability of teachers to pick up where others have left off is predicated on local privacy policies and interoperability of data systems. Actions to address these challenges are unique to each technology in question. They range from

creating publically available Internet access, to increasing the centralization of data systems, to addressing concerns about privacy and security.

4.2.3.4. What might stay the same?

This report addresses questions about the role of technology in supporting educational change. In considering such issues, it is easy to become wrapped up in exuberance around the promises of technology. This exuberance, however, leads to blind spots regarding whether technologies are actually effective at helping students learn[283][284]. As much as the digital era might seem inescapable today, it is still a relatively new and fresh even in the arc of human progress[285]. Now is the time for careful reflection about the place of technology in schools. On one hand, some technological innovations might be misused or used to the detriment of student learning. Email provides an example from our everyday lives. Despite promises that email would free up our time, it has actually become a source of increased stress and lost time. Similarly, schools in the United States wrestle with narrow definitions of student learning that in turn lead to shallow and questionable uses of computer data systems[286][287]. On the same note, the increased use of

[283] *Brooks, C. (2011). Locating leadership: The blind spot in Alberta's technology policy discourse. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 19(26), http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=EJ956002, Retrieved November 18, 2024.*

[284] *Cho, V., & Wayman, J.C. (2015). Assumptions, strategies, and organization: Central office implementation of computer data systems. Journal of School Leadership, 25(6).*

[285] *Turkle, S. (2011). Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other. New York, NY: Basic Books.*

[286] *Booher-Jennings, J. (2005). Below the bubble: "Educational triage" and the Texas accountability system. American Educational Research Journal, 42(2), 231–268.*

[287] *Cho, V., & Wayman, J. C. (2014). Districts' efforts for data use and computer data systems: The role of sensemaking in system use and implementation. Teachers College Record, 116(2). http://www.tcrecord.org/library/Abstract.asp?ContentId=17349, Retrieved November 18, 2024.*

Internet-capable digital devices raises questions about student distraction[288], teacher and student privacy[289], and the adverse effects of screen time[290][291].

Future research will be important in determining productive and counterproductive approaches to technology use. Evaluations are needed, not only to examine the most effective designs for OERs, 1:1 initiatives, and computer data systems, but also regarding how they might compare to more traditional educational methods. Under what conditions do such technologies make a difference? Under what conditions are conventional methods still best? Finally, there are some conversations that research might support, but ultimately be unable to answer. For example, what is the definition of a successful student? Do conventional methods promote any social values, qualities, or skills worth preserving? How is responsible, ethical technology use to be promoted outside of the school walls?

An innovation makes sense when it is economically justified and helps to raise the standard of living. An indicator of the development of a society is the level of education and inclusion of different social

[288]*Hatakka, M., Andersson, A., & Grönlund, Å. (2013). Students' use of one to one laptops: a capability approach analysis. Information Technology & People, 26(1), 94- 112.*

[289]*Peck, C.M., & Mullen, C.A. (2008). New media, new voices: A complex school public relations and human resources challenge. Journal of School Public Relations, 29(3), 401–424.*

[290]*Pagani, L.S., Fitzpatrick, C., Barnett, T.A., & Dubow, E. (2010). Prospective associations between early childhood television exposure and academic, psychosocial, and physical well-being by middle childhood. Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, 164(5), 425–431. http://doi.org/10.1001/archpediatrics.2010.50/.*

[291]*Uhls, Y.T., Michikyan, M., Morris, J., Garcia, D., Small, G.W., Zgourou, E., & Greenfield, P.M. (2014). Five days at outdoor education camp without screens improves preteen skills with nonverbal emotion cues. Computers in Human Behavior, 39, 387–392. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.05.036.*

communities. In this way, innovation and education go in the same direction[292].

The Bulgarian education system, and the school in particular, cannot yet meet the requirements of the ongoing social processes. The dynamics of the development of social relations and new social requirements are a challenge for education. Changes in the educational environment are much slower and follow certain historical patterns. Transformations in societies are dynamic and require much faster changes that are not accompanied only by upgrading existing educational techniques and technologies. All these undertakings require a thorough scientific approach, which should be accompanied by an accurate analysis of ongoing social processes.

4.3. Sustainable education and education for sustainable development

Education for sustainable development is an opportunity for people to cope with change, but it should also enable them to shape change. Innovations in Education for Sustainable Development are closely related to new skills, curricula, teaching methods, and forecasting tools, which should become the main measure of quality education.

[292]*Terziev, V., & Bogdanova, M. (2019). The academic capitalism and the new business model of the universities. // Proceedings of ADVED 2019 - 5th International Conference on Advances in Education and Social Sciences, 21-23 October 2019, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2019, pp. 477-484, ISBN: 978-605-82433-7-8.*

4.3.1. Sustainable education

After the adoption of Agenda 21 and the United Nations Declaration on Sustainable Development, the idea has been implemented in various fields, including the field of education. These documents primarily talk about sustainable education. A concept of sustainable education is being built, which attempts to unite education and the principles of sustainable development, while simultaneously preserving the status of education and its importance for global development. The main focus of the concept is the sustainability and stability of the education system itself as a carrier of specific knowledge and skills, of course in the context of preparing people to deal with the complex challenges of the modern world. The following key aspects are emphasized[293][294][295]:

– Integrated approach - sustainable education includes different fields of knowledge, such as ecology, economics, and social sciences, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the problems;

– Critical thinking - stimulates the development of critical thinking and analysis of information so that learners can make informed decisions;

[293] *Nedkova, S., & Atanasova, P. (2018). Study of the effect of implementing an interactive form of education in the discipline "Technical safety and disaster protection", Asen Zlatarov University, Burgas, Bulgaria, Volume XLVII, book 1, 131-134.*

[294] *Atanasova, P., Nedkova, S., & Krasteva, T. (2023). Development and application of visualization situation models as part of a methodological toolkit for disaster situations and protection, Assen Zlatarov University, Burgas, Bulgaria, Vol. LII, 24-26, ISSN2603-3968.*

[295] *Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., & Solovev, D. The interaction: business- education- investment for development. // Proceedings of INTCESS 2020- 7th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences 20-22 January, 2020 - DUBAI (UAE), International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2020, pp. 865-869, ISBN: 978-605-82433-8-5.*

– Skills Development - providing the skills and knowledge needed to address global challenges;

– Creating informed citizens - applying education to create active and informed citizens who can make informed decisions.

Sustainable development of education is a continuous process of training and building skills, forming life positions and values. At its core lies the complex approach characterizing readiness for action - realization in a life with rapidly changing characteristics, including planning the development and consequences of the steps (actions) taken.

Sustainable education is key to building a better future for each individual and predetermines his participation in a specific direction, regardless of the general and integrated preparation that he receives. The positives for the individual from this participation also become positives for society.

In practice, however, sustainable education is turned inward, and the education system functions for itself. It is necessary to make teaching, the formation of knowledge and skills sustainable, stable, and independent of external factors, to develop and adapt to the conditions, standards, methodology, and methods by which the educational process develops. In this regard, it is necessary to ensure implementation in accordance with the acquired knowledge and skills. The results of the changes in the education systems in the context of the concept of sustainable development remained closed in the system itself. The

labour market continued to produce personnel with specific knowledge and skills, without the comprehensiveness that "Agenda 21" provides, i.e. in-depth knowledge in certain scientific fields does not contribute to the inclusion of education as a system moderating the overall process of sustainable development. It is necessary to derive a new model that would encompass not only school education, and higher education, but also training and education in society as a whole, which would put the understanding of sustainable development on a new basis. Sustainable development should be understood as a philosophy and a process of building a sustainable future for all future generations.

4.3.2. Education for sustainable development

Education for sustainable development is a process that corresponds to the transformations of social, ecological, and economic systems provoked by the challenges of the 21st century, such as high technology, climate change, economic inequalities, and social justice. Education for sustainable development is fundamental to understanding the processes of sustainable development and shapes the approaches through which individuals can become part of sustainable development. This is not only for them to find their own fulfillment, but to achieve a result that is commensurate with the trinity of the main pillars of sustainable development and its impact on society.

Sometimes the concepts of sustainable education and education for sustainable development are perceived as analogies, but these are two different concepts (Table 10).

Goals	Sustainable education	Education for sustainable development
	Prepares learners for implementation in development processes with acquired knowledge and skills	Prepares learners to understand and apply concepts related to sustainable development in various contexts.
Principles	Participation in social development; Integration of knowledge and skills; Sustainability of knowledge and skills over time; Usability and adaptability of skills; Sustainability of methodology and teaching methods; Long-term prosperity; Well-being of future generations.	Awareness of sustainable development; Integration of education in sustainable development; Toolkit for decision-making in favor of sustainable development; Integrated quality of education; Predictability of interactions between elements of sustainable development; Innovation and adequacy with the dynamics of sustainable development.
Focus	On the educational system; On the methodology for forming the knowledge and skills that determine implementation; On the integration of resources.	On the interaction of the education system with sustainable development systems; On education as a tool for sustainable development; On the integrity and synergy of systems.

Table 10: *Elements of the concepts of sustainable education and education for sustainable development*

Source: *Authors' elaboration*

We are talking about education that is comprehensively related to "Agenda 21" and ensures intelligent connectivity between all elements of sustainable development. In the global plan for sustainable development of the United Nations, education is listed as priority No. 4. This is a more specific concept that emphasizes education as a tool for achieving sustainable development. It focuses on training individuals to address the challenges of sustainable development, such as climate change, social justice, and economic sustainability. Education for sustainable development aims to develop skills and knowledge that allow learners to make informed decisions and act in

favor of a sustainable future. This applies not only to their own but also to the future of society.

Sustainable education is a purely educational concept, linearly aimed at training in a certain direction and implementation in a field close to it, while education for sustainable development can be defined as three-dimensional, aimed at preparing individuals for an active role in sustainable development and participation in the transformational interaction of systems. This is a process model that goes beyond purely educational goals, methodologies, and approaches. Education for sustainable development is a comprehensive approach that aims to prepare the younger generation, not only, for the challenges of the modern world, related to environmental protection, social justice, and economic sustainability - elements that determine the existence of social systems as a whole. It is based on the principles of sustainable development and integrates social, economic, and ecological aspects in the educational and extracurricular process. Interactivity, transdisciplinarity, and innovation are key concepts of this education, which some call “education of the future”. Those trained in Education for Sustainable Development must play in the field of multifunctionality and be good enough in economics, social problems, and environmental protection. They must be aware of the resources and capabilities of each of these systems individually or in combination, to assess and analyze their mutual influence in order to prevent possible risks that could arise when changing the parameters of any of them. The imposition of the paradigm for Education for Sustainable Development

requires a certain amount of time - to understand the processes, analyze the changes, and study the attitudes, and skills for formulating intelligent approaches connecting synergizing systems. In addition, the penetration of digitalization into a significant part of the interactions of these systems requires the inclusion of new elements in educational technologies, not only with a specific perspective for a separate discipline but its integration with the others and with the rest of the world. Education for sustainable development works on the principle that there is no such thing as just mathematics or physics, but rather interrelationships between all sciences that require complexity and common solutions, in which 2+2 does not always equal 4. When technologies, and today also artificial intelligence, determine the direction, education in schools and universities goes beyond the capabilities of a single discipline to provide solutions that new systems need. The basis of Education for sustainable development is divided into two contours: the first contour includes the complex: knowledge-research-innovation; the second contour includes - management, vision, and strategies (these elements are already included in the field of secondary education). The visibly complicated paradigms, provoked by the dynamics of development and the generated problematic challenges, require a change in both thinking and actions. The previous understanding that education accumulates knowledge and skills, forms competencies, and business creates realization, adaptation, and career, gives way to the synergy between the two systems, in which the elements of strategizing, visiona, and career become the main

background. The philosophy of sustainable development does not differentiate information and scientific accumulation in a temporal manner and educational degrees but combines and systematizes them as thematic and effective (Table 11).

What	How	When	Where
So that you know	Form a model of thinking and attitude towards the world	Secondary education Higher education	Education
	Make a connection between your education and life in general	Secondary Education Higher Education Lifelong Learning	Education Lifelong learning
	Adapt to the cyclical transformations in the labour market and education	Secondary Education Higher Education Lifelong Learning	Education Business
So that you can	With professional skills	Secondary education Higher education	Education Business
	With transferable skills	Secondary education Higher education	Education Business

Table 11: *Requirements for Education for Sustainable Development*

Source: *Authors' elaboration*

This philosophy includes education and more. The complex of readiness to participate in sustainable development includes research and innovation, competence and entrepreneurship, information security, communication, and digital intelligence. For this preparation, the curriculum system in secondary and higher education is the least suitable.

4.3.3. Mainstreaming sustainability into all aspects of education and training

Preparing for the future requires rethinking education, modernizing learning, and changing models to create a culture of sustainability that will shape the opportunities for each individual to be a driving force. Making learning for the ecological transition and sustainable development a priority in education and training policies and programmes is the most important part of this change.

How can this all happen?

– By defining the problems orienting learning toward sustainable development and transforming economic, social, and ecological systems;

– By taking action in response to the "Sustainable Development Agenda" in education at all levels of education;

– By developing among learners and teachers the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for a greener and more sustainable economy and society at all levels of education;

– By supporting education and training institutions to integrate sustainability into teaching and learning and all aspects of their work;

– By creating a shared understanding of the profound and transformative changes needed in education and training for sustainability and the ecological transition.

Changing the model is a slow process, but the steps it goes through are important in order to fill the entire educational space with the spirit of Education for Sustainable Development - from funding, through equipment and the freedom of learners to be included in the process, to teacher support and a symbiosis between formal and informal learning.

The European Framework of Competences, corresponding to Education for Sustainable Development, includes several main packages:

– Embodying the values of sustainability: valuing sustainability, supporting justice, and promoting nature;

– Embracing the complexity of sustainability: systems thinking, critical thinking, and problem formulation;

– Visualizing a sustainable future: future literacy, adaptability, and inquiry-based thinking;

– Actions for sustainability: political activism, collective activities, and individual initiative.

The dynamism in the transformations of systems puts the updating of the elements of “Agenda 21” on the agenda. A SkillsOVATE study shows that new elements need to be included in the main package of actions of Agenda 21 to take into account these dynamics:

– The digital and green transitions are reshaping European labour markets (mainstreaming sustainability into the green transformation);

– New management schemes are being introduced, focusing on green and digital skills, such as renewable energy and related professions, as well as ecology and green diffusion in professions;

– Rapid digitalisation affects many roles not related to the IT sector, while the willingness to learn is emerging as a prominent skill that is needed.

4.3.4. Relevance of education for sustainable development to sustainable development

Education for sustainable development should include in its scope of education environmental, social, and economic aspects, considered in interrelation and unity.

– Environmental aspects: understanding ecosystems and their importance; sustainable management of natural resources; problems related to climate change and environmental protection;

– Social aspects: development of social responsibility and activism; support for human rights and equality, understanding of cultural diversity and intercultural communication;

– Economic aspects: foundations of sustainable economic development; understanding of the concept of circular economy; support for innovation and sustainable business practices;

– Interactive and practice-oriented approaches: project-based learning that encourages critical thinking; inclusion of local communities and real cases in the learning process;

– Personal development:

– promotion of personal commitment and activism in sustainable development;

– development of problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Education for sustainable development not only informs students about the importance of sustainability but also prepares them to be active participants in its creation, respectively, creating conditions for a better future.

Learning methodologies are essential in the conditions of intercultural and digital interaction. The classroom form of teaching with maximum information saturation should be replaced by approaches that stimulate critical and analytical thinking. What is needed is not the reproduction of certain information, but a creative approach with the generation of ideas, consistent with the level of preparation of the learners. Digital technologies allow the use of own and shared global platforms and applications and tools, such as WWF's EduCare and NASA's Climate Kids, which aim to teach concepts of sustainability and sustainable development. The report of the UNESCO team “Teaching for the Planet” emphasizes that by 2040, more educational programs around the world will adopt a holistic approach focused on emotional, social, and physical well-being, integrating them with traditional academic training to promote a sustainable lifestyle.

The most important skills that are needed for the next generations to be real participants in the processes of sustainable development are transferable and meta-skills. Understanding which skills employers value is key to sustainable development and to overcoming their shortage. The ability to learn is emerging as the most sought-after meta-skill. Employers are increasingly looking for candidates who demonstrate a strong desire to learn and have a clear understanding of how to develop new skills. Other highly sought-after skills include data analysis, digital collaboration, and event and program planning. Two-thirds of non-ICT jobs now require digital skills. Digital skills are becoming almost universal. Data analysis, graphic design, and animation development are in increasing demand, and the importance of green skills such as corporate responsibility, environmental engineering, and green computing is undeniable. The dynamics of transformations of different systems and the demand for new skills pose a serious question about the qualifications of teachers and lecturers, who are responsible for shaping the knowledge, skills, and competencies of young people. Qualification, requalification, as well as changing the training model of lecturers and teachers in universities is a serious challenge for Education for Sustainable Development.

4.3.5. Learning models in education for sustainable development

A gradual exit from the comfort zone of today's educational models is necessary. One-way oriented, reproducing information, accumulating purely academic knowledge with little or no practical focus, forming competencies in the classroom instead of in the field.

The approaches of Education for Sustainable Development are too different to motivate, guide, challenge, and provoke the mind and thought, on which both the idea and its implementation depend.

The competency model focuses on the overall development of students. It forms a set of competencies that are organized in a common matrix corresponding to the chosen educational model and the types of educational institutions. This model describes all the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve success in a given profession or field.

The Entrepreneurial Model: Focuses on the development of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge in students. It is based on practical training, project work, group work, and active communication. Its goal is to prepare students for a successful career in the dynamic environment of modern business. It forms qualities and skills that fully comply with the requirements of Education for Sustainable Development.

Project-based learning: An innovative pedagogical approach that encourages students to acquire knowledge and skills through participation in projects. It focuses on real-life scenarios, role-playing games, research lessons, robot behavior projects, and assessment. Replacing role-playing games with gamification models would certainly be a suitable option. It engages students through real-life projects and encourages critical thinking and practical skills. It is characterized as an environment that activates learning, as it is focused on learning, not teaching. It relies on the creative energy and provokes the initiative of each student.

4.3.6. The reality of education for sustainable development

The educational model applied in Bulgaria is too far from the needs of education for sustainable development. Even though that environmental protection is studied both as an independent subject and in combination with some other disciplines, the philosophy of education for sustainable development is absent from the Bulgarian education system. The information saturation of curricula and textbooks, which provide separated academic knowledge, does not allow students to develop their creative potential, become aware of common problems, connect and evaluate them comprehensively, and form in themselves motives, behavior, and understanding in their entirety. And even with the existing differentiation in education, important skills for the realization of young people are not formed. A study by the Institute for Market Economics (https://ime.bg/) shows that almost no personnel are being prepared for the most sought-after professions in Bulgaria, which are required even without taking into account the concept of Education for Sustainable Development. A survey among secondary school students and university students shows dissatisfaction with the skills that students manage to develop in school.

When asked what the most important skills they need to succeed in the job market are, young people answered:

- self-confidence and motivation - 20%;
- financial knowledge - 5%;
- public speaking - 2%;

– flexibility in work - 4%;

– productivity - 1%;

– teamwork - 68%;

– environmental knowledge - 8%;

– digital technologies - 10%;

– preparation for university studies and meetings with representatives from different industries - 1%;

– social realization - 5%;

– skill - 3%;

– patience - 1%;

– empathy- 5%;

– being able to deal with documents, accounts, etc. - 5%;

– critical thinking - 10%;

– sympathy -1%;

– simple human relationships - 1%;

– communication - 89%;

– rhetoric and language - 1%;

– civic education -1%;

– leadership - 10%;

– problem-solving - 4%;

– emotional intelligence - 1%.

Young people themselves conclude their unpreparedness for life and realization in the labour market.

At the same time, in the applied educational model, there is a great weight of information and data, which are too variable to be reproduced by students, instead of them being taught to analyze and evaluate. Specialties are developed that are not in demand in the labour market or form an insignificant share of it. There is no talk of sustainable development in secondary, even higher education, again knowledge is differentiated by topics, without being connected and even less harmonized and seeking synergy in their interaction. This is the reason for a not-at-all-complicated question for the time in which we live: "What are the main pillars of sustainable development?".

The situation can be improved by using global networks and support provided at the European level through the NextGenerationEU Plan. A much more significant change would occur if education were seen as a strategic resource (not as a service, as many experts believe) and by implementing the following easy-to-implement steps:

– Replace the disciplinary approach with an interdisciplinary one;

– Implement the peer assessment model;

– Reject formal changes at the expense of substantive ones.

In this regard, the names of schools are important, but they do not make a difference (for example: innovative schools). STEM centers are important, but they will not replace human intelligence in school, especially if they are used formally. The overwhelming information saturation will not replace thinking, critical thinking, and creative

energy; Examples of good entrepreneurs will not replace the creative potential of young people. Today it is important to give an impulse to education to stay ahead of industry because it is extremely difficult to develop Industry 4.0 with education 2.0, 3.0... The formal raising of the level of education to Education 5.0 is important only as a motivating effect. We must give education those characteristics that, applied in school and outside it, give the young generations security, resilience, and self-confidence that they know the world and can manage processes[296][297][298][299].

Education for Sustainable Development empowers people to cope with change, but it should also empower them to shape change. Innovations in Education for Sustainable Development are closely related to new skills, curricula, teaching methods, and forecasting tools, which should become the main measure of quality education. Implementing the Education for Sustainable Development model is creating a new culture of learning not only in school and university but throughout life. Only then can it be said that human resources have realized their role as a leading force in the processes of sustainable development. There must be a connection between education and reality. The reality is that the world economy is technological, and this

[296] *Vakleva, Z., & Georgieva, T. (2022). Educatıon for sustaınable development –practıcal-apply aspects. Азбуки, https://doi.org/10.53656/str2022-3-6-sus.*

[297] *Grinfild, E. (2023). The role of education in sustainable development. https://sigmaearth.com/ru/role-of-education-in-sustainable-development/. Retrieved November 27, 2024.*

[298] *Ivanov, I. (2010). Intercultural education for sustainable development, Innovations in education, 42-57.*

[299] *Bazan, M. (2022). Education for sustainable development through active learning methods in primary grades. Author's abstract of a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", 2022.*

should determine the model of the education system and learning models[300].

4.4. Challenges to education in society development

The development of the educational system and educational technologies, as part of the social development of societies, is of particular importance for progress. That's why particular emphasis is placed on various research efforts in this direction, along with the implementation of new ideas and development strategies. Education for sustainable development is an opportunity for people to cope with change, but it should also enable them to shape change. Innovations in Education for Sustainable Development are closely related to new skills, curricula, teaching methods, and forecasting tools, which should become the leading measure of quality education.

4.4.1. Socialization of the personality in the process of education and realization of the individual

Education as a social and cultural phenomenon and a pedagogical process is a fundamental component of the socialization of the individual; a social activity consisting in the transmission by specially trained persons and the assimilation by adolescents of the accumulated social experience and knowledge and the transformation of this experience into the social capital of the individual. Learning as a social phenomenon originated in the earliest stages of human society. The

[300] *Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Shared knowledge and changes in the higher education system in Bulgaria. 79th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Rabat, 25-26 March, 2022, Economic and Social Development, Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, 228-237, ISSN 1849-7535.*

preparation of the adolescent generation for life through the transmission by adults of accumulated experience is an important prerequisite for the existence and development of society. In the course of historical development, the transmission of social experience was transformed from a spontaneous process into a separate, specific type of social activity. Consequently, the school emerged as a special social institute for organizing and conducting the education of adolescents.

Education as a public and social activity is aimed at passing on experience, knowledge, and cultural, ethnic, and moral values from the elderly to the upcoming generations. It needs to be orientated towards both the requirements of society and the interests of individuals. It is necessary to take into account both the contemporary needs of society, as well as the trends and prospects for its development, and thus help preserve the established way of life, but also support and favor its further development and improvement. As an irreplaceable resource for the society, education deserves our attention. While learning is a continuous process carried out consciously throughout life, education is a time-framed process of enriching the next generation with knowledge, skills, art, and understanding; it aims to encourage individuals to do better and transform society for the better.

The ability to succeed depends on one's ability to adapt to new conditions. As people cannot be prepared in advance for the various changes they will face in life, people must be able to navigate through the process of assimilating the sum of various expectations. The more firmly social values, experience, and connections are assimilated, the

more prepared they become for the challenges of the world and professional realization.To present the features of socialization at each stage of a person's life, it is necessary to look at this question from two sides. On the one hand, to determine the influence of personality on society, and on the other hand, the impact of society on personality development[301]. There are two approaches when considering the role of education in the process of socialization:

– Sociological approach, which presents the point of view of society. In this case, the influence of society on the individual is used as a means of influence;

– Psychological approach, where education is observed from the perspective of the individual. The psychological approach shows how the transition takes place within the individual.

Studying the problem of socialization, personality development can be considered in relation to the influence of the individual characteristics of the person and their surrounding environment.

The role of education in the socialization of each member of the community, regardless of where, by whom, and under what conditions he or she was raised, is to create conditions for overcoming differences, for integration, and, if necessary, adaptation. Education supports the socialization of an individual by providing the necessary foundation of knowledge that enables communication, interpersonal relationships,

[301]*The role of education in the process of human socialization. (2014). Retrieved from Studiopedia: https://studopedia.ru/2_70890_rol-obrazovaniya-v-protsesse-sotsializatsii-cheloveka.html, Retrieved 27 December 2024.*

and in general – understanding, acceptance, and communication in the surrounding environment. Socialization is the basic means by which children from an early age begin to acquire the skills needed to present themselves as a fully functioning member of their society. It is believed that those are the most influential educational processes that a person can experience. Education as a social phenomenon is a relatively independent system whose task is to teach members of society aimed at mastering certain knowledge (mainly scientific), ideological and moral values, abilities, skills, and norms of behaviour, the content of which is determined by the social, economic and political structure of this society and the level of its material and technological development. On the one hand, education may provide more employment opportunities and consequently better social status of a person. On the other hand, social inequality, insufficient or lack of financial resources for proper education limit one`s socialization.

The concept of education evolves due to various reasons. The evolution of society leads to a change in the main social paradigms. One of the primary goals of education around the world is to prepare students to lead successful, fulfilling lives. In today's world, this means providing them with an adequate educational environment, quality educational services, and appropriate educational experiences that nurture and encourage their aspirations, problem-solving abilities, and higher-order thinking skills, including critical thinking and creativity. The best solutions involve the engagement of the whole paradigm of participants in the process, namely: teachers, students, schools, and

entire communities. Educators, student communities, and individual students are at the centre of this. Depending on the roles they play in a specific situation, they can be objects or subjects of the activity.

In developed democracies, commitment to a comprehensive system of public education goes hand in hand with the growth and prosperity of the particular country or community. Since the mid-19th century, mass public education has provided a foundation for millions of people to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families, and to become proactive citizens. In the developed world we live in today, we take for granted that children start school around the age of five and go through about 11 years of compulsory schooling.

The main goal of education, as we have already outlined, is to prepare students for adulthood, which inevitably involves synchronizing the processes and changes that take place in society with those that take place in education. This, in turn, is a prerequisite for expanding the scope of contacts and interactions that educational institutions, especially those in the field of secondary education, have with organizations from the public, private and, non-governmental sectors.

Nowadays, education is an indisputable factor in the development of personality, including in his or her socialization. Lora Rashkova points out the following main distinctive and obligatory characteristics of the role of education in the socialization of an individual:

– Physical and spiritual growth, development, and personal self-development related to acquiring socially important experience in the form of knowledge, skills, and emotional attitude towards the world;

– Purposeful education and training in the interest of a person, society, and the state, accompanied by approval of achievements (educational qualifications);

– Is determined by the requirements of production, the state of science, technology, culture, and public relations; a social institute that contributes to the preparation and inclusion of an individual in various spheres of society, and his integration into the culture of this society.

The author concludes that "Education must be adapted to the needs of the growing person and take into account the achievements of science"[302].

In the context of socialization, education takes into account the social needs of society and aims to introduce its new members – those who are to be educated – to social traditions, norms, customs, etc. In other words, when a society strives to have a strong social organization and does not allow its members to neglect their social traditions, it largely emphasizes the social goal of education. Both socialization and education involve learning, but there is one very important difference. Socialization is something that takes place in our everyday lives, it cannot be planned, but it helps us understand our identities, and the reality and find ways to get along with others. Education, unlike

[302]*Rashkova, L. M. (2017). The Role of Socialization, Upbringing and Education for Personlity Development. SocioBrain: International Scientific Refereed Online Journal with Impact Factor, Issue 39, 2017, pp. 225 – 229, ISSN 2367-5721.*

socialization, is planned, it usually involves a formal organization responsible for providing and monitoring the learning process and focuses on limited skills and knowledge. In other words, socialization is an action through which with the help of interaction, a person becomes a member of society. It is a learning process that aims to prepare people for the set of roles they will interpret in the future.

Socialization and education are directly related to the overall development of an individual. These processes prepare an individual and ensure their inclusion in various social spheres and cultural integration. To have a positive impact, education should be consistent with the development processes, individual peculiarities, and age, specificity of the macro and microenvironment. Education in the global world should be fundamental, adapted to the needs of the developing human being and, last but not least, take into account the modern achievements of science and technology.

Traditionally, students may be told to look in an encyclopaedia when they need information, and they can rely on what they find true. And they will do so with ease - access to information is increasingly easy. But the question arises - what information exactly do they have access to? Andreas Schleicher, director of the Directorate for Education and Skills and special adviser on education policy to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development secretary-general argues that students today must also acquire the critical skills to “sift” true from false information. Consider the time amid the advent and free access to resources on the Internet. The more knowledge we can access on the

web, the more important the ability to make sense of the information available becomes. This includes interpreting the often contradictory data that appears and resides on the web, assessing the value of available information, and translating it into knowledge, a skill of critical importance in the age of global society and global access to information on the web[303].

And while the 21st century is a time of change that no one would have predicted even 20 years ago, the classroom and curriculum in mainstream education are still catching up. Methodologies developed for a time when routine jobs were predominantly in demand continue to dominate, partly adapted to modern requirements for creating individuals ready to succeed in the job market as well. As Sir Ken Robinson, an international adviser on arts education, says: “If you design a system to do something specific, don't be surprised if it does. If you run an education system based on standardization and conformity that stifles individuality, imagination, and creativity, don't be surprised if that's what it does”[304]. This necessitates the requirement for educational institutions to follow the rhythm of the times, preserving this individuality and at the same time using the tools of education to help shape the emerging person, ready once out of the protected school

[303]*Schleicher, A. (2023). The case for 21st-century learning. OECD: https://www.oecd.org/general/thecasefor21st-centurylearning.htm, Retrieved 27 December 2024.*

[304]*Education for Our Times. (2023). The Human Journey: https://humanjourney.us/health-and-education-in-the-modern-world/education-in-the-modern-world-solving-for-the-future/?gclid=Cj0KCQiA6rCgBhDVARIsAK1kGPKpHBD76YVHH7yzBi_W4aPYGdz_XAYWbKbaBUEGPxMqN03pVNb3lawaApgjEALw_wcB, Retrieved 27 December 2024.*

environment to face the challenges of life by asserting themselves and the values they have been taught in school.

Committed to the race to produce students with excellent test scores and espousing the belief that scores on a limited number of subjects on standardized tests accurately represent the quality of education a school provides, teacher performance and student's ability to succeed in the future diminishes the opportunity for learners to reach their potential as individuals with qualities and capabilities. The effect of this type of learning is felt most strongly in the later stage of pupils' and students' education, namely the labor market, where there is an increasingly marked decline in demand for routine cognitive skills, while demand for non-repetitive analytical skills and non-routine interactive skills, such as coding and problem-solving, is increasing. One result is the so-called "boomerang generation" - a growing number of young people who end up living with their parents after college, most often because of a mismatch of their education with available jobs, compounded by the huge burden of student debt and unaffordable rents[305].

The reasons for the widening gap between education and subsequent personal fulfillment are many and complex. Each country or community develops its analyses and takes measures to address them. But education, as a common process for any society, is the system that can take preventive measures to bridge this gap. Despite the many

[305] *Young Adults Living with Parents in the UK, 2011. (29 May 2012), Office for National Statistics: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20160107120815/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/young-adults-living-with-parents/2011/young-adults-rpt.html, Retrieved 27 December 2024.*

analyses and surveys, no one is committed to saying exactly what jobs will look like in the future. But all analysts are clear in their conclusions that:

– even those skills that are in high demand today, such as programming and data analysis, are poised to be taken over by next-generation machines;

– over the next 20 years, between 30% and 50% of all today's jobs are predicted to be replaced by technology;

– growing demand for professionals for jobs that encourage and need creativity, relationship management, and emotional intelligence. These are the difficult tasks that artificial intelligence will not be able to replicate - at least not shortly.

According to Indian scientist Namita Patti, the three major shortcomings of the current education system worldwide can be described as follows:

– Current education does not generate or strengthen the kind of knowledge that is relevant to our changed society;

– The technology associated with a particular body of knowledge is inappropriate for our stage of development in terms of its employment potential or investment requirements;

– Education has failed to provide a valuable framework that can prepare committed policymakers, bureaucrats, technocrats, and professionals that our nation can rely on for a sophisticated support

service system that will be useful in taking the country to the highest level[306].

– These very conclusions necessitate the recommendation to modern education, namely - to direct its energy and efforts towards forming individuals, not “factory numbers”; to build personalities, not bolts. This also raises several important questions, such as:

4.4.1.1. How do we educate in the new times?

Educational institutions create conditions for the realization and development of the personality as an individual subject of social education. Providing favourable conditions creates the opportunity for the active manifestation of the personality as a subject of social education. The very nature of the manifestations also depends on the attitude of the individual towards the world and towards himself developed in the educational process. It must be able not only to do but also to create jobs and find solutions to new challenges. This requires an approach that reaches all children where they are and encourages the development of each child's unique strengths and potential. School curricula should promote entrepreneurship, global awareness, and a humanistic outlook that includes an appreciation of different environments, situations, and perspectives. Andreas Schleicher stresses that “The global economy no longer pays you for what you know, but for what you can do with what you know. ... this challenges not only the content of what we teach but also how we teach.” In his paper, “The

[306] *Patil, N.P. (2012). Role of Education in Social Change. International Educational E-Journal, Quarterly, Jan-Feb-Mar2012, Volume I, Issue II, pp. 205-210, ISSN 2277-2456.*

Case for 21st-century Learning", he addresses some of the most important questions facing education as an element of socialization: "How do we foster motivated, dedicated learners and prepare them to overcome the unforeseen challenges of tomorrow? The dilemma for educators is that routine cognitive skills, the skills that are easiest to teach and easiest to test, are also the skills that are easiest to digitize, automate, or outsource. There is no doubt that cutting-edge skills in certain disciplines will always remain important. Educational success, however, is no longer about reproducing content knowledge, but extrapolating from what we know and applying that knowledge to new situations"[307]. Education today is much more than a way of thinking that involves creative and critical approaches to problem-solving and decision-making. It is about a way of working, including communication and collaboration, and the necessary tools, such as the ability to recognize and exploit the potential of new technologies or even to prevent their risks. Last but not least, education is about the ability to live in a multifaceted world as an active and engaged citizen. These citizens influence what they want to learn and how they want to learn it, and this is what shapes the contemporary role of educators.

In today's world, students need to understand subjects at a deep enough level to be able to work with them: to know the basics of math, chemistry, biology, and history and be able to apply them to solve real-world problems. Rather than teaching and testing mathematical

[307] *Schleicher, A. (2023). The case for 21st-century learning. OECD: https://www.oecd.org/general/thecasefor21st-centurylearning.htm, Retrieved 27 December 2024.*

procedures that often seem to have no practical application, teachers should present problems that will allow students to learn to use these basic skills, think mathematically, and apply this knowledge - an ability called quantitative or numeracy literacy.

Young people need to be able to think critically to connect ideas and sources across disciplines. Most subjects are still taught in isolated units, but a broader approach is needed to equip people en masse with the skills to think creatively and critically beyond the boundaries of a single discipline. The traditional model of teaching tends to rely on "right answers" that teachers know and students learn. What is needed is a more balanced approach that encourages students to take responsibility for their learning by asking their questions and generating creative solutions. The world needs people who can work together to solve problems, and that requires open-ended, collaborative classroom projects that require knowledge from multiple subjectivities and questions with no right answers.

4.4.1.2. The emotional side of learning

To better meet the needs of society, the primary goal of education should be to nurture curiosity and build flexible, creative, and critical thinking skills that apply lifelong learning consciously.

Socialization is the process of an individual acquiring patterns of behavior, psychological attitudes, social norms, values, knowledge, and skills that enable him or her to function successfully in society. Every normal person understands that life itself is an endless source of

socialization and a learning process to tackle nontraditional problems with no single right answer.

Yet – it is in the learning environment where adolescents need to develop their social-emotional competencies, i.e. attitudes, beliefs, skills, and behavioral patterns that help them make the right decisions. Psychologist Valeria Simeonova argues that when working on their students' social-emotional learning, teachers should include in their classes "activities that develop their skills to:

– manage their emotions;

– create and maintain relationships with both their peers and the adults around them;

– resolve interpersonal problems;

– make effective decisions that are consistent with ethical and moral principles[308].

In this changing environment, the role of teachers is becoming increasingly important. We all learn best from people we like or admire, and from people who believe in us. The most successful teachers show their students that they matter. They have high expectations, build relationships, and are present to provide personal feedback and guidance. Children need to be valued individually and as a group and need a safe space where they can think independently and learn how to learn without being afraid to ask questions or make mistakes. The successful, good teacher, the one who will best prepare their students

[308] *Simeonova, V. (2023). What is social-emotional learning?. Преподаваме.bg: https://prepodavame.bg/sotsialno-emotsionalno-uchene-kakvo-e-tova/, Retrieved 27 December 2024.*

for life beyond the classroom, does not teach their subject outside the big picture of knowledge. Although a specialist in his field, it is his task to show that there are no “necessary” and “unnecessary” subjects and that all knowledge is valuable, only that it must be taught so that it can be mastered by the students. If for a long time, the sciences were neglected, we are now “reaping” the results. At present, interest in science and science education is booming. But that doesn't mean we should leave the others in the dust. Because alongside science and technology, good language skills are just as important - today, speaking just one foreign language is no longer enough to be successful. Good language skills, the ability to express and present oneself, and knowledge of culture and art - these are all skills that are necessary, complementary, and personality-developing.

Teachers need to emphasize the transmission of values and encourage students to develop their social-emotional intelligence. This, in turn, necessitates a change in traditionally designed classrooms and transforming them from classrooms into spaces for learning and sharing. This, figuratively speaking, provides an opportunity for accumulated experience.

Current trends in education are a combination of traditional knowledge and modern, innovative techniques. That is why modern technology is such an important tool for education, enabling teachers to respond to the natural curiosity of every child and their desire to learn more about themselves and the world around them. The generation for whom smart technologies are an everyday reality must learn how to take

advantage of their possibilities. The latest research claims that today's first graders will work jobs that have not yet been invented. It is therefore important not only to respond to children's interests but to give them that foundation that will prepare them for their future lives when the knowledge gained at school should help to ensure a good quality of life. In this connection, all educational specialists must seek methods, forms, and means of work adequate to current trends to "move" freely and reach each of the learners.

Technology is that intersection where the possibilities of modernity and the interests of the new generation of students come together. They are the tools that help to increase the efficiency and quality of the educational process by harnessing students' natural interest in technology. Technology enables the teacher to stimulate student performance and encourage interaction in the classroom. In her dissertation, Dilyana Andonova says "The appropriateness of using ICT in the educational process is also dictated by the fact that the digital generation of students does not actively participate in the process of mastering knowledge, forming skills and competencies if it does not correspond to modern achievements in the field of digital technologies"[309].

Today, humanity is passing through a period in which the nature of today's materialistic world, parallel to the spiritual nature of man, is

[309] *Andonova, D. (2021). School environment – a place of socialization of kids with special abilities in the context of the inclusive education, Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, Summary file, 2021, https://www.shu.bg/wp-content/uploads/file-manager-advanced/users/razvitie/as/2021/phd-d-andonova/Avtoreferat-Dilyana-Andonova.pdf, Retrieved 27 December 2024.*

difficult to develop without conflict. In this period, the responsibility of education in forming the basis of the perception of what it means to be human and how the individual fits in and into society assumes greater importance.

The importance of education in the socialization process is beyond question. It is more important to give the individual the right to choose and find that individual path that is appropriate for that particular child, including those with special educational needs, parent, group of children, class, school, city, state, inclusive. Only in this way can education fulfill its leading role and mission in the process of socialization and fulfillment of each person, which gives additional value to education as a social phenomenon[310].

4.4.2. Digital education and social media

The study of generational processes as part of social development has aroused particular interest in various works and studies by different scholars. It is a challenge to describe new theories or regularities to explain or represent the processes taking place. This creates the conditions for the development of research in this direction, which will define and define these processes as essential and defining for a particular generation. All of this occurs with certain contingencies and assumptions but ultimately defines them as such. The cyclical nature of the processes taking place over a certain interval of historical time and

[310] *Terziev, V., & Vasileva, S. The role of education in socialization of an individual. // Proceedings of INTCESS 2022- 9th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 17-18 January 2022- Online Conference, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2022, pp.518-523, ISBN: 978-605-06286-4-7.*

the changes that are occurring leads many researchers to try to analyse the changes taking place and to explain them through their theoretical developments.

4.4.2.1. Defining the term "Generation"

The term "generation" can be explained and defined in many different ways. The true popularity of the generational theory came with the book Generations: a History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069, published in 1991. In it, the authors – economist Neil Howe and writer William Strauss – identify four types of modern active generations – baby boomers (people born between 1946 and 1963), the "hip" generation (those born between 1964 and 1980), generation Y (those born between 1981 and 1996) and generation Z (those born between 1997 and 2012). In their bold theory, the two American researchers argue that each generation belongs to one of four types and that these types repeat themselves consistently in a fixed pattern. Howe and Strauss describe the characteristics of different generations and conclude that the value system and orientation of different generations differ significantly. In their work, they examine these differences and the reasons that give rise to them (political and social situation, level of technical development, significant events, etc.). Scientists conclude that being born in a certain period predetermines people's skills, thinking, values, and behaviour, and argue that every fifth generation has similar values, which in turn allows long-term predictions to be made[311].

[311] *Niyl Haui, U. S. (2000). Millennials rising: the next great generation. Knopf Doubleday.*

Two other scholars, Ron Eyerman, and Bryan Turner, in their work Outline of a Theory of Generations, define the concept of "generations" as a group of people who share a common collective memory, share a similar culture, and whose purpose is to provide them with a collective consciousness that seeks to integrate the generation into a predetermined time frame[312]. Dr. Jane Pilcher, Associate Professor of Sociology at Nottingham Trent University's School of Social Sciences and Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, defines the term "generation" as people within a particular group who experience the same significant events within a particular period[313]. We could go on describing the interpretations of the term "generation" by different scholars, but as different as these theories are, one thing undeniably unites them. And that is the conclusion that every twenty years a new generation of students arrives in school classrooms with their expectations, behaviors, and values shaped by the unique circumstances of the times. In the field of education with these children come new challenges and a new perspective for education to be adequate to their needs and to prepare them for the future. The generational vision allows us to map out the recurring cycles and be prepared for the challenges of working with children whose generational manifestations and behaviours we need to get to know, as well as to "adapt" ourselves and the education system so that they are ready for their real entry into life.

[312]*Eyerman, R. (1998). European Journal of Social Theory. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/136843198001001007.*

[313]*Pilcher, J. (1994). Mannheim's sociology of generations: An undervalued legacy. British Journal of Sociology. doi:https://doi.org/10.2307/591659.*

4.4.2.2. Generation Z – Characteristics and behaviour. Are generation z people undervalued or overvalued?

Born and raised in a time of constant economic and social transformations, which also determine change in social processes, those born under the sign of Generation Z attach the greatest importance to the dynamics and the speed with which changes take place in every aspect – social, political, economic, cultural, etc. These are people for whom both local and global socio-economic, environmental, sporting, and cultural events are of particular importance and significance. As previously mentioned, the name "Generation Z" was given by American writer and historian William Strauss and consultant Neil Howe in their book Generations: a History of America's Future, 1584-1991. The term "Generation Z" is also found in the literature under other names, such as "millennial children", "digital generation", "digital natives", "miscellaneous" etc. Accordingly, different periods in which they were born can be found in different literature. Some point to the period 1993-2001, others (including Strauss and Howe's) point to 1997 – 2012, and the latest study by Jeff Desjardins, an editor and visionary author of business analysis quoted by several economic publications, sets 1997-2010 as the years between which Generation Z people were born. Generally speaking, Generation Z – these are people from 13 to 30 years of age, who, according to various studies, today account for between 15 and 25 percent of the earth's population. Or to

use Jeff Desjardins' words, “You may already have Gen Zers in your workplace – but if you don't, you will soon.”[314].

Although there is no definite consensus on the period covered by the people referred to as Generation Z, it is undeniable to all researchers that they are the ones who are currently finishing high school, studying, or have recently graduated from university and an increasing number of their representatives are looking for or have already found their first real job. Therefore, all those working and involved in the field of education have the not unimportant task of adapting teaching to give learners those skills and competencies that will turn them into adequate and well-prepared people in the labour market.

Generation Z people don't remember a time when the internet didn't exist – and as such, it's not surprising to learn that 50% of them spend 10 hours a day connected online, and 70% watch more than two hours a day of YouTube. Setting aside this ultra-connectivity, Generation Z has some unique and perhaps unexpected traits. Among them is their preference for face-to-face interaction in the workplace or classroom and also an expectation to study or work harder than previous groups. Generation Z is also the most racially and ethnically diverse generation and values racial equality as a core issue for their rights. Unlike their predecessors, Generation Y, also known as Millennials and Echo Boomers, members of Generation Z tend to take a more pragmatic approach to both their education and their careers. Finally, Gen Z is

[314]*Desjardins, J. (2019). Retrieved from Meet Generation Z: The Newest Member to the Workforce: https://www.visualcapitalist.com/meet-generation-z-the-newest-member-to-the-workforce/. 14 02 2019 r.*

probably one of the most practical generations, valuing things like saving money and finding stable employment as extremely important[315].

Within the Project № BG05M9OP001-1. 051-0006-C01 "Joint actions of the social partners for adaptation of the working environment to the specific age needs of different generations in order to promote longer working life and ability to work", implemented within the European Social Fund through the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" (2014 – 2020) with the beneficiary Bulgarian Industrial Association – Union of Bulgarian Business (BIA), in partnership with the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CICSB) and associate partners Association of Industrial Capital in Bulgaria (AICB) and Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), the generational characteristics of generations T, X, Y, and Z are studied and presented.[316] The document recognizes that "...in Bulgaria, the representatives of this generation are maturing in a time of constant economic and social change and therefore attach the greatest importance to the dynamics and speed of change in all its aspects – political, economic, cultural." The key events that influenced their formation and development are Bulgaria's accession to the EU, free movement and the right to work, the financial and economic crisis of 2008 and its consequences, corruption, crime, and war on the roads. The period of their earliest childhood and maturation is associated with

[315] *Verghese, A. (2022). Gen Z in tech: How Young, Innovative Minds are Shaping the World of Work. The Adecco group: https://www.adeccogroup.com/, 18 08 2022 г.*

[316] *Generational Profiles: Profile of Generation Z. (2020). Excerpted from Inspired by Experience. Longer together - a path to success: https://activeageing.bia-bg.com/bg/project/.*

deepening socio-economic inequality in Bulgarian society, fuelled by differences in ethnic origin, the social status and income of parents, differences in the state of regional economies, differences in the quality of the education system (private and state, elite and mediocre, language, general and vocational, regional and peripheral schools).

Generation Z tends to be pragmatists and doesn't compromise the present for hypothetical ideas. This doesn't stop them from getting involved in public causes, including volunteering, but it is precisely because of their pragmatism that they only give up some of their free time and energy when they see it making sense to do so.

They don't accept the "status quo", they don't trust falsity. They do not blindly believe and are suspicious of familiar faces "preaching" new ideas. They have a strong intuition as well as a flair for the "new and progressive". Another characteristic of Generation Z, which the authors of the study draw attention to, is their disregard for "official sources" of information and "authorities". They "develop their own critical thinking and cognitive expertise by defending their point of view based on facts found on the World Wide Web. They think and share everything publicly."[317]

As a generation born in the transition between the analogue and the digital world, the representatives of Generation Z create their own new spaces: art, literature, new theatre, and cinema. And it's all connected to new computers and digital technologies. A sense of

[317] *Generational Profiles: Profile of Generation Z. (2020). Excerpted from Inspired by Experience. Longer together - a path to success: https://activeageing.bia-bg.com/bg/project/.*

uniqueness is also at the heart of their heightened sense of belonging to a group. It is this affiliation that on the one hand encourages them to form communities of interest and follow on social networks, and the other hand, this grouping is at the root of ageism and the unfair treatment of adults, considering them unfit and inadequate for the modern digital world.

All these characteristics of Generation Z make it important for those working in education, including lifelong learning, to know this generation. Education, which has a social role as well as an educational one, is committed to imparting knowledge to people who think and act differently from the majority of those working in the field. In order to be "captured"'

by learners, learners need to know and use a learning toolkit that is adequate to the expectations of the new generation, while at the same time remembering that it is up to them to build a solid foundation on which current pupils and students can then succeed in the labour market and life in general. Because not only are the representatives of Generation Z already with us, in our workplace, but they predominate. Some of them have even already left the education system and become the face of the primary labour market. And here comes the startling data that about 20% of young people are representatives of the so-called group of NEETs – neither studying nor working, which puts Bulgaria in the top three in Europe – after Italy and Greece. And we, teachers and lecturers, are not required to overestimate or underestimate their qualities, but to turn the system around so that it is open to them, to

accept them, and to give them the best. They are the product that will henceforth look after us and if we have not been engaged with them and underestimate them, then we cannot expect them to respond to us with a positive attitude. Therefore, I believe that we should neither underestimate them nor underestimate them, but we should properly and timely appreciate their qualities and give them the best messages for their future.

4.4.2.3. Formation of training habits

The development of the "knowledge society" implies a social transformation in which community members need not only knowledge but also new skills and competencies, some of them unpredictable. Generation Z pupils and students are authentic digital people, a hyper-cognitive generation with profiles that differ in many ways from those of students of previous generations. They are not waiting, but creating change themselves, which is a prerequisite for the growing competition between schools and universities for human talent and the demand for qualified graduates to do jobs that do not yet exist. Even the very development of technology, which is accessible to many, motivates educational institutions, both public and private, to develop innovative programs and new ideas to accelerate and improve the processes of teaching and learning and the acquisition of knowledge and competencies. One of the most important actions to achieve this is investment in technological resources. Technology adds value to the teaching and learning experience that students use extensively to enhance or accelerate the educational process, but technology can

certainly also promote or develop additional skills and competencies. This also forms a new, visual way of perceiving information, while at the same time being a prerequisite for not having enough time to make sense of and sift the credibility of anything that is offered as information. The availability of multiple channels of access to knowledge turns out to be a double-edged sword – an opportunity, but also a threat. An opportunity to access hard-to-find sources of knowledge, but also a threat of not always being provided with correct and verified information. This is where the role of teachers and educators comes in, to build these teachings so that each successive generation can "stand" on the shoulders of their predecessors and build on their achievements. Generation Z is inquisitive and curious, focused on constant learning and development, but not in the conservative, classical way. The traditional understanding of the role of education in success in life is gradually cracking. Members of Generation Z accept standard, formal education as mandatory but meaningless. Realising that employers are placing increasing importance on competencies rather than diplomas, disillusioned with the quality of formal education in Bulgaria, Zs do not want to waste years on something that cannot guarantee them a secure future. Generation Z realises the alternatives in education that the digital world offers them. They are successfully and very resourcefully combining various short-term or distance courses, and online certification programs offering and gaining real practical experience. Generation Z is a digital generation that is constantly "surfing" and searching the web for new information, but one that is

pragmatically focused, and related to a specific problem and its solution. Generation Z people tend to predominantly read only what they find interesting. They read hurriedly, breathlessly, carelessly. They prefer images to move and engage their senses in multiple ways. They find it difficult to focus – precisely because of the alternatives that the digital world offers them. The bouncing image increasingly displaces the absorbed solitude of reading, which in turn leads to an unsatisfactory level of comprehension. They read as they live – waiting for someone to take care of them. Proponents of group learning through the tools of social media, members of Generation Z, possess a photographic memory and remember much more and more persistently through hearing, movement, and pictures than they do through reading.

Generation Z's attitude towards reading books is a prerequisite for conflict with the education system, which mainly emphasizes theory and books as a foundation of knowledge. In a survey conducted by the Bulgarian Center for Not-for-Profit Law "Generation Z – a generation with an opinion", when asked how they think they should learn, the most common answer was "not that way". High school students unanimously say that there are much easier and more enjoyable ways to gain the same knowledge on the internet, but at the same time report that "in the context of learning sites and online platforms, they increasingly feel insecure about having to follow a process that they do not understand, that stresses them out and makes them feel uncomfortable."[318]. The authors of the study summarize that "the

[318]*Haralan Alexandrov, V. D. (2020). Generation Z - a generation with an opinion. Sofia.*

rebellion of Generation Z is not against learning, but against an educational model that was created in the past precisely to be a stage. The imposition of a systemic structure tailored to eras of difficult access to information that forces them to receive uninteresting information in an unpleasant way leads to a sense of acute invasion of personal space, which is perceived as aggression by many members of the generation because it is contrary to fundamental values"[319].

The majority of respondents "define education as a value and think it is very important to be educated." However, the majority say that the encounter with secondary education brings or has brought them discomfort, confusion, and uncertainty. These feelings are still present, regardless of their age and the level they are at in the education system. Although education is a value, this educational model frustrates them, but they cannot understand why.

When I work with high school students (17 – 19 years old), I take into account the fact that I work with big people, people with opinions that you can't just say "Do this!" to. You have to be very involved in the subject matter and be able to present it to them in a way of expression as close as possible to motivate them to take it on board. And at the same time give the necessary background knowledge, whether you are training future IT specialists or farmers. For any profession, for any job from now on, it will be necessary for people to be able to read and understand what is contained in the instructions for their job or for the specific task they have to perform, to be able to work

[319]*Haralan Alexandrov, V. D. (2020). Generation Z - a generation with an opinion. Sofia.*

in a team, to communicate and to understand the responding party. And the responding party needs to be able to explain what needs to be done. Only then can the processes be meaningful and workable.

This is why coaching and mentoring are the preferred forms of training for young people in Generation Z, but given that for Generation Z, training and recommendations from a peer are much easier to accept than from a direct supervisor or older colleague. They are looking for their leader, not a teacher, someone to ignite the spark in them and guide them, not just teach them. Although they like e-learning, members of Generation Z prefer face-to-face learning with the proviso that it be autonomous, based on the use and application of new media and on gaining access to multiple information sources, acquiring knowledge, and gaining experience through their own actions. Generation Z wants to choose for itself what to learn, where to learn it, and when to learn it, i.e. to autonomously manage the learning process rather than being its object. The predominant learning style is experiential. It follows that effective learning should involve more application of knowledge and skills, participation and trial, experiential activities and reaching conclusions independently, more visual demonstration, and less theory, explanation, and passive observation. All of this transforms the traditional classroom from a place to learn new knowledge into a meeting place for a group of like-minded people[320].

[320] *3 Generation Z traits today's teachers need to adapt to. (2022). Retrieved from University of Massachusetts Global: https://www.umassglobal.edu/.*

4.4.2.4. The generation Z classroom

In order to understand how teachers can approach teaching Generation Z students, we need to consider their characteristics and learning habits. First of all, we are talking about people who tend to be immersed in digital technology. Generation Z is the first generation that does not know life without technology. For them, Google, Instagram, and smartphones aren't just handy tools – they're necessary parts of life. Generation Z expects to be connected to the world and have access to information at all times, including when it comes to education. Their 24-hour connectivity and social media presence make them people who expect instant feedback on tasks at hand, just as they do on social media. Unlike the previous generation of Millennials, for Generation Z, digital games and technical devices are an important part of life, most likely because they grew up with digital technology and have never known any other way of life[321]. They also crave autonomy in their education. Students want to make decisions about what they learn and how to demonstrate their knowledge.

How can teachers adapt to these new requirements? Rather than trying to distract students from technology, it is much more appropriate to consider how they can use these same technologies to provide information and engage students' attention. Educational software has long been neither new nor exceptional, yet its implementation in practice has proven insufficient and ineffective. Applying technology

[321] *Giray, L. (2022). Meet the Centennials: Understanding the Generation Z Students. (07 2022 r.) doi:10.14456/jsasr.2022.26.*

purely formally is insufficient in the first place, and in no way replaces the qualitative presence of the teacher to guide the overall process. Technology is nothing more than a tool to facilitate the work of the teacher and the teacher's work to attract and hold the student's attention[322]. But if there is no content, that attention will very quickly be shifted to something else.

Pragmatism, as one of the main characteristics of the representatives of Generation Z, is one of the prerequisites for the necessity of teaching grounded learning material. What would this mean? Generation Z students have come to expect only the most relevant information, with the selection made by someone else. For this reason, teachers are advised to look for the practical side of any theoretical issue beforehand, to give students not just the knowledge, but the real answer to why a lesson is important and how it applies to the real world.

Teachers should teach students, not teach the subject, goes a popular saying in education. In reality, learning begins when teachers first understand what learners need. To successfully engage this new generation of learners, schools must take into account their obvious differences, not only in terms of education but also in terms of their overall learning experiences. Generation Z's uniqueness in

[322] *What is 21st century learning? Preparing today's students for tomorrow's workforce. (2022). Excerpted from University of Massachusetts Global: https://www.umassglobal.edu/news-and-events/blog/what-is-21st-century-learning.*

personalities, learning styles and preferences, and use of the internet, digital and social media, can help them perform more effectively.

Representatives of Generation Z differ from previous generations. As a result, their treatment may not be the same as their predecessors. This is a new group of students – each with their interests, needs, and expectations. Teachers are responsible for learning about this issue and putting it into practice in the classroom so that the necessary steps can be taken to help students, especially in the areas of education and classroom management. In order to be adequate to the demands of the representatives of this new generation, all those involved in education – teachers, administration, public, private, and non-governmental entities – must be aware of these particularities to strategically adjust their approaches on how to guide students. Generation Z can realize their goals and dreams with the help of education. Teachers and the school as a whole are responsible for this. But it takes those in charge to identify and grasp their uniqueness. Schools can connect with them in a way that not only motivates individual progress but also ensures students develop into the critical and creative thinkers the world expects in the twenty-first century by creating curricula and learning experiences personalized to their individuality. It is precisely because of the uniqueness of each member of this generation that research needs to be used responsibly, judiciously, and insightfully[323].

[323] *https://bnr.bg/vidin/post/101827572/ako-obvinavame-mladite-che-ne-sa-dobri-znachi-nie-vazrastnite-ne-sme-se-spravili (2023), Retrieved 14 December 2023.*

4.4.3. Vocational education in Bulgaria – status and opportunities

Vocational education brings together many interests. It is not secondary education only, nor just the first most important step towards professional development of those who choose it. It is the key to development of competencies that underpin industrial progress and are a prerequisite for the innovation and creativity so very necessary for any technological progress. Professional education is the implicit part of any successful business.

The discussion about the fate of vocational education is continuous, but in many cases fruitless as far as its adaptation to the modern demands of the economy and the dynamically changing business environment is concerned. If this were not the case, today there would be no shortage of professions, we would not wait for the last drops of state-organized professional education to be drained, to move in leaps and bounds towards the “modern”, and much more popular among candidates, professional fields and thus emptying of content important for the economic base areas. Its complexity, caused by the necessity to combine the general and professional parts, often causes a set of inconsistencies, which requires continuous adaptation and transitions that ensure not only its functioning but the functioning of our entire economy. Professionalism in vocational education requires an arrangement of the mission, goals, factors, and tools in an

appropriate format that can ensure the even development of each business and every single economic direction[324][325].

4.4.3.1. Professionalism in vocational education

For too long, vocational education was left to itself, or rather to the "free market", which not only did not regulate it but also created certain disparities that are very difficult to overcome and last for a long period of time. From the point of view of meeting the needs of skilled workers, this single market did not give the Bulgarian economy a chance and today this is already a serious problem - there is a lack of specialists in basic professional fields, specialists with secondary education as well as such with higher education. It was not enough to change the laws, to change the names, to organize recognition of diplomas, to decide on dual education (a forgotten old thing that had already existed in Bulgaria). It was necessary to arrange the system according to clear and precise criteria, to produce specialists in the needed-by-the-economy professions, and to make it flexible to easily adapt to the rapidly developing technological processes and the changing business environment[326][327]. The economy needs education, and education needs the economy - not only of its orientations but of its

[324]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

[325]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

[326]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

[327]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

investments, too. The people in the education sector did not know exactly what specialists the economy needed; there was nobody to tell them. And they produced specialists according to their internal educational logic, namely – they produced staff in the disciplines and specialities for which they had teachers and/or a material base. In the meantime, there appeared exotic specialties, hardly needed by anyone, but they kept the status quo. Data from evaluations of education quality have long been commented on by society. We talk a lot and at length about external assessment, the content of curricula, about textbooks, we listen to extensive explanations from experts, parents, and citizens, but we rarely comment on the fact that it is increasingly difficult to find a handyman to repair our defective kitchen sink, a handyman to replace the tiles in the bathroom, an electrician to fix our outdated electrical wiring[328][329][330].

Without undervaluing the role of education for personal development and independent growth, it is important to provide the economy in its most general dimensions with skilled staff in the needed professional directions[331][332].

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[328]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

[329]*Terziev, V. Higher education system and labour market policies in Bulgaria in COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis periods. Internauka Publishing House, Kiev, 2022, 168p., ISBN 978-611-01-2645-8.*

[330]*Terziev, V. COVID-19 pandemics and its impact on Bulgarian universities in the context of the new challenges to social system and labour market policies, Internauka Publishing House, Kiev, 2022, 138p., ISBN 978-611-01-2647-2.*

[331]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

[332]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

Change is more than necessary, but change is subject to principles and rules serving both sides in this process –business as well as education. In fact, serving the state. Even the available strategies do not do enough if implemented sporadically or partially. The strategic agenda of professional education requires the creation of an environment in which any supporting and sustaining business system will develop, including the educational one. There have always existed regulations, but what is needed today is a new review of them, precise criteria, and an assessment of compliances to fulfil the functions and roles they are intended for[333][334].

4.4.3.2. The factors of professionalism

Every element in the system of professional education leaves its mark and to some extent affects the quality of specialists with certain qualifications. The factors determining the preparation of skilled workers for the sphere of the economy fall under the general framework of factors for the development of education, and for this reason, it is impossible to completely separate professional education from other types of education. It is an art to make a combination that allows parallelism, enough possible transitions, input, and output to match the dynamics of life and technological development. The organizational factors are determinants of the quality of education, insofar as they

[333] *Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

[334] *Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

determine the overall infrastructure and the professional factors related to capacity, quality, and professionalization, and there must be found the most precise elements responsible for vocational education.

Organizational factors[335]:

– Legislation – legislation with an educational field of applicability and that with an economic field of applicability.

The variety of laws, especially the by-laws, the need to combine the different fields of application of the laws so that they can serve the common goals, and the mechanisms for legislation implementation and control are an essential part of the management process in education. The possibility to manage qualitatively and effectively through laws is determined not by the number of laws or their changing but by their skilful codification, not by the number of sub-normative documents, but by their content and quality. The instability of the legislative base, the introduction of foreign practices without the necessary base in our country, as well as the implementation of legislation, is a challenge[336][337].

– Organizational Infrastructure.

The organizational infrastructure of vocational education is part of the general framework (Figure 3). The main institution responsible

[335]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

[336]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

[337]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

for the organization of the entire educational process, and for the creation and implementation of legislation in the system is the Ministry of Education and Science. The role of all other institutions that are connected with and have responsibility for education is also essential. A well-organized and hierarchical structure through which legislation is implemented and education is managed is also important - especially in the area of vocational education, where the number of interested institutions is greater. An essential issue in this structure is the distribution of responsibilities, which is not always the best and does not always consider different interests in the best way[338].

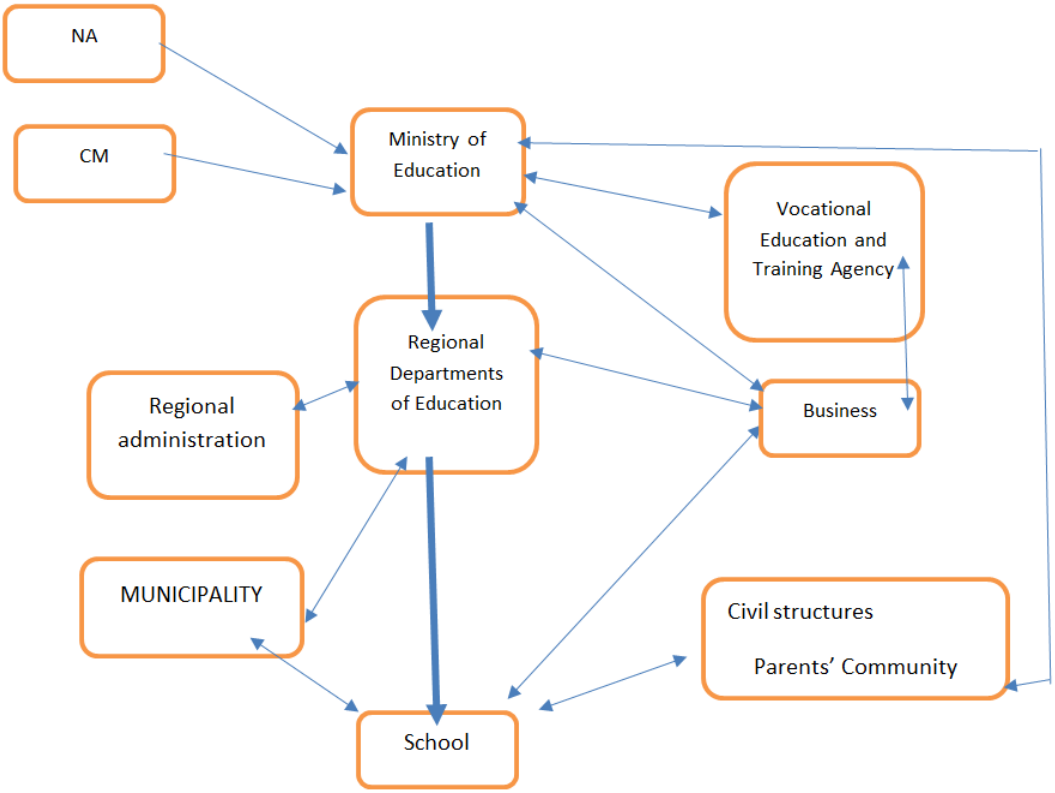


Figure 3: *Organizational infrastructure of vocational education*

Source: *Authors' elaboration*

[338]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

The target institutions with responsibilities in vocational education – the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, Regional Administrations, Municipal Administrations, employer organizations, and business structures – have a serious but insufficiently regulated place in the system and this is probably one of the reasons for the existing inconsistencies and deficits[339].

– Institutional Interaction.

The entire process of management of education depends on the level of this interaction. Even in the presence of a formally good infrastructure, and good legislation, institutional interaction (non-interaction) determines the quality of the educational process from the highest to the lowest level. Even a cursory glance at the structure shows how significant not only the interaction, but the agreement between the institutions, which is often intertwined with different political commitments or with the claims of certain civil groups not always reflecting public opinion. The necessary degree of freedom of each institution must be conformed to that of all others, and only a well-organized mechanism of interaction can lead to the success of the system. Naturally, the institutional interaction is laid down in the legislation, but sometimes it is impossible to overcome the division or the emerging deficits. For example, the interaction between business and vocational education is difficult and very slow to make its way, a deficit that can be easily overcome by strengthening the role of the

[339]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, rethinking the role of the Regional Departments of Education of the Ministry of Education and Science, the regional and local authorities in determining the professional directions in accordance with the priorities of the regional economy. It is a challenge for a Regional Department of Education, for example, to work with only one professional education expert in a rather heterogeneous environment of professional fields. Except for the purely administrative and formal role in approving the admission plan, nothing highly professional can happen. Professional areas of education are often determined by the internal logic of educational institutions, their "enthusiasm" to look for intersections with some employer or other type of business organization, and the competence of the regional councils that approve (most often quite formally) the admission plan in professional education[340].

Professional Factors:

– Institutional Capacity.

This factor includes three main elements - managerial, administrative, and professional capacity.

Institutional capacity answers to the question "To what extent does the professionalism in the management and implementation of the educational process meet the requirements of today - intelligent growth, Industry 4.0, and transition to the digital age?" Perhaps this is the

[340]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

question of the questions. Regardless of modernity, to which everyone rushes with great pleasure, leaving out those areas that carried and carried the prestige of the normal economic support in the development of any economic entity. Even if we make all schools STEM and innovative, they should have majors supporting core operational activities, and they should be up-to-date, but not red-booked[341].

– Teaching Capacity and Quality.

Perhaps the easiest question is the assessment of the capacity of the teaching staff. However, it should be added that it still depends not only on the personal capacity of the teachers but also on the material base, the textbook fund, the costs of maintaining the systems in vocational education, etc. Even if a professor enters a vocational high school, theory alone will not solve the issue of capacity and quality[342][343].

– Professionalization.

It is determined according to the strategy for economic development, but often the implementation and realization remain far from the strategic guidelines. The list of professions for vocational education and training and the standards for acquiring professional

[341]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

[342]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

[343]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

qualifications are essential elements that determine whether the skilled workers "produced" as a result of the thus organized system are sufficient and how qualified they are. The combination of the National Qualifications Framework with the List of Vocational Education and Training Professions, as well as with the standards, is an important part of forming the overall picture[344].

The application of the framework programs (A-E) ensures a balance between general education, common, and specific professional knowledge. Several trends have a serious impact on the imbalance of professional education - on the one hand, the trend for increase of the number of higher education graduates makes the number of those starting work immediately after finishing secondary education constantly decreasing; on the other hand, there are the negative demographic trends, and on the third, there is the fact that Bulgaria is one of the countries in which the share of early school leavers and the number of young people who neither study nor work is too high. This could be a reserve for vocational education, but it requires a professional approach to each group, as well as an appropriate model by which these young people can be involved in the educational process. This would mean a transformation that connects the labour-market trends on the one hand, and on the other, updating the professional directions, aligning them with the forecasts for the economic development of the country, as well as expanding the scope

[344]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

of professional guidance and orientation of young people for career development[345][346].

4.4.3.3. Qualified staff – professionalism and compliance

Undoubtedly, the responsibility for providing qualified staff for each professional direction falls on professional education - secondary professional and higher. Each professional field and each profession needs qualified workers who must meet their requirements and standards if there are such. It is in determining the correspondence between demand and supply, i.e. between the demands of the economy and the response of vocational education, that professionalism in the management of vocational education fits. Part of the solution to the problem is the Framework Programs (Framework Program A - E) and Standards developed by the Ministry of Education and Science - a necessary but not sufficient condition, especially for some professional areas and especially considering the rapid changes occurring in the industry[347]. The variable parameters in professional areas and professions are a fact – today's professions may not exist tomorrow, just as some professions from earlier times already appear as exotic or are completely absent from the labour market. At the same time, we have a red list of deficit professions. The difficulty comes from the fact that

[345] *Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

[346] *Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

[347] *Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

each professional direction needs a serious definition of concrete specialities, as they are often the key to the development of the respective direction. Many of the questions raised above can be solved by better implementation of legislation, better interaction between institutions, and better quality control[348]. If quality control in general education is a public problem, then the quality of professional education has not become such at all. It is important to evaluate the processes of the labour market and, more precisely, the level of qualifications. Professional education "produces" specialists of 1 to 3 qualification degrees. The number of skilled workers with a 4th qualification degree is very small. The participation of professional colleges in the formation of the country's workforce is a challenge. A non-exhaustive reference shows that the 4th degree is planned for some fields in the spheres of tourism, cosmetics, medicine, and especially military science. What would be the motive to create a professional college, which is a serious investment, when with one postgraduate program at any university one can easily get a certificate providing a 4-degree qualification?[349][350].

We have to answer many questions in order to overcome the challenges and deficits and to give freedom to professional education,

[348]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

[349]*Terziev, V. Higher education system and labour market policies in Bulgaria in COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis periods, Internauka Publishing House, Kiev, 2022, 168p., ISBN 978-611-01-2645-8.*

[350]*Terziev, V. COVID-19 pandemics and its impact on Bulgarian universities in the context of the new challenges to social system and labour market policies, Internauka Publishing House, Kiev, 2022, 138p., ISBN 978-611-01-2647-2.*

but such freedom guarantees servicing the economy and providing jobs for specialists[351].

There can be defined several sets of questions, namely[352]:

– Is the List of Professions adequate to the state and prospects for the development of the economy and is the economy provided with the necessary skilled personnel in terms of quality and type?

– Do the protected professional specialties sufficiently protect the development of certain professional areas needed by the state (51 protected professional specialties for the academic year 2021/2022)?

– Is the procedure for opening new occupations adequate?

– Do the standards in the education system ensure the achievement of the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies with which each individual can realize his full potential and be useful for both themselves and society? And is there a reliable standard for every profession?

– Is the analysis made to show what skilled workers are needed for the development of the Bulgarian economy reliable enough to have the whole professionalization arranged on the right basis and to ensure the relevant qualification levels, (The List of specialties in professions in which there is an expected shortage of specialists on the labor market for academic year 2021/2022 – 77)?

[351]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

[352]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. // Proceedings of ADVED 2022- 8th International Conference on Advances in Education, Istanbul, Turkey 10-12 October 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2022, pp. 69-75. ISBN: 978-605-06286-8-5.*

– Is there a need for a change in the ratios between first to fourth-qualification degrees in the different professional fields?

Probably, the answer to many of the questions raised should be sought in the field of higher education, but it should always be taken into account what the risk of retraining for certain activities and positions may be. This requires a refinement of the entire toolkit of vocational education, especially since modern industrial development got primarily interested in training specialists in the digital field, and subsequently led to continued shortages in many other zones[353][354][355].

4.4.3.4. Main challenges facing vocational education in Bulgaria

Recent policy changes[356]:

There is a blurring of the boundaries between general education and vocational education and training. Just as many graduates of general education programmes immediately start working (e.g. in administration), up to 90% of students in some vocational education and training programmes (e.g. in economics) continue their education in higher education immediately after graduation. The latest

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[354] *Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Vocational education - professionalism, compliance, challenges. IJAEDU-International E-Journal of Advances in Education, Vol. VIII, Issue 24, December 2022, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2023, pp. 225-230, (INT) e-ISSN: 2411-182. https://doi.org/10.18768/ijaedu.1198780.*

[355] *Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria, gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 356 p., ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

[356] *Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

educational reform provides for profiled education in the upper secondary stage of general education, with each student being able to choose profiled subjects (e.g. mathematics or foreign languages). In some cases, instead of profiled training, combined and secondary schools can provide vocational training[357].

The Vocational Education and Training Act (1999) regulates the organisation, management and financing of vocational education, and training. The amendments to the Vocational Education and Training Act of 2014 concern[358]:

– widening access to VET through validation of non-formal or informal learning conducted by vocational education and training providers;

– better matching of competencies acquired through vocational education and training with labour market demand;

– strengthening the quality assurance process by training providers;

– providing learners with the opportunity to accumulate credits necessary for acquiring a professional qualification in a given profession. Credits can be transferred between professional qualifications within the same professional field;

[357]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

[358]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

– restructuring of the state educational standards for acquiring professional qualifications through units of learning outcomes and assessment criteria;

– introducing a dual system of training, which since 2015 combines training in a school and a real work environment. Dual training is based on the partnership between vocational education and training providers and employers;

– introduction of mandatory requirements for providers of vocational education and training to create an internal quality assurance system that would guarantee the compliance of the services provided with the expectations and needs of society[359].

The 2016 amendments bring the Vocational Education and Training Act into line with the Pre-school and School Education Act and provide additional opportunities for acquiring professional qualifications in relation to the new structure of secondary education (two upper secondary stages). They also aim to improve the quality of vocational education and training by changing the ratio between theoretical and practical training in favour of practical training, including training in a real work environment. As a result of the amendments to the Vocational Education and Training Act, the Labour Code (1986) was also amended in 2014 to regulate the (dual training system) as a type of apprenticeship. Challenges remain in terms of insufficient funding, weak cooperation with business, the increasing

[359] *Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

number of early leavers from education and training, as well as the lack of a coherent system for assessing the quality of vocational education and training. To address these challenges, in 2017 The Ministry of Education and Science approved a Concept for the Development of Vocational Education and Training in Bulgaria. The draft Concept has been discussed with social partners (employers' organizations, employers, local government bodies, trade unions, and educational institutions) within a series of regional meetings[360].

Main challenges and opportunities for development[361]:

The Law on Vocational Education and Training has been amended several times since its adoption in 1999. Many key concepts, such as quality assurance, work-based learning, validation of non-formal and informal learning, and the implementation of a credit system, have now been fully or partially implemented.

The main challenges can be defined in the following areas[362]:

– reducing the number of early leavers from the education and training system (generally higher in vocational education and training than in general secondary education);

[360]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

[361]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

[362]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

– wider provision of dual vocational education and training (dual training is still mainly implemented within the framework of various projects);

– improving the professional qualifications of teachers/trainers (aging of the teaching staff). The Law on Pre-school and School Education (2015) introduces reforms in primary and secondary education, including vocational education and training, which are oriented towards overcoming these challenges, but it is still too early to assess the achieved results.

Incentives for learners[363]:

Students in the vocational education and training system in Bulgaria can receive financial incentives, just like students in general education.

Social benefits/scholarships[364]:

Students in the vocational education and training system can receive scholarships:

– Scholarships for success are awarded to students with high academic achievements;

– Social benefits support access to education and prevent early drop-out of disadvantaged students from the VET system, such as students with special educational needs or orphans.

[363] *Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

[364] *Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

The scholarships are awarded monthly and range from 5% to 15% of the minimum wage established for the country. Trainees in work-based learning (dual training system) receive a monthly salary from the company in which they are trained based on the contract concluded between them. Students in the secondary vocational education system can participate in projects under the European Social Fund for student internships, where they can also receive an additional scholarship[365].

Vouchers for adults[366]:

The terms and conditions for providing training vouchers for employed and unemployed persons, co-financed by the European Social Fund, are defined. The different types of training, target groups, and requirements for training providers are regulated. One person (employed or unemployed) is entitled to only one voucher for key competencies and one for vocational education and training during the implementation of the program[367].

Reduction when using public transport[368]:

All students in the secondary vocational education system are entitled to a reduction when using public transport, including train and urban public transport. The reduction may be up to 60%, the decision being made by the relevant municipality.

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[365]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

[366]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

[367]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

[368]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

Incentives for businesses[369]:

Exemption from value-added tax:

According to the Value Added Tax Act, vocational education and training services and training for the acquisition of key competencies provided by vocational education and training institutions, including licensed vocational training centres, are exempt from value-added tax.

Financial support for the provision of work-based training (dual training system):

The Employment Promotion Act provides financial support for employers who provide a job for work-based training to unemployed persons. The state budget covers the costs of remuneration, social and health insurance of persons employed under this incentive measure for a period of up to 36 months. The costs of the training institution that provides the person's training, as well as the costs of providing a mentor, are also covered[370].

Guidance and Counseling[371]:

Guidance and counseling of unemployed and employed persons is well developed. Career guidance services for job seekers (employed and unemployed persons) are provided by the Directorates of the Labour Office of the National Employment Agency and include[372]:

[369]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

[370]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

[371]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

[372]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

– career counseling (individual and in groups) to assist in the selection of appropriate professional qualifications and training providers; information on the main characteristics of professions (requirements, demand, and trends) and relevant vocational education and training programs (providers, forms of training, admission requirements, diplomas).

Within the educational system, specialized career guidance services are offered mainly through the career guidance centers at the regional level, established with funding from the European Social Fund. The project results are expected to be implemented at a systemic level[373].

4.4.4. Universities – a new way for development

Universities are the foundation of a state`s structure that ensures its stability both literally and figuratively. Universities educate, teach, and create the most intelligent members of society, implement research and developments, and create new technologies. By presumption, universities form an elite space that largely determines the path of the state. It is no coincidence that in highly developed countries the leadership monitors university rankings closely: the state benefits from the strategies, programmes, and projects developed by the universities, the business takes into consideration and counts on university education and research, and the universities themselves become more competitive to achieve the best results in their field. The modern world cannot exist

[373]*Cedefop. (2018). Vocational education and training in Bulgaria: a brief overview. Luxembourg: Publications Office. (Print) ISBN 978-92-896-2659-0, (PDF) ISBN 978-92-896-2661-3. doi: 10.2801/728903.*

without universities, without modern universities, to be more precise. In the past, we called them third-generation universities, however nowadays it would be more appropriate to update the numbers, as is happening with industry, for compliance and development. In Bulgaria, changes in the universities such as their structures and quality of education follow certain management models and strategies that do not consistently and effectively strive to create a satisfactory product for society. There are relatively few universities whose educational and scientific policies strongly encourage freedom of scientific creativity and the recognized need for progress in science for the development of the economy. Compliance with the imposed models and strategies makes most of the higher education institutions subject to scientometric indicators that create high scientific potential with little contribution to real economic and technological development. Even the last national strategy for smart specialization did not single out the much-desired centers of excellence and did not produce results driving the knowledge economy.

This raises the question of not whether there are too many universities, whether new universities or branches should be opened, or whether there should be a moratorium; not whether there should be a national map of higher education, whether teaching and science are leading in the university and not whether they should be divided into research and non-research (which would make them just schools) HEI, but how universities should work to improve the environment so that

our economy does not wait for high-tech investments from outside, but has its own and ideally even exports them[374].

4.4.4.1. Universities – a new approach to development, change and transformation

The definition of Open Science states that it is a summarizing concept of the movement that aims to make research and research results accessible to all interested people, amateurs, and professionals. It includes the publication of open research works, campaigns for open access, the encouragement of scientists to practice open-notebook science, the facilitation of scientific work, and the publication of scientific knowledge in general[375].

The movement dates back to the 17th century with the advent of the first scientific journals when the public need for access to scientific knowledge led groups of scientists to start sharing resources and working collectively[376]. Today, there is a debate about the extent to which scientific information should be shared[377]. The conflict is

[374]*Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

[375]*Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

[376]*David, Paul A. (2004). Understanding the emergence of 'open science' institutions: functionalist economics in historical context. // Industrial and Corporate Change, 13 (4). Oxford Academic, August 2004. DOI:10.1093/icc/dth023. p. 571 – 589.*

[377]*Nielsen, M. (2011). Reinventing Discovery: The New Era of Networked Science. // Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, pp. 198 – 202, 2011, ISBN 978-0-691-14890-8.*

between the desire of scientists to have access to shared resources and the desire of individuals to earn when others use their resources[378][379].

An article in the journal "Az Buki", issue 1/2021, under the title "Open science - the mission is possible" attempts to justify this possibility in Bulgaria[380][381]:

The introduction of open access to scientific information and scientific data in our country is related to the priorities set in national strategic documents for the development of science, research, innovation, and dissemination of scientific achievements. The Operational Plan for implementation of the first stage of the National Strategy for Research Development in the Republic of Bulgaria 2017 - 2030 and the national concept for the application of the principle of open access to scientific information analyse the trends in the development of open science and set the necessary steps, actions, and preconditions for approving the open access initiative. The creation of the Bulgarian portal for open access to scientific information is an important step in the process of development of open science in our country. The portal is maintained by the Minister of Education through the National Center for Information and Documentation (NACID) in

[378] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

[379] *David, Paul A. (2004). Can "Open Science" be Protected from the Evolving Regime of IPR Protections?. // Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics 160 (1). Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Co. KG, March 2004.*

[380] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

[381] *Open science – the mission is possible. (2021). "Az Buki" journal, Issue 1/2021; https://azbuki.bg/novini-2021/broj-1-2021/otvorena-nauka-misiyata-vazmozhna/.*

the implementation of a European recommendation dated April 25, 2018, on access to scientific information and its storage. The Bulgarian Open Science Portal is part of the implementation of the large-scale task to unite and freely access all results of research in Bulgaria, funded by public funds. In addition, all scientists who wish to provide open access to their publications are encouraged to publish in the portal and its repository, even if they are not publicly funded. This will ensure the widest possible access to scientific publications and this will contribute to the development of science and its dissemination among society. Joint efforts and coordinated actions of all interested people will create the conditions for the success and sustainability of open science in Bulgaria[382].

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations, each person has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of society, to enjoy the arts, to participate in scientific progress, and to enjoy its achievements. Everyone has the right to protect their moral and material interests that are the result of any work of science, literature, or art of which they are an author. The genesis of the open science movement is based on the inalienable human rights defined in Art. 27 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The phenomenon is multi-layered and has gained global importance nowadays. A number of organizations at global, regional, national, and institutional levels are involved in open science. The main ones are few.

[382] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

At the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference, the Member States instructed the organization to develop an international tool for setting open science standards in the form of a recommendation. This process is expected to lead to the adoption of the document in 2021[383].

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published a report entitled: "Making open science a reality". It reviews policies in this field. Evidence of the impacts of the promotion of open science and open data is analysed. Legal barriers and solutions for greater access to research data are also explored. It describes the key participants and their roles and evaluates the progress in the OECD and selected non-member countries based on a study of the latest policy trends.

The European Union has made the greatest progress in promoting open science as a movement, politics, and culture. A number of European Commission's initiatives and documents are tracing the way for turning open science into reality. Amongst the leading documents is the Amsterdam call for action towards open science from 2016. It describes clearly and in detail the steps to be taken, as well as the EC recommendation dated 25 April 2018 on access to scientific information and its storage. For the purposes of the movement, a platform for open science policy has been set up, where the latest news, events, and publications on the subject are uploaded. Open science is

[383] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

often defined as a summarizing term that includes various actions aimed at removing the barriers to sharing any kind of output, resources, methods, and instruments at each stage of the scientific research process[384]. Open access to publications, open research data, open-source software, open cooperation, open review, open research notebook, open educational resources, open monographs, citizen science, and research group funding are the main features of open science. This is a continually developing initiative that covers various movements aimed at sharing all types of science resources. In the publication "Open innovation, open science, open to the world - a vision for Europe", the European Commission defines open science as "a new approach to the scientific process based on cooperative work and new ways of diffusing knowledge by using digital technologies and new collaborative tools. The idea captures a systemic change to the way science and research have been carried out for the last fifty years: shifting from the standard practices of publishing research results in scientific publications towards sharing and using all available knowledge at an earlier stage in the research process". The EU-funded project FOSTER is aimed at fostering the practical implementation of open science in "Horizon 2020". Its primary aim is to contribute to a real and lasting shift in the behaviour of researchers and to ensure that Open Science becomes the norm, by providing resources for practical guidelines and training in the same-name portal to help researchers. The

[384] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

Open Science manual states “Open Science is the practice of science in such a way that others can collaborate and contribute, where research data, laboratory notes, and other research processes are freely available, under terms that enable reuse, redistribution, and reproduction of the research and its underlying data and methods. In other words, Open science is transparent and accessible knowledge that is shared and developed through collaborative networks”. Open access is one of the main aspects of Open Science. Among the first major steps in its support is the Budapest open access initiative since February 2002. The definition states “free internet access that allows all users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or connect the full texts of these articles examining the indexing content, transfer them as software data or use them for any other legitimate purpose without financial, legal or technical barriers other than those who are an integral part of receiving access to the Internet. The only limit to reproduction and dissemination and the only copyright aspect in this area should be the authors` right to control the integrity of their work and the right to be duly recognized and cited”. Budapest's initiative was followed by Bethesda's statement on open access publishing from 20 June 2003, drafted at a meeting held at the headquarters of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The principles are designed to “stimulate discussion within the biomedical research community on how to proceed, as rapidly as possible, to the widely held goal of providing open access to the primary scientific literature”. A little later, in October 2003, the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to

Knowledge in the field of Natural sciences and Humanities was issued. The aim is to stimulate the easily accessible distribution of knowledge to educate society through free online access in a sustainable and interactive network with interoperable software. Open access is defined as a practice of providing online access to scientific information that is free and reusable. In the context of research and development, open access to scientific information relates to two main categories – scientific publications (mostly reviewed research articles published in academic journals) and research data (unpublished data or raw data acquired during scientific research). There are two main recommended ways to provide open access via self-backup, or so-called "Green Road" - the author or his representative deposits the published article or the final reviewed manuscript in an online repository before, simultaneously, or after its publication[385][386].

Many documents define relationships and positions in education and science – from laws and normative documents to regulations, standards, ordinary rules, and many more. Each such document has a precise and certain place in terms of meaning and content. Within a specific frame, everyone develops under these systems – teacher, lecturer, scientist ... which is needed, yet an insufficient condition, to be a good teacher, lecturer, and scientist. The teacher, the lecturer, and the scientist teach, distribute and share knowledge. Knowledge is a special

[385] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

[386] *Open science – the mission is possible. (2021). "Az Buki" journal, Issue 1/2021; https://azbuki.bg/novini-2021/broj-1-2021/otvorena-nauka-misiyata-vazmozhna/.*

category. It is not a fruit or vegetable to be sold or exchanged. Knowledge is a "great event" and this is how we should refer to it – as to something great.

4.4.4.1.1. What are the peculiarities of knowledge?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines knowledge as: facts, information, and skills acquired through the experience or education, the theoretical or practical understanding of the subject, or what is known in a given area as a whole or awareness, acquired by experiencing a fact or situation[387].

To know means a lot and a little. You know a lot, but the knowledge limited to one`s personal space remains only an individual possession. It brings relatively little benefit to others and society. The power of knowledge is in its sharing – either verbally expressed, spread, taught, or written. The more you distribute the knowledge, the more useful it is for a society and its development, it becomes alive. The shared knowledge is fundamental to human survival and development. Shared knowledge generates new ideas, creates opportunities and prospects, removes limits, creates new products and enables any development. In the business environment, shared knowledge is an invaluable resource and a driving force for the functioning of market relations, from which the end user always wins[388].

[387] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

[388] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey,*

It is not accidental that open educational and scientific spaces are created, which even cover political and social initiatives (European Open Science cloud, European Research Area, etc.).[389]

4.4.4.1.2. How do we share knowledge?

In order to share knowledge, you have to master it, you should not only possess someone else`s knowledge that you have realized, analysed, and rationalized, but you should enrich it with your opinion, comment, or your own knowledge, acquired with your own efforts. Knowledge is shared in many ways, often not defined as such. Teaching and research work are defined as fundamental in knowledge sharing.[390]

To teach, distribute, and share knowledge with others requires many other things (skills, experience, competencies, mastery of communication channels, various amplifiers, etc.) that cannot be read or found in laws and regulations. Beyond the documents, it is required to have certain qualities like specific and quality creative energy, dedication, self-sacrifice, understanding, empathy, sympathy, lust for learning, indomitable spirit, desire for discovery, indefatigability, constant striving for improvement, intransigence and many other purely professional features. In order to be a good teacher, you do not have to read the textbooks or ask the right questions to evaluate your students,

International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.

[389] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

[390] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

have your lectures in the classroom and laboratory, and write a number of publications to follow the path of academic growth. Being a good teacher and scientist is a mission that only a few can pursue. That is why I believe that to be a good teacher means to be able to share knowledge so that it reaches many people in a way that will create new knowledge. Then there is a point in living for and with knowledge. For those who share knowledge, this is their essence and meaning, it is their belief. Is everyone capable of this – to fully devote yourself to the point of exhaustion or not being able to do so? And even if you do not have such an opportunity, for a number of reasons, this is a matter of your own development[391].

However, knowledge is not only shared through teaching. Knowledge sharing is performed in many ways outside of school and university. And these methods are no less important because they create an environment and a network for process continuity. This has long been invented and we only apply these methods without thinking about the significance they bring, the effects they create, and the influence they make. Conferences, seminars, and congresses are the places where knowledge is shared. The same knowledge can and should be shared on many different forums. And there is nothing wrong or unnatural about that. The same knowledge can be described in many scientific, and not only scientific journals, and there is nothing wrong with hat either.

[391] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

Thus, it reaches a much larger and more diverse audience, finding its users. This way it stimulates new ideas and creates followers[392].

Does knowledge need followers? One, I hope, rhetorical question that has an unambiguous answer. Yes – to be shared, knowledge must have its followers. Otherwise, how certain ideas, thoughts, deliberations, or theses will reach a certain community and how will they become a necessity? This is a contribution that not everyone can and does make. It is very fashionable to talk about "influencers" today. There is no greater "influencer" than shared knowledge. As long as we give it a chance and do not limit it – due to a lack of understanding and a desire to put it in a frame. And even worse – to put chains on it that will keep it where someone has decided is its place. There have been such times and periods, but today, we hope they are over.

Today, in the period of transition from automated to digital systems, the distribution of knowledge takes place in different ways, with the help of different methods and techniques than a century ago. Naturally, the most important of them is learning – formal, non-formal, informal, which takes place in and out of school. Furthermore, the school is supported by many additional methods for the distribution of knowledge – organized or unorganized, individual or collective. Many lecturers, scientists, researchers, managers, and various specialists analyse this topic and there is always something different and

[392] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

interesting in their opinions regarding the different types of knowledge and the different ways of its distribution.

At the same time, many managers not only analyse, but also create rules by which knowledge is distributed and shared, and when everything is put in a certain framework, it fades and brings relatively little added value. When managers create the framework "you can - you cannot", "you get - you do not" and this framework is formalized to the degree of favouritism or elimination, to the degree of creating friendly circles, to the degree of creating an academic layer without much contribution to knowledge, but with possibilities for distribution of influence – then knowledge also loses its main purpose, it loses a lot. It loses because the manager "gets" a bonus for everyone who is below him in the hierarchy to become "visible". It doesn't matter where you rank on the list of authors, only the number is important.[393]

True knowledge does not follow this pattern. It tries to come to the surface in different ways – informally, personally, with its style. It enters new audiences, appears in front of new listeners, and fulfils the mission of sharing and distribution. Whether this type of knowledge will receive a title or recognition is a matter of approach. Maybe, but not for sure! Is this type of knowledge useful? Yes, because it creates. Does not participation in various competitions through which we strive to engage young people to pursue teaching or research count as

[393] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

knowledge sharing? Why do we do this? Because today we lack leadership in knowledge. Leaders and not managers attract young people. Leaders do not share knowledge in order to be liked, but to create followers of knowledge. They are innovators and they are different. They are liked if they are attractive, if they know a lot, if they know how to communicate, if they carry the charisma of the knowledge they have. And isn't this a new reading?

Knowledge, which is distributed through various means, such as books, magazines (of various kinds), newspapers, electronic platforms, and the Internet, means familiarity with certain content, and information about facts of various kinds and allows for understanding, associativity, reasoning, perception, and discovery. Certain and different processes start from knowledge. Of course, all these considerations do not provoke a violation of the rules but seek that change that will create new models of knowledge sharing. Knowledge management and artificial intelligence are part of this unexpected but inevitable process.[394]

Every means of knowledge distribution can be referred to as knowledge sharing. To my mind, it is the sharing of knowledge that makes it alive, active, useful, working, and effective, ensuring the development not only of the relevant factual resource but also generating a new one. Every teaching activity, no matter where – at school, university, training center, or scientific structure – is an activity

[394] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

of knowledge distribution and sharing. But not everyone who does it gets to the top of sharing. Knowledge sharing is a network activity, as the network grows to huge sizes, requiring strict systematization and consolidation by topic in order to be able to cover and continue its development. On the one hand, teachers and scientists teach knowledge accumulated so far, on the other hand, by expressing their own opinion or adding their own research and studies, they enrich and further develop it. With a small amount of knowledge, like it was at the beginning of its accumulation, each newly discovered fact was usually named after the person responsible. This is how many laws in science that bear the names of their discoverers appeared. This is how the "Eureka" exclamation reached many people, but is it possible to achieve a similar effect today with a publication that will be read by a limited number of people (and in some cases only by the authors)? With the accumulation of vast knowledge that is even difficult to systematize, this does not always happen or only happens in special cases of serious discoveries and contributions. Recognition of the contribution of anyone who has added even a little new knowledge is done differently. Thus, the citation of the contribution becomes an important element of the evaluation of this contribution to the development of knowledge.[395]

Nowadays, when knowledge and science occupy huge space in economic, social, research life, and social development in general, it is becoming increasingly difficult to track contributions. Evaluating

[395] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

contributions to the development of knowledge before you, before your own work, is not so important for documentation as it is important from the point of view of recognition, of ethics about everyone who has contributed their own development to the development of knowledge. Therefore, the evaluation of the contribution is inextricably linked to the sharing of knowledge. The difference between evaluation and sharing is that you evaluate and distribute the evaluated knowledge as an original, but in sharing you put your own understanding or create "newly developed knowledge". "I believe that each of us possesses useful knowledge that he or she can share with others and even should do it at every opportunity to help those pursuing the same professional path – just as he or she received assistance and guidance from the more experienced colleagues in the beginning. From my own experience the best programmers, designers, businessmen, coaches, and others like being asked questions and giving advice to people who are just starting their careers, changing professions, or need other types of help. However, they are rarely asked because many people think that these experts are "unreachable" and are afraid to just write to them asking a question", said Silvina Furnadzhieva, the site's founder[396].

Shared knowledge becomes part of every creative path, i.e., you can share it with different audiences, in different ways, adequate to those audiences, and that's how you participate in the process. In this sense, every way is important and valuable.[397]

[396] *"Един въпрос". www.edinvapros.org, Retrieved 25 December 2024.*

[397] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey,*

Sometimes sharing knowledge would not be possible when a research paper is published in our own university edition and only in Bulgarian. An unbiased assessment in this regard would be that the users of such knowledge are limited to the circle of our colleagues and a very small number of people outside. Different means of knowledge sharing like publishing and distributing it in various scientific publications, platforms, presentations at conferences and seminars, and last but not least in different languages, help expand it. The limited use of the Bulgarian language is a kind of barrier and even an obstacle to the transfer of knowledge. Examples in this direction include translations of several Bulgarian writers and authors (which have been translated into dozens of languages), as well as scientific publications presented with the same content in a number of scientific journals. The SSRN research platform provides detailed information of this nature, which in practice proves to be an effective amplifier for knowledge transfer. Otherwise, it will remain in a closed system, and it needs to be perceived, affirmed and, last but not least, to be recognized by the community.[398]

4.4.4.1.3. Do we regulate knowledge sharing?

We share knowledge verbally and in writing. In verbal knowledge sharing, we can omit names, dates, and positions, but it is not the same

International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.

[398] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

in written works. There, every name and year is important, in order to follow not only the ethical norms of the recognition of achievements but also to provide that systematization which is important from a factual point of view. There every author's opinion is significant, that is not “taken” from anyone, i.e. - this is the created knowledge, which becomes part of the general. This is where we encounter the terms “citation”, “self-citation”, “plagiarism”, and “self-plagiarism” – frightening terms that can not only confuse knowledge sharing but can also destroy one's destiny. The first two terms are, of course, surmountable and in some cases “re-used” - either out of reinsurance or out of a desire to create prestige in terms of analyticity. When it comes to using the methods of publishing, this can also be expressed by sharing your previous experience (research), and in fact, each subsequent work is an upgrade of the previous one. Such sharing can and is done more than once and it does not in any way violate the norms for the distribution of knowledge. And this is important because it is not just sharing. This is an upgrade and it becomes part of the general development of knowledge. In today's science, this is called self-citation.[399]

The other two concepts can be compared to a scientist’s and a teacher’s guillotine or to sending them to a not very favourable group, which marks them as harmful or even expels them from the system. “Non-plagiarism” is a skill, but “plagiarism” is an inability to share

[399] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

knowledge. No one indeed has the right to boast about other people's achievements and other people's knowledge. However, it is a matter of consideration whether someone`s knowledge is enriched and further developed, whether it creates value or benefits society.

When it comes to "self-plagiarism" it is difficult for me to give a definition – an author plagiarized himself ... If plagiarism literally means using someone else's work, then self-plagiarism is the use of one's own work. Something like an autoimmune disease. Is knowledge suffering from this?[400]

Presented in this way, auto-plagiarism contradicts the European Charter of Scientists (2005), wherein the section "Dissemination, exploitation of results" the importance of the dissemination of research results is explicitly emphasized: "All researchers should ensure, in compliance with their contractual arrangements, that the results of their research are disseminated and exploited, e.g. communicated, transferred into other research settings or, if appropriate, commercialized"[401].

4.4.4.2. Changes in the higher education system of Bulgaria

Attempts to implement changes in our education have often made us face artificial challenges. The failed transition to democracy in Bulgaria has turned education from a value of national importance into

[400] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

[401] *"EURAXESS". https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter, Retrieved 25 December 2024.*

one with fading functions and education itself into a field of relentless experiments and controversy engaging a large number of target groups – universities, schools, teachers, students, parents, state authorities, politicians. We realize the risks of the new idea of the Ministry of Education and Science in Bulgaria to restructure higher education, but we will share the statement we stand for anyway. This is the statement that education is at the heart of regional development, and higher education is the foundation of smart growth, provided we still comply with the priorities of the European Union and the world, which, even though modified in accordance with Covid or green deals, cannot refute this claim. Several definitions must be remembered though, not only as titles but as content, and one of them, perhaps the most important, is sustainable development. There can be no sustainable development unless every system is involved and every element becomes part of this process and participates in its realization. Higher education is such a system. The second major system is regional development. We will not dwell on other systems, although they are very important and should not be neglected. Why do we turn to these two systems and what the connection with the reform in higher education is?[402]

– Education, incl. higher education is the foundation for the development of the state; the state consists of regions and their balanced development is absolutely necessary;

[402] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

– Every strategic view of the development of a country begins with these two systems – where they prepare human resources, i.e. the human capital of the state, and where this capital is realized;

– These two systems determine the possibility of a balanced distribution of the population on the territory of the state;

– The use of state resources throughout its territory depends seriously on these two systems and this is not only sustainable development, it is part of national security;

– The artificial relocation of existing elements of an important system on the territory of the state has never been successful and functional for development;

– When talking about higher education and regional development, we should stop believing the mantra that everything outside the capital is a province and of lower quality;

– The good interaction between these two systems gives people a high degree of freedom and the right to choose;

– For two decades we have been talking about the development of a knowledge-based economy, where higher education and regional development are pillars of such an economy;

– Each reform includes an assessment of traditions, the current situation, and prospects (the bad thing is that the forecasts do not work for us easily).

We will not follow the whole chronology of changes in higher education in Bulgaria, which went through the establishment and development of higher institutions, institutes, and universities in many

regions of the country to provide a basis for regional development through various transformations of public and private higher education, through the quest for every big city to have a college or university, until the discovery of over fifty such structures. Not all stages of this development are successful, unfortunately, but at the moment they are a fact. We will not follow the chronology of all strategies for the development of higher education either, where the development of the regions is connected in some way with the development of higher education, culminating in the strategy for smart specialization, which later became the basis for centres of excellence and centres of competence to come up with the idea of such consolidation, which could deprive many regions of independent universities, which today have significant academic potential and are well used in some regions.[403]

If so far we have advocated the academic potential of universities to be seriously included in all development policies of individual regions, then starting from today this will no longer be a valid thesis because the probability of consolidated structures to maintain the potential of structures in each region is not very high. Both from the point of view of the academic staff and from the point of view of students, who have always strived for the central structures, for a

[403] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

hierarchically higher institution, believing that the quality there is higher.

We know that on a European and global scale, the innovation potential of a region is linked to the structures of science and higher education. Through an irrational consolidation, this potential will be increasingly centralized, and if we connect this trend with the idea of research universities, where more financial resources would obviously be concentrated, the result of this reform is by no means encouraging regional development.[404]

Reform in higher education is necessary and urgent. It should focus on modernizing teaching methods and content and adapting them to modern social and technological development. Objectively, Industry 4.0 can not develop with Education 2.0 without, of course, taking the literal meaning of the words, but in many places, the quality of higher (and not only) education can be identified with such identification. However, this does not mean that the created potential should be neglected, but it should be supported and directed to the development of both the regions and the state in accordance with its potential and specific characteristics. To the question of whether there are many universities in Bulgaria, the easiest answer is "yes", the easiest measure that could be applied is reduction. This answer would not be accurate enough and correspond to the respective realities and especially to the

[404] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

defined claims for development. We know that the evaluation of universities has been done, but the scientific measurements of the results are hardly correct and objective enough to rely on and that it would give everything for sustainable and intelligent development. There are many other indicators needed (a set of indicators and criteria), some existing but neglected, others not yet used to make such an assessment. But this is also the easiest measure for young people to migrate to the centre, which is already overcrowded and the gradual disappearance of certain regions and areas is a worrying fact and tendency.

A far better measure is the creation of university networks, the organization of which has already started, but they are with megastructures – they work differently, they increase flexibility, mobility, and connectivity, and provide a multiplier effect to eliminate emerging deficits and solve specific problems with common efforts and potential.[405]

Some time ago we conducted a study on the needs of several regions in Bulgaria for staff with certain knowledge, skills, and qualifications and saw the many problems the regions have to face. But they are not related to the large number of universities, yet to the state's inability to organize policies so that the economy and education move in sync and work in synergy. Unfortunately, these studies were not

[405] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

considered important by any institution, and the right decision was to do such studies for all regions in the country and to identify measures that need to be developed and due to which the policies would focus on strong regional development, which: preserves the regional human capital, raises the potential of the region, improves the innovative infrastructure, creates a balance in the economic development of the country.[406]

However, the study was not conducted by pro-government organizations and therefore was not noticed. It is different to carry out targeted public procurement that decides specific cases for specific interests, which is most often used in the implementation or more precisely in motivating the implementation of national policies.

Probably such a solution is more convenient than endless and often unproductive discussions or oppositions, which is understandable. This is certainly the case in centralized democracies. Because it is known that those whose status is preserved will be happy to remain silent at the risk of changing the nature of the decision, others will be afraid of losing the minimum they have left. Satisfaction is for the big structures, which will develop at the expense of many of the others, but the big problems remain.[407]

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[406] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

[407] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

There are good practices in Europe and the world in which educational institutions related to the arts are managed by the relevant Ministry of Culture. Undoubtedly, the capacity there, both methodologically and practically, is higher than in the Ministry of Education and Science. Moreover, in Bulgaria, the secondary schools of arts are managed by the Ministry of Culture and the completion of this process as well as the higher schools in the field of art are structures of the same ministry[408409410411412413].

There is no doubt that there is an urgent need for a reform that would replace the dysfunctional and problematic autonomy. Undoubtedly, many of the policies in this area so far have not produced the best solutions, and even worse, the results are not of high quality. But this is exactly what requires the next reform to be designed to truly satisfy the regional development of the country and to do so with clear criteria that promote quality – with a clear and synchronized legal

[408]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Attestation of academic staff - opportunity or barrier in career development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2022 - 9th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 13-14 June 2022-Online Conference, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2022, pp. 231-241, ISBN: 978-605-06286-6-1.*

[409]*Terziev, V., & Lyubcheva, M. Shared knowledge and changes in the higher education system in Bulgaria. // 79th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Rabat, 25-26 March, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.228-237, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[410]*Terziev, V. Shared knowledge as a part of open science. // 21st RSEP International Economics, Finance & Business Conference – Virtual/Online 19-20 May 2021, HCC. St. Moritz Hotel, Barcelona, Spain, RSEP, Ankara/Turkey, 2021, pp. 126-131, ISBN: 978-605-70583-0-0/May 2021.*

[411]*Terziev, V. Academic ethics committee - functioning, legal framework and ethics. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2022 - 9th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 13-14 June 2022-Online Conference, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2022, pp. 197-202, ISBN: 978-605-06286-6-1.*

[412]*Terziev, V. Academic examples in times of post crisis social isolation. // 78th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – Aveiro, 24-25 February, 2022, Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), Cakovec, Croatia, 2022, pp.221-224, ISSN 1849-7535.*

[413]*Terziev, V. Shared knowledge and presentation of the research results in specialised scientific publications. // Proceedings of INTCESS 2022- 9th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 17-18 January 2022- Online Conference, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2022, pp.524-530, ISBN: 978-605-06286-4-7.*

framework, accreditation policy, quality criteria for academic staff, which include along with scientific measurement indicators other important elements leading to the development of institutions and regions and many other steps in this direction. It is not possible to initiate such a reform without the participation of the academic community, local, and regional authorities. No one should be afraid of public discussion, no matter how difficult it may be, if there are sufficient and reasonable arguments. Currently, such public discussion is almost non-existent or, if there is one, on a purely departmental basis.[414][415][416][417]

The questions that need to be asked clearly and loudly remain[418]:

– What basis was used to make this decision?

– Are there other alternatives to the consolidation of universities, which would bring administrative, technical, and technological problems at all levels and at all existing structures?

[414]*Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

[415]*Vovchenko, N.G., Andreeva, O.V., Dmitrieva, V.D., Kaptsova, V.S., & Terziev, V.K. (2023). Technological, Economic, and Social Changes: The Role of End-to-End Technologies. In: Makarenko, E.N., Vovchenko, N.G., Tishchenko, E.N. (eds) Technological Trends in the AI Economy. Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies, vol 625. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-7411-3_2.*

[416]*Vovchenko, N.G., Andreeva, O.V., Dmitrieva, V.D., Galazova, S.S., & Terziev, V.K. (2022). Modelling of Economic Clusters in the Russian Regions in the Context of Formation of the Industry 4.0. In: Trifonov, P.V., Charaeva, M.V. (eds) Strategies and Trends in Organizational and Project Management. DITEM 2021. Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, vol 380. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94245-8_91.*

[417]*Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., & Solovev, D. The interaction: business- education- investment for development. // Proceedings of INTCESS 2020- 7th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences 20-22 January, 2020 - DUBAI (UAE), International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2020, pp. 865-869, ISBN: 978-605-82433-8-5.*

[418]*Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

Unified structures located 500 km away, although in the digital age, will not be very easy to manage. It would be even harder to control them;

– What was and will be the role of the National Higher Education Card?

– How does this reform fit in with balanced regional development?

– Won't there be a similar result from the closure of schools in certain regions?

– The management of megastructures, although very tempting, does not cause a concentration of power and resources, which the government in our country does not always do well;

– Which country of the European Union has implemented such centralization of higher education?

A number of other questions can be asked, and the answers will be part of the planned changes in the legislation related to higher education in Bulgaria.

Universities should have a new way for their development, as well as a vision that would correspond to future needs.[419]

4.5. Research of social processes in the works of Venelin Terziev

Social processes are some of the most significant in the development of societies. From the point of view of science, they are difficult to research, study, and analyze, but for people, they are

[419] *Terziev, V. Universities – a new way for development. // Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences 19-21 June 2023- Istanbul, Turkey, International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey 2023, pp. 138-143. ISBN: 978-605-72065-2-7.*

important and significant. This creates certain challenges for scientists who deal with this issue, as well as difficulties in proving their analytical research, judgments, and conclusions.

All these circumstances have placed demands on these researchers to seek a diverse set of opportunities for presenting, proving, and testing research in society. The dynamics of ongoing social processes additionally create difficulties. There are too few scientists who use a large set of instruments, interdisciplinary knowledge, as well as sufficient skills to impose their theses and views. Some of their conclusions are quite bold and sound like an unrealistic forecast for the future development of our societies. Others are not accepted due to the high complexity of these processes and the impossibility of accompanying a specific study or analysis with an appropriate mathematical apparatus. Sometimes the data used has a high degree of relativity and only the high expertise of the authors of these studies helps the process of reaching correct and accurate conclusions in their work.

For example, Professor Marusya Lyubcheva from the University of Burgas, Bulgaria writes the following about one of the seminal works of Professor Venelin Terziev: The book "Policies and Instruments for Social Development"[420] managed to keep my interest because my attention was directed to sustainable development all the time. Without sustainable development being the subject of discussion at all, or even

[420]*Terziev, V. Policies and tools for social development. 2nd ed./ Venelin Terziev, Profi print, Ruse, 2019, 588p., ISBN 978-619-7557-00-8.*

mentioned in the texts. Almost a phenomenon but not so unexpected for a person who seeks the projections of sustainable development in practical life, as the author does. It is a well-known fact that social activities/processes are one of the pillars of sustainable development. And this is probably the reason why I found this connection in the book, without it being demonstrated. Assessing even the very title of the book "Policies and Instruments…", it can be said that it sounds like a resonance in a real environment in which the entire social sphere is subject to certain policies that can make it effective, but can also create chaos, from which the entire chain, starting from management and reaching the last person to whom it is directed, can swing in one direction or another. Even with a good set of tools, an unmeasured policy could not be useful.

Why policies? Considering the social system as such, we must undoubtedly take into account that politics is everything. The organization of all elements in the system begins with it and the creation of a service for each member of society ends with it. As a framework in which administrations, priorities, and measures are placed, starting with an analysis of both the state and achievements and comparison with other similar ones, ending with the quality of each service offered.

Why tools? Methodologies and methods are how a policy becomes a reality and acquires its practical dimensions. It should always be borne in mind that the tools can be different and it is good for them to be up-to-date in order to result in efficiency. This is precisely why policies and tools should be considered in synchrony.

Why development? Every action in a country has its social dimension and an emerging perspective of increased well-being for all social groups or individuals. The purpose of the social system is to ensure the quality of life of all citizens, regardless of their education, status, or group affiliation, and to create an environment for social tolerance and perspective. Each subsequent state of the system is a projection of perspectives and development.

Examining policies and tools, the author makes the perfect combination for result-oriented actions as part of sustainable development and part of the sustainability and security of each system. The policy-tools relationship is the key to systematicity and the transformation of theoretical management models into operational schemes through logistic matrices by elements.

This integration is the greatest achievement of Prof. Venelin Terziev's work and it is positioned in each chapter, with the chapters representing certain areas of the country's social system.

The solutions of the individual chapters reflect a sequence along the axis of study of social policy - social economy - social development, and in this relation the formulated social models become real.

Within the framework outlined by the topics of the three chapters, the main problems of social assistance, inequalities, poverty, models of social development, prospects of the social economy, and social enterprises are discussed. At first glance, the third chapter “Continuing vocational training in Bulgaria as a tool for social development” stands

slightly detached from the first two topics, but a more in-depth discussion places this emphasis at the center of social development and naturally connects it with the first two. The main reason for this is rooted in the fact that modern social development is validated with new knowledge, skills, and competencies, which are achieved with continuous renewal of the knowledge base. If we are talking about a knowledge-based economy, then it is quite adequate to talk about social activities based on modern knowledge and skills. It is precisely these new knowledge, skills, and competencies that can bring the necessary social security, which the author highlights as an emphasis on social policy and the social economy.

This final announcement of the book makes the relationship development – security – competence certain. This relationship returns to the debate in the first chapter, connecting it to research models and in the second, seeking the security of the social economy.

In other words, the book defines a visual cyclicality with a formal beginning in social development, passing through the modeling of the social economy, and ending with training, which, determined as ongoing, again returns the system to determining a new state in social development.

The book is richly illustrated with factual material that emphasizes rich associative reasoning and the construction of interrelationships that can determine the projections of a strong future social policy with its associated tools.

Prof. Margarita Bogdanova from the Academy of Economics in Svishtov, Bulgaria shares: This is a monographic work by the eminent scientist Prof. Venelin Terziev[421]. This is a monographic work by an extremely productive researcher who has devoted a large part of his work to topics related to social policy and social assistance. Venelin Krastev Terziev is a Doctor of Economic Sciences, Doctor of Sciences (National Security), and Doctor of Sciences in Social Activities. He has held several leading positions in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria, and in private business, which determines the practical nature of a large part of his scientific research in the field of economics and management at various hierarchical levels.

This monographic work is aimed at a difficult area to research – social development and the capacity of the administration to provide effective social assistance.

"The topic is particularly relevant both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, because studies and analyses in this area only concern individual aspects of social development problems and often miss the big picture," says Prof. Terziev.

On the other hand, the author has chosen to apply a unified integrated approach that combines structural, normative, functional, and prospective analysis of the object and subject of study. This requires very in-depth knowledge of the system from different

[421] *Terziev, V. Policies and tools for social development. 2nd ed./ Venelin Terziev, Profi print, Ruse, 2019, 588p., ISBN 978-619-7557-00-8.*

perspectives, as well as prospective thinking and a highly prognostic culture, which few researchers possess.

Prof. Terziev does not hide that the topic is also relevant in practical terms due to the complex nature of the social system, which is saturated with numerous contradictions - between individual social groups, between needs and tools for satisfying these needs, between short-term and long-term impacts of policies and regulatory tools, etc.

“These painful discrepancies for society reduce the effect of the functioning of the social system, and therefore scientifically based proposals for their resolution or elimination are more than necessary, relevant and significant,” specifies Prof. Terziev.

By considering possible alternatives for action to overcome the contradictions that have arisen, the scientist clearly states his intentions to provide an answer to at least some of the most pressing problems in the object of research. In order to limit the field of study, Prof. Venelin Terziev has chosen as his goal the creation and verification of a scientific theory of an applied nature for social development and the development of adapted scientific-applied models for increasing the effectiveness of social assistance, aimed at the development and improvement of social policy, social enterprises and the training of specialists in social activities, through continuing professional training. Structurally, the work is divided into four separate parts, which are logically justified and closely related to the research tasks. The first part examines and critically analyzes the problems related to modern approaches in the research of social policy and social work. The

achievements of the leading authors are extensively analyzed, and new scientific-theoretical statements defining social development and social policy are derived. The good European and global practices in the field of social security and their reflection on the management approaches and the capacity of the relevant administrations in Bulgaria are critically analyzed. On this basis, the principles of social policy are derived. This chapter also enriches and further develops the theory of social work as a process. A retrospective economic analysis of trends in the world and our country is made, and the need for the development of social work is deduced. Key concepts are defined, such as “institutionalization”, “identification” and “internationalization of social work”. Based on scientific-theoretical and applied analysis, several concepts are enriched, such as “social state”, “social security”, “social protection”, “social benefits”, “social services”, “social provision”, “social insurance” and “social assistance system”. The author has analyzed in depth the structure of the social assistance system and the organization of social protection activities for vulnerable groups in Bulgaria. A definition of the profession of “social worker” is introduced, outlining its profile and necessary qualifications. This is an important starting point in the process of providing the social assistance system with competent specialists. The second part is dedicated to the social economy and in particular to social enterprises, which are presented as a model for effective social assistance and social development. The European social model is examined as a universally recognized key tool for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth, following the priorities

of the “Europe 2020” Strategy, and now as a vision for “Europe 2030”. A very interesting and in-depth analysis of the state and prerequisites for the development of social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria is presented, highlighting regulatory conjunctions and restrictions, sectoral and territorial characteristics, and development trends. The author pays special attention to the typology of social enterprises from the point of view of their goals (including social goals), size, forms of support for risk groups, phases of development, social effects, etc. The proposed typology is a methodological issue of exceptional importance. It is related to the metrics, analysis, and evaluation of social enterprises in order to provide objective, reliable, and relevant information for their regulation with appropriate policies and instruments. Last but not least, the author presents a broad vision of innovations in the field of social enterprises and of policies for their promotion both at the national and regional levels with various financial and non-financial means and instruments. Particularly interesting are the innovative practices presented, such as “positive discrimination”, the introduction of the “Social Enterprise Product” brand, etc., which break the established stereotypes in this area and contribute to the imposition of a modern, modern understanding of the phenomenon of social enterprises.

The strategic framework for the development of social entrepreneurship complements the presentation in the second chapter. The relevant European and national strategic and operational documents are indicated. The possibilities for supporting social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria are outlined, not only as financial

instruments but also as partnership initiatives, models and various proven good practices for strengthening the institutional capacity of social enterprises, public sector organizations, and the sector as a whole. In support of the defined goal, the third part of the study is dedicated to continuing professional training. A significant contribution of the author is that he enriches the theory of continuing professional training as a tool for social development. The legislative and institutional framework of continuing professional training, trends, factors, and challenges are consistently examined, and also the methodological basis of continuing professional training in the context of lifelong learning. The most adequate forms of continuing professional training in the social sphere are derived and a methodology for the application of continuing professional training based on the concept of “lifelong learning” is proposed. The fourth part presents the author's ideas regarding the preparation and professional qualification of social work specialists in Bulgaria through continuing professional training. The emanation of labor is the developed model of a system for the preparation and professional qualification of social work specialists in Bulgaria through continuing professional training. The steps for implementing the model are proposed and the expected benefits of its application are outlined. The development uses various theoretical and empirical methods of analysis, adequate to the object and subject of the study, all of which are used correctly and competently. The study is based on a solid empirical database of data from national studies conducted by specialized institutions. As a researcher who works

mainly in the field of economics, administration, and management, I am strongly impressed by the fact that the author pays attention to one of the key problems in management - the metrics of the results of the activities of a given system and the related concepts, such as effectiveness and efficiency, especially since they are considered in their social context. The precise solution to the issue of metrics is an extremely challenging task from a research point of view and a basic condition for the validity of the conclusions regarding the relevance of policies and instruments for social development. Perhaps the most important message that V. Terziev sends to the readers is related to improving the sustainability of social policy. This is the leitmotif of the entire work, which is already present in the second chapter - in the analysis and assessment of the prospects for the development of the social economy and social enterprises, but is further developed in the following parts, where the problem of sustainability is also treated as part of the long-term and medium-term strategic impact of social interventions. Without a doubt, the author demonstrates his high erudition both in research and in practice, showing a thorough knowledge of the logic of the processes, of the applicable tools for proving the defined research theses, and of the limitations that shape the framework of the study. It reveals the various aspects of the object of study – social policies and instruments as a basis for development and capacity building for effective social assistance, showing their forms of manifestation, connectivity with other systems, possible transformations, and potential consequences of this. The logical

justification of this author's choice is an excellent prerequisite for the creation of a research product with high utility for both the theory and practice of social policy and social assistance. Among the most serious merits of the work is that the author has an established vision for the development of the Bulgarian social model and for the challenges facing its successful implementation in order to bring it into line with the European legal framework and the specifics of the country. I find that the significance of this monographic work goes beyond the framework of what is generally accepted in the field of scientific research and presents the author not only as a serious theorist and practitioner but also as a professional with a responsible attitude to the management of the social system, who continues to be dedicated to the cause of "social development".

Professor Olga Andreeva from Rostov State University of Economics, Russian Federation shares another fundamental work in which Prof. Venelin Terziev is the main co-author "Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria"[422]: It should be noted that Prof. Venelin Terziev has a great scientific background on the issues, which allows him to concentrate and summarize the latest results of scientific research.

We believe that the presented monograph is worthy of the attention of the scientific community in terms of the development of theoretical positions on the researched topic, as well as the managerial

[422]*Terziev, V., & Georgiev, M. Challenges to active social policies in Bulgaria. Gabriell-e-lit, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023, 357p. ISBN: 978-619-7705-20-1.*

powers authorized to make decisions in the affected areas. The study will also be useful for a wide range of people interested in the problems of social development in the modern state. He has quite good experience in the research and study of social policies and programs. His main publishing and research work is related to this.

Prof. Venelin Terziev's latest research is related to social transformations, which are of particular interest in dynamically changing social systems. The approach to studying the role of socially dominant leaders in the creation of new social systems, as well as the changes occurring in social systems, is interesting.

Professor Venelin Terziev shares: Personal and collective living in the next political system has exhausted its significance both for those who consume it and for those who observe it from the outside. The inability to self-preserve and react to the changing world is an unambiguous answer that it is seeking its new and completely different transformation. These periods of transformation are usually accompanied by severe and painful transitional states, which are accompanied by many diverse conflicts. No matter how simplistic all this sounds, there is a certain and strong logical, and not only, basis in it - we should not underestimate our historical memory in this direction, which would prove these statements of ours with a high degree of relativity.

The question would be quite immediate - how and what is happening to social reality? The next one is not at all useless - and what is happening to us ourselves? And if the answer to the second question

is relatively easier, then to the first it is far more complex, both in essence and in process. We will eventually have to go through periods of active transformations of our entire social system, which will also include a change in political models of existence. If by social system we understand the entire set of relations, it would be practically more justified and more realistic.

The failures and rises of the existing political realities are many and have their essential differences. Comparing and explaining them is important, insofar as this can bring certain benefits in our movement forward, as well as an explanation of the new processes taking place. These processes will carry elements that we know well and will even read and explain well, but also those that will surprise us and will be new with their high sensitivity.

The defective political reality will try to preserve some of its elements, which it will successfully carry over into future periods. This is of course quite uncertain, even unlikely, because these elements existed in a relationship with all the others and even if some of them survive in one form or another, they will have a different relationship with others that are created now.

If we are in a position where the defects in these political realities have already gone through the possibility of being repaired or tamed in that sense of accumulated dissatisfaction in people, then their destruction will occur avalanche-like quickly. The consequences of the defective political reality will be felt with different strengths and to different degrees. This is quite justified because they will be at different

distances from the source of these processes. These influences will have a set of fluctuations that will be misunderstood by those participating in them because they are new and unpredictable in nature and consequences.

Giving organic examples of these processes in a specific context as signals of what is happening can be found even now. We have built up a certain sensitive tolerance to different processes because we do not know them, and we do not have enough time to study them.

All this comes against a background of numerous emerging signals from different places. Their power is increased by the ability of those who create them and those who transmit them. Certainly, those who have the best set of active elements are the best and fastest, able to create and transmit these signals. Their creators are in a process of struggle not for survival, but for dominance. This process will form groups that will try to create new dependencies that will determine the new social reality. The determination of the zones of influence will also give rise to the social significance of those who are contenders for a certain leadership in this environment. More importantly, it will turn out how these new socially dominant leaders will determine or create the system of social relations, which will also determine the creation of new social systems. Political realities or systems will be a consequence of these new social relations.

The turbulence in these newly formed social systems will last from a historical perspective for a very short time, and from the perspective of the participants in them – for a very long time.

These processes are highly complex and are almost unpredictable as a final result. Even if we have information and sufficient data about their course, the influence of certain elements cannot be accurately and accurately defined and measured, which will give rise to frequent and unpredictable changes.

The fact that the social system is changing under the pressure of the multitude of social defects is almost visible to everyone and is felt to a certain and varying degree. It is much more interesting how we will manage to get through this long and quite unpredictably difficult period, which we can unambiguously define as a process. We will hardly be able to have such preparedness that would put us in a sufficiently favorable position so that everything happens in a certain acceptability for all participants. Anxiety grows with the constant divergent nature of the signals and with the sequence of emerging social defects in the system.

We know that a system - whatever it may be - must have a certain efficiency, which is also associated with a certain financial significance. Whether those who are trying to be the leading elements in the creation of the new social system have the knowledge and the desire to accept the dependencies that have existed so far is difficult to predict. It is obvious that this system of social efficiency also creates problems in its existence.

The problems that can be defined are behavioral. As unacceptable as all this may sound, too often the behavioral patterns of a certain individual have changed a certain social system to such an extent that it

has been preserved for a long enough time, without being interested in any effective relationships. It is possible that certain behavioral elements will again significantly influence the already begun process and bring it to a certain stage in which the new realities will have a different meaning.

The easiest conclusion would be to wait and see what will happen in the end. But will we have this opportunity and how, and will we be able to evaluate this process as direct participants? It is best to make some efforts to ensure a certain preparedness for all this. Even if we appreciate and realize that the signals that we will create and transmit will be of relatively small power, perhaps we should take into account that it would be much greater if there was an essential content that would be a response to these ongoing processes.

Historians with a degree of authoritative academic conviction claim that history always moves forward. In their current messages, there is a certain timidity, combined with an unintentional feeling that it, history, may repeat itself in one form or another. Answering at least some of the questions asked, or at least thinking deeply and unprejudicedly about them, can protect us from those repetitions that we would not want to happen[423424425].

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[423]*Terziev, V., Lyubcheva, M., & Solovev, D. The interaction: business- education- investment for development. // Proceedings of INTCESS 2020- 7th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences 20-22 January, 2020 - DUBAI (UAE), International Organization Center of Academic Research, Istanbul, Turkey, 2020, pp. 865-869, ISBN: 978-605-82433-8-5.*

[424]*Terziev, V. The Bulgarian labor market in a period of extraordinary crisis from the COVID-19 pandemic. // 18th RSEP International Economics, Finance & Business Conference – Virtual/Online 26-27 August 2020, Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey, pp.111-115, ISBN: 978-605-06961-5-8/September 2020.*

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The study of social processes is particularly important at the current stage of social development. The works of Prof. Venelin Terziev published in various scientific and other publications in different languages are particularly significant in this direction. Their knowledge and study are important both for the scientific community and from the point of view of managing social systems[426][427][428][429][430][431][432][433][434].

Cham, pp. 24-39, (Print) ISBN978-3-030-15576-6, (Online) ISBN978-3-030-15577-3, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-15577-3_3.

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CONCLUSION

The world is experiencing serious transformations in almost all spheres – political, economic, social, and ecological. The challenges and transitions we face are unknown and have no analogue in our development so far. The combination of economic and social inequalities in using artificial intelligence, through which people discover a new civilization model. All this creates exceptional difficulties in ensuring uniform and standard-compliant transitions that can benefit everyone. Paradoxes arise that open the scissors of differences too much for the future transition to be considered possible at a relatively uniform pace.

Sustainable development seeks integration between the three main pillars of global development – economic, social, and ecological. None of the systems defining these three main pillars can ensure sustainability, but their formal integration will also not be successful enough. A moderating environment is needed to ensure their interaction. An environment that creates comprehensibility within the systems themselves and in their interaction with other systems is required. The education system is responsible for this interaction. Only education can provide knowledge and skills, as well as form competencies necessary for the management of sustainable development and the exploitation of global resources. At the beginning of the emergence of the concept of sustainable development, it was believed that it only applies to environmental protection, gradually it

became clear how one-sided this perception is, and today no one talks just about the environment. Today, relationships are sought in the general transformational interpenetrating transitions that encompass economic and social aspects in the context of the need for them to ensure environmental protection. The concept of sustainable education is being used, which seeks to prepare people to understand and cope with the complex challenges of the modern world, including to prepare them with the necessary consistency and sustainability of knowledge, skills, and competencies to participate in the process of sustainable development.

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