



Republic of Bulgaria
ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

RESOLUTION

on

"THE REALIZATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE LABOUR MARKET"

(own-initiative resolution)

Sofia, 2015

The Action Plan for 2016 of the Economic and Social Council included the elaboration of a resolution on "An integrated policy for young people in Bulgaria." In order to complete the whole cycle of approaches and measures relating to young people in Bulgaria, the President Board decided to elaborate a resolution on:

"The realization of young people on the labour market".

At its meeting held on 17 December 2015 the Plenary Session adopted the resolution.

1. TRANSITION FROM EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT

- 1.1. ESC has repeatedly expressed concern and offered solutions that can mitigate the effects of internal and external migration, to preserve the demographic resources of the country and to stop the process of depopulation of entire regions. In this connection in 2015 ESC surveyed the attitudes to migration of 2130 school graduates from across the country.
 - 1.1.1. The survey results, summarized in the analysis on the subject adopted by the ESC,¹ showed a high degree of resolve in young people to leave their place of residence. Young people from small towns demonstrate attitudes to go to larger towns, and from the big towns - to the capital or abroad. The survey highlighted internal migration as a very serious problem, as two-thirds of the respondents expressed their resolve to leave their place of residence.
 - 1.1.2. In its analysis ESC notes with concern that the main problem facing young school graduates is finding a job in the settlement where they reside, and this is also consistent with their desire for a higher standard of living. Furthermore, one in two high-school graduates in 2015 identified low income as one of the most serious problems in their place of residence.
 - 1.1.3. Economic regional disparities are a serious problem that motivates young people to change their place of residence to look for a job or better education elsewhere and opportunities not only for higher wages, but also for better social services - health care, transport and culture.
- 1.2. ESC notes that the risk of unemployment is particularly high among young people after completion of the compulsory stages of schooling and, according to various studies, even university graduates have difficulty in finding their first job. Significantly, in the third quarter of 2015 an average of 18.0% of the total number of unemployed persons are looking for their first job². Lack of support in these transitional stages, that are crucial for the development of the individual, can result in discouragement, social exclusion and risk of poverty.
- 1.3. ESC finds that the main aim of measures to facilitate the transition from education to employment is assistance in finding the first job, for example by providing personalized consultancy for career guidance; creating one's own plan of steps to find a job; acquiring adequate "hard" (depending on the desired profession) or "soft" (basic, widely applicable) skills, habits, etc.
- 1.4. In this regard, ESC proposes that the government in dialogue with the local authorities, social partners and civil society to develop a "pathway" for young persons - "from education to realization" covering the process from training in school to securing the first job and aiming to achieve quality employment, personal fulfilment and lifelong learning. In

¹ ESC Analysis "Migration attitudes among young high-school graduates in Bulgaria" 2015.

² According to data provided by the National Statistical Institute.

developing such a "pathway" it is important to consider the qualities and qualifications of young jobseekers and the needs and requirements of employers towards them.

- 1.5. Young persons' vision for their own working life rests on subjective notions, social stereotypes, family expectations, etc. - rather than on a reasoned and informed choice. So ESC is confident that good-quality, timely career guidance that is consistent with the age of job seekers is a crucial part of the transition "from education to realization" and has the potential to reduce structural unemployment at the regional level and in disseminating best practices across the nation.
- 1.6. ESC welcomes the measures implemented in the National Action Plan for Employment /NAPE/ in 2015 for active policies to help young people in finding their first job. One example of this is the possibility for internships in the public administration. Unfortunately however, after the expiration of the internship period, most young people remain unemployed. A lasting solution for the employment of young people is the real economy and therefore ESC welcomes the measures under the Employment Promotion Act carried out in the context of NAPE, which are aimed at encouraging employers to hire young people.
- 1.7. According to ESC, more joint action with employers is needed which would take into account their requirements and forecasts for the demand of workforce. A good initiative in this direction is the approach taken in 2014 in forecasting the demand and supply of labour in Bulgaria in the short, medium and long term.
- 1.8. Since the measures for youth employment should be flexible and tailored to the economic cycle, ESC notes that in periods of economic downturn there is high demand for youth measures. The data show that at times of decline in the economic growth and the number of jobs in general, young people tend to remain longer in various forms of education or training.
- 1.9. European Youth Guarantee is a successful initiative to improve the transition from education to employment, as it provides for the identification of young people not in employment, education or training and providing opportunities for their inclusion in individually selected measures. ESC believes that the implementation of the "Youth Guarantee" in Bulgaria, in addition to educational and activating measures, will help to reduce the number of young people from the group of the so called "NEETs"³, an indicator in terms of which our country is lagging seriously behind other EU Member States.
- 1.10. ESC welcomes the development and implementation of the National Plan for implementing the European Youth Guarantee and in a separate resolution⁴ made concrete recommendations regarding youth policies in Bulgaria. Although the plan envisages measures for young people aged up to 29 years, ESC again emphasises its proposal of the need for more measures targeted on young people aged between 25 and 29 who encounter difficulties in finding a job that adequately corresponds to their education. The

³ Young persons who are not in education, employment or training - the group of the so called "NEETs").

⁴ ESC Resolution on: "Actions to support young people and tackling youth unemployment in Bulgaria".

Employment Promotion Act defines youths as persons under the age of 29 and in this sense, although they do not fall within the target group of the Youth Guarantee, the work with them is also seen as a priority. This is evidenced by indicators for monitoring the implementation of the National plan for implementing the European Youth Guarantee, which covers youths under the age of 29 and those under 24. This is also confirmed by Eurostat data, according to which the economic activity rate of Bulgarians aged 25-29 is one of the lowest in the EU.

- 1.11. Young persons who are offered/provided with individual measures for integration into the labour market (or back into training) should participate in the drafting process of their individual employment plans (incl. in the context of the Youth Guarantee), so as to feel more engaged with their own future. In this way young people will gain a sense of fulfilment, improve their vision for the future and focus on their goals.
- 1.12. However, according to ESC, the implementation of the "Youth Guarantee" in Bulgaria undervalues regional disparities, on the one hand, and youths' individual preferences for employment, on the other. Given these realities, it is necessary for labour mediators in the dialogue with young people to explain the opportunities offered by potential jobs in the respective settlement, region and beyond. In this regard, ESC welcomes the development of an individual action plan for each unemployed young person upon his or her registration with the Labour Office.
- 1.13. ESC believes that in order to meet the challenges arising from the mismatch in supply and demand of professions and skills on the labour market, further measures are necessary to acquire new skills, and early (e.g. in the course of primary education) informed and good-quality career guidance.
- 1.14. ESC is pleased to note that a number of recommendations on the need for financial support for young people in programs for apprenticeship schemes have been already implemented, such as the regulation of a contract of apprenticeship with a specific duration and wages.
- 1.15. ESC re-states that the implementation of active youth policy would be more effective if the state served not only as employer but also as mediator between youth training organizations and employers in the private sector. ESC is also pleased to note that the results of the application of the "Youth Guarantee" in 2014⁵ which resulted in the active recruitment of more than 43,000 young persons aged under 29 (of whom over 18,000 aged under 24) was realized on the primary labour market - in the real economy.
- 1.16. ESC believes that some of the proposed changes in the statutory framework, connected with the implementation the Youth Guarantee in Bulgaria, are still waiting to be realized and urges the responsible authorities to take action in this direction⁶:
 - ✓ "introducing additional attributes to identify the place of work (code in accordance with the classification of settlements (Unified Classification of the Administrative-

⁵ According to data provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

⁶ ESC Resolution: "Actions to support young people and tackling youth unemployment in Bulgaria".

Territorial and Territorial Units) of employees as an essential element of employment agreements;

- ✓ obligation to digitize the data for educational and qualification status of citizens by educational institutions and vocational training centres for education and training programmes financed by public funds;
- ✓ integration of the information systems of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) and the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and provision of real-time access to the Employment Agency, the National Revenue Agency, General Labour Inspectorate and other institutions;
- ✓ registration of school leavers and personal identification of the so called "discouraged persons" aged 15-24 and 25-29.

2. REMOVING BARRIERS AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

- 2.1. ESC has repeatedly stressed that the main risks for young persons in their transition from education to professional realization are the deficit of vacancies, the lack of professional experience and qualification that meets the requirements of employers. According to ESC,⁷ the barriers to employment identified in the National Action Plan for Employment (NAPE) in 2015 are objective and correct: the slow growth the number of jobs and the limited supply of jobs in underdeveloped regions; the high number of unemployed persons - representatives of vulnerable groups, incl. young persons; numerous violations of working conditions in our country, etc.
- 2.2. As early as in 2010 ESC in an opinion identified as a serious problem the mismatches between the supply and demand of education, professional training competences, which significantly is characterized as a "defect and problem of regulations - strategic, operational and functioning of labour market structures and providing moderation services between the supply and demand of labour"⁸. ESC hopes that that problem will be solved through the introduction of a systematic approach to conduct short-term forecasting of the needs for workforce with certain characteristics, and by applying the methodology for forecasting the demand and supply of labour in Bulgaria (in the medium and longer term).
- 2.3. Factors such as damage to health, learning disability, problems with spoken language, migrant background, etc., As well as undertaking additional responsibilities to a member of the family (children, parents) have direct or indirect impact on employment opportunities.
- 2.4. In this regard, ESC notes that in order to solve the problems of disadvantaged groups, incl. young people, special measures should be taken for removing barriers to employment, including first precise identification of the hindering factors and concrete proposals to the young persons for alternative options for education, training, apprenticeship or employment.

⁷ National Plan for Employment Activities for 2015 MLSP.

⁸ ESC Opinion: "Current problems and policies in the labour market"2010

- 2.5. Given that disadvantaged persons are one of the groups at risk, ESC believes that in order to successfully tackle unemployment it is necessary to combine measures with specific rules designed for them. Measures and programmes in the field of social services should be extended, so as to provide social services through specialized institutions, on the one hand, and stimulate the development of the social economy and launch social enterprises for specific target groups of disadvantaged persons in the labour market, on the other.
- 2.6. ESC emphasizes that regional policies for economic recovery and development are key to closing the gap in employment between the different regions and would help in overcoming logistical barriers to young people associated with the transport, health care and housing, while encouraging investors to create new jobs. Integrated and well thought out regional approaches to solving the problem of youth employment will impact positively on budget expenditures for active employment policies.
- 2.7. According to ESC, special attention should be paid to the need for early development in young persons of qualities such as entrepreneurship and initiative. A number of studies show that most young persons expect the government to take care of securing work and jobs, and a very small proportion of them have the mind-set to start their own business. Therefore, developing entrepreneurship in young persons can and should begin during the educational process, and then it should be developed and sustained throughout the later stages of their lives.
- 2.8. ESC is pleased to note that the National Action Plan for Employment 2015 pays serious attention to "promoting economic growth conducive to employment, improving the business environment, support for key economic sectors such as the green economy, the ICT sector, the health care sector and social services" and expresses commitment to support small and medium-sized enterprises to preserve and increase jobs.
- 2.9. ESC supports the proposed measures to encourage employers to hire young people included in the Employment Promotion Act, as well as the legalization of internships and their payment as work done by young persons (adopted by the Council of Ministers changes in NAPE⁹).
- 2.10. At the same time, ESC defines as crucial its proposals for legislative changes identified in its resolution of 2013¹⁰ and aimed at greater security for young persons, other unemployed persons, and in addition to the package under the "Youth Guarantee".
- 2.11. An important prerequisite for overcoming communication barriers encountered by young persons who are looking for or need to be looking for work, is the widespread use of Internet technology in administrative services. This communication must use platforms that are close to young people, simple, easy and accessible for them. Therefore, ESC calls on

⁹ Decision of the Council of Ministers № 539 from 12 September 2013 amending the National Action Plan for Employment in 2013 adopted a decision under item 43 Minutes № 47 of the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 19 December 2012 as amended by Decision № 224 of the Council of Ministers in 2013.

¹⁰ ESC, Resolution: "Actions to support young people and tackling youth unemployment in Bulgaria"

the administration to abandon the clerical approach and seek appropriate forms of communication with the youth audiences.

2.12. Various studies have shown that many young persons who have completed their education (secondary or higher), have absolutely no knowledge of the legal aspects of employment relations and do not realize the risks of their involvement in informal practices. Therefore, ESC believes it is high time for the curricula of secondary education to start addressing the topic of labour, social and insurance rights¹¹.

2.12.1. The timely explanation to young people what their rights in the workplace are would contribute to the formation of an adequate and responsible position in case an employer proposes to them irregular employment or possible acts of violation of labour law. On the one hand, this will ensure social security, and on the other, easier access to the labour market, because the recognition of professional experience in legal employment will have a competitive advantage in being hired over young persons who have worked in the informal economy.

2.12.2. At the same time, ESC believes that young persons should be aware of the benefits and the level of security in formal as opposed to informal employment in order to be able to compare, evaluate and decide for themselves and their future development, and be motivated to choose to work in the formal economy.

2.12.3. The state should offer and promote alternative forms of education on these issues (online and others) for all young people and other risk groups - seasonal workers, minorities, migrants, homeworkers, etc.

3. CONTINUING EDUCATION, ACQUISITION OF NEW AND IMPROVEMENT OF PREVIOUS QUALIFICATION

3.1. Continuing education and training is essential in order to increase employability as young persons with primary or lower education and graduates of general secondary education without acquired professional qualification. Due to the combination of multiple risk factors such as lack of work experience, qualifications, and often the basic general knowledge, young people are particularly at risk of falling into a vicious cycle of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

3.1.1. In this regard, ESC considers that the implementation of flexible models for upgrading knowledge, skills and competences could contribute to improving the quality of lifelong learning.

3.1.2. At the same time, ESC is concerned that in Bulgaria there is still a lacking consistency between different qualifications systems to meet the economic processes, driven by the rapid development and introduction of new technologies and simultaneously take into account the current and future needs of the labour market. Therefore, according to ESC, the existing professional qualification characteristics of

¹¹ ESC, Opinion: "Reduction and prevention of the informal economy in Bulgaria as an opportunity to stimulate growth and employment".

human resources in the country do not correspond to the requirements of the labour market.

- 3.1.3. ESC believes that regular surveys and analyses of the needs of the labour market should be carried out at the regional level, in view of the various socio-economic conditions in different regions of the country.
- 3.2. ESC also emphasises the importance of the preparation and implementation of national standards in vocational training, which should be in line with the European standards in this area, and is convinced that this is the mechanism by which the acquired knowledge and skills will have a high added value and will achieve mutual recognition of qualifications in the European Union.
- 3.3. ESC recommends that the state should strengthen its efforts for increasing the quality of continuing education and training, while considered that the most appropriate indicator of the result would be, what percentage of the persons who have successfully completed their training are recruited based on newly acquired knowledge, skills and competences.
- 3.4. The development of the system and methods for lifelong learning is essential for the sustainable employment of young persons, their professional development and the flexibility of their qualification. In this connection, ESC agrees with the adopted Plan for implementation of the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning (2014 - 2020) /SLLL/ in 2015, as well as the envisaged provision with administrative capacity on part of the Ministry of Education and Science.
- 3.5. ESC notes with concern the observed¹² reduction in the share of the population included in formal education or informal lifelong learning, as compared to the levels for 2007. In this regard, ESC evaluates the actions taken under the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning as extremely timely and accurate. This applies especially to the envisioned holistic approach that aims to cover all areas of learning¹³.
- 3.6. At the same time, ESC notes that 2015 is the first year of the implementation of the Strategy and therefore recommends that during the following year a broad discussion should be held on the effect, the new solutions and the problems that will be observed.
- 3.7. In recent years there is a trend of polarization in the employment of young persons, which increases the risk of segmentation in the labour market between low-skilled and highly skilled workers. Such segmentation and polarization create major problems for the professional mobility of the workforce and affects the overall level of employment. For this reason, ESC considers that the accessibility to and provision of more opportunities for lifelong learning is the most reliable tool for overcoming the emerging segmentation and limited occupational mobility.
- 3.8. At the same time, ESC is convinced that in order to achieve higher efficiency of continuing education and the programmes for improving qualification, young people must themselves

¹² National strategy for lifelong learning 2014-2020.

¹³ National strategy for lifelong learning for the period 2014-2020. 5.

be convinced of the benefits offered by their training. According to ESC, the responsible institutions should pay attention to the necessity of carrying out campaigns to increase the motivation among young people and to promote existing opportunities for further training and retraining.

In this connection, ESC proposes that the "Plan for implementation of the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning for 2014-2020" should set more ambitious targets under action "1.9. Promotion of lifelong learning among all segments of the population as a factor for personal development, sustainable employment and social inclusion".

4. COMBINING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

- 4.1. Repeatedly in its acts ESC has made clear and concrete proposals connected with the policy for combining work and family life¹⁴ which, according to the European social partners contributes to economic growth, prosperity and competitiveness in the European Union. This policy is among the European priorities and requires the institutions to work towards encouraging equal opportunities for men and women by implementing measures for combining work, family and private life aiming to improve the quality of life and inclusion in the labour market.
- 4.2. ESC believes that an integrated policy approach should encourage the sustainable family, so that men and women have the opportunity not only to reconcile and to better balance work and personal life in order to achieve economic growth, prosperity and competitiveness - but at the same time be good and responsible parents.
- 4.3. On this basis, there should be national consensus and political commitment for social assistance, provision of services, analysing the specifics of the information society and the effectiveness of ongoing policies, as well as for training managers and human resources specialists in companies on the opportunities to support the career of parents in the workplace.
- 4.4. ESC shares the view that it is necessary to make timely review of the contemporary forms of family life, the concept of family and family structures such as divorced parents, working students, single parent families, women who raise their children alone, families with disabled children, adoptive parents , families with children from different marriages, migrant families having difficulty integrating, because a policy for combining work and family life must comply with the current changes in society.
- 4.5. ESC believes that the combining family and work obligations is an essential tool for achieving gender equality, since unlike men, women are burdened with a larger share of the care for the household and the family. Nevertheless, women have to continue their professional development, which is often hampered by the need to work part-time, resulting in fewer opportunities for career growth, significantly lower income and from there - lower pensions. In this respect the inadequate participation of women in the

¹⁴ Opinion on "Opportunities for combining work and family life" ESC, 2012

labour market, combined with an aging population, should take a leading role in political and social debate.

- 4.5.1. In this regard, ESC welcomes the Bill on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men - approved by the Council of Ministers - which ESC has repeatedly called for and participated in its discussion by the social partners - ESC members. The Bill regulates the mechanisms and authorities to implement a unified state policy through the measures envisaged to achieve equality between women and men in social, economic and political life.
- 4.6. ESC proposes that employers should be encouraged and stimulated to implement measures for reconciling work and family life. More specifically, employers should be encouraged to combine social investments to build social infrastructure, such as children's rooms, day care centres, clubs, green schools, children camps, etc., as well as those who commit the funding of specific social services in order to support their employees and create favourable conditions for reconciling work and family life.
- 4.7. ESC again draws attention to the recommendation expressed in its opinion¹⁵ concerning the need for collective bargaining at the sectoral, and especially at the company level, to include the introduction of measures for successfully combining work and family life. At the same time, it recommends the partners to apply the "cost-benefit" method, taking into account the real economic situation.
- 4.8. ESC believes that it is necessary to examine and analyse the good European practices and solutions for combining and balancing work and family life, such as the familiar example of Sweden to introduce a 6-hour working day in the private and public sector. In this context, it might be a good idea to examine the disadvantages and benefits of adopting a similar arrangement for mothers with children and other disadvantaged groups in the labour market, employee productivity, the impact on their health, as well as the overall benefit for employers from the adoption of such an approach.
- 4.9. ESC once again points out that the "contemporary approach to the implementation of the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the activities of companies expands the scope of its standard forms and manifestations, extending over actions for encouraging local employment and combating social exclusion at the local level"¹⁶. It is especially important to encourage good practices of corporate social responsibility in small and medium-sized enterprises and in smaller settlements.

5. EFFICIENCY OF EMPLOYMENT MEASURES

- 5.1. ESC notes with particular concern that "the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020" includes the preliminary assessment of the impact of employment measures for the period 2014-2016 and expectations for the results of them by 2020: "*Simulations show*

¹⁵ Opinion on "Opportunities for combining work and family life" ESC, 2012

¹⁶ ESC Analysis "Corporate Social Responsibility - Some Approaches and Best Practices "-2009

*relatively modest long-term effect in terms of employment - in 2020 the indicator increases by 0.2% due to the implemented in 2014-2016 measures. On the other hand, in case of full implementation of the measures, i.e. in case all the necessary resources are provided, the number of employees would accelerate its growth to 1.5%."*¹⁷

5.1.1. The preliminary assessment can be interpreted as insufficient effectiveness of the measures planned for the period. Even in achieving the full realization of the measures (1.5% increase in employment in 2020), Bulgaria will remain far from reaching the goals of employment in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

5.1.1.1. ESC finds even more disturbing the fact that in Bulgaria a significant part of the measures related to increasing employment and reducing unemployment, are basically aimed at improving the educational level of the unemployed (incl. achieving minimal literacy), filling gaps in the knowledge acquired in secondary education or learning professional skills to improve employability. ESC also believes that it is not expedient to fund programmes for further training which would prepare people for jobs that actually do not exist. For employers it is often less important that the prospective employee has a document evidencing a certain qualification than existence of actual working skills.

5.1.1.2. According to ESC, it is necessary to avoid the unjustified escalation in the prices of courses and qualifications that are funded by the state. The possibility to set a maximum price for training should be considered where on the free market such courses are offered at a lower price.

5.2. ESC stated that it is imperative to begin a gradual transition from financing cost intensive re-education measures for the unemployed or potentially unemployed to funding the overall reform of the education system, incl. improving the scope and quality of education, as well as the motivation of teaching staff.

5.3. The continued neglect of the shortcomings of the education system has contributed to the increase the number of persons who are at risk to be unemployed, and has directly and indirectly led to the generation of serious budgetary costs. According to ESC, an integrated policy approach to youth employment, setting appropriate goals, can contribute to reducing costs for an active policy on the labour market.

5.4. In this regard, ESC proposes to improve the model for preparation, goal setting and reporting on future measures in order to achieve more tangible and appreciable results and to improve their efficiency. Also ESC recommends that the development of measures should include the development of measurable indicators for interim and ex post evaluation of the implementation and its main effects.

5.4.1. On the one hand, this will lead to more transparency in the spending of public funds and will have a positive impact on the confidence in institutions, which has been shaken after the crisis and increased youth unemployment in its wake. On the other

¹⁷ Three-year action plan for implementation of the National Development Programme "Bulgaria 2020" in 2014-2016, January 2014, pp 11-12.

hand, the possibility of adequate consideration of the measures and their results will enable the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of different stages (e.g. planning, resource allocation, performance or reporting).

- 5.5. In the context of a specialized study¹⁸ of the European Foundation for the Improvement of living and working conditions, ESC proposes that clear targets should be set in the development of measures at three levels:
 - 5.5.1. At the operational level such targets should show what is the planned scope of the measure and to which specific group it is targeted. This may include determining characteristics such as gender, age, education, social status, certain aggravating circumstances, etc. It is also important to set measurable objectives in terms of the covered beneficiaries (number/share of the "target"-group). Thus contributing to the evaluation of the successful implementation and further tracking of the scope provided for in the measure. For example by the number of persons included in training, vocational training, employment (incl. subsidized), number of individual plans for employment, etc.
 - 5.5.2. The specific objectives of the measure must show what results are planned to be achieved in the already identified groups of persons to which the activities are directed. In essence, they must satisfy the need to implement the measure and contribute to solving the specific socio-economic problem and its consequences. The measure can be directed both to solving a particular problem and dealing with complex problematic issues. Again, it is advisable to provide measurable indicators to assess performance.
 - 5.5.3. Strategic goals (global) express the broad impact of the implementation of a given measure. They do not relate only to targeted groups and the individuals covered by the measure, but contribute to the prosperity of communities and regions, to solving the structural social and economic problems, or to ensuring the welfare of society. Assessing the global goals is more difficult than assessing the operational and specific ones, but setting strategic targets provides for the interconnection of measures at the regional level with the joint efforts under different national policies and priorities.
- 6.7. Measuring the effects of the measures directed to the labour market is also necessary to supplement the overall evaluation of policies to combat unemployment and increase employment. According to ESC, it is important not only to report quantitatively parameters such as training activities to increase employability (i.e. how many people have attended courses for training, retraining or training), but tracking the results and effects of trainings - for the individual and for the community as a whole.
- 6.8. ESC emphasizes that "measurability" is a particularly important criterion because the Lisbon Strategy failed to achieve the expected high scores and therefore in developing the Europe 2020 Strategy it was decided to lay down measurable objectives with clearly

¹⁸ Eurofaund: Effectiveness of policy measures to increase the employment participation of young people. 2012.

defined scope of indicators which is interpreted as an important prerequisite their fulfilment.

- 6.9. At the same time, according to ESC it is still necessary in the development of concrete measures to make provision for the performance of three assessments of the implementation and the achieved results after the implementation (funding) of the respective measure by: the principals and contractors (responsible institution), the social partners, stakeholders (beneficiaries) under the measure, as well as an independent net and gross evaluation of the effect.
- 6.10. ESC has found that the post evaluation, carried out by the MLSP, of the effect¹⁹ from the active policy on the labour market at an individual level recognizes that the highest net effect is noticeable among young people under 29 years of age. (16.3% as compared to the total net effect on employment policy financed from the state budget which amounts to 13.2%), i.e. the stimulation of the youngest participants in the labour market has more significant effect. ESC further recommends to enrich the toolbox of measures for youth employment, exploring the experience, successes and shortcomings of measures for young people implemented in different European countries. ESC proposes that the preparation and planning of policies and measures for the labour market should rely on a clear definition, most significantly, of operational and specific targets to help tracking scope, results and effects from the implementation of the measures. This model can be realised with regard to the measures and activities included in the National Reform Programme.
- 6.11. In conclusion, ESC emphasizes that continuing pressure on public finances and relatively high youth unemployment requires more attention be paid to the development and implementation of systematic evaluation. This is extremely important for obtaining information on the effectiveness of the measures and is crucial both with respect to individual Member States and the EU as a whole. In the process of drafting the measures and strategies for development it is necessary to use reliable systems for monitoring and evaluation. The statistical information is important and necessary both at the preliminary stages, before the introduction of a given measure, and later to monitor the implementation and results of its application.
- 6.11.1. In this regard, ESC welcomes ex-post evaluation of the effect of active policy financed from the state budget, as well as at the individual level (net valuation) and in the following areas: focus, relevance to the Europe 2020 Strategy, economy, efficiency, effectiveness and also the assessment of the contribution of the active policy to the labour market for effecting change in the selected indicators characterizing the economic and social development of the country for the period 2000-2011. At the same time, ESC emphasizes the need to regularly assess the effect of the active policy on the labour market.
- 6.12. ESC recommended to provide monitoring functions both to responsible state authorities and trade unions, employers, civil structures - on the basis of clear statistics and results

¹⁹ <http://www.mlsp.government.bg/ckfinder/userfiles/files/politiki/zaetost/strategii%20izsledvaniq%20otchet/NETNA-bg.pdf>

from targeted surveys, in order to prevent abuse of funding from the state budget and EU funds.

- 6.13. ESC emphasizes that the involvement of the social partners and civil society organizations can be a guarantee for the transparency of the process of monitoring the spending on youth policies both from EU funds and the national budget. In this regard, ESC expresses satisfaction that the "National Plan for implementing the European Youth Guarantee for the period 2014-2020" provides that the coordination and monitoring of the implementation should be carried out by the Coordination Council, including representatives of the social partners, youth organizations and the National Association of Municipalities in Republic of Bulgaria.

(signed)

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PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL