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THE STATE POLICY IN THE FIELD EMPLOYMENT UNDER CONDITIONS OF ECONOMIC INSTABILITY

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ДЕРЖАВНА ПОЛІТИКА В СФЕРІ ЗАЙНЯТОСТІ В УМОВАХ ЕКОНОМІЧНОЇ НЕСТАБІЛЬНОСТІ

Abstract. The article explores state policy in the field of employment in the context of economic instability. Employment is a key factor in socio-economic development, while economic instability caused by crisis phenomena significantly impacts the labor market. In current conditions, the state plays an important role in regulating employment through mechanisms such as unemployment support, job creation, promoting entrepreneurship, and improving vocational training systems. The impact of the russian federation's military aggression against Ukraine on the structure of employment by sectors of the economy and regions is analyzed. The article identifies the challenges faced by state employment policy, including high unemployment, labor market in-formalization, inadequate adaptability of the education system to market needs, and limited state resources. Special attention is given to the youth labor market, as young people are one of the most vulnerable categories during periods of economic instability. The main challenges faced by young specialists are highlighted, including insufficient practical experience; the mismatch between the education received and market needs, and low competitiveness compared to more experienced workers. The article also examines international experience in overcoming youth labor market crises. A number of state regulation measures are proposed, including active and passive employment programs, tax incentives for employers, the development of social entrepreneurship, modernization of vocational guidance systems, and support for labor mobility. The importance of labor market digitalization is emphasized, as it opens new opportunities for remote employment and flexible work forms. The article concludes that state employment policy in the context of economic instability must be adaptive, aimed at supporting employment, increasing labor mobility, and reducing social risks. The implementation of a comprehensive approach will ensure economic stability and sustainable growth in employment

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levels. The introduction of innovative approaches, focused on stimulating self-employment, retraining, and improving labor force competitiveness, will strengthen the national labor market and ensure sustainable economic development.

Key words: population employment, unemployment, labor market, youth employment, self-employment, employment of persons with disabilities, labor legislation.

Анотація. У статті досліджується державна політика у сфері зайнятості в умовах економічної нестабільності. Зайнятість населення є ключовим чинником соціально-економічного розвитку, а нестабільність економіки, спричинена кризовими явишами, значно впливає на ринок праці. В сучасних умовах держава відіграє важливу роль у регулюванні зайнятості через механізми підтримки безробітних, створення робочих місць, стимулювання підприємницької діяльності та вдосконалення системи професійного навчання. Проаналізовано вплив військової агресії рф проти України на структуру рівня зайнятості за галузями економіки та регіонами. Визначено коло проблем, з якими сьогодні стикається державна політика зайнятості, зокрема, високий рівень безробіття, тінізація ринку праці, недостатня адаптивність освітньої системи до потреб ринку та обмеженість державних ресурсів. Окрему увагу приділено проблемі молодіжного ринку праці, оскільки саме молодь є однією з найбільш вразливих категорій у періоди економічної нестабільності. Відзначено основні труднощі, з якими стикаються молоді фахівці, зокрема недостатній рівень практичного досвіду, невідповідність отриманої освіти потребам ринку, низька конкурентоспроможність у порівнянні з більш досвідченими працівниками. Розглянуто міжнародний досвід подолання кризи на молодіжному ринку праці. У статті запропоновано ряд заходів державного регулювання, серед яких – активні та пасивні програми зайнятості, податкові стимули для роботодавців, розвиток соціального підприємництва, модернізація системи профорієнтації та підтримка мобільності робочої сили. Також наголошується на значенні цифровізації ринку праці, що відкриває нові можливості для віддаленої зайнятості та гнучких форм роботи. Зроблено висновок, що державна політика у сфері зайнятості в умовах економічної нестабільності має бути адаптивною, спрямованою на підтримку зайнятості, підвищення мобільності робочої сили та зменшення соціальних ризиків. Впровадження комплексного підходу дозволить забезпечити економічну стабільність та стале зростання рівня зайнятості населення. Запровадження інноваційних підходів, орієнтованих на стимулювання самозайнятості, перекваліфікацію та підвищення конкурентоспроможності робочої сили, сприятиме зміцненню національного ринку праці та забезпеченню сталого економічного розвитку.

Ключові слова: зайнятість населення, безробіття, ринок праці, зайнятість молоді, самозайнятість, працевлаштування осіб з інвалідністю, трудове законодавство.

Employment of the population is one of the key indicators for assessing the state of the economy and the effectiveness of public administration in any country. The main goal of state policy in this area is to ensure maximum participation of citizens in the processes of socio-economic development. Employment management at the state level involves achieving a balance between the demand and supply of labor with different professional qualifications, increasing the income level and quality of life of the population, as well as creating conditions for human resource provision that foster entrepreneurial and creative activity. Employment management

is part of the socio-economic development policy, which includes solving many tasks aimed not only at achieving quantitative goals but also at implementing qualitative changes in the economy, developing human capital, especially in the context of European integration.

Today, the system of state employment management in Ukraine is based on an adaptive model that includes complementary institutions. However, practice shows that the insufficient flexibility of this system in the context of modern socio-economic development prevents the model from effectively fulfilling the national tasks set. To increase the efficiency of state employment management, the following issues need to be addressed: combating shadow employment; restoring the balance between demand and supply in the labor market; ensuring gender equality, particularly increasing the economic activity of women, reducing professional segregation by gender, and eliminating the gender pay gap. In addition, important aspects include expanding access to the labor market for vulnerable groups of the population, supporting employers in hiring people with disabilities, aligning professional and general competencies of workers with labor market requirements, enhancing cooperation between employment centers and private organizations, transitioning to active support methods instead of passive benefits, and accelerating the implementation of digital technologies.

Since today, the growth of unemployment and the decline in employment levels are among the most important issues for any country in the world, many scholars have addressed the solution to this problem. Among Ukrainian scientists, this topic has been studied by D. Akimova, L. Halykiv, D. Horbach, M. Papiyev, A. Poznyak, V. Yurchishyn, and others. Among foreign scholars, works by A. Okun, P. Samuelson, G. Terence, and A. Phillips are particularly notable.

Many prominent domestic scholars have studied issues related to the formation and implementation of state policy in the field of employment, the functioning of the labor market, and its changes in the process of globalizations impact on the national economy, such as S. Bandur, I. Hnybidenko, O. Hrishnova, A. Kolot, E. Libanova, L. Lisogor, Yu. Marshavin, M. Maksma, V. Minenko, I. Petrova, V. Skuratovskyi, V. Troshchynskyi, V. Onikiyenko, V. Fedorenko, and others.

The broad research interest in the issue of population employment emphasizes its relevance and complexity. In particular, the importance of introducing non-standard forms of employment, strengthening the connection between the labor market and the educational services market, developing local labor markets to increase the capacity of territorial communities, applying innovative approaches in the field of employment, and other aspects related to public administration in the innovative development of this sector, has determined the purpose and objectives of this qualification work.

The purpose of the research is to analyze state policy in the field of employment and develop recommendations for improving the activities of public authorities to find positive structural shifts in the domestic labor market.

Population employment as a socio-economic category reflects the key characteristics and patterns of real phenomena. It is both a combination and, at the same time, an opposition of economic and social relations, based on economic interconnections that arise in the process of social reproduction. The economic aspects of employment are inseparable from the social ones, and vice versa, the social aspects of this phenomenon always have an economic foundation.

Since employment is a socio-economic phenomenon, it encompasses both economic and social content. The economic component of employment lies in the activities of people aimed at creating the gross domestic product (national income). The more people

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are employed, the more material and spiritual values are created in society, leading to an improvement in the standard of living of the population.

State policy in the field of employment represents a system of socio-economic and organizational-legal measures aimed at creating conditions for the full utilization of the potential of labor and business activity of the working-age population, which are developed and implemented by the relevant state authorities. «It should serve as a stabilizing factor that prevents unemployment from significantly exceeding the acceptable level, i.e., from turning into a long-term stagnation during periods of economic growth due to a qualitative mismatch between demand and supply in the labor market» [4].

When determining the main directions of state policy in the field of population employment, the state must consider the fundamental principles for shaping such a policy. According to Article 15 of the Law of Ukraine «On Employment of the Population» [1] state policy in the field of employment is based on the following principles:

Priority of ensuring full, productive, and freely chosen employment in the implementation of the active socio-economic policy of the state;

Responsibility of the state for developing and implementing employment policy;

Guaranteeing equal opportunities for all citizens to exercise their constitutional right to work;

Promoting the effective use of labor potential and ensuring its realization.

Our country adheres to international standards in the field of employment. Specifically, on June 19, 1968, Ukraine ratified the Employment Policy Convention of 1964 (No. 122). This convention, based on the provisions of the Philadelphia Declaration of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the commitment to promote the implementation of programs that ensure full employment and improved living standards, and considering the ILO's Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, defines the main directions of state policy in the field of employment. The convention stipulates that employment policy should aim to create the following conditions: the availability of work for all those who are willing and looking for work; maximum labor productivity; freedom of job choice and the opportunity for every worker to acquire qualifications and apply their skills and abilities in the most appropriate job, regardless of race, gender, religion, skin color, political beliefs, national or social origin. The policy should take into account the level of economic development and the interconnection of employment goals with other economic and social objectives, implemented by methods suitable for national conditions and practices [3].

The unprecedented conditions in which Ukraine found itself due to russia>s full-scale military invasion provoked radical changes in all spheres of public life and the functioning of state and non-state institutions in the country. Contrary to various forecasts, Ukraine not only withstood but, despite very painful losses, is heroically fighting for its own freedom and independence. Thanks to significant global support, Ukraine>s economic system withstood powerful blows and managed to adapt to the new circumstances.

The migration crisis that unfolded after the start of russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine led to serious economic consequences. According to the results of 2022, the country's GDP declined by more than 30%, the national currency significantly devalued, prices increased, and the income level of the population sharply fell. In addition, due to security threats related to the war, nearly 8 million people left Ukraine, while about 5 million became internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The introduction of martial law and mobilization also affected the labor market. Conscription into the Armed Forces significantly reduced the number of workers, changed the demand and supply for jobs, and increased the labor shortage.

A significant change in the labor market was the substantial reduction in employment caused by decreased business activity and the closure of many enterprises, as well as economic difficulties at enterprises that continued to operate. The reduction in employment most affected industrially developed regions such as Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kyiv regions, and Kyiv city, where the losses accounted for 59% of the total reduction.

Throughout 2022, enterprises that did not cease operations reduced their workforce by up to 5%. Micro-enterprises suffered the most, with a 53% reduction in the number of employees, while large enterprises saw a reduction of no more than 4%. Medium-sized and small enterprises lost 6% and 8% of their employees, respectively.

According to the National Bank of Ukraine's estimates, the unemployment rate in Ukraine remains high, although it has decreased from 21% in 2022 to a projected 14% in 2024 (see Figure 1). It is worth noting that until 2022, official data on the unemployment rate were provided by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine based on regular household surveys. However, due to the war, these surveys have been suspended, which complicates the accuracy of the estimates. Therefore, the current figures are based on sample surveys and labor market modeling.

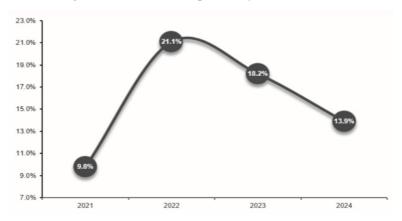


Figure 1. Unemployment Rate in 2021-2024, according to ILO definition

According to the State Employment Service, as of August 1, 2023, there were 112.3 thousand officially unemployed individuals, of which 22% (23.9 thousand) were under the age of 35, indicating a significant proportion of youth among the unemployed. Among this category, 1.8 thousand individuals (2%) were recent graduates with no work experience. More than half of young people who are employed are working in positions unrelated to their field of study, highlighting the importance of aligning labor market demands with the needs of educational institutions [8].

In conditions of high turbulence in the labor market, the search for quality jobs becomes more complicated, which undoubtedly affects the mood and expectations of job seekers. According to a study conducted by the «Rating Lab» laboratory among young people aged 15-30 in August 2023, a significant portion of respondents in Ukraine prefer self-employment and starting their own business (73%), while only 19% want to work

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for someone else. The desire to work for oneself is most characteristic of those who are employed or studying (75% among employed and students), while among unemployed youth, this figure is 61%. Most young people plan to start a business in the fields of trade, information technology, or e-commerce. Other popular areas include culture, design, and tourism, with only 7% of respondents wanting to work in the manufacturing sector. Less interest is shown in education, scientific research, and engineering, as these fields in Ukraine have limited funding and are not considered profitable [9].

According to «Work.ua» data, as of January 2024, compared to February 2022, the labor market has recovered by 93% in terms of job offerings. However, the recovery is uneven across regions. Compared to pre-war levels, the number of job vacancies has increased the most in the following regions: Zakarpattia (155%), Ivano-Frankivsk (146%), Khmelnytskyi (125%), Lviv (123%), Vinnytsia (120%), Rivne (118%), and Chernivtsi (116%). In terms of absolute numbers of job offerings, the leaders remain: Kyiv (30,913 vacancies), Lviv (8,473), Dnipropetrovsk (8,452), Odesa (5,752), and Kharkiv (3,347) regions [10].

According to statistical information as of January 1, 2025, the State Employment Service of Ukraine officially registered 94,190 job seekers, including: 75,830 women, 20,444 youth, 7,747 persons with disabilities, 21,348 internally displaced persons, and 3,013 participants in hostilities. There were fewer registered unemployed in 2024 than the previous year, but in 2023, Ukraine ranked among the top ten countries with the highest unemployment rates, according to the National Bank.

According to data from the State Statistics Service and the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, there are 2.7 million civilians and nearly 500,000 combatants with disabilities in Ukraine. The number of people with disabilities as a result of Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine will gradually increase due to the rising disability rate in the population. According to Article 19 of the Law of Ukraine «On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine» [2], a quota for the employment of such persons is set at 4% of the average number of full-time employees in a year. However, the risks of providing employment for persons with disabilities are exacerbated under current conditions, as the overall number of vacancies has significantly decreased. Recently, the opportunities for financing the creation of jobs for persons with disabilities have been limited because these jobs require consideration of the special needs of this population group. Employment for this group varies significantly across sectors and regions.

To stabilize the labor market during the war, the government has implemented a series of programs aimed at supporting both the unemployed and employers. These measures contribute to the creation of new jobs and the employment of internally displaced persons (IDPs), veterans, and people with disabilities. The programs include providing grants for businesses, incentivizing employers, involving the unemployed in socially useful work, as well as offering financial assistance for setting up workplaces for people with disabilities. A crucial element of support includes retraining and preparation programs to maintain the competitiveness of specific population groups.

The «eRobota» project provides grants for starting a business, entrepreneurship development, and training, including microgrants for creating ones own business, financing for processing enterprises, horticulture, and greenhouse farming, as well as funding for implementing startups, especially in the IT sector and training for IT professions. The project, implemented by the Ministry of Economy, aims to stimulate entrepreneurial activity and create jobs.

As of September 2024, nearly 19.6 thousand entrepreneurs have received grants totaling 9.3 billion UAH under the «eRobota» project, resulting in the creation of 55 thousand jobs. Of this, 4.2 billion UAH (17.8 thousand microgrants) were issued under the «Own Business» program, 3.7 billion UAH (743 grants) for processing enterprises, 1 billion UAH (231 grants) for horticulture and greenhouse farming, and 366 million UAH (806 grants) for veterans.

The veterans' component of the «Own Business» program provides grants ranging from UAH 250,000 to UAH 1 million for veterans or people with disabilities as a result of the war, and from UAH 250,000 to UAH 500,000 for the second person of their spouse. The size of financial support depends on the number of jobs created (from 1 to 4). If a grant of UAH 500,000 to UAH 1 million is received, the veteran must have the status of a sole proprietor (FOP) for at least three years and finance 30% of the project. This way, the state selects grant recipients who already have entrepreneurial experience and are ready to risk their own money. In the «Own Business» program, the most popular business sectors in 2024 are wholesale, retail trade, and automobile repair (35%), temporary accommodation and catering services (16%), and manufacturing (13%). Among veterans and their family members, the most popular business areas are trade and repair (27%), manufacturing (16%), cafes and bakeries (15%), and services (8%).

Vouchers for education and retraining are available to certain categories of citizens to support their competitiveness in the labor market. The program allows individuals to acquire a new profession or improve qualifications in various fields, such as medicine, education, cooking, driving, and others. Vouchers are available for people over 45 years old (up to retirement), veterans, internally displaced persons (IDPs), people with disabilities, and those affected by military aggression or who were in captivity. To receive a voucher, individuals must have professional or higher education, not be registered as unemployed with the State Employment Service, and not have been trained at the expense of the Unemployment Insurance Fund during the last three years. The voucher amount does not exceed UAH 30,280. By the end of August 2024, 15,600 individuals had received vouchers totaling UAH 114 million. In 2023, 18,100 people received training through this program for a total amount of UAH 252 million.

The subsidy program for employers who hire IDPs was launched in April 2022 to increase employment and support the adaptation of displaced persons. The compensation is provided to the employer for hiring IDPs for a period of three months, and for IDPs with disabilities – for six months. Payments are made from the Unemployment Insurance Fund. The compensation amount is the minimum wage (UAH 8,000 starting from April 2024). In the first quarter of 2024, the government paid employers UAH 78 million for the employment of 7,000 IDPs.

The Compensation Program for Employers for Arranging Workplaces for People with Disabilities of Groups 1 and 2 was introduced by the Ministry of Economy in 2023. The goal of the program is to promote the employment of people with disabilities by removing barriers in the workplace. Employers can receive compensation for arranging workplaces: for individuals with Group 1 disabilities – 15 minimum wages (up to 106,500 UAH in 2024), for individuals with Group 2 disabilities – 10 minimum wages (up to 71,000 UAH in 2024). In almost a year of the program's operation, 854 employers created 949 workplaces for employees with disabilities, receiving nearly 63.1 million UAH in compensation from the government.

In today's conditions, Ukraine faces the task of developing a qualitatively new state policy in the field of employment. Without this, it is impossible to change the labor market situation, ensure social stability, preserve and develop human resources, and promote the

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country's recovery. In this context, special attention should be paid to selecting means and mechanisms for regulating employment, centralization and decentralization measures in the field of employment, and the need to change the overall concept of state employment policy.

Regardless of the duration of military actions, programs for recovery aimed at longterm economic development of the country must be developed immediately. Labor market stabilization programs should cover the following key aspects:

- -Engaging migrants in the economy: programs should include both Ukrainian labor migrants and foreigners. Global practice shows that attracting foreign workers positively impacts the economy, so this aspect should be carefully addressed.
- -Creation of conditions for self-employment: this will help reduce the burden on the social sphere.
- -Reforming the social protection system: this involves improving working conditions, refining the wage system, reviewing the job classification grid, and raising salaries to the European average level.
- -Promoting vocational professions: increasing their prestige and recognizing their importance.
- -Supporting high-tech industries and agriculture: at the state level, these sectors need to be developed to ensure stable economic growth.
- -Programs for retraining and skills enhancement: this includes creating employment programs for youth and implementing dual education.
- -Psychological, social, and pedagogical support: measures aimed at identifying vocations and revealing the professional abilities of citizens.
- -Developing socio-economic activity in rural areas: creating jobs and implementing programs that promote work in villages and communities.
- -Measures to combat the shadow economy and employment: fighting illegal activities is necessary for the stability of the labor market.
- -Forming a favorable investment climate: implementing mechanisms that stimulate investment.
 - -Supporting the creation of new jobs: the state must actively promote this process.
- -Developing small and medium-sized businesses: this includes simplifying licensing procedures, reducing tax and credit pressure, and eliminating legislative gaps.
- -Expanding financial support: this involves providing grants and attracting foreign investments.
- -Supporting innovations and startups: creating industrial parks, developing digital business transformation, and fostering international partnerships.

Global experience shows that one of the key tools of youth employment policy is special programs supporting young professionals (graduates) and young unemployed individuals. These programs aim to stimulate employers to hire young people, provide professional training and skills enhancement both in production and outside of it, as well as combine periods of work and study (the «sandwich» model), which includes educational leaves while maintaining the job.

One vivid example is the French CEF system (contract – employ – formation), introduced in 1975. Each year, it covered 70,000 to 80,000 people and aimed to:

- a) Encourage employers to hire young people;
- b) Motivate young individuals to improve their professional qualifications.

The CEF system provided two levels of support: for younger individuals and those who had not completed school, the focus was on education; for older categories with basic education, the focus was on skill improvement or mastering related professions.

Similar programs are also in place in other countries:

- -Austria: Subsidies for entrepreneurs who hire and train young workers; creation of jobs in the public sector; state aid for specific youth categories (residents of remote regions, women, second-generation foreigners); support for entrepreneurial activity.
- -Denmark: Organization of free training courses for young unemployed individuals by local authorities.
- -Spain, France, Germany, Belgium: Right to educational leave with job preservation; obligation for employers to contribute a portion of the payroll fund for vocational and technical education.
- -Sweden: A strong emphasis on career guidance, mandatory internships for school-children in enterprises, which is recorded in the certificate of secondary education.

Summarizing the practices mentioned allows us to highlight their main common features, which contribute to their effectiveness, including: the application of a programmatic approach (the presence of a state program to promote employment); a comprehensive approach to addressing the issue, combining the flexibility of programs with the individualization of services; partnerships, involving a wide range of stakeholders at all management levels (with the mandatory participation of employment services, local authorities, social services, educational institutions, employers, NGOs, relevant ministries and agencies); a wide range of services (career orientation, career counseling, social skills development, job search techniques); a variety of service delivery forms (internships, practices, trial periods, annual contracts, microcredit for business creation, consultations, courses, training, seminars, workshops) and formats (offline, online); monitoring of program implementation with adjustments; co-financing of the program by the state, local authorities, employers, and other stakeholders; and free services for young people. A common feature of all European higher education institutions is the presence of career development units, which support the employment of graduates. Career services in universities play a key role in supporting students during the transition from education to employment, adaptation to organizations, and career development, providing information and advice on finding suitable jobs.

The implementation of these initiatives will not only contribute to the development of the labor market but also to the overall economic growth of the country. The proposals are long-term in nature and can be improved along with the development of the economy and interaction with the global market. These measures should be developed and implemented now, especially in regions not affected by hostilities, which will allow for analyzing weaknesses and testing systems for flexibility to external factors.

Thus, under the conditions of martial law and European integration, the state is focusing on creating a resilient and effective labor market, which involves the development and implementation of modern employment policies. Ukraine's post-war recovery will largely depend on the level of citizen employment, as it will be the key factor for economic growth. Employment determines the well-being of the population and directly influences the quality of life.

In today's realities, it is necessary to rethink the approaches to labor market regulation, creating new mechanisms to ensure social stability, the development of human capital, and the economic revival of the country. Particularly important is the choice of effective tools for regulating employment, the optimal balance between centralized and

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decentralized measures, as well as the implementation of labor market stabilization strategies, which will form the focus of future research.

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