

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

**NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION
IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
2005 - 2015**

Skopje, 2004

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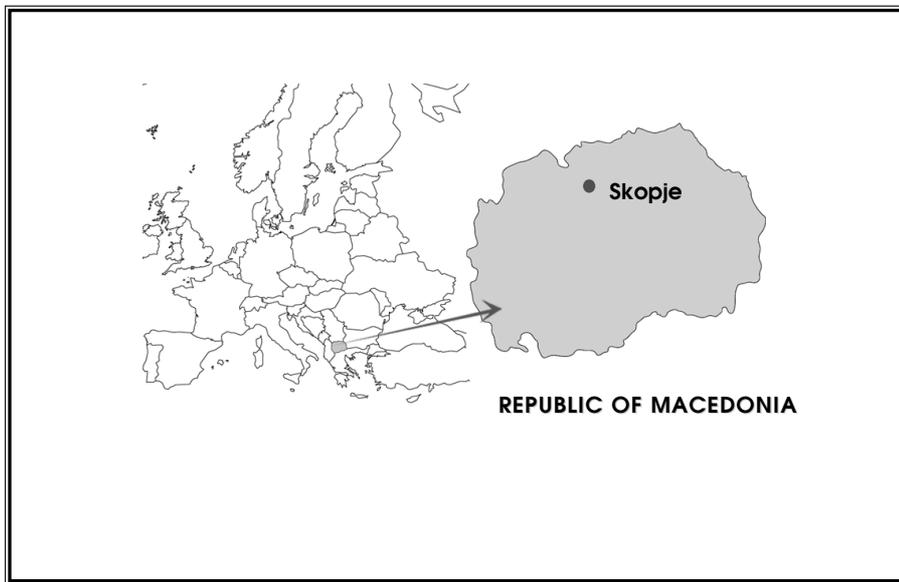
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The National Strategy is concerned with the development and promotion of knowledge and the reinforcement of the culture of living of all Macedonian citizens. It is constantly striving to contribute to the realisation of sustainable development and improvement of the society and its promotion as an equal and respected member of the European and world environment.

The National Strategy for the Development of Education helps in developing an effective education system which has mechanisms for preparing both the young and adults for all the forthcoming challenges and changes they are going to be faced with.

The National Strategy will result in an educational architecture based on values which are appropriate to the main development streams, typical of the modern world, and it should be powerful enough to contribute to the fulfilment of the important and urgent needs of our society, without marginalising responsibility for the protection of national cultures and traditions. High standards in education will certainly contribute to the development of freedom of mind, knowledge, innovations and creativity as foundations of the society, its development and the wellbeing of all its citizens.

*The Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia
Skopje, 2004*



I. STRATEGY AIM

Education is a fundamental human right. It provides power to children, young people and adults to think critically, to make choices and to improve their lives. It breaks the vicious circle of poverty and it is the key ingredient of economic and social development.

(EFA, UNESCO)

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia has a social responsibility to create an environment for the development of education and opportunities for improvement of the wellbeing of its citizens. The results of the activities assumed by the Ministry are long-term, powerful ones, and have a direct influence on the life of every citizen. The conditions and opportunities created by the Ministry for prevention and compensation in the fields of education

and training, research, development and promotion of cultural values, are of essential importance for the life decisions of young people and adults.

The National Strategy for the Development of Education predicts the long-term needs of the state regarding education and shows a readiness which guarantees that the vision, concepts and values included in this strategy will be achieved. The strategic value of this document, for all citizens and participants in education, is the real possibility that all its aims and determinations will be achieved.

The strategy foresees future changes in the local field, changes in the Ministry of Education and Science, and changes in the society as well as in the international milieu, creating relevant aims that are to be achieved.

The strategy is also focused on managing and directing the process of development. This is necessary for establishing dominant development trends in the closer and wider milieu and their influence on the development and organisation of the monitoring of the outcome. Organisation features and efficiency are key factors for the efforts made to achieve the expected aims.

II. CHALLENGES

The events of the second half of the 20th century have established several basic challenges which society at the beginning of the 21st century is faced with. The development of computer technology and modern information systems has caused a revolution in people's lives. Economies have been transformed from standardised manual production into a more versatile *knowledge*-based production of goods and services. Owing to the development of communication systems and mobility of people, the process of bringing nations closer to each other has begun. The strengthening of this interaction and collaborative relations, economic above all, has accelerated the political integration process. Economic, cultural, political and ecological globalisation has become a basic determinant for the development of all the countries of the world.

This new planetary architecture has stimulated initiatives that aim to solve the problems nations are faced with. Nowadays, the following issues are discussed at the highest level: political transformation and integration processes, career and labour intellectualization, the high unemployment rate, the growth in poverty, the fight for human rights (protection of children, the underprivileged, marginalisation and discrimination against certain groups of people), multiculturalism, overpopulation, social and health insurance problems, bilingualism and multilingualism anticipated as requirements for international understanding, problems in the field of environmental protection, promotion of the economic dimension of knowledge, etc.

Economic, political, educational and ecological globalisation on the one hand, and the determination of the Republic of Macedonia for integration with the European and world processes of cooperation on the other, challenge the capacities of Macedonia, both human and material, as one of the preconditions for achieving these aims. The education system, research, innovations and the development of goods and knowledge based on *know-how* skills are manifested as integral parts of competition. The national and international success of Macedonia is directly determined by the existence of high standards in education, development of research, reinforcement of creativity and innovations, cultivation of specific cultural differences and the use of information and communication technology.

In the period to come, Macedonia is going have to find solutions to many important questions such as the strengthening of the economic development, promotion of the competence and procedures for reaching decisions, reinforcement of ethnic and cultural cooperation and achievement of those aims connected

with political and economic integration processes. The basic aim, in this case, will be *strengthening the competitiveness of our country perceived as a quality which will provide the optimal solution of these matters and involve young people and adults in the educational and research processes of cooperation with the countries of the European Union and other countries in the world.*

The active participation of Macedonia in the global integration processes implies assuming responsibility for the realisation of global policies in the field of education. In this respect, the Ministry of Education and Science will assume responsibility for achieving the aims, principles and recommendations that are defined in the international documents for the development of education in Europe and the rest of the world. The UNESCO programme *Education for All*, *Millennium Development Goals* by the UN, *The Stability Pact* and *The Bologna Process* represent a referential frame containing the greatest part of the aims that the Ministry of Education and Science will endeavour to achieve via the National Strategy for the Development of Education in Macedonia.

In parallel with the increasing internationalisation of development and cooperation, Macedonia, in the process of its changing, is aiming to make changes in a spirit of pluralism and different values. Its efforts are reflected in its insistence on achieving unity and transparency in its work with an emphasised cultivation of the spirit of community, democratisation and quality. For this purpose, efforts are being made *to build transparent mechanisms for national and international cooperation, and for a new architecture of values* to satisfy the requirements of the development processes and international cooperation on the one hand, and to help in finding solutions to internal problems of the country on the other. These efforts are to result in *establishing a wide range of offers which will ensure opportunities for a versatile choice for every citizen concerning their career promotion in accordance with their life choices.*

As for children and teenagers, it is important to mention that they will be offered *an education which will cultivate and develop their capacities, respect their interests and affinities, and will offer opportunities for making the right choices and fulfilling themselves via pedagogical and educational processes.*

Changes in the population age structure in Macedonia show that the birth-rate is decreasing every year regardless of the nationality of its citizens. Only with some ethnic groups such as Romanies is there an increase in the birth rate. In the forthcoming period, it is expected that the number of young people will decrease in relation to the number of adults and aged people. This trend strongly determines the creation of an education policy in the country focusing especially on the network of those who offer educational services and on their accumulation power, as well on the specific features and the character of the educational opportunities which are to be established by the country in the period to come. Moreover, unemployment and reduced chances of active work participation of young people influence the structuring of the educational requirements.

It is expected that one of the key challenges for the creators of this education policy and education system on the whole is the *raising of the educational level among young people and adults*, focusing on improving the quality of their professional and social competencies. The impartiality of the concept of lifelong learning and training should help in establishing a dynamic correlation between education and the labour market and social changes. Creating conditions for a continuing improvement, change and refreshment of competencies of all young people and adults will imply a better starting point when transferring from study to work, keeping or changing the work position and taking an active part in the processes of democratic decision.

The basic precondition for achieving this aim is *increasing the quality and power of those who offer educational, cultural and sports services and creating mechanisms for their successful influence* on strengthening the capacities and improving the quality of individual lives, of physical and mental wellbeing, and of pleasure among young people and adults.

In accordance with the long-term strategies for economic development at a national level, it is necessary that individual strategies for economic development at a regional level be developed. On the basis of this, projections for personnel improvement and reducing unemployment will be defined. With the purpose of increasing the opportunities for employment, a parallel implementation of changes in the field of education is necessary. Therefore, employment will be determined not only by the economic growth rate or the demands of the labour market, but also by the efficiency of the realisation of education policy at a regional level. The development of the economy and culture of every region and the country as a whole will depend on the status of knowledge and professional qualities of the scale of priorities of the values existing in the regions and the country. These should have the status of decisive factors for successful economic and cultural development, as opposed to nepotism and political party favouritism. This is the only way of meeting the needs of the global economy and the unstoppable information technology progress, and their influence on the professional profiles and occupations and the production of *knowledge-based* work in all professional fields.

Rapid progress together with a more frequent use of information technology in every field of human activity have been some of the basic features of the last few decades of the previous century. With a wide, planetary range, and implications for all forms of human activity, the progress of the information industry, and especially computer technology progress, highlight the question of promotion of information literacy, to a large extent, as one of the key competencies young people and adults should possess.

The Republic of Macedonia, in its plans for development, should define not only the implementation of a new information technology in all fields of activity, but also an *increase in the IT staff potential of the country, a reinforcement of IT education and training in all professional sectors, functional training or spread-*

ing computer literacy among young people and adults for the sectors that implement the new information technology, promotion of information education in compulsory and post-compulsory education, and implementation of ICT with the purpose of raising the efficiency of the education system. In this sense, knowing and using ICT is an essential part of the competencies of young people and adults and a condition for their efficient activity in the area of labour and social and political life.

In the forthcoming period, Macedonia should create a fundamental stability in the national economy. This implies the realisation of economic growth, strengthening the public and private sectors' competence, establishing an effective legislation and mechanisms for putting economic processes into effect and ensuring them.

The achievement of these aims is determined directly by the determination of our country to favour education and training, the implementation of high technology and its efficient use, raising the efficiency of the public sector and practising high standards and values. Quality should be a basic and recognisable outcome of these efforts. Therefore the state should revise the system of financing the development of human resources by investigating the existing and alternative sources for financing and also by building mechanisms for an efficient and functional allocation of assets intended for education and research.

In view of the permanent reduction of the funding for education and research on the part of the state, activities/projects carried out by local and international organisations in the field of education and research should be taken into consideration. With the purpose of making good the shortcomings and in the function of an efficient realisation of the programme determinations of the state, it is necessary to establish coordination in the realisation of activities between the state, on the one hand, and the non-governmental and international sector on the other. It is important to provide a high level of congruence between the activities of the non-governmental and international organisations and the priorities defined by the state in the area of education. Thus, an efficient use of investments in education and compensation for the lack of assets will be made. Therefore, *in the forthcoming period, it is essential that the type of services that will be offered by the public, private and non-governmental sectors be defined. It is important to decide in what correlation these services will be with the strategic decisions of the country.*

The prognosis is that it is hard to believe that in future financing of the private sector will increase, regardless of the state of the national economy. In view of the increase of demands for assets intended for financing health care, retirement and investment acts in the field of the economy, it is normal to expect that the budget for financing education will be permanently reduced. From the aspect of planning the budget intended for financing education and the detection of alternative sources of finances, it is of invaluable importance to establish what kind of economy and services will be developed by local self-government. The development of the country in the forthcoming period, together with the development of education, will mostly be

determined by the relations established between the central and local authorities and by the type of funding models and mechanisms.

Integrating young people and adults into the processes of decision-making in society will be a key issue for Macedonia. In the forthcoming period, efforts *to promote all forms and activities aimed at including young people and adults in the social field* have to be intensified. This implies reinforcing the voluntary engagements objectified via promotion of cultural and sports activities and various other youth engagements. Part-time engagements should provide social inclusion, influence the development and promotion of civic values and enable young people to organise and manage their lives better. From the aspect of social inclusion and the participation of young people in decision-making processes, the role of educational institutions is essential. Because of this, the state and all its bodies and individuals involved in education should intensify their efforts to support projects which include part-time engagements, on the one hand, and the educational institutions on the other.

With the purpose of social inclusion and participation, it is necessary *to reinforce the non-governmental sector's initiatives*, especially those whose aims are the education, training and cultural elevation of young people and adults, while focusing particularly on the population which is educationally handicapped. Such initiatives are expected to result in creating opportunities, via non-institutional and non-political ways of acting, then forming and improving the competencies of all young people and adults for a greater participation and influence on the processes of decision-making both at a local and a national level.

The National Strategy for the Development of Education aims to provide a greater compatibility of the national standards with those of the European Union and beyond, the progress of democracy and promotion of a civic society, and the development of a modern, free-market economy in the country. The one and only condition for an efficient realisation of this concept is making an additional effort to create an atmosphere and management culture which will establish education as an important factor and generator of progress in every field of society and which will overcome the view of education as a consumer sector. Therefore, the need for balancing the efforts of the Government of Macedonia as a whole, and not only of the Ministry of Education and Science, with local self-government and non-governmental organisations and all other local and international subjects, is an imperative.

III. VISION

The Republic of Macedonia is striving to become an equal and respected member of the European and global environment and this is its permanent orientation. It is strongly determined to follow the path of modern state government where education, training, culture, science and innovations are key factors in the wellbeing of its citizens and in the strengthening of the national economy.

IV. MISSION

The National Strategy for the Development of Education has a mission: by the development of the education system to help Macedonia's efforts for its equal and respected membership in the global, and most of all European, political and economic integration processes; to create conditions for preventing undesirable consequences, and to make efficient use of the benefits which will come as a result of educational, political, cultural and economic globalisation.

The National Strategy for the Development of Education attempts to realise its mission by a long-term orientation and efficient interventions in the following strategic/key areas:

- Education for all/providing equality in education.
- Promotion of the culture of living.
- Raising social participation.
- Raising the educational, cultural and economic competency of Macedonian society.
- Reinforcement and development of international cooperation.
- Change management.

V. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE NATIONAL STRATEGY IS BASED

As an integral part of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the development of education, science, sport and international cooperation in the above-mentioned fields. The strategy of the Ministry is the concept of lifelong learning; it strives to realise this by promoting education, creating favourable conditions for gaining and transferring knowledge, strengthening the competencies of young people and adults for social inclusion and participation, supporting civic initiatives, establishing a balance between the formal and informal sectors and, finally, complete participation in the processes of realisation of the idea of general wellbeing.

The social, cultural, physical and intellectual wellbeing of the citizens of Macedonia is the general value which the National Strategy for the Development of Education in Macedonia relies on. The prosperity of its citizens means, at the same time, the prosperity of the country as a whole, and vice versa. Therefore the development of a competent, creative, civic-oriented and ethically built human capital, understood as a key factor which influences the social, political and economic progress of the country and its international competence, is a priority aim of the strategy.

The National Strategy is striving, in the spirit of such values of modern civilisation as knowledge, democracy, fairness, tolerance and humanity, to establish the main directions for the development of education and of the country as a whole. Within the framework of the defined aims for its realisation, it is consistently trying to respect the general principles on which the development of education in Macedonia is based. Such principles are quality, civic responsibility, connection with the labour market, and being economical, transparent and capable of integration.

VI. KEY AREAS FOR INTERVENTION

1. EDUCATION FOR ALL

The Republic of Macedonia is taking measures which guarantee equal opportunities in education for every citizen regardless their age, sex, nationality or religious affiliation. The Macedonian Government and the Ministry of Education and Science are responsible for providing equal conditions for access to all kinds of education for every citizen.

Objectives:

Development of educational opportunities for all

The aim of the education policy of every country is to provide opportunities to gain an appropriate level of education for everybody and for all ages and to ensure that people possess knowledge, skills and attitudes which correspond with the requirements of the society and labour market. Thus, *education must be available to everybody who lives in the Republic of Macedonia, regardless of their age, sex, religious or ethnic affiliation, health condition and financial circumstances*. Furthermore, education and training have to possess all the necessary conditions for efficient and effective realisation, so that they can offer sufficient general and professional education.

Education has to possess a dynamic and flexible structure which will supply the continuing horizontal and vertical mobility of students and teaching staff, to function through clearly-defined mechanisms which will provide adaptability and readiness to meet the changing needs of individuals and the society as a whole. Also, education must overcome those problems and eliminate those factors which cause educational absenteeism and dropping out on the part of users of the educational services.

The creation of equal education opportunities in Macedonia in the forthcoming period will be conditioned by balancing the differences that exist between urban and rural environments and between developed and undeveloped municipalities as well. Particular attention will be paid to the differences manifested in the following areas: the quality of teachers, conditions for studying, adequacy of the infrastructure, availability of appropriate staff and physical access to educational institutions.

For that purpose, in the period to come, steps for *improving the conditions for studying and the infrastructure in the rural regions, widening the intake of children from the underdeveloped regions at all levels of education, giving incentives to the teaching staff who work in these regions, and, within the process of employment, strengthening the system of professional specialisation of the existing staff and overcoming the problems of physical access by introducing a service that will transport students.*

The Ministry of Education and Science *will provide systematic solutions for the realisation of equal opportunities and access to education for children with disabilities.* To that end, coordination of the efforts for the inclusion of children with disabilities is necessary. This refers to coordination of the programme activities and their components, creation of conditions (in the infrastructure and in staffing) in the pedagogical and educational institutions and additional training of the existing teaching staff to enable them to work with this category of children.

Current state:

- In R. Macedonia there are 2,002,547 inhabitants of whom 1,015,377 are male (50.20%) and 1,007,170 female (49.80%).
- A general feature of the population change in Macedonia is the mild decrease in the growth-rate. The normal growth-rate in 1990 was 9.70 and in 2002 it had decreased to 4.80.
- In the last decade there has been a decrease in the growth-rate among children. From 34,608 births in 1989 the number was reduced to 27,761 in 2002.
- The population aged 65 and over in 1991 represented 8.15% of the overall population, whereas in 2002 it represented 10.57% and it is expected that in 2015 it will be some 14%.

Decentralisation in education

All up-to-date analyses concerning the conditions in education (especially pre-school, primary and secondary education) have shown that one of the key problems in this field is the pronounced centralisation. This situation has generated many problems such as an inflexible structure of the system, marginalisation of the idiosyncracies which stem from the specific features of the environment or place, i.e. the place where a certain educational institution functions, especially in view of the opportunities for modernisation of the curricula, the existence of complex bureaucratic procedures in reaching decisions, the inability of the system to adapt to dynamic changes, both in the field of education and in the area of the socio-economic progress of

the country and its municipalities. The procedures for choosing teaching and management staff have been focused towards one power point - the Ministry, which has resulted in the domination of party political and ethnic and personal interests when implementing the procedure of selecting staff, and marginalisation of professional quality as a key criterion, i.e. marginalisation of the real interest and needs. Moreover, the responsibility of the schools, parents and local community for efficient functioning, and the opportunities for designing and implementing school development plans have been limited by complex bureaucratic procedures and restricted opportunities for finding alternative sources of finance. The centralised organisation has also contributed to the functioning of an inconsistent, and programme-wise ill-founded, policy of allocation of assets, which has been managed to a great extent by voluntaristic motives, the process of connecting education and labour has been obstructed by the limited competences of the educational institutions to decide on their own when establishing cooperation with appropriate local and national economic subjects, as well by the impossibility of these subjects having a greater influence on curricula design in the educational institutions, i.e. by the impossibility of realising their interests. The centralised organisation of selecting textbooks results in creating monopolies which design, print and distribute them at a national level, and therefore the basic pedagogical principles of correlation between the learning source and the specific features of the users and the area where studying takes place have been violated. With the centralised organisation of the education system the educational institutions have placed themselves in the position of direct retailers of education policy without being able to play the role of direct creators in their own professional field.

Current state:

- Extremely centralised education.
- Overlapping of competences.
- Inappropriate school network.
- Insufficient range.
- Factography dominant.
- Minimal informatisation.
- Deterioration of premises.
- Permanent lack of finances.
- Demotivated teaching staff.
- Unsatisfactory governing capacities in administration and educational institutions.

In the forthcoming period steps will be taken to overcome the problems that have resulted from the enormously centralised organisation of education in the Republic of Macedonia. Decentralisation of education will devolve responsibility for the major educational issues (improvement of education quality, professional improvement of the teaching staff, financing) to all three levels of the education system - central, local and school. The responsibilities will be increased at a local and school level, at the expense of the concentration of responsibilities at a central level. These adjustments will include:

- reorganisation of education administration and management by implementing new laws on local self-government and financing of the same;
- improvement of the management and government of education, including the strategic and concept capacities, at a central level;

- development of a more efficient system for financial planning, allocation and financial management (an improved *per capita* formula);
- improvement of the management at local and school level, and of the professionalism and efficiency of the employees in schools and local self-government;
- precise definition and reconstruction of the roles and responsibilities of the administrative institutions at all three levels;
- building a system of school self-government and providing training in the field of school management for the principals;
- evaluation - using the existing capacities of the administrative institutions for monitoring and school evaluation¹.

This implementation of decentralisation initiates adopting a *clear stance on which part(s) of education the state will take responsibility for, and which other responsibilities will be left in the hands of the local bodies*. For this to function efficiently, besides legal support for the process of decentralisation, it is necessary to build indicators, mechanisms and instruments for quality control as a basic criterion which will determine the status of the educational institution and its competences and responsibilities, standardised at a national level. The government will be responsible for external control of the quality of the educational institutions, whereas the local bodies, above all educational institutions and local authorities, will be in charge of providing conditions for a higher quality in accordance with the national standards for quality in education. The devolution of power and responsibility reorganisation from a national to a local level has to be focused on:

- transferring the responsibility for establishing primary and secondary schools into the hands of the local authorities, which means that they will be owners of the school property, will define annual financial plans for the schools, adopt the end-of-year accounts, influence the selection of principals by their representatives on the education committees, appoint the chosen candidate, and in time will be responsible for the school network, which means that they will have the right to open and close schools;
- transferring the responsibility for maintenance of the educational institutions to the institution itself and to local authorities;
- transferring the responsibility for partial financing of education from the local budget;
- transferring the responsibility for permanent monitoring and internal control of the quality of the educational process to the educational institution, parental advice and local authorities;
- creating conditions and opportunities for private capital investments in education;

¹ *The Education Modernization Project and Strategic Priorities in the Education System, World Bank, 2004*

- creating conditions and opportunities for a greater participation in the design of the local curriculum on the part of all interested school and local stakeholders;
- allocating greater freedom to the educational institutions in the process of employing teaching, administrative, ancillary and management staff; the participation of interested local stakeholders, parents above all, should be compulsory in this process;
- creating opportunities for respecting the conditions of the open market in the process of designing, printing and distributing textbooks and teaching aids;
- transferring the responsibility for training the teaching and management staff when there is a free-market of educational services, which functions on the basis of accredited programmes for training teachers, principals and associates.

This competence and responsibility will be carried out by the local authorities on the basis of the previously compiled „Handbook on the municipalities' competence and responsibility in the education sector in accordance with existing legal regulations“.

Under circumstances of decentralised education, the state should take over competence and responsibility for:

- legislation;
- partial financing, on the basis of allocating the assets intended for education from the central budget to municipalities in the form of block subsidies. Such financing, as a basic criterion, will include the following elements: number of students, state of the infrastructure, quality of the vocational work established through external control and vertical mobility of students;
- external quality control of work done by an educational institution;
- implementation of the external part and control of the internal part of the matriculation and school leaving exams;
- setting standards in education, i.e. introducing indicators of an effective educational institution;
- accreditation of training programmes intended for the teaching, management and professional staff;
- providing licences for the competences, vocational work and professional titles of teachers and principals;
- establishing the national interest, i.e. establishing the national curriculum that has to be respected by every educational institution;
- public financing.

Implementation of decentralisation processes does not mean a simple allocation of power, but allocation of responsibilities as well. It means that decentralisation will reflect changes in the status and role of local political and administrative power centres. Assuming responsibility for education means responsibility

for its financing. Financing will be one of the key problems local self-government has to deal with in the forthcoming period. In view of the tendency towards the reduction of financial participation on the part of the state, the heaviest burden in the development of municipalities - including education development - will fall on the local budgets. To what extent the local budgets will withstand the pressure of competitive development will depend on the quality of their plans for development, strengthening the local economy, and the correctness of tax policy implementation.

Decentralisation will entail responsibility for the work-force and the service-providers being transferred from central to local authorities. This, again, will entail assuming responsibility for the consequences of (im)balance between the work-force and local supply of labour and the educational opportunities which will be available to all young people and adults. It may be expected, in some cases, that young people and adults will have serious problems with the opportunities for choice in the field of education and employment. Whether such problems are greater or smaller, will mostly depend on the power of the municipality and its capacities to satisfy the interests of young people and adults who gravitate towards it. This, on the other hand, may increase the inequalities among municipalities in the country, not only in the area of education and supply of labour, but also in the area of their whole economic and cultural development. In this sense, one of the priority aims of the state in the forthcoming period will be *to create an effective network of providers of educational, cultural and sports services*, as a precondition for the development of the municipalities in the country and successful decentralisation in education. However, the development of the municipalities does not depend only on the strengthening of their institutional capacities, but also on the development and efficient use of the results obtained from research and innovation, the quality of cooperation between education and the economy, the use of information and communication technology, the resources available and the quality of the human capacities.

With the aim of a more efficient establishment of balance in development at the local level, the introduction and use of information and communication technology (ICT) must be reinforced. Without the implementation of ICT it is impossible to expect that the educational, research, cultural and recreational institutions will function well, so that it is hard to expect satisfactory results in the development of the municipalities, either. In future, activities for the *promotion of the importance of ICT* not only for educational purposes, but for the whole development of the municipalities and the country as a whole, should be undertaken. In view of the fact that the participation of education is in correlation with the level of development of a municipality, it is necessary to revise and improve cooperation between the economy and education, between the scope, quality, extent of information use and communication technology.

In the forthcoming period, the role of educational institutions in the process of development of the municipalities must be promoted. In this context, it is necessary for the educational institutions to strengthen their activities for a stronger and more efficient influence in their closer and wider social environment.

They have to transform themselves into monitoring bodies, which will constantly point out the weaknesses and will stimulate changes in their environment. The aim is to establish an active cooperation among all local stakeholders via permanent identification and elimination of weaknesses and negative influences, detection and analysis of success factors, development of international cooperation, and permanent insistence on increasing the attractiveness and standing of a municipality.

In the forthcoming period, it is necessary to provide access to a wide scope of high-quality providers of educational services for everyone in every region in the country. All individuals should have the opportunity to prove and express themselves. The educational, sports and youth centres should be open and available to everyone. Here it is important to guarantee the status and to strengthen the position of public libraries, education centres for children and teenagers, and institutions for adults, to invest in the development of public cultural centres, to support initiatives for organising educational and cultural events and to promote cooperation and linking.

Access to all public educational, cultural and sports institutions will be guaranteed by precisely-established mechanisms and instruments of cooperation at local and national level. To what extent access will be guaranteed depends on the consistency of the local authorities in carrying out their responsibility for the protection and modernisation of the educational, cultural and sports institutional network and on the consistent fulfilment of its responsibility for the creation and implementation of the legislation and funding system on the part of the state. The fairness and validity of the legislation are of great importance because this guarantees the principles of equality, whereas the efficiency of the local and national economy determines the level of public contribution. If these two conditions are fulfilled, conditions and opportunities will be created for open access to public service providers and uninhibited guidance and encouragement of students in making choices, completing their education and gaining qualifications.

A great challenge to the education system in the near future will be the creation of a wide market of education service providers for adults. The permanent satisfaction of requirements arising from the sphere of labour and public life implies clear positioning, i.e. *establishing legislation for educating adults and supporting initiatives for the realisation of various educational programmes for adults.*

Financing

Investing in education, training, science and research is always profitable and is the strongest creator of national competence and competition. Moreover, it is a basic factor for the valid development of a country. This, again, implies guaranteed financing of the Ministry of Education and Science and substantial financial support.

If it is clear that this sector is mainly financed from public assets, the responsibility for these investments can undoubtedly be found in the public sector. In view of the fact that an additional pressure for allocating assets to the education and training of adults and public research is expected, the need for a revision and increase in the budget intended for the Ministry of Education and Science, and finding alternative funding sources, is inevitable in the forthcoming period.

The Ministry of Education and Science will endeavour to ensure a higher income for education and a fairer allocation of assets by introducing better coordination in the implementation of activities, by reducing unnecessary expenditure, by cooperation with the local authorities and with international foundations and institutions by coordinating their joint activities, by cooperation with the non-governmental sector, and by relying on domestic expert capacities.

Current state:

- For 2003 the budget for education is 3.49% of the GDP.
- For the period 1996-2003 the budget for education has been decreased by 0.77% of the GDP.
- From the total budget for education, 59.15% is allocated to primary, 22.66% to secondary, and 12.46% to higher education, 1.92 to pupils' standard of living and 3.38% to students' standard of living.
- Of the finances schools receive, about 80% is allocated to salaries, whereas this percentage is above 90% in higher education.

(Source: The Ministry of Finance, 2004)

It is of great importance to define a transparent funding system in the case of decentralisation in education. In spite of the fact that financing of education in the more sparsely inhabited rural regions is more expensive, this should not be a reason for compromising the quality of education and training, or a denial of anyone's natural right to education. Therefore the allocation of assets will be carried out effectively, profitably and fairly in accordance with the priorities of the country, paying attention to the real financial power of the municipalities and the population, especially the marginal population groups, by using objective criteria. In this context, it is necessary to reinforce the inspection of the realisation of the tax and social policy and respect for the law in the economic sector for every municipality separately. This includes abandoning the linear method of assets allocation and introducing a funding system which will stimulate quality and discourage the low-quality work and manipulations present in educational institutions. At the same time, allocation of finances must respect the logic of giving preference to the national priorities.

Partial funding will be made on the basis of allocation of assets intended for education from the central budget to the municipalities as block subsidies. Such funding as a basic criterion will take into consideration the following factors: number of students, state of infrastructure, quality of educational work defined by external inspection, and vertical mobility of the students.

Raising the level of education of the population

One of the key challenges in the forthcoming period will be *raising the education level of all young people and adults*, with a special accent on an improvement in the quality of their vocational and social competences.

The analyses of the population's educational structure in the Republic of Macedonia show that of the total number of persons aged over 15, about half (49.39%) are persons who do not have any or have only a low level of education (illiterate, with incomplete primary or with completed primary education only).

If we add the persons with three or four years' education to the above-mentioned group, then the state of the population's educational structure in Macedonia is alarming and it does not encourage optimism for the future economic and social status of the country. In circumstances of the permanent modernisation of the technical and technological labour basis such a situation, in correlation with the reduced economic power of the country, is a real generator for increasing the number of unemployed and for the weak economic progress of the country.

Most of the unemployed in Macedonia have a low level of education. If we add the economically inactive population to this number, where 62.05% are female and 67.57% have an educational level of completed primary education or less, then the situation worsens. On the other hand, the efforts of the country to intensify the inclusion and participation of the population in the processes of decision-making and influence at local and national levels, in conditions where there is a large number of educationally handicapped persons, are a mere declaration rather than a real possibility.

The reasons for the poor state of the educational structure of the population are many, but the most dominant are the unsatisfactory intake of students, the drop-out of students in elementary and secondary education, the dominance of traditional values present among certain ethnic groups which marginalise the importance of education, the level of the technological development in the economy which still tolerates

Population - school training	total	%
total	1579500	100
Without education	60 700	3,85
Incomplete primary education	170 200	10,77
Primary education	549 200	34,77
Three-year secondary education	168 000	10,64
Four-year secondary education	465 100	29,45
Two-year college-level education	51 200	3,24
University education	114 900	7,28

Source: Stat. Annual 2004

Unemployed-school training	Total	%
total	315 900	100
Without education	3 700	1,17
Incomplete primary education	16 700	5,29
Primary education	112 600	35,64
Three-year secondary education	49 100	15,54
Four-year secondary education	108 400	34,31
Two-year college-level education	7 700	2,44
University education	17 700	5,61

Source: Stat. Annual 2004

workers with a lower level of education, the decreased financial power of the population, the weak educational intake from marginal groups, etc.

In the forthcoming period the Ministry of Education and Science will take *steps to eliminate the decrease in the number of children who do not attend any educational institution.*

The total decrease in the number of students in primary and secondary education is 18.32%, which means that every year the number of persons who are at a low level of education is constantly increasing. If we analyse the vertical pass rate of students in primary and secondary education at a generation level, then the indicators become worse. This clearly shows that the problem of the permanent production of a population with a low level of education which is unsatisfactory for the requirements of modern labour and social inclusion must be overcome urgently. Therefore this problem has to be included on the priority list of interventions in education in the forthcoming period. This means *raising the effectiveness and quality of the educational institutions and building mechanisms for detection of children who are not included in the educational processes, and their inclusion or re-mobilisation.*

Current state - drop out rate:

- The annual decrease in primary education is 1.42%.
- The annual number of people who abandon primary education is 0.29%.
- The highest percentage is found at the transition from primary to secondary schools is 16.65%.
- The annual decrease in secondary education is 2.84%.
- The annual number of people who abandon secondary education is 0.88%.
- The fewest students leaving education are of Macedonian ethnicity, and the most from the Romany ethnic group.
- Only 88.47% of the generation which enrolled in 1997/9 succeeded in completing primary education within the regular period.
- The state of secondary education is similar to that of primary education. The generation which graduated in 2002/03 was 89.24% of students who began their secondary education 4 years before, but only 69.03% of the generation that entered the first grade 12 years ago.

(Source: State Statistical Office, 2002/04)

In the forthcoming period it is necessary to focus activities on the realisation of two global aims:

- *raising the level of education of young people and adults who are not included in the education system and strengthening their vocational and social competences;*
- *eliminating the possibility of creating new generations of educationally handicapped people.*

The first aim implies the need for implementing activities directed towards *raising the awareness of the young and adult population of the importance of education, active inclusion of the formal and informal sector in actions for raising the level of education and competences of the population, offering financial relief for those who participate in the actions, activating the existing and finding alternative ways of funding programmes which aim to educate and train unemployed people.*

The second aim implies taking steps to eliminate all the obstacles which make education un-available or cause students to drop out.

One of the measures of prevention which has to be taken is *enlarging the intake of children at pre-school age*. The low intake percentage shows that a large number of children are unprepared for inclusion in the regular school system. If we rely on the analyses of the results achieved by students it can be ascertained that children who were included in the various forms of pre-school education achieve better results in further education and do not abandon it. This measure is essential for an efficient preparation of children from the minority ethnic groups, who are least included in the pre-school forms of education and at the same time play the dominant part in the increase of the number of children who abandon school.

Current state: (2002) - intake:

- Gross intake of children included in pre-school education - 18.67%.
- Intake in the first year before going to primary school - 83.23%.
- Gross intake in primary education - 97.1%.
- Gross intake in secondary education - 69.5%.
- Number of students per 100,000 inhabitants is 2212.

(Source: State Statistical Office, 2002)

In parallel with the efforts to increase the intake, the Ministry of Education and Science will take steps to include pre-school education in its sector. In the forthcoming period, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, activities for improving the quality of pre-school institutions and their attractiveness will be undertaken. In these efforts *attention will be paid to the implementation of good models taken from practice, which have shown good results in the previous period, no matter whether they come from the formal or informal field. The early development of children will be one of the priorities for the Ministry of Education and Science.* Help from the non-governmental sector in the realisation of this aim will be invaluable.

In the forthcoming period, it will be important to widen the intake of young people and adults included in university education. With 2212 student per 100,000 inhabitants, Macedonia is placed at the bottom among European countries. *In the period up to 2015, the Ministry of Education and Science will take steps to increase the university intake and reach the number of 3500 students per 100,000 inhabitants, so that the minimum in the developed European countries can be reached.*

With this aim, initiatives will be taken to improve the attractiveness and efficiency of university education, the capacity of the university network in the country will be enriched, private initiatives in university education will be supported, the legal regulation will be completed and the table of norms and standards for opening a higher-education institution will be defined, and international cooperation and the mobility of students and teachers at both national and international level will be stimulated.

Special attention will be drawn to the modernisation of the educational process in higher education and the use of ICT in teaching. In collaboration with the universities in the country, educational, cultural and

sports activities will be stimulated. The priority responsibility and the major aim of the Ministry of Education and Science, in the forthcoming period, will be supporting, encouraging and facilitating the implementation of the principles and recommendations which resulted from the Bologna Process in higher education in Macedonia.

In the period to come, it will be insisted, through systematic measures, that changes in the structure of primary and secondary education be taken, so that the causes of the decrease of young people in the educational processes will be overcome. This implies a systematic intervention which, above all, considers the issue of the length of compulsory education.

Extending compulsory education

Globalisation processes and the accelerated dynamic of changes, i.e. labour and work modernisation, have initiated marked tendencies to increase the level of education among the nations of the world. The responsibility of countries in the field of the educational intake of their population is increasing. There is a universal trend in the length of compulsory education as the most evident form of the responsibility of the state, and an insistence on it being lengthened. If in the past the upper limit of compulsory education was set at the end of primary and the lower level of secondary education, today it is more often being set at higher levels and covers secondary education. It is considered that secondary education is the minimal level of education and qualification that every citizen should reach in order to be able to enter actively into society and upon work. Thus, in the more developed countries in the world, compulsory education lasts 9, 10, 12 years or longer. The length and the structure of compulsory education depend to a large extent on the economic power of the country, the character of its domestic problems and the vision of its education policy.

Apart from the above-mentioned global tendencies, the following can also be mentioned as reasons for lengthening the duration of compulsory education in Macedonia: the poor educational structure of the population; the small intake and the high percentage of students leaving school during the regular levels of education; and the need to strengthen the competences for work and social inclusion of the population. It seems that the greatest problem is the range of pupils in the year before they start school (a great number of children start school with low initial knowledge and capacities which are later reflected in low grades, a

Current state:

- In Macedonia compulsory education coincides with primary education and lasts 8 years.
- It is divided into two cycles of class and subject teaching, each of 4 years' duration.
- There is a discontinuity in the programme structure.
- There is considerable programme overlapping of its subject teaching and that of secondary education.
- By completing compulsory education students do not acquire work qualifications.

lowering in the number of students, and abstention from further education) and at the transfer from primary to secondary education, i.e. the intake is reduced by 16.65%. This phenomenon puts permanent pressure on the labour market from individuals who have completed primary education only, and have no qualifications. This structure influences the increase in the number of unemployed.

In the forthcoming period, *activities will be undertaken to lengthen the duration of compulsory education in the Republic of Macedonia*. To this end, the Ministry of Education and Science² will establish a nine-year compulsory education. The extension will be effected through the inclusion of the pre-school year in the compulsory education system. In view of the structure, this means that nursery school and the final year of kindergarten will become compulsory for all children.

With the lengthening of compulsory education it is expected that:

- the current 83.23% intake in the year before pupils start school will increase to 100%;
- the educational structure of the population will improve;
- the basic education will be strengthened;
- opportunities for vocational orientation will increase;
- the transfer to secondary education will be simplified and effectuated;
- the programme successiveness will be realised;
- educational capacities in rural environments will be better used.

What type of nine-year compulsory education will be implemented, i.e. whether it will be the model 3+3+3, 5+4, 4+5 or 6+3, will depend on the existing state of education in the country (available material and human resources) and the character of the problems which it is hoped will be overcome. The method of implementing the model of compulsory education will be established by additional decisions to be made by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Compulsory education (2000)	
Country	Years
Holland	13
Belgium	13
Germany	13
G. Britain	12
Moldavia	11
France	11
Norway	11
Malta	11
Spain	11
Sweden	10
Czech Republic	10
Slovakia	10
Ireland	10
Finland	10
Luxemburg	10
Hungary	10
Denmark	10
Switzerland	9
Estonia	9
Poland	9
Portugal	9
Austria	9
Latvia	9
Italy	9
Slovenia	9

Source: Eurostat 2003

² In its work the expert group considered the possibility of establishing ten-year compulsory education. All indicators show that this model is more appropriate and can be a more efficient solution to the problems which education in the Republic of Macedonia is faced with. However, unlike nine-year compulsory education, this model is more expensive and requires greater investment, especially in the fields of the infrastructure, teaching staff and provision of school equipment. A decision was reached that the idea of ten-year compulsory education is not to be discarded, but to become an issue for discussion at the moment when the conditions for its implementation arise.

2. PROMOTION OF THE CULTURE OF LIVING

For education which cultivates a culture of living and promotes know-how skills, culture and sports are essential factors which determine and develop independent study, life management, self-realisation and self-improvement, and therefore the intellectual and physical wellbeing of the citizens of Macedonia. Permanent changes in the immediate and the wider social environment will promote the concept of lifelong study and self-improvement among young people and adults.

Objectives:

Strengthening intellectual growth

The greatest responsibility for strengthening intellectual progress lies in education and training and in cultural and sports activities. Intensifying activities in these areas of human progress guarantees that an individual will be ready for an active work life and social influence and participation. An individual with knowledge and skills in the area of work culture and the culture of living possesses skills for a permanent analysis of the immediate and the wider social environment, relevant and real personal placing in this environment, and a readiness for active participation in and contribution to the country's development.

A school, via its activities and educational materials, offers knowledge and skills for an ongoing ability to cope with personal life and opportunities for individual progress. Cultural, sports and art activities offer opportunities to meet and accept different values which additionally strengthen and enrich individual progress and social inclusion. In this context, it is of great importance in the forthcoming period *to support and assist initiatives for the organisation of educational, innovative, cultural, sports and art activities for young people and adults.*

Promotion of an effective pedagogical and educational institution

The Republic of Macedonia is firmly determined to follow recommendations for creating a *child-friendly world*. The right to education is the highest right which the Ministry of Education and Science and the country itself can provide and must respect.

In the forthcoming period, steps that will provide a realisation of the efforts and responsibilities resulting from national and international documents and a further improvement of the quality and relevance of education will be taken via: a) adopting the standards of *School - a friend of children and young people*, which define primary and secondary school as a safe and secure, stimulating and activating environment, which offers quality teaching, and permanent and relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes; b) improving the knowledge, skills and attitudes of children and young people, thus providing a culture of living in both primary and secondary schools.

The culture of living is the process of creating a quality of life through gaining personal and collective experience, individual needs and interests and an active relation with life values.

In this context, primary and secondary schools have the responsibility for providing the development and stimulation of children and young people's lifestyles which correspond with their individual needs and interests, such as life values and civilisational gains.

The Ministry of Education and Science, in collaboration with local authorities, will *develop mechanisms for monitoring the state of children who are in or out of the education system and for active participation of all stakeholders in the process of detection and mobility of children who have left school or never enrolled.*

Building an effective school means a reduction of the total work to one criterion - quality alone. This implies creating indicators of the success and efficiency of an institution as a whole. These indicators should include the key fields, such as the school infrastructure, teaching, the teaching staff, management and cooperation with the local community. Such indicators will serve as an internal and external control of the quality of work of a particular educational institution.

An effective school practises, promotes and helps monitor the rights and wellbeing of ALL children within a community; it looks for and finds children who are not included in the educational system and helps them to enrol in schools and to attend regularly. It is sex-sensitive and promotes equality in the scope of achievements between girls and boys; the child is its focus - it initiates the participation of children and active studying and gives priority to children's needs. It is open to cooperation, it unites all positive achievements of projects which are car-

Current state:

- the process of transition has reflected badly on education;
- financial assets intended for education have been permanently reduced;
- the negative effects of the process of transition on the values and norms of behaviour in the immediate and the wider environment are more and more emphasised, which reflects negatively on student values, attitudes, behaviour and habits;
- children, parents and teachers are more frequently faced with various forms of violence, even criminality, both in and out of school, and an increase in the consumption of alcohol and psychotropic substances;
- in such conditions, the greater number of children can be regarded as children at risk.

ried out in Macedonia, flexibly respects differences, adapts to various conditions and children's needs (sexual, cultural, social, those referring to children's skills), and it promotes the acquisition and improvement of life skills (problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity).

The expectations from promoting an effective school are great and they are, above all, reflected in:

- providing high achievements and success;
- improving the health and wellbeing of children;
- widening the intake of children in education and increasing the rate of its completion;
- raising the morale and motivation of teachers;
- guaranteeing a safe and protective environment for children;
- ensuring support from the local community;
- encouraging social inclusion and participation.

Promotion of teaching and learning

Analysis of the teaching and learning processes shows a series of inconsistencies which hinder efforts at modernisation or slow down initiatives for their creation and are typical of all the educational subsystems. The way educational syllabuses and programmes are set favours encyclopedic learning and facts - knowledge as opposed to skill.

Teachers are focused on the programme aims and tasks, i.e. their attention is drawn to the realisation of previously-adopted contents which are then transformed into aims and tasks. Thus a teacher is focused on a certain syllabus and its contents, not on the students. The teacher's attention is drawn to the way he/she can realise a teaching unit, not to the way the teaching unit influences the students or what effects it has on them with regard to the acquisition of knowledge, of skills-development and attitude-building, nor to how students acquire new knowledges and skills or which activities they undertake for their acquisition. Minimal attention is drawn to the way in which students put the acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes into practice in real life situations.

To date interventions have only incidentally or partially created changes in teaching and learning. As processes of realisation they have remained almost unchanged: a domination of lecturing when working with students, the cultivation and encouragement of memorisation instead of learning through understanding or learning by problem-solving, obedience instead of critical thinking, passivity instead of creativity, teacher-centred work instead of interaction, insufficient use of modern teaching aids, insufficient use of information systems, etc.

The system of evaluation of the work of teachers and students is responsible for the above-mentioned situation. A teacher and her/his work are assessed only on the basis of a realised syllabus, normatively, without paying attention to whether the teacher has succeeded in realising its aims and initiated certain changes with students, i.e. without paying attention to how much knowledge and skill has been acquired and what effects this knowledge and these skills have had on the students. Teacher success is measured by students' achievements. The evaluation system only cares about the skill and ability of students to „reproduce“ the contents of a syllabus, and it depends on the individual judgement of the teacher.

This approach brings about a state in which the ability of students to implement their acquired knowledge in new situations, especially real-life situations, is insufficiently monitored, checked and assessed. The skills, interests, attitudes, beliefs and other features of a student's personality are rarely taken into account. Thus, the whole assessment of student achievements is reduced to a mere realisation of the material task of the teaching, and the functional and pedagogical side is neglected.

Current state:

- domination of traditional approaches in the teaching process;
- favouring factography and encyclopedic knowledge;
- domination of didactic strategies;
- domination of summary assessment instead of continuing and analytic monitoring of students' progress;
- absence of aim-oriented teaching;
- passive status and position of students in the teaching process;
- lack of standards for effective schools and quality teaching;
- absence of global evaluation strategy of effects of project processes in primary education;
- insufficient sustainability of innovations;
- insufficient technological support for teaching, and insufficient use of ICT in the teaching and learning processes;
- unequal conditions for studying.

In the forthcoming period, the Ministry of Education and Science will take steps to *revise teaching syllabuses and programmes and will strive to implement the Concept of Learning Outcomes based on standards of competence on the one hand, while insisting on promoting modernisation of teaching and learning on the other*. This implies:

- revising teaching syllabuses in relation to professional disciplines and teaching fields;
- designing aim-oriented teaching syllabuses;
- clear differentiation of general and specific knowledge and information;
- specifying the competences and skills that students are expected to acquire within the framework of the syllabus. For this purpose all unnecessary repetition and irrelevant information, which additionally overload teachers and students, must be discarded;
- establishing cooperation and successiveness among all teaching syllabuses;
- creating a suitable evaluation system with clearly defined assessment methods;

- defining the specific activities used for registering the levels of student achievements;
- introducing a system for quality control the of teaching and learning;
- basing the educational process on the principles of interactive teaching, with a focus on creative learning, critical thinking, problem-solving and implementation of modern education technology;
- introducing knowledge necessary for practice and everyday life.

This concept will provide:

- an effective process of defining the existing curricula and designing appropriate assessment;
- a permanent and systematic process of curricula redesign in relation to defined strategies and current requirements;
- established bases which will allow curricular and instructional transfer from teaching to learning (putting stress on the learning of content and skills by the students rather than on the teacher and his/her teaching, i.e. on „covering the material“);
- balance and successiveness of syllabuses;
- establishment of important connections between syllabuses with optimal reinforcement of the contents and skills in more than one subject, avoiding irrelevant material and repetition;
- a complex approach to the learning process on the part of the students;
- implementation of modern teaching and learning methods on the the part of the teachers;
- an efficient readying of students for quality of life and acquired skills and habits for lifelong education;
- opportunities for developing the skills for individual creative and critical thinking on the part of students;
- a greater level of inclusion of children, young people and adults in education, an increase in the number of students who complete their education and a higher pass-rate.

Strengthening the system of initial training and specialisation of teaching and management staff

The need to satisfy the standards of compatibility, modernity and efficiency in educational practice raises the issue of a scientifically considered and global approach in this field. Improving the quality of work, especially the quality of the teaching process, imperatively sets the new directions in which the creation of education policy in the country should move. In this context, all pedagogical staff, especially the teaching staff, are placed at the centre of modern efforts to improve and raise the efficiency of pedagogical work.

Therefore the requirements which result from the place and role of the teacher emphasise his/her qualifications in the first place, i.e. his/her skill in knowing, respecting and applying modern concepts in the field of pedagogy and educational theory and practice.

Due to the fact that formal certificate education can hardly keep pace with the dynamic of the new requirements and changes, and that knowledge (gained during formal education) swiftly becomes obsolete, the need for a new architecture of the system of initial training and that of teacher specialisation is obvious. Here, the quality and success of teachers' work is expected to be less a reflection of their qualification certificate, and more a product of their real skilfulness, i.e. readiness and possession of qualifications necessary for permanent educational mobility.

Satisfying the needs to *raise the quality of teachers and realise their permanent education mobility, create conditions for unemployed teachers whose skills and knowledge have been significantly reduced due to a period of unemployment to have a second chance, and balancing the certificate, personal and vocational qualifications in the area of initial training of teachers*, is one of the priority tasks of the Ministry of Education and Science, in the forthcoming period. There is a great need to make the teaching profession more attractive, by improving the social and economic status of teachers.

In the forthcoming period, the Ministry of Education and Science will *define indicators for a successful implementation of teaching*, i.e. sets of vocational and professional competences which will be a framework within which initial training of teachers in pre-school, primary and secondary education and their specialisation will take place. Such a standardisation will offer an opportunity for certification of the teaching vocation carried out by a specialised institution. The licence that every teacher has to have will be a reflection of their competences. For this purpose, *it is necessary that a wide range of accredited suppliers of educational services who will offer opportunities for specialisation of teaching staff in primary and secondary education be formed*. The assistance and the contribution of the non-governmental sector and of private and international initiatives in the fulfilment of this task will be invaluable.

Current state:

- in Macedonia there is no system for the vocational and professional training of teachers;
- the Bureau for Educational Development is in charge of continuing vocational and professional training of teachers in pre-school, primary and secondary schooling;
- teacher education and training are reinforced to a great extent by joining international foundations such as FIOOM and UNICEF in primary education;
- for secondary education PHARE, CARDS, USAID and FIOOM play this role. Due to their small scope, a large number of teachers do not have any additional vocational or pedagogical training;
- USAID and FOSIM carry out vocational training of teachers in secondary education in the field of information technology;
- there is no system of vocational and professional education and training of teachers and professors in higher education.

For the purposes of improving the quality of teachers' work, the Ministry of Education and Science drafts amendments to the laws on primary and secondary education, thereby achieving a better order, transparency and systematisation in the performance of the teaching profession. Thus the issue of assessing teachers will acquire a clearly-defined form and mechanisms for its implementation by using clear indicators of efficiency; the selection of teachers will be made by using precisely defined procedures, as well as by checking the competences of future teachers, so that their professional specialisation will have a systematic framework and the promotion of teachers a legal basis.

With the purpose of reinforcing teacher motivation in primary and secondary education the Ministry of Education and Science will introduce *legal changes whereby the system of career development as a systematic solution will be promoted throughout the country*. Such a system should be an additional motivation for teachers because it will make clear distinctions not only in terms of vocational titles (assistant, teacher, academic advisor [mentor]), of teachers, but also in terms of the salary they will receive. Every vocational title will imply a higher degree of vocational and professional competence which, moreover, implies an increased dynamic in the field of educational mobility of teachers and their continuing education.

It is expected that by reinforcing the processes of decentralisation in education a greater opportunity to make the teachers' work more dynamic will be afforded. In this case, a greater responsibility and engagement on the part of local self-government authorities for issues connected with the quality of work of the schools is expected, and with the quality of the realisation of syllabuses by the teaching staff.

In the forthcoming period, initial training and specialisation of the school management staff (the principals) will be one of the activities of the Ministry of Education and Science. *Indicators of the success of their position will be established both for teachers and for school principals*. On the basis of these indicators of success initial training and specialisation of this staff will be created. For that purpose, a wide range of education service providers, focused on raising the vocational competences of school principals, who will work according to accredited programmes in the field should be offered. This measure is expected to eliminate the possibility of the existence of "monopolies" and improvisations in initial training and specialisation of principals and it is in accordance with the efforts to provide opportunities for choice for those who wish to acquire the necessary competences. The acquired competences will be verified and will be subject to licensing by a state authority. Only a person who has an official licence to fill the post of a school principal will have the opportunity to be selected for such a post.

Ensuring and controlling quality

In the forthcoming period, The Ministry of Education and Science will take measures for the permanent ensuring and control of the quality of the education system in Macedonia. *The National Education Inspectorate (NET), the Pedagogical Institute (PI) and the National Examinations Centre (NEC)* will play the key roles in this process.

With the decentralisation processes, the role of educational inspection will be of great importance and it will be objective in monitoring and controlling the imposition of legal solutions in the field of education. Its direct responsibility will be: protection of children's rights in education and the right to education for all, and representation and fairness in the implementation of national interests and regulations in education on the part of educational institutions at local and national levels. The National Education Inspectorate will also conduct state quality control in pre-school, primary and secondary education. For these activities, certain of the employees in PI will be engaged. For that purpose, *The Ministry will take actions for additional education and training of the staff which will control the quality in pre-school, primary and secondary education.*

Current state:

- Absence of a coherent system of quality control at a central level.
- Absence of an independent body in charge of quality control.
- Lack of professionals trained in quality assessment and control.

The National Education Inspectorate will collaborate directly with the PI of Macedonia (currently BED). This collaboration will be particularly marked in the control of the legal/normative position and the quality of implementation of the national curriculum in the educational institutions in Macedonia.

The PI of Macedonia (currently BED), in collaboration with the NEC, will have within its competences responsibility for creating national standards to ensure and control quality. The BED will collaborate directly with schools and local authorities to define the input and process quality indicators, while the National Education Inspectorate and National Examinations Centre will be in charge of the output indicators.

In higher education an *Evaluation and Accreditation Authority* will undertake this role.

Quality control in education will be imposed at two levels: *national and local*.

The national level of control will be undertaken by national bodies of quality evaluation (NEI and NEC), via periodic inspection of the work of the schools, i.e. a check on the level to which the national quality standards are fulfilled, and via external assessments of students, teachers and management staff.

Local quality control will be an integral part of the activities undertaken by local self-government authorities and educational authorities and institutions. They will take the responsibility for monitoring, secur-

ing, maintaining and improving quality in primary and secondary schools, with the help of precisely defined mechanisms and instruments for measuring the indicators of success. In the matter of decentralisation in education and the redistribution of responsibilities at central and local levels, the consistent realisation of this duty is of great interest to the schools and, above all, the local authorities. In these constellations the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the educational process and students' success fall within the responsibility of the local authorities.

The responsibility for the development of a municipality, in this case, will be directly determined by the consistent fulfilment of its responsibility for the quality of education. Therefore, the realisation of self-evaluation and establishing the quality of education will be a permanent task of schools and local self-government authorities. Cooperation with the Pedagogical Institute (currently BED), and especially with its inter-municipal centres for developing and ensuring quality, will be compulsory and in accordance with precisely established mechanisms of cooperation. It will be made objective by offering professional and advisory help to schools and teachers and permanent cooperation with the pedagogical and psychological services in schools, and all with the purpose of securing quality in accordance with the national standards of quality in education.

The internal control of quality in higher education will be within the competence of the universities.

Linking formal and informal education

It is impossible to expect that the total responsibility for strengthening the intellectual capacities of the country, and training young people and adults to work efficiently and include themselves in society by participating in the processes of decision-making and management will be left to formal education alone. Therefore, in the forthcoming period, *measures will be taken to strengthen cooperation between the institutions of formal education and all forms and institutions of informal education*. Within this, establishing an efficient link with the non-governmental sector and its promotion to a *key partner* in the process of the development of education and the country as a whole will be an important assumption. For that purpose, creating mechanisms and establishing dynamic cooperation and division of responsibilities and activities between the Government and the non-governmental sector, in accordance with the priorities of the country, is essential.

The links between formal and informal learning are constantly increasing. The fact that, beside their formal and organised education, people learn at work, at home, via their hobbies and through voluntary activities must be respected. Reinforcing this link contributes to the improvement of our abilities to control our personal lives, intellectual progress and wellbeing. The formal education system will be developed in such way that it will provide greater understanding of informal education.

Promotion of lifelong learning

The aim of lifelong learning is to foster and protect a positive and active approach to learning at all stages during the whole of life. In the forthcoming period, The Ministry of Education and Science will strive to create a positive atmosphere for the continuing learning and self-development of all population groups. This implies *increasing opportunities for the educational mobility of young people and adults and realising a dynamic cooperation between the educational institutions and requirements which result from the area of labour and social life*. In this context, mobilisation of those population groups whose knowledge has become obsolete for various reasons and who do not have suitable competences or have become educationally handicapped, such as the unemployed, illiterate people and all marginal groups, will be important. Cooperation between various subjects in education, between the public and private sectors, non-governmental organisations and voluntary associations will be of great importance for the realisation of a reinforced educational mobility of young people and adults. Therefore, *strong support will be given to the activities undertaken by non-governmental and voluntary associations in the field of lifelong learning*.

For a successful realisation of the concept of lifelong learning, it is necessary that children and teenagers gain skills and habits for continuous learning during their basic education.

Adult education

Analysed from the aspect of work competence and competition, the realisation of social cohesion and an improvement in the quality of life, it is important to maintain, keep in form and raise the work and social competences of adults to a higher level. With a view to the dynamic changes which affect modern labour, the explosion of *know-how* based posts, the requirements for efficient, social inclusion and participation of adults, and the occupying of their free time with a functional content, it is also more than necessary *to establish a wide network of formal and informal education service providers. At the same time this means a permanent promotion and emphasis of the importance of education for modern life and work*.

In the forthcoming period measures will be taken for:

- *decreasing the illiteracy-rate among adults, especially the gaps between the illiteracy-rate of men and women;*
- *expanding basic education among adults;*
- *providing opportunities for adults to acquire knowledge, skills and value, required for improving their quality of life;*

- *increasing the opportunities for educational choice;*
- *developing education for adults which will be in the interests of social cohesion;*
- *developing opportunities for education and training which will meet the expectations, aspirations and needs of the different groups in the existing and potential work force;*
- *education and training of adults for the dynamic changes in the areas of labour and life.*

The Ministry of Education and Science will focus on carrying out activities and giving support to all initiatives which are directed towards preventing professional and social exclusion. By promoting lifelong learning and job security, the wellbeing of the population will be promoted at the same time.

Changes:

- while the age group of young people is decreasing in numbers, knowledge and participation of adults in the development of society is increasing;
- productivity and efficiency will increase in knowledge-based work; modern labour requires knowledge and skills for adaptation and meeting changes, dynamic learning capacities, and upgrading knowledge and skills;
- modern labour will initiate a reduction in the workforce and promote the importance of education and training for all age groups;
- education and training will be put to the service of preventing the exclusion of any age group;
- free time will increase, together with the importance of its content framework.

3. INCREASING SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

In every society, success in implementing democratic processes depends on the success of the participation of its citizens. A modern democratic society offers a wide range of opportunities for the inclusion and participation of each and every individual or group. The social wellbeing of every individual will also depend on the quality of that inclusion. The primary aim of the Ministry of Education and Science is to create in the forthcoming period - through interventions in the education system and through support for informal types of education - opportunities for free social inclusion and participation of both young people and adults.

Objectives:

Active citizenship

Active citizenship, i.e. opportunities for citizens' influence on society, is the sole condition for maintaining and strengthening democracy. A continuous strengthening of the citizens' power of active participation and influence on administrative decisions is an integral part of democracy and of enhancing the development of any society.

Education, culture and sports activities are key elements in the promotion of active citizenship. Therefore, *the Ministry of Education and Science will act to ensure that education equips the young with the knowledge and skills for active citizenship.* In this way, the possibility that children and young people adopt civic values through dull contents and activities distant from their immediate environment will be eliminated. The adoption of civic values will be an accompanying curricular and extracurricular activity that will be incorporated in the curricula for pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education.

Socialisation is an area that must become a part of educational strategy, primarily due to the need for a planned, channelled and controlled transfer of certain values. This assumes the operationalisation of certain principles down to the level of developing all teaching contents, the methodology of their application, evaluation criteria, etc. Such an approach will not only contribute to planned and controlled socialisation, but it will also help restore the school's lost status as the dominant institutional agent for creating and conveying values.

This process must start from pre-school education, from the contact with the first groups and the creation of the first group values, and it must include the following dimensions:

The curricular dimension, i.e. the teaching content, primarily textbooks, where socialisation must be one of the chief criteria. This assumes that the analysis of conveyed values will dominate in the assessment of the merit of textbooks and other school literature rather than a focus on exclusively literary and aesthetic criteria. In the choice of literature, a certain measure of value must be applied in terms of its type, quantity and correspondence to the age groups it is intended for. Additional literature must cover the values that are lacking in the textbooks. In the context of the opportunity to choose different textbooks, additional literature must compensate for the values given in the alternative. All additional means of conveying values (illustrations, discussions, practice) must be used.

It is necessary, through continuous analysis, to pay particular attention to civic education, and especially to the area relating specifically to human rights and children's rights, taking into account that all analyses indicate that there is a vast void and lack of knowledge in this field among the student population. At the same time, the school will retrieve their dominant position as a source and an agent of positive social values.

The entire process will be designed to encourage finding a common denominator among existing subcultures, as well as a unique base for the value matrix. This means underlining and respecting sub-cultural diversity and idiosyncratic features, but not to the detriment of the cohesive dimension of cultural transmission.

In this process, tradition can be only one part; this means presenting knowledge and proven information on history and traditions, but oriented toward the modern global processes of integration.

The extracurricular dimension – practising values:

- *Carrying out activities to support certain values through practice that reflects reality, with particular emphasis on human rights.*
- *Introducing a new methodology which guarantees a successful internalisation of values.*
- *Even though there may be numerous projects, continuous teacher training in this respect is essential, primarily for the purpose of establishing the connection between the theoretical background of human rights and their application in specific social practice.*

Current state:

- Macedonian society develops and is developed on the basis of plurality and a diversity of values.
- Tradition is still an important source of values.
- In future, local, national, ethnic and religious factors will represent an important counteraction to globalisation.
- The freedom of the young to make a choice of different lifestyles without the necessary skills obtained in education and culture may cause problems in the management of their lives and lead to exclusion.
- Volunteering offers important opportunities for inclusion, participation and influence; they provide means for acquiring citizenship skills, renewing democracy, creating one's own identity, managing one's own life and preventing exclusion.

Creating conditions for voluntary activities

The Ministry of Education and Science will support *initiatives in the formal and informal sector aimed at the acquisition and application of civic skills, especially in the field of sports and cultural activities*. Particular attention will be devoted to multicultural forms and activities promoting social cohesion and association. Here multiculturalism and an exchange among cultures will be encouraged.

The organisation and carrying out of civic activities will be protected. It is especially important to *adopt a regulation on this kind of activity* at the national level in order to prevent any local anomalies. The importance of such activities must be advocated and the awareness of the local government must be developed regarding the significance of such activities which enhance the social wellbeing of young people and adults.

Current state:

- Volunteering is still a negative stereotype, something to avoid if possible or to be reduced to a minimum.
- The reasons for this are a failure to find sense in an engagement not bringing personal profit, which is, in part, a result of inappropriately presented values in the course of the pedagogical area of schooling.
- Many young people wish to participate through NGOs, but do not have knowledge of how and where to become involved.

Prevention of exclusion

The growing social and economic crisis and class division of the society increase the degree of social exclusion of certain groups of citizens. At the same time, the number of such groups is also on the rise. As a result of the underdevelopment of specific forms of social organisation, but also because of their lack of initiative, young people (both those in education and the unemployed), are increasingly being excluded from the social processes and forms of active participation. In Macedonia, the opportunities that the civil sector can offer in this field are as yet limited and insufficiently popularised. In spite of the large number of non-governmental organisations and the comparatively large number of projects they carry out, this kind of association is not an integral element of the contents offered in the course of education. In addition to a lack of knowledge of them, they are also subject to mistrust or scepticism as regards their usefulness and effects.

At the expense of the above categories, the one field that young people feel open to them is political engagement (party youth branches, involving politics in youth organisations, etc.). Therefore the age threshold for the young people who participate in politics is becoming lower and lower on account of the extremely narrow space for the operation of citizens' associations, non-governmental organisations, etc.

In the forthcoming period action will be taken in order to enable an increase and an improvement of social inclusion in the following forms:

- *promoting social engagement as a value in the contents of the teaching process;*
- *promotion of and introduction to the civic sector within the education process, and to the possibilities offered by non-governmental organisations;*
- *compulsory practice in the NGO sector in the course of education;*
- *providing incentives for social organisation;*
- *removing politics from the existing forms of youth organisation and guiding them towards values appropriate to the age and nature of the group;*
- *stimulating voluntary work so that it will not be seen as abuse, but as a mode of contributing to and improving the situation in the wider community;*
- *Initiating projects where young people in the education system, as well as the young unemployed, will be partners in non-governmental organisations rather than mere spectators.*

In the context of education it is necessary to increase the participation of young people in the process, which is the most important factor in reducing the exclusion of this group. Encouraging student participation in the entire education process, finding forms for their active participation in decision-making relevant to education, as well as their participation in the evaluation of teaching contents and teaching staff, must become part of future legal solutions.

Education is responsible for equipping both young people and adults with the knowledge and skills for managing and building their lives. Teaching and school activities must enhance the feeling of belonging to the educational institution and the community as a whole. It is expected that exclusion will be successfully prevented by strengthening inclusion in the field of education. Such an arrangement requires developing cooperation between the public sector and non-governmental and voluntary organisations. An increase in the number of children and young people involved in active voluntary work will be one of the future tasks of both the formal and informal sectors.

Special attention will be devoted to eliminating the exclusion that appears when students drop out at the transfer to a higher level of education and when they move from education to work.

Children with special needs will be protected from educational and, thereby, from social exclusion. Action will be taken for their inclusion at all levels of education. One of the tasks of the educational institutions will be a continuous engagement in detecting and bringing this category of children "out" of their homes and involving them actively in the formal pedagogical and educational process. For this purpose efforts will be increased to train teaching staff for work with this category of children.

In future, action will be taken to increase opportunities for all age groups - regardless of their sex, social status, state of health and ethnicity - for self-fulfilment in education, cultural and sports activities.

4. IMPROVING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF MACEDONIAN SOCIETY

The economic and social wellbeing of the Republic of Macedonia depends on the dynamics of production and on the quality of applying new knowledge. Improving the competence and competitiveness of Macedonian society internationally is to be observed in four key processes: augmenting the power of education, developing science, fostering and disseminating culture and cultural values, and encouraging research and innovation. In the forthcoming period, the Ministry of Education and Science will take actions to provide incentives and support for initiatives focused on developing these key areas.

Objectives:

Strengthening the research and innovation system

Investments in increasing creativity and innovations are always worthwhile. The political efforts to recover the economy of the country and to strengthen its competence in the global integration processes will result in failure unless they are backed by a powerful national creative energy to fortify such development. The Republic of Macedonia is a small and economically weak country which cannot import minds and innovations. Therefore it is compelled to rely heavily on its own capacities and implement an active policy for their stimulation.

Investing in education, raising the educational level of the population, developing scientific research and stimulating creativity and innovation must not be taken only as an additional budget allocation, but importance must be attributed to strategic and development investment in the future of the country.

Current state:

- The economic crisis has brought about an even more drastic drop in the opportunities to apply science in the development of the country's economy.
- Such a situation has caused a decrease in scientific and research cooperation among the university, the scientific institutions and the economic entities.
- Science and research work is largely carried out under modest conditions and with minimum funding.

Opportunities for achieving national success in the global economy will be increased by strengthening the innovation system. Therefore it is necessary that additional efforts be invested to increase research and development funding. In the forthcoming period, the Ministry of Education and Science will take action *to create a balanced and flexible system of cooperation among the stakeholders in research and development*. There will be parallel efforts for *increasing participation in international research and innovation networks and for strengthening the research infrastructure*. Public funding, channelled through the Ministry of Education and Science, will be linked with high quality and applicability requirements, depending on national priorities. In the Ministry's priorities, research in the fields of art and culture will be equally encouraged and will be considered an important strategic factor for strengthening the competence of the country and enriching the social innovation base.

Development of the IT society

In the forthcoming period *we will strive to create conditions for the development of the IT society*. New IT and communications technology must pervade all areas of social life. It is expected to enable a successful balance between technological development, on the one hand, and intellectual development on the other.

The Ministry of Education and Science will strive to enhance the introduction of new information technology in the education system in order to provide: functional training, i.e. computer literacy of the young for a community saturated with new information technology; promotion of education, and, in particular, of the systems for special student groups; an increase in the efficiency of the education system; and development of citizens' political awareness.

In the subsequent period action will be taken in order to *improve access to modern international and national information systems and databases*. Therefore, action will be taken for the *satisfactory equipment of educational institutions with modern information technology and for its linking to information systems*. At the same time, we will support initiatives for creating a comprehensive and transparent database of education in the Republic of Macedonia, developing education services and conveying the cultural heritage through the new media.

Finally, the development of the IT society is preconditioned by the development of human resources in the field of information technology. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Science will support all initiatives and guidelines for strengthening staff capacities in the field of informatics, both in formal and in informal education.

Linking education and research with the labour market

Education and research must be coordinated with the changing needs in the field of labour. These needs will be largely determined by the character and contents of the education policy and by the planning of education and training in the forthcoming period. *Linking education and research with the labour market* will be improved by installing facilities for increased cooperation with business and industry.

The education system will establish a structure and an organisation that will enable its functional connection with the labour market. In this, the education system must not perpetuate the practice of taking care solely of the preparation of the new workforce, and its concern for its participants must not cease at the moment they leave the educational institutions. The modern setup of the education system must observe the principles of flexibility, functionality and openness. It must be concerned with the regular participants in education, the employed, the unemployed, and all those in need of educational upgrading. The dynamics of the changes in the education system will follow the dynamics of the changes in the necessary competencies dictated by the labour market.

The operation of the education system within the suggested setup must be followed by a redesign of curricula and syllabuses. *The primary function of curricula must be the establishment and accomplishment of a unity among the student, general knowledge, professionally relevant knowledge, and professionally specific knowledge, complemented by the standard of competencies for a certain profession or vocation.*

The current needs of the economy can never be resolved by an isolated education system.

Current state:

- In the employed group, persons aged 15-19 account for 1.6%, whereas in the unemployed group the same account for 5.4%. The situation with the 20-24 age group is similar. This group accounts for 5.8% of the employed and 19.0% of the unemployed.
- There are 148,727 business entities in Macedonia, 132,934 of which (89.38%) are privately owned, 1,911 (1.28%) are in mixed ownership, 1,741 (1.17%) are in collective ownership, 437 (0.29%) are state owned, and 11,704 (7.87%) are socially owned.
- Propelling the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and increasing employment by expanding the industry and service sectors is difficult due to slow economic growth and the reduced financial power of the population.
- The industrial sector is still a dominant field for placing the workforce, unlike the service sector which, in spite of recent mild growth, is still not sufficiently prominent for one to be able to talk about drastic disruptions of the transfer of the workforce from one sector to another.
- According to the length of unemployment, 44.60% of the unemployed with completed higher education await employment for more than four years. This length of time is greater for the other education groups and it is greatest for the unemployed with incomplete primary (72.40%) or without any education (61.16%).

Educational services must abandon the realm of formal standards and norms, they must leave the classroom and connect with the world that is in need of those educational services. Therefore the Ministry of Education and Science will create conditions where social dialogue will be a base for coordinating education and the needs of the labour market.

5. PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The development orientation of the Republic of Macedonia is focused on including the country in the global integration processes at a European and world level. The primary objective in the forthcoming period is going to be the construction of a common value base for managing development problems concerning globalisation. The country's determination for inclusion in the EU will open up a range of cooperation opportunities. The quality and intensity of cooperation will primarily depend upon the readiness and capability of the country to follow the quality standards and criteria essential to the accomplishment of such cooperation. Education has a key role in the accomplishment of such competence and competitiveness on the European and on the world market.

Objectives:

Democratic and sustainable education

Our relations with other countries continually present new challenges in education, mobility and culture. The international renown of the Republic of Macedonia will be secured, *inter alia*, by its active and positive approach to education, science and culture. The construction of such development concepts aims at confirming and consolidating Macedonia's position as a responsible nation.

The strengthening and modernisation of the education system and the incorporation therein of democratic principles and values is the primary condition to be met. By increasing its power to face and manage global, national and international problems, as well as by nourishing its openness and accessibility, flexibility and readiness for cooperation in all fields, the Republic of Macedonia will not only create a base for con-

tinually harnessing its competitiveness, but it will also contribute to the creation of its self-image and to its international renown.

In the forthcoming period, the Ministry of Education and Science will also aim to *strengthen international cooperation at the national, institutional and project levels*. The inclusion of schools and universities in the international exchange of students and teachers, as well as the execution of international projects, are of vital importance for strengthening their capacities, promoting the national “product” and internationalising the values of global integration processes.

Strengthening higher education

Higher education is a constituent and an indivisible part of the development of any country and it is one of the strongest factors for the international renown of a country, hence the need for accelerated transformation of its entire setup and the establishment of quality that is appropriate to the country's needs and internationally transparent and competitive. Overcoming the residues of the past and implementing internationally recognised norms and standards is a priority in the development of higher education in the forthcoming period. It is only in this way that it can carry out its mission both nationally and internationally.

In the past, state universities were the ones satisfying the labour market's needs for highly educated staff. However, the processes of globalisation have to a large extent disrupted that relationship. Today, the labour market establishes new relations and new relationships, surpassing the narrow national focus and expanding its scope to an international field. Due to its own dynamics, the labour market is in need of a flexible and dynamic education supply that may be provided only by flexible and dynamic educational institutions. Therefore, the state higher educational institutions must overcome their inertia and inflexibility and must develop a new structure and organisational setup compatible with the overall changes in the labour market.

Current state:

- There are three state universities in the Republic of Macedonia: the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, the St. Clement of Ohrid University in Bitola and the State University in Tetovo.
- In addition to the state ones, there is also one private university - the Southeast European University in Tetovo.
- In addition to these four universities, the Republic of Macedonia has seen the start of the process of establishing private higher education institutions, mostly formed as departments of more developed foreign universities dealing with the production of specialised profiles in the field of informatics, administrative management, humanities, etc.

Globalisation and the internal transformational processes have strongly reflected on the redesign of the entire social structure, giving rise to the need for national and international cooperation and system compatibility, and innovation in the role and structure of higher education as an important factor in the accomplishment of such compatibility.

The need for a strategic approach to the transformation of higher education is not only a result of the changes taking place at the national level, but is also a consequence of the influence of the so-called external, i.e. global, overall influences determining higher education in other countries in the world as well.

On 19th September 2003 the Republic of Macedonia became a fully-fledged member of the European family of countries which undertook to follow and put into practice the recommendations of the Bologna Process and the common determination to create a unified European area of higher education.

The country's undertaking of the commitments of the Bologna Process presents higher education with new challenges in its further transformation. In addition to its regular efforts for improving the quality of studies and their efficiency, higher education is also faced with the commitments for its own structural, organisational and curricular design, which will be transparent, competitive, compatible and recognisable on the European academic services market and wider. Such a new situation will mean consistent observation of the outlined provisions stipulated in the Bologna Declaration and their implementation.

The initiatives for developing a common European area of higher education confront higher educational institutions with the obligation of their own self-assessment and provide them with a fresh impetus to invest efforts on their way to achieving active membership in the family of European universities and acquiring the status of respectable providers of education services on the broad European academic market.

As one of the signatory parties to the Bologna Declaration, the Republic of Macedonia, and thereby the Ministry of Education and Science, has committed itself to adapt its policy in the first decade of the 21st century in order allow for the accomplishment of the objectives arising from the Bologna Process, which are of primary importance for creating a European higher education area:

1. **Adoption of a system of easily recognisable and comparable degrees and introduction of a diploma supplement** in order to allow the employment flow of European citizens and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system.
2. **Adoption of a system based on two main cycles – undergraduate and postgraduate.** Access to the latter is preconditioned by successful completion of the former study cycle which must take at least three years. The degree achieved after three years is considered the necessary degree of qualification on the European labour market. The second cycle will lead to a master's degree and/or a doctorate, as is the case in many European countries.

3. **Introduction of a credit system**, such as ECTS³, as an appropriate means of promoting the widest possible student exchange. Credits can be earned outside higher education, including lifelong learning, provided that the admitting university recognises the same.
4. **Promotion of mobility** by overcoming the obstacles to free movement, especially of:
 - *students*: providing them with an opportunity to study, allowing them access to studies and the relevant services;
 - *teachers, researchers and administrative staff*: recognising and valuing the time they have spent in Europe researching, teaching or learning, without prejudice to their statutory rights.
5. **Promotion of European cooperation in ensuring quality** by developing comparable criteria and methodology.
6. **Promotion of the required European dimension in higher education**, especially in the development of subject curricula, inter-institutional cooperation, mobility schemes and integrated study programmes, and training and research.

The accomplishment of these objectives - which must take place with complete respect for the cultural differences, the language, the national education systems and the autonomy of universities - is to allow the development of a European higher education area. From the point of view of higher education in the Republic of Macedonia, this must result in:

- Increased efficiency in studying;
- Mobility of students and academic staff;
- Improved quality of the education process;
- An active role of the students in providing quality;
- Improved employment prospects for graduate staff on the national and the European labour market;
- Enhanced scientific research work;
- Ensured competitiveness on and compatibility with the European and world academic market.

In the forthcoming period, in accordance with its responsibility, *the Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with the universities in the country, will try to create conditions for the free implementation of the principles and recommendations of the Bologna Process* in higher education in the Republic of Macedonia, by accomplishing the following objectives:

³ European Credit Transfer System

- *Structural adjustment of the tertiary education system to the Bologna Process.*
- *Alignment of legal regulations with the principles and recommendations of the Bologna Process.*
- *Alignment of higher education norms and standards.*
- *Construction of an efficient scholarship system that will enable enhanced education mobility of students and teachers.*
- *Promotion of European cooperation in ensuring quality by developing comparable criteria and methodology.*
- *Strengthening the system of external quality evaluation in higher education.*
- *Defining and closely following the standards for the establishment and accreditation of a private higher educational institution.*
- *Developing an efficient system for higher education funding and for allocation of financial resources.*
- *Improving strategic and managerial capacities.*
- *Developing scientific and technological strategies.*
- *Transparent funding of scientific research activities.*
- *Establishing a foundation for national innovation systems in the higher education sector.*

Promotion of cultural identity

Global integration processes and greater mobility place the idiosyncrasies of cultural identity at the forefront. A part of that identity is the degree of implementation of democratic values and principles of respecting human rights, tolerance, transparency of cultural values and quality of social cohesion.

The Ministry of Education and Science will create an education that will focus on individuals, their free development, and the development of their individual and cultural identity defined in the multicultural environment and placed in the global national and supranational context.

The special objectives and tasks of education will focus on *fostering and developing the individual features of the person through the processes of knowing, understanding and respecting other cultures at the national and international level for the purpose of developing individuality, its interests, views and motives.* This process must be raised to every level of the self-education activities of the person for the individual identity to be able to place itself in the world of its immediate and broader social and professional environment.

Taking into consideration international mobility, which stresses the importance of tolerance and the culture of understanding, it is immensely important to be, first of all, able to understand ourselves so that later we can understand others.

EU integration

The operation of the European Union is firmly founded on the production of knowledge and know-how skills. The image of what changes the Republic of Macedonia will undertake in its education system, what development policy it will create in the field of culture, how it will define and carry out its youth policy, what will be the pace of development of the IT society and structural policies, in particular, and the efficiency of the funding system, will present a challenge for the Republic of Macedonia in its desire for membership of the Union.

The objectives set by the Ministry of Education and Science for the implementation of changes in education in the Republic of Macedonia must be ensured, and the effects must be sustainable. This assumes cooperation among all Government sectors and all stakeholders in education nationally, as well as all relevant international education and development bodies and institutions internationally.

Strengthening regional and European cooperation

On its way to integration in the global processes, the Republic of Macedonia must intensify European and, even more, regional modes of cooperation. *Balkan cooperation in the fields of education, research and culture, considering the geographic proximity, minor language barriers, traditional connections and mutual influence, will present an important objective for the forthcoming period.* Education development initiatives in the Republic of Macedonia must involve closer relations with neighbours, in particular in the fields of exchange of expertise and knowledge, student mobility, developing study programmes, and establishing regional networks, joint scientific research and exchange of good practices. In this, the development of neighbourly relations and cooperation must not marginalise initiatives for broader connection and cooperation.

The success and scope of international cooperation at the national, regional and institutional levels is directly dependent upon not only a competence and readiness to enter upon these processes, but also upon the readiness to respect the agreements, deadlines and quality standards that this type of cooperation

assumes. The repute and attractiveness of the country in the processes of immediate and broader regional cooperation will largely depend on its ability to accomplish the international commitments it has undertaken. This assumes consistent satisfaction of the commitments undertaken arising from a large number of international documents, such as the Bologna Declaration, Education for All, the Universal Declaration of the Rights of the Child and many others to which our country is a signatory. In this respect, in the forthcoming period *the Ministry of Education and Science will take action to implement all relevant international documents and agreements that it has undertaken to implement.*

6. CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The efforts for European integration, and accelerated economic, social and cultural development face the Ministry of Education and Science with important challenges in changing its institutional basis and strengthening its capacities. In the forthcoming period, managing changes in education, depending on the objectives, will be developed in the sector and supported by an appropriate legislative basis. During this time, the activities of the Ministry will be designated according to priorities and to a realistic ability to accomplish them.

Objectives:

Strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Education and Science

The Ministry of Education and Science is a consistent executor of the Government development programme focused on the sector of its activities. The key factors for efficiency in the work of the Ministry are found in normative regulations, management of activities based on targeted outcomes, and information-based guidance.

Interventions in the field of education will be pointless and fruitless unless they are followed up by comprehensive and succinct normative regulations. In this respect, the Ministry of Education and science will take actions for *a more immediate connection of normative regulations with the National Strategy for the Development of Education.* In this, the quality of legislation must be guaranteed.

Action will be taken to *strengthen the links between funding, strategic priorities and the management of planned changes*. Change management must be based on targeted outcomes. The objective is to raise the efficiency of change management by a more efficient projection of objectives (targeted outcomes), monitoring, control and evaluation.

Transparency and the ongoing publication of information will be used for a more efficient implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia.

In the forthcoming period, *the Ministry of Education and Science will install professional bodies in charge of implementing specific activities based on targeted outcomes* which will serve quality implementation, monitoring, control and evaluation of changes.

The efficiency and success of the implementation of the activities of the Ministry of Education and Science are directly connected with staff quality and expertise. The operation of the Ministry must take into account mutually agreed qualities: expertise, openness, cooperation, future orientation, and accountability. In this respect, *the Ministry will implement activities for strengthening the competence of its staff and it will take care of their development*.

The objective of the Ministry in the forthcoming period will be *the strengthening of its sector capacities by continuous sector expertise, sector research, monitoring and evaluation of work*. One of the accompanying elements influencing the quality of work of the Ministry is the existence of an efficient information system and a rich database, both between sectors and between the Ministry and the base (providers of educational, cultural and sports services). In this respect, it will be necessary continuously to monitor reactions and receive feedback from education staff, pupils, students, citizens and all stakeholders and partners regarding the course of implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of Education and the overall activities of the Ministry of Education.

Reorganising central educational institutions

Taking into consideration the current situation of the central educational institutions, following the completion of the decentralisation process, and for the purpose of efficient change management in the field of education as well as for the purpose of improving its quality, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia will take action to establish the following educational institutions at the national level:

- *The National Education Inspectorate (NEI)*
- *The National Examinations Centre (NEC)*
- *The Pedagogical Institute of RM (PI) (the current Bureau of Education Development [BED])*
- *The Centre for Secondary Vocational Education (CSVE)*

The National Education Inspectorate (NEI) will be a central educational institution in charge of observing legality in the field of education and systematic quality control of the education process. This assumes institutional evaluation of educational institutions, as well as individual evaluation of the teaching and management staff for the purpose of ensuring quality and competitiveness.

In order to accomplish this expected mission, the NEI will engage only eminent individuals in law and pedagogy. Their appointment will be based exclusively on achieved results in their work and on stringent criteria that will take into account success, years of service and recommendations from appropriate authorities. The appointment of state advisors will be carried out by the appropriate national authority.

For the purpose of efficiency and effectiveness, the NEI will operate through the work of several national and local sector departments. These departments will carry out their work by way of precisely defined indicators controlling the educational institutions. These indicators will correspond completely with similar EU indicators. The inspection will be carried out by teams comprising state advisors on the control of the legal and normative field, as well as state advisors on expert control.

The NEI will carry out its regular field operations with internally established dynamics, as well as upon the request of the PI (the present BED) or the NEC, upon the request of parents' councils in schools, and upon the request of the local authorities and other stakeholders who will point out the presence of certain irregularities or poor quality in the work of a specific educational institution or individual.

The competencies of the NEI for inspection of the observation of legality in higher education will be regulated by a special law. With respect to quality control, the NEI has no competencies in higher education. This function will fall entirely under the competence evaluation and accreditation authority and the expert services of the Ministry of Education and Science.

Current state:

- There is an apparent overlapping of competencies and inefficient operation by the Bureau of Education Development (BED), the Pedagogical Service (PS) and the National Education Inspectorate (SEI) as bodies within the Ministry of Education and Science (MES).
- The competencies of BED do not correspond to the capacities of this institution.
- The NEI is not in a position to carry out its competencies allocated under the existing Law on the National Education Inspectorate.
- The Pedagogical Service has technical competencies only in textbook development.

The National Examination Centre (NEC) will be a national professional authority with the capacity of a legal entity. It will carry out periodical inspection of students' knowledge by organising final examinations after the fourth and eighth grades and by the state school leaving exam and a final vocational exam in vocational secondary education. The common denominator of these kinds of examinations is externality, ensuring the alertness of the teaching and management staff. This especially applies to school principals, who, by means of self-evaluation, should render subjective marking, giving away of marks at the end of the academic year, etc, impossible. Transparency in announcing results will greatly improve the accountability of all stakeholders in education.

The main attributes of the NEI will be confidentiality and impartiality. The satisfaction of these conditions requires the assumption of adequate staff and technical means. The NEI will engage people with high personal and professional qualities. Appropriate premises and technical working conditions will be provided on account of the volume and particularity of the work and the need for confidentiality and safety. This assumes premises with a special protection regime, a small printing office for printing validated tests of knowledge, strong IT support, etc.

The Pedagogical Institute of RM (the present Bureau of Education Development [BED]) will be a national professional body with the status of a separate legal entity and it will undertake the competencies for developing and promoting education in the country. Its competence will encompass the following activities in pre-school, primary and secondary education:

- Developing curricula and syllabuses;
- Developing and maintaining standards of knowledge and the standards and norms for an effective school;
- Establishing textbooks concepts and the methodology for their assessment;
- Participating in the assessment of the appropriateness of textbooks and teaching aids to the aims of the syllabuses;
- Preparing the teacher development programme;
- Developing extracurricular and pedagogical activities for the young in schools and hostels;
- Strengthening the pedagogy and psychology services in schools by clearly outlining staff competencies and focusing them on development;
- Offering professional assistance to schools in providing quality consistent with the national quality standards;
- Supporting projects aimed at improving the quality of education which are in accordance with national priorities;
- Establishing a system of (re)qualification of teaching staff;

- Cooperating with the non-governmental sector;
- The research and development component of education.

Such obligations impose on the Pedagogical Institute as an imperative its staffing needs. It will employ only proven pedagogy officers who carry out their work professionally. Its regional units, having the status of inter-municipal centres for development and providing quality in education, will be a constituent part of the PI (the present BED).

The Centre for Secondary Vocational Education (CSVE) will undertake the competencies for development and promotion of secondary vocational education and ensuring its quality. The CSVE will focus its activities on enhancing youth and adult employability and creating conditions for their free professional and social inclusion. It will carry out its work in the fields of secondary and post-secondary vocational education and adult education. Within its competence, the CSVE will carry out the following activities:

- Cooperating with the economy, the business sector and the NGO sector;
- Developing and maintaining knowledge standards and the standards and norms for an effective school;
- Establishing textbooks concepts and the methodology for their assessment;
- Participating in the assessment of the appropriateness of textbooks and teaching aids to the aims of the syllabuses;
- Offering professional assistance to schools in providing quality consistent with the national quality standards;
- Developing concepts for various kinds of secondary and post-secondary vocational education;
- Developing a professional qualifications system;
- Developing vocational standards;
- Defining the areas of work, establishing and proposing educational profiles for various levels of professional qualifications;
- Developing and innovating curricula and syllabuses for secondary vocational education and offering professional and advisory assistance for their implementation;
- Teacher education and training;
- Establishing the norms and standards for theoretical and practical classes;
- Monitoring the labour market and research into education needs;
- Professional information and orientation for the young;
- Supporting projects aiming at improving the quality of education which are in accordance with national priorities;
- Education and training (pre-qualification and re-qualification) of young people and adults.

Considering the wide scope and character of activities that the CSVE will carry out, it establishes itself as a centre for the professional development of young and adults and is a key link between educational institutions and the labour market. From the point of view of improving and maintaining the work competencies of young people and adults, the establishment of a connection with the labour market and the improvement of workforce competence in the country, the CSVE will be of exceptional importance.

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The National Strategy for the Development of Education in RM is a framework for carrying out the activities of the Ministry of Education and Science by 2015.

A constituent part of this Strategy are the programmes for: pre-school and primary education, secondary and post-secondary education, higher education, adult education, ICT in education, funding, legislation and professional development.

The National Strategy will continuously be updated, regardless of political shifts in Government. The National Strategy for the Development of Education will be an obligation for each and every citizen in the Republic of Macedonia.

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**NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION
IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
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