COUNTRY FICHE: BULGARIA

PES NAME: National Employment Agency (NEA)

Basic organisational model

Type of organisation/relation to government
Subsidiary body to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Structure and organisational levels

- 9 Regional Employment Service Directorates (RESD), which coordinate local offices, participate in the implementation of regional strategies for local development and of specific regional measures and programmes, and maintain regional labour market databases.
- 105 Labour Office Directorates (LOD), which are in charge of registering jobseekers and providing services for individuals and firms. They carry out research and monitoring of local labour market trends and prepare analyses and forecasts on developments of local labour markets.

Management structures and the role of social partners

- Management: NEA is managed by and Executive Director, who is supported by an Executive Council and two Deputy Executive Directors. NEA also has a Secretary General for the administrative management of the Agency, six directorates and an Internal Audit Directorate.
- Supervision: NEA is accountable to the Ministry of Labour. Moreover, in abidance by the social partnership principle, tripartite Cooperation Councils exercise direct supervision and control over local employment policies.
- Social partners: The Executive Council operates on a tripartite basis, as it includes representatives of the social partners as well as representatives of the executive at national, regional and local levels.

Financing model

PES financing by source, EUR (million)

	Expenditure (EUR million)						Change 2010-2011 (%)		
	2010			2011 (forecast)					
Source of funding (%)	Total Budget	Operating costs	ALMP	Total Budget	Operating costs	ALMP	Total Budget	Operating costs	ALMP
Total	40,3 (100%)	13,1 (100%)	27,1 (100%)	46,6 (100%)	11,9 (100%)	34,7 (100%)	16%	-10%	28%
Social security contributions									
Government and other public funding	39,3 (97,6%)			45,3 (97,3%)					
ESF									
Other EU Funding									
EURES									
PES own revenues	1,0 (2,4%)			1,3 (2,7%)					
Other									

Human resources

PES human resources. Date of observation: N/A

	Number of staff	% directly servicing clients
Total	2.396	71%
Head office	269	6%
Regional offices	262	
Local offices	1.865	90%

Note: There are in total 1.700 employees directly servicing clients (1.684 working in local offices and 16 working in the head office)

Integration of employment services and benefit payments

Unemployment and related benefits:

- Responsibilities for the registration of benefit claimants, payment of benefits and the provision of employment services are shared among NEA, the Social Insurance Institute and private providers. NEA is responsible for the initial registration and for the on-going monitoring of continued eligibility. The payment of unemployment benefits is entrusted to the Social Insurance Institute, which cooperates with NEA in order periodically to verify the list of recipients. Employment services for the benefits recipients are mostly provided by NEA, but tailored activities for some long-term beneficiaries might be outsourced to private providers.

Clients/Customers

Jobseekers. Date of observation: January 2011

	Number	%
Jobseeker client groups		
Total	367.879	
Unemployed	362.447	98,5%
Employed	2.426	0,7%
Students wishing to work in their free time	706	0,2%
Persons who acquired the right to retire, based on their age	1.867	0,5%
Persons who acquired the right to occupational pension for early retirement, currently not working	433	0,1%

Further breakdowns are typically applied to monitored unemployed persons: gender; age; duration of unemployment; disability; ethnicity. Age, duration of unemployment and disability are considered useful breakdowns only to be applied to the unemployed. No specific attention is paid to the level of education and professional qualifications.

Employers

No precise figures on employer customers were provided. NEA employment counsellors perform a first segmentation of employer clients following some basic criteria such as: the status of the company; the sector of activity; the type of company (sole trader, Ltd, etc.); the form of ownership; and the location (region, municipality). A second step implies a more detailed analysis, according to information collected by PES officers such as, above all, the number of employees or the demand for services provided by LODs.

Other clients

The inactive are a further target of NEA's activity. A special programme for activating this group was launched under the National Action Plan for Employment, providing for the organization of job fairs aimed at getting in contact with those who are not actively seeking employment and at including them into the labour force by offering ad hoc employment services (programmes or employment measures on the primary market, involvement in vocational training, counselling, etc.).

Types and methods of service provision

Services for jobseekers

- Individual counselling services, with the possibility of referring to specific measures or suitable programmes, training or projects, are provided to all registered unemployed through face-to-face interviews with employment counsellors, followed by the drafting of individual action plans;
- Referral to suitable programmes, measures/schemes and projects for employment and training are offered to the registered unemployed according to their needs and following a face-to-face interview with an employment counsellor;
- Psychological support is provided through direct interviews with psychologists for all the registered unemployed, following a specific advice of the employment counsellor;

- Help to start a new working career abroad is managed through interviews with counsellors, according to intergovernmental agreements or the EURES network;
- Self-service information is also available on the job vacancy database, the NEA website or at the self-service information corner at the LODs.

Services for employers

- Provision of information on registered jobseekers and on their profiles as well as their readiness to start working are provided by employment counsellors to all interested employers;
- Information on programmes and measures useful to preserve employment or promote the creation of new jobs through training or re-training is also provided by employment counsellors;
- Other forms of employment counselling, such as processing and dissemination of announced vacancies, acceptance of applications, selection and pre-selection of candidates, information on work visa requirements for foreign nationals, are made available to all employers.

Job vacancies and market share

Collecting information on job vacancies

The notification of job vacancies is mandatory in Bulgaria only if the employers wish to benefit from NEA's mediation services. Other than that, NEA receives information only about vacancies announced to the LODs through the "National Labour Market Database". Periodically, local offices organise meetings with employers in order to update all the list of vacancies. As many as 73.010 meetings with employers were held in 2010.

Vacancies and referrals

2010: total of 187.579 vacancies of which 153.669 were successfully filled thanks to NEA's services.

Matching of supply and demand

NEA monitors the labour and skills mismatches quarterly and yearly, by recourse to unemployment records and the job vacancy database. This information is collected nationally and all the data are transferred to the Ministry of Education and Science, broken down by professions and fields. NEA representatives participate in an inter-agency working group to determine the intake of university students in the next academic year.

Market share

NEA's market share in 2010 was 24.8%.

Method: This was calculated as the ratio between the number of people who found their jobs thanks to NEA's services and the total number of placements in the economy.

Active labour market policies

LMP Services

Name of service	Brief description	Delivery
Provision of information and counselling to jobseekers and employers	The aim is to provide general services for jobseekers during their job-search. ACTIRIS is also responsible for job creation and recruitment promotion measures.	LOD through employment counsellors.
Referral to suitable programmes and measures for employment	Providing information on programmes and measures for maintenance and promotion of employment, under the National Employment Action Plan.	LOD through employment counsellors.
Vocational Guidance	Provision of information, referral to vocational guidance.	LOD through employment counsellors
Incentives for the territorial mobility of employees	Granting funds to employers for promotion of the territorial mobility of the employed persons.	LOD

LMP Measures

Name of measure	Category	Brief description	Delivery
Training for adults	2	Motivation training of adults, training for the acquisition of professional and vocational qualifications.	Training is provided by training institutions, financed by NEA.
Transition from passive to active measures on the labour market	4	Promotion of the territorial mobility of unemployed persons (refunds of transportation costs).	The EA concludes a contract with the unemployed person who is willing to move.
Socio-economic integration measures for disadvantaged groups on the labour market	4	Encouraging employers to create new vacancies for risk groups.	NEA concludes agreements with the employers, giving them funds for wages, social and health insurance of the new employees.
Creation of new jobs	6	Implementation of programmes for creating new jobs in socially beneficial activities, in the public administration, in the culture sector.	NEA concludes agreements with employers, giving them funds for wages, social and health insurance costs of the new employees.

Cooperation/partnership

NEA's responsibilities in employment services and training are performed in cooperation with a range of other actors, notably municipalities, regional administrations, and government ministries. External providers such as training organisations are involved in the delivery of some ALMP programmes. NEA enters into contracts with private sector actors to outsource some educational activities, while keeping a planning role on all.

Evaluation

No mention is made of recourse to evaluation studies to assist the design of programmes.

Management logic and performance measurement

Planning process

NEA prepares an annual action plan that is approved by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. The action plan sets out key objectives and priorities regarding NEA's overall activity, and specific performance indicators. These should abide by long-term policy documents, such as the National Reform Programme, the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy for the period 2009-2013, the revised European Employment Strategy, relevant EU policy documents, the National Action Plan for employment and the Ministry's Operational Plan for the current year.

Types of objectives and targets

NEA's main priorities for 2011 are:

- Reducing the unemployment rate to 9.4%;
- Improving the quality of the labour force (the employed as well as the unemployed) through training;
- Development of the social dialogue (increasing the role of advisory committees at all levels);
- Effective integration into the EU's labour market (management of labour migration, promotion of labour mobility through EURES);

- Strengthening the institutional capacity of NEA by training and re-training staff and raising awareness of the agency's activities.

Monitoring

NEA regularly prepares detailed reports (every 6, 9 and 12 months) on the implementation of action plans. Periodically, on the basis of the results of monitoring, a reallocation of resources is carried out to ensure more efficient spending. RESDs also prepare periodic reports on their own action plans and monitor the execution of contracts by the LODs.

Lean management

NEA adopted in 2004 a new technology for streamlining work process models was established to meet the needs of LODs. The adoption of base (process) and extended ("one counter") service models was associated with a shift in focus toward individual job seekers, i.e. providing specific services for individual needs. The process was supported by the introduction of new instruments, such as individual action plans, questionnaires for the prioritisation of persons, and profiling. At the moment, all territorial divisions apply service process models, and 36 of them operate on the principle of "one counter" service. Since the beginning of 2010 all LODs work with an integrated database system – the National Labour Market Database. NEA also follows best practices concerning the use of innovative tools and approaches for the implementation of employment policies.