



Youth Guarantee country by country

Bulgaria
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Introduction and context

The [Youth Guarantee](#) has become a reality across the EU. It has facilitated structural reforms and innovation in policy design across EU Member States.

This document provides extracts from official Commission documents on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Bulgaria. It contains extracts from:

- The country report drawn by the Commission for Bulgaria in the context of the [European Semester](#);
- The conclusions of the thematic multilateral surveillance review of the [Employment Committee \(EMCO\)](#).
- Results from the data collection on Youth Guarantee schemes.

A section at the end of the document is devoted to the assessment made by the Commission the previous year.

Bulgaria presented a [Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan](#) on 20 December 2013, updated in May 2014.

Bulgaria is eligible for the [Youth Employment Initiative](#).

Commission's assessment

From the 2020 country report (EN-BG)

"Labour market developments remain positive, though labour shortages and the steady decrease in the working-age population pose challenges. The employment rate has been increasing steadily in the past 5 years, reaching 72.4% in 2018, and leading to progress on SDG 8 'Decent work and economic growth'."

"Integration into the labour market differs among population groups and regions. The positive economic developments of recent years did not benefit the whole population equally. There are still noteworthy discrepancies in employment and inactivity rates depending on age, education levels and across regions [...]. In 2018, the share of young people aged 15-24 not in education, employment or training (NEET) decreased further, but was still 15.0 % (EU average 10.5%). Likewise, 15.4% of the low skilled active population was unemployed, while the share was much lower for the medium skilled (4.4%) and high skilled populations (2.4%)."

"Bulgaria is making progress towards achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Bulgaria has fared well with labour market indicators in SDG 8 "Decent work and economic growth", with employment rates on the rise and the shares of long term unemployed and young people neither in employment nor in education/training falling, both approaching the EU averages."

"The Social Scoreboard supporting the European Pillar of Social Rights points to a number of employment and social challenges in Bulgaria. Steady economic growth has contributed to improved labour market outcomes. The employment rate has continued to increase and the gender employment gap is at the EU average. The long-term unemployment rate is now close to the EU average. Labour market participation of certain groups remains a challenge, however. The shares of young people neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET) and of early school leavers remain high (at 19.1% and 12.7%, respectively, in 2018). The level of digital skills is low, with only 29% of the population (16-74) reporting basic or above basic levels of digital skills, compared to 57% in the EU."

"The labour market integration of vulnerable groups remains low. The overall inactivity rate in Bulgaria decreased to the EU average of 25.8% in Q3-2019, but young people aged 20-24, Roma and people living in rural areas show much higher levels of inactivity. While the overall unemployment rate of Roma is 55%, it is even higher (65%) for young Roma aged 16-24 (36)."

"Although decreasing, the number of people not in education, employment or training (NEET) is still high. In 2018, the NEET rate for young people aged 15-24 was 15.0%, well above the EU rate of 10.5%. Almost half (47.0%) of those leaving the Youth Guarantee scheme in 2018 were either in employment or training within the target of 4 months. However, as approximately 80% of NEETs are inactive, only 1 in 10 (10.6%) is covered by the Youth Guarantee. According to a recent study (39), 73% of NEETs aged 15-34 live in small towns and rural areas, 57% have lower secondary education or below, 55% are women and 38% of them are Roma. The region with the largest share of NEETs is the North-West, although in absolute figures the South Central region has the highest number."

"Digital skills are low among the young population. Only 53% of young people aged 16-19 assess their level of digital skills as basic or above basic, compared to an EU average of 83%. The usage of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in schools is not optimal (52). Despite the support of some national programmes (53), the weak general performance in digital education remains. A large-scale, recently started ESF project aims to include 2,000 schools and kindergartens in activities for introducing innovative teaching methods using ICT(54)."

For further youth-related matters please refer to the country report.

EMCO's assessment

Conclusions of the Employment Committee's multilateral surveillance review on youth employment, October 2019:

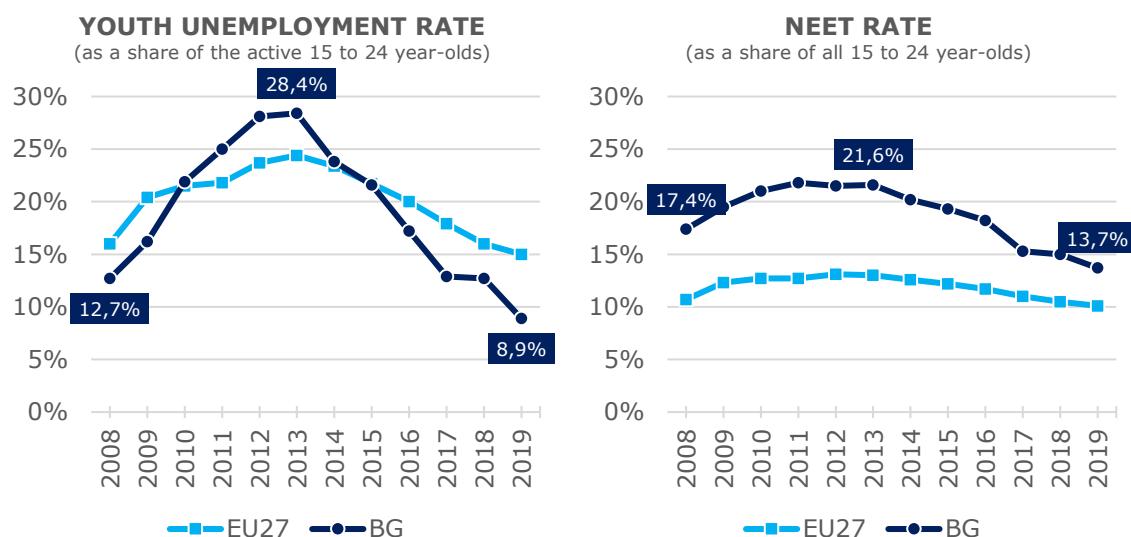
Bulgaria has advanced in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, although some challenges remain. A number of initiatives have been taken to improve coordination mechanisms, strengthen partnerships, reduce the share of early school leavers, improve outreach, expand traineeship opportunities and provide support and training to youth mediators.

Outreach and activation measures need to be further strengthened to increase the coverage of the Youth Guarantee, which is still very low. Although Bulgaria is placing special attention on putting in place an integrated approach, especially for vulnerable groups, factors of inactivity still need to be better addressed, as do some regional disparities. The quality and sustainability of jobs provided through the Youth Guarantee need to be improved, as do the quality and labour market relevance of education and training opportunities. It is therefore important for Bulgaria to quickly implement the planned initiatives to increase coverage and outreach to vulnerable groups. Implementing a solid monitoring system could help improve the overall effectiveness of the Youth Guarantee scheme.

Traineeships comply to a large extent with the Quality Framework for Traineeships and provide quality work experience for young people.

Youth Guarantee monitoring – Key data¹

1. Main trends in young people's labour market performance



Source: Eurostat, LFS (une_rt_a, edat_ifse_20)

2. Youth Guarantee delivery

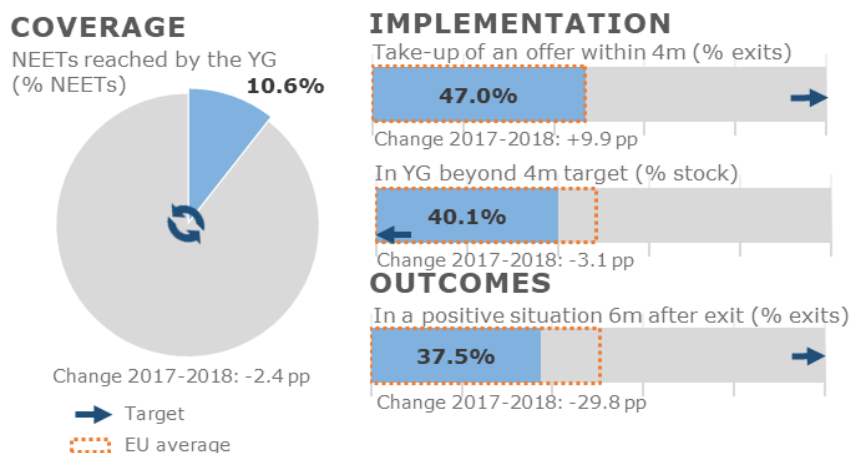
The YG scheme in Bulgaria was launched in January 2014. Bulgaria presented a [Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan \(BG\)](#) in 20 December 2013, which was updated in May 2014. Bulgaria has extended the YG to young people under 30.

The Coordination Council (managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) oversees the implementation of the National Plan for Youth Guarantee 2014 - 2020. In addition to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, other actors involved are the Ministries in charge of Regional Development, Education and Science, Youth and Sport, Economy and Energy as well as national representative organisations of employers, employees and young people. The National Association of Municipalities is also involved.

More information (in Bulgarian) can be found in the [dedicated YG website](#) and in the [Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan](#).

¹ The information below is taken from the country fiche related to the Youth Guarantee Data collection (full results can be found on <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1143&langId=en#YGIF>).

YG monitoring data 2017-18



Source: DG EMPL, YG monitoring database, data extracted 09 December 2019.
NEETs data were extracted from Eurostat, Labour Force Survey on 21 June 2019.

On average, two fifths (40.1%) of those registered in the YG at any point during 2018 had been waiting for an offer for more than 4 months, a reduction of 3.1 pp from 2017 and significantly below the EU average of 48.6%.

Approaching half (47.0%) of those leaving the YG in 2018 are reported to have exited to positive destinations within the target of 4 months, a notable increase of 9.9 pp from 2017, bringing Bulgaria in line with the EU average of 46.7%.

Only one in ten (10.6%) of the NEET population in 2018 was covered by the YG in Bulgaria, a reduction of 2.4 pp from 2017. This poor coverage rate reflects the low proportion of unemployed among the NEET population, around 80% of which is inactive and effectively not reached by the YG.

Under two fifths (37.5%) of those leaving the YG in 2018 were known to be in a positive situation 6 months after exit, a stark decrease from 2017 (67.3%). Part of this reduction derives from reduced quality of data evidenced by a significant increase in the proportion of young people in unknown situations (41.7% in 2018 compared to 27.0% in 2017).

Previous year

From the 2019 country report (EN-BG):

"Sustained economic growth is having a positive impact on the labour market, although labour and skill shortages are increasing. The employment rate reached 73.5 % in Q3-2018, 2.8 pp. above its highest level before the crisis (70.7 % in 2008). The unemployment rate fell to 5.2 % in Q4-2018, below its pre-crisis level (Q4 2008) and below the EU average of 6.8 %."

"Inequalities of opportunity are limiting access to the labour market for large groups of the population, which could hinder sustainable and inclusive growth. People living in rural areas, the low-skilled and the Roma still have very low levels of activity and employment. ... The co-financed programmes of the European Social Fund provide a wide range of labour market reintegration initiatives. These include training opportunities for low-skilled young people and the support of psychologists and Roma mediators for public employment services."

"The number of young people not in education, employment or training is still high but steadily decreasing. In 2017, the rate for young people aged 15-29 in Bulgaria fell to 18.9 % (from 25.7 % in 2013), but was still well above the EU average of 13.4 %. While the rate of people not in education, employment or training in cities is lower (11.2 %) than the EU average (12.5 %), in rural areas it is much higher (31.1 % against 14.2 %). The majority of those people are inactive, which contributes to the low participation in the Youth Guarantee (in 2017, this included only 13 % and 18.8 % of the population not in education, employment or training in age groups 15-24 and 25-29, respectively). Nevertheless, more than two thirds of participants reported being in employment, education or training 6 months after leaving the scheme. The youth unemployment rate has also been decreasing steadily and reached 12.9 % in 2017, below the EU average of 16.8 %. In addition, the share of young people unemployed for longer than 12 months shrank rapidly from 8 % in 2016 to 4.7 % in 2017."

"Educational attainment is a major factor in determining employment prospects for young people. The unemployment rate among low-skilled young people (24.8 %) is nearly three times higher than for the medium-skilled (8.7 %) and this difference has widened in the last 3 years. Several measures co-funded by the Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Fund provide tools for people to access the labour market, including incentives for employers to hire young people after their training and supervised internships. Investment in traineeships and apprenticeships could help to make young people more employable."

For further youth-related matters please refer to the country report.

Links to further information

Youth Guarantee Knowledge Centre – Including promising examples from Bulgaria

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1327&langId=en>

Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16473&langId=en>

Where to register for the Youth Guarantee?

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1218&langId=en>

National Youth Guarantee Website

<https://www.az.government.bg/pages/mladezhka-garanciya/>

Youth Wiki Bulgaria

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/overview-bulgaria>