



SCHOOL INSPECTION IN BULGARIA

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CONTENTS

1. School education system in Bulgaria
2. School inspection
3. School planning and improvement
4. Conclusion

1. SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN BULGARIA

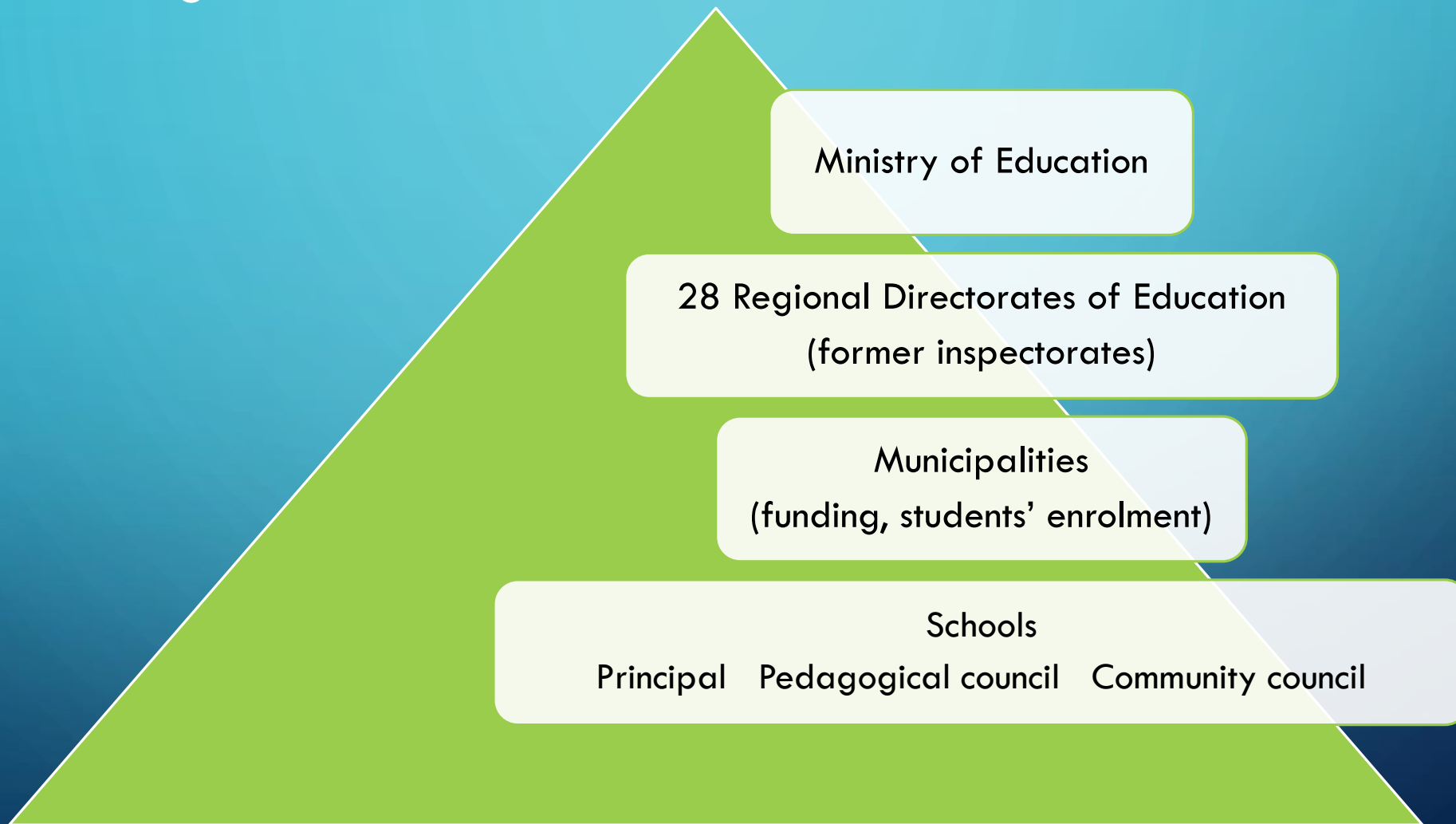
☐ Compulsory education

- 5-7 years – pre-school
- 7-16 years - school

☐ 12 grades – levels/stages of education

- Elementary – 1-4 grade (national exam)
- Middle school – 5-7 grade (national exam)
- Lower secondary – 8-10 grade (certificate)
- Upper secondary 11-12 (diploma, matura – entrance to higher education)

SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN BULGARIA – levels of governance



SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN BULGARIA (3)

- Highly centralized governance
- Relatively low school autonomy, but high financial autonomy
- Rather high teacher autonomy
- School principals are appointed by RDE
- Teachers are appointed by the principal
- Variety of types of schools, majority financed by local authorities
- Not satisfying PISA results
- New Preschool and school education Act since 2016 – lots of changes introduced

2. SCHOOL INSPECTION

- School inspectors – since 1879 as officials, subordinated to the Secretary of Education, responsible for executing control, external evaluation and support of schools and teachers in respective regions of the country.
- Up to 2016 – 28 Regional inspectorates of education, subordinated to ME
- Main functions: control and support schools

Types of inspections:

- full (whole single school inspection)
- thematic – on particular area of education provided (single school or group of schools in the region)
- ongoing (inspection of principal or a teacher)
- incidental

SCHOOL INSPECTION (2)

- Regulations on school inspection but no national standards (although few frameworks were designed and tested over the years)
- Inspection methods: checking school documentation, classroom observation, discussion with school principal or the inspected teacher, and, rarely – discussion with other stakeholders (students, parents) or analysis of other sources of information.
- Inspection documentation: year plan, order for inspection, report (to the principal with recommendations for improvement and to the chief inspector), year report to the minister of education
- School reports were not public or shared with stakeholders
- Community-consultative council - consultative body established in some inspectorates

SCHOOL INSPECTION – recent changes

- Since end of 2016 – new inspection regulations
 - National inspectorate of education established, independent from the ME
 - It will develop the national standards for inspection
 - ‘The aim of the inspection is to determine the level of accomplishment of the state educational standards and to formulate an evaluation of the strengths of the educational institutions’ activities and of the aspects that need improvement’.

SCHOOL INSPECTION – recent changes (2)

- Only single school full inspection – every 5 years or less depending on the evaluation received
- Only control, not support function
- Support function to be implemented by RDE (former RIE) and they will continue to implement the other types of ‘checks’
- 2 types of inspectors – internal and external
- Variety of methods to be used, all stakeholders' opinions to be taken into account
- School self-evaluation will be taken into account
- Inspection report to be provided to the principal and to the RDE (not yet public or obligatory shared with all stakeholders)

3. SCHOOL PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENT

- By education law each school is obligated to have a 4-years strategic plan – RDE/RIE checks it, but not enough competency or support at school level
- In 2016 a compulsory school self-evaluation (every 2 years) was introduced as part of quality management system in education
- Self-evaluation is linked to strategic school planning and school improvement
- All stakeholders need to participate in it
- School self-evaluation is linked to inspection (2 means for school improvement and common areas)
- No national indicators on school self-evaluation, to be developed by each school, no methodological support by the ME
- School self-evaluation canceled end of 2017

SCHOOL PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENT (2)

- Inspection reports will include recommendations for improvements – it is obligatory to be addressed by the school by preparing a school improvement plan and by receiving support by the RDE and not by the National inspectorate
- No detailed regulations on how the RDE will support school in school improvement planning and implementation

CONCLUSION

- Inspection system is currently being reformed through introduction of some new regulations but its practical applications are yet to be seen
- In some aspects, Bulgaria will be in line with more developed European countries (through establishment of national standards for inspection, creation of National Inspectorate, taking into account all stakeholders' opinion, implementation of various inspection methods), but in other aspects it is still not in tune with some innovative inspection approaches.
- Emerging and good inspection practices from Bulgaria and other European countries, for example inspections of network of schools, were not included in the new regulations and thus a chance for introducing more innovative approaches to school inspection were missed at this point.