



PRIMARY SCHOOL “ GEO MILEV” Grohotno village

Tracking school dropouts in Bulgaria



Bulgaria was one of the first countries in the EU which, apart from recognizing the existence of the problem with early school leaving, has developed special policies for reducing the

share of the early school leavers and plans to achieve reduction of this share to 11% as of the year 2020. In 2013 a Strategy for reducing the share of early school leavers (2013 – 2020) and **an Action Plan**, which is indelible part of it, were adopted.

The Action Plan includes measures for the prevention, intervention and compensating the problem with the early school leavers and every year it is updated and supplemented. An important milestone in the Strategy is the establishment of a Coordination mechanism for the implementation and control of the performance of the action plan since the problem is related to the operations of various ministries and other stakeholders.

Early school leaving in Bulgaria is related to various **complex reasons**, which are mainly of socio-economical nature.

- ✓ In the period of elementary education school truancy or its leaving to a great degree are related to family and community reasons.
- ✓ In the higher levels of education, apart from the abovementioned factors, the environment, in which the young people find themselves, the lack of well trained pedagogues to work with them, the absence of additional qualification for the teachers for coping with youngsters demotivated from participating in the educational process, also have an impact.

Along with these factors serious influence exercise the poor marks at school as consequence of the not too proficient knowledge of the official language and the outdated educational programs that do not take into consideration to the necessary degree the abilities of the students to cope with the learning matter. The latter is valid not only for the Roma and Turkish minorities, but also for the children from families with lowincome level and lower degree of education. In the recent years the problems in Bulgaria with early leaving or truancy from school were decided with the support of various projects financed in the previous programme period mainly within the framework of the European Social Fund.

Here is some statistic about dropout and early leaving according education stages

STUDENTS AND LEAVERS BY REASON AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION	
(Number)	
	2018/19
Total	
Students	718 186
They left	21 127
I - IV class	
Students	256 857

STUDENTS AND LEAVERS BY REASON AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION	
(Number)	
	2018/19
They left	7 024
including:	
Due to reluctance	330
Due to family reasons	2 854
They went abroad	3 501
V - VII class	
Students	190 250
They left	6 370
including:	
Due to reluctance	904
Due to family reasons	2 459
They went abroad	2 699
PU with admission after VII class (I st. PC)	
Students	2 493
They left	179
including:	
Due to reluctance	30
Due to family reasons	64
They went abroad	61
VIII - XII class	
Students	267 756
They left	7 545
including:	

STUDENTS AND LEAVERS BY REASON AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION	
(Number)	
	2018/19
Due to reluctance	1 895
Due to family reasons	3 339
They went abroad	2 129
Vocational colleges with admission after secondary education	
Students	830
They left	9
including:	
Due to reluctance	4
Due to family reasons	4
They went abroad	-

¹ Interruption of the time series due to changes in the national education system (Law on Preschool and School Education, promulgated, SG No. 79 of 13 October 2015). The data are not comparable to previous school years

Number of students left PRIMARY EDUCATION (CLASS I-VII) FROM GENERAL EDUCATION AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS BY STATISTICAL ZONES, STATISTICAL REGIONS, DISTRICTS AND MUNICIPALITIES

Смолян/ Smolyan	31
Баните/ Banite	-

Борино/ Borino	-
Девин/Devin	1
Доспат/ Dospat	9
Златоград/Zlatograd	9
Мадан/Madan	-
Неделино/Nedelino	1
Рудозем/Rudozem	2
Смолян/Smolyan	6
Чепеларе/Chepelare	3

In Primary school “ Geo Milev”- Grohotno village the last 5 years there aren't students dropped out from the school. The reasons are different, but the mainly reason is that families are sure and support their children to get good educational levels so that they can easily find their jobs.

The Ministry of Education has indicated its great satisfaction at the success of the mechanism and in March 2018 it announced that, as part of the new national strategy for prevention of dropouts for the period 2018- 2020, the mechanism will become a permanent instrument; various accompanying measures (including funding) will be put in place to help the teachers, social workers and other professionals in their work with the students and their families. Outlook & commentary In addition to the tracking of nonattending children, many nongovernmental organisations, including the National Network for Children in its Annual report, suggest that a comprehensive policy on school retention and prevention of dropping out should be developed and implemented urgently. It should aim at

supporting families at risk and not merely sanctioning them with unbearable and useless fines that negatively affect children, without changing parental practice. The objectives of the new strategy for prevention of dropouts are important but the concrete implementation of the strategy and its outcomes will represent a major challenge because the crucial problems are not at the national level but rather at the level of municipalities and families: lack of sustainable policies for education and young people, lack of professional perspective, high rates of migration, as well as low levels of trust and interest in the educational system - not only among students but also and more importantly among parents. This makes the gap between high and low performing students huge and supports the thesis that the social background is closely related to the long-term success in life for children and the educational system in Bulgaria is failing to fill this gap.

The tracking mechanism identified quite a few children for whom the school education system is not adequate. The Bulgarian education system is poorly equipped to help students who are substantially lagging behind their peers. This is due to inflexible curricula and a lack of innovative methods for remedial instruction.

The 2017 Monitoring Report on Education2030, which raises the main question “Are the reforms sustainable?”, states that there is still not enough effort put into ensuring equal access to education for every child - removing the social barriers and economic disparities suffered by students. In some places, the educational environment is not very welcoming. There have been parental protests, widely reported in the media, against having children with behavioural problems enrolled in their school. Such children are, of course, a challenge for educational authorities and teachers. There has been a shortage of social workers for years, while their involvement is crucial for the success of almost any set of measures for reenrolment of children who have missed one or more school years. It is also necessary to deploy new instruments to address issues such as poor housing, poverty, domestic violence and many other deeprooted social problems generating school dropout. The ViceChairperson of the Commission of Education and Science in the National Assembly stated that there is a strong need for change in the legislation to regulate the legal situation of children left by parents in extended family care.

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