

A Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) Programme

A good idea - "Perspective 50plus – Employment Pacts for Older Workers in the Regions":

The Federal Programme "Perspective 50plus – employment pacts for older workers in the regions" was launched in October 2005 and is operational in all federal states. Its target is to improve the employability and employment opportunities of older persons. Perspective 50plus, a particularly successful part of "Initiative 50plus" is a Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Programme. With its networks and innovative methods that have been adjusted to regional particularities contributing to the reintegration of the long-term unemployed this Programme supports and subsidises 62 employment pacts. Every pact can thus develop placement ideas on its own and in its own responsibility or it can test integration strategies and further develop successful approaches. This freedom and flexibility has led to high motivation and creativity in the individual pacts.

The successes achieved speak for themselves: During the first programme phase (October 2005 till the end of 2007) approx. 80,000 persons were contacted. More than 25 per cent of these long-term unemployed persons (precisely 22,562) were finally successful in finding their way back into the general labour market with the help of the federal Programme Perspective 50plus.

81 per cent of the women and men who were placed in employment found a job requiring the payment of social insurance contributions. The remaining 19 per cent set up their own business or found marginal part-time jobs.

58 per cent of all contracts of employment newly concluded are open-ended; this share is thus bigger than the share of fixed-term employment relationships. Moreover, the past activity level was generally achieved again.

At the end of the first programme phase, the second phase of the Federal Programme was directly launched. Besides the labour market integration of as many older jobseekers as possible, independence of the target group is to be sustainably strengthened through various activities. During the second programme phase more than 70,000 older long-term unemployed persons had been activated, 19,500 of whom could be placed into the general labour market. In the year 2009 31,000 older jobseekers were integrated (125,000 women and men had been activated). By the end of 2010, 165,000 older long-term unemployed persons are to be activated and 45,000 women and men are to be integrated into the labour market.

The model of employment pacts is now fully accepted. From 1 July 2009 the Federal Programme was extended from 292 to 349 basic provision agencies (joined agencies according to section 6 of Book II of the Social Code, approved municipal bodies according to section 6a paragraph 2 of Book II of the Social Code and job centres, provided the execution of tasks is assigned to different bodies) This means that two-thirds out of 437 basic provision bodies participate in the Federal Programme. This is beneficial for all participants – there is an intensive exchange of experience and knowledge on the one hand and there are new ideas coming from the newly included basic provision bodies on the other hand. In January 2008 yet another new feature was introduced – the further development of the Federal Programme's conceptual ideas.

The transition to a fund allocation that is solely success-driven is an essential element of this new concept. Here, employment pacts can choose between two different funding models that are either based on their activation and integration efforts or on their integration successes.

The results achieved in the framework of the activities of the Federal Programme "Perspektive 50plus – employment pacts for older persons in the regions" clearly demonstrate that older long-term unemployed persons play an important role in the labour market. Apart from professional skills, older employees represent values that are valuable for today's world of work: Experience, flexibility, reliability and loyalty. And not only today, but also in future.