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Factsheet for case BG-2020-15/496

## COVID - 19: Unemployed can take seasonal work in agriculture without loss of benefits

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|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Country      | Bulgaria, applies nationwide  |
| Time period  | Open ended, started on 05 April 2020  |
| Type         | Legislation or other statutory regulation                                   |
| Category     | Income protection beyond short-time work<br>– Income support for unemployed |
| Case created | 12 April 2020 (updated 01 May 2020)   |

### Background information

A new opportunity for registered unemployed individuals to sign temporary labour contracts with agriculture producers without losing their unemployment benefits has been approved by the Bulgarian government. The new amendment gives a legal right to an unemployed person to receive unemployment benefits from the state and at the same time work at a rural stop and take a salary from there.

According to unofficial information, the Ministry of Agriculture is also discussing the possibility of workers in enterprises that have been introduced to reduced working hours due to the coronavirus crisis and are being compensated under the 60/40 scheme, to be able to start additional work in agriculture

### Content of measure

People receiving unemployment or social assistance benefits can earn additional income from seasonal work in agriculture without losing their entitlement to state support. Those who are currently on unpaid leave can also sign a second employment contract without permission from their primary employer. These are the two approved measures that, at the threshold of the active season in agriculture, should divert employees to this sector.

Amendments to the Emergency Legislation adopted in April 2020 introduce the possibility for farmers to conclude temporary employment contracts similar to one-day contracts to hire employees for activities such as harvesting. The key change in this case is that the conclusion of such contracts would not affect the

receipt of unemployment benefits or social benefits by employees, which in previous years was a serious obstacle to securing seasonal workers on the field.

Currently, there is also no limit to the length of time that employees can work under the second employment contract while on unpaid leave.

## Use of measure

The measure can benefit all registered unemployed, who as of 10.04.2020 are approx. 300,000 people. Of these, only 30% are entitled to unemployment benefits

## Actors, target groups and funding

| Actors   | Target groups                  | Funding                                      |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| National government<br>Social partners jointly | Unemployed<br>Seasonal workers | Employer<br>National funds<br>Regional funds |

## Social partners

|                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Role of social partners | Consulted           |
| Form of involvement     | Direct consultation |

The measure was thoroughly consulted with the representatives of the workers in the agriculture sector in Bulgaria.

## Sectors and occupations

This case is sector-specific (only private sector).

| Economic area                         | Sector (NACE level 2)   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| A - Agriculture, Forestry And Fishing | A1 Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities |
|                                       | A2 Forestry and logging   |
|                                       | A3 Fishing and aquaculture  |

This case is not occupation-specific.

## Sources

- 06 April 2020: Закон за изменение и допълнение на Закона за мерките и действията по време на извънредното положение, обявено с решение на Народното събрание от 13 март 2020 г ([parliament.bg](http://parliament.bg))
- 07 April 2020: Земеделците ще могат да наемат безработни при облекчени условия ([www.capital.bg](http://www.capital.bg))
- 15 April 2020: Farmers can conclude short-term seasonal farm work for more than a day ([www.gli.government.bg](http://www.gli.government.bg))