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Factsheet for case BG-2020-15/496

COVID - 19: Support for unemployed and agricultural sector

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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 support to workers and those laid off – Income support for unemployed
Case created	12 April 2020 (updated 23 April 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 Social partners jointly	unemployed seasonal workers	Employer National funds 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)
- 07 April 2020: Земеделците ще могат да наемат безработни при облекчени условия (www.capital.bg)
- 15 April 2020: Farmers can conclude short-term seasonal farm work for more than a day (www.gli.government.bg)