

Study visit of the Public Employment Services of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the National Employment Service of the Republic of Serbia

Belgrade 24th and 25th December 2018

Report

The study visit was organized by ESAP project and was attended by the representatives of the RCC (Srđan Kujundžić, Sanda Topić and Dragan Đukić), the representatives of the NES of Serbia (Jelena Popović, Željka Zelenović, Vesna Pavlović, Goran Gležnić, Radmilo Pešić, Vesna Kostić..) and the representatives of BH (Gordana Latinović, Željko Tepačević, Marijana Petrović, Luka Glibo, Haris Huskić i Ognjenka Spasojević).

First day, 24th December 2018

In the introductory speech of the RCC representatives the importance of the study visit from the perspective of further strengthening the capacity of public employment services in the Western Balkans, as well as the importance of topics that were on the schedule and on the agenda of more developed public employment services in the EU was highlighted. Also, the main findings of the comparative analysis done in the framework of ESAP project on benchmarking were briefly presented. This analysis also served as the basis for the selection of the NES of Serbia for the purpose of provision of examples of good practice. After the guidelines for discussion and expectations from the study visit were stated, the presentations and discussions on the topics from the agenda started.

Head of the Department for working with people with disabilities, Biljana Paspalj, presented the performance agreement as a tool for strategic performance management and models of approach in working with people with disabilities.

When it comes to the performance agreement, it was pointed out that it had been developed since 2006. It was initially concluded between the directorate level and the line ministry, while now it is also concluded between the directorate and the branch office. In a formal legal sense, the obligation to conclude a performance agreement is defined by the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance and signed by the Director General and the responsible Minister with the approval of the NES board of directors, after which agreements with the branch directors are concluded. Regarding the data and analyzes used to define the objectives under the agreement, regular reports on the movements in unemployment and formal employment as well as the degree of realization from the previous year were used, and the agreement covered around 20 objectives, the most important of which is NES's share in the market (measured by the number of



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the employed from the NES records in relation to the total number of the employed according to the data of the Central Register of Compulsory Social Insurance). During the discussion, it was found that the performance agreement was used primarily for the needs of the directorate and reporting to the ministry, and that the target values agreed and signed at the beginning of the year with the branch directors did not change during the year in the situation when it was assessed that the expected values had been underestimated or overestimated. In these situations the work program, which has the same objectives (but also other activities) as the performance agreement, is changed. Also, the model of the agreement in use does not imply the ranking of branch offices or any kind of reward or sanction depending on the work results. This aspect was of particular interest during the discussion on the management of PES of Republika Srpska (Gordana Latinović). Regarding the above, during the discussion representatives of the NES of Serbia said that there had been an evaluation rulebook before, but that it was no longer in use and that there were online tests for knowledge check and certification of employees on the position of an employment advisor that did not imply any kind of reward or sanction. The evaluation and ranking model developed by the World Bank is not used in practice and neither are the earlier models of performance measurement that included branch ranking.

In the part regarding the work with people with disabilities, the experiences in the implementation of the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities were presented and on that occasion it was emphasized that the implementation of the Law had had an impact on the reduction of the number of unemployed persons with disabilities and that, as part of the project, an evaluation of the effects of measures for persons with disabilities had been carried out by the line ministry, but it has not been submitted to the NES of Serbia yet. In the organizational sense, during the discussion there was talk about the ways of organizing work with people with disabilities. Namely, in the NES of Serbia since 2015 in all branches there are advisors for working with people with disabilities that undergo appropriate training. In addition, during the discussion it was also indicated that the possibility of suspending the Budget fund for people with disabilities was being considered. Participants in the discussion agreed that the employers in both Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina used as an opportunity to pay the "penalties" more often than to employ a person with disability.

Head of the Employment Mediation Department Goran Gležnić presented experiences in the field of the development of local employment action plans. On this occasion too, the participants were informed about the legal bases as well as about the ways of financing local employment action plans. During the discussion, three models of financing were mentioned, together with the advantages and disadvantages of each of them. The co-financing model is characterized by lower flexibility in terms of programmes and measures that may be co-financed in accordance with the National Action Plan. The technical support agreement as a form of partnership with local self-government gives a greater degree of freedom for programme selection. The third model refers



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to self-financing of measures and programmes by the local self-government and gives the highest level of autonomy in regard to measures and programmes that are going to be implemented, but since in this model the programmes and measures are administered by the NES too; it is not possible to start the implementation of new programmes and measures immediately due to the requests for technical support and the preparation of procedures. During the discussion, the participants agreed that PES should initiate the creation of local employment councils and the development of local employment action plans, and that the positive attitude of the mayor and political support was of crucial importance.

Head of the Department for Statistics and ICT support, Radmilo Pešić, presented functional solutions in ICT and real-time reporting possibilities, and on that occasion, the realization of the performance agreement for the branch office Novi Sad, including the level of realization until the 24th December 2018, was shown in a short version. In addition to real-time realization monitoring, the switch to the new DOT.NET information system instead of the old VISUAL AGE platform was also discussed as well as the web applications developed internally by the NES of Serbia. During the discussion, it became clear that the DATA WAREHOUSE platform also used by the PES EU was developed within the EU Twinning Project. The new information system was to be released in February this year, but as it is now in the final stage of testing, it is expected to be released into production in February next year.

In the part regarding the development of the ISO-2001 quality system, Vesna Pavlović emphasized the importance of employee dedication for the preparation of procedures, and a brief history of the quality system development, including the engagement of agencies specializing in certification, was given.

In the second part, Željka Zelenović and Vesna Kostić presented experiences in the field of local employment action plans and performance agreements for the level of the Belgrade branch office with the emphasis on operational processes and documentation used for applying for co-financing. The possibilities for local self-governments through local employment action plans to, in addition to standard measures, also foresee other measures and activities were discussed, and on that occasion examples of incentives for entrepreneurs provided by local self-governments were listed. Also, positive experiences with the formation of clubs for active job search on the local self-government level within the framework of IPA initiative as a model in which NES staff in Serbia trains persons who will run clubs at the expense of local self-government were highlighted.

Second day, 25th December 2018

All the participants in the study visit pointed out that the support provided by ESAP project/RCC and the study visit itself are important for strengthening the capacity of the PES in the Western



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Balkans, and the importance of experience exchange and practical approach was particularly emphasized. In this context, the top management of the Labour and Employment Agency of BH and the Employment Service of the Republika Srpska emphasized that they would strive to rely on the experience of Serbia to apply the models of local employment action plans and performance management in practice, while on the other hand interest was shown in the program "Golden badges" implemented in BH.