



# Programme "Career Start"

Програма "Карий Старт"



Bulgaria

## 1 DESCRIPTION

Timespan

2003 - present

Stage

FULLY OPERATIONAL

Focus area



MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET

## 2 FOUNDATIONS

Policy Area



ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

The 'Career Start' Programme is in line with the youth employment integration priority laid down in the National Reform Programme of the Republic of Bulgaria, and is aimed at contributing to the achievement of the Europe 2020 National target for employment.

Policy Goal

The programme "Career start" addresses the gap between education and employment. It facilitates the transition between education and employment by providing a possibility to gain work experience. The Programme addresses the difficulties that young secondary school and university graduates face immediately after graduation in their efforts to find jobs that match the knowledge and skills they have acquired during their education. The 'Career Start' programme includes two components. The target group of the first component are university graduates aged up to 29 years without work experience, who are registered at the Labour Offices. They are given the possibility to gain experience in public administration (i.e. national institutions, regional and local administrations) for the period of nine months. The Minister of Labour and Social Policy approves an annual quota for the job placements. The target group of the second component refers to young people up to 24 years old, who have completed vocational education in the past two years, have no work experience in their occupation and are registered at the Labour Offices. They are provided with an opportunity to gain experience in private companies for the period of six months.

Mismatch

### PART OF BROADER PROGRAMME, YET WITH EXPLICIT FOCUS

The 'Career Start' Programme is implemented in the context of the National Youth Strategy 2010-2020 of the Republic of Bulgaria, as it contributes to the achievement of Strategic objective No.1: 'Encourage the economic activity and career development of young people', through provision of opportunities for gaining work experience in the state administration and private sector.

Aim of policy instrument



MATCH SKILLS OF YOUNG GRADUATES

Legal basis

MINISTERIAL ORDER

Administrative level

NATIONAL

## Main responsible body

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

## Stakeholders



**GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)**



**GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS**

Ministry of Education and Science: promotes the programme through its Regional Education Offices. National Employment Agency: performs governing, coordinating and organisational functions; allocates the necessary funds and controls the programme implementation. Regional Employment Services Directorates: coordinating functions at regional level; grants employers the financial resources for participation in the programme; monitoring and control functions at regional level. Labour Offices: carries out the actual implementation of the programme; provides intermediary services for young people and employers; concludes contracts with employers for granting resources for the young people hired under the programme; performs control and coordinating functions at the local level; assists external control organs in their work. Employment Committees: members of the Committee participate in committees for selection of candidates for jobs in public administration at regional and local level; performs monitoring and control functions. Regional Administrations: participates in information campaign for promoting the programme and attracting youth candidates; the Regional Governor assigns the Committee for the selection of candidates for the region and its municipalities. Municipal Administrations: participates in information campaign for promoting the programme and attracting youth candidates. Employers - partners under the programme: ensures suitable jobs for young people applying as part of the programme; makes a final selection among the youth candidates, pre-recruited by the Labour Offices; concludes labour contracts and pay remunerations to selected youth candidates.

## Funding

A total of â, ~3,027 million from the State Budget was allocated to the programme for 2017. The funds have constantly been increased over the years - a trend, which is expected to continue in the future.

## Intended beneficiaries

The 'Career Start' Programme is implemented in two components: Component 1: targeting young people of 29 years of age and younger with no work experience, who have completed their higher education and are registered in the Labour Offices. Component 2: addressing young people of 24 years of age and younger, who have completed their vocational education in the past two years, have no working experience on their occupations and are registered at the Labour Offices. The benefits for both types of beneficiaries, mentioned above, is associated with the working experience that they will gain by participating in the programme, which will facilitate their transition from education to employment.

## 3 PROCESSES

### Use of labour market intelligence



**OTHER**

The use of LMSI is limited to the process of determining the annual quota for job placements in the central, regional and municipal administrations and its approval by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. The annual quotas are based on the declared needs of the administrative structures and specify the available number of positions and department within the respective administration, as well as the requirements to the prospective candidates for each position including academic specialty and acquired skills (computer literacy, foreign languages, etc.).

### Financial schemes

Resources are granted in the form of subsidies to employers, who have hired young people under the Programme, pre-recruited by the Labour Bureau Directorates, covering salaries and employer social security contributions.

### Frequency of updates

The LMSI of the Programme is updated annually with the quotas for job placements in the central/regional/municipal administrations, approved by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy.

### Development

The approach described above has not undergone any changes since the onset of the Programme in 2003.

### Barriers

The most serious barrier to the effective implementation of the 'Career Start' Programme, especially in Component 2, is the weak interest in participation in the programme on the part of private sector employers. This issue has obviously not been effectively addressed, as since 2012 only Component 1 of the Programme has been implemented.

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**Success factors**

The effective planning and selection procedures seem to be the key factors for maintaining the high success level of Component 1 of the programme.

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**Monitoring**

The Annual Report of the National Employment Agency provides regular information about the progress of the 'Career Start' Programme, including reporting data on the following indicators: a) number of individuals, included in employment under the Programme; b) number of individuals, employed under the Programme during the year (average number per month); c) financial resources spent under the Programme.

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**Innovativeness****VERY INNOVATIVE**

The 'Career Start' Programme is the only initiative in Bulgaria that provides opportunities for young university graduates to gain work experience by being employed in the central, regional or municipal administration. Due to the systematic approach, by including the programme in the Annual Employment Action Plan, its impact has increased over the years, as a general upward trend can be observed in the number of job placements since the onset of the programme (in 2016 placement numbers has increased nearly two times compared to 2003).

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## 4 SUSTAINABILITY

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**Evidence of effectiveness**

Nearly 9,000 young people were newly included in the 'Career Start' Programme for the period 2003-2016, the majority of whom were under Component 1 - young university graduates up to 29 years of age. According to the Ex-post Assessment of the ALMPs Effect at Individual Level, carried out in 2015, the overall impact of the Programme is among the highest, compared to other ALMPs, implemented in Bulgaria, as 74.1% of all participants in the Programme stayed in employment. As already mentioned, the benefits were mostly for the Programme's Component 1 participants, i.e. young university graduates, while the benefits for Component 2 target group - young people with vocational education degree, were negligible. The participation in the programme substantially improved the employment prospects for young university graduates, as the level of employment sustainability among them is nearly 80%, whereas for the remaining 20%, the rate of long-term unemployment is nearly 0%.

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**Engagement of stakeholders**

The Order of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, issued on an annual basis, clearly describes the roles of all the stakeholders, involved in the implementation of the programme, namely: Ministry of Education and Science, National Employment Agency, Regional Employment Services Directorates, Labour Offices, Employment Committees, Regional and Municipal Administrations, etc.

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**Transferability****EASILY TRANSFERABLE**

The 'Career Start' Programme can be easily transferred in countries with: a) relatively high personnel turnover and hence many job vacancies in the public administration sector, which is usually caused by the lower level of remunerations there, compared to the private sector; and/or b) high level of employment security for those occupying positions in the state administration. Of the two components of the programme, Component 1 is by far the most successful and can be best transferred to other countries, including the processes of job placement planning, definition of selection criteria, recruitment process and opportunities offered for sustainable employment of new youth recruits.

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**Sustainability**

Bearing in mind that the 'Career Start' Programme has been established as one of the most successful ALMPs over the last decade, one can expect the implementation of this instrument to continue over the years to come. In addition, being financed by the State Budget, the Programme has a stable source of funding, unlike some other initiatives, which are highly dependent on EU grant funding and are hence of questionable financial sustainability.

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