

STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE: EUROPEAN APPROACHES TO PROVIDING ELECTRONIC SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

The article covers issues related to provision of electronic services by state employment agencies to citizens and employers regarding employment and recruitment. In particular, peculiarities of online services implementation by workforce development agencies in different countries, such as Germany, France and Spain, were investigated. It also reveals the essence of the worldwide renowned indices EGDI and EPI, which determine the level of electronic government in any country in the world and provide relevant data of the last report on the level of e-government among the states. The content of the norms of the current Ukrainian legislation covering e-government issues, as well as modernization and development of the State Employment Service, including provision of innovative electronic services to the public and business is revealed. Main advantages of electronic services provided for jobseekers and employers by employment agencies of different countries are outlined. As a result of the undertaken analysis of contemporary approaches to provision of electronic services by employment agencies of foreign countries the possibility of introducing online services aimed at improving quality and minimizing time for customer service are suggested.

Keywords: Employment Service, Online Service, Electronic Office of the Job Seeker, Electronic Office of the Employer, Electronic Queue, Employer Consultant Institute.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays due to IT penetration in every sphere of social life the services provided to citizens and businesses by state should be on par, employing Internet technologies as a means of implementing e-government in a particular country. Application of information and communication tools in the public administration system enables optimization of information exchange and automation of various functions to increase their transparency to overcome acts of corruption in the public sphere (Reznik et al., 2019). For practical public administration in the European countries, including provision of electronic services, it is important to consider social and economic, technological, organizational and regulatory factors in the process of implementation and development of e-government.

Within organs of public administration whose activities are aimed at supporting contemporary trends in the development of e-government, the State Employment Service is no

exception. Therefore, it actively introduces the latest electronic online services, designed to provide a full range of quality services both to the unemployed (job seekers) and the employers. At the same time, in order to upgrade electronic services provided by the State Employment Service and to increase their efficiency, it is important and appropriate to take into account the practical value of the experience of employment centers in the European countries to improve customer service using the latest approaches to providing electronic services to the public.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In most of the European countries, basic services provided online by employment agencies are related to job search, unemployment benefit, employers' social contributions, etc. At the same time introduction and implementation of online services by employment agencies differ from country to country.

In Germany, the public body dealing with issues related to employment is the Federal Employment Agency. On the official website of the agency the electronic services are presented separately for individuals and legal entities (companies). However, the use of the online services is possible only after user authentication. For individuals electronic services of the federal employment agency are presented in three sections as follows:

1. Mediation and consultation in the field of electronic services (application for employment; editing applicant's profile; job proposals and references, skills development and work experience);
2. Electronic services related to cash benefits (application for unemployment benefits; extra allowance for professional training; insolvency payments, etc.);
3. Other electronic services (review and updating personal information; work records report; sick leave reporting, etc.).

For the employers electronic services include:

1. Job placement mediation and consultation, job opening posting and editing;
2. Electronic services "*cash benefits*" for short-term or seasonal payment applications;
3. Making application or modifying company details (Bundesagentur für Arbeit)¹.

The official website for employment related e-services in France has a user-friendly interface and a large number of applets. There is an interesting service that allows to quickly finding the services needed by answering questions. Among the electronic services provided for the purpose of employment, particular attention should be paid to:

1. The possibility of online interview (virtual interview);
2. A digital service related to preparation to relocation abroad for employment;
3. A professional social network that provides real-time communication with professionals, professional career, clients and electronic reputation management;
4. Online meeting services that enable job search by joining groups or joining already established groups in your area or city and sharing information on skills, plans and actions on the subject, etc.

On the other hand, a large number of e-services are also available to employers for selection of candidates for vacant positions. A 24/7 online recruitment platform is convenient and features a job fair. Creating a free of charge employer business page involves presenting its activity and any available job offers. It is important to note that the company page is freely

available not only to the registered client, but also to any search system user (The official website of Pole-emploi)².

In Spain, the official employment website, like in most of the advanced countries, also contains a division of e-services aimed at jobseekers and at employers. So, an unemployed person can use the online service to:

1. Search a job not only in Spain but also abroad;
2. Obtain own professional certificate;
3. Calculate the unemployment benefit, etc. using a calculator.

Employers are also provided with electronic services, such as:

1. Job seekers' jobs search;
2. Electronic service as to transfer information about their employees instead of submitting documents personally;
3. Online contract signing, etc. (The official website of Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal)³.

It is important to emphasize that, in order to assess the level of e-government development in the world, back in 2003 the United Nations has introduced the Electronic Government Development Index (EGDI) and the Electronic Participation Index (EPI), with statistics updated every 2 years. The use of the EGDI aims to measure the willingness of governments to use information and communication technologies while providing high-quality information and public services to the public, businesses as well as using the services by the authorities themselves (Kuzhda, 2019). Besides, the EPI is an indicator of the active communication services development between citizens and the state (Yushchenko & Kovtun, 2019).

As for Ukraine, statistics for 2014-2016 indicate an improvement in the e-government development index, as evidenced by the 62nd position in the world rankings and the entry in the group of countries with high level of development in this field. Despite the fact that in 2018 the value of the e-government development index has increased, Ukraine has taken only 82nd place in the ranking. This situation is explained by rapid development of e-government in other countries over the period of 2016-2018 and their transition from middle to higher level of development (Kuzhda, 2019). According to the United Nations e-government 2018 survey, the following countries hit the top ten leaders in e-government development such as Denmark, Australia, The Republic of Korea, The United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Singapore, New Zealand, France and Japan (UN E-Government Survey, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis for the study of the features of electronic services provided by employment centers in both European countries and Ukraine is grounded on technically legal, dialectical and systemic-structural methods. The use of the technically legal method has made it possible to reveal the content of the current Ukrainian legislation covering e-government issues, as well as modernization and development of the State Employment Service, including provision of innovative electronic services to the public and businesses. The dialectical method reveals the essence of the World Indices, which determine the level of development of e-government in a country. Using the systemic-structural method, an analysis was conducted to identify the main

benefits of e-services provided to job seekers and employers by employment agencies of different countries.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Within the framework of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union of June 27, 2014 one of the identified strategic directions was ensuring overall development of e-government in line with European requirements. To this end in 2017 a concept of development of e-government in Ukraine was worked-out and approved, the provisions of which are aimed at improving the system of public administration, enhancing competitiveness and stimulating social and economic development of the country (Concept of development of e-government in Ukraine, 2017).

Chapter 21 of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union defines the basic principles of cooperation in the field of employment, social policy and equal opportunities. In particular, Article 419 of the Agreement provides for intensification of the dialogue and cooperation between the parties on worthy work, employment policy, safe and healthy working conditions, social dialogue, social protection, social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination (Legislation of Ukraine, 2014).

In pursuance of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union in Ukraine was developed a Strategy for Modernization and Development of the State Employment Service for 2016-2020, approved by regulation of the management of the Obligatory State Social Insurance Fund for Unemployment of February 16, 2016 (hereinafter referred to as Strategy). The Strategy defines that for modernization and development of the State Employment Service it is essential to examine and adopt foreign experience, primarily from the EU member states (Legislation of Ukraine, 2016).

Implementation of the Strategy aims at modernization and development of the State Employment Service of Ukraine as a modern-day service institution with a client-oriented approach to serving jobseekers and employers according to their needs. The achievement of the Strategy's goal is seen through introduction of new and development of the existing services, as well as ensuring transparency and de-bureaucratization of activities through optimization of management functions, strengthening financial discipline and rational use of available resources of the Fund (Legislation of Ukraine, 2016).

In the current conditions of IT development, in order to increase the level of access and convenience of social services for the public and the employers, the State Employment Service of Ukraine is introducing electronic services using internet technologies. So, introduction of electronic services in the activity of the State Employment Service is aimed to provide high quality services to the public and the employers. Thus, in 2018, a new website of the State Employment Service "*Unified Social Environment for Employment*"⁴ was set up. Main advantages of the new site featured:

1. Convenience and speed of searching jobs and resumes throughout Ukraine;
2. Possibility of creating electronic offices both for jobseekers and employers;
3. Online reporting by employers;
4. Access to the electronic queue service to the public, which expanded the self-service options;
5. Access to analytical and statistical information on the labor market and the activity of the State Employment Service;
6. Preliminary testing for professional orientation on the website homepage;

7. Access to the resource not only from a PC, but also from a mobile phone based on Android or Apple software, etc. (State Employment Service, 2019).

Innovation in the provision of electronic services by the State Employment Service was the introduction of a new modern online service for job seekers "*Electronic queue*". Use of this service provides opportunity for an unemployed person to apply without delay for an appointment with specialists of any employment center in Ukraine, to get advice on issues related to registration at an employment center, facilitation of employment, vocational training, choice of profession, etc.

Also among innovations in the sphere of providing electronic services by the State Employment Service to the public is introduction of a remote online service "*electronic office of the job seeker*" and "*electronic office of the employer*". Thus, the point of the online service "*electronic office of the job seeker*" is that the registered unemployed person may review the applicable regulatory environment, create resume execution selection a job, details of vocational training, be informed of temporary employment, as well as information on the assessment and payment of unemployment benefits. An important advantage of this online service is the ability of the personal office user to view information about planned and actual visits to the employment center, scheduled events at the employment centers as well as register to participate in such events. All this can be done remotely by the user.

Whereas, use of the online service "*electronic office of the employer*" is a modern information and communication service, which reduces the time spent by the employer to find employees and increases the level of effectiveness of its interaction with the employment service. "*Electronic office of the employer*" is a personal automated workplace, which enables the employer to review details of his company profile registered at the employment center, makes selection of employees by reviewing their resumes; review communication history with the employment centers related to suggested candidates, make reports, etc. Employers are also given the opportunity to submit appropriate forms for reporting the number of persons employed by economic entities, the planned mass dismissal of employees due to changes in the organization of production and work processes, the demand for workforce (vacancies), which characterizes the economic component in the management system of a company (Reznik & Shevchenko, 2015).

One of the latest innovations in the provision of e-services by the State Employment Service of Ukraine is a new project, such as the employer consultant institute, launched in August 2019. Dnepropetrovsk Region being one of the most stable and economically developed regions in the country was chosen as the pilot region for development of the new technology of providing services to employers. As one of the strategic stages of the State Employment Service development, this project aims to broaden the approaches to providing services to employers, taking into account different entrepreneurial practices in different regions, peculiarities of regional labor market development and the overall balance between labor supply and demand. The purpose of the new approach to providing services to employers is retargeting the employment center specialists' focus from formal implementation of the functions imposed by the current legislation to satisfaction of specific needs of a particular client. Among the important expected results of the implemented project are the following:

1. Effective solution of the "*personnel gap*" problem;
2. Increasing interest in legal employment in Ukrainian enterprises among Ukrainian citizens;

3. Establishing communications with employers using convenient electronic services;
4. Reducing the time of vacancy filling;
5. Prompt establishment of cooperation with start-ups;
6. Provision of specialized services to employers in different target groups;
7. Improving the system of recruitment and vocational training of unemployed persons for their further effective employment (State Employment Service, 2019).

According to the latest data posted on the official website of the State Employment Service, specialists of employment centers in Dnipropetrovsk Region conducted more than 1300 various events to inform population about the innovation, including workshops, informational meetings with employers and meetings in the united territorial communities, conferences, round tables, presentations, job fairs, press conferences. Thus, since August 2019, employment centers and branches of the regional employment center concluded nearly 400 cooperation agreements with employers, including 50 with market-forming enterprises (State Employment Service, 2019).

RECOMMENDATIONS

To fulfill obligations under the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union one of the strategic directions for Ukraine is ensuring comprehensive development for e-government in line with the European requirements. Therefore, the modern strategy of improving performance of the State Employment Service of Ukraine requires modernization, development and implementation of the latest online electronic services for users. To this end, it is appropriate to use practical experience of European countries in this field. In particular, taking into account the analysis of current approaches to providing e-services by employment agencies of foreign countries, it is advisable, for example, to create:

1. A professional social network for managing one's own professional career, clients and electronic reputation;
2. Online job search services by joining groups or joining existing groups in local neighborhood or town;
3. A service for a jobseeker for online interview (virtual interview);
4. An electronic service for sharing information about employees instead of personal delivery of documentation;
5. Signing contracts online, etc.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of practical experience of European countries in the field of modernization, development and implementation of the latest electronic services for the public makes it possible to state the following. In most of the leading countries in the world, electronic services provided by employment agencies are divided into those provided to jobseekers or used by employers. Practical experience of the European employment agencies in providing electronic services shows that online users have a wide range of employment-related options, both within the country and abroad; facilities for virtual interviews; signing employment contracts, etc. Introduction of such electronic services by employment agencies aims at improving quality and minimizing customer service time, which improves efficiency of these agencies.

ENDNOTE

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