



FOR INTERNAL USE

European Network of Public Employment Services

PES Capacity Questionnaire
Country Factsheet

Bulgaria
Employment Agency (EA) of Bulgaria
2019



Written by ICON INSTITUT Public Sector GmbH
October 2019

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INSTITUT

Social Europe

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
Directorate B — Employment
Unit B1 — Employment Strategy

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The European Network of Public Employment Services was created following a Decision of the European Parliament and Council in June 2014¹. Its objective is to reinforce PES capacity, effectiveness and efficiency. This activity has been developed within the work programme of the European PES Network. For further information: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESNetwork>.

This activity has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation 'EaSI' (2014-2020). For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>.

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¹ DECISION No 573/2014/EU

About the Employment Agency (EA) of Bulgaria

Name of PES	Employment Agency of Bulgaria
PES Website address	www.az.government.bg
PES contact person and email address	Ani Delibasheva a.delibasheva@az.government.bg

1. Background

1.1. Status of the national PES

The EA is an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. At the national level, information is exchanged between the EA, the National Revenue Agency, the Executive Agency of the General Labour Inspectorate and other Ministries.

The main objectives of the PES are to:

- Reduce unemployment with a focus on the labour market integration of disadvantaged groups;
- Implement policies on employment protection and the labour market
- Facilitate job search;
- Provide vocational training.

The EA is managed by an Executive Director assisted by two Deputy Executive Directors. The administrative management of the EA is performed by the Secretary General. The Information Security Official, the Director of Internal Audit Directorate and the Financial Controllers are directly subordinate to the Executive Director.

1.2. Geographical organisation

The PES is organised on the following structure:

Level	Description
National	<i>Head Office</i> – organised into eight directorates
Regional	Nine <i>regional offices</i>
Local	<i>Local labour offices (107) with branches (145)</i> facilitating the provision of services to jobseekers and employers

1.3. Relationships and cooperation with other organisations

The PES operates and cooperates with a range of organisations and with different types of relationships, the principal ones being as follows:

- The PES is overseen by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.
- Information is exchanged between the PES, the National Revenue Agency, the Executive Agency of the General Labour Inspectorate, and other ministries.

1.4. Key PES responsibilities



The key activities and tasks and the PES responsibilities within them are set out in the table below:

Activities/Tasks	PES Responsibility
Implementation of services of individualised assistance (e.g. intensive counselling and guidance, job-search assistance) and follow-up for unemployed people provided as part of a planned path towards durable (re-)employment (cf. services as in Eurostat LMP database Category 1.1.2).	Fully responsible
Implementation of ALMP (Active Labour Market Policies) measures (any measures within Eurostat LMP database cat. 2-7) financed by national funds or ESF (the European Social Fund) co-funding.	Fully responsible
Administration of the national unemployment benefit (UB) scheme (handling of UB claims, payments, financial planning and reporting, etc.)	Not responsible However, the PES registers unemployed jobseekers with the right to unemployment benefits and provides data on their status to the institution responsible for payment, the NSSI.
Administration of social types of allowances (e.g. child allowances for UB recipients), please specify each allowance separately:	Not responsible
Administration of benefits for people with disabilities or handicapped people, please specify which exact group(s) are covered:	Not responsible
Approval of layoffs by employers. Please specify if this concerns specific conditions or situation only:	Partly responsible – the PES responds to the registration of mass redundancies by taking preventive measures to relocate the released workforce to other activities and sectors. The EA supports employers who have declared mass redundancies with consultations and the training of redundant workers.
Licensing and supervising private employment agencies (PrES), please specify whether this covers PrES, temporary work agencies, or another type of service provision by private companies:	Partly responsible – the PES is responsible for registering the PrES and temporary work agencies. It keeps a register of the issued certificates, but the monitoring and control of these agencies is carried out by the Executive Agency of the General Labour Inspectorate.
Notification of apprenticeship places and placement of apprenticeship candidates:	Partly responsible - regular publication of vacancies for apprenticeships within the framework of the European Solidarity for Youth project implemented by the EA as a PES-France partner

Activities/Tasks	PES Responsibility
Career advice and guidance for young people still in education:	Partly responsible - the labour offices offer professional orientation for young people in their final two years of secondary education.
Acting as Managing Authority for the ESF:	Not responsible
Managing training centre for jobseekers (that are an integral part of the PES:	Not responsible
Issuing work permits for third country nationals (e.g. dealing with applications, approving and issuing, keeping records, reporting, etc.)	Fully responsible
Other – please specify:	None

1.5. PES good practices

Examples of good practice in the Bulgarian PES identified by the European Network of PES are listed below:

EN		PES Practice: National Programme 'Support for Retirement'	2015
EN		PES Practice: 'I Can'	2015

Source: EC DG EMPL, PES Practices: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1206&langId=en>.

2. Annual expenditure

Total PES expenditure increased by EUR 10 million or 57% between 2013 and 2018, reaching EUR 68 million by the end of the period. Within this total, expenditure on ALMPs (Active Labour Market Policies) fell by 17%. Expenditure on staff costs remained stable over the period, at between EUR 12 million and EUR 13 million.

The principal sources of funding for PES activities are the Government Budget and the ESF.

Table 1. Annual expenditure summary (EUR million)

Expenditure category	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total PES	58	57	45	45	51	68
All types of benefits	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ALMPs	43	42	31	32	36	36
Staff costs	12	13	11	11	12	13
Staff training costs	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Budget intended for other institutions	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other expenditure	3	3	3	3	3	19

Source: The Annual PES Benchlearning Data Collection.

3. Human resources

The total number of PES staff increased by approximately 608 people or 25% between 2016 and 2019, reaching around 3 005 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) at the end of December 2018. The proportion of staff directly and exclusively servicing jobseekers was 41% in 2019, they are in territorial offices and they provide mediation services to jobseekers, although some might also occasionally work with employers. The total number of employees increased with the recruitment of additional staff for the implementation of newly approved and recently started projects.

The proportion of total staff working directly with employers is around 27% and while for most this is a major part of their work, they are not necessarily exclusively working with employers. This figure includes employees in dedicated employers' teams and mobile teams for working with key and structured employers, directors of the Labour Office and Head of Departments, as well as ALMP employees.

Overall staff turnover in 2019 was 21%.

Table 2. Staffing summary (FTE, as at 30 April each year)

Staff category	2016	2017	2018	2019**
Total PES staff	2 397	2 905	3 000	3 005*
Of which (absolute and in % of total PES staff):				
Exclusively servicing jobseekers	1 836	1 272	1 280	1 226
% exclusively servicing jobseekers	77%	44%	43%	41%
Exclusively servicing employers	225	885*	740	826
% exclusively servicing employers	9%	30%	25%	27%
Staff turnover (for all reasons – figure for calendar year)	16%	15%	N/A	21%

*Note: Of this total, 403 FTE are employees serving jobseekers, employers and employees in the central administration of the PES.

**Figure at end December 2018.

Source: Responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire.

4. Registered unemployed

The number of registered unemployed jobseekers fell by 168 387 or 45% between 2013 and 2018, ending the period at 202 994. Over the same period, participants benefitting from ALMPs decreased by 1 303 or 66%, with 674 in ALMP-measures in 2018.

Table 3. Registered unemployed jobseekers and participants in ALMPs (average monthly stock each year)

Client Group	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Registered unemployed jobseekers*	371 381	366 472	330 817	284 707	236 753	202 994
Participants in ALMPs**	1 977	1 639	1 025	1 075	740	674

*The number of people registered with the PES, who are available for the labour market and who are, or should be, looking for a job, excluding those on any active labour market policy (ALMP) measure.

** The number of people participating in ALMP measures in the following categories (according to the LMP database): Training (Category 2); Job rotation and job sharing (Category 4.3); Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation (Category 5); and Direct job creation (Category 6).

Source: The Annual PES Benchmarking Data Collection.

5. Job Vacancies

Table 5. PES Job vacancies

The monthly average of job vacancies notified to the PES increased by 2 346 or 13% between 2013 and 2018, reaching 20 322 in 2018. The proportion of monthly average job vacancies notified to the PES that were filled stood at 84% in 2018, from which 60% were filled within 60 days of notification in the same year.

The share of the job finders who found their present job with PES involvement at any point has slightly decrease between 2013 and 2018 from 12.6% to 8.3%.

Table 4. PES Job vacancies

Vacancy measure	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Vacancies notified to the PES (monthly average inflow) *	17 976	19 320	18 144	20 742	19 939	20 322
Vacancies notified to the PES that were filled (monthly average outflow at the end of the month) *	17 041	16 329	14 232	15 714	16 209	17 038
Vacancies notified to the PES that were filled within 60 days of notification (monthly average outflow at the end of the month) *	5 710	7 170	9 002	11 914	11 976	12 117
Share of the unemployed who stated in Eurostat's Labour Force Survey that the PES was involved at any moment in finding the present job (<i>proxy for vacancies filled with PES assistance</i>) **	12.6%	8.4%	6.2%	7.3%	5.8%	8.3%

Source:

* The Annual PES Benchlearning Data Collection.

** The European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS).

6. Active labour market policies (ALMPs)

A new employment measure was introduced in 2018 (see Table 5). Eight amendments were made to existing measures last year (see Table 6).

Table 5: New ALMPs introduced in 2018

Intervention name	Target group(s)	Type
<i>Проект „Работа“, по ОП РЧР</i> <i>Job Project under the OP HRD</i>	Unemployed and inactive people, with priority being given to the following groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term unemployed (registered in the Labour Offices for over 12 months without interruption); Newly registered as unemployed (economically inactive people) who, according to information from the National Revenue Agency, have not worked during the previous 12 months; Unemployed people. 	2, 4, 6

* Classification of ALMPs according to the EU LMP database: Training (Category 2); Employment incentives (including job rotation and job sharing) (Category 4); Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation (Category 5); Direct job creation (Category 6); and Start-up incentives (Category 7).

Source: Responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire.

Table 6. ALMPs modified in 2018

Intervention name	Target groups	Type	Main modifications
<i>Национална програма „Активиране на неактивни лица“</i> <i>National 'Activation of inactive people' Programme.</i>	Registered unemployed people with a minimum level of secondary education, appointed as organizers of community service under the Programme in the municipal administrations.	4	Activation and rehabilitation of working habits attitudes of recipients of social benefits by improving the organisation of socially useful work.
<i>New opportunity for youth employment</i>	Unemployed youth up to 29 years.	6	Increase in project duration and the budget
<i>Training and employment for youth</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployed youth up to 29 years; Inactive and unemployed youth with permanent disabilities aged up to 29 years. Priority to population with an established level of reduced working capacity (degree of disability 75% and over). 	6, 2	Increase in duration and budget of the project.
<i>Training and employment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployed people over 29 years; Inactive and unemployed people with permanent disabilities aged over 29. Priority to population with an established level of reduced working capacity (degree of disability 75% and over). 	6, 2	Increase in duration and budget of the project.
<i>Parents in employment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployed youth up to age 29; 	4, 6,	Increase in budget.

Intervention name	Target groups	Type	Main modifications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobseekers, unemployed and inactive people over 30; People disadvantaged in the labour market. 		
<i>Adult education for passing literacy courses</i>	Unemployed people with basic and lower education, or no education, over 16 years old and registered with the Labour Office.	2	Programme duration extended
<i>Vouchers for employed</i>	Employed people with secondary or lower education.	2	Programme duration extended
<i>Ready-to-work</i>	Economically inactive young people aged 15-29 who are not in education, training or employment and who are not registered with the Labour Office Directorate.	4	Programme duration extended

Source: Responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire.

* Classification of ALMPs according to the EU LMP database: Training (Category 2); Employment incentives (including job rotation and job sharing) (Category 4); Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation (Category 5); Direct job creation (Category 6); and Start-up incentives (Category 7).

The following table shows the types of ALMPs that are primarily used for each of the client sub-groups listed in the table.

Table 7: Types of ALMP for specific client groups

Target group Type of ALMPs	Young people (aged under 25)	Long-term unemployed	Older workers	Disabled	Refugees*
2: Training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4: Employment incentives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5: Supported employment and rehabilitation				✓	
6: Direct job creation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7: Start-up incentives	✓	✓	✓	✓	

*Applies only to those with a temporary or permanent resident permit (status).

Source: Responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire.

7. Main strategic targets for 2018

Table 8 lists the main strategic targets set by the PES in 2018 for all clients and for sub-groups. The first column describes the indicators used, while the second column contains the actual targets set.

In a managerial effort to assess the PES performance in line with the benchmarking methodology, a more comprehensive and complex list of indicators were introduced in 2018.

Table 8. Targets for all clients in 2018

Indicator, including target group and time frame where applicable	Target(s) set for 2018
Average annual unemployment rate	Decrease by 0.7% vs. 2017
Sustainable transitions from unemployment to employment	8.0% of the registered unemployed
Fast transitions to employment for the unemployed registered for up to 6 months	65% of all transitions
Transition to sustainable employment on the primary market for long-term unemployed - 65% of all transitions	16% of all transitions to employment
Transitions in sustainable employment of young people up to 29 years	20%
Open new jobs	Increase by 12% vs. 2017
Entry into employment after participation in labour exchanges and other information events	Increase by 2% vs. 2017
Young people who started work after taking part in job fairs	Increase by 5% vs. 2017
Newly registered employees, students, retirees	Increase by 2% vs. 2017
Number of Roma included in Active Labour Market Policies	Increase by 5% vs. 2017
Included in adult long-term unemployed training	Increase by 1% vs. 2017
Number of inactive young people identified and activated	Increase by 5% vs. 2017
Counselling and careers guidance for jobseekers at Careers Centres	Increase by 10% vs. 2017
Administrative services provided to citizens and organizations (number), incl. services realised electronically	Increase by 10% of the services provided by electronic means
New Opportunities for the Youth Employment Programme (2014-2020): unemployed people up to 29 years of age	3 400 people
Training and Employment Programme (2015-2023): inactive and unemployed people over 29 years	5 000 people have a job when leaving the operation, of which 1 000 people were included in employment after training
Training and Employment for Youth Programme (2015-2023): unemployed people aged 15-29	5000 people, of which 500 people included in employment after training
National EURES (European Employment Services) Network Programme (2015-2018): (1) Jobseekers with EURES support services, incl. information and consultation	(1) 37 100 jobseekers (2) 216 employers

Indicator, including target group and time frame where applicable	Target(s) set for 2018
(2) Employers with EURES support services, incl. information and consultation	
Prepared for a Job Project Programme (2018-2019): inactive participants from age 15 to 29 not in training or education	4 300 participants
Parents in employment project (2017-2020)	900 parents
Vouchers for employed project (2016-2021)	15 000 beneficiaries
Project training of adults who have passed literacy courses (2016-2019)	1 000 adults
Job project (2018-2019)	9 700 people

Supporting Youth

Implementing the Youth Guarantee

Responsibilities for the Youth Guarantee

The PES is just one of the implementing agencies of the national Youth Guarantee (YG) and it has the following responsibilities:

- Registration of young people
- Provision of PES services including YG services to young people
- Coordination of partners
- Outreach to NEETs
- Follow-up of all young people who receive YG services
- Design and maintenance of the YG monitoring system (including indicators)

The Coordination Council (managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP)) oversees the implementation of the National Plan for the Youth Guarantee 2014-2020. The MLSP, in consultation with the Coordinating Council, issues instructions on specific tasks that need to be performed in the framework of the YG.

The PES plays a key role in liaising with young people, contacting employers and collaborating with partner organisations bringing together PES counsellors, Roma mediators, psychologists and case managers. Each local labour office has two staff members dedicated to the implementation of the YG.

To reach out to NEETs who have not yet registered, the PES conducts information campaigns and workshops. In addition, the EA website has a dedicated page on the YG. An institutional agreement for identifying and activating young people has been drafted.

The PES is also responsible for collecting and compiling data on all services, programmes and measures targeting unemployed young people.

Involving young people and youth organisations

The young people and youth organisations regularly participate in interdepartmental working groups for designing/re-designing or improving the YG services.

Partnerships in place and main developments

- *Partnerships to ensure that young people have full information and support available* - PES works in partnership with the educational institutions for training and career guidance provision;
- *Partnerships aimed at increasing employment, apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities* – cooperation with employers and social partners for the development of apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities;
- *Partnerships aimed at supporting transitions from unemployment, inactivity or education into work* - ongoing partnership with MLSP (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy).

Many other partnerships, based on signed agreements, are in place at the local level, with all institutions and organizations (public sector, NGOs) involved in specific activities/projects with youth.

In the past 24 months (April 2017-April 2019), there have been no significant changes or developments to partnerships.

New projects focusing on young people

Over the period April 2017-April 2019 no new projects were developed.

Resources for implementing the Youth Guarantee

Human resources

At the end of April 2019, there were 227 (FTE) specialised labour mediators working with youth in the context of the implementation of the YG. They are not exclusively working with youth, though this occupies most of their time.

From April 2017 to April 2019, between 25% and 50% of all EA staff working on the implementation of the YG received training in the following topics: counselling, outreach to NEETs, careers guidance, how to work with youth, activation of youth, communication and working with marginalised youth, case management, specific services and ALMPs for youth, interviewing techniques and drafting individual action plan.

Funding for youth programmes (planned)

Specific YG measures are funded by Government, the ESF and YEI (Youth Employment Initiative), with the ESF providing the largest source.

Reaching out to young people, including NEETs

The PES reaches out to young people (including NEETs) through the following activities:

- *Proactive work with schools* – Regional Inspectorates of Education (Ministry of Education), together with schools in municipalities, undertake activities related to: preventing dropout of students at risk; finding and reintegrating young people who have dropped out or early school leavers back into the education system; special focus is given to the work with young people aged 15 to 18. Agreements with labour offices and local partners on the implementation of the YG and agreement with universities.
- *Cooperation with NGOs and youth organisations* – participation in the process of identifying and establishing contact with NEETs, the provision of information and the motivation of young people to return to the education system or integrating them into the labour market by inclusion in education and employment. NEETs are being encouraged to return to the education system through opportunities for involvement in various forms of informal learning and voluntary initiatives, according to the specifics of the functional profiles of youth organizations and NGOs. The PES is also involved in the development and implementation of mentoring programmes to support young people at risk of dropping out of school and offering opportunities for internships to young people with appropriate education in accordance with the area of the activities of youth organizations and NGOs. It sets up local agreements on collaboration with NGOs to reach the inactive under the National Programme 'Activation of Inactive People'.
- *Employing or working with designated youth outreach workers* – the work on spot of youth counsellors appointed in municipalities to reach NEETs and activate them. This has been implemented through the National Programme 'Activation of Inactive People' in cooperation with municipalities who employ the youth counsellors.
- *Providing new points of entry for the YG* – this is an on-going activity in collaboration with partner agencies and it includes internet/social media presence.

- *Single point services (one-stop shop)* – in place for some time bringing support services together under a single point of entry.
- *Mobile PES services* – in place for some time to reach outlying areas and with agreements for the implementation of remote offices.
- *Awareness-raising events or campaigns* – the organization of specialised job fairs for youth and participation in the 'Raising awareness among youth about the YG in Bulgaria' project.
- *Follow-up on young people who drop out from activation schemes/no longer access benefits* – as part of the monitoring of the implementation of the YG. It includes agreements with the Ministry of Education and Science and the National Insurance Institute on providing follow-up information.

Cooperation is also in place at the local level with NGOs and youth organizations, social partners, employers, local authorities and others. In this way PES can 'mediate' between inactive young people and the institutions that provide appropriate social, health, education and other services, complementing the services provided by labour offices. Terms and conditions are specified in the approved programme.

Information management

The PES has access to the following sources to support implementation of the YG:

- Database of apprenticeship vacancies – but limited mainly to those arising from subsidised programmes;
- Database of traineeship places – mainly for those arising from subsidised programmes.

Timing in the provision of PES services

- The first interview with the young client is conducted on the day of registration.
- Clients then see counsellors at least once a month.

No other information is available on the average time for making an offer to a jobseeker after registration with the YG.

Monitoring and evaluation

Specific targets for youth-oriented services are used within the framework of the YG:

Time-bound targets

- Providing training and employment schemes (OP HRD 2014-2020): the 'New Opportunities for Youth Employment' Project and the 'Training and employment for youth' Project and 'Ready-to-Work' Project

Proportionate targets

- Providing training and employment schemes (OP HRD 2014-2020): the 'New Opportunities for Youth Employment' Project and the 'Training and employment for youth' Project.

Numerical targets

- Providing training and employment schemes (OP HRD 2014-2020): 'New Opportunities for Youth Employment' Project – job placements for 3 469 people; 'Training and employment for youth' Project - job placements for 3 504 people and training for 451.

Combined Targets

- Motivation for active behaviour on the labour market and participation in training and employment schemes (OP HRD 2014-2020): 'Ready-to-Work' Project – activation of 1500 inactive people (NEETs).

Monitoring and evaluation activities

- *Satisfaction survey of young jobseekers* – covers satisfaction with psychological services and with case managers;
- *Satisfaction surveys of employers* – focuses on the need for staff;
- *Monitoring young people who leave the register* – introduced in 2016;
- *Monitoring the number of young people who receive an offer within the 4 month target* – monitored on a regular basis and at least monthly;
- *Follow up of young clients once they have entered employment or training* – only for those on particular schemes or projects;
- *Follow up of young clients once they have been referred to education or training providers* – only for those on particular schemes of projects;
- Application of the EU requirements for monitoring the YG.

Mutual learning activities

During the period April 2017-April 2019, Bulgarian PES staff took part in the following mutual learning or technical assistance activities relating to youth:

Name of event or activity	Location and Host	Date
Mutual learning seminar related to the Youth Guarantee on 'Tracking and mapping of young people who are neither educated nor employed'	Zagreb, Croatia	14.06.2018