

## MEDIA EDUCATION POLICY IN BULGARIA

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### Highlights

- *Media education is seen in its historical roots, legal policy framework and capacity-building*
- *The article presents a successful BA program at Sofia University, concerning media education*
- *Recommendations are made with respect to the future media literacy policies in Europe*

### Abstract

Media education is difficult to achieve as it is aimed at understanding and interpreting of the greatest concentration of sources and contents which are located in the media institutions. On the other hand, forming in two different and zealously protecting territory fields - pedagogy and media studies, media education is not yet positioned themselves in the relevant framework in almost all European countries. There are still no European or national mandatory requirements that would outlined its parameters in educational systems.

This article is an attempt to enter the historical roots and placing the problems that accompany media education in our country - legal policy framework; capacity-building; teacher training; materials and other relevant content; funding; educational institutions, etc.

Within the presentation of the condition of educational institutions in this area, the review study focuses on a successful Bulgarian experience in combining the two research directions with respect to media literacy - media studies and pedagogy at the biggest Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Recommendations are made with respect to the future positioning of the relevant issues of media literacy policy in the European context.

### Keywords

Media education, media literacy in Bulgaria, pedagogy of mass communication

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### Introduction

Media literacy education is a relatively new trend in the Bulgarian educational system. It is based on an access to and participation in all media - traditional and new and involves obtaining skills for understanding of media content, as well as their interpretation and critical reflection in different contexts. Media literacy is a key prerequisite for active citizenship.

Media literacy is a matter of concern in many European and national official documents, but not yet with the imperative nature. All of the existing official European documents concerning media literacy are not in form of regulations, as we may see in Media Literacy Background Documents (2015)

This reviewed study reveals the state of the media entity in Bulgaria - historical background, legal policy framework, capacity building, role of actors etc. The article is part of project "European approach towards public competencies in digital environment in conditions of post modernity" in frame of International Academic Seminar on Media and Education in Philosophical Faculty, South-West University, carried out in 2014<sup>1</sup>.

### Historical background

In the 1960s and 70s in Bulgaria the need arose to establish a scientific discipline combining pedagogy and the media in response to the many problems arising from the growing influence of the media on people of different age groups. This discipline has developed under different names, such as media pedagogy, media literacy, media education, etc. Initially the preferred term in Bulgaria was "media pedagogy", but later on "media literacy" widely accepted. (Angelov, 2005; Zlateva, 2006)

The course on "Media Pedagogy" was first approved for the academic year 2003/2004 in the MA program on Public Communications within the framework of UNESCO's Department of Communication and PR at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.

In 2007, at the Faculty of Pedagogy commenced an undergraduate program entitled „Pedagogy of Mass Communication and the Arts”, comprising four years of training; a master program with the same name was also introduced. Three bachelor students have already graduated in this program. Training practice for the students is provided at bTV, the most popular Bulgarian TV channel, which has also employed several graduates of the master program.

<sup>1</sup> The project "European approach to public competencies in the digital environment in terms of postmodernity" was carried out in 2014 - 2015 under the leadership of Dobrinka Peicheva within the International Academic Seminar on Media and Education at the Department of Sociology, South-West University "Neofit Rilski"

An important step in the development and understanding of media education has been the Bologna process<sup>2</sup> (which began in 1999; that same year, Bulgaria signed the Bologna Declaration), under which the university system of Bulgaria has been coordinated with regard to other European countries. An important aspect of this is the need for active and creative use of the media by young people, who must be equipped with a critical approach to the media; diversity of viewpoints regarding local and regional identity should be promoted.

A milestone event with respect to the policies on developing media education was the accession of Bulgaria to the European Union. Adaptation of the Bulgarian education system to the standards of the European Union was an important element. An important part of the Bulgarian education system adaptation has been the formation of young people's skills in the competent and creative use of media and critical approach to media contents.

The actors in media education policies were mainly teachers and students involved in media literacy training – NGO representatives played a considerably smaller role. But nowadays teachers, students and representatives of NGOs have become the major agents. as a result of the adoption of the European recommendations<sup>3</sup>. The role of our National Parliament and its Committee on Media and Education is another important factor in the adoption and ratification of European official documents. Parliament's role in relation to the spread of the Internet among young people is particularly distinct. Discussions in this area are related to positive and negative sides of the Internet communications. In the "National Program of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Schools" (2006) the Parliament has emphasized the need for providing media education for people of all ages and developing their skills for dealing with Internet and the new media. The role of the Ministry of Education and Science in the process of creating and disseminating documents relevant to these goals, including its acting as intermediary for the organization of numerous seminars, competitions, proposals, etc. in the field of media literacy is also very important. In response to the European reports and recommendations concerning media literacy and the European program 2020, a series of strategies, programs, plans, etc., have been designed and published by the government.

The main European and governmental projects, programs and technological initiatives related to media education and published in Bulgaria are: The National Strategy for Implementation of ICT in Bulgarian Schools(2005); The National Program of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Schools (2006); The European Parliament resolution of 16 December 2008 on media literacy in the digital world - 2008/2120 (2008); The National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020 (2014); The National Program Digital Bulgaria (2015), which

2 The Bologna Process is a collective effort of public authorities, universities, teachers, and students, together with stakeholder associations, employers, quality assurance agencies, international organisations, and institutions, including the European Commission. The main focus is: the introduction of the three cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate); strengthened quality assurance and easier recognition of qualifications and periods of study [Online], Available: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process_en.htm)

3 <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/media-literacy-background-documents>; Recommendation2006/962/ECof the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning [Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006]. II. [Online], Available: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009H0625>

aims to define parameters (measures, responsible institutions, deadlines, budget) for the development of the information society in Bulgaria and to support the implementation of EU guidelines and tasks described in the digital agenda of Europe regarding the social and economic potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the Internet; The European Commission Recommendation on media literacy in the digital environment for a more competitive audiovisual and content industry and an inclusive knowledge society(2009); The European strategy for smart sustainable and inclusive growth "Europe 2020"(2014); The National Youth Strategy 2015 – 2020 (2013). However, none of the official documents of the Ministry of Education and Science contain specific references to the need for media and information literacy in educational structures. The European texts concerning the inclusion of media literacy in schools have not been taken into account – not even in the new draft education act. Article 77 (1) of the new Education Act (2015) encompasses some key components of media competences, including digital competence; social and civil competence; initiative and enterprise; cultural awareness and skills for creative expressions; ability for steady development supporting a healthy way of life, etc., but the Act does not link these components to media and information literacy.

The role of media literacy is clearly understood and emphasized mainly by researchers, who view media education as a mechanism for alleviating the problems of the educational system. Other major actors in media education are: NGOs, professional associations, and the family; it should be their mission to assist Bulgarian media education.

The most important agent in this respect should be the state, the legislative and executive sphere playing a decisive role in this connection. In order for Bulgaria to achieve its own conception for media education, the first task would be complying with the European recommendations. Moreover, target groups of today' media education are not only children and young people, but also older people and people with disabilities; this means there is a broad basis for expanding the scope of media literacy among the general public.

Information literacy, computer literacy and digital literacy are more popular in Bulgaria than media literacy (Marinov, 2013; Stefanova, 2013). We can say that these three terms have mainly been associated with media literacy by university teachers and NGO activists in this sphere.

We can also conclude that, while the initiatives of some universities and NGOs contribute to media literacy, there is yet no explicit agenda or active national strategy with respect to this goal.

## Legal policy framework

There is no an official designation or legal definition of media education. The latter has been associated with digital culture, digital competence as components of media literacy. Most researchers, media workers, and NGO experts have adopted the European definition of media literacy as "the ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contents, and to create communications in a variety of contexts", which has been validated by a large majority of the respondents to the public consultation and by the members of the Media Literacy Expert Group (2014). They have

seen media messages as “informational and creative contents in forms of texts, sounds and images carried by different forms of communication, including television, cinema, video, websites, radio, video games and virtual communities”.

From the researcher’s point of view media literacy includes all dimension of the European approach to media literacy in the digital environment (2007):

- “understanding all aspects of existing media - from newspapers to virtual communities;
- actively using media, through, *inter alia*, interactive television, use of Internet search engines or participation in virtual communities, and better exploitation of the potential of the media for entertainment, access to culture, intercultural dialogue, learning and daily-life applications (for instance, through libraries, podcasts);
- having a critical approach to media as regards both quality and accuracy of content (for example, being able to access information related to advertising in various media by using search engines intelligently);
- using media creatively, given that the evolution of media technologies and the increasing presence of the Internet as a distribution channel allow an ever growing number of Europeans to create and disseminate images, information and content;
- understanding the economy of media and the difference between pluralism and media ownership;
- being aware of copyright issues, which is essential for a „culture of legality“, especially among the younger generation in its double capacity of consumers and producers of content.

In such a framework, media literacy may be seen as an opportunity for young and old to develop their knowledge, values and a broad range of skills for critical thinking, communication and information management – skills that will make them reasonable users and creators. Therefore, it is an important and progressive strategy to foster thoughtful, engaged and informed citizens. The Bulgarian legal document referring to media literacy is the mentioned Act on pre-school and school education (2015), specifically its article 77 (1). But the mentioned Act contains no official designation of media literacy, and media education is not explicitly connected to resource allocation. Media literacy is only implicit in this new law. Nor does it designate a clear authority overseeing media education.

It would be reasonable for this to be a prerogative of the Ministry of Education and Science but no special resources are allocated in this respect. The legal documents - acts, recommendations, etc. – that serve as a framework for media education policies fail to reflect the issue of media literacy. (Dineva, 2012; Kirova, 2013) The new Education Act nowhere mentions that media literacy is one of the key competences for lifelong learning nor is any mention made about this in the Action Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning (2009). The legal documents (laws, recommendations, etc.) which serve as a framework for media education policies fail to sufficiently reflect the EU recommendations regarding media literacy.

There are quite a number of documents that should be taken into consideration by Bulgarian media policy: The Grünwald Declaration on Media Education (1982); Recommendations

Addressed to UNESCO on Media Education (1999); The Paris Agenda, or 12 Recommendations for Media Education (2007); Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on „Media Literacy“ and „Creative Content Online“ (2008); Brussels declaration on Lifelong Media Education”(2010) etc.

We could say that the changing communications environment, the important role of the media in the education of young people, and the importance of the various forms in which media messages (such as programs, films, images, texts, sites) in everyday life can influence and change expectations with respect to the training and qualifications of teachers have not been taken into consideration and made sufficiently explicit. We should have in mind that, in this respect, target groups are all categories of people: children, youths, adults, elderly people, people with disabilities, etc.

There are informal links with other legal or social actors in the private and civil sector, which can deliver media education, but there is no explicit mechanism to facilitate interagency and inter-ministerial cooperation on this specific issue. There are no useful relations, discussions or dialogue going on with content editors and the program industries. Presentations, discussions and dialogue mainly take place between researchers (Marinov, 2013; Peicheva, 2014).

In the state educational requirements regarding the school disciplines of social studies and civical education (school education) the main focus is on the formation of the social culture of students and on developing their skills for active citizenship in society in terms of cultural diversity and globalization through building a critical approach to various media contents, creating communication and decision-making skills, promoting independent thinking and personal development.

Media education is the responsibility of various departments in the Ministry of Education, and there is no specialized department dealing with this specific area. Various departments in the Ministry (such as those of General Education, Vocational Education, Higher Education, Youth Activities) have media education as one of their priorities, insofar as it relates to the overall digital culture and digital education of young people. (Milenkova, 2011)

There is no Strategic Plan for Media Education for the use of school teachers. There are no laws stipulating the inclusion of media education in primary and secondary education. In terms of resources, though schools are technologically equipped to a satisfactory degree, there is no special curriculum on media literacy.

### **Capacity building:**

#### **Teacher training**

Official government media policies on the role of teachers in the field of media literacy are lacking in our country – both with regard to their qualification and pre-qualification and to their role in student’s training at all educational levels. There are no specialized disciplines connected with media literacy in the official curricula for the 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade approved by the government. Training in information technologies is predominant – this discipline begins to be taught in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, being elective until 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and then becomes mandatory

until 10<sup>th</sup> grade inclusively. The discipline primarily involves computer training of adolescents and is taught in all Bulgarian schools.

As mentioned, the most significant political program in the field of media education in recent years is the National Program for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Schools, which is mainly focused on technology and Internet access. In Bulgaria media education, with a stress on media literacy, is mainly taught at universities. In schools media literacy problems are tackled more or less by the independent activities of lecturers, whose activity in this respect is linked to their participation in international programs and projects. (Sayanova, 2005)

The different forms and varieties of media training in our country are mainly positioned:

1. *Within university frameworks* - in bachelor, master and doctoral programs at different faculties and departments; at scientific centers, research seminars, laboratories, etc.;

2. *Within the sphere of non-government organizations*, as the subject of their constant work in organizing lecture courses, international seminars, discussions, etc.;

3. *In mobile "ad hoc" formations* connected with international or national projects more or less related to media literacy. These mobile formations have initiatives connected with the realization of project aims and tasks, but have no policies for implementing and continuing these activities and initiatives afterwards.

Training activities by these three types of actors have been and will continue to be realized in all educational grades (kindergarten/primary school/junior high/high school).

*Within university frameworks:* lecturers in accredited subjects connected with media education (journalism, public relations, media pedagogy, media impact etc.) are qualified in the respective profile. Their involvement with media education stems from their education and/or academic degree. Usually people dealing with media problems at universities and non-government organizations hold bachelor, master or PhD program in the field. For other lecturers - those working in areas outside media subjects, but with some relation to these - media education is also a part of their respective degree. Such are the lecturers on media topics teaching at departments of sociology, pedagogy, philosophy, cultural studies, library science, economics, etc.

Media disciplines taught or discussed in the different scientific educational units are predominantly connected with studies for the bachelor, master or PhD program and are primarily mandatory, not elective, specialized training courses. Usually the separate courses to media education contain 30 to 60 hours per year and represent predominantly mandatory disciplines.

The hours, types of programs, mandatory or elective characters of the disciplines related to media specialties or of separate courses related to media education are given in the Table 1.

University	Total hours	Com-pulsory	Optional	MA	BA
ULSIT	66745	54273	12472	13650	53095
SU+FJMC	27857	23832	4025	8945	18912
NBU	25710		25710	12750	12960
BFU	24750	18963	5787	13500	11250
SWU	6840	5381	1459	2380	4460
UNWE	3510	2370	140	555	2955
AUB	1076	666	410	--	1076
AMI	165	165		90	75
Total	158577	106698	50879	54870	103707

**Table 1: Generalized information about media education at universities, 2014-2015**

Legend: **ULSIT**- University of Library Studies and Information Technologies; **SU** - Sofia University "Kl. Ohridski"; **NBU** - New Bulgarian University; **BFU** - Burgas Free University; **SWU** – South-West University Neofit Rilski; **UNWE** - University of National and World Economy; **AUB** – American University in Bulgaria; **AMI** - Academy of Ministry of Interior

The data collected in Table 1 were collected by the authors and give an instant view of the situation at Bulgarian universities, but we do. We do not claim to be quite precise as there is no uniform national methodology for designing curricula or for the inclusion of the respective indicators.

The development of curricula in the field of media education is not connected with the regulations that are currently in force. Moreover, the development is not coordinated between the various lecturers and specialists working in the field. The absence of official media education policies reflects on the initiation and curricula contents of media education.

The accredited curriculums existing at the different universities are predominantly mandatory both in master and bachelor programs. The curriculums and programs in place are the results of lecturers' initiatives and are consistent with accreditation requirements and specific features of the other disciplines at the respective university. Accreditation of universities, professional orientations and programs is carried out by the governmental National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA)<sup>4</sup> The absence of official media education policies including requirements for a set of competences in media education is compensated by various competence indicators applied by individual lecturers, indicators that correspond to the general requirements of NEAA. Standard instruments for expected results are connected with the acquirement of skills for interpretations, analyses, co-creativity, independent presentations, etc. They are consistent with the specific characteristics of the different age groups and with the aspects of media literacy.

The basic results are connected with the knowledge of, for example:

- theories on the formation of media competence in different age groups - these theories take into consideration age group and multicultural environment particularities;
- positive practices in the activities of the European Union for the construction of a European cultural identity and

<sup>4</sup> See: Bulgarian National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency. [Online], Available: <http://www.neaa.government.bg/en>

the realization of lifelong learning policies; the Bologna process for the construction of a uniform European higher education space;

- practices of application of multi-media for the needs of education;
- informing different age groups about currently important social problems of the democratic development of Bulgaria;
- variants of educating people so as to prepare them for active participation in social life;
- patterns of democratic citizenship and association. Key competencies have not been formally defined and included in media education.

Even in the published European Strategy for Lifelong Learning (2001), which lists key competences, there is no explicit key competence related to media literacy. The competences referred to are in the field of ICT. For EU countries, as it is well known, the following eight key competences have been defined in accordance with the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2006)

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Mathematical competence and basic knowledge in the natural sciences and technology;
- Digital competence (ICT);
- Learning skills;
- Social and civic competences;
- Initiative and entrepreneurial skills;
- Knowledge in the field of culture and creativity.

Higher specialized media education in the form of bachelor's, master's and PhD programs as well as individual disciplines and specializations in the fields of media, journalism or public relations in Bulgaria are available in major public and private universities, such as Sofia University, University of National and World Economy, New Bulgarian University, Southwest University, American University in Bulgaria, Burgas Free University, and others.

Sofia University, the largest and most prestigious Bulgarian university, uniquely offers a specialized bachelor program in media pedagogy at its Faculty of Preschool Education. The designation is "Pedagogy of Mass and Art Communication". (see Anex 1)

This pedagogical bachelor program in media literacy has been very successful. Its workload is 2205 hours and provides 240 credits; the duration of training is 8 semesters (4 years). Upon successful completion students receive a bachelor degree in Pedagogy of Mass and Art Communication. Students of this program can use their knowledge in various ways. One way is for students to demonstrate certain literacy products to kindergarten children – this enables students to check the children's responses and assessments. Some media products periodically prepared by the students include broadcasting, stream radio, children's magazine projects, documentary films, etc.

Some other media-related elements in universities involving research and training activities are centers, seminars, and associations. Some of the important ones are:

- The International Academic Seminar of Media and Education (SWU "N. Rilski");

- The Center for New Media and Digital Culture (SWU "N. Rilski");
- Southeast European Center for Semiotic Studies (NBU);
- Summer schools in various universities.

In the secondary education, media education is partially in teaching of foreign languages or Bulgarian language and literature in the higher grades. There are no specialized disciplines in this area. Some forms of specialization are available only in the training of Bulgarians school students living outside the country - USA, Spain, Germany, etc. No official national data are available regarding the teaching of media literacy in schools. Sporadic data may be found related to project activities of participants involved in media literacy projects. (Sayanova, 2005)

#### *Within the sphere of non-government organizations.*

NGOs are also involved in activities related to media literacy. This refers to various foundations and associations, some of which have long years of experience in organizing training courses, lectures, international seminars, discussions, etc. The most popular NGOs whose work is related to media education, for which they engage specialists, are the following: Easy Communication Association; The Media Development Center; Foundation Media with a Human Face; The Southeast European Media Center; Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation; AMI Communications Bulgaria; Media Democracy Foundation, etc.

The main areas of their activities can be summarized to:

- training courses in language skills for media;
- education and training for media professionals and journalism students in Bulgaria;
- professional training for journalists and media managers from Southeast Europe;
- training courses in language skills for media;
- support for the development of the free media market;
- development and implementation of media projects in Bulgaria and abroad;
- research, consultancy and information services on media and for the media;
- publication of media-related books and training materials;
- media promoting events; conferences, round-tables, discussions.

No statistical data are available for Bulgaria regarding the number of events held and the hours allocated to this activity. Such a statistical account cannot be made due to the absence of systematic data in the public domain and the unwillingness of some organizations to share data.

#### *Mobile "ad hoc" education.*

This forms a mixed nature. They include various categories of professionals - scientists, experts from NGOs, teachers, etc. Participation is usually along the lines of international and national projects; the groups are formed within the framework of the concrete projects and do not continue beyond the duration of the projects.

Unlike the other two forms, ad hoc participation is generally marked by insufficient long or short-term effectiveness of the implementation of activities (actually, this kind of inefficiency is

also typical for other project performance in the humanities and social sciences). One example of ad hoc education is the project “Media Education in Schools: Opportunities and Challenges 2007-2009”, conducted in the city of Razlog under international Comenius School Partnership.<sup>5</sup> Another example is “On Air: European Project for Media Education”(2008) the Pestalozzi project, with respect to the participation of the Ministry of Education, which organized competitions for modular training seminars on media literacy and human rights during the period 2008 – 2010, etc.

### **Teaching/training materials and other relevant content**

There are usually no teaching resources and materials made available under law or under official policies and the ones there are fail to address the issue of intellectual property. The few available materials are in the national language. The universities and their libraries, the training schools, centres, laboratories, seminars, etc., have been the significant research institutions and main support for media education. The NGOs and civil media centres have also played a role for creating teaching resources.

The majority of the available resources are copyrighted materials. They were created by teachers in universities and, to a much lesser extent, by people from non-governmental organizations and teachers in secondary education. The resources consist in published monographs, studies, manuals, including translations of books, articles from the European Union (manuals, statements, recommendations).

Materials in hard copies include lectures published in the printed media. The degree of their authenticity, similar to other author authenticities, is high in Bulgaria. Some of them are the results of specific project activities or of guided/mandatory activities. These resources have been selected and validated by official university committees, councils, boards. Some of them are disseminated among students in Bulgaria in the form of written texts prepared by teachers. Some available resources are usually created by the teachers themselves, and other resources are likewise usually selected by the teachers themselves.

The resources available are produced on the basis of specific projects. We have no official list of the most significant publications in the sphere of media education.

### **Funding**

There is no official funding policy specifically for media literacy. Media education is situated in the framework of official education policies and their funding. The resources of media literacy are usually financed by university funds, by government science projects funds, by international project funds or EU funds, by different national funds, etc. Some projects are without funding, as are likewise some training programmes. There is no official information concerning funding. This issue usually lacks transparency. (Marinov, 2013; Peicheva, 2014)

Some resources of training programmes are funded by university funds, others by project funds. But most are without funding. It is difficult to say exactly what their proportion is in relation to the total education system revenues but it is certainly not

<sup>5</sup> Project “Media Education in Schools: Opportunities and Challenges 2007-2009”, conducted in the city of Razlog under international Comenius School Partnerships, [Online]. Available: <http://pgtht-razlog.org/bg/european-projects/media-education.html>

high. In general, the media education in state universities is funded mostly and mainly by the central government. In private universities it is funded mostly and mainly out of students’ tuition fees. The financial reports of non-governmental organizations are available to the public via the Internet only in rare cases.

### **Role of actors (outside the school system)**

Media education policies take into account partnerships outside the school system, but there are no media education policies for partnership outside the education system. Partnership is conducted on a basis that is usually defined in the design requirements for partnerships between researchers and business. (Dineva, 2012; Kirova, 2013)

A regulatory body for the media exists, called Council for Electronic Media, but this Council plays no role as regards the promotion of media education. The media authorities are not concerned with media literacy initiatives. They have appeared only on a power point presentation on “Protecting children from negative media content” - report prepared for the Council of Europe by Millwood Hargrave (2009). As for the private sector has been involved significantly in the conducting of training programmes and courses.

Some private universities offer media education in bachelor, master and PhD programmes and courses - The New Bulgarian University and the American University in Bulgaria. These universities have significant editorial capacity and available resources.

The role of civil society associations is not as visible as that of private universities. The former are involved in some European projects that include various kinds of media trainings and resources. Youth participation mostly consists in the participation of university students in the creation of media content and its presentation in various school units. The level of youth participation is not high. There is no grassroots community participation in media education.

In Bulgaria there are no specific professional organizations of media education teachers, librarians; learning centres professionals, or computer scientists. There are a few cases when parent associations and media/information professionals have collaborated in media education, but these were primarily on the basis of research projects, and were of low capacity.

We can cite many examples many examples of specific events – such as “press week”, festivals, competitions, games – that draw attention to the importance of media education. But there are no overlapping structures or events that try to bring together media literacy, information literacy and computer literacy. There are no online platforms or mechanisms.

### **Evaluation mechanisms (inside and outside school)**

No media education policies exist to test media accountability as concerns the traditional media contributions or the public service media. Usually, this activity is carried out by researchers through research projects conducted by NGO staffs at universities, etc. There are no legal mechanisms to ensure and measure the efficiency of media education policies. Legal mechanisms are official institutions for measurement of media education official government ratings of universities and their specialties and mentioned above National Agency for Accreditation and

Evaluation Media educational resources, programs and actors are evaluated in accordance with national indicators. There are additional mechanisms for evaluation, which are different for different universities.

Media education is predominantly targeted at the younger generation. No formal quantitative data about how many people to focus their efforts, and how many and what types of programs are available to targeted groups. There are quite a few media education programmes but yearly reports on them are prepared only in a few cases.

### Main concepts and legitimizing values

All sorts of educational paradigms are put forward, including transmission, prevention, participation, but of these, participation is a more attractive educational paradigm for teachers and students. The main competences that are preferred and adopted are critical thinking, citizenship, creative interpretations and participation in processes.

There are many examples of positive impacts of media projects *on students and children* - one of them is connected with G. Tuleshkov, a student at the Sofia University BA program Pedagogy of Mass and Art Communication. His video clip: "My small civil contribution." won first place in a special national competition. The competition was organized by Human Resource Development Centre (2013)

Improvement, diversity, pluralism and critical thinking are the foremost values used to justify policies. The idea of empowerment is presented. Pluralism is a value that holds a significant place in the learning process in Bulgarian schools. Employment and inclusion are also major values referred to in the programmes. The question of human rights has also been invoked in many Bulgarian programmes. The hierarchy of values are used to justify actions, mechanisms and events outside formal and official policies and outside schools.

### Conclusion and general appreciation

To give in brief our general view on the relevance of the media education policies in the national media system and in the national school system, we should say that they are not significant, efficient or relevant. (Milenkova, 2011; Popova, 2013; Stefanova, 2013; Peicheva, 2013) There are discrepancies between the legal framework and the actual performance of the actors inside and outside schools. The actual performance of the actors is better in quality than official government policies, which are not satisfactory. The unwillingness shown with regard to structural changes and new opportunities for improvement are due to lack of understanding, and underestimation of the importance of media literacy.

There is no clash between the state and the activities of self-regulating and co-regulating entities dealing with media education, but the activities of the Ministry of Education and Science are not adequate to the existing needs of these entities. The Bulgarian National Science Fund at the Ministry of Education and Science support a wide range of Bulgarian organizations, including commercial ones, NGOs, etc. But very often these organizations lack adequate scientific and general professional competencies. A drastic case was the failure of the Science Fund program for the year 2012-2013. In the last twenty years many NGOs in Bulgaria have been able to exist through projects. They win projects but lack the required professional

capacity and competency. Unfortunately this is also true of many projects in the field of media education and media literacy. As a result, there is a lack of awareness of the importance of media literacy, the media literacy results of teachers and students are inadequate, interest does not continue after the end of the project, and there is a lack of concern with regard to establishing official media education policies.

Future digital convergence may be a challenge for all these different actors to create new forms of cooperation and effectiveness. The successful meeting of this challenge will depend on our critical concern. The positive result might be the launching of new initiatives for media literacy and legislation relative to it. Bulgarian universities are the places for realizing effective media literacy and education.

### Recommendations for better positioning of media literacy in EU countries

1. Media literacy should be a subject taught within the framework of compulsory education;
2. Media literacy should be taught as part of the primary school education.
3. Media literacy training should focus on teachers, professionals and students.
4. Many European countries need to have a special EU directive for including media literacy in their national education legislation and curriculums (one such country is Bulgaria).
5. For better positioning of the national media literacy policies it would be good:
  - to be established a European network of media literacy training institutions;
  - to set up an EU Information Centre and network responsible solely for project support in the field of media literacy;
  - to enhance the professional and qualification criteria for participation in media literacy projects at European level.

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Appendix 1 CURRICULUM *Pedagogy of Mass and Artistic Communication*

										
SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"										
FACULTY OF PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION										
CURRICULUM										
Signed by: .....	Approved by the academic council,  Record of Proceedings № ..... / .....									
Professional Field: PEDAGOGY										
Educational and Qualification Degree: BACHELOR										
Subject Area:										
<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">P</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">M</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">0</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">4</td> </tr> </table>		N	P	M	1	4	0	1	1	4
N	P	M	1	4	0	1	1	4		
<i>Pedagogy of Mass and Artistic Communication</i>										
<b>Form of Study: Full-time</b>										
<b>Length of Study: 8 semesters</b>										
Professional Qualification: Bachelor of Arts in Pedagogy of Mass and Artistic Communication, pedagogue, media expert, foreign language teacher										

## **Qualification Description**

**Subject Area: Pedagogy of Mass and Artistic Communication**

**BA Program/ MA Program: BA Program**

### **Educational objectives:**

The range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and professional competences are defined in the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria, adopted by the Council of Ministers in Resolution № 96 of 02.02.2012.

Due to the development of civil society in Bulgaria in the beginning of the 21st century, it is important that there are well prepared and qualified teachers who are able to efficiently work in the field of media pedagogy and artistic communication. Such teachers could cultivate and facilitate the formation of information and media literacy in children. The course in “Pedagogy of Mass and Artistic Communication” comes as an answer to the growing need for teachers’ participation in the design and implementation of various artistic and mass communication projects (including websites), intended for children. It is a topical and interdisciplinary course which incorporates knowledge in pedagogy, media studies and art. The overall aim is to train specialists who are able to provide and successfully maintain a link between education, art and the mass media.

### **Description**

The academic goal of the course in “Pedagogy of Mass and Artistic Communication” is that students acquire thorough and comprehensive knowledge in pedagogy (theory, history, methodology and contemporary issues of pedagogy) as well as in communication and its characteristic features in different cultural settings, human interaction and mass media.

Students are expected to develop skills for diagnostics and professional consultations, counseling and advice on topical issues related to the organization and governance of education. They should be able to apply these skills in their practice by adopting the educational tools of pedagogy, cultural and media studies. The practical course in the foreign language aims at developing students’ language skills. At the end of the course students should achieve a high level of confidence as users of the foreign language. They should also acquire theoretical knowledge and understanding of the existing foreign language teaching methods, approaches, principles and techniques and be able to successfully apply them when teaching children in various pre-school and primary school settings.

### **Professional Qualifications**

The professional skills/competences of the students on this course are designed to match the ones, designated in the First cycle (Bachelor’s level) of the Qualification Framework of the European Area for Higher Education and in the National Qualifications Framework, sublevel 6. Students should develop an array of knowledge, skills and competences which would enable them to competently look into, analyze and tackle issues and solve problems related to children’s upbringing and education in the current context of our information society and mass and artistic communication.

### **Professional Realization**

The specialized training and education of the students in “Pedagogy of Mass and Artistic Communication” enhances their chances for professional attainment and employment as pedagogical experts in different media and cultural institutions.

The students who have successfully completed the Bachelor of Arts in “Pedagogy of Mass and Artistic Communication” course can:

- in general, occupy eligible job positions in children departments at the institutions of mass and artistic communication;
- work as specialists-pedagogues in the media (including web-based media), competent in matters of upbringing and education;
- work as specialists-pedagogues in cultural institutions (institutions related to literature, folklore, music, theatre, fine arts, etc);
- work as specialists in marketing and management of mass and artistic communication in educational institutions;
- work as specialists-pedagogues in the departments of Public Relations;
- work as teachers of media studies, media pedagogy, media didactics and artistic communication in high school;
- work as foreign language teachers of preschool and primary school children;
- work as consulting experts in cultural and mass communication institutions which deal with children;
- work as supervisors and teachers in cultural and media centers for children and groups for extracurricular activities;
- work as consulting experts in agencies and centers for pedagogical and educational research and prognoses;
- hold administrative management positions;
- hold scientific and assistant positions.