

The Youth Guarantee in Bulgaria and Its Uptake among Roma Youth

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I. Introduction. The 2008 financial crisis severely affected European youth¹. In the context of economic instability and a process of EU economy recovery, issues of transitioning from school to work among young Europeans exacerbated. According to a 2014 report by the EU Commission, the EU-28 youth unemployment rate six years after the financial crisis reached over 23 percent for people under 25, and the same indicator skyrocketed to over 50 percent in some countries (such as Greece and Spain)². To respond to such negative trends, the EU adopted the Youth Guarantee (YG) so that young EU citizens (usually between the ages of 15-24) can receive good-quality employment offers and offers for employment-enhancement activities. Implemented EU-wide in 2014, the Youth Guarantee has mainly targeted the group of young EU citizens who are out of education, employment or training. In some member states (such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Spain) youth in underprivileged positions and ethnic minorities, such as Roma, are in the position of being eligible for support through the YG³. As one of the countries with a high number of Roma population and a high rate of Roma youth who leave education prematurely, Bulgaria has implemented the YG with the aim to tackle the overall rate of youth unemployment and also unemployment among Roma youth. This report aims to review the current state of the YG in Bulgaria and to discuss the results of desk research conducted in regards of the scheme implementation among Roma youth. After the desk research, we discovered that more in-depth examination of the YG impacts as they pertain to Roma youth needs to be done. We identified research gaps that call for the conducting of follow up qualitative research to trace factors and conditions facilitating or hindering higher or lower uptake of the YG measures among Roma youth in the country. Respectively, the report proposes a qualitative research study of the YG among Roma youth in ten selected locations. The report consists of several parts. In Part II, we provide an overview of the YG across the EU, as well as what the impacts of the scheme have been up to date at the EU-level. This Part also discusses the YG in Bulgaria and more specifically how the National Plan for the YG envisioned the implementation of the scheme. This Part also refers to how the National Plan sees the YG as contributing to the employment situation of Roma youth. Part III gives an overview of the actual implementation of the YG in Bulgaria, its current impacts as a whole and in regards to Roma youth. Part IV builds on the discussion from Part III and analyzes research gaps and research questions that will be the focus of the proposed follow up qualitative study. This chapter also presents our analysis of existing statistical and administrative data on various indicators that we selected to justify the need for additional research and specific sites for the qualitative research.

The type of data sources used for the desk research were statistical and administrative data on various indicators that were deemed relevant to this project (e.g., percentage of unemployed Roma youth between 15-32 per region, overall unemployment rates per region, youth employment coefficients/rate per region, etc.). We collected these data sources from Bulgaria's National

¹ B. Stanicek, 'The Impact of the Financial Crisis on the Employment and Social Inclusion of Young People. What Should be Done?', *Foundation Robert Schuman*, [website], 2011, <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0220-the-impact-of-the-financial-crisis-on-the-employment-and-social-inclusion-of-young-people-what> (accessed 27 April, 2018).

² EU Commission, 'The Youth Guarantee Making It Happen', *European Commission: Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion* [website], 2014; <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1079&eventsId=978&furtherEvents=yes>, (accessed 9 May, 2018).

³ Ergo Network, 'Youth Guarantee – Opportunities for Youth Roma; Findings of a Small Scale Field Research in Six EU Countries', 2016, http://ergonetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Youth-Guarantee-%E2%80%93-Synthesis-note_ERGO-Network.pdf (accessed 28 June, 2018).

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Statistical Institute and the Bulgarian National Employment Agency. These data were used to determine the specific sites for the following qualitative research. It is important to note that the data used from the National Statistical Institute particularly in regards to demographic distribution of Roma date back to 2011 – the year of the latest Bulgarian census. Thus, statements that we make here in relation to demographics per region may not reflect current demographic realities fully. However, the majority of the statistical data reported here, both from the Bulgarian National Employment Agency (e.g., percentages of unemployed Roma youth) and the National Statistical Institute (e.g., employment and unemployment coefficients and other labor market statistics) are either from 2016 or 2017. Furthermore, when we report on some general employment and unemployment indicators, as well as reporting data about NEET rates, we used the Eurostat Labor Force Survey.

In addition to statistical and administrative data, this analysis is based on annual monitoring and evaluation reports on the YG published by the Council of the EU.

A detailed explanation of the research site selection concludes this report.

II. The Youth Guarantee

II.1. The Youth Guarantee and the EU

“I cannot and will not accept that Europe is the continent of youth unemployment,” stated EU Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, in a major speech in early 2018. Nine years after the 2008 economic crisis, these words remind of the great economic challenges of the EU in the context of the crisis and its negative effects, with some EU states such as Greece and Spain reaching youth unemployment rates of more than 50 percent among some age groups⁴. Such realities were and continue to be alarming in some member states as unemployment has adverse effects not only on young people’s financial situation in the present, but also on their long-term well-being, job satisfaction and health status⁵.

As one of the groups most affected by the 2008 global financial crisis, EU youth in the 15-24 age group (the main age group targeted by the YG) have experienced an increased unemployment rate (15.6 percent at the peak of the crisis). In the subsequent years, this group’s unemployment rate has been on the rise reaching to 23.7 percent in 2013 when YG schemes were designed (see Graph 1). Although this group’s unemployment rate has been gradually declining since the introduction of the YG plans, this decline has still not led to an unemployment rate lower than that of 2008.

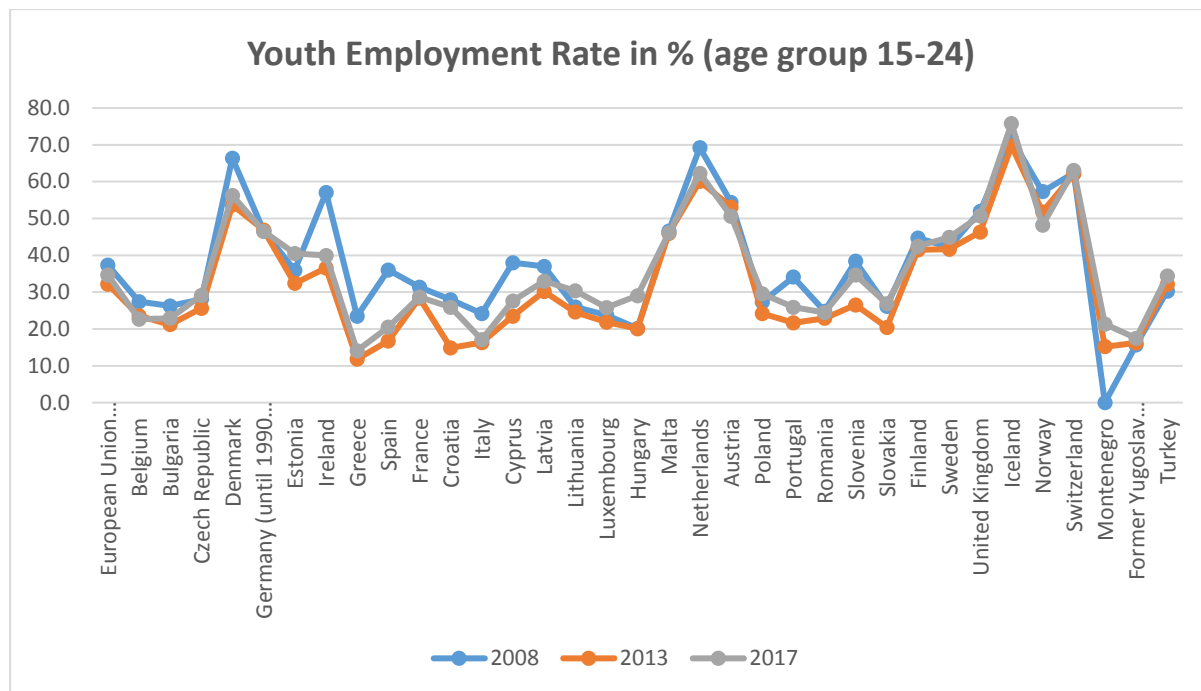
In terms of its employment rate, this age group has still not reached its 2008 employment rate of 37.4 percent (its 2017 employment rate was 34.7) (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: Youth Employment Rate Among Main Target Group of YG (15-24 years)

⁴ V. Escudero and E. L. Mourelo, ‘The European Youth Guarantee: A Systematic Review of Its Implementation Across Countries’, International Labor Office, 2017, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_572465.pdf (accessed 9 May, 2018).

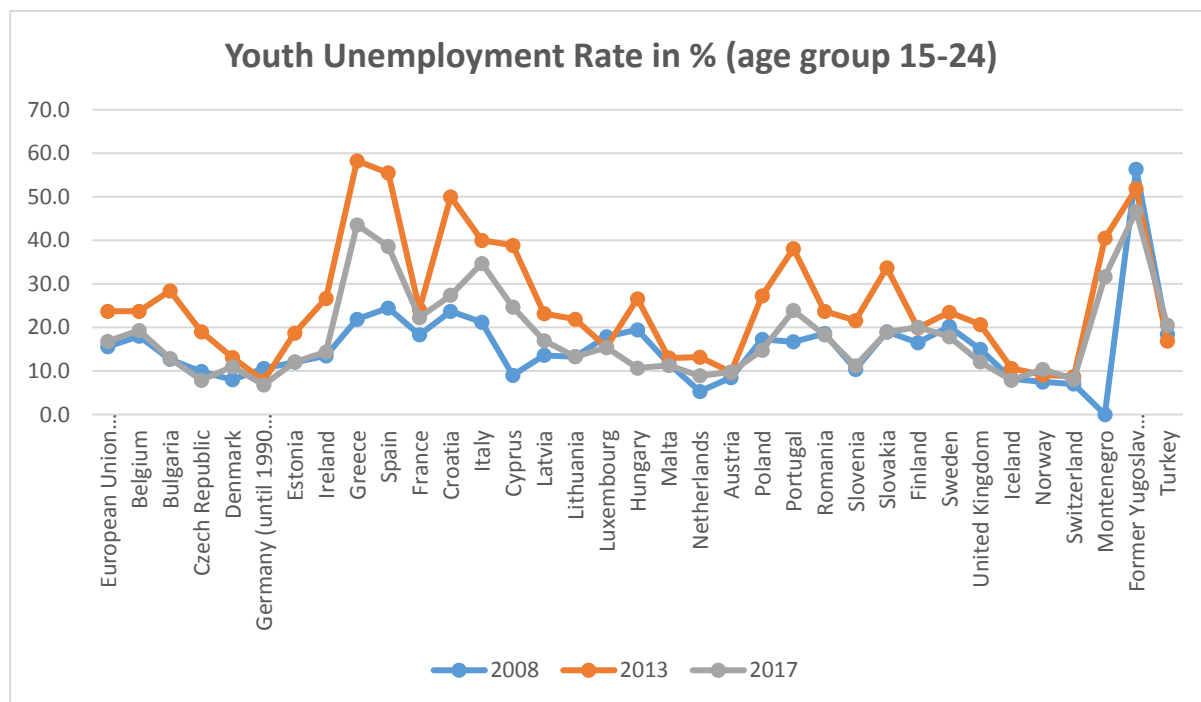
⁵ EU Commission, ‘The Youth Guarantee Making It Happen, para. 1.

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Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey

Graph 2: Youth Unemployment Among Main Target Group of YG (15-24 years)



Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey

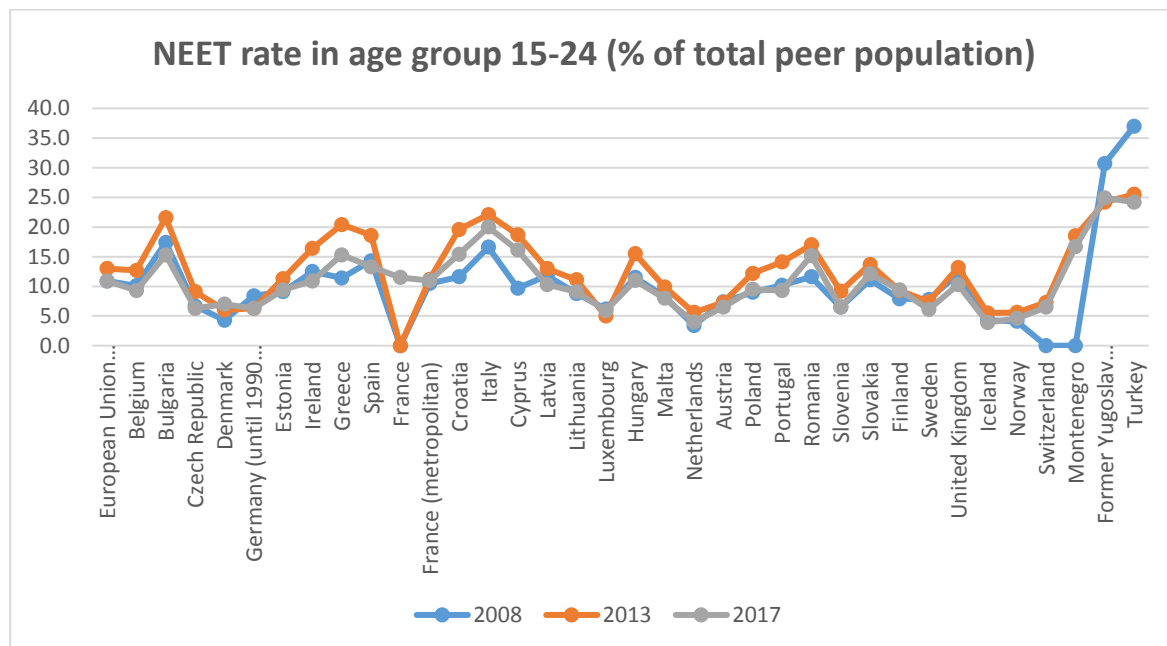
When it comes to NEET youth across Europe, data indicate that for 2017 almost 17 million people aged between 20-34 were not in employment, education, and training. For youth between the ages of 15-19, most of whom are still in education, the NEET rate is much lower (6.1 percent in 2016).

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However, the situation was different for those between 20-34, among whom almost one in five people (18.3 percent) was in the NEET category. The latest available data about NEET youth (between 20-34) reveal several trends:

- (1) Young women are more likely to be in the NEET category and as they become older they are more likely to be NEET youth (see Figure 1 in Annex 2).
- (2) Young female NEETs are more inactive than male NEETs, but male NEETs are more likely to be unemployed (see Table 6 in Annex 2).
- (3) When it comes to education status across the EU, youth with higher education attainment tend to be less likely in the NEET category. For example, young people between the ages of 20-24 with low level of education have higher NEET rates (38 percent) than those with higher education (13 percent) (see Figure 2 in Annex 2 for more information). Across the EU, for the age group of NEET youth between 25-29, there is also a correlation between spending more time in the educational system (having higher education) and lower NEET rates (see Figure 3 in Annex 2 for more). Similarly for 2016, in the highest youth NEET group (ages 30-34), the NEET rate of people with low education (39.7 percent) was about double more than the rate for those with intermediate education (18.6 percent), which in turn was about twice higher than the rate for those with high level education (10.8 percent) (see Figure 4 in Annex 2 for more).
- (4) In terms of the overall NEET rate among the age group that is the main target of the YG (15-24), the EU-wide NEET rate has come down to the 2008 numbers, but there is still a number of countries (such as Italy, Romania, Greece) in which this NEET rate is higher than the EU average (see Graph 3 below).

Graph 3: NEET rate among YG main target group (age 15-24)



Source: Eurostat Labor Force Survey

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In response to the youth unemployment trends caused by the financial crisis of 2008, the Council of the European Union took measures in the form of the Youth Guarantee (YG) (2014-2020). “Youth Guarantee” refers to “a situation in which young people receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, and apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education”⁶. With the creation of the Youth Guarantee and its adoption across the EU, member states agreed to design national YG schemes, submit national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans, as well as implement the Youth Guarantee to promote integration of youth on the labor market, in particular youth who are not in employment, education and training (NEETs). In and of itself, the YG has not been designed to be the cure to tackle youth unemployment. The intention behind the YG has been to improve the functioning of country economies and complement other structural reforms in the labor market institutions of EU states.

To implement the YG, the EU has planned to invest at least EUR 12.7 billion between 2014-2020 through the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative,⁷ in the form of various measures to support the program, including the modernization of labor market institutions and education system reform. In addition to providing financial support to each member state, the EU has also provided members with policy support and mutual learning activities so that states can rely on infrastructures and measures to implement the YG. Mutual learning programs have also been mobilized and tests of local partnership approaches for YG schemes have served as learning opportunities to provide member states with practical implementation experience⁸.

Fundamentally, the YG is a goal-driven structural reform on the EU level. However, even though it was designed at that level, the Youth Guarantee is tailored to national and local circumstances, making the implementation of the scheme a unique endeavor in each member state. This means that policy-makers and institutions responsible for the implementation of the YG need to set up analyses and context-relevant actions that would ensure the comprehensive impacts of the scheme, mapping relevant youth sub-groups that may be more or less susceptible to unemployment (e.g., according to age, gender, ethnicity, geographical distribution). This has led to context-specific measures such as the creation of a network of youth mediators to inform unemployed youth about the Guarantee (in Bulgaria), reformation of the apprenticeship system (Spain), and one-stop guidance centers for youth (Finland)⁹.

Furthermore, depending on the level at which similar programs have already been part of the labor policy of each state, EU members adopted the YG at different speeds. Here are more details on the speed of reform in each member state:

Table 1: Speed of YG Reform in the EU

Speed of Reform	EU Member
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⁶ Council of the European Union, ‘Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on Establishing a Youth Guarantee (2013/C 120/01), *Official Journal of the European Union*, 120, 1, 2013, p. 1, [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426(01)&from=EN), (accessed 9 May 2018).

⁷ The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is the EU funding program that facilitates the Youth Guarantee and aims to support NEETs in regions where youth unemployment is higher than 25 percent. The YEI was created in the first half of 2013 by the EU Council (Source: EU Factsheet on the Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative – Three Years On, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3216_en.htm)

⁸ EU Commission, EU-Level Support for the Implementation of the youth Guarantee, [website] <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1099&langId=en> (accessed 9 May 2018)

⁹ EU-Level Support for the Implementation of the youth Guarantee

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Accelerated reform	Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia
Reinforced policy framework	Austria, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom
More limited reform	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Romania, Slovakia

Source: EU Commission, *Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion* (<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>)

To achieve its main goal of ensuring “that all young people under the age of 25 years”¹⁰ are part of Europe’s sustained economic growth, the YG promotes four types of good-quality offers each of which can help young people to pursue various possibilities for being active and employable. The first type is a good-quality employment offer, which may include a full-time or part-time offer, or self-employment, as long as they “respect national or sectoral wage agreements” and “lead to sustainable integration into the labor market”¹¹. Second, the YG views high-quality continued education as a possible end since it allows unemployed youth to reenter education and training to enrich their skills and subsequent integration into the EU labor force. Third, another viable possibility considered by the YG are apprenticeships which support access to higher education and further learning. A final possibility for youth in the YG are traineeships that can be short-term or long-term work placements related to one’s education. In the YG scheme, a young person can receive multiple employment offers and ideally take the one that fits the person’s profile with the hope that the person will remain in employment after the offer is given. It is the responsibility of each member state implementing the program to ensure that its labor market offers high-quality offers.

Another important feature of the YG is that it has been designed as a partnership-based scheme. In setting up the initiative, the Council of the EU has asked EU member states to establish and coordinate partnerships across all sectors and levels that will take responsibility for executing the YG. This has made it imperative for stakeholders such as employment services, various government institutions, trade unions, youth and career guidance services, youth NGOs, Public Employment Service (PES) offices among others to cooperate in boosting employment opportunities for unemployed youth. Relatedly, the Youth Guarantee is seen as a way to provide long-term impacts on how public institutions work. In that respect, the implementation of the YG in the various EU member states has indeed depended on the structural and institutional specificities of each member. For instance, some member states have had to make changes and invest in institutional partnerships. Others have had to strengthen the capacity of public and private employment services, reform the vocational training and apprenticeship systems, as well as encourage labor demand among youth¹². Despite encouraging such changes, in and of itself, the YG is not designed with the intention to serve as a single-pronged approach to addressing youth

¹⁰ Council of the European Union, Council Recommendation, p. 1.

¹¹ EU Commission, ‘Frequently Asked Questions about the Youth Guarantee’, *European Commission: Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion* [website], 2015; <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=10&catId=1079&langId=en&moreDocuments=yes>, (accessed 9 May, 2018).

¹² EU Commission, *Frequently Asked Questions about the Youth Guarantee*

unemployment in the EU. Indeed, to work successfully, the YG should be part of additional structural reforms that support youth inclusion in the labor market, including changes in the labor market regulation (such as youth labor segmentation)¹³, as well as reformation of educational systems supported by member state funding and funding from the European Regional Development Fund.¹⁴

II.2. Impacts at the EU-Level

Although the YG has been a recently implemented EU-wide scheme, researchers and policy-makers have been curious about its impacts. Evaluation efforts have looked at: (1) the extent to which the YG has been implemented by EU member states and (2) the extent to which implementation has led to the achievement of scheme goals.

In regards to the first criterion (extent of YG implementation), all member states have been active in setting up various measures, including: (1) education and training for employment, (2) school dropout measures, (3) labor market intermediation, and (4) labor market policy reforms that impact labor demand¹⁵. In terms of education and training for employment, all member states have planned such initiatives with a focus on providing traineeships and apprenticeships. Measures to reduce school dropout and enhance school completion rates have also been part of member states' implementation plans. This has been particularly important for member states which have a high presence of vulnerable groups lacking in basic skills due to early school leaving. Some states have had a challenging time implementing such measures due to the fact that such youth can be difficult to reach and supporting them requires significant changes to the country's educational system¹⁶. Additionally, all member states have planned to include intermediation services to support job searches primarily by strengthening their Public Employment Services (PES) (e.g., review of PES activities, make changes to PES staff, focus resources to the quick and efficient implementation of the YG)¹⁷. Finally, most member states have started to make changes to labor market policy, primarily by boosting labor demand through incentives. For instance, states have secured employment subsidies and reductions of hiring costs through social security bonuses to encourage employers to open additional workplaces and hire extra staff.¹⁸ Data show that as of 2016, the measures that have received the greatest focus by member states have been in the area of education and training for employment, followed by addressing school dropout, creation of intermediation services, hiring incentives, and least attention have received start-up incentives and direct employment creation¹⁹.

Other criteria that have been used to evaluate the implementation progress of the YG involve how much member states have handled three factors: (1) development of institutional frameworks, (2) efficient resource allocation, and (3) the presence of mechanisms that make sure that YG beneficiaries comply with their obligations. Evaluation data indicate that most member states have created institutional frameworks and paid particular focus on modernizing their PES structures. However, there has been less success in making sure that stakeholders such as trade unions and employer representatives are involved in the implementation of the YG. In terms of efficient

¹³ EU Commission, *Frequently Asked Questions about the Youth Guarantee*

¹⁴ EU-Level Support for the Implementation of the youth Guarantee

¹⁵ V. Escudero and E. L. Mourelo, 'The European Youth Guarantee', p. 1.

¹⁶ V. Escudero and E. L. Mourelo, 'The European Youth Guarantee', p. 1.

¹⁷ V. Escudero and E. L. Mourelo, 'The European Youth Guarantee', p. 15.

¹⁸ V. Escudero and E. L. Mourelo, 'The European Youth Guarantee', p. 16.

¹⁹ V. Escudero and E. L. Mourelo, 'The European Youth Guarantee', p. 16.

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resource allocation, there have been great variations, with some countries allocating more funds to the YG than recommended and planned (e.g., Hungary, Ireland) and others significantly less than recommended (Belgium, Italy, Latvia, Poland). Finally, most of the member states have applied commitment compliance rules for YG beneficiaries²⁰.

As such outcomes suggest, although with certain variations, member states have taken the steps necessary to implement the YG and take institutional and structural measures towards the YG goals. In that regard, what the actual results of the scheme implementation have been is of importance as well.

Monitoring and evaluation of the YG up to date suggest mixed impacts of the scheme implementation. The EU Commission reports that 5 million young people have entered the Youth Guarantee each year since its launch in January 2014²¹. Four years after the implementation of the Guarantee, there are nearly 2 million fewer unemployed youth in the EU and 1 million fewer young people who are in the NEET category²². Overall, this has led to a drop in the EU youth unemployment from 23.7 percent in 2013 to 18.7 percent in 2016²³. Here, it is important to note that even though the EU reports such numbers in the context of the YG, it is unclear how much these positive results are an aftereffect solely of the YG specifically or of other sets of measures in combination with the YG.

In terms of results and impacts of the YG, the EU further reports that more than two thirds of the YG offers were offers for employment and about half of the youth leaving the YG in 2017 were in a positive situation 6 months after exiting the YG²⁴ (i.e., they were still in employment or some kind of training). Such data also confirm that long-term outcomes are more positive for youth who have taken up an offer before exiting the scheme than the outcomes for YG participants who left the YG in a negative or unknown situation²⁵.

While such results are encouraging, they show only “some improvement in the situation of young people” across the EU²⁶. Evaluation data for 2017 indicate that at the EU-28 aggregate level, the YG covers and reaches out to less than 40 percent of its main target group – the category of youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs). This suggests that as a whole, four years into their operation, the YG schemes are still not accomplishing their main objective of reaching out all young people in a NEET situation after they leave school or become unemployed. Data further show that a little over 40 percent of the youth leaving the YG take up an offer within the designated 4-month duration of the program. Another important consideration is the reality that “more than half of those passing through YG schemes are in a negative situation or unknown situation after leaving the YG”²⁷. Finally, research points out that even though most member states have established proper institutional frameworks for the implementation of the YG, members have

²⁰ V. Escudero and E. L. Mourelo, ‘The European Youth Guarantee’, p. 17.

²¹ EU Commission, ‘The Youth Guarantee’, *Employment, social affairs and inclusion*, [website], 2018, What has been achieved so far?, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079> (accessed 10 May 2018).

²² EU Commission, ‘The Youth Guarantee’, What has been achieved so far?

²³ EU Commission, What has been achieved so far?

²⁴ Council of the European Union, ‘Investing in Youth Employment: Implementation of the Youth Guarantee’, *Consilium Europe*, 2018, <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6149-2018-ADD-1/en/pdf> (accessed 10 May 2018).

²⁵ Council of the European Union, ‘Investing in youth employment’, p. 8.

²⁶ Council of the European Union, p. 2.

²⁷ Council of the European Union, p. 9.

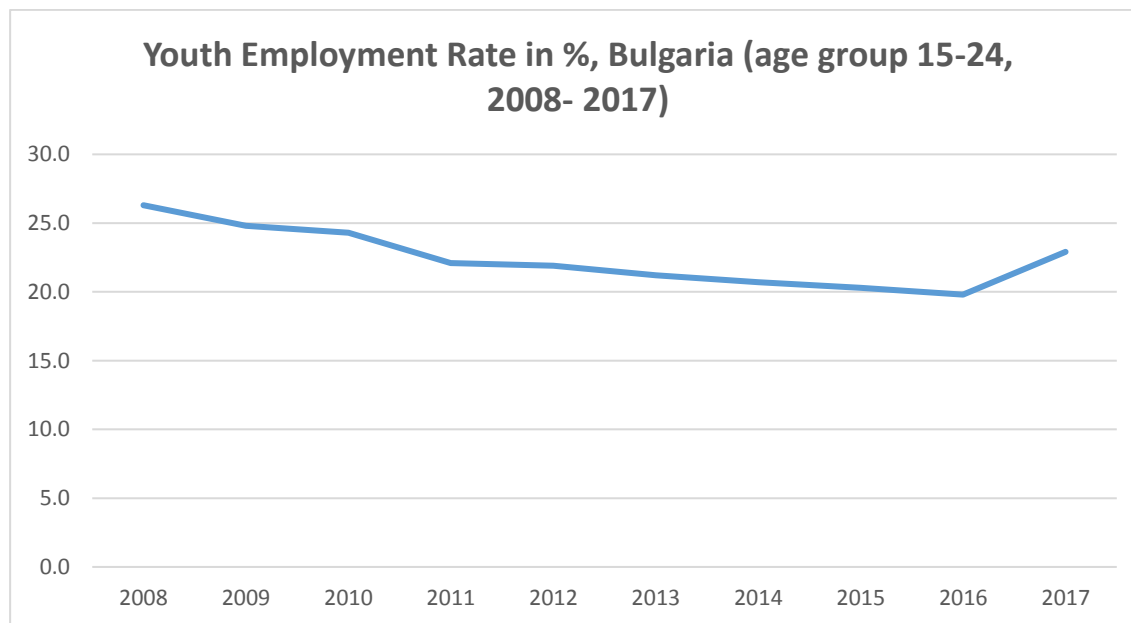
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issues with securing early intervention (in many member states, registered youth need more than 4 months to be placed in employment or training), effective enforcement of the schemes, as well as sufficient resources to follow the planned actions²⁸. In some states (particularly the Eastern European ones), initiatives are still in development and the number of executed measures is still not high. What accounts for such slower development (e.g., in Romania and Slovakia) is the limited capacity of the PES system to each non-registered NEET youth, as well as the need to strengthen the relationship between major actors such as the PES, schools, social partners, and private stakeholders. Even in some EU states where youth employment measures have already been adopted (such as in France), a major challenge has been to integrate non-registered NEET youth²⁹. More action and initiative are needed on the side of member states to get closer to the goals of the YG.

II.3. The Youth Guarantee in Bulgaria

Similar to other EU member states, Bulgaria suffered economically as a result of the 2008 financial crisis, which led to a significant increase in the country's unemployment rate, in particular among young Bulgarians. Since the peak of the financial crisis in 2008, the youth employment rate for the target group of the YG (15-24) years of age has been steadily declining (see Graph 4). Unsurprisingly, the employment rate for the same age group has been on the increase with 2014 being the first year since the beginning of the recession when unemployment started declining (see Graph 5).

Graph 4: Youth Employment Rate among Main YG Target Group in Bulgaria (15-24), 2008 - 2017



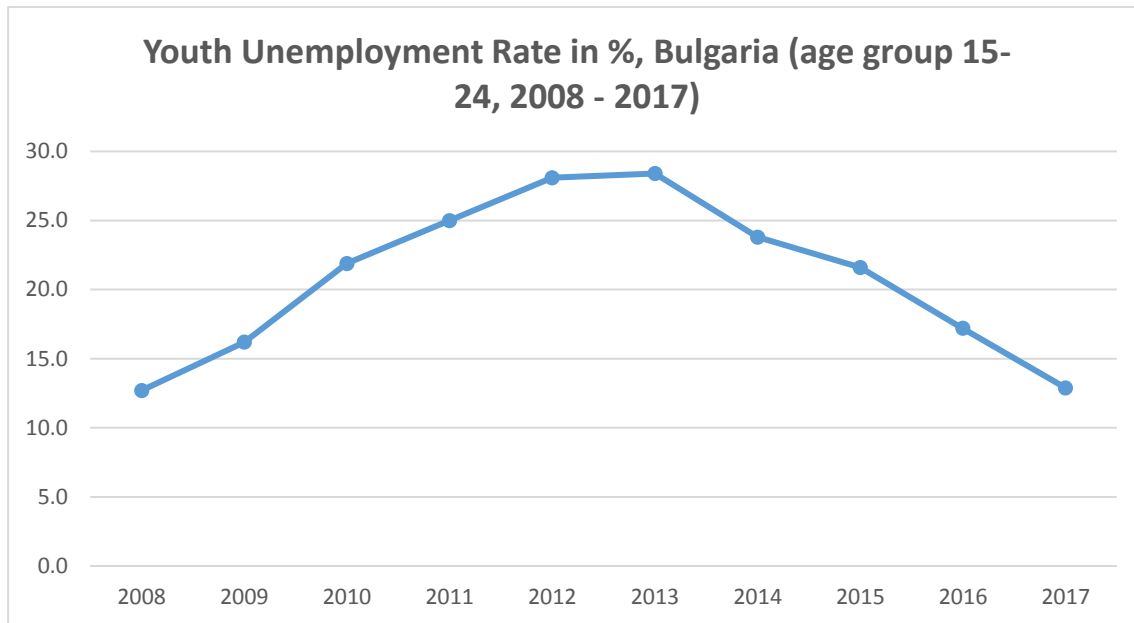
Source: Eurostat Labor Force Survey

²⁸ V. Escudero and E. L. Mourelo, 'The European Youth Guarantee', p. 19.

²⁹ V. Escudero and E. L. Mourelo, 'The European Youth Guarantee', p. 20.

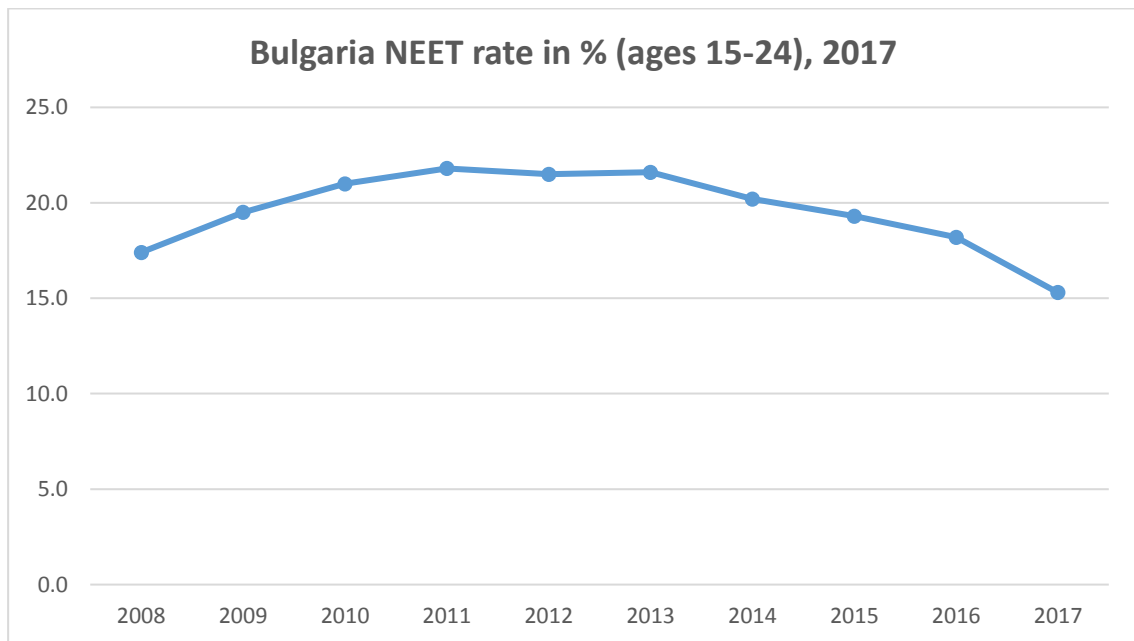
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Graph 5: Youth Unemployment Rate (15-24 years), 2008 - 2017



Source: Eurostat Labor Force Survey

Graph 6: NEET rate (15-24 years), 2008 - 2017



Source: Eurostat Labor Force Survey

The groups that were most severely affected by the crisis were the age groups between 25-34 and 35-44 for which the unemployment rate when economic recovery started (2013) was 15.3 percent

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and nearly 10 percent respectively³⁰. Immediately before the implementation of the YG, the unemployment coefficient of Bulgarian nationals between 15-24 was the highest (nearly 30 percent) in comparison to all other groups at employable age³¹. Apart from the general economic picture of an economy recovering from a recent crisis, other reasons contextualized the need for the YG scheme in Bulgaria, including many young people's low education status leading to low professional qualifications. Such factors, accompanied by an overall insecure economic environment contributed to youth unemployment. However, in addition to these factors, other structural reasons included the lack of professional experience, key skills and work habits, the premature abandonment of school, as well as the loss of motivation to work as a result of ongoing unemployment.³² It is in the context of such dynamics that the Bulgarian government prepared and implemented the European YG plan.

Bulgaria submitted its YG plan to the EU Commission in December 2013 and since January 2014 has been receiving support for scheme implementation through the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). As a result, the country has so far received EUR 55.19 million for the initiative. Until 2020, YG activities will be funded through EU and national government funds. The national plan determined that the following goals would be met by Bulgaria between 2014 - 2020:

- A decline of the unemployment rate among youth aged 15-24 to 27.2 %;
- A decline of the relative ratio of youth aged 15-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) to 20.5 %;
- A 50 % increase of the relative ratio of registered unemployed youth (aged 15-24) who are included in training or employment out of the entire number of registered unemployed youth.

The Bulgarian plan foresaw an incremental approach of YG implementation. The initial focus of the initiative was to fund the training and employability of youth below 24 years of age who had registered with local PES offices and who had left the educational system prematurely. Following this group, the Bulgarian plan foresaw support for unemployed youth with university and high-school education to support their start of a first job. For youth with high-school education, the plan offered professional training. Another priority group in the plan was also youth not in education, employment or training (NEETs) who would be approached through the support of the Ministry of Education and Science, employment mediators, Roma mediators and NGOs working in the sphere of Roma integration (Roma youth constitute an important part of youth in the NEET category). According to the YG plan, Bulgarian youth registered with the Public Employment Service (PES) should receive a job offer by the end of the fourth month after their PES registration. Each registered person would receive an individual action plan which would determine the registrant's profile. Based on the profile, the registrant would receive a good-quality job offer, an offer for traineeship, apprenticeship or continued education.

As outlined by the Council recommendations on the Youth Guarantee, Bulgaria planned to take a partnership approach to implementing the scheme. The Bulgarian plan includes the following institutions in the execution of the initiative³³:

Table 2: YG Implementing Institutions in Bulgaria

³⁰ National Plan for the Implementation of the European Youth Guarantee 2014-2020 (Sofia, BG) s1

³¹ National Plan s1

³² National Plan s1

³³ National Plan s2

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Institution	Level	Responsibility/Function
Ministry of Labor and Social Policy	National	<i>Design, coordination, implementation, monitoring of national YG plan</i>
State Agency of Employment Local PES Offices	National, Local	<i>Implementation of YG national plan (e.g., through employment schemes, labor mediator services)_</i>
Ministry of Education and Science Regional Inspectorates of Education Schools	National, Local	<i>Implementation of YG plan (e.g., education measures, prevention of early school dropout, securing access to education)</i>
Ministry of Youth and Sports	National	<i>Design and implementation (of youth programs; relating to youth NGO sector)</i>
National Center “European Youth Programs and Initiatives”	National	<i>Consult, manage, coordinate (participation of national and European youth organizations); implementation (by administering projects and disseminating information about them)</i>
National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Matters, Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria	National	<i>Implementation, monitoring (bridging national organs and ethnic/integration matter NGOs)</i>
National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria	Local	<i>Implementation (identification of NEET youth to support outreach)</i>
National representatives of employer organizations in the Republic of Bulgaria	National	<i>Implementation (planning and realizing youth interventions), consulting (presenting the business side), monitoring</i>

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National representatives of employee organizations in the Republic of Bulgaria	National	<i>Implementation</i> (planning and realizing youth interventions), <i>consulting</i> (presenting the employee side), <i>monitoring</i>
Centers for professional training, recognized and licensed by the National Agency of Professional Education and Training	Local	<i>Implementation</i> (e.g., providing trainings to boost labor integration)
Youth organizations in Bulgaria	National, Local	<i>Implementation</i> (through youth activation and YG information sharing)
Representatives of Bulgarian NGO organizations belonging to ethnic minorities	National, Local	<i>Implementation</i> (through their own youth project work; YG information sharing, activating inactive youth), <i>monitoring</i>

Source: National Plan for the Implementation of the European Youth Guarantee, 2014-2020

The plan aimed to set up a coordinating council which would coordinate and monitor the progress of implementation. The council is presided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Apart from members of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the council is also comprised of members of other ministries, representatives of employer and employee organizations, as well as members of youth organizations and the National Association of Municipalities. The State Agency of Employment has been taking leadership in cooperation with organizational partners and is the main actor responsible for connecting employers to unemployed youth and encouraging these youth to register for the YG. The coordinating council is not a consultative organ, but has responsibility over the practical implementation and monitoring of the YG. Presiding the council is the Minister of Labor and Social Policy. The council meets at least twice a year, but at times it can meet more frequently. There are no publicly available reports of the meetings of the council nor regular public reporting on its work. Decision-making in the council is made according to common agreement and in the cases when such cannot be reached, the majority principle is followed. According to the council's statute book, the council is to be comprised of representatives from the institutions outlined in the table above plus the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Regional Development, and the Ministry of Economy.

Currently, the council consists of members from the following partner groups:

- ❖ Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
- ❖ Ministry of Youth and Sports
- ❖ Ministry of Education and Science
- ❖ Ministry of Economy
- ❖ Ministry of Regional Development
- ❖ Labor Confederation "Podkrepa"
- ❖ Confederation of independent syndicates
- ❖ Association of Industry Capital, Bulgaria

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- ❖ Confederation of employers in Bulgaria
- ❖ Bulgarian Trade Association
- ❖ Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- ❖ National Youth Forum
- ❖ National Employment Agency

Importantly, representatives of NGOs dealing with ethnic minority issues are missing from this council as are members of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Matters (Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria).

Following the Council recommendations on the Youth Guarantee, the Bulgarian plan posits that a first step towards the implementation of the initiative on individual level is that every young person between 15-24 registered with a PES office would go through preparation of an individual plan of action with the support of an employment mediator who (with the help of the registrant) will create a registrant profile of skills, competencies and interests. A second step in the process will be the provision of professional and career orientation by experts from PES offices and licensed career development centers.

Bulgaria's YG plan also proposes future reforms and initiatives to secure early intervention and activation of youth at risk of unemployment, as well as reforms and initiatives for integration in the labor market. For more specifics on these reforms/initiatives and timeframes when available, please refer to the Appendix at the end of this report.

II.4. The YG Scheme and Roma in Bulgaria

Across Europe, in different respects, the situation of Roma is more challenging than that of non-Roma. In the area of education, almost twice as many Roma at the age of 16 (56 percent) left school compared to non-Roma living nearby who left school at the same age (29 percent)³⁴. On average, 17 percent of Roma across 11 EU member states³⁵ never went to school (versus 2 percent of non-Roma living nearby).³⁶ Across these 11 EU member states, 87 percent of Roma are at risk of poverty versus 46 percent of non-Roma living nearby who are at such a risk.

One of the priorities and focuses of Bulgaria's YG national plan is the encouragement of participation of particularly vulnerable youth in the NEET situation, such as Roma³⁷. The overall employment situation of Roma in Bulgaria needs improvements. According to Bulgaria's National Roma Integration Plan, Roma people have been historically at labor disadvantage because of structural changes that have been taking place in Bulgaria, including changes in the country's macroeconomy after the end of communism, leading to persistent high unemployment and low-income jobs among Roma³⁸. Experts in the area of Roma education also claim that despite the increasing number of policy documents on Roma integration, the overall conditions of Roma have

³⁴ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 'Survey data explorer – Results from the 2011 Roma survey', 2011, <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-results-2011-roma-survey> (accessed 9 July 2018)

³⁵ The eleven member states included in the 2011 household survey by the Fundamental Rights Agency are: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain.

³⁶ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 'Survey data explorer – Results from the 2011 Roma survey'.

³⁷ V. Escudero and E. L. Mourelo, 'The European Youth Guarantee', p. 19.

³⁸ *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020)* (BG) s1

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been deteriorating³⁹. The latest 2011 Bulgarian census reported that there are marked differences in the employment and unemployment rates between the three major ethnic groups in Bulgaria.⁴⁰ For 2011, 19.4 percent of all Roma were employed versus 33.7 percent people of Turkish origin and 46.9 percent ethnic Bulgarians.⁴¹ For 2011, 19.3 percent of the ethnic Roma were unemployed versus 11.7 percent of ethnic Turks and 6.6 percent of ethnic Bulgarians.⁴²

Among the Roma population, economically inactive are three fifths (60 percent) of the Roma above 15 years of age⁴³. Such statistics also coincide with a low share (4.4 percent) of all Roma youth who continue their education after the age of 15⁴⁴. Reasons for such trends are usually the lower education status and insufficient qualification profile of Roma youth which make them less competitive on the job market for well-paid employment. Research also shows that even though the number of Roma who have never attended school seems to have been on the decline lately, Roma are still more likely than other ethnicities to drop out of school⁴⁵, have low literacy rates, or not attend early education programs⁴⁶. The 2011 census also indicates that in terms of university education acquisition, 23 percent of ethnic Bulgarians have received such education, versus 5 percent of ethnic Turks and only 0.3 percent of ethnic Romas.⁴⁷ Among ethnic Bulgarians, 47.5 percent have secondary education versus 26 percent of ethnic Turks and 6.8 percent of ethnic Romas (for primary education, the numbers are: 20 percent of ethnic Bulgarians, 43 percent of ethnic Turks and 35.3 percent of ethnic Roma).⁴⁸ In 2011, 0.4 percent of ethnic Bulgarians had never attended school versus 3.6 percent of ethnic Turks and 9.4 percent of ethnic Romas.⁴⁹ Complicating such trends is the reality that Roma housewives make up a great part of the share of inactive Roma – 36.5 percent⁵⁰ - as well as the fact that Roma population is the youngest population in Bulgaria (Roma under 30 are 57.33 percent of the total number of people who identified as Roma compared to 28.11 percent of ethnic Bulgarians of the same age⁵¹).

³⁹ Roma Education Fund, 'Advancing the Education of Roma in Bulgaria REF Country Assessment – 2015', 2015, https://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/publications/bg_country_assessment_2015_web.pdf (accessed 11 May 2018)

⁴⁰ National Statistical Institute, 'Population, Book 3, Economic Characteristics of the Population', *Census Questionnaire for Buildings, Dwellings and Population in 2011*, 2011, <http://www.nsi.bg/census2011/pagebg2.php?p2=175&sp2=218> 9 (accessed 22 May 2018).

⁴¹ National Statistical Institute, 'Population, Book 3, Economic Characteristics same', p. 56.

⁴² National Statistical Institute, p. 56.

⁴³ *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020)* (BG) s2

⁴⁴ *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020)* (BG) s2

⁴⁵ Open Society Institute, 'Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma, Volume 1', 2007,

https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/2roma_20070329_0.pdf (accessed 11 May 2018).

⁴⁶ D. Berman, 'BULGARIA: Does making early education free benefit disadvantaged children?', *From Evidence to Policy*, 2018, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/223521522180987329/pdf/124657-BRI-PUBLIC-EPBulgaria.pdf> (accessed 11 May 2018).

⁴⁷ National Statistical Institute, 'Population, Book 2, Demographic and Social Characteristics', *Census Questionnaire for Buildings, Dwellings and Population in 2011*, 2011,

<http://www.nsi.bg/census2011/pagebg2.php?p2=175&sp2=218> (accessed 22 May 2018).

⁴⁸ National Statistical Institute, 'Population, Book 2, Demographic and Social, p. 2-11.

⁴⁹ National Statistical Institute, p. 2-11.

⁵⁰ *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020)* (BG) s2

⁵¹ I. Tomova, E. Benedetti, A. Piacquadio, A. Leu and M. Frankovic, 'Analyses of the Situation of Roma in the Four Countries with Emphasis on Chosen Localities, Maribor, Slovenia, ISCOMET Institute for Ethnic and Regional Studies, 2013, p. 29. Available from: <http://www.iscomet.org/images/documents/Publikacije/Redupre-Publication.pdf>, (accessed 22 May 2018).

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Due to such trends among the Roma population and particularly among Roma youth, targeting Roma youth has been an essential aspect of the YG scheme. In this regard, the Bulgarian plan has envisioned some direct and informal outreach to Roma communities so that Roma youth can be informed about the YG. The plan envisions the special presence of mediators, psychologists and case managers who are offering Roma youth services to encourage activation. The people who take these roles work with Roma communities, as well as with individual Roma youth, as well as organize informal group gatherings with members of local PES offices. Important in this process are also NGOs working in the arena of Roma integration. The NGOs will be of special importance in providing Roma youth with information about possibilities to continue education. Roma youth mediators, whose main task is to act as a bridge between PES offices and Roma youth are instrumental in this process too, as they visit Roma communities and interact directly with Roma youth to convince them to use PES services and be part of the YG.

III. Impacts of the YG in Bulgaria

Since it implemented the Youth Guarantee in 2014, Bulgaria has conducted reforms outlined in its national plan. For example, PES offices have started offering specific services including⁵²:

- Registration of young people in the YG scheme
- Career advising and guidance
- Career guidance for young people who are still in school
- Face-to-face employment counselling
- Presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Provision of automated matching tools
- Pre-selection of young candidates for employers
- Individual action planning

In addition to these services PES offices in Bulgaria have offered some Active Labor Market Policies in the context of the YG⁵³, including:

- Training (work experience, work trials, institutional training, workplace training, alternative training and special support for apprenticeships)
- Employment incentives (recruitment, employment maintenance incentives, mobility/relocation allowance, job rotation, job sharing)
- Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation
- Direct job creation
- Start-up incentives

While it is important that measures have been taken to implement the YG, it is also important to evaluate the impact of such measures. In designing the National Plan for Implementation of the YG, the responsible actors set a number of indicators for evaluation of the initiatives. We tracked down these indicators and what the YG implementing authorities report on them in their reports since the implementation of the YG. At the EU-level, there are several indicators for YG monitoring and evaluation. The primary indicator is the aggregate NEET rate among youth aged 15-24 (i.e., the people not in employment, education, and training). Eurostat data indicate that since

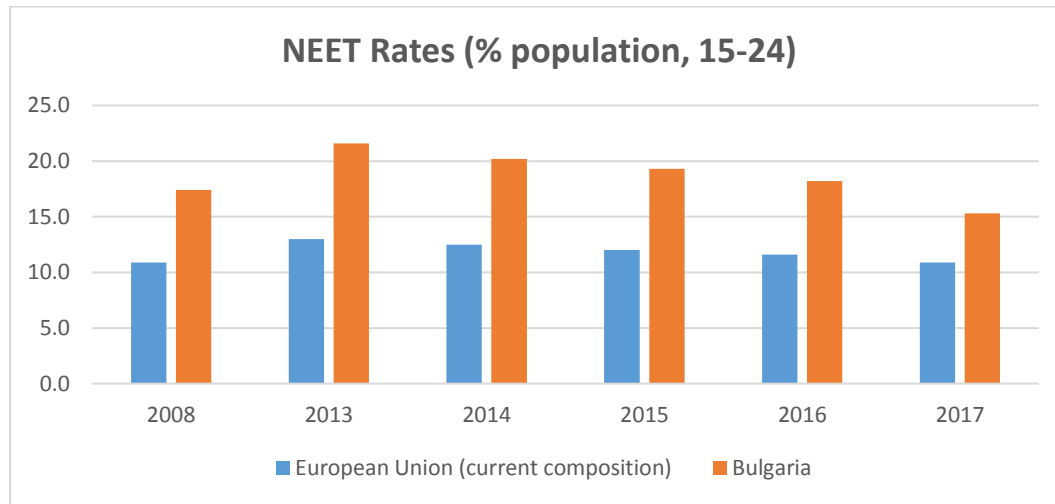
⁵² EU Commission, 'Report on PES Implementation of the Youth Guarantee,' 2016, ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18901&langId=en (accessed 11 July 2018)

⁵³ EU Commission, 'Report on PES Implementation', p. 28.

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the implementation of the YG, Bulgaria's NEET rate has been on the decline, but still higher than the aggregate NEET rate for the EU (see Graph 7 below).

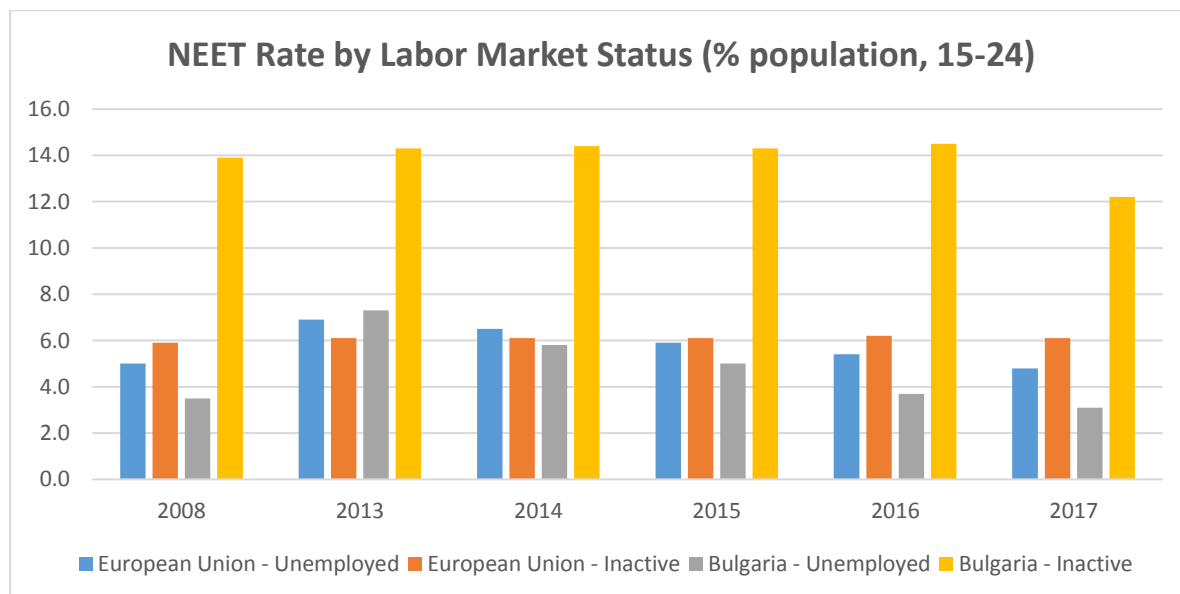
Graph 7: NEET Rate, Bulgaria, 15-24



Source: Eurostat Labor Force Survey

At the EU level, there are two supplementary indicators of YG impact: (1) the NEET rate (15-24) by labor market status and (2) the difference between the unemployed NEET rate and the youth unemployment ratio (i.e., unemployed youth not in education and training). The NEET rate by labor market status looks at the relative weights of unemployed (they can be actively looking for employment) and inactive youth (they are not looking for work, education or training). As demonstrated by Graph 8, the rate of inactive NEETs in Bulgaria has been significantly greater than the rate of unemployed NEETs. This raises the issue in Bulgaria of an ongoing need for the YG to reach out to inactive youth with the goal to activate them.

Graph 8: NEET Rate by Labor Market Status, Bulgaria, 15-24

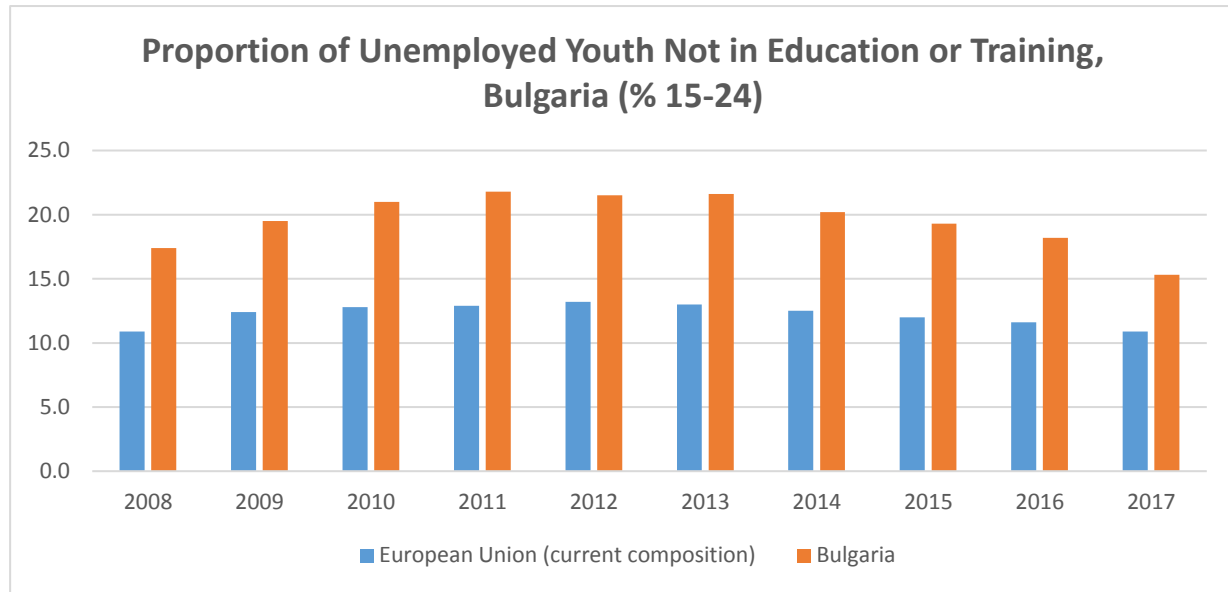


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Source: Eurostat Labor Force Survey

A second supplementary indicator to evaluate the YG is the proportion of unemployed youth not in education or training. The results for this indicator in Bulgaria demonstrate a declining trend, especially for 2016 and 2017, but still a rate higher than the average for the EU (see Graph 9).

Graph 9: Proportion of Unemployed Youth Not in Education or Training, Bulgaria (15-24)



Source: Eurostat Labor Force Survey

Apart from these EU-level indicators, the National Plan for the Implementation of the YG in Bulgaria outlines input indicators as evaluation and monitoring indicators. Table 3 below presents results on these indicators as reported by the Bulgarian Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

Table 3: Evaluation of YG According to Evaluation Criteria Set in National Plan

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Indicator	Target Group (or equivalent)	Results 2017	Results 2016	Results 2015	Results 2014
1.Macro-Level Indicators					
Number of unemployed up to 24 (included), registered with the Public Employment Service		12 920	14 736	21 578	28 745
Number of activated youth up to 24, registered with the Public Employment Service		2 814	2 761	2 049	2 104
Registered unemployed youth up to 24, including:					
- With previous employment		4 528	5 879	9 356	12 109
- Coming from the school system		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
- Having left the education system and not registered as unemployed		258	353	167	120
Number of unemployed up to 29 (including those up to 24) registered with PES		33 600	37 998	51 680	64 122
Number of unemployed 15-24, Eurostat data		22 000	28 000	40 000	48 000
Unemployment Rate 15-24, Eurostat data		3.4	4.1	5.6	6.5

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Unemployment Rate 15-29, Eurostat data		4.6	5.3	6.6	8.2
Number of NEET youth (15-24), Eurostat data		99 000	123 000	136 000	149 000
Share of NEET youth (15-24) (including only inactive persons), Eurostat data		12.2	14.5	14.3	14.4
2. Implementation indicators					
2.1. Career orientation	Unemployed youth up to 29 (including those up to 24)	42 116	35 943	15 897	15 110
	Unemployed youth up to 24 (included)	17 572	15 054	6 568	4 956
2.2. Number of offers for:	Unemployed youth up to 29 (including those up to 24)	72 221	86 922	74 354	79 021
	Unemployed youth up to 24 (included)	35 655	36 211	33 399	40 815
2.2.1. Training					
Unemployed up to 24 (included)		8 854	10 254	9 526	11 286
Motivational training		0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Literacy training		0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Acquiring key competencies including:		694	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Entrepreneurship</i>		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Acquiring professional qualification, including:		1 087	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Self-employment and management</i>		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Unemployed up to 29 (included)		19 537	23 547	18 637	21 258
Motivational training		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Literacy training		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Acquiring key competencies, including:		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Entrepreneurship</i>		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Acquiring professional qualification, including:		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Self-employment and management</i>		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2.2.2. Employment					
Unemployed up to 24 (included)		26 801	25 957	23 873	29 529
On primary labor market		20 655	15 102	17 070	21 281
Subsidized employment, including:		6 146	10 855	6 803	8 248
<i>Internship</i>		680	1 215	1 376	167
<i>Apprenticeship</i>		3 240	2 630	1 981	43
Independent business activity		3	2	4	3
Unemployed up to 29 (included)		52 684	63 375	55 717	57 763
On primary labor market		39 634	40 269	42 164	44 393
Subsidized employment, including:		13 050	23 106	13 553	13 370
<i>Internship</i>		1 287	2 958	1 845	67
<i>Apprenticeship</i>		4 900	4 321	3 354	31
Independent business activity		18	22	17	14
2.3. Number of youth included in:					
2.3.1. Training					
Unemployed up to 24 (included)					
Motivational training		951	973	1 054	1 258
Literacy training		N/A	N/A	N/A	149
Acquiring key competencies:		1 235	1 157	1 371	1 687
<i>Entrepreneurship</i>		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Acquiring professional qualifications, including:		4 254	3 899	4 032	3 987
Independent business activity		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Unemployed up to 29 (included)					
Motivational training		1 381	1 563	1 894	2 721
Literacy training		N/A	N/A	N/A	245
Acquiring key competencies, including:		1 634	1 951	2 230	2 757
<i>Entrepreneurship</i>		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Acquiring professional qualifications, including:		6 102	5 937	6 025	5 621
Independent business activity		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2.3.2 Employment					
Unemployed up to 24 (included)					
Primary labor market		17 523	14 102	15 070	18 559
Subsidized employment		4 526	7 855	6 203	8 105
<i>Internship</i>		671	1 215	1 376	N/A
<i>Apprenticeship</i>		3 145	2 630	1 981	N/A
Independent business activity		3	2	4	3
Unemployed up to 29 (included)					
Primary labor market		35 634	40 269	40 164	41 173
Subsidized employment		12 050	15 106	11 553	12 619
<i>Internship</i>		1 287	2 958	1 845	N/A
<i>Apprenticeship</i>		4 900	4 321	3 354	N/A
Independent business activity		18	22	17	14
2.4. Territorial mobility of unemployed people					
Unemployed up to 24 (included)		8	N/A	N/A	2
Unemployed up to 29 (including those up to 24)		12	N/A	2	3
2.5. Employment mobility through EURES					
<i>Consulted for services</i>		3 012	2 556	2 529	2 705
<i>Directed to employment</i>		8	2 436	47	91
Unemployed up to 29 (including those at 24)		8 191	9 605	5 866	6 030

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<i>Consulted for services</i>		8 163	6 619	5 752	5 814
<i>Directed to employment</i>		28	2 986	114	216
2.6. Included in the Youth Guarantee Scheme					
Unemployed up to 24 (including)		4 169	9 296	2 536	N/A
People registered with the Public Employment Service after expiration of employment contract		347	2 490	758	N/A
Participants who 6 months after leaving the measure/program/scheme have employment (or are self-employed)		2 613	6 322	1 637	N/A
Participants who 12 months after leaving the measure/program/scheme have employment (or are self-employed)		2 877	6 405	1 681	N/A
Unemployed up to 29 (including those up to 24)		8 600	19 514	4 852	N/A
People registered with the Public Employment Service after expiration of employment contract		878	6 334	1 656	N/A
Participants who 6 months after leaving the measure/program/scheme have employment (or are self-employed)		6 348	14 152	3 460	N/A
Participants who 12 months after leaving the measure/program/scheme have employment (or are self-employed)		6 426	14 632	3 482	N/A

Source: Ministry of labor and Social Policy, 2018

Although such data suggest that initiatives have been implemented to meet the goals of the YG, the existing data do not provide a clear enough picture on how successful the YG implementation process has been. While the 2016 data give a sense of initiative implementation, the existing data are mainly descriptive, oftentimes not exhaustive enough to support comparative statements about the success of the scheme across localities within Bulgaria. Furthermore, while the majority of the

indicators outlined present some positive changes in youth unemployment in the context of the YG schemes, it cannot be claimed that these changes are solely due to the YG. It is feasible that demographic trends (NEET youth leaving the country to work abroad), educational reforms and economic recovery may interact with these figures, making decreasing NEET rates not a direct contributor to YG effectiveness.

Additionally, EU Council⁵⁴ data demonstrate that despite the presence of early intervention efforts to prevent school dropout (one of the YG measures), early-school leaves are still an issue and there is a mismatch between the education system and the needs of the labor market. The EU reports that Bulgaria is also one of the EU members with a low rate of young people who leave the YG and are known to be in positive situation 6 months after exiting the YG⁵⁵. In that regard, data also show that more than 40 percent of youth between 15-24 who were registered with the YG have been waiting for a good-quality offer longer than 4 months (compared to nearly 50 percent of the same rate for the EU average), but an improvement of the same number for Bulgaria in previous years.⁵⁶ In contrast, 69.5 percent of the youth that left the YG within 4 months in 2016 went to positive situations with 75.8 percent who took an employment offer, 9.5 percent receiving more education, 10.8 percent doing an apprenticeship and 4.4 percent doing a traineeship.

Importantly, Bulgaria still has the task to achieve positive outcomes in a main indicator for YG monitoring – the NEET rate for youth between 15-24. In that regard, even though the country's NEET rate dropped between 2015 and 2016, with its 2017 NEET rate of 15.3 percent, the country remains lagging behind the EU-28 aggregate NEET level of 10.9 percent⁵⁷. For 2016, out of all the youth included in the NEET category, only 11.9 percent of the NEET population was covered by the YG which is below the EU average of 42.5 percent, but lower than the same number for Bulgaria for 2014 (19.3 percent). As the Council of EU evaluation report argues, this NEET number covers only inactive youth registered as unemployed with the National Employment Agency, leaving out about 80 percent of NEETs out of the scope of the YG. The decline in the NEET coverage numbers from 2014 (from 42,700 in 2014 to 25,000 in 2016) can signify a lack of success in reaching inactive NEETs the numbers of whom have not dropped significantly between 2014 and 2016 (from 106,000 to 97,800).⁵⁸ YG coverage also differs for NEET youth of different ages, with NEETs between 20-24 (14.8 percent) and 25-29 (17.3 percent) being covered more than those aged 15-19 (6 percent),⁵⁹ indicating that registration with PES associates to higher rates of YG participation and that a major challenge in decreasing the number of NEETs is that many NEETs are not registered with PES offices.

III.1. Outcomes Related to Roma

Relatedly, the NEET rate is the indicator that brings up the topic of Roma youth unemployment to the forefront. In 2014, the NEET share of Roma between 16 and 24 was 61 percent, compared to

⁵⁴ Council of the European Union, 'Investing in Youth Employment: Implementation of the Youth Guarantee', *Consilium Europe*, 2018, <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6149-2018-ADD-4/en/pdf> (accessed 10 May 2018).

⁵⁵ Council of the European Union, 'Investing in Youth Employment', p. 2

⁵⁶ Council of the European Union, p. 1

⁵⁷ Council of the European Union, p. 4

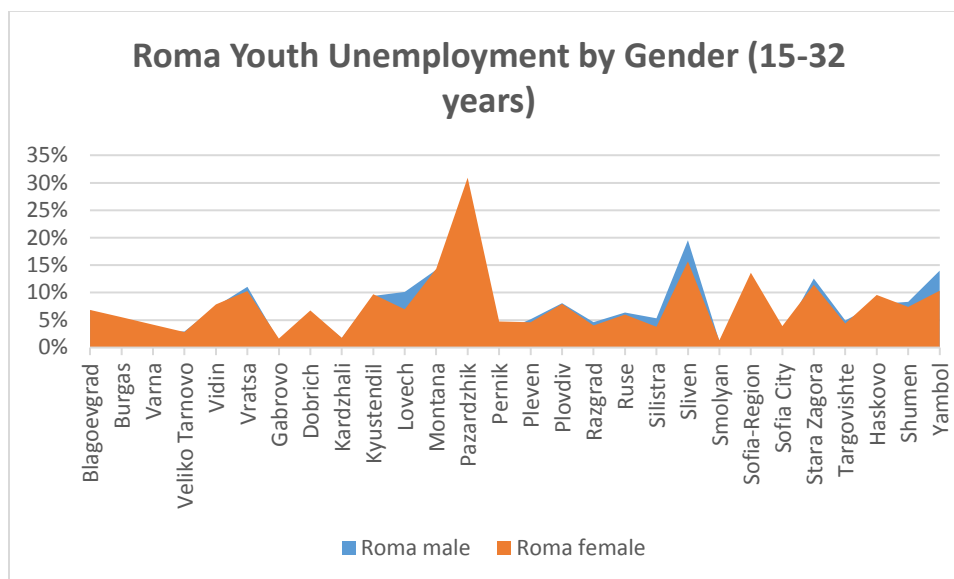
⁵⁸ Council of the European Union, p. 7

⁵⁹ Council of the European Union, p. 7

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22 percent of non-Roma youth in the same category⁶⁰. Among the Roma youth in Bulgaria who are in the NEET category, the percentage of females is higher than that for males (54 percent versus 46 percent) (see Graph 7) – a trend similar across the EU when it comes to gender differences among Roma NEETs⁶¹.

Graph 7: Percentage of Unemployed Roma Youth by Gender (per geographical region in Bulgaria), 2017



Source: National Employment Agency, Bulgaria 2017

The high NEET rate among Roma youth in Bulgaria coincides with a trend among some Roma youth to drop out of the education system – a process making their activation even more difficult. In 2011, with the publication of the results of the latest Bulgarian census, a category was established of people “who never attended school” and the 23.2 percent of the Roma children between 7-15 of age in 2011 who had never attended school became part of this category. Only for 2014, the share of Roma youth between 18-24 of age who left school prematurely was between 82-85 percent,⁶² becoming accountable for the high NEET rate of young Roma in the country. A main challenge for the institutions responsible for the implementation of the YG in Bulgaria as one of the EU countries with strong Roma presence is to find ways to activate low-skilled Roma lacking education or transitioning from school to work⁶³. Such practical necessities also call for a deeper understanding of the YG implementation and Roma youth dynamics in Bulgaria.

IV. Research Gaps and Next Steps

Existing monitoring and evaluation data on the YG in Bulgaria provide clarity about the general situation of scheme implementation and allow policymakers and implementing institutions to see where resources and future efforts can be directed for efficient scheme functioning. However, when it comes to the YG and how it affects Roma youth – one of the groups in Bulgaria with the highest

⁶⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, ‘Poverty and Employment: The State of Roma in 11 EU Countries, A Study Among Roma’, 2014, [http://fra-2014-roma-survey-employment_en%20\(2\).pdf](http://fra-2014-roma-survey-employment_en%20(2).pdf) (accessed 10 May 2018).

⁶¹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, ‘Poverty and employment’, p. 21.

⁶² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, p. 19

⁶³ Council of the European Union, p. 4

need of employment, financial, human, and networking support – existing data are deficient. Even though the Bulgarian Employment Agency and the EU Council have published annual reports on the intake of the YG scheme, substantive questions about the outreach of the scheme to Roma youth and its effects on them remain to be answered. Apart from certain statistical indicators (such as the NEET rate among Roma youth in Bulgaria, the rate of registered Roma youth by the PES offices, the ratio between unemployed male and female Roma youth), much of the data occurring in regards to Bulgarian Roma youth in the context of the YG cannot be deduced fully for the Bulgarian context. Even through official Eurostat data provide insights into the decomposition of young NEETs in Bulgaria according to indicators such as age, gender, and educational level, ethnicity does not figure as an indicator, raising the question of the need for more ethnically-relevant YG targeting and YG monitoring and evaluation reflecting such targeting. Furthermore, we were unable to access statistical data specifically referring to the YG and Roma youth possibly because such in-depth systematically collected data are currently not present. Thus, we are proposing a qualitative research study that can be seen as a first of its kind for this context.

In that respect, one overarching question deserves attention:

What characterizes the outreach and uptake of the YG scheme by Roma youth in Bulgaria?

IV.1. Research Study and Site Selection Methodology

To address what characterizes the outreach and uptake of the YG by Roma youth in Bulgaria, we propose a study. To understand the intricacies of the YG, we selected ten different locations across Bulgaria where we will conduct research. To select the ten locations, we relied on available statistical and administrative data mainly from the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria and the National Employment Agency of Bulgaria. Examples of available data that we analyzed include: numbers of unemployed youth in Bulgaria according to various attributes (e.g., age, region, ethnicity, education level); regional employment coefficients/regional employment rates for Bulgarians between 15-24 years of age and between 25-34 years of age; regional employment and unemployment coefficients; regional economic activity coefficients; regional income rates. The main source of analysis were data provided by the Bulgarian National Employment Agency about unemployed youth per region in the period since the beginning of the YG in Bulgaria and the last calendar year (i.e., 2014 – 2017). In the review of existing data, the following indicators were selected and taken into consideration in choosing the ten research sites:

- Percentage of unemployed Roma youth between the ages of 15-32 for 2014 – 2017 per region⁶⁴ (this was a main indicator in the selection);
- Overall unemployment rates per region for 2017;
- Coefficients of youth employment/youth employment rate (15-24, 25-34 years of age) per region for 2016⁶⁵;
- Overall employment and unemployment coefficients per region for 2016;
- Overall economic activity coefficients per region for 2016.
- Overall Roma population per region for 2011 (according to the latest census).

⁶⁴ Since the majority of the available statistical and administrative data reported numbers on the regional level, the data were analyzed at the regional level.

⁶⁵ The year 2016 is the last year that offers available data with reports on the youth employment coefficient, employment and unemployment coefficients, and economic activity coefficients. When it comes to statistics relevant to youth, the reports presented data relevant to the 15-24 age category and 25-34 age category.

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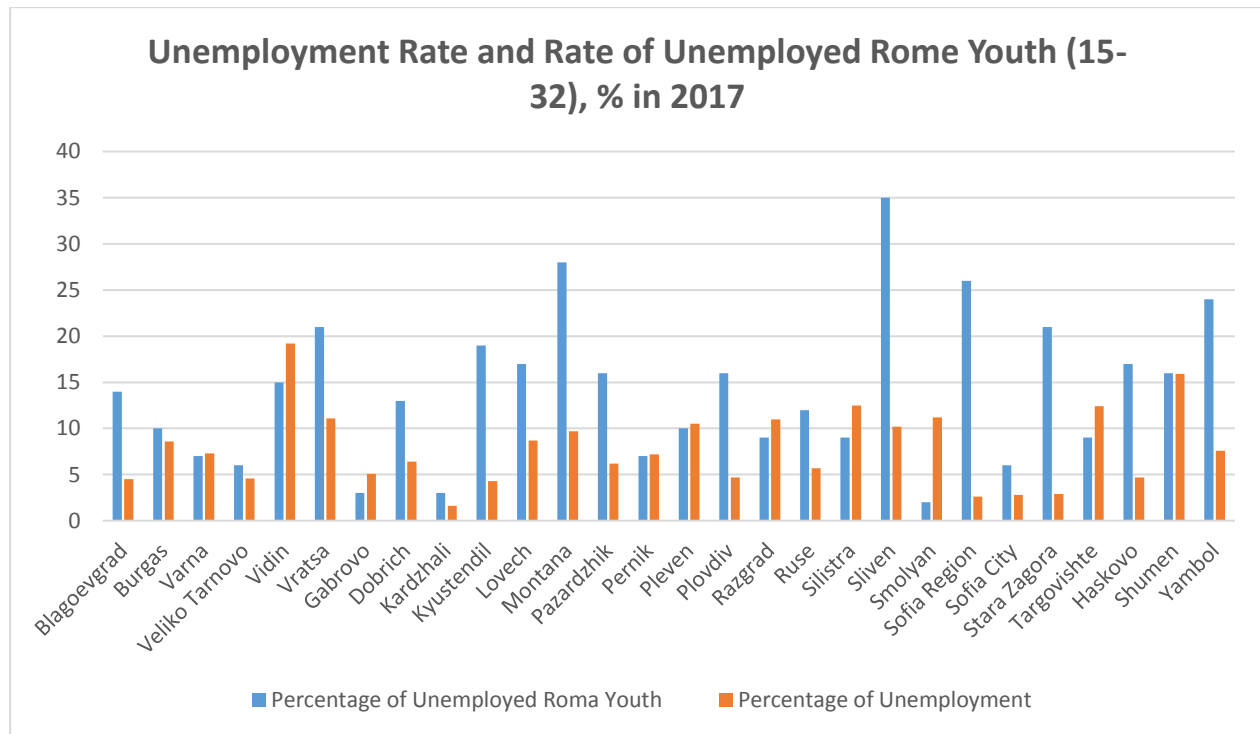
In the selection of the research sites, of particular interest were sites with the following characteristics/criteria. These two criteria were used in the site selection together with the indicators above:

- (1) *Low overall unemployment rate, but high unemployment rate among Roma youth – this criterion was selected because of the contrasting dynamic between the general employment situation of the particular region and the employment situation of Roma youth. Regions with such dynamics are of study interest because they can help understand why there is such a discrepancy, as well as how the YG is implemented among Roma youth in regions where one would not expect that there would be high unemployment among most groups. In the category of regions with “low overall unemployment rate,” we include the group of 10 regions with the lowest overall unemployment rates out of all 28 regions in Bulgaria. We define regions with “high unemployment rate among Roma youth” as the regions with the top 10 highest rates of Roma youth unemployment out of all regions in Bulgaria.*
- (2) *High overall unemployment rate and high unemployment rate among Roma youth. – this criterion was selected because some of the regions with high overall unemployment rate are in some cases also the most economically challenged regions and are often marked by a high number of Roma living there. These regions are not only economically disadvantaged as a whole, but they also face particularly severe challenges with youth unemployment as a great number of unemployed youth in them are indeed Roma youth. In the category of regions with “high overall unemployment rate,” we include the group of 10 regions with the highest overall unemployment rates out of all 28 regions in Bulgaria. We define regions with “high unemployment rate among Roma youth” as the regions with the top 10 highest rates of Roma youth unemployment out all regions in Bulgaria.*

As Graph 8 below demonstrates, the regions with the highest rate of unemployed youth who are Roma are: Sliven Region (35 percent), Montana Region (28 percent), Sofia Region (26 percent), Yambol Region (24 percent), Stara Zagora Region (21 percent), Vratsa Region (21 percent), Kyustendil Region (19 percent), Lovech Region and Haskovo Region (17 percent). Interestingly, some of these regions appear to be marked by some of the lowest overall unemployment rates in the country: Sofia Region (2.6 percent), Stara Zagora Region (2.9 percent), Kyustendil Region (4.3 percent).

Graph 8: Unemployment Rate and Rate of Unemployed Roma (15-32), 2017

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Sources: *Labor Market Statistics, National Statistical Institute, 2017 & National Employment Agency, 2014 - 2017*

These data posed questions that guided our interest in focusing the site research on some of these locations. For instance, one major question that came up in the process of site selection was: what is the reason that regions with the lowest unemployment rates are also the places with some of the highest percentages of Roma youth unemployment? Other questions that provoked interest in certain regions included: Does the YG scheme or other employment schemes have a good outreach to Roma youth in these regions?; What are the impacts of the YG program particularly in these regions? Is there more competition for jobs in these regions? Is there more job discrimination against Roma youth in these regions or/and less motivation for Roma youth to seek employment? Could there be additional factors involved?

(3) Low overall unemployment rate and low unemployment rate among Roma youth

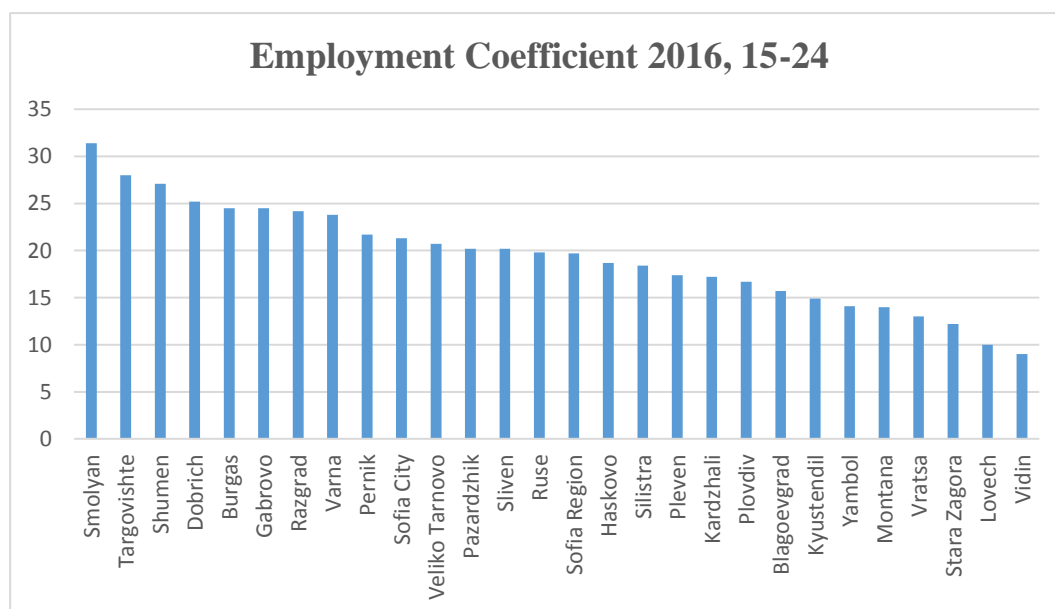
We were also interested to discover whether there is overlap in the regions with the lowest unemployment rates for 2017 with those where unemployment among youth from Roma ethnic origin is low. Data indicate that Kardzhali Region (1.6 percent), Sofia Region (2.6 percent), Sofia City (2.8 percent), Veliko Tarnovo Region (4.6 percent), Gabrovo Region (5.1 percent), and Ruse Region (5.7 percent) are among the regions with top 10 lowest rates of overall unemployment for 2017. Simultaneously, these regions are also among the top 10 regions with the lowest rate of unemployment among youth of Roma ethnic origin: Smolyan Region (2 percent), Gabrovo (3 percent), Kardzhali (3 percent), Veliko Tarnovo (6 percent), Ruse (12 percent). In this regard, it is also important to consider that the same regions are also marked by the lowest percentages of Roma population (e.g., Kardzhali Region, Veliko Tarnovo Region, Gabrovo Region, Ruse Region) according to the 2011 census.

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(4) Employment coefficient among youth (15-24 years of age, 25-34 years of age), 2017

In selecting the research sites, it was also important to consider the overall employment coefficient of youth in each region for 2017 (see Graph 10 below). As can be seen in Graph 10, the regions with some of the lowest employment coefficients for the main target group of the YG (15-24) are the Vidin Region (9 percent), Vratsa Region (13 percent), Lovech Region (10 percent), and Montana Region (14 percent). These regions overlap with the regions with lowest employment coefficients among people between 25-34 years of age (the second age group in Bulgaria targeted by the YG): Vidin Region (56.6 percent), Lovech Region (51.9 percent), Vratsa Region (54.3 percent), and Montana (52 percent) (see Graph 11 below). Importantly, these employment coefficients for this age group are significantly higher than the same for the age group of 15-24, suggesting that the YG and similar programs in Bulgaria may need to target the 15-24 age group more effectively. Furthermore, the reality that these regions are with lowest employment coefficients overall made them candidates for research sites in the proposed study.

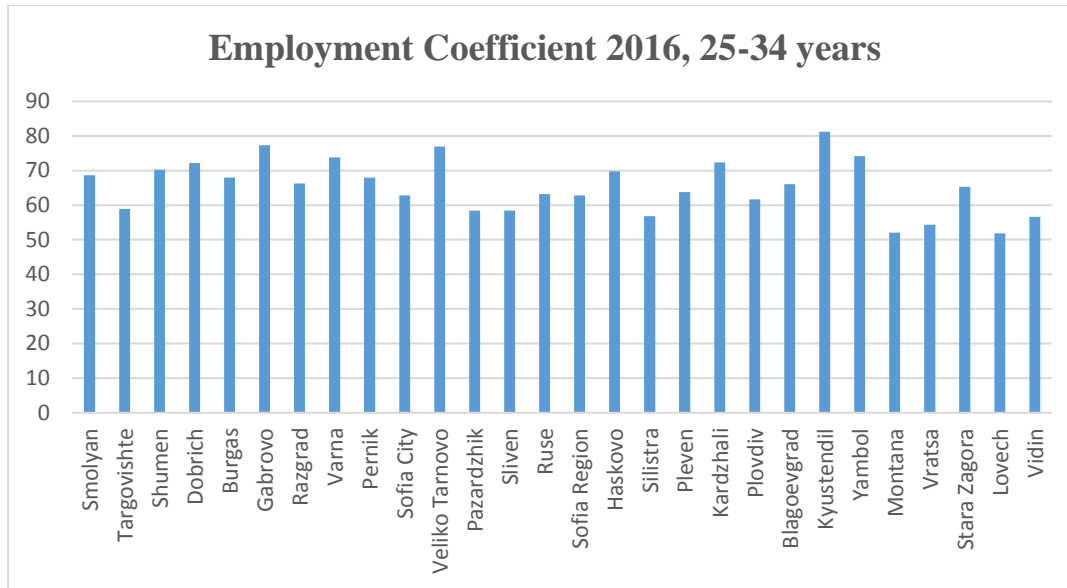
Graph 10: Employment Coefficient (15-24 years of age), 2016



Source: National Statistical Institute, 2017

Graph 11: Employment Coefficient (25-34 years of age), 2016

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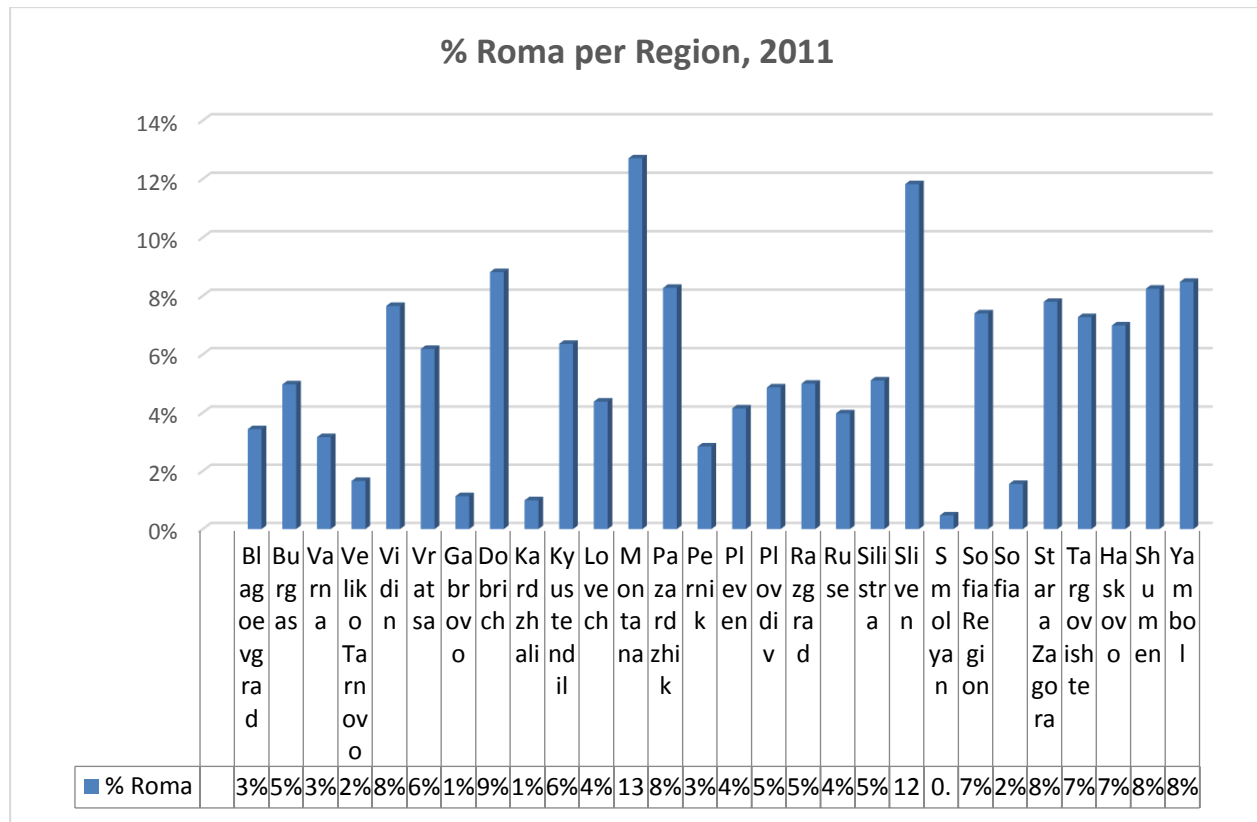
Source: National Statistical Institute, 2017

(5) Regions with the highest percentage of Roma

Another criterion that helped in the selection of the research sites was the percentage of people from Roma ethnic origin in each geographical region. To estimate percentages, we relied on the 2011 Bulgarian census. While we realize that these census data may not correspond to the realities of 2018, they are the latest official data available about the percentages of Roma in each region. In using these data, we paid particular attention to the regions with the highest percentages of Roma population. We discovered that these regions overlap with some of the regions that drew our attention in the other criteria that we reviewed (e.g., Montana Region – 13 percent of population is Roma, Sliven Region – 12 percent, Vidin – 8 percent).

Graph 12: Percentage of Roma per Region, 2011

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Source: 2011 Census, National Statistical Institute

Once we reviewed the different indicators described above, we pinpointed 10 different regions that appear as likely candidates to conduct a qualitative study. To narrow down the exact communities we will visit to do the proposed study, we again referred to the 2011 census and focused our attention on one community/town/city within each region with the highest number of Roma. While we observed that in many regions there are small communities (villages) with a high number of Roma, we justified our choice of larger communities with the reality that employment opportunities exist primarily in bigger towns and cities, and Roma youth in these places could actually benefit from the YG if they sign up for it. Simultaneously, however, in our choice of research sites, we decided to not completely ignore the Roma youth employment realities in smaller communities/villages. Based on anecdotal evidence from Roma youth activists, we deemed it to be crucial to visit at least one small community with a high Roma population.

A final consideration in the selection of research sites is that we see as important the necessity to compare places where the situation of Roma youth employment is problematic (i.e., the Roma youth unemployment indicators are high) with locations where the overall economic and Roma youth employment situation are better (i.e., Roma youth unemployment is low and the region as a whole is faring better in terms of overall employment rate). To be able to make a comparative analysis and make statements about what is different (if anything) about the YG uptake in these locations, we decided to select 8 locations with an overall problematic Roma youth employment situation and 2 locations with better employment indicators among Roma youth.

IV.2. Research Sites

All in all, based on the desk research we conducted and the indicators we selected, we propose the following ten locations in Bulgaria where we will conduct research to address the research questions:

(1) Sliven Region (exact location – City of Sliven). We selected Sliven as it covers several of the criteria that we examined to make the site selection. First, as a region, Sliven is the area in Bulgaria with the highest percentage of unemployed youth of Roma ethnicity (35 percent). Sliven as a region was also selected due to it being in the top 10 Bulgarian regions with highest unemployment rate (10.2 percent). The more specific research site - the City of Sliven – was selected as it is the city with the greatest number of Roma in the Sliven Region (12,153 people)⁶⁶.

(2) Montana Region (exact location – City of Lom). Montana Region was selected for similar reasons and in that regard Montana Region is very similar to the Sliven Region, with very small differences in regards of the main indicators. Following the Sliven Region, the Montana Region has the second highest unemployment rates among Roma youth (28 percent) and is in the top 10 regions with highest unemployment rate for 2017 (9.7 percent). The City of Lom was selected as a research site in Montana Region due to it being the community within the region with the highest number of Roma (4,231 people).

(3) Sofia Region (exact location – City of Samokov). Sofia Region is comprised of a number of smaller cities/towns around Sofia City. Sofia Region was selected as it is in the top regions with highest percentage of unemployed youth who are Roma (26 percent), as well as one of the regions with the lowest unemployment rates in the country (2.6 percent). This contradiction makes Sofia Region an important place to explore why a region where there is little unemployment is simultaneously a place with one of the top unemployment rates for young Roma. The exact location in Sofia Region where we will conduct research is the City of Samokov – the community with the largest number of Roma in the region (4,678 people).

(4) Stara Zagora Region (exact location – Stara Zagora and possibly a smaller community/village such as Nikolaevo or Gurkovo). Stara Zagora Region has a profile similar to Sofia Region. With its 21 percent among youth in unemployment who are Roma, Stara Zagora takes fifth place in the top ten regions with the highest percentage of youth in this category. Paradoxically, Stara Zagora is one of the regions with the lowest unemployment rates in Bulgaria (2.9 percent). Its largest Roma community is in the City of Stara Zagora (with 5,430 people), making it one of the research sites. However, our communication with local Roma activists and project collaborators suggested that it might be relevant to examine what the YG processes are in some of the smaller communities with high numbers of Roma (such as the town of Nikolaevo with 739 Roma or 30 percent of population in the town, and the town of Gurkovo, 626 Roma or 23 percent of population in the town). Examining the YG processes in such small communities could give insight into what is going on in less populated places with a good share of Roma population. Thus, the Stara Zagora Region may present the research team with two possible research sites. In this case, one of the other proposed research sites will be dropped out of the study.

(5) Kystendil Region (exact location – City of Kyustendil). Kyustendil Region was selected according to similar criteria. The region has one of the lowest rates of overall unemployment (4.3 percent), but simultaneously one of the top rates of young people in unemployment who are Roma

⁶⁶ The exact numbers of Roma in each city/town was taken out of the 2011 census data.

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(19 percent of unemployed youth in the region are Roma). Due to it being with the largest number of Roma in the region (5,210), the City of Kyustendil will be the research site in this region.

(6) Lovech Region (exact location – City of Lukovit). Lovech Region was selected as it has a high unemployment among youth who are of Roma ethnic origin (17 percent) and also one of the lowest employment coefficients among youth in the main YG target group (15-24 years of age). The community with the largest population in the region is Lukovit (1,971), which makes it a possible research site. However, if the research team eventually decides to conduct fieldwork in two locations within the Stara Zagora Region (the City of Stara Zagora and Nikolaevo/Gurkovo), the City of Lukovit (and thus, the whole Region of Lovech) may be dropped as a site possibility. The possible exclusion of Lukovit is again guided by communication with project collaborators and Roma activists who suggested that Lukovit may be less appropriate to study than a small community in the Stara Zagora Region.

(7) Yambol Region (exact location – City of Yambol). The Yambol Region was chosen as a research site due to its high unemployment among youth of Roma ethnic origin (24 percent), as well as one of the high percentages of Roma in the country (8 percent). The community in this region where the research will take place will be the City of Yambol, the community with the largest Roma population (4,263).

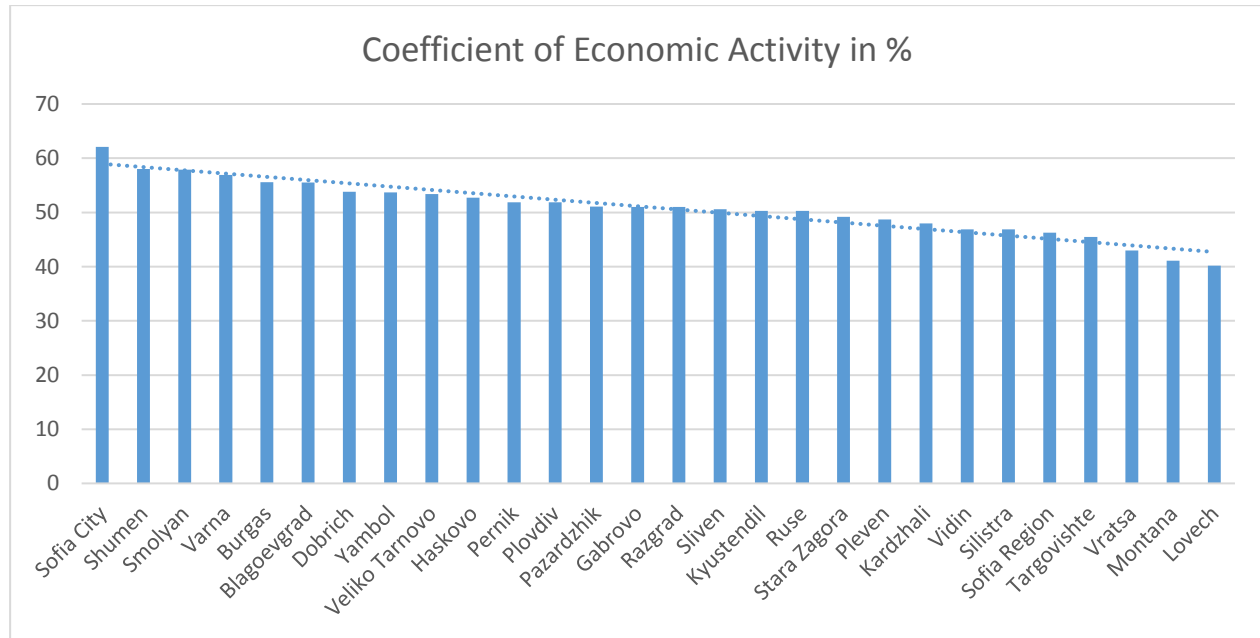
(8) Vidin Region (exact location - City of Vidin). The Vidin Region also has one of the high rates of unemployment among youth who are from ethnic Roma origin (15 percent). Simultaneously, the region has the lowest employment coefficient in the country among youth between 15-24 years of age – the main target group of the YG (9 percent). The city with the highest number of Roma is the City of Vidin (3,753), which will be the site of research.

(9) Sofia City – we selected Sofia City as a site of research because based on the desk research, Sofia City showed up as a location with some of the most positive indicators that we used for the site selection. For example, when it comes to the unemployment rate among youth of ethnic Roma origin, Sofia City has one of the lowest among large cities (6 percent). Sofia City is also with the highest rates of economic activity coefficient in the country (62.1 percent) and employment coefficient rates (59.7 percent) (see Table 3 below for all numbers). Sofia City is also in the top ten of cities with highest coefficients among youth aged 15-24 (21.3 percent) and the highest among youth aged 25-34 (82.3 percent). Thus, as a research site Sofia City is a good source of insights about how the YG functions in a big city with positive indicators.

(10) Smolyan Region (exact location – City of Smolyan). We selected the Smolyan Region for reasons similar to Sofia City. With its employment coefficient of 31.4 percent among youth aged 15-24, Smolyan Region takes the top position (though not in a top position among youth in the 25-34 age group). The region also takes one of the leading positions when it comes to the overall coefficient of economic activity (57.9 percent) and employment coefficient (49.7 percent). When it comes to the unemployment rate among youth who are from Roma origin, Smolyan Region has the lowest rates (2 percent) compared to the rest of the country. Furthermore, the City of Smolyan, the community within the region with the largest number of Roma (301 people) is a community smaller than Sofia City, giving an opportunity to examine how the YG operates in a smaller community with good indicators.

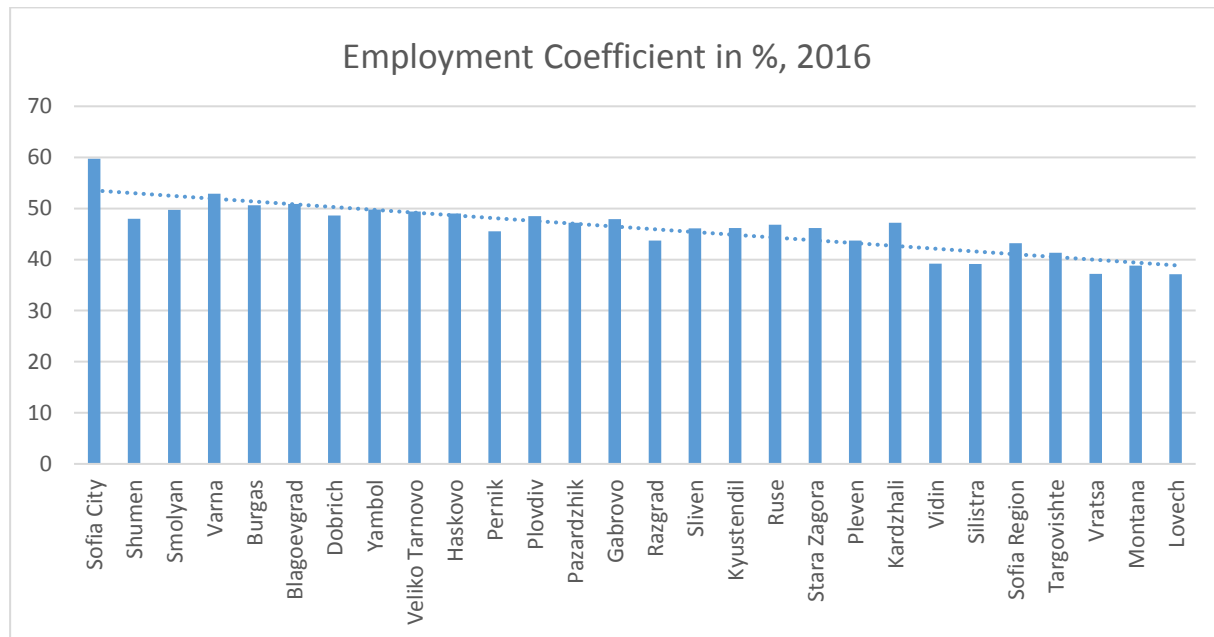
Graph 13: Coefficient of Economic Activity (%), 2016

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Source: *Employment and Unemployment Data 2016, National Statistical Institute*

Graph 14: Employment Coefficient (%), 2016



Source: *Employment and Unemployment Data 2016, National Statistical Institute*

A final note worth mentioning in regards to the site selection is that indicators such as coefficients of economic activity and employment coefficients per region were taken into consideration while selecting the first eight locations even though they are not discussed in this report. According to

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these two indicators, regions such as Lovech, Montana, Vidin, and Sofia Region have some of the worst numbers, additionally justifying the need to propose these locations as research sites.

IV.3. Conclusion

Four years after the implementation of its national plan for the YG, Bulgaria has further work to do to fulfill the scheme goals. Of particular importance to the long-term success of the Guarantee is a more effective outreach to Roma youth and a decrease in the NEET rate among this vulnerable group. Although data on the impacts of the YG exist, they are limited in scope and do not give answers to substantive questions, such as what better strategies can be taken for a more successful uptake of the YG by Roma youth. This report reviewed existing knowledge about the implementation and impacts of the YG in Bulgaria and proposes the conducting of qualitative research in ten locations across Bulgaria to address this and other relevant questions related to the YG and Roma youth.

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APPENDIX

ANNEX 1: YG REFORMS, INTERVENTIONS, and ACTIVATION - BULGARIA

Table 4: Planned Reforms for Early Intervention and Activation⁶⁷

Name of Reform	Goal of Reform	Target Group	Institution Responsible for Reform	Level of Implementation	Implementation Timeframe
New forms of training and education	Developing long-distance learning and combined forms of education	Youth leaving school prematurely and at risk of dropping out	Ministry of Education and Science; National employer and employee organizations	National	After passing a new law on education and after amendments to the Law for professional education and training
Development of individual and group mentorship	To support youth in overcoming educational, social and personal challenges	Youth at risk of early drop out from school; parents of such youth	Ministry of Education and Science; Ministry of Youth and Sports; local employer and employee organizations	Local	2013-2015
Career Development at Schools	Development and application of a career orientation system for	Youth above 15 years of age	Ministry of Education and Science; in collaboration with nationally	Local	N/A

⁶⁷ National Plan s2

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	youth of different ages to support professional qualifications		represented employee and employer organizations		
Application of Early-Warning Systems	Identification of youth at risk of early school dropout	Youth at risk of early school dropout	Ministry of Education and Science; Regional and municipal administration; National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria; National Employment Agency; Regional and local administration; local self-government bodies	National and local (municipal, school level)	2013-2015
Normative regulation of procedures for validating competencies for acquiring professional qualification	Creation of a system for validating competencies acquired through informal	N/A	Ministry of Education and Science; nationally recognized employer and employee organizations	National	N/A

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	education and self-study				
Dual form of education	Creating opportunities for a dual form of professional education	N/A	Ministry of Education and Science	National	2020
Conception for the development of professional education and learning in Bulgaria	Reformation of professional education and adapting it to the needs of the labor market	N/A	Ministry of Education and Science	National	2014

Table 5: Planned Initiatives for Early Intervention and Activation⁶⁸

Name of Initiative	Goal of Initiative	Target Group	Implementing Institution(s)	Level of Implementation	Implementation Timeline
Professional orientation	Professional orientation at schools and universities	School-age and university students	Regional Inspectorates of Education; career centers; nationally recognized employment organizations	Local	N/A

⁶⁸ National Plans 2

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Specialized individualized work	Specialized employment mediator at every branch of the Public Employment Service	All youth registered with the Public Employment Service	Local branches of the Public Employment Service	Local	Daily
Youth labor markets	To organize and conduct youth labor markets during 2014 and 2015	All youth where labor markets are to take place; local employers; local employee and employer organizations; NGOs; Regional Inspectorates of Education	Local directorate of the Public Employment Service; Regional Education Inspectorate; Regional Inspectorate of Education; nationally represented employer and employee organizations	Local	2014 - 2020
Information exchange	To establish information exchange between Ministry of Education and Science & Ministry of	Early school dropouts	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy; Ministry of Education and Science; Employment Agency	National	2014-2020

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	Labor and Social Policy				
Career Development Centers	Creation of 10 career development centers part of directorates of regional employment services	N/A	Employment Agency; employer organizations	National; Local	2014
Resources for children at risk of drop-out due to unexcused school absences	To motivate students at risk of school dropout to continue their education	Students	Schools	Local	2014-2020
Creation of an accessible and modern environment	To improve and modernize the quality of professional education by the use of modern technology in education	Students	Schools; social partners	Local	2014-2020
Environment accessible to students with Special Education Needs	To keep students with Special Education Needs as part of the	Students with Special Education Needs	Ministry of Education and Science; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Agriculture	Local	2014-2020

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	education system		and Forestry; Ministry of Youth and Sports		
Information technology	To introduce new information technology as part of instruction processes to motivate students to participate in learning	Student	Schools	Local	2014-2020
Information Consultative Centers	Development of Information consultative centers (to offer service packages to eligible youth)	Youth between 15-29	NGOs offering the services in the area of youth informational consultative services	Local	2014
Literacy enhancement	To include illiterate youth in trainings to reach the educational minimum	Youth between 15-29	Ministry of Education and Science; schools	Local	2014-2015

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Table 6: Reforms and Initiatives for Integration in the Labor Market⁶⁹

Name of Reform/ Initiative	Goal of Reform/Initiative	Target Group	Implementing Institution(s)	Level of Implementation	Implementation Timeline
Individualized action plan	To prepare individualized action plan for each youth registered with the Public Employment Service	Each youth registered with the Public Employment Service	Branches of the Public Employment Service	Local	Daily
Career orientation	To conduct career orientation of unemployed youth registered with the Public Employment Service	Centers for career orientation and professional development of youth at the Public Employment Service and other relevant licensed institutions	Branches of Public Employment Service	Local	2014
Motivational training	To include youth in motivation group training	Every youth registered with the Public	Branches of the Public	Local	2014-2020

⁶⁹ National Plan s2.

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		Employment Service	Employment Service		
Directing towards the primary labor market	To select youth for the primary labor market	Every youth registered with the Public Employment Service	Branches of Public Employment Service	Local	Daily
“First job” salary subsidies	To secure work experience of unemployed youth with university degrees	Youth up to 29 without work experience, with higher education, and registered with the Public Employment Service	Branches of Public Employment Service	Local	N/A
Employer subsidies	To encourage employers to open new work places to employ unemployed youth of different backgrounds (e.g., “New Work Place” scheme, “First Job” scheme), as well as offer	Unemployed youth up to 29 (including Special Education Needs youth)	Branches of the Public Employment Service	Local	Yearly

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	apprenticeships and traineeships				
Subsidizing professional qualification and key competencies	To increase youth employability	Youth up to 29 (with priority for youth up to 24)	Branches of Public Employment Service	Local	N/A
Start-up grants; subsidizing training and consulting services	To encourage unemployed youth to create businesses	Unemployed including youth with approved business plans (priority for youth up to 24)	Branches of Public Employment Service	Local	N/A
Supporting labor mobility	To use the EURES network for employment and education in the EU	Unemployed including youth	EURES advisors to the National and Regional Branches of the Employment Agency, Public Employment Service	National, Regional, Local	N/A
Development of YG plans	To implement the YG	Registered unemployed youth up to 29	Employment Agency	National	2014

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Table 7: Planned Activities for YEI Support, Bulgaria

Type of activity	Training and support to gain qualification	Apprenticeships and traineeships	Subsidized jobs	Short-term work placements or internships	Job-seeking support, guidance and counselling	Self-employment and entrepreneurship support	Second chance education	Employer incentives	Other
Yes/No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes*

***"Other" activities may include promotion of registration of currently inactive or disengaged youth, schemes promoting training and employment in particular economic sectors, mobility schemes, volunteering.*

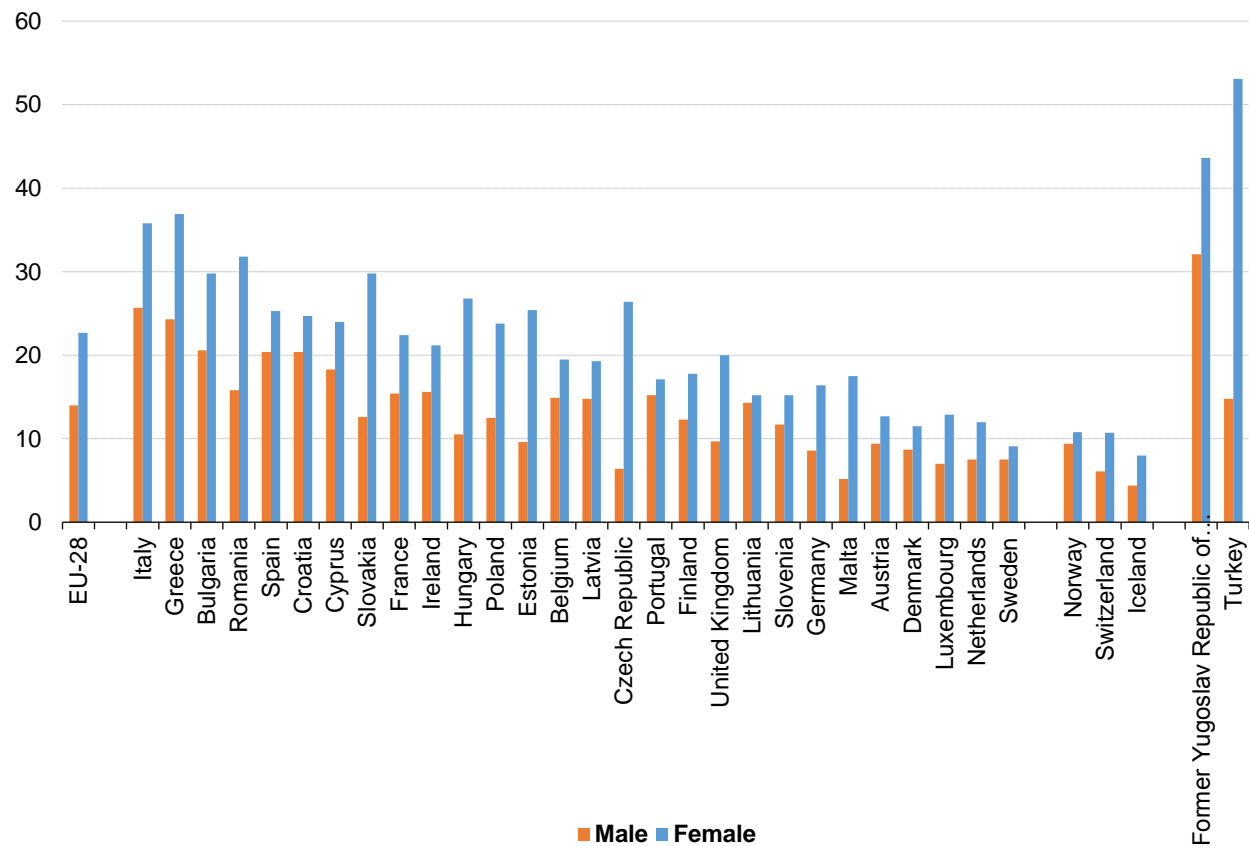
Table 8: Types of Measures Implemented under YEI Up to November 2015, Bulgaria

Type of Measure	Provision of first job experience	Provision of traineeships and apprenticeships	Quality vocational education and training courses	Job and training mobility measures	Start-up support for young entrepreneurs	Wage and recruitment subsidies	Second chance programmes for early school leavers	Other*	Reduction of non-wage labor costs
Yes/No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

***"Other" include job counseling and mentoring, national and regional civic service, and early school leaver activities.*

ANNEX 2 – STATISTICS ON NATIONAL NEET YOUTH

Figure 1: Share of Young People (aged 20–34) Neither in Employment nor in Education and Training by Sex, 2016



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Table 6: Activity status of young people neither in employment nor in education and training, by age and sex, 2016

20–24 years						30–34 years					
Unemployed			Inactive			Unemployed			Inactive		
Total	Male (¹)	Female (²)	Total	Male (³)	Female (⁴)	Total (⁵)	Male (⁶)	Female (⁷)	Total	Male (⁸)	Female
49.1	58.9	40.1	50.9	41.1	59.9	34.9	54.8	25.2	65.1	45.2	74.8
51.6	58.9	44.3	48.4	41.1	55.7	38.6	54.8	29.0	61.4	45.2	71.0
24.2	31.6	17.8	75.8	68.4	82.2	25.3	36.2	17.6	74.7	63.8	82.4
38.7	62.0	23.9	61.3	38.0	76.1	17.3	52.5	11.1	82.7	47.5	88.9
35.3	36.2	34.7	64.7	63.8	65.3	34.8	43.8	29.7	65.2	56.3	70.3
36.1	49.4	23.9	63.9	50.6	76.1	24.5	48.3	14.8	75.5	51.7	85.2
41.4	:	23.2	58.6	:	76.8	26.0	50.6	18.3	74.0	49.4	81.7
50.0	62.0	36.7	50.0	38.0	63.3	30.1	54.1	17.2	69.9	45.9	82.8
72.7	76.5	69.2	27.3	23.5	30.8	68.3	84.0	60.0	31.7	16.0	40.0
71.2	76.9	65.5	28.8	23.1	34.5	65.1	79.8	55.3	34.9	20.2	44.7
58.8	67.4	50.5	41.2	32.6	49.5	39.7	58.5	30.0	60.3	41.5	70.0
68.9	70.8	66.9	31.1	29.2	33.1	47.4	60.8	38.1	52.6	39.2	61.9
49.1	53.4	44.3	50.9	46.6	55.7	33.4	50.2	23.9	66.6	49.8	76.1
58.0	54.0	61.2	42.0	46.0	38.8	50.0	63.6	41.8	50.0	36.4	58.2
51.4	61.4	38.4	48.6	38.6	61.6	35.9	47.9	28.8	64.1	52.1	71.2
45.1	54.6	34.3	54.9	45.4	65.7	35.3	48.6	:	64.7	51.4	:
56.2	61.3	51.5	43.8	38.8	48.5	43.8	60.0	36.4	56.3	40.0	63.6
36.4	54.7	24.9	63.6	45.3	75.1	18.5	47.3	10.2	81.5	52.7	89.8
50.6	:	42.6	49.4	:	57.4	14.6	:	:	85.4	:	:
39.1	43.3	34.8	60.9	56.7	65.2	23.4	35.4	18.3	76.6	64.6	81.7
48.5	57.0	39.2	51.5	43.0	60.8	36.9	53.8	27.3	63.1	46.2	72.7
46.2	59.7	33.9	53.8	40.3	66.1	25.8	44.0	17.8	74.2	56.0	82.2
65.1	67.8	62.1	34.9	32.2	37.9	56.6	57.7	56.1	43.4	42.3	43.9
31.6	49.4	20.6	68.4	50.6	79.4	20.6	44.7	10.0	79.4	55.3	90.0
56.8	59.7	52.0	43.2	40.3	48.0	59.5	70.2	53.4	40.5	29.8	46.6
59.3	77.4	46.0	40.7	22.6	54.0	31.9	60.3	21.2	68.1	39.7	78.8
42.5	51.0	31.3	57.5	49.0	68.7	27.3	44.2	19.0	72.7	55.8	81.0
40.9	50.0	30.7	59.1	50.0	69.3	38.7	52.5	29.7	61.3	47.5	70.3
39.9	52.7	29.1	60.1	47.3	70.9	20.0	38.4	13.8	80.0	61.6	86.2
:	:	:	:	:	:	36.8	:	:	63.2	:	:
35.7	45.6	24.1	64.3	54.4	75.9	35.3	45.0	27.1	64.7	55.0	72.9
45.9	42.7	48.8	54.1	57.3	51.3	29.5	54.1	23.2	70.5	45.9	76.8

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60.8	78.7	43.9	39.2	21.3	56.1	52.0	83.1	32.3	48.0	16.9	67.7
25.5	50.3	16.2	74.5	49.7	83.8	18.2	61.4	9.5	81.8	38.6	90.5

⁽¹⁾ Luxembourg and Malta: low reliability

⁽²⁾ Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia: low reliability.

⁽³⁾ Croatia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Slovenia: low reliability.

⁽⁴⁾ Croatia, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia: low reliability.

⁽⁵⁾ Malta: low reliability.

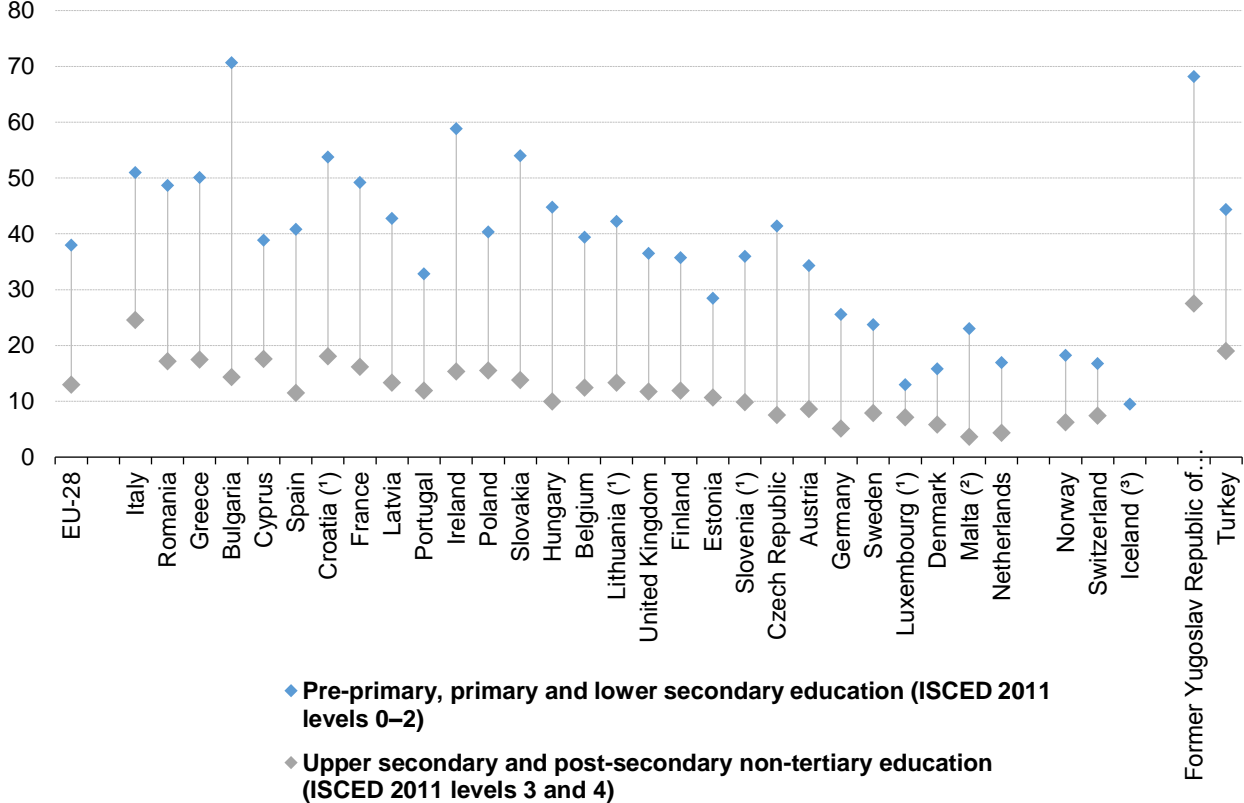
⁽⁶⁾ Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Malta: low reliability.

⁽⁷⁾ Estonia: low reliability.

⁽⁸⁾ Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Switzerland: low reliability.

⁽⁹⁾ Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Switzerland: low reliability.

Figure 2: Young people neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) (20-24), 2016



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Figure 3: Share of people aged 25–29 neither in employment nor in education and training, by educational attainment level, 2016

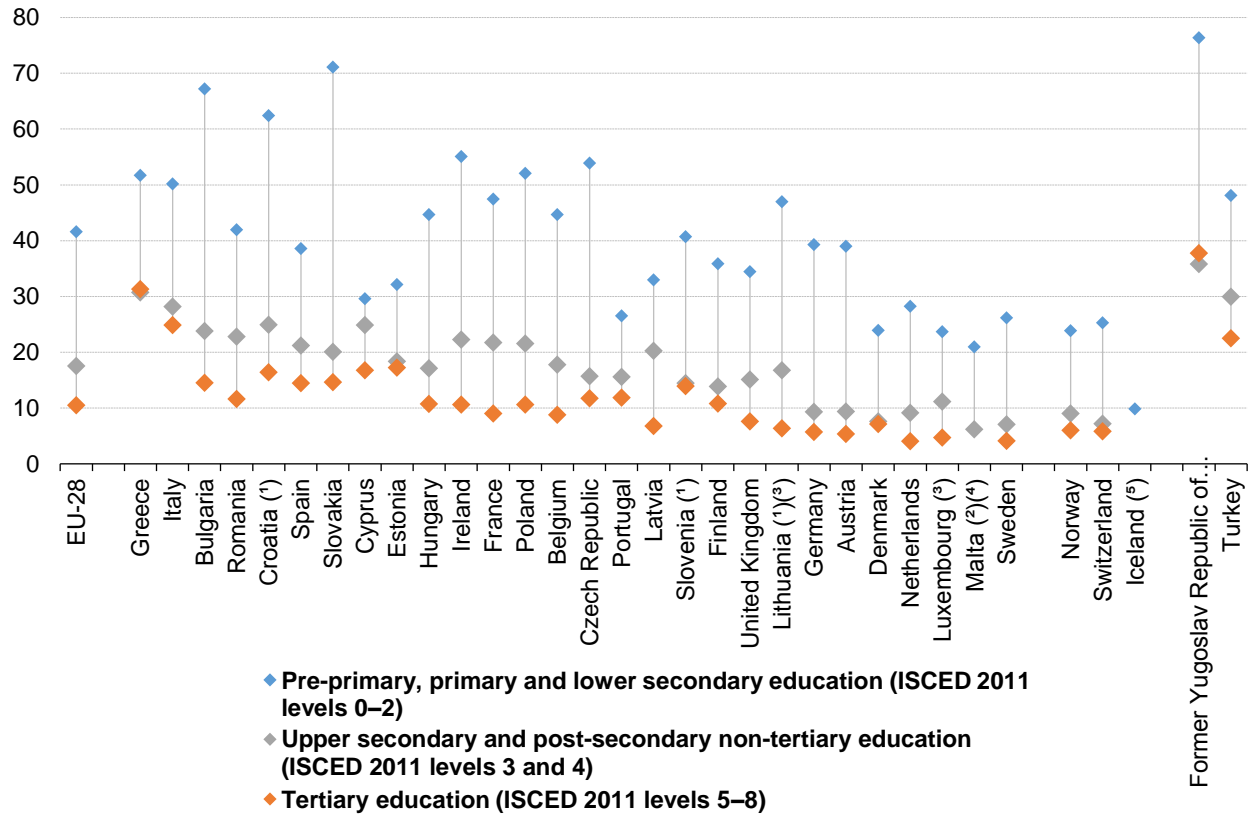
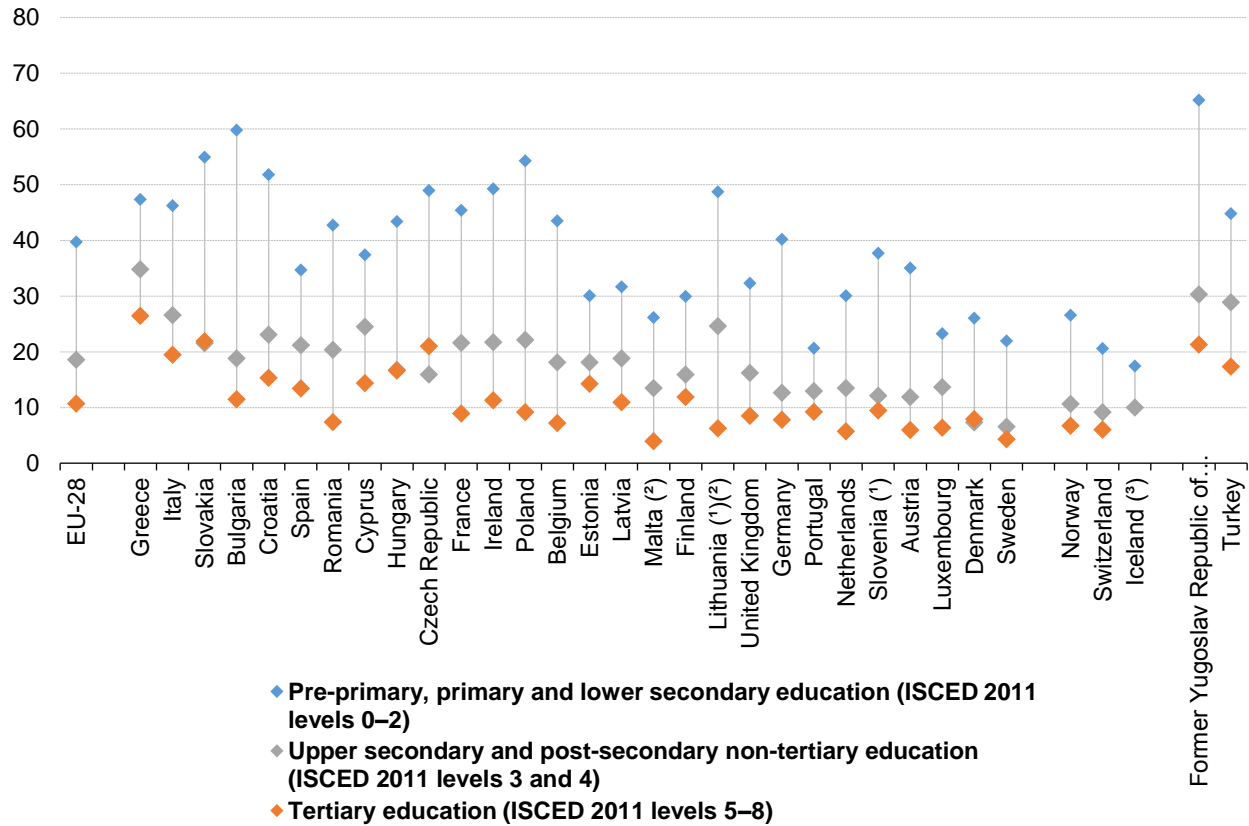


Figure 4: Share of people aged 30–34 neither in employment nor in education and training, by educational attainment level, 2016



ANNEX 3 – YG BUDGET ALLOCATION

Name of initiative	Funding period	Resources and levels of funding (in BG leva)					Number of beneficiaries (when applicable)		
		EU/ESF/YEI	National funds, co-funding included	Regional/local funds	Employer funds	Other	Males	Females	Total
Planned initiatives									
2014 г.									
2.4.1. Designing individual action plans	2014		1 125 000				36 750	38 250	75 000
2.4.3. Motivational training	2014		250 000				6 000	8 000	14 000
2.4.4. Finding work for youth at the primary labor market	2014		1 000 000				3 800	3 700	7 500
2.4.5.-2.4.12. Securing employment, trainings, internship and apprenticeship through the resources from the state budget for active policy on the labor market	2014		21 900 000				5 200	5 800	11 000
2.4.15.-2.4.17. Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013, Schemes: "New Work Place", „First job”, „Creating Employment of Youth through Providing Internship Opportunities”	2014	25 000 000					622	648	1 270
2.4.14. Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2014	23 412 345					3 824	3 980	7 804
Total		48 412 345	24 275 000	0	0	0			
2015 г.									
2.4.1. Designing individual action plans	2015		1 150 000				34 300	35 700	70 000
2.4.3. Motivational training	2015		300 000				6 370	6 630	13 000
2.4.4. Finding work for youth at the primary labor market	2015		1 100 000				3 920	4 080	8 000
2.4.5.-2.4.12. Securing employment, trainings, internship and apprenticeship through the resources from the state budget for active policy on the labor market	2015		34 650 000				8 143	9 182	17 325
2.4.14. Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2015	207 863 655					29 957	31 180	61 136

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Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)		4 900 000					1 000	1 041	2 042
Total		212 763 655	37 200 000	0	0	0			
2016 г.									
2.4.1. Designing individual action plans	2016		1 175 000				32 500	32 500	65 000
2.4.3. Motivational training	2016		350 000				5 880	6 120	12 000
2.4.4. Finding work for youth at the primary labor market	2016		1 200 000				4 018	4 182	8 200
2.4.5.-2.4.12. Securing employment, trainings, internship and apprenticeship through the resources from the state budget for active policy on the labor market	2016		54 450 000				11 176	12 603	23 779
2.4.14. Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2016						0	0	0
Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)		5 600 000					1 055	1 098	2 154
Total		5 600 000	57 175 000	0	0	0			
2017 г.									
2.4.1. Designing individual action plans	2017		1 200 000				29 400	30 600	60 000
2.4.3. Motivational training	2017		400 000				6 125	6 375	12 500
2.4.4. Finding work for youth at the primary labor market	2017		1 300 000				4 165	4 335	8 500
2.4.5.-2.4.12. Securing employment, trainings, internship and apprenticeship through the resources from the state budget for active policy on the labor market	2017		59 895 000				11 490	12 956	24 446
2.4.14. Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2017						0	0	0
Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2017	8 400 000					1 470	1 530	3 000
Total		8 400 000	62 795 000	0	0	0			
2018 г.									
2.4.1. Designing individual action plans	2018		1 225 000				26 950	28 050	55 000
2.4.3. Motivational training	2018		450 000				5 390	5 610	11 000

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2.4.4. Finding work for youth at the primary labor market	2018		1 400 000				4 263	4 437	8 700
2.4.5.-2.4.12. Securing employment, trainings, internship and apprenticeship through the resources from the state budget for active policy on the labor market	2018		65 884 500				11 812	13 320	25 131
2.4.14. Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2018						0	0	0
Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2018	12 600 000					2 058	2 142	4 200
Total		12 600 000	68 959 500	0	0	0			
2019 г.									
2.4.1. Designing individual action plans	2019		1 300 000				24 500	25 500	50 000
2.4.3. Motivational training	2019		300 000				4 900	5 100	10 000
2.4.4. Finding work for youth at the primary labor market	2019		1 500 000				4 361	4 539	8 900
2.4.5.-2.4.12. Securing employment, trainings, internship and apprenticeship through the resources from the state budget for active policy on the labor market	2019		72 472 950				12 143	13 693	25 836
2.4.14. Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2019						0	0	0
Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2019	15 400 000					2 358	2 454	4 813
Total		15 400 000	75 572 950	0	0	0			
2020 г.									
2.4.1. Designing individual action plans	2020		1 325 000				22 050	22 950	45 000
2.4.3. Motivational training	2020		350 000				4 900	5 100	10 000
2.4.4. Finding work for youth at the primary labor market	2020		1 600 000				4 459	4 641	9 100
2.4.5.-2.4.12. Securing employment, trainings, internship and apprenticeship through the resources from the state budget for active policy on the labor market	2020		79 720 245				12 483	14 077	26 560
2.4.14. Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2020						0	0	0

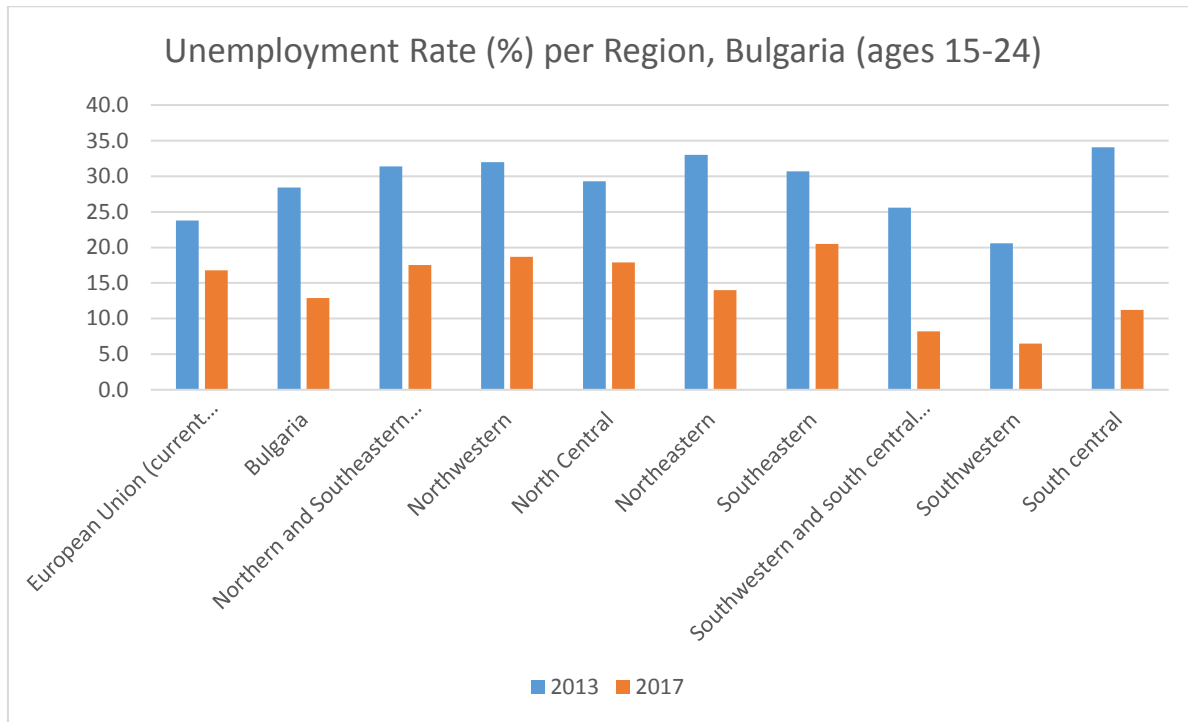
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Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2020	21 000 000					3 026	3 150	6 176
Total		21 000 000	82 995 245	0	0	0			
2014 - 2020 r.									
2.4.1. Designing individual action plans	2014-2020	0	8 500 000	0	0	0	206 450	213 550	420 000
2.4.3. Motivational training	2014-2020	0	2 400 000	0	0	0	39 565	42 935	82 500
2.4.4. Finding work for youth at the primary labor market	2014-2020	0	9 100 000	0	0	0	28 986	29 914	58 900
2.4.5.-2.4.12. Securing employment, trainings, internship and apprenticeship through the resources from the state budget for active policy on the labor market	2014-2020	0	388 972 695	0	0	0	72 447	81 632	154 079
2.4.14. Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2014-2020	231 276 000	0	0	0	0	33 781	35 160	68 940
Schemes for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (OP HRD 2014-2020)	2014-2020	92 900 000	0	0	0	0	11 591	12 064	23 654
Total		324 176 000	408 972 695	0	0	0			

Source: National Plan for the Implementation of the European Youth Guarantee, 2014 – 2020

ANNEX 4 – UNEMPLOYMENT RATE PER REGION, BULGARIA

Graph 15: Regional Unemployment Rate, Bulgaria, Ages 15-24



Source: Eurostat Database, 2017