

## **Regulation of Public Relations in the Field of Employment and Unemployment in Bulgaria**



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**ABSTRACT:** The drafting and adoption of laws in the social sphere is always preceded by a long discussion, which is accompanied by sharp discussions. All changes in this area directly or indirectly affect the entire population of the country. In the first years of adoption of the new legislation, its enforcement was accompanied by many problems and sharp social clashes. This means that the executive power, which prepares the bills themselves before submitting them for approval by the Bulgarian Parliament, must approach very carefully and seek prior consent from the social partners. All draft laws go through a complex and long process of public discussion with representatives of trade unions, with representatives of employers and affected communities. Finding common ground in any of the conflicting elements is quite difficult and this further slows down the process of updating and synchronizing legislation in this area.

**KEYWORDS:** Social Policy, Legal Regulation, Employment, Unemployment, Bulgaria

### **INTRODUCTION**

The regulation of public relations in the sphere of employment and unemployment is particularly important for public and social development in a country. Their creation and proper law enforcement is a complex process that is constantly subject to the active influence, both from the external and internal environment. All this requires the creation of such conditions that create prerequisites and opportunities for this legislation to meet people's expectations, as well as to allow a quick response to crisis social situations through its toolkit.

### **REGULATION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN BULGARIA**

It should be noted at the outset that the laws, rules, and regulations that serve the sphere of employment and unemployment are some of the most dynamically changing in the last thirty years. The political and economic transformation that occurred at the end of the 1990s imposed a significantly different and very rapidly changing social environment. The existing laws and by-laws turned out to be practically unenforceable and the Bulgarian state began the process of creating new ones. The experience gained in various European countries is used and an attempt is made to test it in Bulgaria. Falling into a difficult economic situation, social inequalities deepen and the created laws have to be changed frequently. This need is most often determined by the fact that the Bulgarian government should have the opportunity to quickly and effectively intervene in the labour market with various tools, exerting a very high influence on the secondary labour market. These circumstances change and even distort the social picture of employment and unemployment in certain regions of the country.

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The multiple changes in recent years are proof of this complex process. Currently, a special law regulating public relations in this area is the Employment Promotion Act. There are two more special laws, namely: the Law on Vocational Education and Training and the Law on Labor Migration and Labor Mobility.

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In the late nineties of the last century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, the creation of sustainable legislation was quite difficult, due to the lack of accumulated experience and knowledge in this field. The strong social fluctuations, a series of economic and social crises that Bulgaria is going through, and later the accession to the European Union, require a long process, which is accompanied by changes and subsequent synchronisation with European legislation.

The expert and scientific capacity is insufficient in this period of time, and the direct transfer of foreign norms and programs encounters a number of shortcomings and low effectiveness of the same.

The assessment of the ongoing social processes is a long period of time, and during this time the Bulgarian governments create normative documents that aim to suppress social discontent and quell social tension, and not seek solutions to the severe social problems that have arisen.

The reasons for the frequent changes in this legislation can be grouped into several main groups:

- Changing the state's economy from a centrally planned to a market economy;
- An increase in the level of unemployment in any of the regions of the country ( in the period from 1996 to 1999, in some of the Bulgarian municipalities, the registered unemployed persons in the employment services exceeded 40% of the economic population of the respective municipality );
- Sharp imbalances in the structure of employment and unemployment in different regions of the country, with these processes being the most acute in the North-West region of the country;
- Different occupational structures of unemployed persons in different regions;
- Sharp inconsistencies in professional training and the inability of the workforce to meet the needs of the labour market;
- Strong and dominant influence on the secondary labour market;
- Registered illiteracy of certain vulnerable groups of the population, especially characteristic of the concentrated Roma communities;
- Depopulation of certain administrative areas and lack of workforce to meet the emerging needs;
- Lack of labour mobility;
- Lack of an effective and efficient social policy to stimulate positive processes and good practices.

Political parties, which are the basis of parliamentary democracy in the years of active political and economic transformations, create conditions for the formation of not particularly good legislation in this area. Their vision is related to the quick satisfaction of the emerging needs of the risk groups in the market, and not to the search for a permanent and successful solution to the emerging problems. There is a severe lack of such expertise in the political parties, and the superimposed processes have distanced the scientific community from all this and even isolated it.

Scientific research in this area has lagged both in its essence and in its dynamics. This somehow isolates scientists from the process of creating sustainable and good legislation. The main scientific capacity is concentrated in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and in several specialised departments in three universities. Relatively few financial resources are devoted to research in this area, and the research organisations themselves do not enjoy a high scientific rating. In the world and European rankings of scientists with high achievements in this field, there are only a few who have proven and high expertise in this direction. Their knowledge and skills are practically not used in the Bulgarian environment, but rather by foreign organisations. The creation of various working groups and committees is rather a superficial examination of the problem and does not lead to good solutions.

The main strategic document is the Employment Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2023, which must, through the introduced legal mechanisms, fulfil its main priorities and goals.

- Opportunities to increase employment and improve its quality until 2030 through:
- Increase in the economic activity of the population as a result of measures for activation on potential working strength (inactive persons people with disabilities, pensioners, non-working for personal or family reasons, seasonal workers, etc.); support for combining personal and professional life, flexible employment, employment at incomplete working time saving on labour activity on the persons in pension age and etc.;
- Development of forms of work and growth of employment in activities that do not depend on factors like seasonality, epidemic setting deterioration on the international relations, etc. of this genus; providing more attractive pay conditions and labour;
- Changes in the education admissions plan to more fully adapt to the demand for the workforce; for the unemployed - Advanced training and training at the request of the employers; training for the employed; import on working strength from third countries; provision of the necessary funds from the state budget, training of employees and unemployed persons for acquisition on wanted from the employers skills, inclusive preemptive training, en masse training on the population for acquisition on digital skills;
- Conducting information campaigns among Bulgarians living abroad, for opportunities for professional realisation in Bulgaria, encouraging return on highly qualified footage after training or work in other countries;

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- Providing employment, including to municipalities, to reduce poverty in small settlements and rural areas, ensuring faster transitions from inactivity to employment, inclusive of the tools of the social assistance;
- Removing barriers to active job search caused by poverty, worsened health, and bad household conditions;
- More efficient distribution and use of human resources with redirection to better quality and more productive jobs, both by providing high-tech equipment and implementation of new technologies, and through improving skills and motivation for work, training managers, etc. A short-term plan supporting the geographical and professional mobility of working strength can answer the demand on the market for labour but in a long-term plan, the answer to the decreasing number of working strength is in the promotion of productivity on labour;
- Development of the analytical and forecasting activity regarding the processes of the market of labour development on the legislation for regulation on the changes in labour relationships for saving on employment at crises and disasters, as insurance on social security for the working ones at the new one's shapes on labour - mobile work in information and communication technologies, work with vouchers, from a distance and others.

The strategic document does not envisage legal changes, but a search for the effectiveness of existing opportunities. They develop in two main directions:

- Implementation of activities of national programs and regional projects through the National Employment Action Plan for the relevant year;
- Measures to promote employment through the relevant financial incentives provided for in the law on employment promotion.

The relatively good indicators characterising the labour market in the last few years also determine the sustainability of the legislation. In the event of crisis situations of any nature, an opportunity is provided for rapid and adequate changes through the tools created for an active social policy. The passive social policy model is based on receiving cash benefits and unemployment benefits, which are tied to the minimum wage established for the country for the respective year. This is a mechanism that is regulated by the social security code and has hardly changed in the last 20 years [1-4].

## CONCLUSIONS

The existing social model of regulation of these public relations will continue to develop in the coming years, which will certainly lead to new changes in the legal framework. All this is related to the ever-increasing discussion about insurance relations and the continuous changes in the labour market, which are caused by the demographic problem, the qualification characteristics of the workforce, as well as the uneven economic development of individual regions in Bulgaria. This will necessitate the imposition of a differentiated approach and the possibility of regional regulation of these public relations. The general regulation shows unsatisfactory results in at least ten of the administrative areas of the state.

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