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Situation Analysis of the Security Education and Training System in the Republic of Bulgaria

Analýza systému vzdělávání a odborné přípravy v oblasti bezpečnosti v Bulharské republice

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Abstract: The purpose of the article is to present a situational analysis of the education and training system in the field of security in the Republic of Bulgaria in 2021, in which internal and external threats, strengths and weaknesses, problem areas and possible solutions will be highlighted. The subject of the article is the education and training system, as the specific subject is the education and training system in the field of security in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Abstrakt: Účelem článku je představit analýzu systému vzdělávání a odborné přípravy v oblasti bezpečnosti v Bulharské republice v roce 2021, ve které bude položen důraz na vnitřní a vnější hrozby, silné a slabé stránky, problémové oblasti a možná řešení. Předmětem článku je systém vzdělávání a odborné přípravy, kde specifickým předmětem je systém vzdělávání a odborné přípravy v oblasti bezpečnosti v Bulharské republice.

Key words: Education; Training; Security; Defence; Bulgaria.

Klíčová slova: Vzdělávání; výcvik; bezpečnost; obrana; Bulharsko.

INTRODUCTION

The results of scientific and educational activities in the security system in the Republic of Bulgaria remain hidden from the public, which inevitably leads to a division of public opinion regarding the importance of the “security” and “defence” fields and the number of public resources allocated to their achievement. Therefore, the purpose of the article is to present a situational analysis of the education and training system in the field of security in the Republic of Bulgaria in 2021, in which internal and external threats, strengths and weaknesses, problem areas and possible solutions will be highlighted. The subject of the article is the education and training system, as the specific subject is the education and training system in the field of security in the Republic of Bulgaria. The main thesis of the scientific research supports that in view of the increasing needs of Bulgarian higher education in the field of security, we should support human capacity in the country for Euro-Atlantic and European cooperation in security.

The methodology used is a set of well-known methods and approaches for heuristic and statistical situational analysis carried out at a specific moment, such as SWOT analysis, which is adapted to the objectives of the study of the system of education and training in the field of security in the Republic of Bulgaria and used together stand out with a certain synergy.

The results indicate that the examples in Bulgarian education are evidence of a successful, if still timid, attempt to offer academic training for the growing needs of expertise for international activity at all levels of the security system. Anticipatory improvement of management in educational institutions in the security system will allow finding talented people with expertise who are engaged in decision-making and are able to bear responsibilities for them.

1 APPROACHES AND MODELS FOR RESEARCHING THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM IN THE FIELD OF SECURITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA - A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Education is a single purposeful process of upbringing, training and acquisition of aggregate knowledge, skills, values, social beliefs and habits, to form the mind, character and physical abilities of a given person, as well as transmission of knowledge accumulated over generations. Training is one of the main elements of education. It consists of the learning and teaching components. We interpret training as a process that has specific goals and prepares a person or a group of people for a position at a certain future time. The acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences in training occurs as a result of teaching professional or practical skills and knowledge that relate to specific competences. Modern management theory considers four scientific approaches - systemic, situational, process and resource. The situational approach is the most orderly and reliable basis for managing complex interrelated activities and represents a process

of identifying and evaluating all factors related to the system in each situation, which is why we turn to it in the present study.¹ The preliminary scheme for situational analysis can be considered in the following directions:

- presence or absence of any problem (uncertainty) in the conditions of the security environment (principle of empirical confirmation) – definition of the problem in the context of the given conditions, concepts, criteria and distinctive characteristic for defining the problem;
- relationship between the source of the given problem and the environment in which this problem manifests itself (principle of invariance) - diagnostics of relations in a certain context of a system of relations, concepts, criteria and distinguishing characteristics of the manifestation of the problem;²
- regularity of the manifestation of the given problem (principle of nomology) revealing the cause-and-effect relationships in the manifestation of the problem in the context of a system of regularities, concepts, criteria and distinguishing characteristics;³
- consequences of solving or/and not solving the given problem - prediction in short-, medium- and long-term perspective (principle of holistic).

In the study of the education and training system in the field of security in the Republic of Bulgaria we use one of the forms of situational analysis known as SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). In this model, the goal is to identify and assess the strengths and weaknesses, potential opportunities, and likely threats associated with a given process in the system. This fundamental approach can be used for everything from implementing security system operational processes to gaining competitive advantages in the aggressive security education market. SWOT is a widespread tool that can be successfully applied to analyse the state and development trends of the security education and training system.^{4,5,6}

The first stage of the situational analysis thoroughly examines the strengths and weaknesses of the system. A detailed list of the objects of research and a scale for evaluating the results is compiled. The second stage is an analysis of the external environment and the external factors favouring or limiting the development of the security education and training system. Of particular importance at this stage is the study and mastery of the

1 STAEHLE, Wolfgang H. Situational Approach to Management. *Management International Review* vol. 16, no. 3. 1976. pp. 59–69. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40227278>. Accessed 06.09.2022.

2 ĆWIK, B. Systemic Perception of the Environment of a Modern Organisation. 2019. Proceedings of 34th International Business Information Management Association Conference (IBIMA 2019). Madrid, Spain: INT business information management assoc-IBIMA.

3 See e.g. MCNABB, D.E. Research Methods for Political Science: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. 2010. Armonk NY, M.E. Sharpe.

4 ANSOFF, H. Igor Strategic issue management. *Strategic Management Journal*. 1 (2): 131–148. 1980.

5 MADSEN, Dag Øivind SWOT analysis: a management fashion perspective. *International Journal of Business Research*. 16 (1): 39–56. 2016.

6 COMAN, Alex; Ronen, BOAZ Focused SWOT: diagnosing critical strengths and weaknesses. *International Journal of Production Research*. 2009. 47 (20): 5677–5689.

key and risk factors influencing the trends and dynamics of development of the security education and training system.

The synchronicity between the selected scientific methods, which although widely known but also widely used, complement and accelerate each other, as well as their unification in a single methodology, which leads to a synergy of the result, gives us a reason for their application in the present study.

2 ANALYSIS OF COMPETITION IN SECURITY EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Modern requirements for security and defence education require an extensive increase in knowledge according to the adopted national security system of the country. In addition to the purely national elements, security-related knowledge also covers the elements of NATO and EU alliance defence. Therefore, the problems of education and training in the field of higher education of Security and Defence in the Republic of Bulgaria are not only dealt with by the higher schools and academies of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence, because the scope of knowledge in the field of security exceeds many times the quantity and quality of the armed forces in the ideas of the power of the state and extends into the field of national political conditions, ethnic conditions, economic strength, the level of development of science and technology, cultural traditions, demographic picture, etc.

In order to analyse the competitive environment in education in the field of security in the Republic of Bulgaria, it is necessary to determine the each of the factors and forces. The combined impact of them determines the intensity and dynamics of competition in education system. Analyses of the competitive environment are important input information in the evaluations of the attractiveness of the system, the chances, risks and opportunities to change its internal environment, and to review and analyse the alternatives for competitive strategy.

In 2021, according to the rating system of higher education institutions in Bulgaria, a total of 13 Bulgarian higher educational institutions carried out educational and research activities in Security and Defense scientific field of knowledge, 9.1. National Security professional direction, according to the national classification.

The training is positioned in 2 Academies - Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and G. S. Rakovski Military Academy, and 11 universities as follows:

Table 1: Higher education institution in Security and Defense in Republic of Bulgaria

Acronym		Status of property
VFU	1. Varna Free University	Private
HSSE	2. Higher School of Security and Economics	Private
AMI	3. Academy of the Ministry of the Interior	Public

MA	4.	Military Academy	Public
LSITU	5.	Library Studies and Information Technologies University	Public
NMU	6.	Vasil Levski National Military University	Public
NBU	7.	New Bulgarian University	Private
PU	8.	University of Plovdiv	Public
SWU	9.	Southwest University	Public
RU	10.	University of Rousse	Public
VTU	11.	University of Veliko Tarnovo	Public
SHU	12.	Shumen University	Public
HNS	13.	Higher Naval School	Public

From 2021, the Nikola Yonkov Vaptsarov Higher Naval School in Varna is also a positively evaluated.

33 specialties are accredited for training at the bachelor's educational qualification degree (training is in 25) through full-time, part-time and distance learning. 70 specialties are accredited for training at the master's educational-qualification degree (training is in 42) through regular, part-time and distance learning. 18 doctoral programs are accredited for training in the PhD educational-scientific degree.⁷

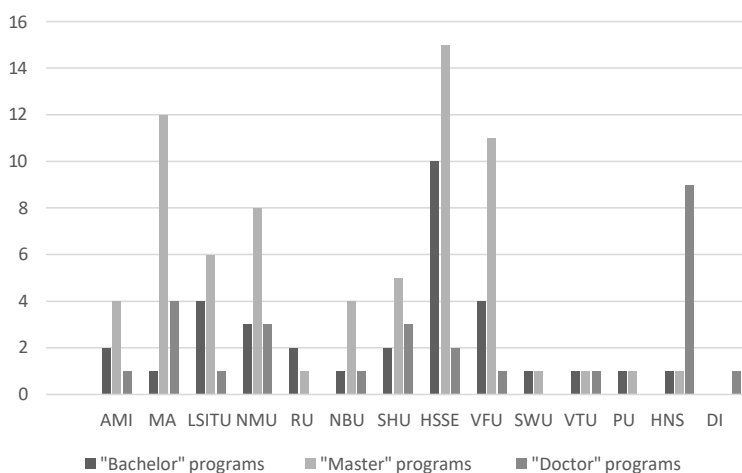


Figure 1: Distribution of the number of study programs in universities in higher education institutions in the field of "Security" in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria

⁷ Ministry of Education and Culture. Ranking system of higher education institutions in Bulgaria for 2021. Ministry of Education and Culture. 2021. Available from: <https://rsvu.mon.bg/rsvu4/#/university-details/209;3043>. Accessed 06.09.2022.

Distribution of the various educational and educational-scientific degrees in higher education institutions in the field of “Security” in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria is presented below by universities and educational programs that are accredited for teaching in the field of security, and from the presented visualization we can highlight the strength of CSCE, HNS, MA, VFU and NMU. We should emphasize the huge territory in security education that private universities have occupied. (**Fig. 1.**)

Figure 2 shows the internal distribution of the various educational and educational-scientific degrees in the relevant higher education institutions in the “Security” area in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria. We could see extremely unbalanced education and training across the three educational degrees by university. There is even training only in the scientific-educational doctor degree at the Institute of Defense of the Republic of Bulgaria. (**Fig. 2.**)

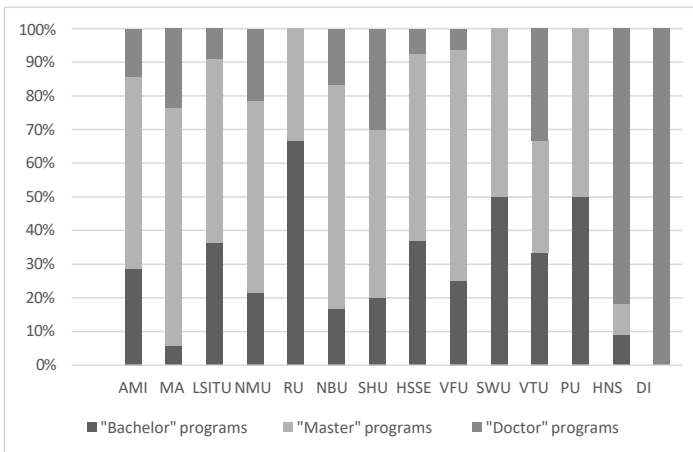


Figure 2: Internal distribution of the various educational and educational-scientific degrees in the relevant higher education institutions in the “Security” area in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria

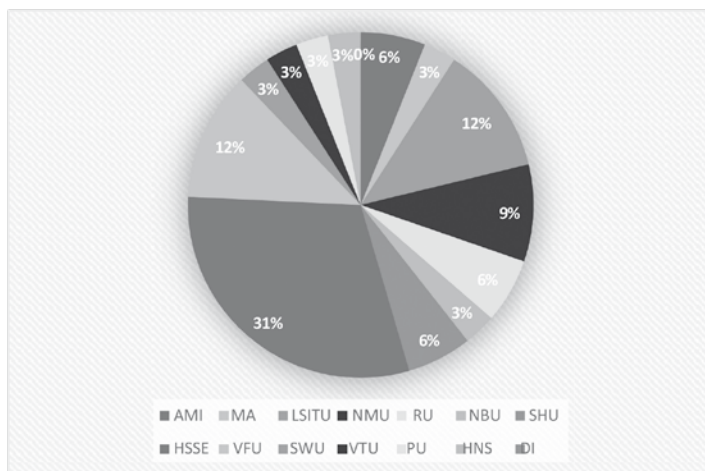


Figure 3: Distribution of students in the bachelor's educational qualification degree in the relevant higher education institutions in the "Security" region in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria

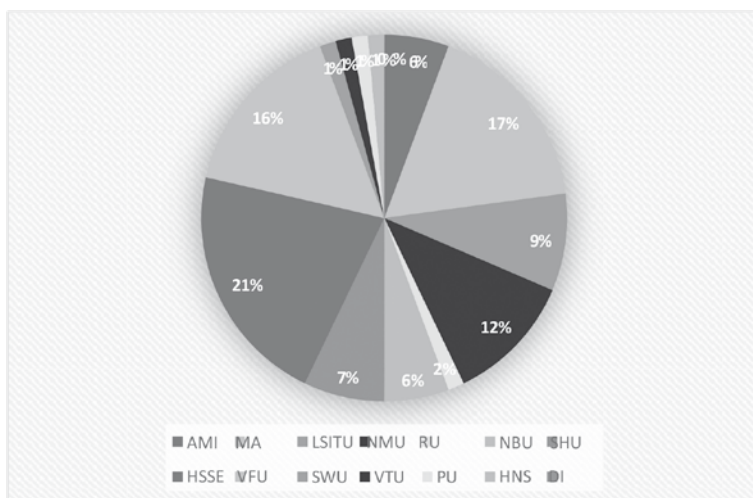


Figure 4: Distribution of students in the "Master" educational qualification degree in the relevant higher education institutions in the "Security" area in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria

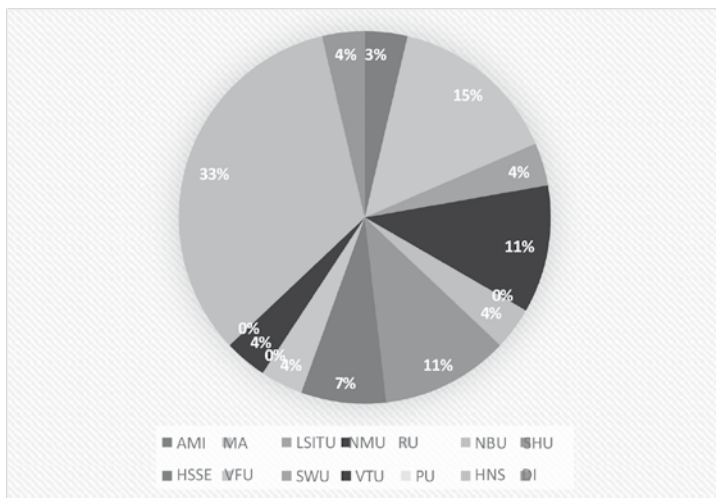


Figure 5: Distribution of students in doctoral programs in the relevant higher education institutions in the “Security” area in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria

The figures show the distribution of students by different educational qualification degrees in the relevant higher education institutions in the “Security” area in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria. (Fig. 3., Fig. 4., Fig. 5.)

The specialties in the bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral programs focus on training personnel for the security system, understood in its purpose to protect a country’s territory with its assets and its adjacent population within the framework of the nation-state. Specialists who have acquired such a qualification in the Republic of Bulgaria are mainly expected to identify and solve problems in the context of:

- intra-national deviations from the established social order;
- foreign national deviations from the agreed international order;
- response to sudden events with large-scale tragic consequences for the nation-state such as natural disasters, industrial accidents and catastrophes;
- responses to terrorist attacks.

The results of the situational analysis allow the specification and clearer orientation of the goals of the security education and training system on the one hand and the selection of a strategy for its successful operation on the other. We will present the conceptual aspects of the situational analysis, focusing on the positives in the situation, the specific threats, the strengths and weaknesses of the system.

The situational analysis we performed shows the following favourable factors:

- legal and normative basis established for the functioning, management and development of the security education and training system;
- good zoning and territorial placement of the academies, universities and schools of the security education and professional training system;
- traditionally (and quite deservedly) high marks at the institutional ones (Library Studies and Information Technologies University - 9.33; Academy of the Ministry

of the Interior - 9.18; Vasil Levski National Military University - 9.17; N.Y. Vaptsarov Naval Military University - 9.16; Military Academy - 9.06) and program accreditation procedures from NAEA - (9.1 professional direction - Vasil Levski National Military University - 9.50; Library Studies and Information Technologies University - 9.42; Academy of the Ministry of the Interior - 9.25; Military Academy - 9.02) and (PD 9.2. - Vasil Levski National Military University - 9.46; N.Y. Vaptsarov Naval Military University - 9.41; Military Academy - 9.31), with the maximum possible score - 10.00 and where PD 9.1 is "National Security" professional direction, and PD 9.2 is a "Military Affairs" professional direction;

- good established organizational-functional relationship with the applicants and users of personnel;
- good opportunities for participation during the new EU programming period in projects under the operational programs, including through inclusion in clusters and the creation of competence centres;
- opportunities to organize and participate in international and domestic scientific conferences and other forums in which the security education and training system is presented, and the virtual world of modelling becomes one of the main approaches to security education and research;
- opportunities for admission of foreign cadets, trainees, students, doctoral students and other trainees;
- active participation of the security education and training system in operations that are different in nature and subordination increases the opportunities for integration and harmonization of the activities of the EU and NATO countries and their educational institutions in the field of security and defence.

The situational analysis formed the following main threats facing the education and training system in the field of security in the Republic of Bulgaria:

- negative trend of lowering the prestige of the professions in the security system;
- social and demographic conditions leading to a decrease in the number of candidates for service and work in the security system and respectively for training in the academies, universities and schools of the security education and qualification system;
- negative trend of a significant lowering of the educational level in our educational system remains. According to education indicators (primary, secondary and higher), which are the basis of quality human resources for carrying out innovation activity in 2020, 33% of Bulgarians aged 25-34 had a higher education, which is below the EU average of 40.5% and the EU target of 45% by 2030;^{8,9,10}

⁸ European Commission. Education and Training Overview: Bulgaria. European Commission. 2020. Available from: <https://op.europa.eu/bg/publication-detail/-/publication/cd97ef45-2497-11eb-9d7e-01aa75ed71a1>. Accessed 06.09.2022.

⁹ European Commission Country Report Bulgaria 2020. European Commission. 2020. Available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/BG/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0501&from=EN>. Accessed 06.09.2022.

¹⁰ Ministry of Education and Science. Strategic framework for the development of education, training and learning in the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2030. Ministry of Education and Science. 2021.

- chronic underfunding and material and technical support.

The competition in the security higher education market outlines the lack of clear rules and inter-institutional loyalty (with a NAEA - authorized capacity of 8,235 trainees in the field of security, in 2020/2021. 7,738 students are being trained, whereby the share of those studying in private higher education institutions (3,265) is 42%, of which 23.4% are studying in VFU and 14.8% in HSSE, which limits the attraction of sufficient students with potential learning opportunities of occupations in the security system as follows: VFU – 1817; HSSE – 1147; AMI – 1130; MA – 1320; LSITU – 639; NMU – 504; NBU – 301; PU – 286; SWU – 211; RU – 163; VTU – 148; SHU – 72. (Fig. 6.)

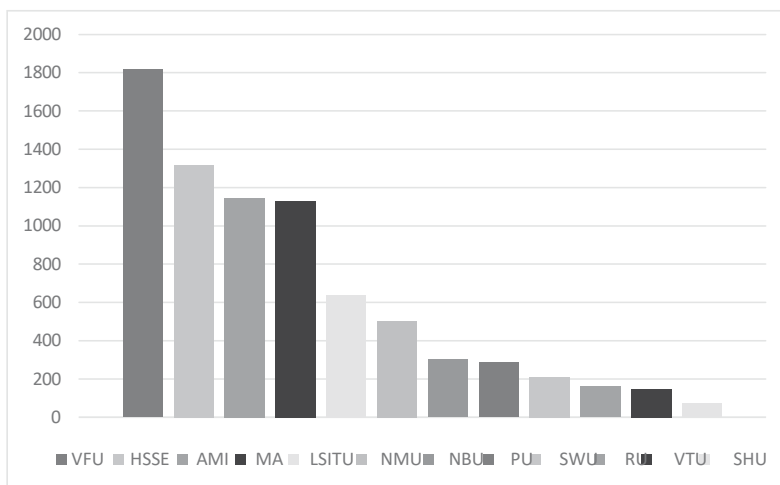


Figure 6: Distribution of trainees in the field of “Security” in the various higher education institutions in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria

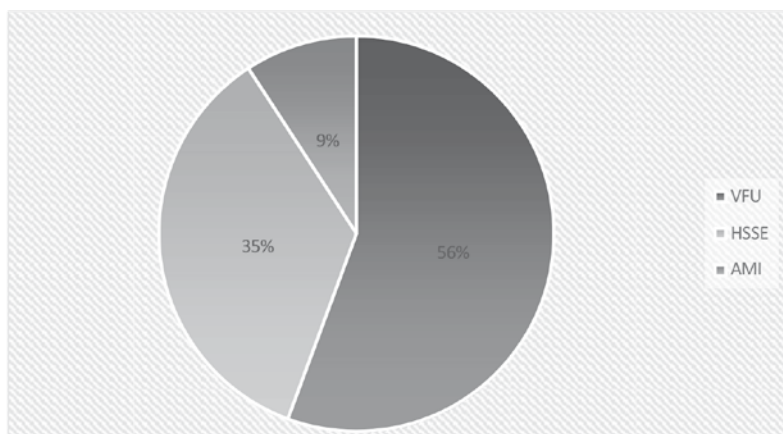


Figure 7: Percentage distribution of students studying only at the first three higher education institutions in the “Security” region in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria

Fig. 7. shows the percentage distribution of students studying at the first three higher education institutions in the “Security” region in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria. If we assume that the first three universities form 100% of the students, then it could be found that two private education institutions - Varna Free University and the Higher School of Security and Economics are leading, with the Academy of the Ministry of the Interior remaining only in third place. The competition in the security higher education market outlines the lack of clear rules and inter-institutional loyalty (with a capacity of 8,235 trainees in the field of security allowed by National Agency for Education and Accreditation, in 2020/2021, 7,738 students are being trained, while the share of those studying in private universities (3265) is 42%, of which 23.4% are trained at the Varna Free University and 14.8% at the Higher School of Security and Economics and 3.8% at the New Bulgarian University, which limits the attraction of sufficient trainees with potential opportunities to learn professions in the security system.

They themselves (private universities) educate 3265 students distributed among themselves respectively: - 56%; 35% and 9% fig. 7. As researchers, we can only speculate as to what this is due to. It is likely that the legislation as well as the accreditation processes are characterized by gaps.

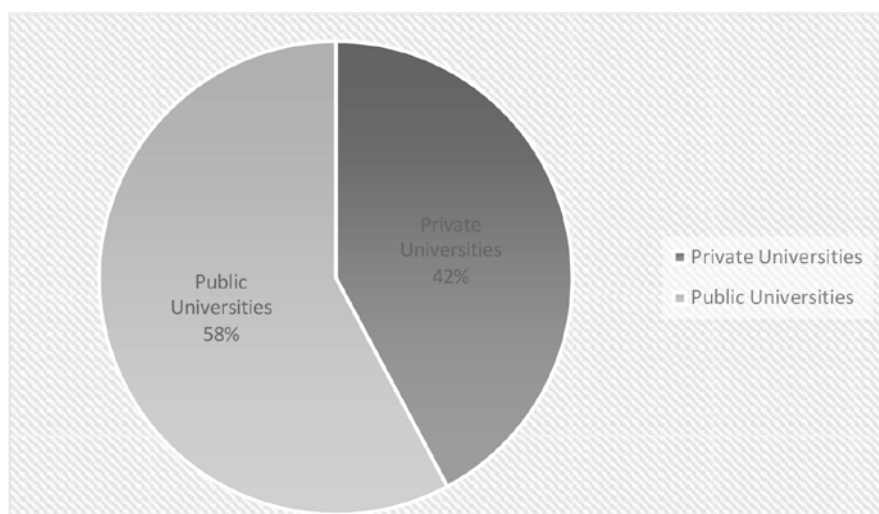


Figure 8: Percentage distribution of students studying in private and state higher education institutions in the field of “Security” in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria

Fig. 8. shows the percentage distribution of students studying in private and state higher education institutions in the field of “Security” in 2020/2021 in the Republic of Bulgaria. The difference is small, with state universities leading the way.

The situational analysis found the following strengths before the system of education and training in the field of security in the Republic of Bulgaria:

- existing long-standing (centuries-old) traditions in security education and training, and established legitimacy of the institutions in it (the academies, universities and schools of the security education and training system);
- active cooperation with the leading universities and security research institutes in the world and the country, which provides opportunities for worthy participation in the European research network, as well as in international and Bulgarian research projects;
- availability of motivated and highly qualified academic, teaching and research staff;
- an achieved trend of sustainability in participation in international, national, departmental projects and projects with a high social need, as well as the participation of members of the academic staff in scientific events and activities of other educational and scientific organizations;¹¹
- the forms of cooperation and interaction in the scientific and research activities of the academies, universities and schools of the security education and training system with other national and foreign schools, institutes and business organizations are constantly being expanded and enriched;
- a developed and traditionally established system for evaluating, maintaining and managing the quality of teaching and scientific research.
- The situational analysis found the following weaknesses facing the education and training system in the field of security in the Republic of Bulgaria:
- in the various regulatory documents, emphasis is placed on different aspects of the security education and training system, conjunctural decisions are made and contradictory temporary measures are applied within the framework of completely different approaches;
- the strong (direct) dependence of the organizational-staff structures, academic staff and administrative staff of the academies, universities and schools of the security education and training system on continuous structural and personnel reforms in the security system;
- unevenness and non-compliance with demographic and other (regional) factors of the number of people accepted and trained in the security education and training system, which leads to a decrease in the educational level in it;
- the educational process in the security education and training system has not yet reached the educational-research level;
- systemic underfunding, disallowing the development of the living environment - domestic, educational, informational and publishing, research, technological, etc.

Bulgarian educational institutions in the field of security and defense actively cooperate in the field of training and education with all members of the European Security and Defense College. Before the foundation of the ESDC back in 2005, there was no single entity within the EU devoted either to training and education at the European level, or to the development of a common European security culture. Today, partners of Bulgarian universities and academies in the field of security and defense are numerous

¹¹ See e.g. WYSOKINSKA-SENKUS, Aneta. The Concept of Safety and Security Education in the Context of Sustainability. 2020. Sustainability. MDPI. Basel. Switzerland.

universities and academies from various countries in Europe and the associated European space, including higher educational institutions from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Turkey, Hungary, Ukraine, Croatia and the Czech Republic, and their number is constantly increasing.

The situational analysis shows whether the security education and training system has the possibilities to carry out its mission and functions and whether it answers the questions of choosing commensurability with national and European educational and scientific standards. Based on the analysis of the education and training system in the field of security in the Republic of Bulgaria, we propose the following tactical goals to be set before it:

- development and improvement of the policy and system for the management of the quality of training and academic staff in the security education and training system;
- improving the management of human, material, financial and time resources in the security education and training system;¹²
- harmonizing education, training, scientific and innovation activities in the security education and qualification system with those of the EU countries;¹³
- development of personnel scientific potential in the system of education and professional training in security;
- continuous and adequate change of strategy, policy and system for the management of scientific research and innovation activity in the system of education and professional training in security, according to the needs of the dynamically changing security environment;
- development of program proposals for participation in research programs and projects, incl. through participation in centers, consortia and scientific clusters;
- modernization of the educational material base with the main emphasis on the construction of training complexes and situation simulators and computer-assisted training in the security education and training system;
- provision of an intensive educational process with the existing samples of weapons, combat and special equipment;
- improvement of the living environment - domestic, educational, aesthetic, ecological, sports;

¹² See e.g. JAŁOWIEC, Tomasz, Ireneusz MICIUŁA, Piotr MAŚLOCH and Henryk WOJTASZEK. Model of Military University Management. 2021. 37th IBIMA Conference: 30-31 May 2021. Cordoba, Spain.

¹³ See e.g. DONCHEVA J. Principles of training in line with the new thinking and action. 2017. SEA - Conf., 3 International Conference. Naval Academy. Constanta. No 3, pp. 74. ISSN 2457-144X.

- improvement of standards for moral, volitional and leadership development of trainees in the security education and training system with an emphasis on - internal self-discipline; etc.^{14,15}

The results of the analysis proposed in the article have been sent to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior, with recommendations for solving the identified problems at a meeting to update the National Map of Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria for 2022.

The examples given are evidence of a successful, if still timid, attempt to offer academic training for the growing needs of scientific expertise for international activity at all levels of the security system, whereby the VU curricula, not only by their name, but also in their content they go beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. In view of the above-mentioned needs, not only the Bulgarian higher education is indebted to the security competences offered, in order to support the development of scientific capacity for Euro-Atlantic cooperation in security (in view of the internal and external security of the European Union).

CONCLUSION

Modern countries invest in education, but in Bulgaria education is seen only as an expense. Our democratic indifference to the quality of education at the expense of our excessive zeal for austerity has a price - our students show dizzyingly fast falling results among European countries in international comparative studies of functional literacy, civic competences and mathematical skills. The examples given are evidence of a successful, if still tentative, attempt to offer academic training for the growing needs for international expertise at all levels of the security system. In view of the stated needs of Bulgarian higher education, we are in debt to support the development of human capacity in our country.

Some notes and recommendations for the development of the system of education and professional training in security in the Republic of Bulgaria could be: First, raising the role and importance of the military and security education system to establish itself as a leading national center for strategic training of management personnel and its transformation into a single educational institution for education, qualification, scientific and scientific-applied research in the field of security and defence. Second, it is necessary to strengthen the knowledge and skills for joint work of experts from different structures and levels of the administrative hierarchy when solving certain cases or situations in real

¹⁴ See e.g. ȘTEFĂNESCU R. Leaders decided to change the world. *Review Quality - Access to Success*. 2011. Edited by Romanian Society for Quality Assurance - SRAC, Bucharest, Romania. ISSN 1582-2559.

¹⁵ See e.g. GURGU, E. Leadership on Ethical Bases in the University Environment to Improve Standards in Higher Education. 2022. In *New Perspectives on Using Accreditation to Improve Higher Education*. pp. 49-68. IGI Global.

or close to real conditions. Third, satisfying the necessitates of the introduction of minimum state requirements or a body for coordinating the study plans and training programs, Vasil Levski National University (i.e. public but not private universities) can and should be the main methodological, monitoring, evaluation and control body, supporting the work of the National Agency for Education and Accreditation. Fourth, to proceed with the development of a national strategy for education, qualification and science in the security system.

In these proposed basic guidelines, it is possible to find the main decisions, actions and approaches to build the smart system of education and training in security, which will produce such managers and experts who are able to build and manage in a completely different, i.e. in an intelligent way, the national security system of the Republic of Bulgaria.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NAEA	National Agency for Education and Accreditation
PD	Professional direction
EU	European Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
MI	Ministry of the Interior
MoD	Department of Defence
VFU	Varna Free University
HSSE	Higher School of Security and Economics
AMI	Academy of the Ministry of the Interior
MA	Military Academy
LSITU	Library Studies and Information Technologies University
NMU	National Military University
NBU	New Bulgarian University
PU	University of Plovdiv
SWU	Southwest University
RU	University of Rousse
VTU	University of Veliko Tarnovo
SHU	Shumen University
HNS	Higher Naval School
DI	Defence Institute

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