Digital Skills &
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Bulgaria – Concept for the Development of Artificial Intelligence in Bulgaria until 2030

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The Concept for the Development of Artificial Intelligence in Bulgaria until 2030 was adopted by the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology, and Communications **in 2020. The primary goal of the Concept is to concentrate efforts on the development and implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems.** This involves creating research, expert, business, and management capacities while supporting the coordination of measures and activities outlined as priorities in relevant national strategic documents, including the "Vision, Goals, and Priorities for the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2030".

The Concept presents policy initiatives for the development of AI in Bulgaria for the period 2020-2030. It offers a comprehensive policy vision for the development and use of AI in Bulgaria and identifies main areas of impact such as infrastructure and data availability, research and innovation capacity, knowledge and skills, and building trust in society.

The main objectives defined are:

- Nurturing a solid knowledge and skills base in AI.
- Developing a strong research capacity for scientific excellence.
- Supporting innovations to foster the implementation of AI in practice.
- Building a reliable infrastructure for AI development.
- Ensuring sustainable conditions for financing AI developments.
- Raising awareness and building trust in society.
- Creating a regulatory framework for the development and use of reliable AI in accordance with international regulatory and ethical standards.

The document proposes a comprehensive vision for the development and use of artificial intelligence in Bulgaria, based on the strategic and programmatic documents of the European Commission, which recognize artificial intelligence as a primary driver of digital transformation in Europe.

Regarding education and lifelong learning, the strategy emphasizes the role of AI and the need to increase the number of specialists working with AI. The Concept emphasizes both mass basic training in the field of AI in vocational secondary and higher education, which includes necessary technological disciplines and training content related to management and business skills. As stated in Bulgaria's national AI strategy, education reforms are needed across all education levels, as well as placing greater emphasis on vocational training and lifelong learning, to enable people to acquire and improve their digital and AI-related skills.

The following initiatives are undertaken by the [Ministry of Education and Science](#) **to actively increase the knowledge and skills in AI:**

- Applying AI tools in education to increase the quality, attractiveness and efficiency of the learning process.
- Improving students' competencies in ethical issues related to the use of information technologies.
- Planning measures to increase students' participation in STEM subjects.
- Expanding bachelor and masters programmes with AI-related courses, not only restricted to computer science but targeting multidisciplinary fields. This may also include courses with a specific focus on the legal, ethical and social aspects of AI.
- Creating adequate conditions for a sharp increase in the number of PhD students in AI fields.
- Enhancing teachers' competencies in teaching and working with digital and AI technologies.

Policies related to vocational training, retraining and lifelong learning include among others:

- Offering short-term trainings and traineeships aimed at acquiring and upgrading digital skills in programming and data analytics.
- Designing and implementing life-long learning programmes to expand the stock of IT professionals with AI-related skills.
- Setting up specialised (re-)qualification schemes for professional profiles at risk of unemployment due to automation, in cooperation between business, trade unions, higher education institutions and public authorities.
- Creating more opportunities for the validation of non-formal learning to ensure more flexible labour mobility.
- Building an Education and AI platform with online AI courses, educational policies, and good practices for AI in education.

Strategy Details

Website link

[Concept for the Development of Artificial Intelligence in Bulgaria until 2030](#)

Target audience

Digital skills for the labour force.
Digital skills for ICT professionals and other digital experts.
Digital skills in education.
Digital skills for all

Digital technology / specialisation

[Artificial Intelligence](#)
[Digital skills](#)
[Digital transformation](#)

Digital skill level

[Intermediate](#)
[Advanced](#)
[Digital Expert](#)

Geographic scope – Country

Bulgaria

Target language

English

Geographical sphere

National initiative

Organisation

[Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communication of Bulgaria](#)

Timeline/roadmap

Published in 2020. Actions for period 2020-2030.

Budget

The main sources of funding for the activities implementing the Concept are the Bulgarian Government budget, the Structural Funds of the European Union and programmes of the European Union "Horizon 2020" and "Digital Europe", as well as the National Plan for Reconstruction and Sustainability and other international programmes.

Stakeholder Involvement

The Concept is based on documents developed by a team of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) and external experts, and finalized by experts of the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications (MTITC) after a public consultation with the state institutions and interested stakeholders.

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