**ANNEX III**

**Additional information in reply to paragraph 18 and 20 of the concluding observations**

*On the specific programmes and measures targeting particular groups are implemented with funds from the state budget for active labour market policy*

1. **Measures aiming at to promoting women’s full participation in the labour market**
2. **Measures taken under the Employment Promotion Act**

According to data from the Employment Agency, the total number of women employed under the incentive measures of the Employment Promotion Act, financed with funds from the state budget, are as follows:

* 03-12.2019 – 1,489;
* 2020 – 1,706;
* 2021. – 1,746;
* 2022 – 2,273;
* 2023 – 798;
* 01-06.2024 – 43.

The distribution of employed women by employment programmes is:

* 03-12.2019 – 4,456;
* 2020 – 6,963;
* 2021 – 5,535;
* 2022 – 8,145;
* 2023 – 2,576;
* 01-06.2024 - 296.

Employers who open jobs and hire persons from the target group are provided with funds for labour remuneration and insurance for a period of up to 6 months.

1. **Measures taken under the National Employment Action Plan**

In the National Employment Action Plan 2024 (adopted on 9 May 2024), BGN 7,134,000 has been allocated for the employment of 1,000 unemployed persons and the training of 100 persons, as well as for 1,000 responsible persons (mentors). The budget of the measure is distributed as follows:

* unemployed youth up to 29 years of age (incl.) - BGN 438,652;
* long-term unemployed - BGN 893,584;
* unemployed persons with permanent disabilities - BGN 271,731;
* unemployed parents (adoptive parents) with children up to 4 years of age - BGN 306,433; unemployed persons who have served a prison sentence - BGN 5,303;
* unemployed over the age of 55 – BGN 1,184,228;
* unemployed persons with primary or lower education - BGN 1,760,872,
* unemployed persons without professional qualifications - BGN 2,273,197;
* and the amount of BGN 750,000 for responsible persons (mentors).
1. **Measures aiming at young persons**
2. **National "Career Start"** programme provides opportunities for young people with completed higher education up to the age of 29 to gain professional experience in their specialty by working in the public administration.

Under the programme in new employment are included as follows:

* In 2019 - 692 persons.
* In 2020 - 443 persons.
* In 2021 – 867 persons, of which 853 newly included.
* In 2022 – 1,414 persons, of which 692 persons newly included.
* In 2023 – 591 persons, of which 11 persons newly included
* In 2024 the implementation of the programme started on September 2.
* Art. 36, para. 1 to encourage employers to hire unemployed persons up to the age of 29 by providing funds for labour remuneration, social and health insurance for a period of up to 9 months.
* Art. 36, para. 2 to encourage employers to hire unemployed persons up to the age of 29 with permanent disabilities, including military invalids, as well as young people from specialized institutions or using social services in the residential type community, who have completed their education by providing funds for labour remuneration, social and health insurance for a period of up to 9 months.
* Art. 36a to encourage employers to hire part-time unemployed youth up to 29 years of age with continuously maintained registration for no less than 12 months by providing funds for labour remuneration, social and health insurance for a period of up to 6 months.

In total, under the three measures (Art. 36, para. 1; Art. 36, para. 2; Art. 36a), employment is ensured as follows:

* In 2019, 396 young people, of which 242 were newly admitted.
* In 2020, 294 young people, of which 182 are newly admitted.
* In 2021, 429 young people, of which 278 are newly admitted.
* In 2022, 580 young people, of which 363 are newly admitted.
* In 2023, 309 young people, of which 30 are newly admitted.
* Art. 41 to encourage employers to open internship jobs to unemployed persons up to the age of 29 by providing funds for labour remuneration, social and health insurance for a period of up to 6 months.
* Art. 41a to promote the employment of unemployed youth with primary and lower education and without qualification for apprenticeship under the guidance of a mentor by providing funds for labour remuneration, social and health insurance for a period of up to 6 months for the unemployed, up to 12 months for mentors.
* In 2019, 24 young people were included in internships, all of whom were included in new employment, and 27 young people were included in apprenticeships, of which 25 were newly hired.
* In 2020, a total of 8 unemployed persons were provided with internships and apprenticeships.
* In 2021, a total of 52 unemployed persons will be provided with internships and apprenticeships.
* In 2022, a total of 77 unemployed persons will be provided with internships and apprenticeships, of which 53 are newly hired.
* In 2023, according to Art. 41, Art. 41a, Art. 46 and Art. For 55 years, 63 people have been provided with employment.
1. **With funds from the European Social Fund under the Operational Programme "Development of Human Resources" 2014-2020, the following projects have been implemented for young people:**

**"New opportunities for youth employment"** project, which aims to increase the competitiveness of young people by providing opportunities for apprenticeship or on-the-job training that will facilitate the transition from education to employment and lead to the accumulation of the professional experience necessary for employment, and in 2022, a new activity for supported employment has been announced.

* In 2019, 4,275 unemployed young people were included in employment, of which 594 were for internships and 3681 for training.
* In 2020, 4,426 unemployed young people were included in employment, of which 514 were for internships and 3912 for training.
* In 2021, 2,660 unemployed young people were included in employment, of which 306 persons for internships and 2,354 persons for training.
* In 2022, 2,710 unemployed young people were included in employment, of which 211 persons for internships, 2,228 persons for training and 271 persons for securing employment with an employer.
* In 2023, the project ended with a total of 5,420 unemployed youth involved, of which 31 persons for internships, 865 persons for training and 4,524 for employment.

**"Training and employment for young people"** project aims to integrate unemployed young people up to the age of 29, including those registered with the Labour Office Directorates of the Employment Agency, into employment with an employer by providing training and a subsidy for long-term employment. To facilitate the transition from education to employment for unemployed young people, giving them a first or new chance at work, new or improved professional knowledge and skills acquired in the workplace, as well as the acquisition of professional qualifications and key foreign language and digital skills (if required by the particular employer). The project has been implemented in two components:

In 2019, under Component I, 2 persons were included in employment, and under Component II, 224 young people with permanent disabilities were included in employment and 4 young people with permanent disabilities were included in training.

In 2020, under Component I, there are no persons involved in training and/or employment, and under Component II, 594 youth with permanent disabilities are involved in employment.

In 2021 and 2022, there are no persons involved in training and/or employment.

**"Ready for Work"** project, which aims to activate young people up to the age of 29 who are not in education, training or employment, including those who are not registered as unemployed with the Employment Аgency, and to improve their chances of finding and keeping a job.

* In 2019, the project's activation experts motivated 8,852 inactive youth to register and seek assistance and support for inclusion in training and/or employment.
* In 2020, 7,507 inactive youth were covered by the project activities.
* In 2021, 5,517 inactive youth were identified, of which 5,446 youth were motivated to register and seek assistance and support for inclusion in training and/or employment.
* In 2022, the project's activation experts motivated 4,310 inactive youth to register and seek assistance and support from the labour offices for inclusion in training and/or employment.

In 2023, the project's activation experts motivated 3,196 inactive youth to register and seek assistance and support for inclusion in training and/or employment, of which 2,057 upon leaving the operation are engaged in education/training, receive a qualification or have a job, including as self-employed persons.

1. **With funding from ESF+ under the "Human Resources Development" programme 2021-2027, the following projects will be implemented specifically for young people:**
2. Youth Employment+ project, which aims to increase the competitiveness of young people by facilitating the transition from education to employment through support for gaining work experience (apprenticeship); gaining work experience, including from a first job (on-the-job training or supported employment); gaining transferable and 'soft' skills to increase employability; and improving employability, regardless of the specific job. Providing young people with opportunities for apprenticeships, on-the-job training or supported employment, as well as new skills applicable to a wide range of occupations, will provide young people with new opportunities for subsequent employment with an employer (same or different).

In October 2023, the project started with applications from employers, with a total of 921 employer applications for 1,895 vacancies as of 31 December 2023.

In the first half of 2024, 808 contracts worth BGN 20,797,331 have been concluded under the project and 1,807 unemployed youth have been employed, of which 170 persons for apprenticeship, 36 persons for training and 1,601 persons for employment.

1. **Measures aiming at persons with disabilities**

Measures under the Employment Promotion Act (EPA) are financed with funds from the state budget to encourage employers to open jobs for hiring unemployed persons with permanent disabilities. The subsidy granted to finance the measure under Article 51, paragraph 2 of the EPA is for not less than 3 and not more than 12 months, providing amounts of up to 75% of eligible costs for the subsidy period.

* In 2019, 363 persons with permanent disabilities were included in employment, of which 193 were new. The funds spent by state budget were in the amount of BGN 1,115,660.
* In 2020, 439 persons with permanent disabilities were included in employment, of which 276 were new. The funds spent were in the amount of BGN 1,187,970.
* In 2021, 466 persons with permanent disabilities were included in employment, of which 220 are new. The funds spent were in the amount of BGN 1,620,001.
* In 2022, 428 persons with permanent disabilities were included in employment, of which 225 were newly included. The funds spent were BGN 1,350,986.
* In 2023, 389 persons with permanent disabilities were included in employment. The funds spent were BGN 1,231,603.

During the period January - June 2024, the employment of 160 persons was ensured and funds in the amount of BGN 600,354 were spent.

Under Article 52 of the EPA employers are encouraged to open part and full-time working places for persons with permanent disabilities including military with disabilities.

* In 2019, a total of 140 people were employed, of which 122 were newly employed. The funds spent are in the amount of BGN 288,104.
* In 2020, the employment of a total of 133 persons was secured, of which 84 were newly employed. The funds spent are in the amount of BGN 249,859
* In 2021, a total of 140 people will be employed, of which 84 are new employees. The funds spent are in the amount of BGN 371,879.
* In 2022, the employment of 140 persons is ensured, of which 104 are newly incorporated. The funds spent are BGN 458,493.
* In 2023, the employment of 28 persons is guaranteed. The funds spent are BGN 51,120.

The National Programme for Training and Employment of People with Permanent Disabilities is aimed at increasing the employability of unemployed persons with permanent disabilities registered at the labour offices or persons of working age who have successfully completed a course of treatment for addiction to narcotic substances, such as a prerequisite for overcoming their social isolation and for their full integration into society. Priority is given to persons with and over 71% reduced working capacity; military disabled; persons with sensory disabilities; persons with mental disabilities.

* In 2019, the programme provided employment to 1,819 persons, of which 679 were newly included. The funds spent were in the amount of BGN 9,324,580.
* In 2020, employment was provided for 1,632 persons, of which 567 were newly employed. The funds spent were in the amount of BGN 9,029,664.
* In 2021, employment was guaranteed for 1,350 persons, of which 905 were newly employed. The disbursed funds were in the amount of BGN 11,141,250.
* In 2022, employment was guaranteed for 1,670 persons, of which 949 were newly employed. The disbursed funds were in the amount of BGN 14,151,699.
* In 2023, 1,198 people were employed under the programme, of which 494 were new recruits. The disbursed funds were in the amount of BGN 15,672,901.

During the period January - June 2024, the employment of 1,145 persons was ensured, of which 39 persons were newly included, the funds spent were in the amount of BGN 6,134,568.