



# THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND



## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE



### Support to Youth Employment: 2014-2018

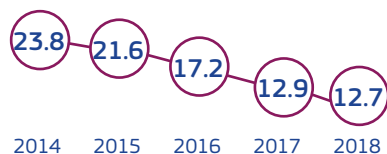
**BULGARIA**

## SUMMARY

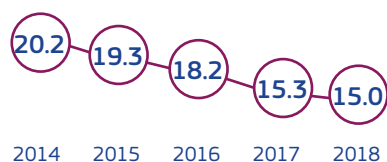
Youth Employment measures funded by the YEI and the ESF aim at improving access to employment for young people. During the period 2014-2018, the EU and Bulgaria spent a combined total of 219.4 million euro in ESF/YEI investments to achieve this objective. As a result, 54 737 participations in youth employment activities have taken place in Bulgaria. This factsheet summarises the main actions, outputs, results and lessons learned so far of the implementation of youth employment measures funded by the EU.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

### YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



### NEET RATE (15-24 YEARS)



- ▶ In 2014, the rates of **young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)** and of unemployment were **high and above the EU averages** (12.5% and 22.2%). While the unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 was significantly higher than that of the age group 25-29, this was the opposite case for NEET rates, which were considerably higher for young people aged 25-29.
- ▶ The **NEET rate** in 2018 is still above the EU level (10.5%), despite some positive achievements. There are **persistent regional differences** with NEET rates ranging from 6.2% in Yugozapaden region to 24.1% in Yugoiztochen region.
- ▶ The **youth unemployment rate** is lower than the rate observed across the EU (15.2%). Some considerable variations by regions persist with youth unemployment rates ranging **from 5.6% in Yugozapaden region to 24.8% in Severozapaden region**. The **regional youth unemployment rates for young people aged 25-29 have decreased significantly**, with the only exception of Severozapaden region, which has a youth unemployment rate of 19.7%.
- ▶ The **labour market situation of young women** is characterised by considerably higher NEET rates than that of young men, but significantly lower unemployment rates. Since the beginning of the programming period, the youth unemployment rates of young women of both age groups were halved.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

**ESF** European Social Fund

**YEI** Youth Employment Initiative

**OP** Operational Programme

**NEET** Young people not in employment, education or training

- This factsheet was prepared before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Figures present the situation for youth employment operations under Investment Priority 8.ii for the programming period 2014-2020 implemented up to 2018, as reported by 6th September 2019. In many instances, operations are not yet complete at this stage. They are provided only as an indication of progress.
- Target achievements are calculated dividing the outputs and the results by the targets set in the Operational Programmes. Targets set should to be reached by 2023.
- Participants' data are collected on starting an operation. Data on results are collected at the end of an operation or even later. Because of this time lag, the two sets of data (participations and results) should not be directly compared.

## ESF PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

ESF 37

Million Euro are budgeted to the support of young people, including national funding

YEI 120  
Million Euro

ESF 32

Million Euro  
The EU contributes a large share of this funding

YEI 110  
Million Euro

ESF YEI One of the three Operational Programmes (OPs) implements specific actions supporting young people's integration into the labour market. The national OP Human Resources Development covers specific actions through ESF and YEI funding.

► **The investments in the OP focus** on early intervention and activation, as well as the integration of young people into the labour market by offering good-quality proposals for jobs or training, professional guidance, career consultation and motivation training.

## STATE OF PLAY

► **Number of participations** of young people reported in specific actions promoting the sustainable integration of young people into the labour market by the end of 2018.\*

ESF 8 208

YEI 46 529

► The expected number of participations in ESF measures is on track, while YEI targets have already been exceeded by end 2018. The number of participations of unemployed Roma is much higher than targeted (5 267 against targeted 1 020). ESF targets are reached for unemployed Roma and participants with secondary or higher education, though targets are not reached for the inactive.

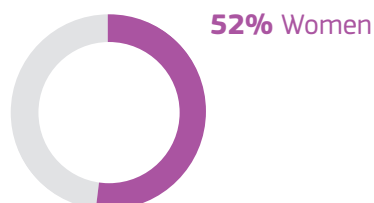
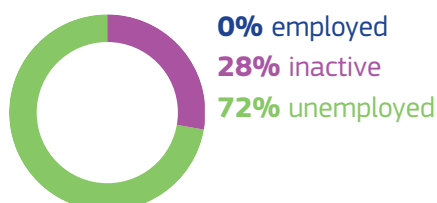
ESF 90%

Achievements of targets for participation

188% YEI

\* As one person could participate more than once in ESF operations over time, the number of participations is reported, not the number of participants. These figures exclude Technical Assistance.

## PARTICIPANT PROFILES WHEN RECEIVING SUPPORT



52% <25 years  
48% ≥25 years

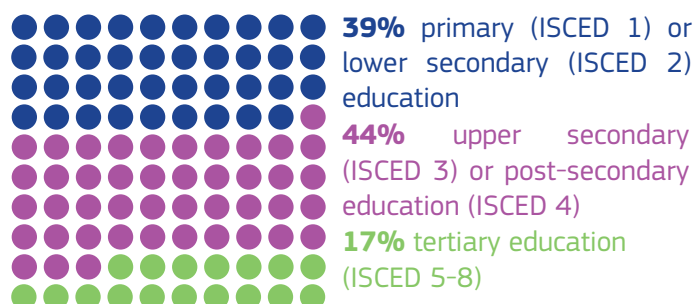


Migrants | 11 498

Other disadvantaged | 292\*

Participants with disabilities | 823

Homeless | 125



- ▶ Extended age group of eligible persons up to 29 years in the OP: Share of participants above 25 years: ⇨ 48%.
- ▶ Differences in terms of the educational level of participants: Almost half of the participants supported through the YEI have primary or lower secondary education, compared to 17% of the participations supported through the ESF.

Overall, **26 698 young people achieved a positive result upon leaving**, 4 576 under the ESF and 22 122 under the YEI.

**ESF 3 269** Participants in employment **10 388 YEI**

**937** Participants gaining a qualification **8 101**

**138** Participants in education **1 054**

**232** Inactive participants engaged in job searching **2 579**

- ▶ Under the ESF, targets are reached for one particular sub-group: the unemployed with completed secondary or higher education who have a job upon leaving. The targets for other sub-groups are not yet reached.
- ▶ Under the YEI, employment rates after participation are particularly high for the 'Youth employment' (75%) and 'Training and employment' (63%) programmes. 32% of the young people were employed or taking on training.

**ESF 48%** Achievement of targets for results

**79% YEI**

\* Participants may refuse to give this information. Consequently, disadvantages are likely to be underreported.

## LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR

### ESF

#### Reaching Roma

‘Mediators’ were designated to work in the field to reach the Roma, i.e. on the streets and other public places, to encourage young people to register in the employment offices in the communities. The challenge was to find educated ‘liaison officers’. Training ‘liaison officers’ to work with NEETs was considered important.

#### Innovative outreach

Innovative outreach measures were introduced such as organising concerts at which the Public Employment Service was then present to inform and collect contact details from NEETs.

### YEI

#### Positive impact

Completing the programme increases the chances of being in employment six months after exit by 37% (and by 49% after 12 months). In addition, it is estimated that in 2020, the number of employed in the economy will grow by 1.8% as a result of YEI and the unemployment rate is expected to improve by 0.9 percentage points; and these positive net effects are expected to continue up until 2023.

#### High employment

The employment rate of work based learning or first job experience measures is very high with 75% of participants who found employment immediately after exit (for the ‘Youth employment’ measure).

#### Permanent contracts

63% of job offers made involved ‘permanent’ employment contracts (in the sense that they were for an indefinite period of time).

#### Reaching NEETs

In Bulgaria, many NEETs are not registered and it requires streetwork to identify and encourage them to register.

#### Success factors

The flexibility of the supported programmes and the partnership with NGOs and municipalities were assessed as crucial for the success of YEI.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The ESF in Bulgaria <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=372>

Website of the ESF Bulgaria <https://esf.bg/en/>

- European Commission, Study for the Evaluation of ESF Support to Youth Employment
- Evaluation of YEI measures under priority axis 1 of OP Human resources development 2014-2020

