

Abstract of the Study “Unemployment Benefit Recipients Failing to Access Labour Market Policy Measures”

This study analyses the background behind and reasons why unemployment benefit recipients, despite having been invited by the Public Employment Service (PES), fail to participate in labour market policy measures. Although this phenomenon is not new, it has not yet been examined systematically. This recent study aims to close this gap in knowledge by identifying both the personal reasons as well as the organisational/structural background for non-attendance. Additionally, it reveals reasons for premature dropping out in early phases of such labour market policy measures.

Methodically, the project is based on administrative as well as empirical data acquired through qualitative interviews with experts and through approximately 300 telephone surveys of target group interviewees. Nine selected measures during the invitation period from 2018 to mid-2019 were examined. The results differentiate due to diverse personal and social characteristics (e.g. gender, age, country of origin) as well as between various groups of clients such as recipients of the Viennese needs-based minimum benefit system.

Results show that a high percentage of the invitees does not participate in the measures and that it varies widely depending upon the type of measure. Furthermore, results have to be adjusted for those clients who took up employment before the measure started as well as for those who received multiple invitations to participate in different measures taking place simultaneously. Across all examined measures, it became evident that the following categories of people are more prone not to participate:

- ❑ adolescents and young adults
- ❑ persons with low education levels
- ❑ persons having migrant backgrounds
- ❑ persons with career aspirations in construction
- ❑ persons re-entering the workforce
- ❑ recipients who fully qualify for the Viennese needs-based minimum benefit system
- ❑ persons already shown to have prior failure to access

At the organisational/structural level communication with clients (e.g. extending invitations in person as opposed to sending them, participation being perceived by clients as voluntary rather than mandatory, detailed information about measures being given to clients in advance, etc.) plays an important role. Personal motives on the other hand vary widely across the client base. Based upon information extracted from the expert interviews, a list of 22 possible motives was compiled. These motives were grouped into nine categories, out of which the three most relevant groups were found to be:

- ❑ persons pursuing other objectives or having conflicting obligations (e.g. childcare or ongoing simultaneous training/education not financed by the PES)
- ❑ persons who had already taken up employment or those having potential employment in the immediate or near futures
- ❑ persons dealing with health issues

In summary, the study provides detailed information and enables more understanding as to why PES clients fail to access labour market policy measures and contains specific recommendations to reduce attrition in the future.