

Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus
National Institute for Higher Education

EDUCATION IN BELARUS

(National Report of the Republic of Belarus)

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INTRODUCTION

Education is among the national priorities in the Republic of Belarus. Current state and development of all its stages are under the permanent attention of President Alexander Lukashenko and Government. Compulsory secondary and vocational education, free of charge higher education for majority of students, advanced and developing legislative base are the main features of Belarusian system of education.

There are the principles of Jomtien, Dakar, Paris and Hamburg World Conferences are shared in Belarus. The ideas of «Education for All», Lifelong Learning, Magna Charta, Bologna Declaration are the most fruitful international sources for the national system of education development.

After the periods of stagnation and perestroika and the crisis of the beginning of 90-the, all the quality indicators of the education in the country demonstrate the sustainable growth. Almost everybody in the country is involved in education process since earliest childhood till old age. The last year's successes in national economy restoration and modernization permit to invest more in education. Belarus provides the highest percentage of the National Income that is for education among the CIS countries.

The education system governance in Belarus is built on the legislative base. The Law «On Education in the Republic of Belarus» adopted in 1991 was recently revised and became more modern and democratic. The rights of schools, teacher staff and students were strengthened. The legislation on vocational education and education for persons with disabilities appeared. The draft of the Law «On Higher Education» is under the consideration in Parliament. It contains a number of provisions, which outline the university autonomy and academic freedoms. The same time the public responsibility for quality of education and effective governance as well as personal responsibility for public funds using during study are stressed.

Chapter I

BELARUS IN BRIEF

GENERAL INFORMATION

GEOGRAPHY

POPULATION

HISTORY

RELIGION

INDUSTRY

AGRICULTURE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Republic of Belarus is a unitary democratic lawful state that exercises a principle of legislative, executive and judicial powers separation. The independence of the State was proclaimed on July 27, 1990. President, parliament, government and courts are the state authorities in the Republic of Belarus. President is the head of the State. Alexander Lukashenko won the first presidential election in July 1994. Parliament named The National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus is a representative legislative body that consists of two chambers. They are The Chamber of Representatives (110 members) and The Council of Republic (1 representatives from every region and the city of Minsk and 8 members appointed by President). The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus is the government of the state which carries out executive authority in the republic. The Constitution of the Republic of Belarus was adopted on March 15, 1994. Then it was revised by the people referendum on November 24, 1996.

Republic of Belarus is among the founders of the Organization of the United Nations and its member since 1945.

There are 20 registered political parties with the number of members over 1,000 in each of them. Trade unions have a long history since 1894. The Federation of Belarusian Trade Unions acts since 1990. There are 33 branch trade unions that engage 4.4 million of members.

Mass media is rather developed in Belarus. There are over a thousand of newspapers and magazines. The first newspaper was opened in 1776 (Gazeta Grodzienska) in Grodno. Broadcasting started since 1925, TV since 1956, cable TV since 1991.

There is an effective librarian network in Belarus. Mostly, libraries are public and free for users. According to UNESCO ranging the country keeps 19th position in the world by the number of books at libraries per capita.

The city of Minsk is the capital of the State. It is known since 1061 and it was granted with Magdeburg rights since 1499. The population of Minsk is now over 1.8 million of inhabitants.

There are 6 regions (oblast) with 118 administrative districts (rajon) in Belarus. The city of Minsk has its special status that is equal to region.

Belarus has a developed public transportation network. General extent of railways is 1582 km. Density of highways equals to 240 km per thousand of square km. The network of public bus lines covers all the territory of the State and provides every settlement.

GEOGRAPHY

The territory of the Republic of Belarus makes 207.6 thousand square km. Forests covers 36% of the territory, lakes and rivers – 2%. Agricultural activities involve 45% of land. The extent of the territory

from North to South is as long as 560 km and from West to East it is 650 km.

Extent of borders is 2969 km (with Russia - 990, Ukraine - 975, Lithuania - 462, Poland - 399, Latvia - 143).

There are 20 000 rivers and creeks in Belarus. The following rivers are the longest among them: Dnieper - 700 km, Berezina - 613, Pripjat - 495, Sozh - 493, Neman - 459, Ptich - 421. The largest Belarusian lakes are (square km): Naroch - 79.6, Osvejskoe - 52.8, Chervonoe - 40.3. The total number of lakes is over 10,000.

The landscape is mainly plane. The average altitude is about 160 m. The Mountain Dzerzhinskaya near Minsk of 345 m above the sea level is the highest point. The lowest point of 80 m above the sea level is in the valley of the river Neman near Grodno at the West of the country.

Nowadays, there are Minsk, Gomel, Brest, Vitebsk, Grodno and Mogilev among the largest cities of Belarus.

POPULATION

The population of Belarus is about the sustainable level of 10 million of habitants during the latest 20 years. This provides 14th line in Europe. Nevertheless, the trend of slow population decrease appeared after 1990 and continues running now. The most significant decrease was observed at the rural side where a bit more then 3 million people live now in 24222 villages. About 7 million urban inhabitants are in 423 cities and towns. Male share of population is 47% in versa of 53% of female inhabitants.

Declaration on the State Sovereignty provides a cultural autonomy for national minorities living at the territory of Belarus. At present there are over 120 minorities in the country. In November 1992 the Law of the Republic of Belarus «On National Minorities in the Republic of Belarus» was accepted. The Law confirms free development of cultures, languages, traditions of all people living at the territory of the republic. It proclaims also the freedom of creation of national public organizations, cultural and educational establishments. In 1994 the Centre of National Cultures of Belarus was opened in Minsk to strength the small nationalities' development.

POPULATION OF THE MOST NUMEROUS NATIONALITIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS (according to the 1999 census)

Belarusians	8 159.0 thousand	81.2 %
Russians	1 141.7 thousand	11.4 %
Poles	395.7 thousand	3.9 %
Ukrainians	237.0 thousand	2.4 %
Jews	27.8 thousand	0.3 %
Tatars	10.1 thousand	0.1 %
Gypsy	9.9 thousand	0.1 %
Lithuanians	6.4 thousand	0.1 %
Other nat.	53.6 thousand	0.6 %

According to <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bo.html> the main population quality indicators are the following:

Median age:	<i>total: 36.9 years male: 34.2 years female: 39.5 years (2004 est.)</i>
Population growth rate:	-0.11% (2004 est.)
Birth rate:	10.52 births/1,000 population (2004 est.)
Death rate:	14.1 deaths/1,000 population (2004 est.)
Net migration rate:	2.54 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2004 est.)
Sex ratio:	<i>at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female under 15 years: 1.04 male(s)/female 15-64 years: 0.95 male(s)/female 65 years and over: 0.5 male(s)/female total population: 0.88 male(s)/female (2004 est.)</i>
Infant mortality rate:	<i>total: 13.62 deaths/1,000 live births female: 12.47 deaths/1,000 live births (2004 est.) male: 14.71 deaths/1,000 live births</i>
Life expectancy at birth:	<i>total population: 68.57 years male: 62.79 years female: 74.65 years (2004 est.)</i>
Total fertility rate:	1.36 children born/woman (2004 est.)

The language culture of the Belarusian people is rich and original. According to the 1999 census 85.6% of the Belarusians and 73.3 % of total population of Belarus consider Belarusian to be their native language. According to the Law on languages accepted by the Supreme Soviet of Belarus in 1990 the Belarusian received the status of the State language. Since 1996 by the people referendum the Russian got the status that is equal to Belarusian.

There are 5.1 million people engaged in the labour sphere in Belarus. 3.6 million of them work in a public sector. Every eighth employee has higher education.

HISTORY

Belarus is a new independent state in the centre of Europe. It was created due to disintegration of the Soviet Union by the decision adopted in 1990 in Belarusian Viskuli by the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. That was the end of the Soviet empire and the epoch of communism.

The territory of nowadays Belarus was settled with primitive men about 120 thousand years ago that is proved by recent archaeological data. The Slavic history of Belarus runs since VI century when Slavic tribes occupied this land. They assimilated and superseded more ancient Balts inhabitants. That was the initial pulse to formation of Belarusian ethnos. In IX century the ancient state formations named Polotskoe and Turovo-Pinscoe Knjazhestvo (Principalities) appeared in the river basins of Western Dvina and Dnieper.

At the end of X centuries the Christianity was accepted at the Belarusian territory that strictly affected their further cultural, political and economical development.

Belarusian Ponemanie (North-West part of the contemporary Belarus) in XIII century became an important political and cultural centre of Europe. Here, Great Principality Lithuanian, Russian and Zemajtijskoe came into being and soon appeared among the largest feudal monarchies of Europe. Statute of Great Principality Lithuanian from 1588 is recognized as the most accomplished and perfect collection of laws of the medieval Europe and a classical sample of the feudal legislation. In the middle of XVI century Great Principality Lithuanian and Polish Kingdom were united on a federal basis into the Rech' Pospolitaya. That period a number of wonderful castles were built by magnats (great landlords) to provide safety of their privacy and the State. A few of them exist until now and they are the national architectural memorials.

At the end of XVIII century the territory, where the Belarusians lived, was integrated into the Russian Empire. The new rise of democratic and national-liberation movement at the end of XIX and in the beginning of XX century created the real preconditions for revival of Belarusian culture and the State. After the October revolution in Russia and Lenin's decree on independence of nations on March 25, 1918 Belaruskaya Narodnaya Respublika (Belarusian National Republic) was proclaimed. This State was not vital enough and on January 1, 1919 Bolsheviks changed it for the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic. Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine became the founders of the Soviet Union in winter 1920. On July 27, 1990 the Supreme Soviet of Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic adopted the Declaration on State Sovereignty of Belarus.

Belarus went through a number of wars. During the conflicts of the middle of XVII century each second inhabitant was lost, during Northern War every third one was killed, Napoleon's Wars carried away a quarter of population. During the World War II more than 3 million people were lost, i.e. each third inhabitant of the republic died. Many historical and cultural values were lost irrevocably.

RELIGION

According to the data of the State Committee on Religions and Nationalities, at the beginning of 1999 year 2256 religious communities acted in Belarus. They belonged to 26 confessions (15 – Protestant). The majority of believers in Belarus are of Christian orientation. Orthodox Church is the leading one (about 1000 communities). Second by the number of the believers is Rome-Catholic Church (about 400 communities). There are 357 Protestants communities and this number grows dramatically. Jewish and Moslem communities act along all the territory of the State also.

All these communities are equal by the law. Their activities are under the statements of the Law «On Freedom of Creed and Religious Organizations» that was accepted by the Supreme Soviet of Belarus in December 1992. The above-mentioned Law provides human rights protection for believers according to the internationally recognized democratic traditions.

INDUSTRY

The natural, technical, economic, social and demographic features determine the branch specialization of the republic. Nowadays there are over 2000 industry enterprises with 1.5 million of employees in Belarus.

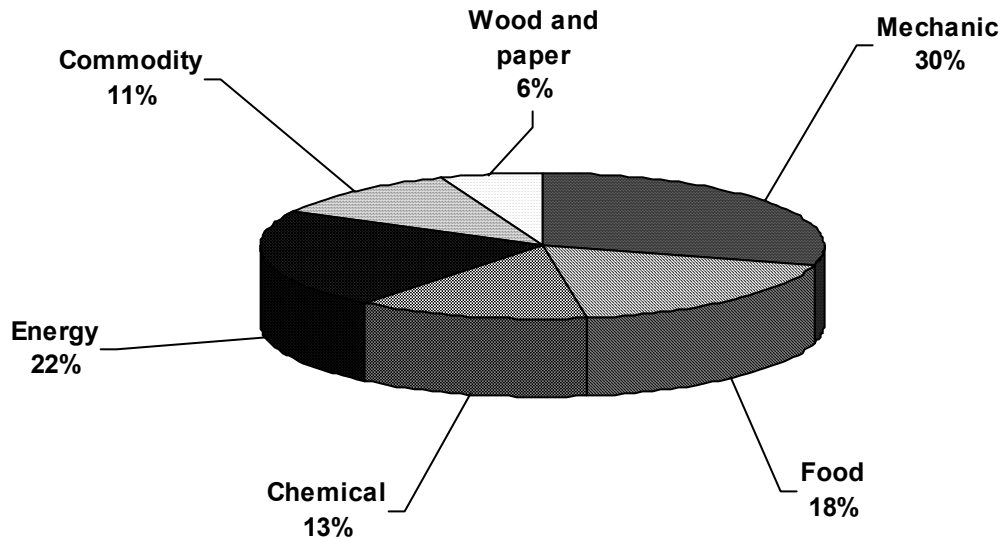
There are potassium, salt, peat, limited stocks of oil, coal, slates, bitumen and building materials, mineral waters, agricultural and forest abilities among the main natural resources of Belarus.

The industry gives 70% of the total national product. The main branches are mechanical engineering, wood processing, chemical, tractor, track and tool production and food industry. The country provides itself with buses and trolleybuses, gasoline and different oil products, fertilizers, main food, shoes and textile. High-tech industry after the crisis of 90th demonstrates the rise of output. It produces refrigerators, TV and radio sets, electrical lamps, computers, electronic components and aggregates and software.

Significant investments were made last decade to develop the industries that do not require too much energy and raw materials. First of all this concerns high chemical technologies, drugs production, electronic components and assembling fabrication.

Energy, oil, gas, cotton, metals, paper and grain are the most important items of import. Belarus exports potassium, steel, nitric fertilizer, meat, potato, fabrics, wheel tractors, tracks including heavy tracks for open pits, TV-sets, refrigerators, electronic components, furniture, clothes, underwear, knitted garments, bicycles, motorcycles, clocks and software.

After stagnation in 80th and crisis in 90th the Belarusian economy demonstrates 3-10% annual growth during a few last years. According to the recent UN data Belarus is among the developed countries of the world.

THE BRANCHES CONTRIBUTION INTO INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT**AGRICULTURE**

A lot of lands are involved in agricultural industry (0.8-0.6 hectare per capita). Natural and adopted pastures, soft climate with rare local droughts promote to the development of a diversified agriculture. This sector gives grain, flux, potatoes, beet, meat, milk, eggs, vegetables and fruits. Nevertheless, there are the necessity to import sugar, vegetable oil, fruits, seafood and cotton that are impossible to produce to meet the population demands. Heavy grain harvest of 2003 resulted in wheat export for the first time.

Chapter II

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

STATE POLICY AND GENERAL PRINCIPALS OF EDUCATION

MANAGEMENT IN THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

CURRENT STATE AND REFORM OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

STATE POLICY AND GENERAL PRINCIPALS OF EDUCATION¹

The system of education in the Republic of Belarus is based on national traditions and global trends in education area. These guarantee equal access to all education stages, unification of the requirements, continuity of all training stages and state financial support. National education system is regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, Laws «On Education in the Republic of Belarus», «On Languages», «On National Minority», «On Child's Rights», other provisions adopted for past years. The Law «On Education in the Republic of Belarus» announces the right to receive complimentary education at every stage of the national structure.

According of the Law on education all state and non-state educational establishments on the territory of the republic are included into the national education system of the Republic of Belarus. There are the following main components in its structure:

1. Preschool education
2. General secondary education
3. Out-of-school education
4. Vocational education
5. Secondary professional education
6. Higher education
7. Research education (postgraduate)
8. Adult education and staff retraining (lifelong education)
9. Self-education of citizens
10. Special education (for people with disabilities).

The system of education of the Republic of Belarus includes different types of educational establishments:

- Children's preschool (kindergartens, nurseries) and out-of-school establishments
- General education (primary, basic and secondary schools, gymnasiums, lyceums) establishments
- Special and boarding establishments (child's home, boarding school, reformatory for the minor offenders, etc.)
- Vocational schools and technical lyceums
- Secondary professional schools (technicums, uchilishche and colleges – SPE)
- Higher education establishments (universities, academies, institutes and higher colleges)

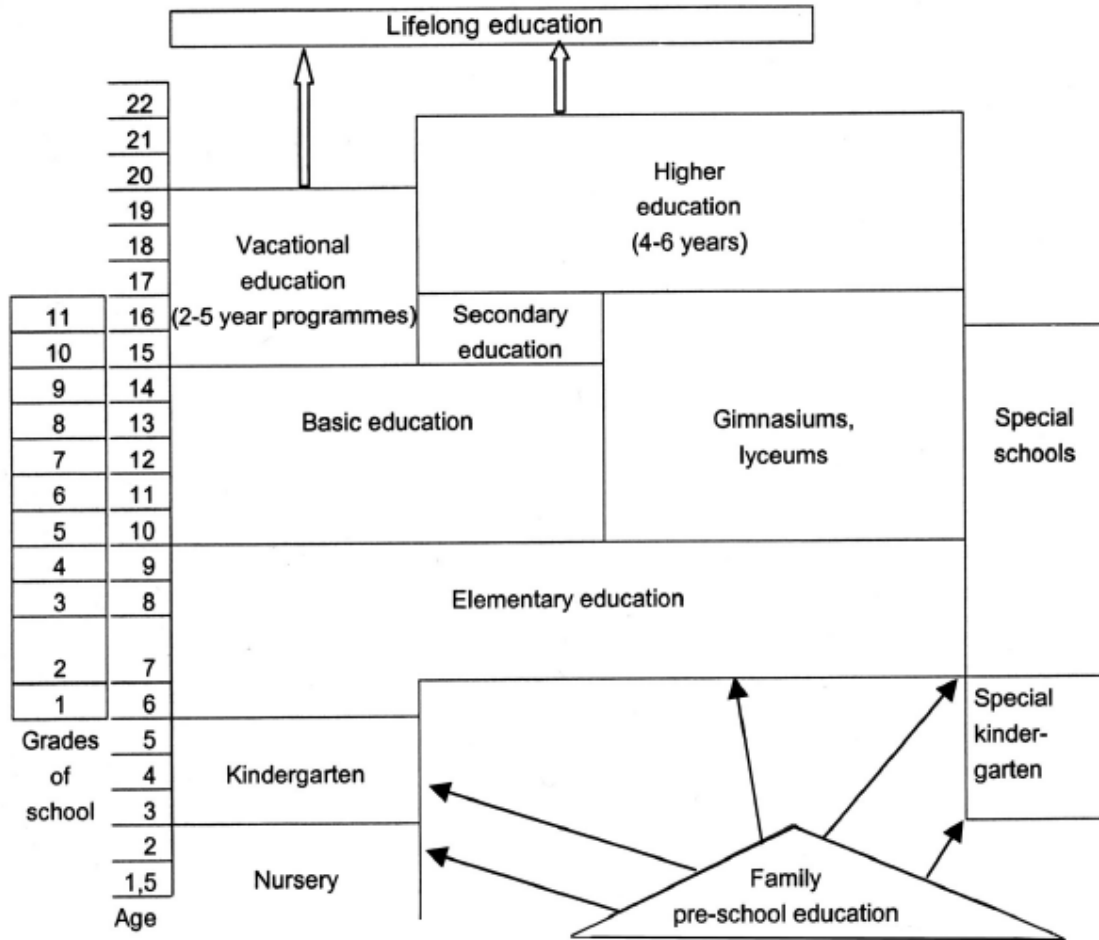
¹ * The text is based on the official document «Основные направления развития национальной системы образования/Министерство образования Республики Беларусь. Минск. 1999. – 24 с.» (Main Directions of the National System of Education Development, adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus on April 12, 1999, Statement № 500). Nowadays, the similar document is under preparation for the period of 2006–2010.

The data were actualized with the Ministry of Education' Report "Итоги работы системы образования в 2003 году и основные направления ее развития на 2004 год".

□ Institutes of adult education and staff retraining.

The system of education of the Republic of Belarus includes also bodies of management. There are Ministry of Education, subdivisions and departments on education at local territorial administrations and subordinated instructional-methodical establishments among them. A few national level institutions provide more practical activities and research within the definite educational branches. National Institute of Education is responsible for preschool and general school education; National Institute for Higher Education is responsible for higher education, humanities (at all the levels of education) and recognition issues; Republic Institute of Professional Education supervises vocational education; Academy of Post Diploma Education serves for secondary school managers and teachers. Continuity of the successful stages in the education system, its structure, levels of training and types of educational establishments are shown at the figure below.

THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS



During last few years the efforts to eliminate corruption in education were made. First of all this concerns the university students enrolling to provide equal opportunity for everybody. The special telephone hotline was opened by Ministry of Education for population consulting and civil activity.

MANAGEMENT IN THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

According to the Law «On Education in the Republic of Belarus» the Ministry of Education is responsible for the state and development of the system of education. In this sense all the educational establishments are subordinated to the Ministry of Education, which organizes the system of quality assurance and elaborates national regulation in this area. It manages also the directly subordinated research and instructional-methodical establishments, institutes for adult education and staff retraining, some national enterprises and organizations. It supervises the activity of territorial subdivisions and departments of education together with local authorities. Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus governs the system of higher education irrespective of privacy and subordination of a higher education establishment by means of regulations and methodical guidance. The main aims of Ministry of Education are the following:

- ❑ Development and implementation of the State policy in the field of education;
- ❑ Maintenance of functioning and development of the national system of education in the Republic of Belarus;
- ❑ Coordination of activity of other national authorities, subdivisions for education management of regional and Minsk City executive committees in education field; coordination of activity of various establishments, organizations, enterprises for the system of education issues.

Ministry of Education is the only State body authorized to license the educational business in the country. It has all public classic, pedagogical and technical universities and a part of colleges and vocational schools in its direct subordination. Some education establishments are in privacy of different ministries.

The local governments are in charge of preschool and out-of-school establishments as well as primary, basic and secondary schools, a part of vocational and secondary professional schools and colleges. They own them in the privacy and provide their financial supply. Nevertheless, they execute the programs approved by Ministry of Education.

Every public educational establishment is permitted to provide paid educational service and enroll additional amount of paying students if the conditions allow doing these.

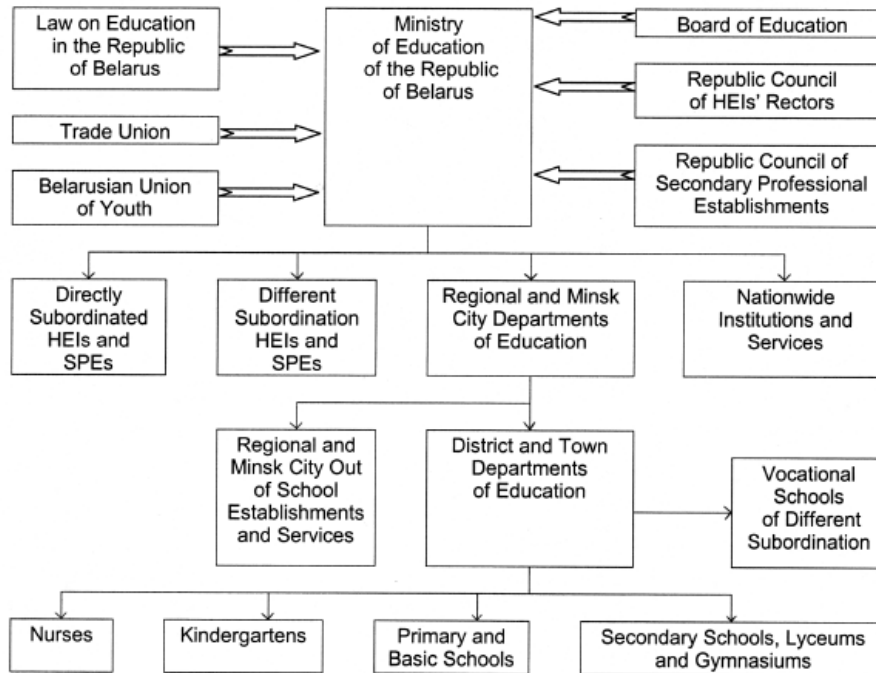
The Department of Quality Assurance belongs the Ministry of Education and provides licensing, attestation and accreditation of educational establishments. The evaluation and analysis of definite issues of school activity are in responsibility of independent evaluators who are recruited by the Department for every accreditation event from the list of the best specialists of universities, research institutes and etc. The evaluators are jointed in expert commissions but every evaluator acts within his/her area independently. The Department formally checks the reports of the evaluators and prepares the draft of the final decision that is under responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

The issued certificates of accreditation or attestation are valid for 5 following years. Poor estimation in the process of accreditation could be a reason to suspend or terminate the license because of too low quality of training that does not meet the state requirements. In a less problematic case the period of 1-2 months could be given to change

situation and prove better result. Negative decision or low accreditation grade could be a subject of appeal.

The diagram explains the hierarchy and links in the system of higher education.

STRUCTURE OF MANAGEMENT IN THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION



CURRENT STATE AND REFORM OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

There is the advanced and developing national system of education in the Republic of Belarus. It covers the interest of all the social groups of inhabitants and offers a lot of educational services for foreigners. Every Belarusian citizen is within the field of attention of this system. The educational establishments act under supervision of local authorities, receives resource supplement and staff training free of charge (in public sector). It is possible to know more about the current state of the national system with the web-site of the State Center of Information and Analysis at the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus (<http://www.giac.unibel.by>).

High quality of Belarusian secondary education is approved with the successes at the international Olympiads of school children. In 2004 they win 17 medals including in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology.

The current reform of the Belarusian education system pursues the development of its every element on the basis of the common educational policy. In accordance with this intention the special aims for these elements are stated in the «Main Directions of the National System of Education Development», which covers the period of 1999–2005.

Pre-school education. The document proclaims providing the children with of the optimal conditions for physical and psychological development with due regard to age and individual features in the system of pre-school education. It is devised to a high value of childhood as well as a high level of preparedness and equal start abilities to further education. It is necessary to save and develop the state system of preschool establishments, to diverse them for better correspondence to the people demands, to involve family in the process of education, to

change the content and technology of preschool education, to make a rush to preliminary school more comfortable for children, to improve child healthcare system. The rural preschool education and upbringing system development is among the first level problems. Nowadays, about 80% of children are involved in pre-school education system and almost 100% of 5-year age children participate the preparatory course that is organized in schools and kindergartens. But at the rural side only 45% of the target group children are taught at pre-school points.

Totally, there are 4195 establishments in the national system of pre-school education, 355580 children attended the classes in 2003. Their number fall down by 12,000 that is due to the birth rate decrease (over 35% down since 1990). In 2002/2003 season 177 new pre-school establishments were opened and 44 were reorganized in accordance with local requirements. The problem exists concerning the establishments that belong to enterprises and organizations. During the same period their number decreased by 12% because of shortage of funds. Part of them was removed in public privacy and was taken at the local budget accounts.

The public nurseries and kindergartens are free of charge but parents should cover about 60% of the meal's cost. This practice will be continued for the next years.

The content of pre-school education is under the permanent State control. Every year some tens of guide books are edited for the teachers and parents (national program «Praleska»). As well, the UNISEF project «Early Childhood Development» runs in the Republic.

There are a few aims for the agenda for nearest future, stressed at the Ministry of Education Report in 2003:

- drafting the Law on Pre-school Education and the corresponding regulation;
- enhancing of the pre-school establishments' network and methods of teaching;
- quality assurance system development;
- rising the meal's quality;
- rising the social status of the pre-school establishments' staff.

Secondary education. There are 2687 general secondary schools, 447 primary schools and 867 basic schools in Belarus now. Their number falls down slowly in accordance with the actual birth rate at the definite regions. The most significant decrease is obtained among primary schools at the small settlements where it is impossible to guarantee quality assurance and local budgets don't can allocate satisfactory funds. Nevertheless, no one pupil is aborted due to organized delivery of the children to the nearest secondary schools. A part of schools were reorganized into new formations like gymnasiums (115 at the end of 2002/2003 year), lyceums (26) and gymnasium-college complexes (6). Their number demonstrates the growth during the moment of their appearance yearly in 90th.

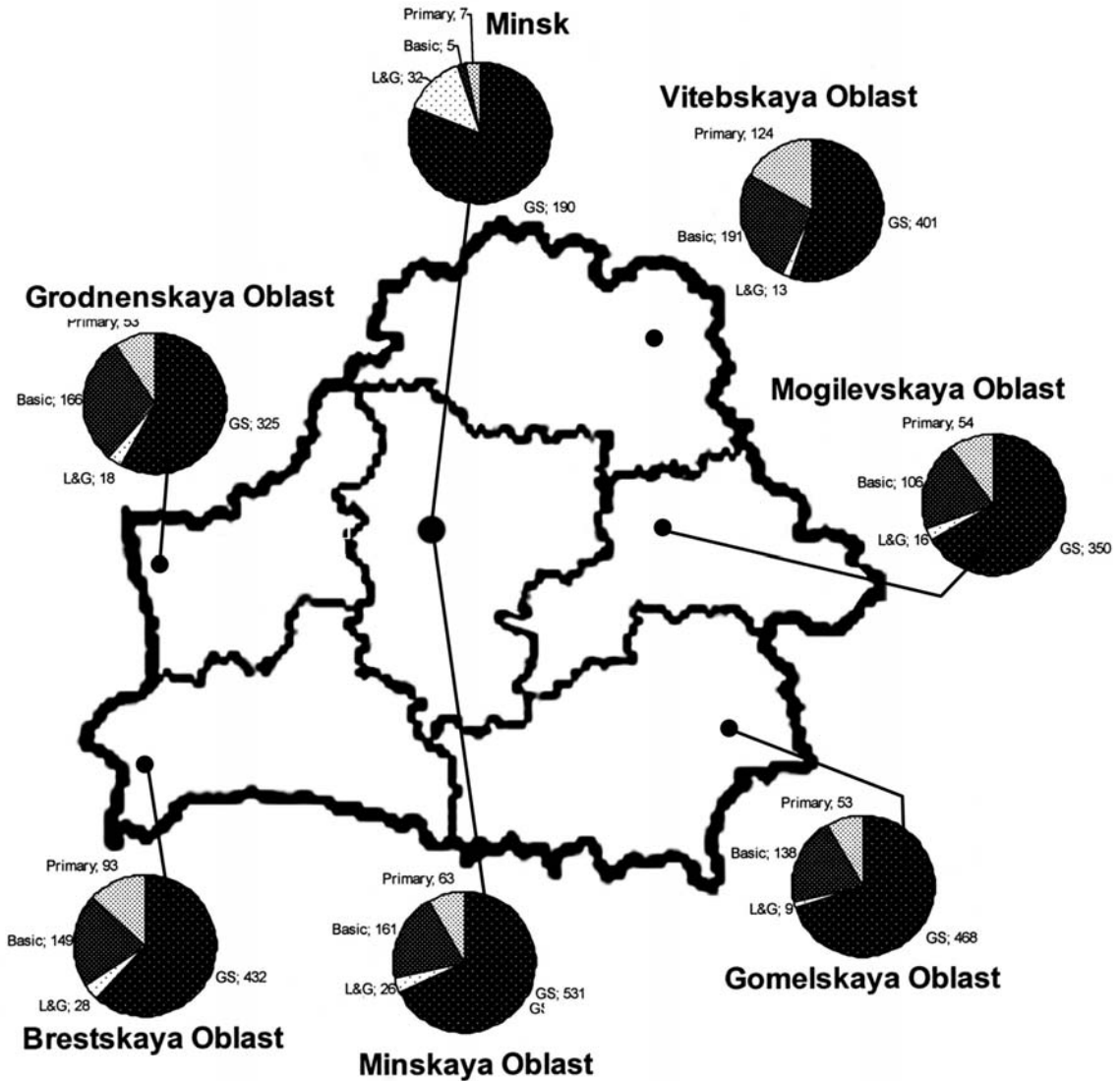
There are also 40 boarding general secondary schools for orphans mainly, 21 sanatorium-schools, 20 special schools and 67 special boarding schools for children with disabilities.

The total number of school-children was in 2002/2003 equal to 1,344,400. There were 1,143,400 pupils at general secondary schools, 97,895 pupils at gymnasiums, 10,482 pupils at lyceums. 16,883 children attended special schools and classes at the conventional schools. 8,426 people with less damaged health studied at the integrated classes to

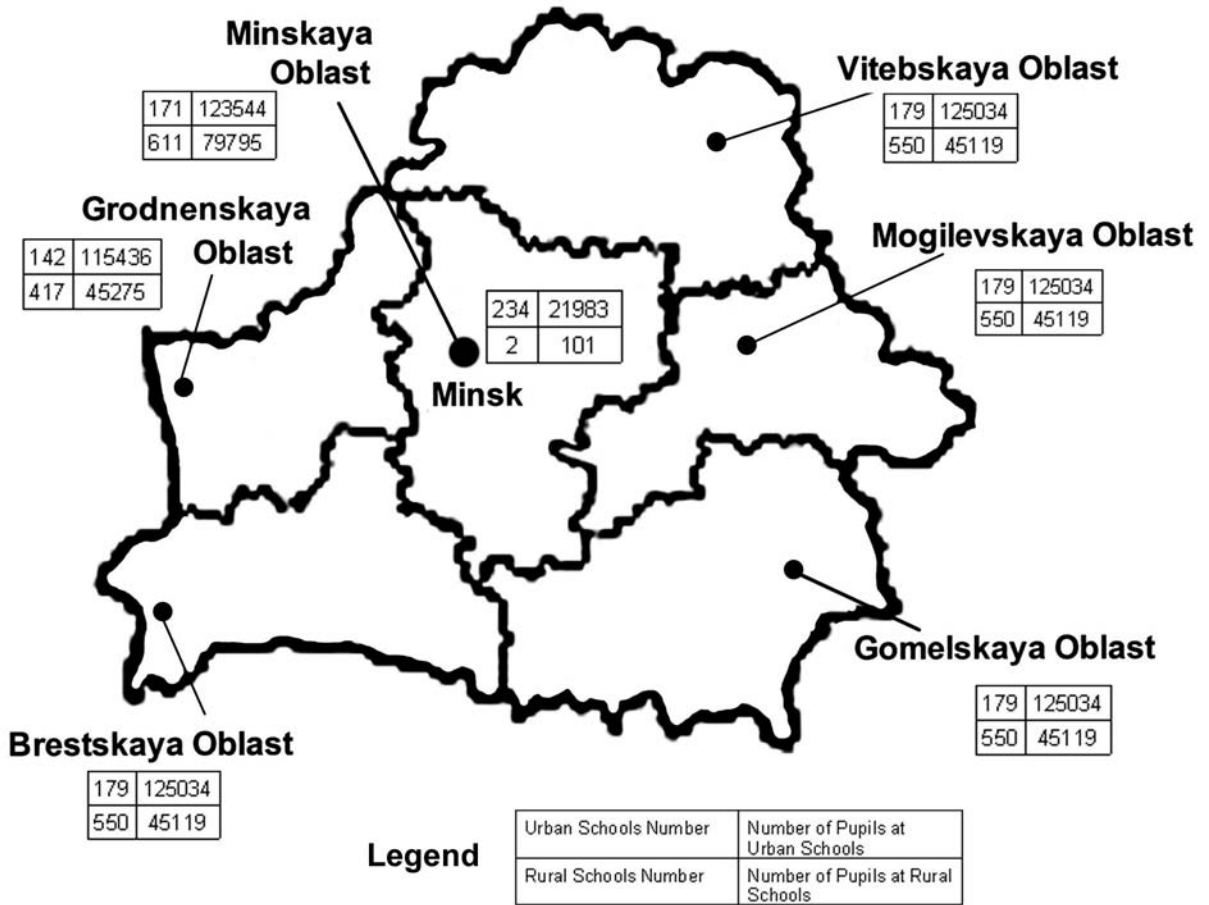
provide their better rehabilitation. 4291 establishments are in privacy of local governments and 12 schools (873 pupils) are private ones. 1305 of them are in cities and 2986 in rural area. It was purchased 126 school buses for delivery of children who live afar from their schools.

The allocation of general secondary schools and pupils across the Belarus is given by the following maps.

SCHOOL TYPES' ALLOCATION ALONG THE REGIONS

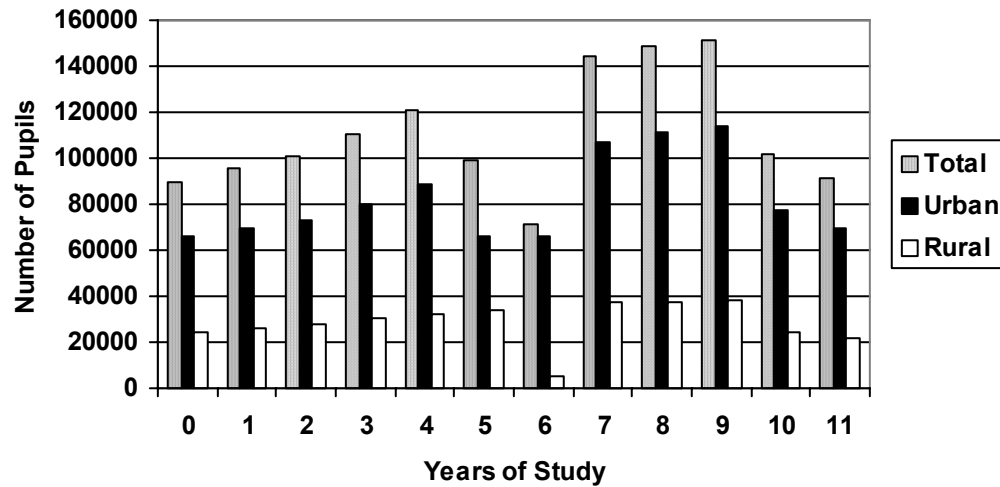


SCHOOLS AND PUPILS' ALLOCATION ALONG THE REGIONS



The pupil's distribution among the years is not smooth enough due to hard demographic situation after Chernobyl disaster and Soviet Union collapse. The Diagram (the data for September, 2003. Zero means preparatory classes) shows a gap for the sixth form filled with children who were born in 1990-91. There is no principal difference for rural and urban schools.

Pupil's Distribution for General Secondary Schools



There are 147.5 thousands of pedagogical workers in Belarusian general schools. 26,300 of them serve to primary education (1-4 classes). 83.8% of school teachers own the diplomas of higher education, 14.3% graduated from non-university colleges, 2.0% are the university students and 0.2% only (298 persons) has secondary education background. About 18% of them passed the State attestation and were awarded the high category of quality certificates.

In 2003, 3,706 young teachers started working in general schools of any type. 2,924 of them graduated from universities, the rest of them received their non university diploma in teaching. 355 teacher positions were occupied by the university students and 7654 – by the retired persons.

At the level of secondary education the efforts should be focused on the preparedness of the young generation for life in the changing world. That is based on the harmoniously developed individualities who know basic of national and world culture. The average educational level of population will rise. To achieve this goal the structure and content of secondary education will be enhanced; the system of patriotic, civil and moral education will be established. Compulsory basic education will include 4-year primary level and 6-year basic level. Full secondary education requires 2-year study at the senior school level additionally and provides the access to higher education.

The idea of transition to 12-year period of study includes the implementation of 5-day training week. Saturdays are expected will be used for consulting, sports, clubs and different out-of-class activities, mainly. These give the excellent possibility to meet pupil requirements and interests. New curriculum includes only 17 teaching courses and subjects instead of 24-27 subjects nowadays. The maximum learning week is 30 and 40 class hours at the basic and senior school stages correspondently. General secondary school reform will be carried out by 2010. The recent public opinion poll shows that 83% of population support the current reform of secondary education.

The senior stage of secondary education (11th and 12th years) in new school system will be profiled in accordance with future learning track of a pupil at a HEI. Vocational schools will cover the same period of

study and provide the opportunity to continue study at HEIs, too. This concept is based on the real situation at the modern schools where over 50% of pupils attend additional courses in the streamline of chose future university program preparation. Since 2005, the experiment will start at the 18 secondary school to check the approaches, guidebooks and methods of teaching.

The draft of renewed Concept of Profile Education was recently elaborated by National Institute of Education and represented for ministerial workers and specialists. Academy of Postdiploma Education provides school teacher and administration staff training for these goals and supports the activity of regional teacher training institutes to meet the challenge.

10-grade scale for pupils' knowledge assessment is among the recent innovation in Belarusian schools. It is expected to be an effective instrument for quality assurance. Short period of not understanding and refusing has passed already but the methods of metrics have to be developed.

High attention is paid to the rural secondary school development. Of course, it is impossible to save the schools at the villages with 5-10 pupils and some hundreds of such small schools were closed in the last 5-year period. The same time new good equipped schools were opened in all the rajons and school bus system was established in the country side. It is expected that 55 gymnasiums, 9 lyceums and over 700 classes with advanced programs will be established here by 2010.

Special education system serves to children with disabilities who can not attend a conventional school. The system provides them with equal opportunities to study and to have a profession. The staff of these schools does all the best to make children integrated into all the public affairs without any discrimination.

Now, there are 4072 classes at the conversional schools, which run the integrated programs that allow involving children with disabilities. 935 points are opened across the country for such children and their parents consulting. 112 centers of rehabilitation are established to run new methods of care for children who were considered as «untrainable» earlier.

This is out-of-school education that is to promote all-round meeting of the educational requirements of children and their parents. No one talent can be missed. This system offers also some additional healthcare abilities, enhancing in life skills, handicraft, music, sports and etc. The network of out-of-school education establishments includes 361 entries participated by 350,000 juniors during the year. There are a few national establishments among them but all other belong to the local governments.

The priorities of the current development of the secondary education system in Belarus are the following:

- current reform support and supply;
- drafting the Law on General Secondary Education and the corresponding regulation;
- enhancement of quality assurance and quality metrics;
- humanization of school work, pupils' overloading elimination and health protection;
- rising the effectiveness of the national programs «Informatization of the System of Education», «Foreign Languages», «Social and Economical Development and Revival of Countryside» and «Gifted Childs».

Vocational education. Vocational education should meet the requirements of young people in profession and demands of labor market. It is possible in Belarus to start vocational study just after graduation from basic or secondary school. Anyway, vocational establishments offer classes of secondary education. Alternative ability for vocational qualification includes the system of Courses and Course Combinates, which provides training mostly and cooperates with shifted secondary schools that serve for adults.

The system of vocational education has to become the more effective service that faces the needs of new social and economic conditions. 242 schools of the system involve over 125,000 of students. Annually they enroll over 50 thousand of students for 1-2-year programs as a rule. Mainly, these schools belong to the Ministry of Education.

There are 39 vocational schools that enroll the students with disabilities. The schools run 22 different programs for that cohort of population that meet their abilities.

The transformation of secondary education on 12-year basis enforces the vocational schools to meet new challenges. The legislative base of the system includes the Law «On Vocational Education» adopted in 2003.

Secondary vocational education. The Republic of Belarus saves the system of secondary vocational (professional) education that provides graduates with qualification of «technic» that is between qualifications of workers and engineers. The system includes technicums (23 in 2002/2003), uchilishches (40) and colleges (84) with two- or three-year training program for people who graduated from secondary school. There are also 7 private technicums and 5 colleges. The total number of these schools students is about 150 thousand of people who study 150 programs of non university level. Some establishments offer earlier enrolment for people who have got basic education and can continue secondary education in parallel with vocational training.

COHORT OF SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS
(AT THE BEGINNING OF 2003/04.
ASTERISK* MARKS THE DATA FOR PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENTS)

Year	Number of Establishments	Total. Thousands	Number of students		
			Full-time, %	Shifted, %	Extramural, %
1	2	3	4	5	6
1940/41	128	35.0	83.43	0.29	16.29
1950/51	107	41.8	83.01	1.20	15.79
1955/56	123	60.1	81.86	4.83	13.31
1960/61	102	62.6	56.87	10.38	32.75
1965/66	122	122.1	54.95	10.57	34.48
1970/71	128	146.1	62.08	10.06	27.86
1975/76	133	154.7	64.84	8.02	27.15
1980/81	135	162.8	66.34	8.35	25.31
1985/86	139	160.4	68.27	6.80	24.94
1990/91	147	143.7	74.60	3.76	21.64
1991/92	149	139.1	75.56	3.09	21.35
1992/93	148	134.9	76.20	2.30	21.50
1993/94	147	129.2	77.55	1.70	20.74
1994/95	145	124.5	78.88	1.37	19.76
1995/96	146	121.6	79.61	1.23	19.16
1996/97	146	123.7	79.71	1.05	19.24
1997/98	149	128.6	83.59	0.93	20.14
1998/99	151	133.4	77.44	0.90	21.66
1999/00	150	139.6	76.22	1.00	22.78
2000/01	149	144.8	75.97	0.97	23.07
2001/02	148	148.6	75.50	1.01	23.49
2002/03	147	153.4	75.23	1.04	23.73
2003/04	140	145.5	78.84	1.17	21.99
1995/96*)	3	0.81	80.25	-	19.75
1996/97*)	4	1.49	78.52	-	21.48
1997/98*)	6	3.87	79.33	-	20.93
1998/99*)	6	5.02	77.29	-	22.71
1999/00*)	7	4.67	77.52	-	22.70
2000/01*)	7	5.49	79.05	-	20.95
2001/02*)	8	6.80	77.94	-	22.06
2002/03*)	7	7.50	73.33	-	13.33
2003/04*)	13	16.77	56.53	-	43.47

**ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS
TO SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS IN 2003
(ASTERISK* MARKS THE DATA FOR PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENTS)**

Year	Enrolled			
	Total. Thousands	Full-time. %	Shifted. %	Extramural. %
1940/41	15.1	-	-	-
1950/51	12.8	85.16	1.56	13.28
1955/56	18.8	78.19	6.38	15.43
1960/61	25.2	54.37	11.11	34.52
1965/66	40.4	56.93	8.66	34.41
1970/71	45.4	64.10	8.59	27.31
1975/76	49.3	66.13	7.71	26.17
1980/81	52.5	66.29	7.43	26.29
1985/86	52.9	67.30	6.05	26.65
1990/91	46.6	73.61	3.43	22.96
1991/92	44.9	74.83	2.23	22.94
1992/93	41.4	76.33	1.69	21.98
1993/94	37.8	78.31	1.32	20.37
1994/95	37.3	80.43	1.07	18.50
1995/96	38.8	80.41	0.77	18.81
1996/97	40.9	79.46	0.73	19.80
1997/98	43.9	77.90	0.68	21.41
1998/99	46.7	76.87	0.86	22.27
1999/00	49.6	76.41	0.81	22.78
2000/01	51.1	78.08	0.78	21.14
2001/02	53.2	76.32	0.75	22.93
2002/03	54.0	76.48	1.11	22.41
2003/04	47.9	77.45	1.04	21.51
1995/96*)	0.44	77.27	-	22.73
1996/97*)	0.80	75.00	-	25.00
1997/98*)	2.70	81.48	-	18.52
1998/99*)	2.10	76.19	-	23.81
1999/00*)	1.80	83.33	-	16.67
2000/01*)	2.80	85.71	-	14.29
2001/02*)	2.90	79.31	-	20.69
2002/03*)	3.20	71.88	-	28.13
2003/04*)	6.57	57.38	-	42.62

The main problem of this system concerns outdated equipment, weak co-operation with higher education establishments and poor labour market for leavers. To overcome the difficulties there will be established a new system of educational standards and some courses and periods of education will be adapted to university ones and recognized. This will permit the access of «technics» to the second or even third grade of an affiliated higher education establishment. That idea is realized completely in higher colleges that are incorporated simultaneously in the secondary

vocational education and higher education systems and that are closely linked with their supervisors among universities.

The secondary vocational schools' leavers exert high pressure upon universities: over 9 thousands of full-time form's leavers (33% of the total output) entered public universities in 2003 that was about 28% of enrollment; mainly, to continue education as extramural students. About half of them use the shorter terms of university studies due to recognition of a part of their academic results. But usually they have low theoretical background and they need to be additionally taught. Evidently, these people lost their time and recourses because they never intended to run the carrier under secondary vocational qualification.

Different approach concerns joining of technicums and colleges of secondary vocational education to the universities. In 2004 the approach was realized for all 11 pedagogical colleges and a few of technical ones. That permits to adopt the programs to university requirements.

Nevertheless, this stage of education has been still claimed in some branches of economy being excluded in different ones like aviation industry. Now, the regulation of study continuation for technicums' and colleges' leavers and the schools network are under consideration.

Higher education. The system of higher education needs transformation as well. It should better meet population requirements, be better managed and exercise more university autonomy and academic freedoms. The system development will come through legislation and regulation enhancement. For example, new regulation on the system of university ranks, structure of the higher education levels, academic freedoms and university autonomy will be established. Universities will become the centers for lifelong education in accordance with the decision of the UNESCO World Conference in Hamburg in 1997. The system of enrolment will be revised to provide more fair access to universities. Research in universities will be supplied with more effective financial and equipment support. This will be also better coordinated with industry requirements and basic investigations in National Academy of Science.

A new spirit must instill into postgraduate education system to make it more effective and attractive. Particularly, the problem could be solved through intensification of international scientific co-operation and academic mobility. Another action is a special financial support of young scientists' research projects through the system of the state grants as well as better opportunity to publish the results.

The detailed analysis of higher education development in Belarus is given in Chapter III below.

Continuous education. Lifelong education system in Belarus is the most diverse among different parts of the national system of education. It covers all the levels of education and informal education. There are a lot of non-state investments and establishments in this sphere. It includes now the traditional staff retraining courses and new branches for unemployed and retired military officers. Just this system provides small business and innovation spheres with leaders and specialists.

The system is under the process of fast development and diversification. During the last 5-year period the significant growth of the number of schools and students were recorded. Private sector appeared in this sphere. Not certificated courses became demanded. A number of international projects are run in this area.

In the season of 2003 there were 354 public accredited establishments that belonged to the system. Mostly, they are in privacy of branch

ministries or they are the divisions of educational establishments of similar profile. Annually, over a half of million people study here. As well about 20,000 of unemployed attend the courses to gain new qualifications.

The structure and detailed analysis of lifelong system in Belarus are given in the appropriate section of the next Chapter in the deal with higher education that is the basis of this system.

Chapter III

HIGHER EDUCATION IN BELARUS

UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY AND ACADEMIC FREEDOMS
 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF BELARUSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM
 POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
 HEI DIVERSIFICATION
 DYNAMICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN BELARUS
 ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION
 STUDENTS' OBLIGATIONS AND PRIVILEGES
 SOME RECENT APPROACHES
 RESEARCH
 ACADEMIC STAFF
 INTERNATIONALISATION AND GLOBALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY AND ACADEMIC FREEDOMS

Belarusian higher education establishments (HEIs) exercise some university autonomy that is protected by the new text of the law «On Education in the Republic of Belarus». They are free in staff employment and promotion (rector's position is an exception. Rectors are appointed by the Minister of Education in public universities and by owner's decision in private ones). They create their own procedures and provide the elections for the appropriate position filling. They are able to spend income money for any goal for development or extra payments and budget money within the budget lines. They can apply to change their structure or the list of study programs to Ministry of Education that adopts the proposal after evaluation of the applicant's ability to operate in the new conditions. A proposal cannot be refused if it meets actual regulation and does not exceed current state budget allocation. They establish the procedures of enrolment and staff benefits. The HEIs can participate in any multilateral domestic or international organizations, projects, networks or contracts. It is not prohibited to establish university newspapers, magazines, TV or radio channels or hold conferences and exhibitions. Public HEIs are free of political or clerical activity but they can support public professional or trade union organizations for faculty and students.

The HEIs' community exercises academic freedoms of teaching, research and study. These freedoms are also under the protection of the Law. Every university teacher has the right to offer any course for delivering within the field of the program or any topic for research. He/she is able to participate in officially announced research topic for the department or apply for a new project. The methods of teaching are also in responsibility of the teacher. The results of the individual or group research are protected by the legislation on intellectual property and could be published or reported by the authors in homeland or abroad. Academic staff has also the right for personal development that is realized through free access to libraries' abilities, computer networks, conferences participation, fellowships and retraining at the special centers like National Institute for Higher Education.

It is possible to appeal about any university body decision in accordance with the university's status to a responsible official or body that must accept the claim and reply to it in the legal way and term. Faculty has the right to have its own casual opinion or a theory in the field of science, policy, economy, public life, management and so on and protect this position in open discussion. He/she may belong to any

public, religious, trade union or political organization or community or establish it.

The students are free in their choice of a HEI, program and form of education when they apply to enter. Then, they can change the program if it is possible to provide. An advanced student can apply for participation of any lesson in his/her HEI or set forth an individual educational plan. They are free in their choice of research topic within their department and educational program. The students may belong to any public, self-governing, religious and political organization or community or establish it. It is possible and popular to be a member of a student trade union.

The students, who won entrance competition at a public HEI, have the right to apply for stipend and university dormitory accommodation. The following years students receive their stipends in accordance with the academic success or at the social security basis. About 70% of full-time students of public HEIs get stipends and over 50% of the students originated from another settlements are provided with very cheap place at dormitories. University administration and trade union allocate some financial allowances for needy students.

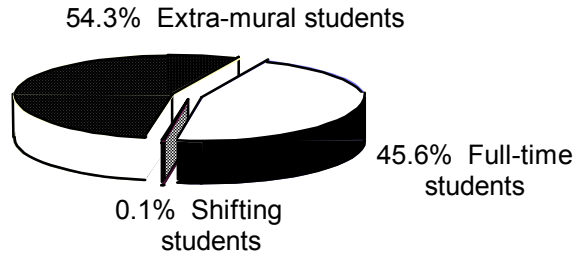
GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF BELARUSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Nowadays, Belarusian system of higher education includes educational, research and governing institutions that use unified official standards and rules in the processes of teaching, management, control and research. They provide the population needs in the required background and it updating. This system, of course, supplies the national economy with highly qualified personnel. The system includes 43 public higher education institutions with 272,900 students. There are 163.5 thousands of full-time students, 1.8 thousands of shifting students (evening classes for working adults) and 107.600 thousands extramural students. Belarusian legislation permits external studies but this is not actual form now.

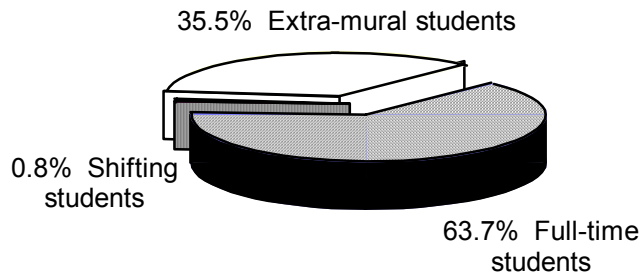
14 private HEIs involve 17,500 full-time students and 30,300 extramural students in addition. They stopped shifted students enrollment three years ago because of lack of applicants.

The enormously high share of extramural students in Belarusian HEIs is the result of the necessity of additional income for this cohort for personal and family needs.

ALLOCATION OF THE HEI STUDENTS ALONG THE FORMS OF STUDY
PUBLIC HEIS



NON PUBLIC HEIS



There is limited admission of students to university programs in the presidential Academy of Public Service, National Institute of Education and Republic Institute of Vacation Education but the goal of these institutions is to retrain managers, officers and teachers for government establishment network, for public industry and service sectors and for the system of education.

The doctorate students are not included in the statistics above because doctorate is the special after university stage of study. It is focused at the research and university staff training mainly. The description of doctorate is given later in the separate section. Usually, it is considered as research education.

Geography of higher education is extremely uneven in Belarus. Most of HEIs is located at the capital. Correspondently, Minsk is the most student city in the republic. Allocation is shown at the next map. This unevenness generates the problem of regions' supply with specialists and it forces the peripheral HEIs to open new programs for local people. Recently, the Government adopted a special program on regional higher education development. Minsk region hasn't any HEIs.

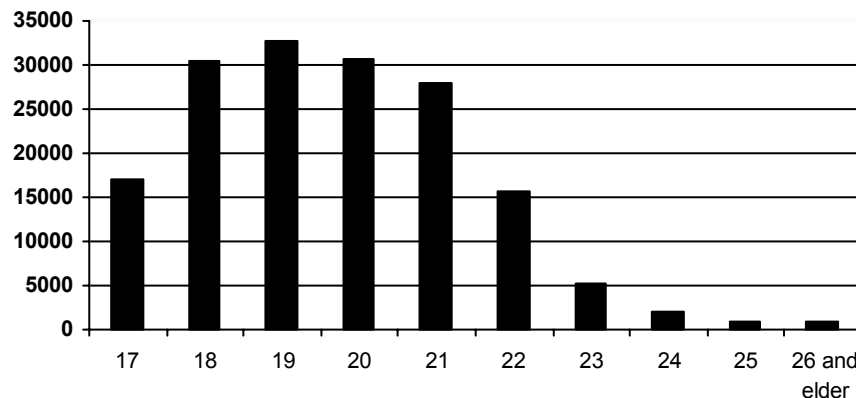
NUMBER OF HEIS/THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS ACROSS BELARUS (2003)



In total, the «density» of HEIs' students is over 320 persons per 10,000 of population that is close to average European level. This figure does not include college students who exercise 2 or 3 years programs as well as doctorate students.

The age distribution of full-time students is rather sharp. The main part of them belongs to the age group of the pupils graduated from school in appropriate time. Some of the students enter a HEI after two years military service or upon graduation from secondary professional establishments.

THE AGE DISTRIBUTION OF FULL-TIME STUDENTS



The contribution the elder population, who come back to education, is not significant but the trend is observed now. Mostly, this cohort prefers shifted and extramural forms of study. This concerns also people who is going to change the early given higher education qualification and receive the second university diploma. The actual regulation stipulates shorter terms of study for them and one-year retraining courses for enough close new and former university programs (perepodgotovka).

Multilevel system of higher education is under the reforming in Belarus now. Recently, Council of Ministers adopted the Concept of Introduction of Two-stage System of Higher Education, which supposes switching to the scheme that includes bachelor/master levels. But finally the system will be established by the Law «On Higher Education» that is expected to be adopted in the beginning of the next year.

Study in public institutions is free of charge as a rule. However, since 1993 there appeared a cohort of students who pay for their study in public HEIs due to government permission to increase enrolment over state granted level if the conditions of a HEI allow doing this. During the years the cohort grows permanently. In 1993 there were already 13.9% of such first year students. Following years display figure 16.4% in 1994, 19.5% in 1995 and 28.3% in 1996. Now, less than 70 % of public HEIs students study at the expense of the state budget. Over 4% of paying students receive financial support of enterprises and companies. The annual cost of study is mostly between 500 and 2500 \$. The same cost is applicable for the foreign students.

There is the possibility for a «payable» student to change the status and become a free of charge student if the place becomes vacant at any reason. HEI's administration must fill such vacant places with applied pretenders on the base of academic success competition.

POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Almost every HEI runs postgraduate courses (aspirantura). The same ability could be given to research or staff retraining institutions that have appropriate learning and research conditions. Total number of postgraduate students is over 2.5 thousands. Aspirantura in Belarus is not recognized as a level of higher education but a special level for scientific post diploma education. A graduate person is not awarded any certificate of background. Awarding diploma of scientific degree of Candidate of Science (in a definite research field) is available after public defense of a dissertation in front of a specialized council. Every pretender must pass the candidate examinations before defence.

Positive evaluation of the state expert body is necessarily to validate the decision of a specialized council. Degree of Candidate of Science is equal to Ph.D. degree and usually recognized in the entire world due to high state requirements and excellent level of research.

There are three forms of study in aspirantura. Full-time form is the most effective and popular in Belarus. All foreign aspirantura students use just this form; nevertheless, different forms are available for them, too. Every native Belarusian full-time student of aspirantura at a public HEI is granted with the stipend for 3 years of study and, usually, accommodation at a dormitory if one needs. The full-time students should attend classes in philosophy, foreign language and computer science. Sometimes the institution announces a few additional courses for the students' professional development. The extramural students study as long as 4 years. There are no obligatory classes for them but consulting is available. The students could be permitted to attend the classes for full-time students of aspirantura. It is available a special form of extramural study called «soiskatelstvo» for the persons who work with a little consulting assistance only and do not attend any classes. The term of their study is 5 years.

The HEI appoints a personal supervisor and approves the topic of the research for every aspirantura student and controls the program of study and research execution.

Usually, study at aspirantura is free of charge but the number of positions, which are supported by the State budget, is limited. If necessary and possible, institutions could enroll paying students over the limit. Fee is 20-50% over the bachelor or master level cost.

The second level of scientific degree named Doctor of Science in the field of a concrete discipline could be awarded to a person who has candidate degree already. As a rule, pretenders make their doctor degree dissertations in their own time and on their own risk. But it is available to apply to the Academic Council of a HEI, which is authorized for such actions, for a special fellowship for doctorantura. The right to run two-year doctorantura can be given by the State to the institutions with common recognized scientific schools. During the study the working position of the doctorantura student stays reserved.

Defense of a doctor degree dissertation is to be in front of a specialized council. The state expert body should approve the council's decision to make valid doctor degree award.

Doctorantura and aspirantura could exist also in research institutes of National Academy of Science and in national retraining institutions.

Usually, less than 5 % of candidates of science become later the doctors of science. The preparation of doctor degree dissertation takes 3-10 years and more.

Nowadays, Supreme Attestation Commission is the state expert body that controls the procedure of scientific degrees awarding. It produces national regulation, issues filling forms of certificates, approve the special councils for dissertation defenses and recognize foreign scientific degrees. Together with Ministry of Education the Supreme Attestation Commission elaborates the programs of candidate examinations.

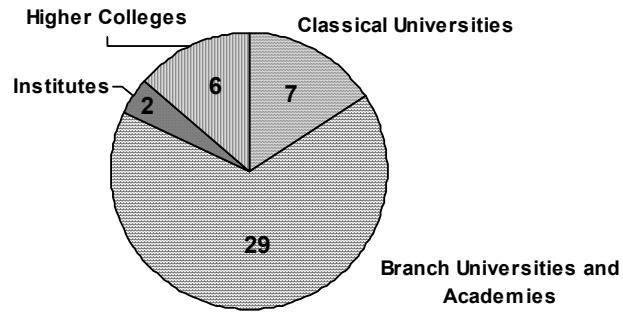
HEI DIVERSIFICATION

There are four different HEIs' categories in Belarus. They are classical universities, branch universities or academies, institutes and higher colleges. Professionally the diplomas of these institutions are equal but higher college's diploma of higher education does not permit to continue study in aspirantura. Also, an institute is never awarded the right to run doctorantura but the staff members could apply for doctorantura to any different appointed HEI.

Classical universities are mostly oriented to basic science and humanities. Branch universities and academies cover the programs for industry, economy, medicine, defense, secondary school system, art, music, sports and etc. Institutes mainly execute a limited number of programs in narrow field of disciplines. A few existing now higher colleges run a couple of higher education programs working basically as a three-years college² affiliated and supported by a HEI of different category that runs the same programs. The structure of public HEIs system is shown on the following diagram.

² Three-years colleges as well as two-years technicums do not formally belong to the higher education system but to the special secondary education network.

STRUCTURE OF BELARUSIAN PUBLIC HEI SYSTEM



Among 14 non-public HEIs there is only one that looks like a classical university of humanity field. Three non-public HEIs are clerical academies; they are out of the State regulation. All different establishments belong to the categories of institutes and branch universities.

The Government awards some of public HEIs their special title and privileges. So, Belarusian State University and National State Technical University have the title of Leader HEI in the National System of Education. A few branch universities are awarded the title of Leader HEI in the Branch of Higher Education.

DYNAMICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN BELARUS

Dynamics of HEIs' student number demonstrates the permanent growth. More minute description of the process is given in the table. The valley of 1945 is due to World War II. The plateau at 1980-1990 appeared because of stagnation and following perestroyka. The growth after 1995 was initiated by population's demand to have more access to higher education and softening of the regulation and administrative pressing. Rising was achieved due to payable enrolment in public HEIs' mostly; that is over 30% of total enrollment now. Private HEIs also demonstrate very fast enrollment increase during last five years.

STUDENT COHORT IN THE BELARUSIAN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Year	Number of HEIs	Number of Students			
		Thousands	Percentage of Students of Forms		
			Full-time	Shifted	Extra-mural
1940/41	25	21.5	60.93	1.40	37.67
1950/51	29	31.6	61.39	2.53	36.08
1955/56	23	50.5	63.96	3.76	32.28
1960/61	24	59.3	54.47	9.27	36.26
1965/66	27	104.0	47.12	11.54	41.35
1970/71	28	140.0	56.79	11.21	32.00
1975/76	31	159.9	60.73	10.76	28.52
1980/81	32	177.0	62.15	9.38	28.47
1985/86	33	181.9	56.13	7.09	36.78
1986/87	33	180.2	54.83	6.44	38.73
1987/88	33	179.4	54.85	5.52	39.63
1988/89	33	178.6	56.10	4.70	39.19
1989/90	33	189.4	60.08	3.75	36.17
1990/91	33	188.6	61.45	3.13	35.42
1991/92	33	184.6	62.78	2.87	34.34
1992/93	37	185.0	63.84	2.49	33.68
1993/94	38	175.4	64.31	2.05	33.64
1994/95	39	173.8	65.77	1.38	32.85
1995/96	39	174.2	66.36	1.21	32.43
1996/97	39	180.0	66.83	0.94	32.22
1997/98	42	190.0	66.32	0.74	32.95
1998/99	42	207.2	65.83	0.82	33.35
1999/00	42	228.6	64.17	0.83	35.00
2000/01	43	245.1	62.79	0.94	36.27
2001/02	44	260.0	61.19	1.08	37.73
2002/03	44	272.9	59.91	0.66	39.43
2003/04	43	279.3	59.00	0.64	40.36

STUDENT COHORT IN THE BELARUSIAN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Year	Number of HEIs	Number of Students			
		Thousands	Percentage of Students at the Forms		
			Full-time	Shifted	Extra-mural
1994/95	17	13.8	62.32	2.90	34.78
1995/96	20	23.2	56.03	2.59	41.38
1996/97	20	28.9	55.02	1.38	43.60
1997/98	17	34.5	48.99	0.58	50.72
1998/99	15	36.5	46.03	0.27	53.70
1999/00	15	33.5	45.67	0.12	54.33
2000/01	14	36.6	45.51	0.03	54.46
2001/02	14	41.8	41.69	0.02	58.29
2002/03	14	47.8	36.61	0	63.39
2003/04	12	58.6	32.08	0	67.92

ENROLLMENT TO THE PUBLIC BELARUSIAN HEIS

Year	Number of Students			
	Thousands	Percentage of Students of Forms		
		Full-time	Shifted	Extra-mural
1940/41	7.0	52.86	1.43	45.71
1950/51	10.2	58.82	2.94	38.24
1955/56	10.7	66.36	4.67	28.97
1960/61	15.8	50.63	11.39	37.97
1965/66	25.1	51.00	10.36	38.65
1970/71	30.4	61.51	11.18	27.30
1975/76	34.9	65.62	10.60	23.78
1980/81	36.4	66.21	7.97	25.82
1985/86	39.4	61.68	4.82	33.50
1986/87	38.7	62.53	4.39	33.07
1987/88	39.1	62.92	3.07	34.02
1988/89	39.1	63.94	3.07	32.99
1989/90	38.3	65.27	3.13	31.59
1990/91	37.5	66.40	2.67	30.93
1991/92	36.2	67.40	2.76	29.83
1992/93	35.0	68.57	2.29	29.14
1993/94	34.4	69.19	0.58	30.23
1994/95	36.3	71.35	0.55	28.10
1995/96	38.5	69.87	0.78	29.35
1996/97	43.9	69.02	0.91	30.07
1997/98	46.7	66.60	0.64	32.76
1998/99	53.4	66.48	1.12	32.40
1999/00	54.5	65.50	0.92	33.58
2000/01	57.6	63.72	1.22	35.07
2001/02	61.0	61.15	1.48	37.38
2002/03	64.2	58.41	0.47	41.12
2003/04	65.00	58.77	0.62	40.61

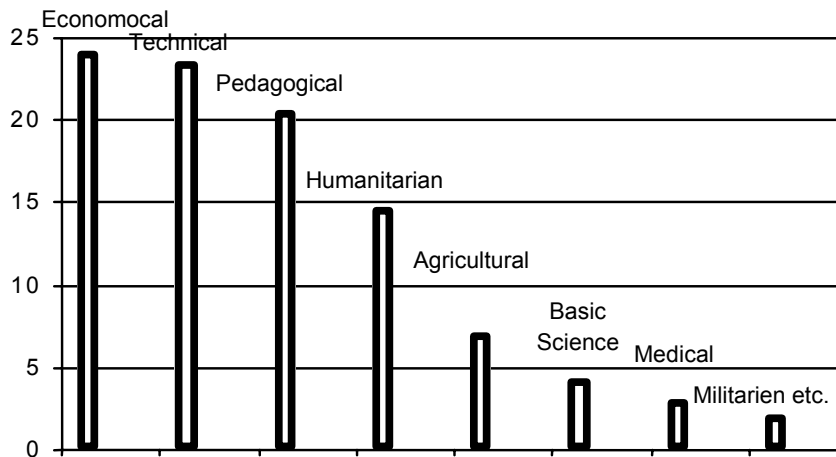
Enrollment to the private Belarusian HEIS

Year	Number of Students			
	Thousands	Percentage of Students of Forms		
		Full-time	Shifted	Extra-mural
1994/95	7.2	58.33	2.78	38.89
1995/96	10.6	55.66	1.89	41.51
1996/97	9.4	52.13	1.06	46.81
1997/98	10.9	46.91	0.18	53.00
1998/99	10.1	49.95	0.00	50.05
1999/00	7.5	52.48	0.00	47.38
2000/01	10.7	50.00	0.00	50.00
2001/02	10.7	50.00	0.00	50.00
2002/03	15.6	32.05	0.00	67.95
2003/04	17.1	25.73	0.00	74.27

Total number of the students in all kinds of HEIs reached in 2003 the highest level of 335 thousands (a previous pike was in 1988). This gives over 340 students per 10 thousands of population. That complies with the mean European index. Current year 41,494 full-time students (different student's cohorts data were unavailable at the moment of the text preparation) were recruited to the public HEIs that is 3208 people over the previous season level. 24,686 of them will study free of charge (200 positions growth).

Public higher education system provides over 300 professional qualifications (spetsialnost) in all professional fields. It offers over 1000 programs (spetsializatsia) of education. Earlier, the technical programs dominated in Belarusian higher education system. In the middle of 90th, humanities, economical and management programs' student cohort rose very fast but a few last years the proportion is rather stable. Non-public establishments prefer to run programs in management, economics, law and foreign languages, mainly. By the actual regulation they cannot teach defense and medicine. The proportion among 8 main profiles of higher education training is illustrated the diagram below (data for 1999).

ALLOCATION OF THE FIRST YEAR HEI STUDENTS ALONG THE PROFILES OF EDUCATION (in %)



Naturally, the growth of cohort results in the increase of people graduated from HEIs. It is obvious that these two processes are going on for 5 years roughly in accordance with the average duration of study in HEIs.

As it was mentioned earlier, the growth of the student number is achieved due to the rise of payable education service. That concerns both state and private HEIs. The former have now the right to enroll till 20% of students who cover the education expenditures in total or partly. Next 20% of students are admitted by the orders of local governments to cover their needs in social sectors. The expenditures for their teaching are the subject of the State budget. Every such student commits the obligation to come back the home rajon and work for a few years here. Some of the paying students have fundators. Nowadays, over a half of extramural students pays for their study. The situation with the full-time students, who are sponsored by their future employers, requires further analysis due to decrease of their number. This seems to be a reflection of the economic situation and less demands of new managers, economists and lawyers who are excessively presented at the labor market.

**ALLOCATION OF THE FIRST YEAR STATE HEIS' STUDENT
ALONG THE SOURCES OF THEIR EDUCATION FUNDING**

Year	Totally admitted	Admitted at the expense of the State Budget		Admitted at the expense of future employers		Admitted at their own expense or the expense of private persons	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Full-time students							
1994/95	25869	22293	86.2	1082	4.2	2494	9.6
1995/96	26934	22678	84.2	1051	3.9	3205	11.9
1996/97	30307	23252	76.7	1078	3.6	5977	19.7
1997/98	31081	23201	74.6	1391	4.5	6489	20.9
1998/99	35474	23517	66.3	2161	6.1	9796	27.6
1999/00	35717	23961	67.1	1985	5.6	9771	27.4
2000/01	36393	23900	65.7	1907	5.2	10586	29.1
2001/02	37277	24573	65.9	1605	4.3	11099	29.8
2002/03	37483	24273	64.8	1236	3.3	11974	31.9
2003/04	38216	24701	64.6	644	1.7	12871	33.7
Shifted students							
1995/96	331	291	87.9	1	0.3	39	11.8
1996/97	371	296	79.8	–	–	75	20.2
1997/98	339	247	72.9	–	–	92	27.1
1998/99	594	327	55.1	75	12.6	192	32.3
1999/00	568	360	63.4	68	12.0	140	24.6
2000/01	711	416	58.5	101	14.2	194	27.3
2001/02	901	417	46.3	102	11.3	382	42.4
2002/03	313	220	70.3	–	–	93	29.7
2003/04	433	189	43.6	75	17.3	169	39.0
Extra students							
1995/96	11269	8053	71.5	697	6.2	2519	22.3
1996/97	13194	7914	60.0	1370	10.4	3910	29.6
1997/98	15275	7887	51.6	1441	9.4	5947	39.0
1998/99	17316	7962	46.0	2026	11.7	7328	42.3
1999/00	18251	8069	44.2	2205	12.1	7977	43.7
2000/01	19781	7328	37.0	2055	10.4	10398	52.6
2001/02	22832	7850	34.4	1878	8.2	13104	57.4
2002/03	26400	8120	30.8	1151	4.5	17099	64.8
2003/04	26361	7899	30.0	779	3.0	13683	67.1

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The right of access to higher education is among the major human rights of Belarusian citizens. It is provided with accordance to UNESCO approach that includes consideration of personal background and aptitudes of people. Everybody can apply for any higher education program to any HEI and has equal rights to be considered. The application must be considered by a responsible body of the HEI (admission commission) and replied in a legal way and term. This right is available for foreigners as well. Any decision of the admission commission, evaluator or university's officer can be complained to the responsible officer or body of higher administrative level in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the Admission Rules. The State Control Department supervises the admission process every year and keeps its representatives at every HEI during all the annually enrolment company.

Belarusian HEIs and Ministry of Education respect the European decisions that are focused on the enhancing the access to higher education such as Recommendation No. R (98) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Access to Higher Education (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 March 1998, at the 623rd Meeting of the Ministers' Deputies). In particular, access policy «aims both at the widening of participation in higher education to all sections of society, and at ensuring that this participation is effective (that is, in conditions which ensure that personal effort will lead to successful completion)». This is a policy of equal opportunities that guaranteed to everybody who is «designed to meet all requirements of the principle of equality, not only formal or de jure equality and the absence of discrimination, but also full and effective equality in the sense of enabling all individuals to develop and fulfill their potential». The promotion of effective equality is provided in Belarus with special measures where this is necessary and consistent with the principle of non-discrimination to take account of the specific conditions of individuals or groups in society.

The Government provides all who are able and willing to participate successfully in higher education with fair and equal opportunities to do this. The established in Belarus access system and permanent monitoring serve this aim. The legislation prohibits discrimination in higher education on any reason that isn't concern academic requirements. This is among the main principles in Belarusian access policy that all residents and all holders of national qualifications are treated equally for the purposes of entry to higher education, regardless of their legal status as nationals or non-nationals. As well, people with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities to participate in study, research and employment in higher education; physical and systemic barriers to their participation are in progressive removing in accordance with general democratization of public life and economic development.

At the same time some European ideas on access to HEIs are under the preliminary discussion because they are too far from the traditions in this sector. This approaches concern the admission criteria and procedures of future that should recognize the different starting points and cultural backgrounds of applicants, and seek to include all those with the potential to benefit. There is no enough understanding of idea to wide the access routes extending admissions criteria to include alternatives to the conventional secondary school leaving certificate such as high-level vocational qualifications (mainly, vocational training in Belarus is accompanied with secondary education) or experiential learning.

The access to higher education in Belarus is limited by the prerequisite of secondary education certificate (11 years of study at a general school or equal training at a vocational school, technicums or college). Admission to Belarusian HEIs is conducted by competitive examinations. Individuals who are permanent residents of the Republic of Belarus as well as citizens of the Republic of Belarus and Belarusians who live outside Belarus and citizens of the Russian Federation have their right to be admitted and receive free education in Belarusian public HEIs. Equal opportunity exists in the Russian Federation for the citizens of Belarus. There is no discrimination by race, gender, origin and religious or political orientation.

Every public higher educational establishment has a certain number of vacancies financially supported by the state budget. The entrants are admitted to fill these vacancies according to the required number of points gained at the entrance examinations. The number of entrance exams is limited by four.

The entrance examinations run in accordance to the curricula made up and recommended by the Ministry of Education. These curricula meet the public general school program of the current year. The curricula for entrance examinations include the following subjects: Belarusian language and literature, Russian language and literature, Foreign language (English, French, German or Spanish), History of Belarus, World history of the newest time, Man and society, Geography, Physics, Information science, Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, Drawing and music. Applicants for certain programs in culture, arts, sport go in for additional creative examination in a given field. Applicants of the institutes of the Ministry of Defense or Ministry of Internal Affairs should pass examination in physical training. The entrants have the right to take their entrance examinations either in the Belarusian or Russian language by choice.

Every year the Ministry of Education elaborates the Rules of Admission to the public HEIs. These Rules are the subject of the Council of Ministry approval. The Rules include the aforementioned curricula, a list of higher education programs for every HEI, application filling forms and recommendations. The Ministry of Healthcare is authorized to make some restrictions on pretender's health conditions for certain specialties if these conditions could be dangerous when student runs the program or starts profession. To protect people from such dangers every applicant must have the health certificate from his/her local regional hospital. Any other restrictions are prohibited.

The admission becomes completed by the rector's order that lists all the admitted students in accordance with their programs, forms of study and tuition fee level. After this every student receives a personal photo ID and a book of personal academic records, which validities should be annual confirmed to provide the owner with some student privileges.

A few years ago Ministry of Education launched a limited experiment with general admission tests that were harmonized with the similar tests exercised in Russia. The former experience of local testing of the applicants in several Belarusian universities was also used. Belarusian State Polytechnical Academy (Belarusian National Technological University now) was the executive body during the starting period.

The experimental testing was found positive and popular. The results of general tests are recognized now by all the Belarusian HEIs. The success of the experiment resulted in establishment the special Institute of Knowledge Control by Ministry of Education in 2000. This independent body is expected to provide more democratic and objective procedure.

The system of general tests is in the way of fast development now. Established Institute opened the field offices in all the regions and started research. Over 177,000 of HEIs' applicants tried these tests in 2004 and 3/4 of them was profited by the results in the admission process. Some part of tested entrants preferred to pass admission examinations in accordance with the selected HEI's rules.

Since 2004 the test in Belarusian (or Russian) language becomes the compulsory one (children had the ability to pass this graduate exam in traditional form) and changes both school graduate exam and HEI's

entrance exam simultaneously. 94% of school leavers participated in the test and 80% of them used its results in the admission process. The procedure of exams is in responsibility of the Institute of Knowledge Control (forms, delivery, security and evaluation) and the regional authorities (arrangement). Because the result of this experiment is found positive, the next year it is expected two entrance examinations (native language and math, most likely) will be combined with graduate exams by similar national wide tests. No doubt, introduction of unified and secured tests will enhance the objectivity and decrease the children overload at the period of university enrolment. To provide better quality assurance since 2004 the common enrolment rules are introduced as obligatory regulation for all the HEIs.

By the actual regulation the access to HEIs is easier for a few social groups such as rural and unfavorable territories' inhabitants, some disabled people, orphans and etc. As a result the number of country side applicants increased by 7% and enrolment by 12%. These privileges are to be saved next year to enhance equity and social cohesion.

The objectivity of this year admission campaign was the best among the long period. Only 199 complains were made by the applicants in versa of over a half of thousand in previous seasons. The appellation commissions of HEIs met 38 of them.

STUDENTS' OBLIGATIONS AND PRIVELEGES

Photo ID issued by a public HEI is an evidence of the institution its owner belongs to. That gives the right to a public HEI student use all the public libraries free of charge, take public city transport (but not taxi) in a half of rate over the year and inter city public transport, as train and bus, in a half of rate from September 1 to June 30. A public HEI student whose permanent address is in different place can apply to university for residence hall room under extremely low cost. Foreign students are provided with a place in a dormitory also. Usually, a dormitory room should be shared with one or two roommates. There are many opportunities for the students to participate in additional sport, tourist or cultural classes and clubs free of charge.

Presence at all the scheduled lessons and labs is obligatory for HEI students. These lessons take from 24 to 36 hours per week. An advanced student with great academican success might have an individual educational plan adopted by the council of the department and approved by dean. Such plan includes more individual studies or consultings and less classes. Almost every course includes a marked (examination) or credential (zachet) final test. The examination result could be estimated as unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent corresponding to the aquired level of knowledge. Just at the period of this book writing the Ministry of Education adopted the decision of 10-grade scale introducing. The implementation is expected to start since September 2003. Zachet is two-graded estimation: yes or no. The title of the course, number of class hours and result should be written in the personal book of records. There are 3-5 examinations and 3-7 zachets per semester. As a rule all the zachets should be successfully passed before December 31. Then, it will be a four weeks semester examination session.

The students of public, and sometimes private, universities can be paid stipends that cover residence hall renting price and minimum living expenditures. In public HEIs over 70 % of full-time students receive their stipends.

The highest-level personal stipend is for the most advanced students with excellent academic success. Personal stipend could be awarded by the President of the Republic of Belarus, Council of Ministries or Academic Council of the university. Sometimes such a stipend has its honorable title in respect of an outstanding person.

The regular procedure of student stipends nomination and the kinds of them are under the provision that was approved by the Order of Minister of Education No. 26 (January 24, 1996) with Amendment approved on December 17, 1996 No. 539 and Comments by the Ministry of Education and Science No. 16.1-6/18 from April 20, 1996. These are based on the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus from November 20, 1995 № 474 «On Social Support of Studying Youth» that set special, regular and social stipends.

Special stipend is awarded to the students completely successful in training and distinguished in research work and science-technology creative activity. Regular stipend is paid to the students successful in training. The stipend amount depends on the average study score in the examination session as well on the acquired program. Social stipend is established for the successful students from low-income families whose average study score does not allow them to receive a regular stipend. To be among the successful students a person should have no academic debts (bad grades) in the results of the examination session and attend all the lessons and different obvious learning events.

Academic Council of a HEI makes its decision on all kinds of stipends awarding. First year students before the first examination system can pretend for a regular stipend only. Later they can receive a regular stipend if their average study score is not lower than 3.6 (5-grade scale) – for whole humanitarian, pedagogical and economical programs; 3.4 – for all basic, technical, medical, agricultural and military programs. If the students get a higher average study score the stipend amount is determined by multiplying on a fixed raising coefficient. Social stipend is paid to students since second semester of the first year of study. The category of students having right to get social stipend includes:

- orphans;
- children who lost their parents and being on state maintenance
- children from the families of militaries whose parents were lost (died) or became invalids during war; or whose parents were lost (died) or became invalids in a peace time at military or police service;
- former militaries became invalids in the result of wound, contusion, mutilation or disease got at military service;
- invalids;
- those having privileges according articles 18-20, 23-25 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus «On Social Protection of Citizens Suffered from the Accident on Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant»;
- waiting female students since 12-weeks of pregnancy and who have presented the confirmation from a doctor;
- students having children;
- those with tuberculosis disease.

The students getting social stipend keep all privileges and state social insurance payments stipulated by the appropriate legislation.

SOME RECENT APPROACHES

Development of the new educational model is closely linked with renewing the structure of higher education programs and multi-level system of higher education. Since an academic year of 1994/95, the Ministries of Education, Labor, Economics, Finance and Justice approved a new list of programs for HEIs. The idea behind the list is speciality extension that would offer any HEI's graduate a wider choice of employment and the possibility of prompt occupation changing. Over a few years Belarusian HEIs started training in the following specialities: classical languages and literature, Japanese, Chinese, commercial activity in commodity and service market, metrology, standardization and certification, printing industry technology, record keeping (archiving) and etc.

In 2001 instead of this list it was introduced the General State Classifier of The Republic of Belarus (OKPE 011-2001 «Specialties and Qualifications»). It uses the UNESCO ISCE 1997 coding and the universal approach to vocational, special secondary and higher education. This Classifier is a subject of upgrading in accordance to the requests of citizens, HEIs, communities' administration, enterprises and different stakeholders. Nowadays, the third revised edition of the Classifier is close to be published.

Late in 1998 Council of Ministers approved 5-years Concept of the Development of Higher Education System in the Republic of Belarus that was elaborated by the Ministry of Education. Among the issues of this Concept there are preparation of the above-mentioned draft of the Law «On Higher Education», renewal of the existing regulation, creation of national wide standards of program content, development of diversification, support the HEIs in the outlying regions, development of research, development of laboratory and librarian facilities and etc. Actually, there are other national programs just for higher education in Belarus. The most important among them there are the following:

- Program on Higher Education Guidebooks
- Program for Standards in Higher Education
- Program for Regional HEIs Development
- Program on Pedagogical Education Development
- Program on Technical Education Development.

Now some new approaches to quality assurance in higher education appear. The standards become the means for certification and accreditation of education institutions, defining the status of diploma and its equivalence outside the Republic of Belarus. It also makes easier academic mobility of students within the country and abroad. The standards for two-level higher education system are under consideration.

The Concept and the Program of its introduction is successfully finished. About 100 new provisions were adopted and introduced in the higher education system. They replaced the ancient acts of the Soviet period. More then 200 standards of education were created by academic society and approved by Council of Ministries. In 2002 the new text of the Law «On Education in the Republic of Belarus» was adopted. It was the first event in the CIS countries when a law proclaims the principles of university autonomy and academic freedoms, which follow the ideas of Magna Charta of 1215. Moreover, Ministry of Education and National Institute for Higher Education prepared the draft of the Law «On Higher Education» and it is now under consideration in the Parliament. The Council of Europe's expert team evaluated this draft and elaborated a

number of constructive proposals and recommendations, which were taken into consideration with gratitude.

Recently, Ministry of Education approved the Concept of Transition to Two-stage System of Higher Education in the Republic of Belarus and the Plan of the Urgent Tasks. According these documents the transition pursues the aims of Bologna Process and should be started immediately. The appropriate regulation must be created during the first year and the programs in basics, humanities and schoolteachers training will be switched upon the readiness. 2004 is expected to be the critical point. Necessity and expediency of technical programs transformation require the additional assessment and will be defined later. It is supposed that the programs in medicine will not be affected by the transition but the second stage will be introduced for the students who are going pay more attention to research or management in medicine. The Concept translation is given in annex.

There are the new Rules for Admission to Belarusian HEIs among the latest regulation news. The Rules are adopted by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus (Decision No. 72 from November 11, 2003). Since 2004 the rules become unified for all the HEIs including private ones. The main ideas are the following:

- The Rules are obvious for any HEI, both private or public
- The persons who are the owners of secondary or special secondary education certificate have the right to be admitted to a HEI
- The citizens of Russian Federation, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan (the members of Eurasian Economic Agreement) as well as the permanent inhabitants of Belarus and persons of Belarusian origin who live abroad can participate in the entrance competition to be admitted for free study in state privacy HEIs
- The state HEIs, which have the appropriate conditions, could enroll additional number of students, who pay for study
- To avoid aborting the best people, who tried the most prestige programs and lost competition, the HEIs divided into two groups. The first group of HEIs accepts applications for full-time study between 2nd and 8th June and the second one does between 23rd June and 17th July (private HEIs till 29th July). Part-time students apply later
- All the HEIs accept the results of national test in Russian or Belarusian (by choice) that is equal for the 2004 school leavers to the exit examination. As well the optional Centralized Tests results should be accepted instead of two exams in the program profile disciplines
- There are a lot of social privileges and bonuses for outstanding school leavers
- Special abilities for free of charge studies exist for Belarusians from abroad who are recommended by their local Belarusian communities
- For foreigners who are not mentioned above the special rules [smooth enough – note by S.Vetokhin] are applicable even if there is not any acting international treaty with the country of their origin.

RESEARCH

In 1991–1995 HEIs and research institutes of the Ministry of Education worked under stringent conditions of reduced budgetary allocations for research and unfavorable economic situation, severance of traditional links with the partners in the former USSR republics. However,

diversification of the sources of finance and more active negotiations with manufacturers allowed HEIs to protect the core of high qualified staff by dismissing only part of researchers who was not involved in teaching. The attention was focused on the projects of greater practical value and fundamental research. The major lines were optics and optical instrument making, computer sciences, electronics, synthesizing of new substances and materials, environmental control. Pedagogical problems, humanism and humanities have received much consideration. International relations of HEIs became more active.

Nowadays, budget funding of HEIs is on a stable level that allows fulfilling some republic wide research programs and projects in basic, humanities and applied science. Ministry of Education allocates the money for these purposes among the subordinated institutions in accordance with public evaluation councils' recommendations. The HEIs subordinated different ministries get their research funds from these ministries. Nevertheless, total funding of HEIs' research was cut in 10 times during the last ten years including 3.5 decrease of direct funding from the State Budget allocated by the Ministry of Education. The number of industry contracts fall down dramatically and the reviving of this activity appeared only recently.

Conference and exhibition activity of HEIs could be also supported. Annually Ministry of Education organizes and finances over 50 international and national wide scientific and methodical conferences.

There are some other sources of research support in Belarus. Belarusian Republic Fund for Fundamental Research supports mostly institutes of Belarusian Academy of Science and HEIs including private ones. It is possible to get an allowance from this Fund for monograph or textbook edition and printing. Some conferences annually receive a share of financing from the Fund.

Applied research and design are the subjects of State Committee for Science and Technology support. This Committee annually provides over 20 national wide technological and social programs as well as over a hundred of separate projects. Applicants should reach very important practical results like new technology or product and invest at least 10% of the project cost. The similar activity is provided by Republic Innovative Fond but the allocated money should be returned back in 3-5 years that is not so attractive for HEIs.

It is necessary to mention the specialized Fund of Informatization that supports basic and applied projects focused on «computerization». That means creation of local networks and Internet means, development of new hard and software.

Before 1990 it was a lot of industry contracts in Belarusian HEIs mainly with electronic, machinery and chemical enterprises from all the Soviet Union. Some of these contracts were not industrial but basic science or applied research to provide prospective development of production. Now, only Belarusian partners are of significance. Some last years show a few contracts with Russian enterprises. Instead of «union» market the international one opens for Belarusian HEIs, which find partners in Europe and Asia mainly.

The National Academy of Science of Belarus is among the major partners of university researchers. It does not allocate funds outside the Academy's system of research institutes but it coordinates the basic research in the republic and edits a number of prestige research journals that are opened and free for university contributors. The Academy is an

excellent place for student fellowships. Over 1/3 of Academy's employees are involved in joint research projects and in teaching in HEIs.

Ministry of Education, National Academy of Science and State Committee on Research and Technologies coordinate research and design activity by the national wide programs. In particular, it is the most important the participation of HEIs in two following programs:

- ❑ «Education and Personnel» is a branch program that runs since 1999 and focused on the secondary school reform support. In 2001 it was 236.9 million rubles allocated among the participants of the program.
- ❑ «Children of Belarus» is a presidential program that runs since 1998 and includes the subprograms «Children of Chernobyl», «Disabled Children», «Orphans» and «Development of the Social Service for Family and Children».

The researchers of the Belarusian HEIs achieved some significant results in new technology design. In Belarusian State University there was developed and put into practice a technology of precious metals extrusion from scrap. The output reached 6 million dollars in 2000. The enterprise Uniprom that is in ownship of the same university implemented a number of university models and annually produces medical devises of the total cost about 3 million dollars.

Belarusian State University of Transport designed the devises for rail wagon wheel pair testing that save over 10 million dollars for the Belarusian railways every year. Another technology of railway tanks upgrading brings up to 1.5 million dollars per year.

The results of research and design by Belarusian State University of Radioelectronics and Computer Science in micro- and nanoelectronics are awarded the National Premium in Science and Technology. This university carries out a number of contracts for the clients from China, India, Germany and Italy. It won a few great grants from INTAS, ESPERIT and COPERNICUS international programs. They produce also the computer based complex «Lukoml-2001» for permanent control of turbine-plant for power within 25-300 MWt and equipped with this complex 6 large power plants in Belarus and Russia.

Certification of industrial production is a very important direction of HEIs' applied activity. Belarusian State University of Radioelectronics and Computer Science, Belarusian National Technical University and Belarusian State University are in the lead in this way. The same establishments take the first place in the republic in software production for domestic and foreign clients.

Participation of HEIs' student in research is considered as a very important component of their training. During the first part of the last decade low students research activity was observed. Later the trend of their activity rising occurs and 10068 official participants were recorded (only 6669 students were on the list in 1994). HEIs' students published 4688 research papers in 2000 that is 5.7 times more then it was in 1994. 1700 students participated in the national wide competition of student research works. To develop this activity the Special Fund of the President of the Republic of Belarus on the Social Support of Advanced Student was established a few years ago. The Fund annually announces one hundred of prestige stipends.

ACADEMIC STAFF

There are university teacher staff (UTS) and researchers in the academic staff of a HEI. UTS includes professors, docents, senior

lecturers, lecturers and assistants. A researcher could occupy a position among the following: main researcher, leading researcher, senior researcher, researcher, junior researcher. As well, a part of methodists in HEIs and educational institutions works as researchers but they formally belong to supporting staff. Usually, engineers of research laboratories are involved in research, too. It is out of research staff obligation to deliver any education work but the majority of researchers are involved in the teaching process. This activity is extra paid.

Every HEI involves a lot of part-time teachers from different external HEI, research institutes, enterprises and government bodies. That allows using an additional experience, avoiding employment of more expensive extra permanent staff and supporting fruitful links with student employers and different stakeholders. Mainly, part-time teachers are enlisted for single narrow scientific courses delivering. A lot of such teachers are alumni of the employing HEI.

The members of UTS must participate in educational, research, methodical and creative activities of his/her department. Lectures, seminars, consultations, examinations and other forms of work with students take about 16 hours per week in average. This is the so called «the first half of a day». Different activities are included in «the second half of a day» within 36 hours of working week. Schedule of lessons and training labs covers the days from Monday till Saturday and from the very morning till late evening.

Ministry of Education approved The Recommendation on Teaching Work Planning in HEIs on November 29, 1999. According the document the first half of day should be within 450 and 1000 hours per year and includes at least 150 hours of lecturing. The Recommendation is the basic framework for the HEI's Academic Council decision. The last adopts the local rules for teacher work planning.

Every academic staff member has the right of an annual payable holiday. It has 8 weeks duration for teacher staff (Belarusian State University provides the teachers with 56 days holiday) and 4 weeks for research staff. Everybody has a right for an additional not payable holiday or days off under the certain personal circumstances. Also, by the Academic Council decision it is possible to receive a special holiday till 6 months for finishing candidate dissertation. The holiday for doctor dissertation finishing could be as long as 2 years and has a special title «Doctorantura».

For the period of the above-mentioned special holidays HEI administration can employ a different person under strictly terminated contract. Sometimes the department allocates the work of the «holiday person» between different members of the staff to avoid employment of extra personnel.

The Table shows the current cohort of UTS. It is necessary to add that there is good sex parity in the university teacher staff in Belarus. The difference is less than a half of percent in public HEIs on male favor; female teachers win in private HEIs. At the same time women have worse position among the persons awarded scientific degrees and titles especially in private HEIs.

Obviously, the staff crisis of the middle 90th is overcome. Nevertheless, the age distribution of the most qualified teachers is still distorted to the older person that indicates the problem of succession of generations.

UNIVERSITY TEACHER STAFF IN THE PUBLIC HEIS

Year	Full-time	Part-time	Degrees and titles of full-time staff			
			Doctor of Science degree	Candidate of Science degree	Title of Professor	Title of Docent
1990/91	15363	860	610	7341	618	5077
1995/96	16356	2552	843	7104	897	5271
1996/97	16520	2226	841	6989	925	5333
1997/98	16993	2358	843	6771	912	5140
1998/99	17150	2229	941	7162	1005	5455
1999/00	17881	3397	988	7269	1013	5430
2000/01	18530	3113	1040	7315	1059	5621
2001/02	19831	3562	1065	7302	1056	5534
2002/03	20305	4403	1144	7353	1120	5561
2003/04	19903	4324	1156	7293	1090	5537

UNIVERSITY TEACHER STAFF IN THE PRIVATE HEIS

Year	Full-time	Part-time	Degrees and titles of full-time staff			
			Doctor of Science degree	Candidate of Science degree	Title of Professor	Title of Docent
1999/00	1469	874	46	390	42	287
2000/01	1556	942	86	431	52	313
2001/02	1853	931	66	514	57	348
2002/03	2240	933	88	599	76	410
2003/04	2440	3540	104	745	102	470

EDUCATION FOR ALL, LIFELONG LEARNING AND UNIVERSITIES IN BELARUS

The discussions of Dakar World Conference (2000, Senegal) were focused mainly on the problems of illiteracy eradication and access to education. This scope meets first of all the needs of the least developed countries and concerns also Belarus in the way of sustainable development providing; develop of responsible, participatory and accountable systems of education, governance and management; promotion of mutual understanding, peace and tolerance; implementation as a matter of urgency educational programs and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic; creation of safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning; enhance of the status, moral and professionalism of teachers; harness of new information and communication technologies; systematical monitoring at the national level; building on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress towards the goals of education for all.

This list of the goals requires the clear national strategy that should include program documents, necessary resources and legislative support.

First of all this touches upon the national plan of actions that has been already approved by Minister of Education and it is expected to be implemented through the mechanism of the National forum under the Ministry of Education but with wide participation of different concerned bodies and people.

Regional Conference on Education for All in Europe and North America hold in Warsaw in February 2000 outlined the specific of the Region. Here, the attention was made primary on the real involvement in the process of learning of everybody to provide them with key skills used as personal development tools and as a basis for lifelong learning; initial vocational guidance; the knowledge, values and abilities that are need for individual development, and for the exercise of participatory and responsible citizenship in a democracy. The necessity to pay special attention to the right of disadvantage groups was stressed. The Conference reminded the recommendation to give for education high priority and not less 6% of country's GNP devoted to education by Commission on Education for the XXI century, chaired by Jacques Delors.

Obviously, the mentioned issues concern the higher education in two main ways. Initially, the higher education system is responsible for teachers' background and this system's institutions permanently contribute to the educational policy at the basic level. So, all listed in the beginning of this paper problems are actual items for higher education area, as well. At the other hand, this list reflects the problems of just higher education and lifelong learning systems. In particular, according to the decisions of the world conferences in Hamburg and Paris the universities were named as the centers of lifelong education and should consider this activity as their new mission.

So, Belarusian dimension of education for all program includes the actions focused directly on the quality and accessibility of existing compulsory basic education as well as more advanced levels of education and lifelong learning. Such approach is the most actual due to transition economy and fast changes of the labor market. Moreover, basic education in Belarus is rather good developed but actually it is the intermediate level of education because the majority of children intend to continue their education at the level of general secondary or vocational education and then at the college or university level. Therefore, the concept of basic education transforms from the formal stage of schooling into the philosophical principle of necessary education where college/university level becomes the core of the system.

The structural challenges of the last decade in Belarus have a great impact on the development of the national higher education system. Completed and current reforms that turn over the State to market economy and change the political orientation of the society demand to develop a new personnel education model. This leads to review the higher education structure and to match higher education content with the quest for national revival. Under these circumstances higher education establishments should become the basis for lifelong learning for all branches' specialists. This concerns schoolteachers, university staff,

managers and physicians retraining, engineering knowledge refreshing and upgrading and etc. Mostly, they are employed in the public sector. Nevertheless, the upcoming private sector also requires good educated personnel with critical thinking and flexible approaches to the facing problems.

Nowadays, there are three national level and seven regional institutes for retraining of pedagogical staff in the Belarusian system of education. Every accredited university is obliged to have in its structure a division for retraining of local personnel to serve its region. These institutions offer a number of different short-term courses for knowledge refreshment and rather long-term programs that lead to new qualifications. Students of national and regional public institutions are free of their tuition fee in such establishments if they are employed in the public institutions. Financing is provided by Ministry of Education or by a different ministry that is the main employer of the specialists. Ministry of Labor supports special courses for unemployed persons and former militaries.

International and foreign organizations also demonstrate high activity in Belarusian education. For example, MAGATE contributes to training of specialists for radiation control system, Public Affairs Service of the USA helps in computer and INTERNET users teaching through its agents, UNDP supports the programs for managers and etc. Official and commercial bodies of Germany, Great Britain and Russia and a number of joint ventures offer a lot of programs.

At the national level regulation of the process of adult learning is regulated by Law on Education, Law on Employment and some governmental decisions and statements. Now Ministry of Education is preparing the drafts of Law on Higher Education and Law on Professional Education that contain some provisions on retraining. In 2000 the government adopted the National Concept and Working Plan on the lifelong learning system development. Parliament approved on 19th of December 2001 the revised text of the Low on Education that is the basis for any different legislation and regulation in the field of education.

Monitoring of lifelong learning system at the national level is provided by Ministry of Statistics, Ministry of Economics and Ministry of Education. Different ministries make limited search in their branches. This activity seems to be difficult for a correct execution from behind absence of the authorized body and wide variety.

Program content for certified retraining courses is a matter of Ministry of Education responsibility. Graduate students of such courses are awarded their certificates that are nationally recognized. If a student who has a university degree passes over 1000 class hours with a certain program he/she can get a special diploma on a new qualification of higher education. So, this system seems to be the most flexible and effective in the fast changing world. And these are just universities that have required personnel, equipment and experience to provide this activity in the most reliable manner.

To provide the demands of adult population the universities arrange shifting classes and distance learning forms of education. Shifting classes are not popular now because this is too difficult to work and participate the lessons almost every day. Extramural learning becomes a main way of retraining for adults. There is a form with handbooks and guides supply in the usual practice. The electronic guides could be recommended as an additional source of information but their regular use is rather seldom from behind the shortage of equipment and teacher staff.

It is necessary to outline a few obstacles that hold back development of extramural learning in Belarusian higher education. First of all, this is a poor information base at the locations of the distance students: small libraries, absence of consulting offices, bad communication abilities. Shortage of handbooks (especially adapted for this cohort) is very significant factor, too. The next problem of Belarusian extramural education concerns the shortage of special oriented guidebooks, audio and video records, computer programs and communication networks outside the large cities. Then, there is lower background level of students from countryside in computer science and electronic communication whilst they are the main part of the cohort.

An idea of a virtual university has not any real chance to be implemented in Belarus under the existing conditions because of shortage and low capacity of computer informational network. Moreover, population of Belarus has not enough home personal computers that could be connected in network. So, the market of this service is too limited and it seems to be more profitable to use international facilities instead of establishing of domestic ones in the nearest future. Ministry of Education and Ministry of Communication conduct a number of projects for development of this system in Belarus. The projects are also supported by international organizations. As a result a few Internet providers have already operated on the Belarusian information market successfully. They created a few national computer networks. Some of them act in the system of education. All higher education institutions have already haven or started creation of their Web-sides.

Certain universities attempt to work out multimedia courses and courses for adult education among them. Effective assistance in teaching methods development is provided in Belarus by IAPT and British Council. The European, American and Russian experience is under investigation. Foreign education service providers like Open University offer their courses through Internet for the inhabitants of Belarus.

The Belarusian system of lifelong learning in higher education has good traditions and experience but it needs to be upgraded. Under great significance of this sector of education it is possible to expect appearance of new education forms and regulations to proved more equity and social cohesion. First of all the mission of the system as well as the role of universities in this system development is to be revised. These are among the most urgent goals of the government and different actors: providing of participation in the process of internationalization and globalization instead of the conservative policy; enabling of everybody to

contribute in the civil social based on the democratic values society; accordance the equal opportunity to everybody to update the competencies at every age and position. To achieve these goals the structure of the system as well as its governance should be changed. Partly, these ideas are already included in the mentioned above Concept whereas different ones are the subjects of the further consideration.

Any enhancement of the system requires taking into account the processes of internationalization and globalization in education. There are two main vectors in these processes that are directed respectably to CIS and European community. Just these vectors indicate two areas of education with their specific trends of development. Nevertheless, there are a number of common challenges and approaches on the background of internationalization and globalization. The fast and effective measures are claimed by population because of growing migration and academic mobility within and outside of the regions. This leads to appearance of the recognition instruments, systems and networks as well as unification of the national education systems to some extent.

Belarus needs take into account both vectors owing to its geopolitical situation. Traditionally, the close links with Russia and different CIS countries are among the priorities of Belarusian foreign policy. This is now shaped in the common education area for a few CIS members and bi- and multilateral treatments on recognition of education qualifications, documents and different achievements. Moreover, the CIS's Model Law on Retraining was recently adopted and it should be accompanied with similar model acts on all the levels of education in the nearest future. These decisions are the effective support of integration in the region and provide the citizens of the signatory countries with more abilities for migration. Belarus is a permanent and persistent champion of CIS integration in the sector of education and it is just Belarusian initiatives in the basis of the development in this area.

On the second vector, the majority of Ministers responsible for education of Western and Central European states signed Joint Declaration in 1999 in Italian Bologna. The Declaration defined the common principles of European higher education area development for the following decade. Belarus is not among the signatories but it is absolutely necessary to accept these principles to avoid isolation and make the national system more attractive for foreign students. The first step in this direction was made on January 4, 2002 when President of the Republic of Belarus signed the Decree on joining to the Lisbon convention on recognition of higher education qualification in European region. Belarusian State University started the experiment on two-stage higher education system approbation in 2001 that is also an important principle of Bologna Declaration. It is the most actual because the revised Law on Education demands just two-stage system of higher education in Belarus.

In spite of Hamburg Declaration definition of universities as the centers of lifelong learning the latest branch has a lot of very specific features and it realizes its goals through different channel and in

different ways that is wider than higher education system ability. There is the unique diversity of programs, qualifications and establishments as well as requirements and missions. In Belarus this system is the leader among the after secondary school educational sectors. Figure illustrates the structure of the Belarusian system (2001 year data) of lifelong learning that includes 377 schooling elements and only small part of them belongs to higher education. Branch schools seem to be dominating among them. This concerns schoolteachers and physicians retraining systems first of all.

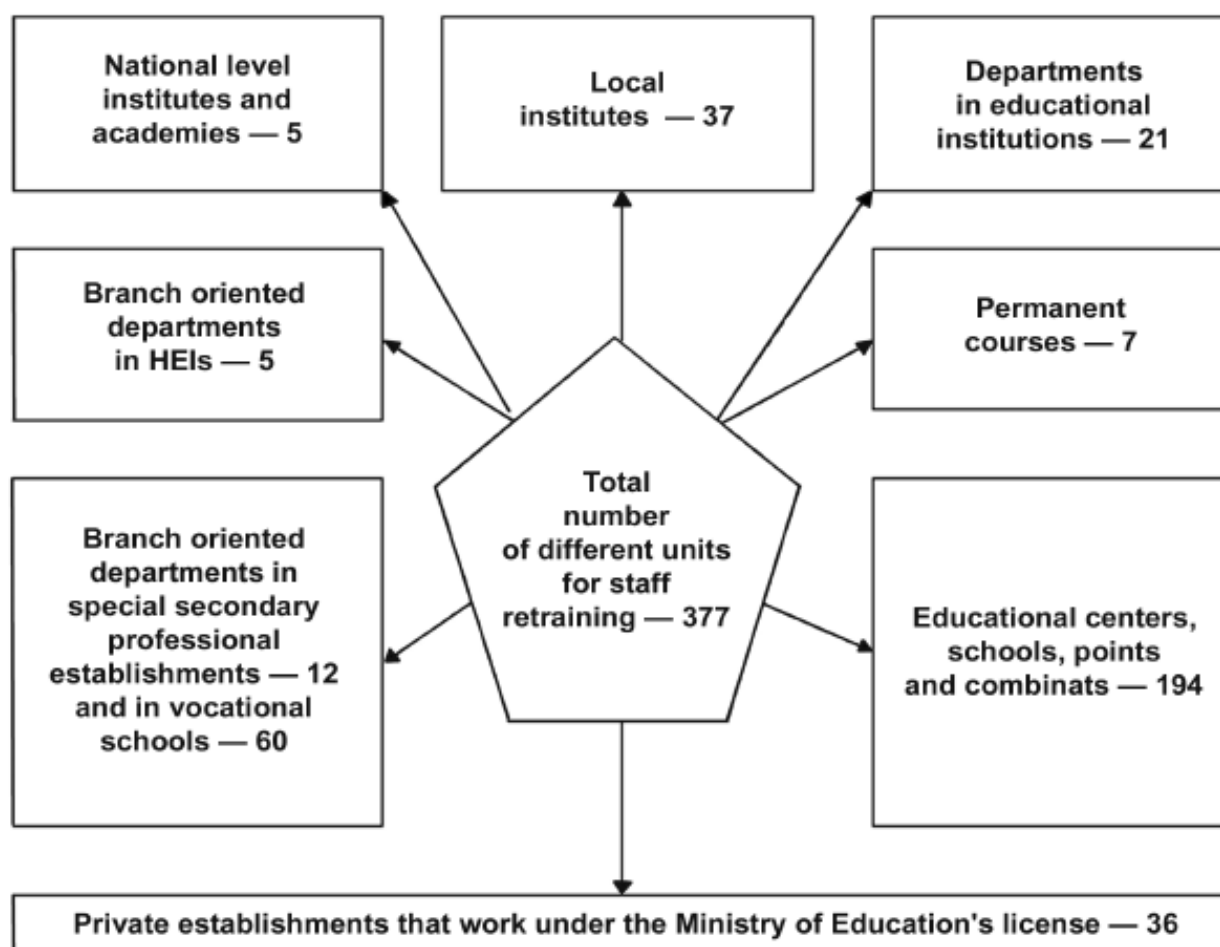
Private establishments are out of university system but recently a few non-state universities applied to Ministry of Education with proposals to include retraining in the list of their activity.

During the latest three years the Council of Europe organized the most valuable activity in lifelong learning. It was launched at a symposium held in Budapest in November 1998³ in accordance with the project⁴ «Lifelong Learning for Equity and Social Cohesion: a New Challenge to Higher Education» adopted by plenary session the Higher Education and Research Committee (CC-HER) in March 1998. The project reflects the Council of Europe's politic focused on social cohesion and fairness as building blocks of democracy. It concerns a crucially important field and runs in the context of the ongoing process of European higher education area reform conceived by the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations.

³ CC-HER (99) 20, Launching Symposium on Lifelong Learning for Equity and Social Cohesion: a New Challenge to Higher Education, General Report prepared by Professor Gerard Losfeld (France).

⁴ Council of Europe, Lifelong Learning for Equity and Social Cohesion: a New Challenge to Higher Education — accepted project proposal (April 1998); Lifelong Learning for Equity and Social Cohesion: a New Challenge to Higher Education, Progress Report (February 2000).

STRUCTURE OF LIFELONG LEARNING ESTABLISHMENTS IN BELARUS



This process was continued in the frameworks of the above-mentioned project by three following seminars:

1. Meeting the needs of all students in a changing society (Bomholm, Denmark, May 1999)⁵.
2. Application of information and communication technologies in lifelong learning (Catania, Italy, April 2000)⁶.
3. Structures and qualifications in lifelong learning (Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, November 2000)⁷.

There were represented a number of background papers prepared by the participating countries on the seminars' topics as well as special experts' reports. The project was concluded with the Final Conference held in Paris in November 2001 by CE together with the French Association of Universities and under patronage of French ministries of education and foreign affaires.

These seminars' participants discussed the problems of:

- a new strategy for social cohesion;

⁵ Proceedings of the Workshop on «Meeting the needs of all students in a changing society» (Bormholm, 1999).

⁶ Proceedings of the Workshop on «Application of the new information and communication technologies in lifelong learning» (Catania, 2000).

⁷ Proceedings of the Workshop on «Structures and qualifications in lifelong learning» (Kranjska Gora, Slovenia 2000).

- ❑ education for democratic citizenship fostering active participation in all spheres of life;
- ❑ extensive use of new information and communication technologies maximizing their educational potential;
- ❑ redefinition of the role of higher education institutions as it extends beyond their traditional missions into lifelong learning, and involves new clients and partners;
- ❑ development of operational lifelong learning strategies for higher education institutions and the higher education system as a whole.

The project resulted in the concept and recommendations on the lifelong learning system development in Europe⁸. The offered methodical background is of great importance, too. In particular, the concept of the process seems to be fine:

«Lifelong learning is a continuous learning process enabling all individuals, from early childhood to old age, to acquire and update knowledge, skills and competencies at different stages of their lives and in a variety of learning environments, both formal and non-formal, thus maximizing their personal development, employment opportunities and encouraging their active participation in a democratic society».

This definition concerns people of all ages and backgrounds at different stages of their life. It recognizes non-formal channels of education because it considers the top humanitarian mission of learning as priority and allows any way of its achievement. Such approach helps to prevent social exclusion and provide social equity. On the second hand it requires to arrange the developed market of educational services with access ability for everybody, quality assurance and qualification recognition systems. The effective use of universities' ability seems to be absolutely necessary to make the system successful.

So, the problems of education for all are bundled with the similar problems of higher education and lifelong learning. It is impossible to solve effectively these problems separately. Just the way of step-by-step flexible solutions in the interests of every education sector is selected in Belarus.

INTERNATIONALISATION AND GLOBALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Belarus is involved in the world processes of internationalisation and globalisation in higher education due to its participation in intergovernmental and international agreements, programs, projects as well through organized and wild mobility of the student and academicians. As a result of globalisation, people and universities are operating more and more internationally. These reflect the desires and intend more working and learning internationally.

Nowadays, there are 1.5 million of foreign students in OECD countries, twice as many as twenty years ago. Some 30% go to the United States, 13% to the United Kingdom, 7% to Germany and around 1% to the Netherlands.

⁸ Report by the Secretariat of the Final Conference «Lifelong Learning for Equity and Social Cohesion: A New Challenge to Higher Education» (Paris, 2001).

Belarusian HEIs provide learning about 3 thousands of foreign citizens who are from Russia, mainly (86%). This year a half of thousand of foreigners has been already admitted. Belarus aspires to make study for foreigners more attractive and involve an additional cohort of students from CIS and developing countries from all the world. The national concept on that issue is under consideration.

The creation of the common labour market within European Union implies that free movement of labour is also a European goal. If this is to be achieved, the harmonization of systems and integration of higher education will be essential. Republic of Belarus being out of the European Union is, nevertheless, strongly affected by the people mobility through western and eastern borders.

For many vectors of developments the aims of European Union and Republic of Belarus are equal but the national aims take into account the obligations and tradition of the Belarusian State within CIS and different agreements.

There are the aims, which are proclaimed in Bologna Declaration, among the common ones. Particularly, Belarus creates more attractive and more transparent education system, which is compatible with European Area of Higher Education and can compete with the other major education regions. Belarus shares the concept of lifelong learning in a European context that has recently been incorporated into Bologna process as an important part of higher education sphere of interests and responsibility. The most visible and, for educational institutions, far-reaching instrument of the Bologna process is the Europe-wide introduction of the bachelor-master structure that has been already introduced in Belarus by law. It is expected the introduction of bachelor's and master's degrees will probably have an impact on mobility – both positive and negative.

System of ECTS should be among the most effective instruments of the positive student mobility. ECTS compatible system introduction is on the national agenda.

Brain drain is usually considered as a negative phenomenon because of losses of specialists and the most prospective young people. Nevertheless, recent research into the brain drain (Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education) has changed received opinion concerning not rich countries.

Globalisation presents as well in the international quality assurance system that is under creation in the Europe. Joint degrees, programs, qualifications, criteria for assessment and approaches are in the process of elaboration in the framework of Bologna Process. The existing Belarusian system of quality assurance meets main European requirement and includes national, branch and institutional elements but it is open for new ideas and approaches. A number of Belarusian HEIs runs joint programs together with European and USA universities.

At the same time there are a few apprehensions about globalisation aims, which are pursued by Bologna Process, in the countries out of European Union as well as among some huge West Europe universities. In Belarus such apprehensions exist among technical universities, mainly.

First of all, the danger of quality of education decrease is called. Indeed, cutting the terms of study due to switching from Germany-Russian university system to pragmatic bachelor/master one can't be compensated with enhanced technology of education. On the other hand, there are a few successful experiments of transition to two-circle system of higher education in Belarusian classic and technical (including public and private) HEIs. This allows expecting positive outcomes but taking into account peculiarities of separate branch programs and employers' requirements.

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