



Republic of Bulgaria  
ECONOMIC  
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

**OPINION**

**ON:**

**"LABOUR MIGRATION IN BULGARIA  
- TRENDS AND NEEDS"**

**(developed by own-initiative)**

**Sofia,  
May 2022**

The Activity Plan of the Economic and Social Council for the first half of 2022 includes the preparation of an own-initiative opinion on "Labour Migration in Bulgaria - Trends and Needs."

The development of the opinion has been assigned to the Commission on Labour, Income, Living Standards and Industrial Relations with the ESC. Ivelin Zhelyazkov – Association of Industrial Capital in Bulgaria (AICB), from Group I, Vanya Grigorova - Confederation of Labour Podkrepa, from Group II, and Ofeliya Kaneva, from Group III, were appointed as rapporteurs.

The draft opinion was adopted at meetings of the Commission on 03.05. and 17.05.2022.

At its plenary session held on 27.05.2022, the Economic and Social Council approved this opinion.

## ABBREVIATIONS USED

EA	Employment Agency
GLI	General Labour Inspectorate
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
LLMLM	Law on Labour Migration and Labour Mobility
LFB	Law on Foreigners in Bulgaria
ESC	Economic and Social Council
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
NRA	National Revenue Agency
NSI	National Statistical Institute

## **1. Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 1.1. The ESC believes that among the main challenges facing the labour market in Bulgaria are the deteriorating demographic situation, the decrease in mechanical growth and the postponement of parenthood.
- 1.2. According to the information from the Employment Agency, the Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Revenue Agency, from 2017 to 2022, there is an annual increase in workers - citizens of third countries, who have received a work permit. In the years of state of emergency, despite closed businesses, this growth continues.
- 1.3. The ESC recommends that the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, together with the social partners according to their subject of activity, plan, organize and conduct a long-term national campaign to ensure the opportunities of young Bulgarian citizens to combine career development and raising children.
- 1.4. A series of legislative changes in the field of labour migration and labour mobility have been carried out over the last four years. The ESC recommends that an interdepartmental working group, with the participation of social partners, be created to assess the effects of the regulatory amendments, and that the identified weaknesses be overcome.
- 1.5. The ESC draws attention to the fact that the role of the state is decisive in the preparation of qualified specialists due to the uncertainty that this activity brings to private investments in the knowledge and skills of the workforce.
- 1.6. The ESC recommends that concrete steps be taken to address pay inequalities within and between professional communities. Taking into account the progress in the field of education, the ESC notes that a special focus is needed on professions of strategic importance to improve the qualification and health status of the workforce, such as the teaching and medical professions.
- 1.7. ESC believes that the digital transformation and the impact on all social processes is a matter of strategic importance for the deployment of economic potential, the improvement of working conditions and the quality of life, especially in the context of

an aging population, but at the same time it confronts society with hitherto unknown risks.

- 1.8. ESC is convinced that in the new conditions of global competition, the European Union (EU) has every chance to be a model for a modern, sustainable and rapidly developing society of prosperity and solidarity with a leading role in the world. In this regard, the ESC welcomes the successive steps of the European Commission (EC) to create a European strategy for Digital Transformation that works for people, for an open and competitive economy and for a sustainable society.
- 1.9. The ESC emphasizes that a basic prerequisite for conducting an effective labour market policy is access to data on the real levels of unemployment in the country, as well as on the number and characteristics of vacant jobs.
- 1.10. The ESC recommends taking the necessary steps to collect sufficient analytical data for the preparation of a targeted policy initiative to support the children and families of labour migrants, including in the context of the Commission's European Child Guarantee initiative. With regard to immigrants and refugees, the ESC draws attention to the fact that it is necessary at the government level, including with a discussion in the National Council for Trilateral Cooperation (NCTC), to determine the policies for their detention, as well as for the reunification of their families in our country.
- 1.11. The ESC finds it necessary to create a coordination mechanism to support the children of labour migrants, following good practices from the interaction of institutions and service providers (including for the risk of violence, emotional instability, dropping out of school, etc.).

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**Zornitsa Roussinova**

PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL