



PES to PES Dialogue

The European Commission Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

PES PAPER

**Peer Review “PES approaches to low-skilled adults and
young people: work first or train first?”**

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1. Labour market situation of low-skilled adults and young people

1.1. What is the situation of low-skilled individuals in the labour market?

In March 2013 the low-skilled made up the largest share of all those unemployed, accounting for 214,363 individuals or 55.2% of all those unemployed. Of these the vast majority, 83.9%, held lower secondary or lower educational qualifications, almost one in four (22.5%) were young people under the age of 29, and one third (33.3%) were aged over 50. The share of long-term unemployed in this group remains unchanged at 39.4%, and over half (56.6%) of this group are women.

In March 2013 71,754 (18.5%) individuals registered unemployed had completed lower secondary education. The share of young people aged under age 29 in this group is 16.7%, with those aged over 50 accounting for 40.6%. Of individuals classed as long-term unemployed, 39.7% had lower secondary education. The share of unemployed women with lower secondary education is 50.2%.

According to National Statistics, the employment coefficient of people with lower secondary education, age 15 – 64, was 29.8% in 2012, compared to the general employment coefficient for the same age group, which is 58.8%.

In March 2013 110,361 individuals (28.4%) registered unemployed had primary and lower education. Young people up to the age of 29, and people aged over 50, represented 22.5% and 32.6% of this group respectively. The share of long-term unemployed with primary and lower education is 45.0%. The share of unemployed women in the group of unemployed with primary or lower education is 56.7%.

According to National Statistics, the employment coefficient (rate) of people with primary education and lower, age 15 – 64, was 15.5% in 2012, compared to the general employment coefficient (rate) for the same age group, which is 58.8%.

Unemployed young people up to the age of 29.

In March 2013 the number of unemployed young people up to the age of 29 is 80,207, representing 20.6% of all the unemployed. Of these unemployed young people, the share of young people without qualification is 60.1%. Almost half of all unemployed young people (45.9%) had lower secondary or lower education qualifications. In March the long term unemployed young people under 29 represent 21% of all unemployed young people under the age of 29.

According to National Statistics the employment rate of people in the age group 15-29 is 37.5%, compared to the general employment rate in the age group 15-64 which is 58.8%.

1.2. What are the factors influencing the situation of low-skilled people in the labour market?

In March 2013 the most common vacancies in the primary labour market are for individuals without qualifications (12,984), accounting for 79.0% of all the announced vacancies in the primary labour market.

In the last four years the economic crisis has directly affected employment amongst higher skilled groups. Their share of the total unemployed increased by 3.2 percentage points in the group of those with university education and by 5.5 percentage points in the group of those with upper secondary and vocational education in 2012 compared to 2008. Over the same period the share of the registered unemployed without qualifications, and with lower secondary education, fell by 7.1% points and 10.5% points respectively. The share of the unemployed with primary and lower education remains almost unchanged – having increased by only 0.3% points. Many active labour measures are addressed to them.

2. Services for low-skilled adults and young people: overall strategy and approach

2.1.1. What is the overall approach to the delivery of services to low-skilled adults and young people? Do legal activation rules/regulations make a distinction between low-skilled and other job seekers and between low-skilled young people and adults?

According to the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) every unemployed individual has the right to access the following employment services: information about vacancies; information about programmes and measures for employment preservation and promotion; mediation services for informing and recruiting; psychological support; carrier guidance; enrolment in training for adults; internship for training; and transport and accommodation allowances during the training. The EPA does not differentiate the services which are provided to different clients groups.

The Annual National Employment Action Plan defines priority groups towards which the active policies on the labour market are addressed. For 2013 the target groups are:

- Unemployed young individuals up to the age of 29;
- Unemployed individuals over the age of 50;
- Unemployed individuals with low qualification, or from professions which are not in demand in the labour market, and lacking key competences; and
- The unemployed with low education, and other groups including Roma, disabled people, inactive people and discouraged people.

2.2. What types of special measure does the PES offer to (unemployed and employed) low-skilled adults and young people and how effective are they?

Type of measure	Offered? (yes/no)	For which group (adults, young people or both)?	Brief operational description of measure	Year introduced	Year abolished	Effectiveness of measure (scale: 1 = not very effective, 5 = very effective)	Reasons for effectiveness or ineffectiveness
Work-first approaches e.g. wage subsidies, work experience, internships							
National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment"	Yes	Unemployed, including low-skilled, who are eligible for social assistance	Employers who hire unemployed individuals on a full or part-time basis under this programme receive funding for their remuneration, and social payments are provided by the state.	2002	Active	5	Provided employment to 21,438 unemployed individuals in 2012.
Measures addressed to employers to encourage them to hire unemployed young people under 29, disabled unemployed young people under 29, unemployed with lower secondary or lower education for apprenticeships. Employees who coach trainees are entitled to additional	Yes	Both groups	Funds for salaries and for all health and social security payments are provided to employers when they hire unemployed individuals from the risk groups in the labour market.	2002	active	5	for 2012 we had 4498 employed. The plan for 2013 is to ensure employment for 5110 unemployed persons and 95 in training

remuneration for the time of coaching, to unemployed hired for "green jobs"							
Promotion measures for employers to hire the following target groups – long-term unemployed; unemployed on part time; micro enterprise – the first 5 employed.	Yes	Both groups	Employers are subsidised only for due social security payments.				
Train-first approaches e.g. training							
Scheme "Development"	Yes	For both groups	Training for acquiring or enhancing the professional qualifications of the registered unemployed, and their placement into job.	2010	active	5	From the beginning of the programme until 31 March 2013 58,856 unemployed individuals were enrolled in training, with 53,780 being placed in a job.
Project "Professionals"	Yes	For young people under 29 and adults over 50; for low-skilled	Training is tailored according to labour market demand in the respective region. Training packages include motivation training, key competences and vocational training in Food and Beverage, Business Administration and IT. 20% of successful graduates will be placed in subsidized employment and 30 % in non-subsidized employment.	2013	active	5	2000 unemployed will be included
Project "Chance for success"	Yes	For young people under 29 and adults over 50; for low-skilled' disabled	Training packages include training for key competence – Managing of conflicts, vocational training – 300 training hours in 6 professional areas. Under this project 50 % of the successful graduates will be placed in	2013	active	5	300 in training and 150 from them in subsidized employment

			subsidized employment.				
Project Chance for work - 2013	Yes	Unemployed over 50, priority to long-term unemployed, with at least lower secondary education, unemployed from Roma origin, disabled unemployed.	This project offers motivation training, training in key competences – teamwork, and vocational training for part of profession – Health care assistant. 4 months practice with employers, who are partners in the project.	2013	active	5	Expected results – 1100 enrolled for motivation training; 1100 – for key competence training; 1100 enrolled in vocational training for health care assistant, 856 placed for a period of 4 months in subsidized jobs for acquiring practice.
Project "Improving the employability of unemployed through enhancing professional and key competences"		Unemployed from the disadvantaged groups in the labour market	The aim of the project is to improve employability through a set of measures – motivation, training for key competences, vocational training in accounting and tax audit, administration, applied IT; metallurgy; electronics and energy; food technologies; construction works; etc.	2013		5	1596 unemployed will be enrolled
Services and measures to prevent low-skilled from being made redundant							
HRD OP – schemes "I can do" and "I can do more"		Low-skilled employed adults and young people	Opportunity for training in key competences, and vocational training with vouchers for preserving employment.	2009	"I can do" scheme will be finalised end 2013, the other end 2014.	5	High interest among employed to these projects "I can do" – from 2010 until now – included in training 64 778 employed concluded training – 56 230 employed; "I can do more" – from beginning until now included in training are – 78 088 employed and concluded training ; – 42 699 employed.

Other services or measures e.g. career guidance or specialist guidance for low-skilled, specialist counsellors etc.							
Career guidance	Yes	Including low skilled adults and young jobseekers, employed, unemployed and pensioners	Job Centres at the Local Labour Offices (LLOs).	1996	active	4	This service can be offered to any jobseeker on demand
Professional orientation	Yes	Including low-skilled unemployed adults and young people	Service is offered by the licensed information and professional orientation centres which are subsidized by the state budget.	2008	Active	4	Quality service. It is offered as a part of projects which are implemented with social partners.
Information and consultation and professional orientation provided to employees which will be subject to mass redundancy	Yes	For both groups	The service is provided by LLOs at the employer site and is regulated by the Employment Promotion Act.		It is offered all the time	4	The affected employees are informed about available services and are assisted in their job search.

3. PES services and measures for low-skilled adults and young people

3.1. Does the PES offer services and measures to prevent low-skilled individuals from being made redundant? What types of services are offered, which kind of measures are funded and how successful have these been in different areas (ideally based on performance measurement)?

The Employment Agency seeks to enhance the quality of the workforce through facilitating access to, and widening the opportunities for, training for both the unemployed and the employed. In this way the skills of the workforce are enhanced with the aim of better matching to available vacancies. The financial resource of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme builds upon and expands the active and preventive measures on the labour market:

- National Programme "From Social Assistance to Employment" implements one of the core goals of the social policy – providing subsidised employment as a means of achieving social inclusion for the unemployed, including those low-skilled, who receive social benefits monthly and for whom this is the only opportunity to work and earn their income. Individuals are hired by employers or municipalities with a labour contract.
- National Programme "Activating the inactive" aims to activate and bring into the labour market inactive and discouraged individuals, mostly from the Roma community. In 2008 and 2009 125 unemployed individuals of Roma origin were trained to work as labour mediators. Their main activity is to motivate inactive and discouraged people to register at the local labour offices (LLOs) and so benefit from the training and employment mediation services offered. Mediators conduct information campaigns, hold individual or group meetings, and work with social partners, NGOs and employers' organizations to nominate candidates to participate in the programme. As a result of their activities 10,646 inactive and discouraged people were registered at LLOs in 2012 – of which 1,635 were placed in jobs, 262 were enrolled in literacy training and 321 were enrolled for vocational training.

Employment measures are better targeted and ensure employment in the private sector, on condition that any employment is continued beyond the subsidised period. Employers can obtain such subsidies for recruiting individuals from different target groups; unemployed with lower secondary and lower education; young individuals under the age of 29, young disabled people, including war invalids, ; unemployed over the age of 50 and others.

Measures for providing new jobs opened for internships are implemented successfully; including promotion to employers – micro enterprises for hiring the first 5 individuals; employing unemployed individuals in part time jobs; apprenticeship programmes for those unemployed with lower secondary and lower education; promotion to employers for offer "green jobs"; and the promotion of entrepreneurship for the unemployed. Funding for these measures was increased in 2013 with the aim of creating jobs for unemployed individuals from the target groups. Most of the measures are similar to the subsidising schemes – the salaries and social benefits are subsidized for a period of 6 months, to assist the employers and minimize their expenses for hiring unemployed individuals.

Funds from the European Social Fund are used to finance programmes targeted towards low-skilled, long-term unemployed and discouraged people:



- Grant Scheme "Development" BG051PO001 – 1.1.03: provision of training for acquiring or enhancing the vocational skills and qualifications of the registered unemployed, aimed at improving employability. If an employer expresses the need at the LLO for workers with certain qualifications, unemployed individuals can be trained for the specific posts and employment subsidies are available for between 9 and 12 months.
- Grant Scheme "Support for Employment" BG051PO001-1.1.11: provision of employment for vulnerable groups on the labour market, through incentives for employers in the form of remuneration and training for the new worker to provide them with the key competencies necessary for their new job. This also contributes to the social protection and social inclusion agendas, including ensuring income from work and rights for social benefits. Incentives are also envisaged for experienced staff, to cover their roles in coaching the newly employed and assisting with their adaptation.

Scheme: Literacy training for adults /Contracting Authority - Ministry of Education/: provision to enhance the employability of people with low education to complete lower secondary level education to allow them to access vocational training.

3.2. Is the basic approach underpinning the PES concept for unemployed low-skilled individuals one of 'work first' or 'train first'?

The Employment Agency sees both approaches as equal. During each appointment at the LLO the jobseeker and the labour mediator review the available vacancies, and if a suitable job is available the jobseeker is encouraged to apply. If no suitable vacancy is available, the labour mediator makes an assessment and, together with the jobseeker plan, steps for motivating, enhancing skills and inclusion in employment and training.

The Employment Agency regards these two approaches as equal. The Train First approach achieves improvement in the profile of the jobseeker. Jobseekers gain skills and qualification and become more employable now and in the long term. With the Work First approach the jobseeker achieves practical experience which can be a base for further training and better employability.

3.3. If a 'work first' approach is used to integrate low-skilled adult and/or young jobseekers, please describe the approach taken, specifying what approach is taken for which group.

3.3.1. Is the emphasis placed on the first available match or is attention paid to matching with future development and training opportunities (with or without PES assistance) to ensure the sustainability of work?

3.3.2. What support/encouragement is offered to employers to provide opportunities to low-skilled workers?

According to the specific programme, scheme or measure, the employer could be reimbursed either the due minimal salary and social benefits for any individual they take on, or only the social benefits and the cost for coaching or training of the hired person. Lifelong learning is encouraged, including for people with low levels of education, as a means of continuing to acquire or enhance individuals' knowledge and skills. The scheme "I can" provides vocational training and training in key competences to employed and self-employed people, helping



them sustain employment by being better able to adapt to change in the workplace or respond if they have to find new work.

3.4. If a 'train-first' approach is used to integrate low-skilled adult and/or young jobseekers, please describe the approach taken, specifying what approach is taken for which group.

Services

3.4.1. How does the PES identify which individuals are suitable for training and which training is right for whom? What is the role of personalised services in this?

The approach followed by individual labour mediators and the wishes of the unemployed are key factors in deciding what type of training is provided. Additional technical tools (e.g. information about professions) are also used in assessing the suitability of the person for training.

3.4.2. What support is provided during training by the training provider to ensure the training is successfully completed?

The Employment Agency and its territorial offices control the implementation of training contracts – including on the spot checks both for training providers and for unemployed participants.

Planning and management of measures

3.4.3. How does the PES link provision of training to an assessment of current/future labour market requirements? And what are the preferred sectors and occupations for training?

The Employment Agency organizes training for the acquisition of professional qualification according to the needs of the labour market and the requirements of employers. Currently the areas with greatest demand for training are in Word Processing and Accounting. The information for need / demand comes from the LLOs, who assess the needs of employers and advise the unemployed about available training opportunities.

3.4.4. Is employer involvement a pre-condition for training to take place?

If training is conducted in advance of employment with a particular employer (i.e. the employer has vacancies for which unemployed individuals are trained), a tripartite agreement is signed which regulates the responsibilities of each party – the unemployed individual, the employer and the Local Labour Office.

3.4.5. What type of training is offered for which categories of jobseekers?

Two different types of training packages are offered to unemployed individuals on the basis of the opportunities for employment and the structure of unemployment in the respective region. The packages include motivation training, key competences training, vocational training, and packages which include both key competencies and vocational training. Unemployed individuals who complete their training successfully can then be offered subsidised employment at a particular employer.

3.4.6. What are incentives for job search within the training? Are any measures in place to ensure jobseekers are not hooked into



training if a suitable job becomes available or is the emphasis on the completion of training? Does the training include internships and job search assistance to bridge the transition from training to employment?

All contracts for training for unemployed individuals state that if the individual finds a job in the primary labour market this is an eligible reason for terminating the training.

According to the State Education Requirements vocational training for adults includes both theoretical and on-the-job training. Theoretical training could not last longer than the practical training in order to facilitate the transition from training to employment.

The aim is to secure an on-the-job placement for most of those who have successfully completed the theoretical training.

3.5. What are the main challenges in the integration of low-skilled job seekers?

The large number of inactive individuals, including the discouraged, continues to be among the main challenges in 2013. In response to this challenge, the National Employment Action Plan for 2013 envisages the implementation of both active and preventive measures to integrate the inactive and the long-term unemployed, which take into account the specific characteristics of each person in the target groups. This year the range of the National Programme "Activation of inactive unemployed" is broadened, as 35 psychologists and 10 case managers are included in the work with the inactive and the discouraged unemployed. The new staff will conduct information campaigns, hold individual and group meetings with inactive individuals, and attend meetings with the social partners, NGO and employers' organisations.

Alongside these activities a scheme under the HRD OP "Increasing the Quality of the Provided by the Employment Agency Services for Citizens and Business with Focus on the Vulnerable Groups in the Labour market" will operate in 2013. The scheme includes the organisation of job fairs in each region, with specialized job fairs for different target groups including individuals with disabilities, Roma, unemployed young people, etc. A total of 96 job fairs are planned for 2013, because on previous experience of effective delivery.

3.6. Based on your experience (ideally backed up by details of integration rates where applicable, including those after 6 months if available) what works best for which category of low-skilled job seeker? What factors ensure a fast and more sustainable integration of low-skilled job seekers? What works best in encouraging employers to offer opportunities?

The territorial offices of the Employment Agency periodically conduct surveys via the Local Labour Offices Directorates, which explore employer satisfaction with the services provided and the characteristics of the unemployed. The Employment Agency also has data about the number of individuals who have registered at the Local Labour Offices after the termination of their contracts within an employment measure or program. It is however complicated to organise a comprehensive survey about the sustainability of employment resulting for individuals placed in subsidized employment, as this would involve cooperation between different institutions including the employers and the unemployed.

However changes are proposed which will set an expectation on employers to participate in periodical surveys on the sustainability of employment after the end of a period of subsidised employment.

4. Partnership working to support low-skilled adults and young people

4.1. Are services (e.g. career guidance, testing) and training measures for low-skilled adults and young people delivered in-house by the PES or are part or most of these contracted out to private or third sector/other public service providers (and if so, which)? What is considered to be the added value of external provision (what can external providers offer that PES cannot)?

When required the labour mediator can direct the unemployed person to career guidance in relation to their personal profile. The career guidance is carried out either individually or in groups, either at the LLOs and/or at the information/consultation units to them – Job Centres.

Career guidance is the provision of information about professions across all economic and social spheres, including the tasks required; the physical, psychological and personal qualities required; and what the options are for training and finding a job. Brief descriptions of different professions could be found on the Employment Agency's website.

At LLOs career guidance is provided by the labour mediators. When career guidance is provided by external providers, they generally provide more comprehensive services, usually by career consultants or psychologists, who use special techniques, information and materials to provide a more professional service.

4.1.1 How do PES assess/quality control the delivery of these services?

The Employment Agency and its territorial divisions are responsible for the delivery and quality control of contracts to provide careers guidance services. These include on-the-spot checks during career orientation sessions organised by the Local Labour Offices.

4.2. Is there co-operation with chambers of commerce / other employer representatives, or social partners at management level to ensure opportunities can be offered to low-skilled individuals?

The Employment Agency has an agreement with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS) to implement the "Career Development of the Employed" and "System for Career Orientation during secondary education" projects, under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme (HRD OP).

The Agreement regulates joint activities for:

- Organising workshops, information campaigns, round tables and other career orientation events;
- Participation of experts from the project teams in meetings to discuss challenges in the field of career guidance and orientation;
- The provision of updated information about employment programmes and projects in the career centres at the MEYS; and
- Exchange of information and materials regarding career guidance and employment.

4.3. Is there co-operation with education and training providers, career guidance providers, municipalities, youth services etc at management level to reduce drop out and drive up qualifications?

Experts from the Employment Agency participate in the Commission for Career Guidance at the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training. Experts from MEYS, employers' organizations and trade unions participate in this Commission, and Commission reports are valid for the issuing or termination of licenses for education and training providers.

There are also agreements with MEYS regarding Adult Literacy projects, and for exchanging data about the educational status of young people.

4.4. What works best to ensure good partnership working and in which areas do you see challenges for the future?

Framework agreements between respective authorities involved in career guidance activities ensure good partnership.

Future challenges are the elaboration of new methodologies and specialized information products.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

5.1. What systems are in place for performance measurement and evaluation for low-skilled adults and young people?

Regular monitoring is carried out using certain indicators, focusing on low-skilled adults and young people and the implemented active policies. These groups are the priority target groups of the National Employment Action Plan, and specific active measures on the labour market are targeted towards them. The national initiative "Work for the young people in Bulgaria" is delivered in accordance with the European Commission initiative "Youth on the move". This initiative is carried out with the cooperation of many institutions and social partners, with the aim of reducing youth unemployment and increasing youth employment. The Employment Agency reports monthly on the outcomes of the implementation of the initiative to the specially created Coordination Council.

5.2. What the main indicators used in evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of services and measures for low-skilled adults and young people?

A monthly monitoring programme is in place to establish the characteristics of the registered unemployed on an on-going basis, and to monitor the results of the active employment policies and participation in them by the different target groups.

Monitoring of policy implementation includes establishing the relative share of low skilled unemployed and young people up to the age of 29 participating in each policy. . Other indicators include: the number of employed in the primary market youth, the number of specialised youth job fairs held (and employment resulting from them), and inactivate participants engaging with the labour market.

5.3. What have been the main evaluation results in recent years?

As a result of the active employment policies targeting these groups the high relative share of the unemployed who were low-skilled young people dropped to 60.8% in 2012 (from 63.1% in 2011), and the relative share of those with lower secondary and lower

education also dropped significantly from 50.3% in 2011 to 46.7% in 2012. The share of young people unemployed for one year or more also dropped from 24.4% in 2011 to 22.0% in 2012. In 2012 with the cooperation of the labour offices over 45 000 unemployed youth achieved a positive employment outcome, which is 12 000 more than the number which achieved a positive employment outcome in 2011.

The share of the low-skilled unemployed without qualifications also dropped by 1.5% to 55.6% in 2012. Almost all low-skilled unemployed without qualification are low-educated, i.e. with lower secondary or lower education, but their share dropped by 1.4% to 84.3% between 2011 and 2012.

The unemployed with lower secondary education currently stands at 68,567 people, an increase from 2011 of 1,104 individuals (1.6%). However their share of the overall unemployed dropped from 20.3% in 2011 to 18.8% in 2012.

5.4. Have these results led to any changes or are changes being considered in the organisation and delivery of services to improve the labour market situation of low-skilled adults and young people?

In 2013 two new promotional measures were proposed for approval by the National Assembly, promoting the employers to hire unemployed youth on a part-time basis and for apprenticeship.

6. Conclusions and questions

6.1. What lessons have you drawn from your experience and what are your main challenges, tasks, plans for the future?

One of the challenges of the labour market is the large number of inactive people. To address it the National Employment Action Plan for 2013 envisages application of active and preventive measures for the inclusion of inactive and long term unemployed;

- The scope of the National Programmed for Activating the inactive is increased and 35 psychologists and 10 case managers are included
- New measures for encouraging employers to hire long term unemployed young people with lower secondary and lower education and without qualification are designed.
- Information campaigns are planned, individual and group sessions with inactive persons, meetings with employers, social partners and NGOs.

6.2. What would you most like to learn from PES in other countries?

- About methodologies for measuring the sustainability of employment for individuals placed in subsidised employment?
- Do different methodologies exist for measuring the sustainability of employment for different categories of the unemployed, and whether the employment secured is subsidised or not?
- About other programmes, projects and measures to promote the labour market inclusion of low-skilled young people and adults, other than those used in our PES.

6.3. In the Peer Review discussions, on which of the following topics would you most like to focus and what would you most like to learn from others?



Topics	Importance of the topic (scale: 1 very unimportant, 5 = very important)	What would you most like to learn from others in the topic(s) you are most interested in? (maximum three bullet points)
PES services for low-skilled workers: overall strategy and approach	5	Services for the low-skilled workers; different approaches for providing the services; monitoring and measurement of the sustainability of employment.
Train-first approaches	5	Types, monitoring and measurement of the sustainability of employment.
Work-first approaches	5	Types, monitoring and measurement of the sustainability of employment.
Partnership with employers and other actors	5	Ways of cooperating with employers to provide services for low-skilled workers; which are the other stakeholders involved, and what partnerships are possible to support low-skilled workers. Monitoring and measurement of the sustainability of employment.
Monitoring and evaluation	5	Types, monitoring and measurement of the sustainability of employment.