

Assessment of Active Labour Market Policies in Bulgaria: Evidence from Survey Data

Atanas Atanassov*

Summary:

The paper presents the main results of a research that focuses on the subsequent assessment of all elements (programmes and measures for employment) of the active labour market policy in Bulgaria. The analysis and subsequent assessment of the programmes, projects and promotion measures for employment and training financed by State Budget resources are conducted in the following directions: effectiveness, economization, efficiency, reference to the target groups and relevance to the EU Europe 2020 Strategy. The participation in the programmes and measures has been highly appreciated and is characterized by high levels of satisfaction. The results indicate that according to the experts' assessment, the average effect in terms of subsequent employment, which is mainly due to the participation in the programs and measures for employment and training, is high. This means that the people who took part in the programs and measures had a much higher chance of subsequently finding employment for themselves than if they had not taken part in the program/measure.

Key words: subsequent assessment, economization, effectiveness, efficiency

JEL Classification: C10, J08

1. Introduction

The labour market is of key importance to the economic stability, the public and social development of the country, and the standard of living and quality of life. The European Union's ambitions are related to achieving a full recovery of the economies of the member states after the severe global crisis, which should result in economic growth, more jobs, improvement of EU citizens' life standard and achievement of joint competitiveness of the EU. The implementation of this vision is defined in the Europe 2020 Strategy (see Europe 2020). With respect to all this, conducting an analysis and assessment of the labour market policy is quite important for the operational planning and priority channeling of state budget resources towards highly effective measures. The assessment of the projects, programmes and promotion measures for training and employment is made for the following reasons:

- Necessity of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes, projects and promotion measures for training and employment in cases when there is limited budget expenditure and high public expectations of the active labour market policies.
- Necessity of improving the targeting of the programmes, projects and promotion measures for training and employment

* Assistant Professor, PhD, University in National and World Economy, Department of Statistics and Econometric, email: atanassov@econometrica.bg

taking into account the changes in the target groups' needs.

- Assistance in operational planning and priority channeling of resources towards highly effective measures through a full assessment of the active policy by conducting additional research amongst unemployed and employers. The employers have taken advantage of preferences for new jobs creation and job placement for people from vulnerable groups.

The main goal of the subsequent assessment is to determine the extent to which the set goals are fulfilled, the rational spending of state budget resources and the effectiveness of the impact of instruments. The specific goal is to formulate conclusions, recommendations and proposals for the development of the employment policy. In order to fulfil these goals, a subsequent assessment of the employment programmes, projects and measures financed by state budget resources is conducted, elaborated and estimated in the following fields: targeting, relevance to the EU's Europe 2020 Strategy, economization, effectiveness and efficiency.

2. Data Sources

The assessment of programmes and measures of the active labour market policy relies on official statistical data as well as on a special fieldwork statistical survey conducted with three individual target groups. By conducting this study, detailed information about the opinions and expectations of the three groups of people in connection with the achievement of the goals of the active labour market policies, the targeting and effects of particular programmes, projects and measures, was collected. The empirical survey and data collection was made possible through

the project "*Elaboration of a subsequent assessment of all elements (programmes and measures for employment) of the active labour market policy in the following directions: reference to the target groups; relevance to the EU Europe 2020 Strategy; economy; effectiveness; efficiency*". The contracting authority was the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in Bulgaria and the project was implemented in 2014 by the "E-Research" association of Econometrica LTD and Vitosha Research LTD¹. The survey was conducted using the method of a personal structured interview; the target groups of the study are as follows:

- Unemployed people who participated in programmes, projects and promotion measures for training and employment, including unemployed young people aged under 29, unemployed people aged over 50, unemployed with low professional qualifications or with professional qualifications in little demand on the labour market and lack of key competencies, including unemployed with low education.
- Employers that participated in programmes, projects and promotion measures for training and employment; directors, managers or heads/experts of Human Resources Departments.
- Managers and experts within the system of the Employment Agency in Bulgaria working in the field of the programmes, projects and measures for training and employment.

The unemployed people who were included in the respective fieldwork surveys meet the requirement to have finished their participation in the particular programme, project, measure or training at least 12 months before the date of conducting the surveys.

The criterion for applying a sample or a comprehensive approach is defined for

¹ The author was the team leader of the project. For further information see Atanassov (2014).

Articles

each programme/measure separately on the basis of the number of people included in the programmes or measures. With regard to small-scale programmes/measures, which cover fewer than 50 participants, a comprehensive study was used, i.e. all participants in the programme were interviewed or an attempt at interviewing all people from the Employment Agency's lists was made. As far as large-scale programmes are concerned, the comprehensive study is not expedient and because of this reason the stochastic (representative) approach was applied. The main advantage of the stochastic sample is the collection of data about the people selected in the sample, on which basis well-grounded conclusions about the general population (i.e. the whole programme/measure) can be drawn. The representative samples are selected by means of a special selection, which is based on the representative study theory

and guarantees obtaining a representative sample, on which basis it is possible to draw conclusions for the purposes of the respective programmes and measures for employment and training with previously defined accuracy (see Kish (1965)).

For the execution of the fieldwork and interview procedure, the total number of 1,706 interviews with unemployed people who participated in programmes and measures of the National Action Plan for Employment (NAPE) were successfully conducted. NAPE supports economic and social recovery, the reduction of unemployment and labour market stabilization in Bulgaria. The main purpose of NAPE is to reduce unemployment by creating jobs in the Bulgarian economy (see the National Action Plan for Employment for 2011 in Bulgaria).

The majority of the interviewed people, who participated in programmes and measures for training and employment financed by

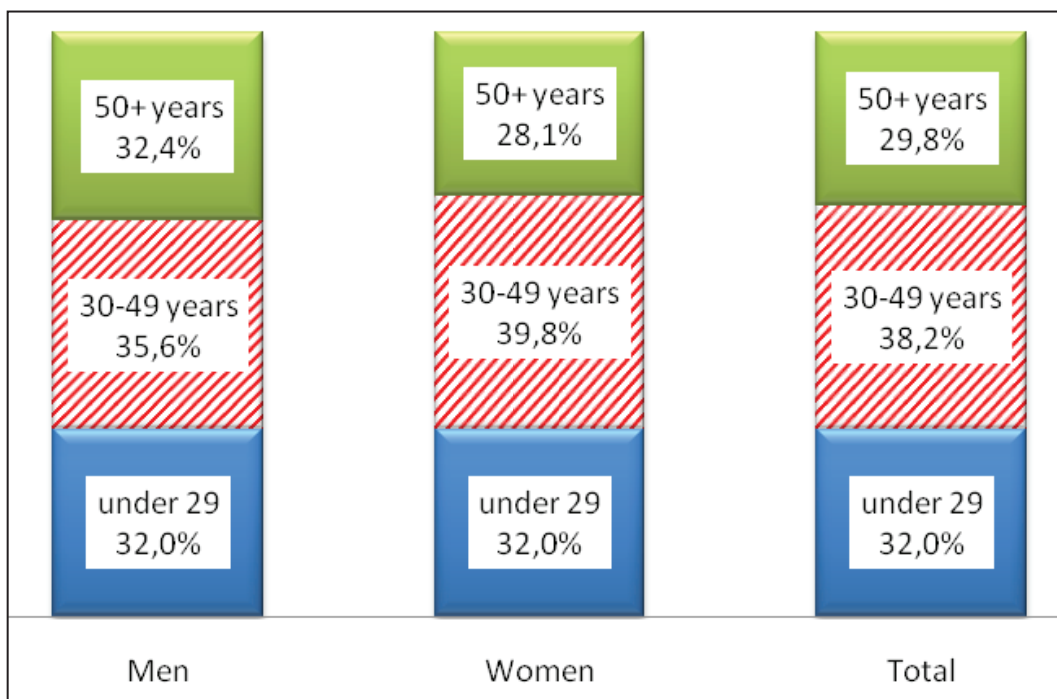


Fig.1. Distribution of the unemployed people who participated in programmes and measures by gender and age.

State Budget resources, are women – 60.7%, while men are 39.3%. In terms of their age, respondents are divided into three age groups as follows: aged under 29 – 32% of the participants in the study, from 30 to 49 years of age – 38.2%, and aged over 50 – 29.8%.

For the purposes of the study amongst employers, a random sample² of different companies and organisations that participated in the programmes and measures of the NAPE were consecutively selected and a total number of 1,523 interviews were successfully conducted. The study amongst managers and experts within the system of the Employment Agency working in the field of the programmes, projects and measures for training and employment covered 113 interviews: 98 interviews with representatives of Labour Offices Directorates throughout the country, 8 – with representatives of Regional Employment Office Directorates, and 7 – with representatives of the central administration of the Employment Agency.

3. Subsequent assessment

The analysis and subsequent assessment of the programmes, projects and promotion measures for employment and training financed by State Budget resources are conducted in the following aspects:

- effectiveness;
- economization;
- efficiency;
- reference to the target groups;
- relevance to the EU Europe 2020 Strategy.

3.1. Effectiveness

The effectiveness reflects the degree of compliance of the set goals with the achieved results and exerted impact, i.e. it assesses to what extent a particular programme, project or measure achieves its set goals³. The present assessment of the effectiveness

of the programmes, projects and promotion measures for training and employment will assess the extent to which the goals are achieved and the target groups are reached.

The effectiveness is assessed by means of the following indicators:

- Realisation of the persons after the end of their participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training;
- Average time of subsequent employment of the persons after the end of their participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training;
- Average monthly income for the period during which the persons had subsequent employment after the end of their participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training;
- Average monthly income of participation in a programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training over one year after the end of the programme;
- Average increase in the total income of a household and of a household member as a result of the participation in programmes, projects or promotion measures for employment and training.

Realisation of the persons after the end of their participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training

The realisation after participation in a programme, project or promotion measure includes starting work on the primary labour market, starting work as self-employed who is not included in a programme of the Labour Offices, as well as retirement after participation in Support in Retirement National Programme.

In half of the programmes and projects the share of those who were able to find realization

² The procedure for random sample selection is described by Kish (1965)

³ Comprehensive review of the effectiveness of active labour market policies in OECD countries was made by Fay (1996).

Articles

was 40% or more. It is worth mentioning that the realisation after the end of participation in a programme, project or promotion measure has the lowest values for the programmes and projects targeted at the groups with unequal status – people receiving monthly social support, long-term unemployed, people with permanent disabilities and people whose families have a member with permanent disabilities. None of the people included in the Activation of Inactive Persons National Programme found a job after the end of the programme. However, it should be taken into account that according to the EA data, of the 8,248 inactive persons registered with the Labour Offices as unemployed as a result of the implementation of Activation of Inactive Persons National Programme 1,384 of them found realisation – 1,298 were employed and 86 were covered by training for adults courses. The regional programmes for training and employment, which aim at increasing the employment and decreasing the regional disparities, also have a low rate of subsequent realisation on the labour market.

Average time of subsequent employment after the end of participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training

The average time of subsequent employment of the people after the end of their participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training represents the months of subsequent employment expressed as a percentage of the period of over one year after the end of participation in a programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training. Data only related to the people with realisation after the end of their participation in a programme, project or promotion measure are used to calculate this indicator.

Support in Retirement National Programme aims to facilitate the transition from unemployment to retirement, respectively

the realisation of the people after the end of their participation in the programme which consists in becoming entitled to a pension, which explains the high percentage of subsequent realisation (almost 100%). As a whole all programmes and projects have very high results of over 50% by the average time of subsequent employment indicator.

Except for one measure, all promotion measures achieve very high results of over 60% in terms of the average time of subsequent employment indicator. What is worth noting are the results of 100% of the promotion measures aimed at providing employment for people in the upper age group (from 50 to 64 years of age). The high result achieved under the promotion measure for providing employment to unemployed people who received monthly social benefits is due to its specific character, namely promotion of the active behaviour on the labour market and incentives for people who get a job without the mediation of the Employment Agency. The only measure with lower results is targeted at unemployed people who served a custodial sentence, who are amongst the vulnerable groups on the labour market, where the average time of subsequent employment is just 23%.

Average monthly income for the period during which the persons had subsequent employment after the end of their participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training

The average monthly income for the period during which the persons had subsequent employment after the end of their participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training represents the incomes from subsequent employment divided by the period of subsequent employment.

The average monthly income for the period during which the people had subsequent employment as part of the Interest-free Loan for People with Disabilities Programme

is calculated on the basis of the information provided by the only participant in the programme who answered that question and is equal to 2,222 BGN. For all other programmes and projects, the average monthly income for the period during which the persons had subsequent employment after the end of their participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training varies from 234 to 530 BGN and is lower than the average monthly salary in the country (820 BGN in 2014).

With regard to both programmes/projects and measures the average monthly income for the period during which the persons had subsequent employment after the end of their participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training is lower than the average monthly salary for the country. The measures aimed at stimulating unemployed people to start an economic activity on their own or with other people (entrepreneurship promotion) have achieved the highest average monthly income – 509 BGN. The high results of the incentives for employers to provide internships for unemployed people give grounds to think that the opportunities for internships are a precondition for subsequent employment with good incomes.

Average monthly income for the period from the end of participation in a programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training over one year after the end of the programme

The average monthly income for the period from the end of participation in a programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training represents the incomes from subsequent employment divided by the period from the end of participation in a programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training over one year after the end of the programme.

The average monthly income for the period of one year after the end of participation in

a programme or project for employment and training represents around 59% of the average monthly income for the period during which the people had subsequent employment after the end of their participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training. The average monthly income for the period from the end of participation in a programme or project for employment and training and the average monthly income for the period during which the persons had subsequent employment after the end of their participation in the respective programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training coincide for Support in Retirement National Programme and Interest-free Loans for People with Disabilities Programme as the persons who answered these questions were employed over the entire period from the end of the programme. The largest difference between the two indicators is observed for Welfare-to-Work National Programme. This is due to the lower value of the average time indicator of subsequent employment of the participants in this programme.

Average increase in the total income of households and of household members as a result of the participation in programmes, projects or promotion measures for employment and training

The average increase in the total income of households and of household members as a result of the participation in programmes, projects or promotion measures for employment and training will make it possible to assess how much the respective elements of the active labour market policy contributed to the increase in the incomes of the individuals and their households. Data only about the persons who found realisation after the end of their participation in a programme, project or promotion measure are used for calculating this indicator.

The average increase in the total income of the household and of a household

Articles

member varies widely between the individual programmes and projects. The highest average increase in both the total income of the household and of a household member is observed for two of the programmes and projects, namely Career Start Programme and Melpomene Programme. The lowest average increase in both the total income of the household and of a household member is observed for Assistance for People with Disabilities National Programme, Welfare to Work National Programme and Realisation Project. The average increase in the total income of the household for the programme with the lowest result (Assistants of People with Disabilities National Programme) represents 43.7% of the increase for Career Start Programme, which achieves the highest result by this indicator (373 BGN). The average increase in the income of a household member for the programme with the lowest result (Welfare-to-Work National Programme) is 40.7% of the increase for Employment and Training of People with Permanent Disabilities National Programme, which has the highest result by this indicator (152 BGN).

The average increase in the total income of households for the measure with the lowest result (Encouraging geographical mobility of the unemployed (article 42, paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 of the EPA) represents 51.4% of the increase for Entrepreneurship promotion (article 47, paragraph 1; article 48; article 47, paragraph 4; article 49; article 49, paragraph 4 and article 49b of the EPA), which achieves the highest result by this indicator. The average increase in the income of a household member for the measure with the lowest result (Providing employment to unemployed persons who received monthly social benefits ("bonus") (article 42a of the EPA) is 40% of the increase for Incentives for employers to provide internships for

unemployed people (article 46 of the EPA), which has the highest result by this indicator.

3.2. Economization

The economization of the programmes, projects and promotion measures for employment and training means reducing the resources spent on their implementation to a minimum and at the same time to observe the achievement of the respective quality.

The implementation of the various programmes, projects and promotion measures for employment and training is connected with different expenditure for achievement of good quality because of reference to different target groups, a different number of people covered by the programmes, projects and promotion measures, etc. In order to eliminate the effect of the different number of people, the expenditure is standardised and calculated per person.

The economization is assessed by the indicator for the average amount paid out to a person, the programs and measures are grouped into the following 4 categories depending on the main type of expenses funded⁴:

I. The first group includes the programs and measures directed at finding employment and funding both salaries and social security payments for the people involved. This is the largest group in which the biggest number of participating persons were accordingly involved — on average 22 thousand people worked in it. The most economical programs in this group are:

- Welfare-to-Work National Programme with an average amount of 190 BGN per month;
- Assistants of People with Disabilities National Programme — 217 BGN per month.

The reason for such low expenditure per person in these two programs is that they are mainly directed at people who are employed in sectors with low salaries and in positions that do not require high qualifications, as

⁴With some programs and measures, training is also funded. For example, these are the "This Is My Chance to Find Myself" Project and the Project "Beautiful Bulgaria". Nevertheless, the grouping of the programs and measures has been carried out according to the main activity on the program/measure.

Articles

well as cases when these people have had a part-time employment.

The programs with the highest expenditure in this group were Career Start Programme (434 BGN) directed at people with university education whose average salaries are higher, as well as Beautiful Bulgaria Project (400 BGN) where the employed people work in the building and construction sector where the wages are higher than the average in the country.

II. The second group comprises measures directed at employment under which funding is provided for employers who are obliged to pay only social security payments. This has turned out to be the most economical group in which the expenditures vary from 51 BGN a month for incentives for employers to hire unemployed people as part-time workers under article 51 of the EPA up to 71 BGN for encouraging employer micro-enterprises to provide new jobs by subsidising the first 5 newly hired employees (article 50 of the EPA).

III. In the third group includes training courses according to article 63 of the EPA in the Center for Human Resource Development and Regional Initiatives (CHRDRI) (614 BGN on average) and Realisation Project with 1,130 BGN. It is necessary to note that the expenditures per person here cannot be compared with the other groups mentioned above since the duration of the training courses is longer than one month and the expenditures apply to the entire period of training, and besides training expenditures the group also includes expenditures for scholarships, for lodging, and for the transportation of those persons that were included in them.

IV. The last group comprises the remaining specific programs and measures included in the NAPE. The most economical among them is Encouraging geographical mobility of the unemployed (article 42, paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 of the EPA) under which only transportation expenses are funded (85 BGN on average). It is followed by Providing employment to unemployed

people who received monthly social benefits ("bonus") (article 42a of the EPA), and to whom "bonuses" have been paid for having found employment without the mediation of the EA (182 BGN); then comes Interest-free Loan for People with Disabilities Programme who get a refund for the interest on the loan to the amount of 947 BGN on average; and finally comes Entrepreneurship promotion (article 47, paragraph 1; article 48; article 47, paragraph 4; article 49; article 49, paragraph 4 and article 49b of the EPA) (1,072 BGN).

3.3. Efficiency

The efficiency of the programmes, projects and promotion measures for employment and training is closely related to their economization and effectiveness analyzed above. The efficiency is characterised by the achievement of maximum results through the spending of the available financial resources. Likewise, as for the assessment of the economization, special attention is paid to the invested resources for the implementation of the projects, programmes and promotion measures for training and employment.

The main issue is whether maximum results are obtained (in terms of quantity and quality) as a result of the invested resources and actions taken during the implementation of the projects, programmes and promotion measures for employment and training. The assessment of the efficiency of the elements of the active labour market policy will provide an answer to the question: to what extent the goals of the respective projects, programmes and promotion for employment and training are achieved by means of efficient expenditure of resources with a maximum return on investment.

For the purposes of the analysis and the subsequent assessment of the programmes, projects and promotion measures for employment and training, the efficiency will be expressed as a coefficient, calculated as the ratio of the total incomes from subsequent employment per person and the expenditure

Articles

per person covered by a programme, project or promotion measure, i.e. the higher the value of the obtained indicator is, the higher the achieved efficiency is. In general, if the coefficient of efficiency is greater than 1, the person has a higher income than the costs which were invested in his participation in the program or measure.

From the programs and measures directed at employment and financing of salaries and social security payments to individuals, the most efficient is the one about granting incentives for employers to provide internships for unemployed people (article 46 of the EPA). Its efficiency coefficient is 1.28 on average, which means that the people that have taken part in it have achieved an income from subsequent employment which is 28 % higher on average than the expenditures channelled for this measure. The main reason for the high efficiency of this measure is the fact that a significant percentage of the people that took part in it were subsequently employed.

Next on the efficiency scale are the New Opportunity for Employment National Programme and Incentives for employers to create jobs for unemployed single parents with children between 3 and 5 years of age (article 53a of the EPA) which also boast high levels of subsequent realization on the labour market.

The least efficient is the Incentives for employers to create jobs for the unemployed who served a custodial sentence programme (article 55 of the EPA). The main cause is the low subsequent realization of these people due to the fact that the group is very specific. Of course, since the number of people who have participated in the measure is quite low, it cannot be concluded that if the scale of the measure would be greater or if it would be combined with another program/measure, the effectiveness would not be higher.

The efficiency has also been low for the Beautiful Bulgaria Project, the Assistants of People with Disabilities National Programme, and the Welfare-to-Work National Programme. The low efficiency of these programs cannot be interpreted unequivocally as a weakness of the same, but account should be taken also of the specific needs of their target groups who face serious difficulties in their attempts to achieve labour market realization and involve higher expenditures for the implementation of the measures. The effects in this case are mainly social in nature rather than effects from the subsequent employment.

The second group of measures are those under which only the social security contributions are financed. Generally, the amounts per person invested in them are

Table 1. Efficiency of the programmes, projects and promotion measures under the EPA

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS	Coefficient of efficiency
Directed at employment (funded salaries and social securities)	
Incentives for employers to provide internships for unemployed people (article 46 of the EPA)	1,28
New Opportunity for Employment National Programme	1,16
Incentives for employers to create jobs for unemployed single parents with children between 3 and 5 years of age (article 53a of the EPA)	1,11
Incentives for employers to create green jobs for unemployed people (article 55e of the EPA)	1,08
Incentives for employers to create jobs for unemployed single parents with children up to 3 years of age (article 53 of the EPA)	1,07
Incentives for employers to hire older unemployed (aged over 50) (article 55a of the EPA)	1,06
Melpomene Programme	1,05

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS	Coefficient of efficiency
Career Start Programme	1,02
Incentives for employers to create jobs for apprenticeships and additional labour remuneration of a mentor for created jobs for apprenticeships (article 55d of the EPA)	0,84
Incentives for employers to provide internships for unemployed people under 29 years of age (article 41 of the EPA)	0,84
Incentives for employers to hire unemployed people with permanently reduced capacity to work on a temporary, seasonal or part-time basis (article 52, paragraph 1 of the EPA)	0,81
Incentives for employers to hire unemployed people under 29 years of age with permanent disabilities, including disabled soldiers, as well as young people from social institutions who completed their education (article 36, paragraph 2 of the EPA)	0,80
Regional programmes for training and employment	0,80
This is my chance to find myself Project	0,79
Employment and Training of People with Permanent Disabilities National Programme	0,76
Incentives for employers to hire unemployed people with permanently reduced capacity to work on a temporary, seasonal or part-time basis (article 52, paragraph 2 of the EPA)	0,71
Welfare-to-Work National Programme	0,67
Assistants of People with Disabilities National Programme	0,64
Beautiful Bulgaria Project	0,63
Incentives for employers to create jobs for unemployed people who served a custodial sentence (article 55 of the EPA)	0,34
Directed at employment (funded only the social security payments for the people that employers are obliged to pay)	
Incentives for employers to hire unemployed people as part-time workers (article 51 of the EPA)	6,39
Incentives for employers to hire unemployed people under 29 years of age (article 36, paragraph 1 of the EPA)	6,02
Incentives for employers to hire people between 50 and 64 years of age who are entitled to a professional pension for early retirement (article 55b of the EPA)	5,61
Incentives for employers to hire long-term unemployed (article 55c of the EPA)	5,52
Encouraging employer micro-enterprises to provide new jobs by subsidising the first 5 (article 50 of the EPA)	3,96
Training courses	
Training of adults organised by the EA under article 63 of the EPA by referring to the BGVTC AND CHRDR I	10,35
Realisation Project	7,19
Remaining specific	
Providing employment to unemployed persons who received monthly social benefits ("bonus") (article 42a of the EPA)	45,50
Interest-free Loan for People with Disabilities Programme	21,12
Entrepreneurship promotion (article 47, paragraph 1; article 48; article 47, paragraph 4; article 49; article 49, paragraph 4 and article 49b of the EPA)	8,08
Encouraging geographical mobility of the unemployed (article 42 of the EPA)	3,26

significantly lower than in the programs and measures funding both the salaries and the social security contributions. This is the reason why the efficiency of the latter is very high. The most efficient is the Incentives for employers to hire unemployed people as part-time workers (article 51 of the EPA), while the least efficient is Encouraging employer micro-enterprises to provide

Articles

new jobs by subsidising the first 5 openings (article 50 of the EPA).

The third group includes the training courses, the training of adults organised by the EA under article 63 of the EPA having higher efficiency than the Realisation Project.

The highest ranking in terms of efficiency is in the last group - Providing employment to unemployed persons who received monthly social benefits ("bonus") (article 42a of the EPA). However, because of the small number of people involved, these results cannot be considered as sufficiently representative. Next in terms of efficiency is Interest-free Loan for People with Disabilities Programme, but here the high efficiency is due to the fact that one of the surveyed people has achieved a very high income. Entrepreneurship promotion (article 47, paragraph 1; article 48; article 47, paragraph 4; article 49; article 49, paragraph 4 and article 49b of the EPA) ranks third, and Encouraging geographical mobility of the unemployed (article 42, paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 of the EPA) ranks last.

The comparison between the individual groups of programs and measures cannot be unequivocal since they differ in nature from one another. However, though subject to certain conditions, a conclusion may be drawn that most efficient are the programs and measures with small expenditures, such as those funding only the social security contributions that are payable by the employer, as well as those directed toward the encouragement of the entrepreneurship where high incomes could be achieved.

3.4. Reference of the programmes, projects and measures for employment and training to the target groups

The necessity of improving the targeting of the programmes, projects and promotion measures for employment and training is determined by both the dynamics of the labour market and the changes in the different target groups' needs. On the basis of the

conducted analysis of the targeting of the elements of the active labour market policies, a proposal for re-direction of resources from one programme to another and measures depending on the achievements and the situation on the labour market can be made. The analysis and assessment of the targeting of the programmes, projects and measures depend largely on the assessment of the effectiveness, as well as on the analysis of the opinion of the unemployed persons who are targeted by the active labour market policies.

For the purposes of the analysis of the targeting of the programmes, projects and promotion measures for employment and training, the opinion of the unemployed people on the following three questions is considered:

1. To what extent did your participation in the programme/measure help you find a job?

Regarding the six programmes and projects with the highest average results, over 60% of the interviewed unemployed stated that their participation helped them find a job to a certain degree, to a large degree or to a very large degree. Some of the programmes and projects obtained a low average assessment and the majority of the respondents think that their participation didn't help at all or helped to a small extent for finding subsequent employment. The following two projects have the lowest results: "This is my chance to find myself" Project⁵ – according to 50.9% of the people their participation in the project didn't help at all, and according to 20.8% it helped to a small extent for finding subsequent employment, and the Realisation Project – according to 54% of the participants it didn't help at all, and according to 18% it helped to a small extent for finding a job.

Over half of the participants in almost all promotion measures consider that the measure helped them find a job later on. Only with respect to the two measures with the lowest average assessment (Incentives for employers to hire unemployed people

⁵ The target group covers unemployed young people who dropped out of school.

aged under 29 with permanent disabilities, including disabled soldiers, as well as young people from social institutions who completed their education and the Incentives for employers to create jobs for unemployed people who served a custodial sentence) less than 50% of the persons consider that their participation helped them find a job later on to a certain extent, to a large extent or to a very large extent.

2. To what extent are you using the knowledge/skills/experience acquired during the programme/measure at the moment or at your last workplace?

Most programmes and projects have a high average assessment - over 50% of the interviewed people stated that they are using the knowledge/skills/experience acquired during their participation in the programme or project to a certain extent, to a large extent or are making full use of them at the moment or at their last workplace. A lower assessment of the usefulness of the knowledge, skills and experience was given by the participants in the following programmes and projects: Welfare-to-Work National Programme, Realisation Project and Support in Retirement National Programme.

Over half of the participants in almost all promotion measures gave a very high assessment of the usefulness of the knowledge, skills and experience acquired during the measure; the participants in Entrepreneurship promotion (article 47, paragraph 1; article 48; article 47, paragraph 4; article 49; article 49, paragraph 4 and article 49b of the EPA) are the most satisfied - 100% of them are using the acquired knowledge and skills to a certain extent, to a large extent or are making full use of them. Only for three of the measures less than half of the participants declared they are using the acquired knowledge, skills and experience to a certain extent, to a large extent or are making full use of them, namely the Incentives for employers to hire people between 50 and 64 years of age who acquired right to a professional pension for

early retirement, Incentives for employers to hire unemployed people aged under 29 with permanent disabilities, including disabled soldiers, as well as young people from social institutions who completed their education and Incentives for employers to create jobs for unemployed people who served a custodial sentence.

3. If it was up to you, what would you mainly change in order to make the programme/measure more effective?

The highest relative share of participants in all programmes, projects and promotion measures say they would like them to be longer. According to a high share of the unemployed the programmes, projects and measures they took part in don't need any change. A relatively small part of the participants have difficulty with the procedure for inclusion and control and would like its simplification. A small number of respondents consider that the place where they are held should be more convenient for the participants (only for Incentives for employers to provide internships for unemployed people and the training of adults organised by the EA this percentage is higher – 12.2% and 11.1% respectively) and the duration of participation should be shorter.

The results of the data based on the unemployed persons' opinion attest to the good reference of the programmes, projects and promotion measures to the respective target groups. The vulnerable groups on the labour market emerge as the most problematic ones, namely unemployed people with permanently reduced capacity to work, young people from social institutions and people who served a custodial sentence.

3.5. Relevance of the programmes, projects and measures for employment and training to the EU Europe 2020 Strategy

The relevance of the programmes, projects and measures for employment and training to the EU Europe 2020 Strategy refers to the extent of their consistency with the priorities

and goals of the Strategy (see Europe 2020). The three main priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy are related to achievement of economic growth, which should be:

- smart – development of an economy based on knowledge and innovations;
- sustainable – promotion of a more environment-friendly and competitive economy with more efficient use of resources;
- inclusive – stimulation of an economy with high employment levels, which will facilitate the social and territorial cohesion.

The Bulgarian priorities relevant to the Europe 2020 Strategy and the active labour market policy are related to the achievement of an employment rate of 76% amongst population aged 20-64 and decrease in the number of people living in poverty by 260 thousand. The programmes, projects and promotion measures for employment and training aim exactly at increasing employment and labour incomes and thus they contribute to the achievement of the national goals under the Europe 2020 Strategy.

According to NAPE 49,109 people were covered by programmes, projects and promotion measures for employment and training in 2011. The results from the survey show that 17% of them have subsequent realisation, which results in an increase in employment in the country. The share of people with realisation after the end of their participation in a programme or project is 15%, for the promotion measures this share is 51%, and for the training of adults organised by the EA under article 63 of the EPA by referring to the BGVTC AND CHRDR – 47%. The participation in programmes, projects and promotion measures for employment and training provides incomes for the people and enables them to more easily find a job later.

The average monthly income for Interest-free Loan for People with Disabilities Programme considerably exceeds the incomes for the other programmes and projects and represents 366% of the average monthly income for all programmes, which amounts to 220 BGN. The average monthly income for

the Realisation Project, which has the lowest results, is 55.9% of the average monthly income for all programmes and 15.3% of the income for the most successful programme.

The lowest average monthly income from participation in a programme, project or promotion measure for employment and training is observed for the measures that are targeted at the vulnerable groups on the labour market - people with permanently reduced capacity to work and unemployed people who served a custodial sentence. The other two measures with a low average monthly income aim at encouraging employers to hire unemployed people as part-time workers (the part-time work is a logical precondition for lower incomes) and at encouraging employers to create green jobs for unemployed people. The average monthly income for Incentives for employers to create jobs for unemployed people who served a custodial sentence, which have the lowest result, is 83.7% of the average monthly income for all measures and 38.6% of the income for the most successful measure. The average monthly income for all measures amounts to 294 BGN and is higher than the average monthly income for the programmes and projects (220 BGN).

4. Conclusions

The active policy on the labour market boosts employment and drives up incomes of the people in two stages. At the first stage when the program/measure is being carried out, it has a financial and social aspect, and the second stage is when the people subsequently achieve realization in terms of employment on the labour market.

The participation in the programs and measures that were included in the NAPE has been highly appreciated and is characterized by high levels of satisfaction both among the unemployed people and among the experts from the Employment Agency responsible for implementing the

programs, projects, and the measures for training and employment.

Sustained realization on the labour market as a result of the active measures on the labour market can be established at least one year after the people have completed their participation in the programs and measures. Despite the ongoing crisis and the growing unemployment in the country, this study has found that about 40% of the people that participated in the survey are currently employed, i.e. they have achieved sustained realization, 5% succeeded to go into retirement, and another 5% are participating in other programs of the Labour Offices. It can therefore be assumed that the measures included in NAPE had a long-term effect of a subsequent realization on the labour market on about half of the participants in the programs.

The realization of the participants in the programs and measures in terms of employment after their participation in them is mainly in private companies, a large part of them keeping on working in the same firm where they were apprentices or interns during the program. This effect is strengthened also by the fact that the subsequent employment of the people is usually full-time, the part-time or seasonal employment being rather the exception.

A general conclusion can be drawn that the following demographic and target groups face the most serious difficulties when trying to find work after the completion of their participation in the programs, projects, and encouragement measures:

- unemployed people who are older than 50;
- people living in small towns and in villages;
- unemployed people with a low level of education or without any education;
- unemployed people without a trade or with a trade that does not require special qualifications;
- people belonging to the vulnerable groups on the labour market — these are mainly people with permanently reduced

capacity to work; unemployed people up to 29 years of age with permanent disabilities, people who served a custodial sentence. The programs and measures aimed at these target groups receive the lowest scores in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

With limited financial resources, the most important aspect in the fight against unemployment is probably the efficiency of the programs and measures. In this case, the most efficient measures are those which spend small amounts of money, but have a great effect. The most efficient ones are those programs and measures by which only the social security contributions of the participants are funded, as well as those directed at the encouragement of entrepreneurship as a result of which the achievement of high incomes becomes possible. Of course, the training courses should not be ignored since they adapt the persons to the changing demand in the labour market and increase the chances for subsequent employment.

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