1. INTRODUCTION

There are 4 universities in Bulgaria that are specialized in the field of the geotechnical design and construction. The oldest one is the University of Civil Engineering in Sofia, which was found in 1942 and is recognized as the bearer of the traditions of the education in construction engineering.

The education in the Bulgarian universities is at two levels after graduating the bachelor's degree - the first one is the master's degree and the second is the doctor's degree. The University of Civil Engineering consists of 2000 students in 6 specialties. The master's degree continues 5 years and the last 10th term is supposed to be the time for the preparation and defense of a graduation work before a State Exam Commission. The positive decision of the Commission gives the right for the student to project buildings and constructional installations. In addition the Bulgarian chamber of the civil engineers legalizes that right through giving a license.

2. THE PRESENT SITUATION

According to the university programs, the geotechnical education is organized at the fifth and sixth term of the education.

The fifth term is devoted to Soil Mechanics which includes lectures 45 hours. The main topics are:

- Physical and mechanical characteristics of the soil - laboratory and field methods for determination;
- Stress and strains of the soil (including consolidation)
- Soil stability

At the same time it is provided a practical part for 15 hours a week. It consists of laboratory work and it corresponds to the geotechnical projecting - defining the characteristics of the soil - plasticity and consistence, strain and strength characteristics. We use contemporary methods of investigation, but not so contemporary installations and equipment. The students work in small groups - each of them does the experimental research and then by themselves they process the results and define the exact characteristics. Each step of the research is according to the Bulgarian standards. The term is finished through the defense of the graduation work.

The sixth term education continues with the support constructions and foundations. The lectures are 30 hours for the term and the main topics are:

- Support constructions: support walls; geotextile walls; Diaphragm and pile walls; classical and prestress anchors.
• Foundation: flat, strip and raft foundation; foundation under dynamic loads; pile foundation; foundation pit; foundation in special soils; foundation reconstruction.

The practical work in the sixth term requires the preparation of project-support constructions. It covers the following elements: flat and pilot fundamentals and support and diaphragm walls.

The results of the project are shown in constructional designs and the level of development does not include the reinforcement of different constructions elements.

The geotechnical education finishes with an exam-recognized as a classical sketch with discussion. The last part is very important as the knowledge of the students is highly estimated.

One of the specialties (Road engineering) at the university introduces Rock Mechanics. It is studied in the sixth term and consists of 30 hours:
- Characteristics of rocks
- Rock slope stability. Hardening.
- Movement of rock blocks on slopes.
- Rock foundation

The practical work of that discipline includes 15 hours per term and prepares matters about the characteristics and the stability of the swaths.

The geotechnical education finally goes to its end with the student's practical work in summer when they are introduced to building sites.

We should not forget and consider the fact that a lecturer from the University of Civil Engineering in Sofia founded a scholarship at the name of the founder of the Department B.Balushev which is motivating for the best students. We should consider in a positive aspect the master's degree program in geotechnical engineering for civil engineers. It emerged just one year ago, so we shall not include in this report any results.

3. ESTIMATION OF THE GEOTECHNICAL EDUCATION

The mentioned scheme of education showed vitality and reliability in the past years. There are about 35000 civil engineers in Bulgaria now who are capable of resolving most of the matters of the building and undoubtedly the most common of the geotechnical problems.

As a result of the economic and political changes in the last 15 years, a great part of the civil engineers were made to work in other fields of the economy, the number of the students wishing to study civil engineering has decreased about three times and more than one million young people (ambitious, decisive and progressive) has emigrated. Those resulted in the general quality of the civil engineering education. The great opportunities of West Europe universities attract more and more young people to continue their education in the same prestigious universities. That increases the competition outside and decreases the competition inside the country. This will not lead to negative results in future as a great number of the students studying in Bulgaria will have to compete with those who are coming back to Bulgaria trying to find prestigious and prospective job. At the market economy conditions partially some of the problems will go deeper to their natural solution.

We may conclude the main problems in the geotechnical education in Bulgaria-it includes the following matters:
- the fifth and sixth term are a quite early level for a deep study of the geotechnical knowledge.
- the lack of access to contemporary geotechnical software.
- the necessity of adaptation of the Bulgarian education to the strengthening world trend for emphasizing on the independent work of the students related to the great and necessary services of the world net.
- here we should mention also the aging of the university lecturers which is in close
connection with the lack of financial interest and motivation for development in the field of the science among the notable young engineers.

4. PERSPECTIVES

The implementation of some reforms and the inevitable harmonizing of the education with the European directives would lead to an overcome of a great part of the latter problems. This includes an increase of the payment of the university lecturers which could lead to an attraction of young specialists. The transformation to paid education including possibilities for bank loans, scholarships from companies, state administration and foundations will also increase the responsibility of the students, the control level and the possibilities for later realization.

A high quality education in the field of geotechnical science is impossible without contemporary research equipment. The opening of masters programs in relation with prestigious European universities and the opportunities of students and lecturers exchange will increase the level of the education. The necessity of target financing, the application for a number of projects of the European Union and the cooperation in that aspect of the universities in general and especially those from South East Europe are the right way of the future development.

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