



REPORT FROM THE STUDY VISIT TO PORTUGAL, 6-8TH NOVEMBER 2023

The study visit to Portugal was conducted with a purpose to introduce representatives of MoLEVSA and NES with the design and implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Portugal. The host of the visit was the **Institute for Employment and Training** (www.iefp.pt), equivalent to the NES Head Office in Serbia.

Portugal has around 10.3 million inhabitants, with share of working population (aged 15-64) of 63.2%. Gross minimal wage is 760 eur and gross average wage is 1.411 EUR. Labour market is faced with aging population and lack of competent work force in all sectors. Unemployment rate is around 6% and it's still higher for women than men. Position of youth in the labour market is presented in the text below.

Institute for Employment and Training (Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional)

The work of IEFP (www.iefp.pt) was presented by **Gloria Ferreira** – member of the Management Board, Head of Sector for Professional Integration / Employment and National Coordinator for YG. IEFP oversees 3 groups of activities: employment, vocational training and professional rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The headquarters is in Lisbon, and offices (centers) are across the 4 regions of the country: 30 centers for (both) employment and professional training, 23 employment centers, 26 training centers, and 1 center for professional rehabilitation of PWDs. The steering committee consists of representatives of trade unions and employers. Budget of the IEFP comes from social contributions and the European Social Fund. IEFP also has a service for professional orientation, important for young people who want to join training. Professional orientation for students is done by schools.

About 4,000 employees work in the IEFP and there are about 400,000 registered unemployed (an average of about 100 per one *technician*, equivalent to an employment counselor at NES). Local employment centers have a certain degree of autonomy, and the director has the freedom to organize work according to the specific local context. Employment centers and training centers are usually not in the same physical space, and the unemployed are sent from the employment centers to the training centers. Training centers are financed by IEFP, but the management is shared with partners who also provide "know-how" (labor market and occupation requirements etc). Employment centers are not directly under the IEFP, but under the LSGs, thus adapting to the needs of the local area.

They emphasize the *quality* of employment, especially for young NEETs who are often engaged on low-quality contracts. About 50% of NEET are registered in the employment centers, therefore the biggest challenge is outreaching to those who are not registered.

The most successful measure is internship, a type of work practice of 9 months duration, during which time the company receives financial support from the IEFP. The effect of this measure on employment is 50-60%. The challenge they currently have is to design a new measure for school dropouts aged 25-29. Upskilling/reskilling measures are increasingly used as they are facing a deficit of labor force.


Youth Guarantee in Portugal

YG was presented by **Sara Ramos**, the Director of YG in Portugal (unlike Serbia, YG Director is in the IEFP and not the ministry). The Monitoring Committee is in the ministry, headed by the state secretary. It approves YG implementation reports. Other ministries, associations, youth organizations, trade unions, employers are included in the implementation ("YG partners"). EC is monitoring implementation of YG with the deadline for reporting of June 30th for the previous year.

IMPLEMENTED BY

NIRAS
IP CONSULT

SUPPORTED BY

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

According to EC recommendations, YG in Portugal focuses on: prevention of youth unemployment and inactivity (focus on digitization), fight against poverty and taking into account regional differences.

Unlike other countries, there is equal participation of men and women in the NEET group. The NEET rate is highest in the islands and in the south. The so-called "signaling strategy" is used to reach out to the NEETs who are not registered. There were around 1.9 million applications (not persons) recorded in the YG system from 2013-22. Owing to the inception of compulsory secondary education 10 years ago, most of the youth aged 15-18 are in education, and the NEET rate dropped from 13.2% to 7.9%. The unemployment rate has also dropped in the last 10 years, from 40% to 12.5%. The biggest challenge is young people aged 25-29, especially those without qualifications, as they often already have families and are not ready to go back to school or enroll in training, they just want to work. Persons with secondary school diplomas are also a challenge because they have only general education.



Following improvements of YG are foreseen in the forthcoming period:

- Completing a new platform and updating the content to be more attractive to the youth
- Campaign on social networks and new strategy for signaling of NEET youth
- The project "Alma" – 24 young people will be sent to internships abroad (Germany, Sweden) with the idea to return and join the labor market in Portugal
- Dynamization of partnerships, because partners became passive over time
- Boosting visibility (new logo, new YG look with more videos and photos)
- Preparing and informing young people before entering YG (avoid direct entering)

The problem of financing is constant, the EC finances only some projects, and the rest is expected to be acquired from the national budget.

The youth unemployment rate is 12.5% (6% for the total population). The highest rate is in the 15-24 age category, and over 24 the rate is slightly lower. Trainings for soft skills (writing a CV, how to look for a job, assertive communication...) are considered very important. As part of counseling, they also apply competency tests.

Employment centers cooperate with the network of so-called **cabinets for professional inclusion** (over 100 in Portugal). These are *non-profit organizations* financed by the IEFP, that support employment centers in working with the unemployed. IEFP contracts them for three years on the basis of a public call, and the contract contains goals that the cabinets must achieve during the contract period. Cabinets existed even before YG, so they were natural partners for YG, because they are the closest to the local population. They must meet the spatial and technical requirements; outreaching to NEET youth is not part of the contract with IEFP.

Within the framework of YG, they implement the same ALM measures (employment subsidies, self-employment, trainings) as for other unemployed, but with alleviating conditions for youth. Vocational training is the backbone of all other measures. It is organized in accordance with the national system of qualifications, which is aligned with the European Qualifications Framework. The ministry responsible for employment accredits informal training providers (in Serbia it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education), and the Qualifications Agency of Portugal is under the joint responsibility of both ministries (employment and education). For all training in non-formal education, certificates are obtained in accordance with the national framework of qualifications. During 2022, about 500,000 participants were included in vocational training, of which 80% were unemployed. The effects of the training are about 80% for young participants, and 50-55% for adults. For shorter training courses lasting up to 25 hours, e.g. for foreign languages, they do not measure the effects on employment, as such short courses cannot directly lead to employment.

Local Employment Centre working with NEET included in YG in the City of Loures

The Center in Loures is only in charge of employment, a counterpart to the branch office of the NES. They have 2150 young people registered in YG, 53% women, 83% long-term unemployed, 47% under the age of 25, 14% with higher education. Most of the registered have secondary education, the rest is without a completed school. Of the total number, 97% were "signaled" for inclusion in YG.

The center has a wide network of partnerships with services responsible for social insurance, education, and the economy. They cooperate with **cabinets for professional involvement** (associations at the local level). Partners are very important to them, they help them reach young NEETs. They intensively deal with the integration of beneficiaries of financial social assistance, and on a weekly basis they have meetings with social services, and they also include health institutions, schools and other partners relevant to this category.



Vacancies are crucial for the integration of the unemployed into the labor market. Since employers do not have the obligation to report vacancies to the Center, the Center makes efforts to reach out to employers. In collecting information about supply and demand, their partners help them, and the centers themselves try to visit employers as much as possible to secure their cooperation.

IMPLEMENTED BY

NIRAS
IP CONSULT

SUPPORTED BY

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

When working with youth, they inform them in detail about all important aspects, e.g. the training venue and period, which public transport lines go to the training place, what social support can trainees receive, which technical person (counselor) in the Employment Center is in charge and whom they should contact when they complete (or abandon) the training.

Any unemployed person (not only candidates for YG) can apply online, and then the application is validated (part of the validation is done automatically, and the other part by the counselor who immediately schedules a meeting after applying to the person). The Employment Center uses statistical profiling of the unemployed ("algorithm") in order to help counselors in assessing the risk of long-term unemployment.



Until now, the **portal for YG** was part of the IEFP website, currently new platform is being prepared. When a young person logs into the platform, the technical person receives an automatic message / notification about it, so that they can continue to work with that person. IEFP has access to all applications to the portal for YG that have not been validated, for the purpose of checking and controlling work in the field. Application to YG is made via the portal or the person is already on the register and the employment center refers him to YG (portal). The participants of the study visit were shown the IEFP IT system and the connection with the portal for YG, that is, how it all works in practice.

Local Centre for Vocational Training in the City of Alverca


Centers for vocational training were established back in the 70s and provide training for large number of occupations. During 2023, training is planned for 11,000 participants, and the budget is 10 million euros (without employees' salaries). Most of the training courses are for all age categories, and some are only for young people (e.g. Digital plus and Active life for young people). Three main criteria for inclusion are: previous qualifications, Portuguese citizenship, motivation. They have a technical team that analyzes candidates and forms training groups. The unemployed are not formally obliged to join the training, but if they refuse, they lose financial aid. Each training consists of theory and mandatory practice, for this purpose the Centre has workshops equipped for various trainings. The drop-out from training rate is very high, many trainees do not complete the course. They believe that this is because, due to the large number of trainees, they do not have an appropriate support structure for trainees (e.g. psychologists), but the opinion of the Serbian delegation is that the long duration of training (up to three years) leads to the dropout of trainees. Informal trainings should be significantly shorter than formal education, otherwise they are not suitable for the adults, especially those who did not stay in regular education.

Accreditation of new trainings is done by the Qualifications Agency, but there is considerable flexibility. The Agency has confidence in the training centers (due to their long tradition and reputation) and allows centers to start with new training before they are accredited, as long as the accreditation is completed by the end of the training, so that the participants can receive a certificate. That flexibility is necessary, because the training must follow the

IMPLEMENTED BY

NIRAS
IP CONSULT

SUPPORTED BY

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

needs of the labor market, and the accreditation process itself is very slow (takes up to 9 months). Part of the Training Center deals with the recognition of qualifications for individuals (they receive diplomas for the 9th or 12th grade).

The national training platform contains a catalog of all trainings provided in the centers and by other providers. Trainings can result in acquisition of the full qualification or part of the qualification. On that platform, there is a passport of qualifications for every single person who has completed some training, with all the trainings they have completed in their life and the certificates are issued automatically. The platform also includes trainings that are not certified, e.g. training at the employer's request, so that information is also in the passport.

In the Training Center, a lunch was organized for the participants of the study visit, which was prepared and served by the training participants.



Youth Guarantee: exchange of experiences of Portugal and Serbia

On the last day of the study visit, the delegation from Serbia presented to their colleagues from Portugal how this program is planned to be implemented in Serbia, based on which the participants exchanged experiences, challenges and potential solutions.

In Portugal, the YG director is appointed by the ministry in charge of employment, but the complete responsibility for this program rests with the IEFP (public employment service). This led to the fact that other ministries distanced themselves and became less and less involved, so Sara Ramos believes that the solution of Serbia, where the ministry is the main coordinator of YG, is a better option. Also, in Portugal, all YG costs are on the IEFP, the budgets of other ministries and institutions are not taken into account. Therefore, the partners of YG in Portugal do not participate in the budget, nor are they obliged to cooperate in any way.

Colleagues from Portugal reacted very positively to the fact that the NES hired 7 new employment counselors for youth, because they believe that they also need additional staff for YG (which they did not get).

Main challenges in the coming period for Portugal are:

- to intensify the involvement of partners;
- financing – a big challenge, because everything is on IEFP;
- platform for YG - visually and content-wise has to be more suitable for young people;
- double registration - a problem for which they still do not have a solution. There are frequent situations where the same person is registered in YG on the IEFP website, but at the same time is registered with one of the partners who is not allowed to submit personal data to IEFP due to the law regulating the protection of personal data.

The Serbian delegation noticed differences in the design and implementation of YG in Portugal as oppose to the guidelines Serbia received from the EC:

	Portugal	Serbia
Registration of NEET youth in YG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - directly through the YG platform - referral by an employment counselor of a person who is already registered in the employment center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exclusively through the YG platform for persons who were not previously registered as unemployed
Outreach to the NEET youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - through the YG platform; social networks in preparation - cabinets for professional inclusion do not provide outreach services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - through CSOs
Duration of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - internship lasting 9 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - any work practice measure cannot last longer than 6 months, including internships (duration determined by a separate law)
Reporting to EC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - until June 30th for the previous year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - until the end of February for the previous year
YG Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - since 2014 as part of the IEFP website, a special platform for YG is only now being developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the YG platform should be separate from the NES website

The study visit helped the participants from Serbia to familiarize themselves with the implementation of this program in an EU member state and with the challenges that exist even after 10 years from the start of implementation. On the other hand, and according to the interlocutors from Portugal, the three-day exchange of experiences helped them to see new solutions for the challenges they are facing and to get inspiration for the improvement of YG in Portugal.

Annexes:

1 – Study visit participants

2 – Study visit agenda

3 – Study visit evaluation

Annex 1: Study visit participants

No	Name	Institution / organization		Function
1	Dragica Ivanović	Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs		Head of Unit for Active Employment Policy and Coordinator of Youth Guarantee
2	Jelena Vasić		Sector for Employment	Senior Advisor for Creation of Active Employment Measures
3	Milana Sekulić*			Independent Advisor for Active Employment Measures
4	Čedomila Đurić		Sector for International Cooperation, European Integration and Projects	Independent Advisor for international Cooperation and European Integrations
5	Neda Milanović	National Employment Service, Head Office	Sector for Employment Support	Director of Sector
6	Biljana Jelenković-Paspalj**			Head of Department for Employment Mediation and Career Planning
7	Ilija Knežević			Head of Department for Education and Training
8	Jasmina Šantić			Head of Department for the Development of Relations with Employers
9	Milan Đuretanović		Sector for Information System, Development and Analytics	Director of Sector
10	Nevena Letić	Niras-IP	Seconded to Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policies	National Senior Policy Officer
11	Jelena Stefanović	Niras-IP	E2E Project Implementation Unit	National Component Leader and Advisor for Career Guidance and Counseling
12	Milena Janković	Niras-IP	E2E Project Implementation Unit	Deputy Team Leader


*Instead of Danijela Stojanović

**Instead of Goran Gležnjić (former Head of Department for Employment Mediation and Career Planning)

IMPLEMENTED BY

NIRAS
IP CONSULT

SUPPORTED BY

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC



Annex 2: Study Visit Agenda, excluding date of arrival and date of departure (5th and 9th November)

Day 1:	Monday, 6th November 2023
	Welcome to the participants
09:30 – 10:30	Introduction to the program and presentation of the host organization Speaker: Ms. Glória Ferreira
10:30 – 10:50	<i>Coffee break</i>
10:50 – 12:30	Presentation of the national youth guarantee program – Portugal YG implementation plan – Main achievements – Challenges encountered at the earliest stage of implementing the youth guarantee – National Youth Guarantee Website- reaching out NEETs Speaker: Ms. Sara Ramos
12:30 - 14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>
14:00 – 14:45	Quality Offer – Active Labour Market Measures – Activation of unemployed youth - Ms. Luísa Bastos – Quality Offer – ALMP: some examples - Ms. Elsa Mano Speakers: Ms. Luísa Bastos and Ms. Elsa Mano
14:45 – 15:30	Quality Offer – Vocational Training Measures Speaker: Ms. Carlos Fonseca
15:30 – 15:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
15:45 – 16:15	Monitoring of YG implementation – adjustment to the EMCO indicators framework Speaker: Ms. Cristina Faro
16:15 – 16:30	Closing remarks on the 1st day of the study visit Speaker: Ms. Sara Ramos
Day 2:	Tuesday, 7th November 2023
10:30 – 12:00	Site visit to a Local Employment Office that serves to NEETs enrolled in the YG program – Centro de Emprego de Loures-Odivelas Serviço de Emprego de Loures Speakers: Ms. Susana Marques and Ms. Ana Rita Marques (and LEO representatives)
12:30 – 14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>
14:00 – 16:00	Site visit to a Vocational Training Centre that serves to NEETs enrolled in the YG program – Centro de Emprego e Formação de Vila Franca de Xira Serviço de Formação de Alverca Speakers: Mr. Mário Rui Lobo and Ms. Ana Rita Lopes (and VTC representatives)
Day 3:	Wednesday, 8th November 2023
10:00 – 12:15	Round table: sharing practices between Serbia and Portugal – Experiences on youth employment practices in Serbia and Portugal – Challenges on NEET activation in Serbia and Portugal – Next steps on Youth Guarantee project in Serbia and Portugal All participants <i>(coffee-break available in the room)</i>
12:15 – 12:30	Closing remarks and final reflections on the study visit End of Study Visit

Annex 3: Study visit evaluation

Participants filled out an anonymous evaluation questionnaire. An overview is made based on 15 filled evaluation forms.

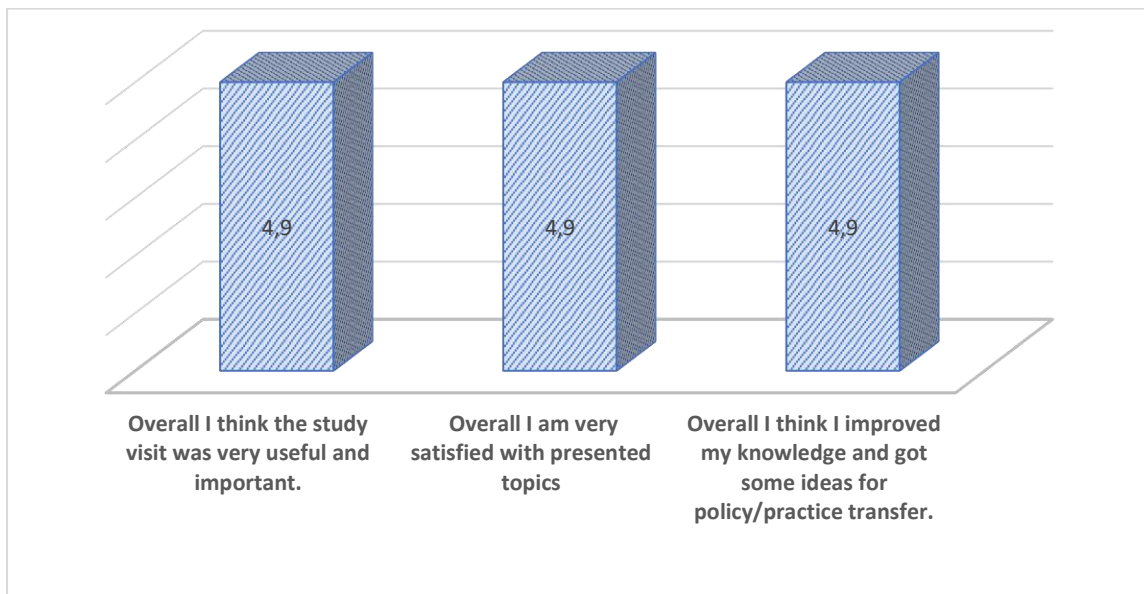
Participants were asked to express their level of satisfaction, using the next scale:

- 1 *Did not meet my expectations (Very Poor)*
- 2 *Partially met my expectations (Poor)*
- 3 *Met my expectations (Fair)*
- 4 *Slightly above my expectations (Good)*
- 5 *Above my expectations (Very Good)*

QUESTIONS	Average scores
1. How do you perceive the length of the study tour?	4.9
2. How do you perceive the selection of the visited institutions?	4.9
3. How would you rate the selection of topics discussed and the content of the sessions?	4.9
4. How do you perceive the quality of the presentations & discussions?	4.9
5. How satisfied were you with the selected accommodation?	4.9
6. Overall, how would you rate whole organization and usefulness of the Study Tour	4.9

The next question was related to assessing **visits/presentations** in order of the most relevant and useful for participant's work and their institutions, using the scale from 1 to 5 (where 5 is the most relevant):


Participants were asked to express overall impressions/satisfaction with the study visit and impacts on future work, using the scale (where 5 is totally agree).



IMPLEMENTED BY

NIRAS
IP CONSULT

SUPPORTED BY

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Participants listed the top lessons learned or good practices that they find most interesting, and feel should be a priority for their organization to be considered/implemented. The answers are listed/grouped in the table:

- ✓ Great education system coordinated with employment sector - training centres, adjusted YG indicators and good practice in informing candidates.
- ✓ Professional training centers for acquiring qualification.
- ✓ "Professional trainings (good practice)
- ✓ Online platform for youth registration in YG
- ✓ Lessons for better youth outreach
- ✓ Outreach to young NEETs as a big challenge
- ✓ NEETs 25-29 years old have different situation and need different approach comparing with persons who belong to NEET
- ✓ It is crucial to have active implementation partners within YG (other ministries and institutions, CSOs...)
- ✓ A wide network of partners at the local and national level, regarding the issue of reaching out to young people;
- ✓ They have a plan to develop a National Strategy for reaching young people;
- ✓ A separate Training Center from the Employment Center, which is well developed, with professional trainers, who also work for schools and companies.
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation of YG
- ✓ Training programs
- ✓ CSO /cabinet participation in YG
- ✓ Process and centers for professional training and acquiring qualification
- ✓ Stakeholders and network of partners involved in YG implementation
- ✓ Flexibility in YG planning
- ✓ Very big importance of lifelong learning which is supported by training centres with high level quality.
- ✓ Importance of contact with young persons from the moment of online registration
- ✓ Verification of importance of institutional cooperation at national level

Additional comments/suggestions:

- Everything was quite good.
- Everything was well organized and all participants were "in the topic".
- The study visit was very useful, well organized, nothing was missing and everything went well.
- I would like to take opportunity to thank for very good organization of visit and I do not have suggestions for improvement. Everything was very professional.

List of abbreviations

IEFP	Institute for Employment and Training of Portugal
YG	Youth Guarantee
NES	National Employment Service of Serbia
LSG	Local self-government
NEET	Youth not in education, employment or training
EC	European Commission
PWDs	Persons with disabilities
CSOs	Civil society organizations

IMPLEMENTED BY

NIRAS
IP CONSULT

SUPPORTED BY

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**