

## ANNUAL REPORT

# EUROPEAN NETWORK OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (PES)



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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019

ISBN 978-92-79-97627-8

doi:10.2767/157066

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The European Network of Public Employment Services was created following a Decision of the European Parliament and Council in June 2014 (DECISION No 573/2014/EU). Its objective is to reinforce PES capacity, effectiveness and efficiency. This activity has been developed within the work programme of the European PES Network. For further information: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESNetwork>.

This activity has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation 'EaSI' (2014-2020). For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

**EUROPEAN NETWORK  
OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT  
SERVICES (PES)**

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2018

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# Acronyms

**AFEPAs** – Advisors for European PES Affaires

**ALMP** – Active Labour Market Policies

**BL** – Benchlearning

**CSRs** – Country Specific Recommendations

**DG EMPL** – Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

**EEA** – European Economic Area

**ESF** – European Social Fund

**EMCO** – European Employment Committee

**EURES** – European Employment Services

**LFS** – European Labour Force Survey

**LTU** – Long-term Unemployed

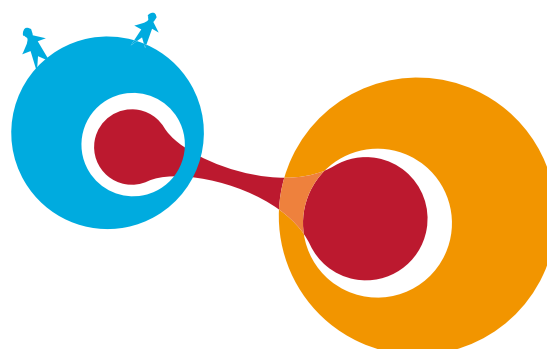
**ML** – Mutual Learning

**NEETS** – ‘Not in Education, Employment, or Training’

**PES** – Public Employment Services

**SMEs** – Small and medium-sized enterprises

**YG** – Youth Guarantee



## FOREWORD

A work intensive year of the PES Network comes to its end – the fourth year of our PES Network collaboration, characterized by a trustful relationship. Highly committed PES are further working on our common Network vision ‘to be the vehicle for enhanced European PES cooperation enabling them to deliver their role as labour market conductors, contributing to European employment strategies, improving labour market function and integration and creating better balanced labour markets.’

Looking back to the year 2018, we see a year of broad activities and initiatives, enhancing our outcome-oriented and systematic approach for working together.

To highlight just a few developments and outputs: In 2018, the second cycle of Benchmarking was finalised, focusing on how PES are implementing and managing their modernisation agenda and change processes. Along with this, our Mutual Learning Programme built more strongly on PES performance evidence and the learning needs emerging. We put a focus on strategic and operational matters that support PES modernisation to improve the impact on those who are in need of PES support. A position paper promotes a structured cooperation between PES and the education sector for better school-to-work transitions and underpins our strong will towards enhancing partnerships. The umbrella topic ‘future of work’ was central in last year’s Work Programme. Well aware of the need to change and innovate on ever changing labour markets, a PES Network working group has developed a position that leads PES in their strategic, long-term orientation to address the future world of work. Moreover, a stakeholder conference on the future of work brings partners on and around the labour market together to discuss on challenging topics. Network experts from various countries launched the work on relevant further topics such as human resource management or digitalisation – outputs can be explored in the evolving PES Network Knowledge Centre.

Looking to a new Work Programme 2019, the broad list of topics certainly demands full commitment of all Network members. We will keep on developing answers to address challenges which the ‘new’ world of work already today requests.

These challenges need co-creation and collaboration with partners on and around the labour markets – and a re-thinking, modernizing and reinventing of the design and implementation of policies, and at times even of the structure and acting of entire organisations.

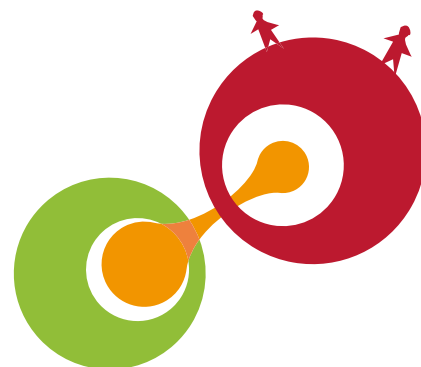
And we will also improve our way of working, further exploiting the systematic peer-learning by introducing Learning Dialogues, strengthening in-depth and tailor-made advice in the frame of the third cycle of Benchlearning.

In the PES Network we can proudly build upon our trustfully relationship and our will to improve. I am looking very much forward to all the upcoming activities in our new Work Programme 2019.

**Fons Leroy**

*Chair of the European Network  
of Public Employment Services*

*CEO of VDAB, the Flemish  
Public Employment Service*



# 1. INTRODUCTION

This fourth Annual Report of the European Public Employment Services Network (PES Network) covers the activities of the Network from January to December 2018. Having completed now two fully cycles of Benchlearning, the PES Network has achieved a higher degree of awareness as regards the institutional capacity enabling PES to pursue modernisation and increasing co-operation between European PES.

The PES Network yearly adopts an **Annual Work Programme**, which is based on exchange of views and a learning needs assessment, agreed upon with all members of the Network. In 2018, the Work Programme contained a wide range of Network activities including those relating to the Benchmarking and Mutual Learning activities intended to further support PES modernisation and improve PES performance. The Work Programme also addressed strategic policy areas such as the future of work, digitalisation, holistic support – for example how PES act to prevent unemployment – leadership and human resource management.

The implementation of the Youth Guarantee continued to be a high priority for PES and PES launched an in-depth study with case studies on factors having impact on the YG-implementation, to complement its previous surveys on the same subject. On long-term unemployment, the PES Network published a report on PES implementation of the LTU Recommendation. As European policy advisor, the Network also contributed to the public consultation on the European Labour Market Authority, and participated in the advisory board for the authority.

A central part of the Network's activities relates to the **Benchlearning**. This project was successfully introduced in 2015, combining the concepts of Benchmarking and Mutual Learning (ML) with the aim of improving the performance of PES. The composition of the **Mutual Learning Programme** is strongly based on an in-depth learning needs assessment, which was continuously discussed and refined with PES, taking into account the results achieved through **Benchmarking**. In 2018, the second cycle of Benchlearning is completed, focusing on how PES are implementing and managing their modernisation agenda and change processes.

Based on the main findings from the second cycle, a learning dialogue concept is developed to be implemented in 2019.

Moreover, looking at the **capacity of the PES**, the annual PES capacity review indicates that the labour market context in which PES operate continues to improve. Overall, the number of jobseekers is decreasing and the number of vacancies increasing. PES are still dominated by difficult-to-place clients. An initial overview of PES and governance issues confirms that the devolution of responsibilities plays an important role in the labour market governance.

The outcomes of the PES Network activities can be found at the **PES Knowledge Centre** and **PES practices** websites<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.1 PES Network Update

### PES Network Chair 2018-2020

Fons Leroy was unanimously re-elected as Chair of the PES Network. His second mandate will run from 23 September 2018 to 22 September 2020.

Throughout his position as Chair, he represented the Network on various meetings and conferences. In the PES Network, he has promoted strategic topics such as PES leadership, digitalisation and the private and public partnerships or more operative ones like the further development of the Youth Guarantee. Moreover, he launched the discussion on the European Labour Authority.

Benchlearning is one core subject supported by the Chair. In February 2018, he invited all Board members to Brussels to discuss on the shared development of a third cycle and enhance the ownership of this initiative.

While one central topic in 2018 was the changing world of work and future trends that have already reached us, the Chair called upon an update of the PES Network Strategy 2020 and beyond which

<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESknowledgecentre> and <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESpractices>

was discussed during the December Board Meeting in Vienna.

### **PES Network Decision – evaluation**

Decision No 573/2014/EU establishes the PES Network from 17 June 2014 until 31 December 2020. An interim evaluation has been started in 2018, to be published in 2019, to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and the EU added value of the PES Network Decision. The results of the evaluation will feed reflections over the possible future cooperation between European PES post-2020 and the Commission's role herein. Its geographical scope is the European Union in its present composition of 28 Member States and the European Economic Area (EEA) countries Iceland and Norway, who are participating in the activities of the Network. The evaluation will cover the period from the entry into force of the Decision establishing the PES Network (May 2014) to the latest possible date.

The Commission aims to ensure that the views of the interested stakeholders are well reflected in the evaluation, and related consultation activities were carried out in the second half of 2018: A 12-week open and internet-based consultation was open from 17 September to 13 December 2018. Targeted consultations (interviews and/or questionnaires) were held with the main stakeholders, among them the PES of the 28 Member States and Iceland and Norway (both Board members and AFEPA), the Employment Committee as an observer to the Network, the PES Network Member State Labour Ministries, as well as EU-level organisations representing private employment services and temporary work agencies, the EURES Network, WAPES (World Association of Public Employment Services), OECD and ILO. A summary of the results of all consultation activities will be published on the consultation page once all consultation activities are closed.

A study to support the evaluation was commissioned to an external independent contractor.

## **1.2 Overview of PES Network Work Programme 2018**

The PES Network Decision requires the Network to adopt and implement an Annual Work Programme. This is designed to assist the PES in delivering the Network mission to promote PES modernisation and

supporting individual PES to enhance their contribution to the implementation of the EU2020 Strategy.

The Work Programme 2018 was again grouped under three axes: Benchmarking, Mutual Learning and PES Network Governance (see Annex 4):

### **Benchmarking**

The constituent elements of PES benchmarking, quantitative and qualitative assessment remained largely unchanged in 2018. The sequencing of events was also maintained: yearly data collection, bi-annual site visits involving self- and external assessment. 14 on site assessments were carried out throughout 2018, completing the second cycle of site visits<sup>2</sup>. They were organised around the 7 performance enablers identified in the PES Network Decision with the addition of an 8th enabler on the identification and implementation of a reform agenda. In addition, the site visits were more oriented towards those performance enablers identified as a priority for change in the change reports which PES developed following the first site visit.

### **Mutual Learning**

Mutual learning activities have been focusing on key strategic and operational themes of especial relevance to PES, thereby assisting their modernisation programmes. For the first time, the activities were structured around four thematic strands that created a clear focus and provided a framework for the development of activities around a specific topic area. The activities have addressed the future of work; holistic support; digitalisation and human resource management.

The learning events have enabled participation from staff at different levels within PES both with senior steering, and operational delivery functions.

Several studies, analytical papers and a questionnaire on PES capacity were also carried out over the year.

### **PES Network Governance**

Network Governance is conducted by its biannual PES Network Board and Advisors for European PES Affairs (AFEPA) meetings.

<sup>2</sup> All EU PES, Norway and Iceland were visited, with the exception of the UK that decided not to participate in the second cycle visit.



The PES Network Board is assisted by a Secretariat provided by and based within the European Commission<sup>3</sup>. The Secretariat, in co-operation with the Chair and Vice-Chairs, prepares the Board meetings, the Annual Work Programme and this Annual Report. The Secretariat also organises and chairs the meetings of the AFEFAs. The PES Secretariat can be reached at [EMPL-PES-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EMPL-PES-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu).

### PES Network Board Meetings Summary

The PES Network Board has held two meetings in 2018, on 7-8 June and 10-11 December:

- At the June meeting in Bulgaria the Board confirmed Fons Leroy as Chair of the Network for another two years term. Furthermore, the Board discussed, together with experts and stakeholders aspects of the labour market integration of people with disabilities focuses on the topic 'Future of work'. Together with an expert from Cedefop, the Board reflected on the future skills needs in the economy. Recent PES examples were presented and discussed on a market place. The Board also endorsed the design and concept of the forthcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of Benchlearning. Finally, the Board exchanged with the PES of the Western Balkan countries that were invited to present the outcomes of their own Benchlearning exercise. A strategic leadership seminar prior to the meeting continued this new format stemming from the 2017 December Board.
- For the December meeting in Vienna, focused topics were 'Shortages of labour skills in the EU and what PES can do in this field'. Moreover, the PES position paper on Future of Work was adopted, and the interim evaluation findings of the PES Network have been presented. The Board endorsed the 2019 Work Programme as well as the 2018 Annual Report. A leadership seminar in the form of a working dinner prior to the Board meeting addressed the question of 'How to create enthusiasm in our business?'

### Meetings of the Advisors for European PES Affairs

The AFEFA meet twice a year in advance of Board meetings to review Network activities, progress on delivery of the Work Programme, and formulate

draft positions on current issues in advance of subsequent Board discussion. In 2018, the advisors met on 1-2 March and on 11-12 October.

### PES Knowledge Centre/PES Practices/PES Network Newsletter

The PES Knowledge Centre website<sup>4</sup> was launched in 2016 in order to collect and share information on the organisation and services of public employment services in Europe. Analytical papers, practitioners' toolkits, good practice examples, conference outcomes and other reports from the activities of the PES Network are published continuously. The centre aims at offering tools to learn from the experiences from other countries for PES, researchers, stakeholders and citizens. Throughout 2018, 12 new resources were published in the knowledge centre. In the PES practices database<sup>5</sup> inspiring practices from PES across Europe can be found, with 60 new practices added in 2018. The selected practices focus on issues such as integration of refugees, approaches to early and intensified counselling as well as skills assessment and competencies recognition and relations to employers.

In 2018, the PES Network published three newsletters. The newsletter can be received by subscribing to the PES Network Secretariat [EMPL-PES-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EMPL-PES-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu) and is also uploaded to the DG EMPL website.<sup>6</sup>



3 DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Unit B1 Employment Strategy.

4 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESknowledgecentre>

5 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESpractices>

6 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1100&langId=en>

## 2. PES SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY INITIATIVES

### 2.1 Contribution to the open public consultation on the Labour Market Authority

The PES Network as stakeholder and important actor on issues related to the European labour markets, mobility and cross-border commuters, contributed a common view on the proposed European Labour Authority in the frame of the consultation process. Moreover, national PES had their say.

The PES Network participates as observer in an Advisory Group for the European Labour Authority. Furthermore, the Network submitted a position on possible cooperation forms between the Authority and the Network to the EU institutions in November 2018.

### 2.2 Future of Work

New forms of work, job polarisation and advanced technological innovation require that PES, together with their partners, understand upcoming change and develop responses for their customers. In 2018 the PES Network defined the 'future of work' as its central work strand with various activities involving PES and partners.

A PES Network Working Group on the Future of Work, chaired by the Hungarian PES, has developed a PES Network position that leads PES in their strategic, long-term orientation to address the future world of work. This paper does not only describe how major trends of future labour markets impact on PES, but also key approaches such as using available information and data or digital skills in order to support PES in further developing future-proof organisations and facing labour market challenges.<sup>7</sup> The working paper was adopted during the December Board Meeting.

With regards to future relevant developments, the **PES Network Strategy 2020 and beyond**, being a living document, will be adapted once more. Main points reflecting the changing (future)

world of work will be added and/or highlighted. These include in particular:

- Recent developments on the labour markets including emerging platform economies and 'non-standard' forms of work
- Labour shortages including increased (work-force) mobility and international cooperation
- A more heterogeneous customer base, that PES will have to deal with
- Need of making use of (new) digital technologies for customer services and harvesting richer data sources
- Need for co-production and PES taking up the conducting function
- PES role as a vital component of the 'knowledge society'

A PES Stakeholder Conference (8 November 2018 in Brussels) brought together around 120 representatives from PES across Europe, as well as European institutions and international organisations, education and training providers, social partners, employer associations, private employment services, research and representatives of health and social services. The conference aimed to discuss further ways of collaboration between PES and their partner organisations in order to address future labour market changes. Approaches and practice examples shared at the conference included better and new ways to operationalise collaboration, making better use of data and labour market intelligence, the further development of digital services whilst offering personal support to people most in need and the creation of spaces and awareness to support people to manage various career transitions in their life. PES and their partners also discussed necessary organisational change, highlighting approaches that promote agility, innovation, experimentation and co-creation with PES customers and staff.

Two webinars (October and December 2018) accompanied the conference. The first one demonstrated concrete practices of PES and partners, e.g. new approaches to skills assessment and development or creating new digital services in a participatory approach involving users and front-line staff. The second webinar promoted the PES

<sup>7</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20520&langId=en>

Network position paper on the future of work and built upon the stakeholder conference. A new collaborative platform for exchange gives the opportunity to PES and partners to keep the discussion on future-related topics ongoing.

### 2.3 Long-term Unemployment

The Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed (LTU) into the labour market<sup>8</sup> provides for the contribution of the PES Network to the monitoring of the implementation of the Recommendation.

In 2018 the PES Network further engaged to the monitoring of the implementation of the Recommendation by complementing to the EMCO data collection through a qualitative survey resulting in a report on PES implementation of the LTU Recommendation<sup>9</sup>. This also feeds into the ongoing Commission's evaluation of the implementation of the Recommendation that will be reported to the Council in early 2019.

### 2.4 The Youth Guarantee

The PES Network has committed to supporting and monitoring the delivery of the Youth Guarantee. For several years the PES have reported on the national implementation on the YG as part of the annual PES capacity survey. The 2017 EMCO multilateral surveillance review on the YG as well as the YG annual data collection revealed that there are still persisting challenges hindering a full roll out of the Youth Guarantee. Therefore, the PES Network decided to launch an in-depth study in order to collect information on which factors may have positive as well as negative impact on the YG implementation. This study also aims at identifying the challenges encountered, as well as PES opinions and proposals that could lead to improving the YG performance.

The study reveals that there are efforts and initiatives in place to improve many aspects of YG implementation and monitoring. Various initiatives that might support the implementation of the YG and contribute to improving the quality of the offers have to be sustained, however, by evidence-based

conclusions. PES need to know what works and what does not, why, in what context and for whom. This is the reason, as previous similar analyses also show, why there is a need for regular, continuous monitoring, assessment and evaluation of interventions, new initiatives, processes and results of YG. This also relates to enhancing the capacity of the PES to use the results of monitoring and evaluation for corrective and further improvement actions in a 'plan-do-check-act' approach.

### 2.5 Refugees

Labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers has been on the PES Board agenda since 2015 and the Board endorsed in 2016 key considerations focusing on; i) language, ii) skills and qualifications, iii) partners and institutions, iv) employers<sup>10</sup>. The key considerations were updated in 2018, and will be endorsed early 2019.

Mutual learning activities took place as part of the 2017 Work Programme. In 2018, the Advisors for European PES Affairs had a dedicated discussion with European Social and Economic Partners on experiences of partnerships in the area of labour market integration of refugees. The PES practices website includes various new practices related to the labour market integration.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.6 Employers Day 2018

The third PES Network European Employers Day took place between the 5-9 November 2018. The objective of the Employers Day is to foster cooperation between employers and the PES and raise the visibility of the PES Network as well as the work of national PES. PES used the Employers Day to showcase their local, regional or national activities targeted at employers in order to increase awareness of national and European PES activities amongst employers.

As in 2017, the 2018 European Employers Day of the PES Network was linked to the European Vocational Skills Week 2018 in order to join forces with the European high-level event that promotes vocational education and training via various events across Europe. In the frame of the European Vocational Skills Week, PES made use of social media

8 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016H0220%2801%29>

9 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20186&langId=en>

10 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16068&langId=en>

11 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1206&langId=en>

campaigns, the registration for national, regional and local events and activities or ambassadors in countries. Since 2017, more than 50 Employers' Days have been registered for Austria, Croatia, Belgium, Poland, Portugal, France, Greece and Slovenia. In the video promoting the organisation of events for the Week 2018, the Slovenian PES was interviewed and demonstrate their engagement in 2017, see: <https://europa.eu/mq64rd>.

Besides PES, also businesses and social partners across Europe are hosting Employer's Days to showcase potential benefits of investing in human resources, and the value of vocational skills in the workplace (initial skills provision for young people, as well as upskilling and reskilling of adults). In total more than 150 events have been registered in the geo map of Europe available on the site of the European Vocational Skills Week [https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/evsw2018\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/evsw2018_en).

The next edition of the European Vocational Skills Week will take place in Helsinki from 14 to 18 October 2019. In 2019 a further European Employers Day will be linked to this event.

## 2.7 Cooperation with the education sector

At its 2017 December meeting, the PES Network Board adopted the position paper entitled 'Proposal for a structured cooperation between PES and the education sector for better school-to-work transitions'<sup>12</sup>. It sets out concrete proposals for facilitating cooperation between PES and the education systems throughout the EU, and reflects on the active role PES can take in building efficient bridges between education and employment by partnering with relevant stakeholders, and in preventing young people becoming NEETs. The paper was disseminated to the EU institutions and relevant networks. At the December 2018 Board meeting, some examples of how PES made use of the paper were addressed. Some countries report that the paper has helped them to discuss with education stakeholders, others have reported already clear steps for stronger partnerships. For example, Bulgaria is about to sign an Agreement between the Employment Agency (EA) Bulgaria and the Ministry of Education and Science for the electronic exchange of messages, data and documents, as well as for joint actions for the quality workforce.

<sup>12</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18867&langId=en>

## 2.8 Research and Studies on PES Topics<sup>13</sup>

### The Role of PES in Outreach to the Inactive Population

The inactive population is not a traditional target group for the PES, although a significant share of the inactive population wants to work and is potentially available for work. Concerns about demographic trends have made the inactive an increasingly central focus of EU labour market policy. A rapidly shrinking labour force can negatively affect the full economic potential of the Union. Since the inactive are ordinarily not clients of PES, the PES, or other actors, have to engage in outreach activities to establish a relationship to this target group. The aim of this study published in 2018<sup>14</sup> is to provide an overview of outreach measures for the inactive with particular reference to the role of PES. Within the framework of this small scale study, the focus is on outreach activities for three target groups among the inactive that are central to current policy discussions on increasing labour force participation and social inclusion: 1) Inactive older workers, 2) Working-age women not in the labour force and 3) Ethnic minorities and migrants. The study surveys existing policy regimes and outreach measures for the selected target groups, based on the existing research literature and on national and EU sources and in greater detail outreach measures for the target groups in 6 country case studies.

### Early Activation and Employment Promotion

This study<sup>15</sup> investigates the rationale for providing services and interventions to jobseekers which most adequately address their potential employment barriers to find a job and doing this as early as possible. Based on an interpretation of the literature, we provide a suggestion for a 'preferred bundle' of services, which entails intensive counselling (and monitoring) meetings between the jobseekers and her individual job counsellor in the first six months of the unemployment spell. Next, the relative costs and gains of providing this 'preferred bundle' of early interventions are assessed through case studies conducted for six Member States. These case studies cover different PES in

<sup>13</sup> Finalised publications can be found on the PES Knowledge Centre website.

<sup>14</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=19219&langId=en>

<sup>15</sup> [ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=19912&langId=en](https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=19912&langId=en)

terms of institutional setup, level of maturity and current approach to early activation. Since the study experienced methodological problems (insufficient data, restrictive assumptions, etc.), the findings were inconclusive.

### Labour shortages and surpluses

This report<sup>16</sup>, following up on earlier reports of the same kind, identifies shortage and surplus occupations in the EU, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland. It explores the causes of shortages and proposes potential solutions. Some of the jobs in short supply in 2017 include cooks, plumbers, generalist medical practitioners and systems analysts, while there is less demand for general office clerks; shop sales assistants and advertising and marketing professionals. Ultimately, this analysis aims at creating a model which can accurately and comprehensively identify imbalances and cross-border matching possibilities.

### Quality of ALMP provision

In 2017, the Secretariat launched an exercise to explore the quantitative measurement of the quality of ALMP implementation. All PES responded to a survey on ALMPs. A composite Working Paper was produced in June 2018 for the Commission, and interested PES were invited to participate in a Reference Group. Detailed comments on the process and Working Paper are being made and possible actions outlined. The aim is to establish an operational tool that can help PES improving their ALMP provision, and supporting and providing input to the broader work on EU economic governance and the convergence of EU labour markets. Work is ongoing.

### Policy levers for early support

As part of the work for establishing a benchmarking framework on unemployment benefits and ALMPs, the Employment Committee Indicators Group (EMCO IG) has mandated DG EMPL to develop policy lever indicators on early support services to unemployed jobseekers, understood as those provided by PES within the first six months of the unemployment spell. A draft expert report has so far identified 3-5 key policy levers looking at key implementation aspects of early support services that would be relevant for the benchmarking exercise and analysed and assessed the feasibility

and quality of the proposed indicators in terms of constituting credible policy levers for the benchmarking exercise.

### Sustainable employment – How can PES measure the effectiveness of their support?

A report on sustainable employment showed differences between the PES, both with regards to the importance they attach to sustainable integration as well as to how they measure the effectiveness of their support. As the report proposes two possible indicators for sustainable employment, it was taken as a working paper for further internal discussions in the PES Network and is not published.

### How do PES act to prevent unemployment in a changing world of work?<sup>17</sup>

Many EU workers are at high risk of being replaced by robots within 15 years as the automation of routine tasks gathers pace in a new machine age. The biggest impact would be on workers who had left school with low level of qualification.

Thus, the role of PES in preventing at risk-in work groups could be central in the coming years. They should be able to inform about labour market insecurity and enable workers building the right skills and adapt these throughout their working lives in response to new demands.

PES therefore launched a study demonstrating that the PES strategy towards those at risk of losing their jobs, must be based on 'comprehensive surveys of employers' skills needs and an in-depth analysis of likely transformations of the skills content of jobs. Moreover, a large number of PES could make a better use of their data. Four PES examples show the importance of career counselling but no evidence this is enough. Their services to workers at risk of unemployment are focussed on subsidised trainings. Upskilling programmes are a good initiative but PES will have to go deeper in supporting enterprises (mainly SMEs), proposing for example skills planning services.

<sup>16</sup> [ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=19364&langId=en](https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=19364&langId=en)

<sup>17</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20600&langId=en>

## 3. PES MODERNISATION

### 3.1 Benchlearning

Benchlearning is central to the Network's activities as defined by the PES Network Decision. It is the process of creating a systematic and integrated link between (quantitative and qualitative) Benchmarking and Mutual Learning activities. The ultimate aim is to support each PES in improving their performance through comparisons and institutional learning from peers.

The core idea is that this will lead to better results and contribute towards improved functioning and convergence of labour markets, and therefore demonstrating the added value of PES.

#### Benchmarking

In order to achieve this aim, a structured and systematic analysis of PES performance and its drivers is conducted through the analysis of performance data (quantitative Benchmarking) and an on-going process of PES self-, peer and expert review (qualitative Benchmarking).

Each year PES are asked to provide data on eight mandatory indicators that are calculated from the PES data and of other sources. The time series of these indicators and their correlation with other data are published on a dashboard and made accessible to registered users. The dashboard is the major tool used to promote transparency between all members of the PES Network.

The second cycle of Benchlearning that seamlessly followed the first cycle, building up on the achievements so far and supporting PES in their modernisation initiatives started in early 2017 and ended in October 2018.<sup>18</sup> Its main elements were again a comprehensive PES self-assessment and an external assessment (site visit at the headquarter and two local offices of a PES) by peer PES and experts. In the second cycle, the assessment focused on changes implemented since the first cycle as well as on change management. There-

fore, the change agenda of all PES was assessed in order to discuss the progress made and support them in change implementations. To this end, a new enabler section has been introduced – Section H: Identification and implementation of a reform agenda (see Annex 1). Following to the external assessments, each PES received a feedback report that provides an insight on relevance, coherence and consistency of the reform agenda and assessment of change management as well as practical suggestions for further improvements and peer PES as potential partners for exchange.

As a general observation from the visits in the second cycle, the first cycle has clearly given orientation to PES on their way to modernisation and change. Modernisation is being further pushed by the strong focus of the second cycle on change processes and management of these changes. Decentralisation and co-production processes between PES, customers and other stakeholders has become more important for setting up services that are suited to the needs of jobseekers and employers. Staff commitment to delivering quality customer services in all PES continued to be high, although unfavourable caseloads persist in many PES, and many PES continue to work under difficult conditions. Annex 2 gives an impression of PES follow-up activities. The assessment is moreover an important source for collecting good practices from PES. A structured and systematic analysis of PES performance and its drivers through analysis of performance data (quantitative Benchmarking) and a process of PES self-, peer and expert review (qualitative Benchmarking) was conducted in its second cycle (see annex 1 for more details).

Due to the quantitative and qualitative Benchmarking, an evidence base is available, which feeds into the development and implementation of the Network's ML Programme.

#### Mutual Learning – Concept, Activities and Integral Part of Benchlearning

The ML concept uses evidence such as the Benchmarking results to identify and address PES learning needs. The ML activities of the PES Network support PES modernisation and improvement of

<sup>18</sup> However, it will only be completely concluded until mid-2019, when also the Wallonian PES (Le Forem) and the PES of the Brussels Capital region (Actiris) have gone through the second cycle.

PES performance by addressing PES learning needs identified through Benchmarking, while facilitating PES learning on subjects that contribute to the goals of the EU 2020 Strategy and the implementation of PES-related country-specific recommendations.

With the completion of the first full cycle of Benchmarking assessment visits and the start of the second cycle of Benchmarking assessment visits, the PES Network's ML Work Programme 2018<sup>19</sup> has been shaped and enhanced through the use of direct and comparable evidence from the Benchmarking data collection and assessments. This evidence has enabled ML activities to continue to be increasingly designed, delivered and targeted in relation to PES learning needs and to identify, disseminate and facilitate the transfer of good practice amongst PES. In addition, the format of ML activities in 2018 provided PES with access to more targeted, support-orientated and peer-based learning activities, which have been reflected in the growing prevalence of workshops, mutual assistance and working group-based activities throughout the year.

### Themes and Activities

The ML activities in 2018 were focused on strategic and operational matters that support the modernisation of PES and improve the reach and impact on those who need PES to progress in their working lives. For the first time, ML activities were structured around four thematic strands that created a clear focus for activities and provided a framework for the development of activities on a specific topic area. As such, ML activities looked at the future of work; holistic support; digitalisation and human resource management. Within these four thematic strands, activities focused on key operational aspects of PES, such as digital strategies and the strategic use of data, becoming an agile organisation and talent management. ML activities also support dialogues around quality management, partnership working and improving engagement with employers. Activities in 2018 (see Annex 3) took the form of learning events (conferences, seminars, thematic review workshops, follow-up visits, mutual assistance projects and webinars) as well as written outputs (reports, toolkits, practices and studies) that are accessible

on the PES Network web pages<sup>20</sup>. In addition, 2018 saw the addition of two new approaches for Mutual learning. Firstly, Study Visits were incorporated into the Work Programme. These are short learning activities that explore one specific approach. Secondly, a new collaborative learning exchange platform<sup>21</sup> was tested around the delivery of the Future of Work strand activities. The platform was piloted as a place for participants to network, exchange and prepare before the activity and also as a space to continue the conversations and further networking.

Ongoing evaluation of these activities captured the benefit and impact of Mutual learning events for individual PES (Annex 3).

In 2018, the ML activities were accompanied by an enhanced monitoring and evaluation approach that set out to understand the potential impact of ML activities since 2015. The enhanced monitoring and evaluation exercise also acknowledged that potential changes (or lack of changes) are also influenced by other Benchmarking activities as well as external and internal drivers, such as changing national priorities and mechanism within PES to take change forward. The enhanced monitoring and evaluation activities found that around 70% of respondents use the knowledge gained from a ML activity to some extent. The enhanced monitoring and evaluation activities have outlined a number of PES whom have been able to take forward the learning gained at one, or several ML events, and implement changes to their processes and approaches to a range of topics such as customer satisfaction measurement, support for refugees and asylum seekers and piloting and evaluation.

The qualitative evaluation report in 2018 confirmed positive effects from attending a sequence of activities. In particular:

- Transfer of knowledge takes place in PES, via formal channels (such as mission reports, intranet articles and meetings) and informal channels (bi-/multi-lateral discussions with colleagues).

<sup>20</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PES>, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESknowledgecentre>, and <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESpractices>

<sup>21</sup> <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/07b8b6b8-b6eb-48ac-9065-0087da7599df>

<sup>19</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docid=18875&langId=en>

- Shortly after taking part in a ML activity, PES reported that the events provided them with ideas to supplement their current or future policy strategies. In some cases, ML activities provided a timely exchange of knowledge and experience on topics that individual PES were also addressing internally at the same time.
- In the medium-term (12 months after the last qualitative evaluation in 2017), PES reported making progress towards their customer satisfaction measurement systems, including initiating their own follow-up activities with PES in other countries. These are echoed in the 2018 enhanced monitoring and evaluation exercise that is currently ongoing.

### 3.2 Mutual Assistance

The Network and its Members continued to provide Mutual Assistance (Technical Assistance through peer PES support) for PES modernisation in Cyprus, Italy and Spain.

#### Cyprus

In 2016 and 2017, Cyprus received Country Specific Recommendation (CSRs) to enhance the capacity of their PES in the provision to the LTU and improve outreach to the non-registered unemployed.

The Cypriot PES requested assistance and support within the framework of the 'Mutual Assistance Project to Cyprus 2017' in 2017 and one follow-up meeting took place in 2018. The Mutual Assistance Project focused on the following thematic areas:

- Customer Segmentation/functionalisation of services;
- Expanded use of IT for self-service provision;
- Evidence based design and enhanced delivery of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) / improved activation services (including outreach) for jobseekers especially from the most disadvantaged groups, e.g. the young, the disabled, the LTU;
- Services for employers; and
- Performance Management/Organisational Culture/Quality Management.

The April 2018 one day follow-up meeting reviewed progress on each of the thematic areas following

the 2017 activities as well as looking ahead in terms of how specific approaches shared by PES colleagues could be considered and taken forward by the Cypriot PES.

PES colleagues from Estonia, France and Germany participated in this project.

It is noticeable that as a consequence of the mutual assistance, progress has been seen on the occasion of the Benchmarking site visit: improvement of digital services, segmentation, implementation of a new service offer to employers, and more generally the Cypriot PES has started a cultural change.

#### Italy

In 2017, Italy received a CSR that encouraged Italy to 'ensure effective active labour market policies.' ANPAL requested assistance and support within the 'Mutual Assistance Project to Italy 2017' project to develop a management information system (MIS) and support for a communication and mission strategy.

These topics were addressed in a series of workshops during 2017.

In February 2018, ANPAL requested an extension of the mutual assistance during 2018 in relation to the following thematic areas:

- Management information systems; and
- Development of an employers' strategy.

PES colleagues from Denmark, France and Slovenia participated in this project with a meeting in June 2018. Progress was made in terms of revising the decree and creating a concise set of indicators – an important step for developing a Management Information System and strengthening ANPAL's role. Due to circumstances internal to the Italian PES, further planned meetings did not take place.

#### Spain

In 2017, Spain received CSRs that called on Spain to reinforce the coordination between regional employment services, social services and employers, to better respond to jobseekers' and employers' needs.

In this context, the Spanish PES requested mutual assistance around three aspects:

- Common profiling system for jobseekers;



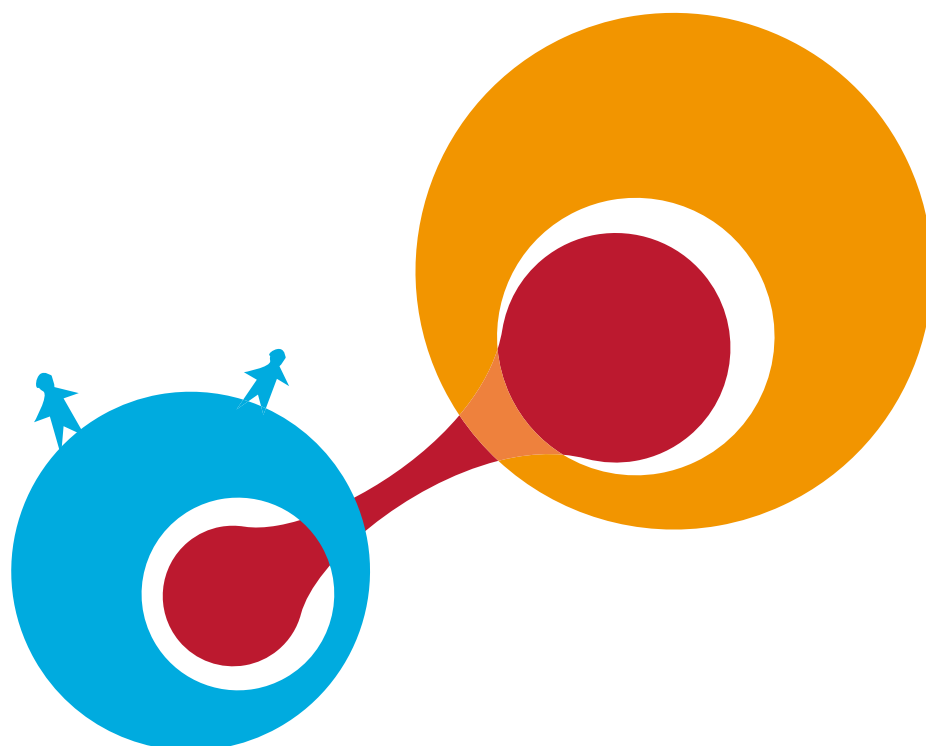
- Common methodology for measuring the satisfaction of PES customers; and
- Development of partnerships between the PES and the key actors on the labour market (with focus on employers).

Within this project, the PES Network provides technical support for the development of the 'Good Practice Exchange and Mutual Learning Programme' within the National Employment System (SEPE and the 17 autonomous regional PES), three seminars were held in 2018:

March 2018: the first session of the internal benchmarking and mutual learning programme in Spain was about the **adaptation of vocational training to the needs of the labour market**; review of the catalogue of training specialities; modular vocational training system. This seminar has led to the publication of a national catalogue of training specialities presented during the October meeting.

October 2018: **Common Profiling tool** – This second session of the programme was devoted to holistic and statistical profiling in the Spanish Employment Services. The objective of this session was to discuss these topics in presence of experts from the French and the German PES, and to reach operational agreements between the SEPE and the 17 regions.

November 2018: **Customers' satisfaction and Partnership**. This session was supported by experts from the French, Latvian and Swedish PES. The SEPE and the Autonomous PES all agreed on the necessary implementation of common tools regarding the customers' satisfaction. Fruitful exchanges about the role of the National Employment System about partnership (territorial, sectorial etc.) should lead to some transformation.



## 4. PERFORMANCE CAPACITY OVERVIEW

### 4.1 Assessment Report on PES Capacity 2018

Within its Annual Work Programme, the Network has undertaken a questionnaire, which in 2018 covered PES capacity and included an ad hoc module on the integration of the long-term unemployed (LTU) into the labour market. The latter contributed to the monitoring of implementation of the [Council Recommendation on LTU](#). 31 PES<sup>22</sup> from all EU 28 with the exception of UK, Norway and Iceland answered the questionnaire, based on which two assessment reports have been produced.

The main findings from the PES capacity report 2018 are summarised below and also supported in Annex 5.

#### The European PES Network: monitoring capacity in a changing context

The 2018 assessment report on the capacity of PES provides an overview of the main trends in the development of PES, describing aspects of their capacity and the client services they offer. It provides an information base to support the work of the PES Network. The main findings of this report are summarised below. A separate report presents the findings of an ad-hoc survey supporting the monitoring and evaluation of the LTU Council Recommendation (adopted in February 2016).

#### Cooperation – a key feature in the set-up of institutions

A start was made this year with the inclusion in this report of developments in the organisational set-up of the PES and governance issues in the wider labour market in different European countries. Subjects scheduled to be covered in the coming years include (de-)centralisation, (de-)concentration, the degree of autonomy, the involvement of other stakeholders, internal organisation and the deployment of human resources.

An initial overview confirms that the devolution of responsibilities plays an important role in the

labour market governance. In some countries (such as ES, IT and PL) this is between the national and the regional level, and it is between national government and local government in those countries where the municipalities share responsibility for labour market policies (DK, SE NL or DE in the context of LTU under regime of the Social Code Book II, for example). However, several other PES also cooperate with other institutions for important tasks such as the design and implementation of individualised assistance and the implementation of ALMPs. Many PES share the responsibility for the provision of careers advice to youngsters of school age with other institutions (19 PES), also the notification of apprenticeship places and the placement of apprenticeship candidates (13).

#### Economic growth has a higher impact on vacancies than on job-seeking clients

The labour market context in which PES operate continues to improve. The number of vacancies notified to PES is increasing, while the number of job-seeking clients is decreasing. The total average monthly inflow of vacancies increased by 8.7% between 2016 and 2017<sup>23</sup>. On the other hand, the number of job-seeking clients registered with European PES decreased by 5.4%.

#### PES are still dominated by difficult-to-place clients

While young people, the long-term unemployed and older workers have all profited from the economic recovery, the share of these three groups in the PES population still remains fairly constant. The share of unemployed young people became proportionately smaller more rapidly when compared with the share of the long-term unemployed, and especially unemployed older people.

#### Signs of decreasing PES expenditure contrary to the previous upward trend

Overall, total expenditure (excluding spending on unemployment and other benefits or 'pro forma'

<sup>22</sup> EU 28 with the exception of the UK (the three regional PES in Belgium are separate), together with Iceland and Norway.

<sup>23</sup> This concerns the 29 PES where information is available on the annual average monthly inflow of job vacancies notified to them.

spending) has steadily increased in recent years<sup>24</sup>, although the most recent period (2016 and 2017) has seen an overall decrease. This overall decrease occurred because almost all PES with medium (CZ, FI, IE and PT) to high (FR and SE) budgets compared to other PES saw their expenditure decreasing. The number of PES reporting increasing budgets has gone down since 2013, while the number reporting decreasing budgets has increased again.

Most of the PES budget excluding spending on unemployment is spent on ALMPs (on average, almost 60%). Almost 30% (on average) goes on staff costs, 0.3% on staff training, while 13% goes on other types of expenditure. Further analysis has shown that the share of the budget spent on ALMPs is not explained by the size of the budget or by the fact that PES are (not) responsible for unemployment or other benefits.

#### **Staff numbers continue the modest decline first observed last year**

During the last year, the total number of staff in FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) posts decreased by 0.2% between April 2017 and April 2018<sup>25</sup>. This development is mirrored in the lower number of PES experiencing an increase in their number of staff this year – 14 PES compared to 18 in the previous year. In addition, PES staff turnover rates – the proportion of total staff leaving the PES in a given year – have increased since the previous year.

In contrast, no less than 15 PES plan to implement staff *increases* this year. A far smaller number (six) has planned decreases for 2018, and one PES foresees both an increase and a decrease during the course of this year.

#### **Planned changes in staff deployment are usually related to internal developments**

14 PES foresee changes in the deployment or allocation of their staff in 2018. These changes were related to a variety of causes, including the introduction of new services or the introduction of a new strategy, a more fundamental reorientation such as a shift in services from passive to active measures, or institutional changes.

#### **A substantial number of staff directly serves clients**

The *average* share of total staff who work in the front office is 63.6%, and in most PES front offices, staff still make up more than 50% of the total. While front office staff can be assigned to work with all clients or all visitors, a majority of the PES also assign specialist teams or specialist office workers to specific customer groups.

#### **Increasing focus of ALMPs on workers, companies and the low-skilled**

In 2017, about one fifth of new measures were still directed at young people. This remains the main category for new ALMPs, and the number of new measures targeting other specific groups, such as unemployed older workers, the long-term unemployed, the disabled or refugees, at average remains relatively small. Three groups of measures that stand out as relatively new and/or gaining in importance are: measures focusing on workers and companies; measures for people with low skills or qualifications; measures with a specific regional or regional mobility focus.

#### **Training and employment remain key measures for specific target groups**

Training and employment incentives remain the type of measure most often used for all target groups, supplemented by supported employment and rehabilitation for the disabled.

Direct job creation for the long-term unemployed can be added to this list in 2018, as no less than 22 PES used this type of measure for this group, compared to 16 in 2017.

#### **Strategic targets often related to long-term unemployed**

This year, information was gathered about the PES's main strategic targets, and the annual PES business plans for 2017 give examples of these. Six PES either do not set targets at all, or they do not set their targets themselves. The strategic targets set by the other 24 PES most often concern specific PES client groups, in particular the long-term unemployed.

<sup>24</sup> In the 17 PES where this information is available.

<sup>25</sup> Information on total staff numbers is available for 27 European PES.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The PES Network has completed four full years of Mutual Learning activities as an integral part of Benchlearning. A growing set of learning needs identified through the Benchlearning exercise was the starting point for the shape of the 2018 year Work Programme. Direct and comparable evidence from the Benchlearning data collection and assessments has fed into Mutual Learning activities. PES has gained access to more targeted, support-orientated and peer-based learning activities, which have been reflected in the growing prevalence of workshops, mutual assistance and working group-based activities throughout the year.

In order to present a longer term and future-proof programme, the Mutual Learning part of the 2018 Work Programme was based on four interlinked thematic clusters which are: the future of work, digitalisation, holistic approach and human resource management. The work in thematic clusters offered the opportunity to build learning packages around topics and allowing for targeted participation of PES staff. The introduction of a collaborative platform as well as the extended use of webinars increased access to learning events.

The strategic approach of the 2018 Programme is continued into the proposed 2019 Programme. Evaluation of the Mutual learning programme demonstrates positive signs that PES were not only sharing and identifying good practices, but also actively following-up on their participation in learning events. An observation from the second cycle Benchlearning visits is that the first cycle has clearly given orientation to PES on their way to modernisation and change. Modernisation is being further pushed by the strong focus of the second cycle on change processes and management of these changes. Summarising the findings of the 29 PES visited in 2017 and 2018, while considering the information of the PES change agendas, the level of maturity differs, but several challenges occur for most of the PES.

These observations and results are well in line with discussions at the Board on how to proceed from the second to the third cycle of the Benchlearning project. Based on assessments and recommendations to the PES, 2019 shall be used for learning dialogues between peer PES on chosen fields for improvement, in order to strengthen in-depth advice and coaching and further develop individual peer-PES learning. Thus, the Learning dialogues is a new and important element in the proposed 2019 Programme.

As the PES Network Decision establishes the Network until 31 December 2020, the Commission started an evaluation in 2018 to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value of the Decision. The evaluation's geographical scope is the European Union in its present composition of 28 Member States and the European Economic Area countries Iceland and Norway, who are participating in the activities of the Network. Targeted consultations were held with the main stakeholders, among them the PES of the 28 Member States and the EEA PES (both Board members and AFEPAs). The results of the evaluation to be published in 2019, will feed reflections over the possible future cooperation between European PES post-2020 and the Commission's role herein.

A range of activities promoted by the PES Network Chair includes a book on and from the PES Network to underpin its added value and celebrate its 5th anniversary in June 2019

This Annual Report demonstrates the Network's strong collaborative learning, activities related to policies and finally the growing learning organisation. In the meanwhile, the new PES Network Work Programme 2019 is being developed and will lead the PES Network through an ambitious year of 2019.

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1 – Benchlearning Project Organisation and Activities

### 1. Introduction

In order to put Benchlearning into practice it was necessary to establish a systematic link between performance enablers and performance outcomes while controlling for context/external factors.

The 2016 Annual Report demonstrated the main results of the quantitative and qualitative Benchmarking exercise, as well as the combined analyses. These results served as basis and learning resource for the second cycle, which started in 2017 and was accomplished in 2018.

This annex summarises the main results and findings of the second cycle. A structured and systematic analysis of PES performance and its drivers through analysis of performance data (quantitative Benchmarking) and a process of PES self-, peer and expert review (qualitative Benchmarking) was conducted in its second cycle.

### 2. Quantitative Benchmarking

In 2018, in the course of the yearly Benchlearning data collection, PES again were asked to provide variables according to clearly defined requirements. 30 PES provided their data used for the calculation for eight mandatory indicators. 26 PES succeeded to deliver data on unemployment for the whole population as well as for long-term-unemployment (LTU/non-LTU). This made it possible to calculate complementary LTU-indicators. All these indicators based on the data provided by the PES and gained from other sources (such as the LFS) were placed on an internet dashboard and made accessible to registered users. PES have the possibility to enhance performance comparison between PES, as well as an opportunity to assess their own performance over time, which could provide a rich source of useful information.

The comprehensive analyses of all indicators (mandatory and complementary) were conducted to identify valid PES performance outcomes. Com-

paring to the first effort carried out in 2016 (at the end of the first Benchlearning cycle), the analyses are based on the enlarged and refined dataset. The set of valid performance outcomes differs from the one identified in 2016<sup>26</sup>. The following indicators are identified as the valid PES performance outcomes:

- Unsubsidised transitions into the primary labour market
- Subsidised transitions into the primary labour market
- Medium-term transitions (i.e. share of transitions within 12 months of unemployment) into the primary labour market
- PES involvement in job finding according to EU-LFS (composite indicator); the indicator is based on the following single indicators:
  - » Share of high-skilled persons who found a job and who indicated in the Eurostat Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) that the PES was involved into this job finding at some point in time
  - » Share of low-skilled persons who found a job and who indicated in the EU-LFS that the PES was involved into this job finding at some point in time
  - » Share of medium-skilled persons who found a job and who indicated in the EU-LFS that the PES was involved into this job finding at some point in time
- Jobseeker satisfaction with PES services (i.e. share of satisfied jobseekers)
- Employer satisfaction with PES services.
- Transitions of LTU into employment as a share of LTU

For these indicators, multivariate regression analyses were applied to adjust for the impact of the context, in which PES operate, and make them genuinely comparable. This analytical step resulted in comparisons of performance across PES, i.e. of measurable achievements that are (almost) exclusively due to the efforts of PES. Therefore, comparisons of all valid performance outcomes were generated.

<sup>26</sup> PES Network Annual Report 2015-2016, [ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=17000&langId=en](https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=17000&langId=en)

Empirical results are more robust over time when having collected more and more data. This increases the potential for comparative study across PES to support mutual learning. The reliability and validity of the quantitative Benchmarking has therefore increased in comparison to the first cycle and will produce more stable results in future, when enlarging the database.

### 3. Qualitative Benchmarking – the second cycle

#### Background

During the first cycle, qualitative Benchmarking was based upon seven areas analysed in a two-staged assessment process (self and external assessment). After the assessment, considered as core element of the whole Benchlearning exercise, each PES received an individual feedback report on the strengths including good practices as well as an analysis of its major areas for improvement together with detailed suggestions and recommendations.

For the second cycle, the assessment exercise focused on changes, in order to accompany and support PES in the endeavour to modernisation and on their way into the future. A 'Benchlearning Report – National PES Change Agenda', developed by each participating PES served as basis for the second cycle's assessment. These so-called change reports were delivered by each PES one year after they received the first cycle's feedback report.

In order to continue refined measurement approaches and to identify and assess changes over time within each PES, the self and external assessment exercise this time focused on:

- **Measuring change** and thereby broadening the empirical basis for context-free performance comparisons across PES and to find out which organisational structures, processes or services (performance enabler) led to improved performance results.
- **Supporting change** by providing individual feedback and advice to PES regarding their organisational development projects.

Specifically, the assessment exercise was based on an update of the 29 original performance enablers with a clear focus on changes since the first cycle. To this end, a new enabler section was introduced – Section H: 'Identification and implementa-

tion of a reform agenda' with three enablers. The updated and extended (by Section H) self-assessment together with the change report served as an essential information base for external assessors to prepare for the 3-day site visits of the second cycle. In addition, PES were free to provide additional information supporting the contents of their change report and self-assessment, thus broadening the analytical basis for the external assessment. After the visit, each PES again received a feedback report providing an insight on relevance, coherence and consistency of the reform agenda, an assessment of changes since the first visit and change management as well as practical suggestions for further improvements.

#### Important observations from the external assessments

Regarding the seven performance areas, the following trends can be summarized:

With respect to **strategic performance management**, the gradual shift from centralised to decentralised PES management models, which was already noticed during the first cycle, was intensified. On basis of the recommendations made during the first cycle, many PES have critically reviewed their performance management system and especially the structure of their Key Performance Indicators. While a series of PES have started to reduce their number and to replace input- and/or output-related indicators by indicators capturing result and efficiency, other PES are still in a process of selecting and defining a small set of smart and appropriate indicators. A major concern of external assessors related to the fact that with the increasing decentralisation it seems to become more and more difficult to organising a coherent strategic performance management reaching out from the central to all regional and local levels, thus leaving some question marks whether a coherent performance management is likely to be achieved in the future.

Regarding the **design of operational processes**, the second cycle again gave plenty of evidence that customer needs and expectations build the heart for an effective modernisation of processes. A major aspect of concern for external assessors was that nearly all PES have implemented important elements of quality management, but in the same time an integrated quality management system applied to the entire service provision chain and all organisational levels is limited to a very small number of PES.

In the area of **sustainable activation and management of transitions**, PES increased their efforts for strengthening customer's self-sufficiency. Activation of jobseekers' potential for the job-seeking processes becomes a strategy that is adopted by more and more PES. In the same time, nearly all PES have introduced different channels for communicating with customers, and especially digital tools have helped to reduce administrative burden in some PES, thus unleashing resources for in-depth counselling of vulnerable groups and jobseekers with specific needs. One important observation is that despite some progress made, the profiling systems implemented often do not integrate informal competences of jobseekers, thus leading to an incomplete and therefore not holistic view on customers' potentials.

Based on the experiences and recommendations from the first cycle, PES have invested a lot in order to improve **relations with employers**. This is mainly due to the trend of increasing difficulties of employers to find adequately qualified staff by themselves. In parallel, PES are faced with a situation that despite favourable labour market conditions, customers from vulnerable groups are still not easy to place. Different concepts on how to satisfy employers' needs with an increasing share of difficult-to-place customers are currently developed by the PES in order to meet these challenges, and it will be of utmost importance of sharing experiences across Europe on what works in this context.

In the context of **evidence-based design and implementation of PES services** it was an important observation that the use of pilot projects has become more and more relevant in the past two years, especially for testing new organisational set-ups, service provision models, ALMPs for specific target groups etc. However, it seems that a systematic evaluation of these practices as well as a systematic communication of pilot project results has only been implemented in a few PES. The same conclusion is valid for systematic scientific evaluation of processes and customer services in addition to regular monitoring of quantified targets and performance indicators. A clear strength of PES continues to be their competence in labour market analysis. However, a systematic analysis and presentation of results for local offices is not always in place.

With respect to the **management of partnerships and stakeholders**, it became apparent that

in the last two years the discussion on which PES services should be externalised to service providers and which ones to keep in-house or which ones should even be taken back by the PES, has been intensified. Strategies are quite different among the PES, and it will be interesting in future to understand, which concept works under which particular condition. Another important observation concerns the increasing importance of effective cooperation with municipalities at the local level. One-stop-shop solutions of combined social and labour market services have been introduced in some PES and others will follow. As already said in the section on strategic performance management (see above), decentralisation and stronger cooperation with municipalities make it more and more difficult to assess performance and contribution of PES to support the transition of jobseekers (back) to the labour market in a systematic way.

Regarding the **allocation of PES resources**, observations from the first cycle could widely be confirmed, especially the rigidities in the management and allocation of staff resources within some PES continue to persist. Nevertheless, PES manage to maintain staff morale high and a significant commitment to quality customer service remained in place. Modern leadership principles have been introduced in a couple of PES, thus giving more freedom, responsibility and ownership to PES officers.

### Identification of true performance enablers and maturity of PES

After nearly all site visits of the second cycle had been completed<sup>27</sup> and the externally validated scores for PES performance enablers had been collected, quantitative indicators from qualitative benchmarking were generated. They serve as essential input for the empirical identification of **'true performance enablers'**, i.e. for the final step of a combined quantitative-qualitative analysis (see also next section).

Quantitative indicators were generated for each potential performance enabler, designed to reflect the proximity of each PES to the theoretically defined excellence level. This proximity can also be considered the 'maturity' of the organisation with

<sup>27</sup> Two external assessments will take place after this reporting at the end of 2018 (Le Forem, the Wallonian PES) and in mid-2019 (Actiris, the PES of the Brussels Capital Region).

respect to a given benchmark. The following aggregation rule was used for the construction of quantitative indicators for each potential performance enabler:

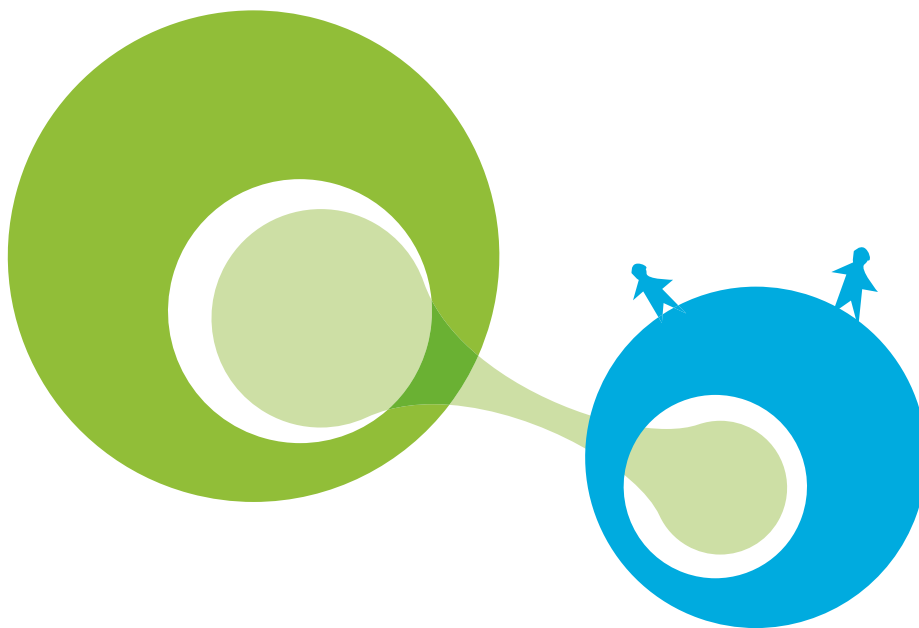
- A **mature** organisation with respect to the potential performance enabler X is achieved, if all four external scores in the PDCA cycle are 5 or higher.
- A **well-developed** organisation with respect to the potential performance enabler X is achieved if at least three of the four external scores are 4 or higher.
- A **developing** organisation with respect to the potential performance enabler X is achieved if at least three of the four external scores are 3 or higher.
- In all other cases, the maturity of the organisation is considered developable.

These scores for the single enablers were further aggregated on sectoral level and for overall maturity. Since the sections contain different numbers of enablers, the aggregation rules differ slightly in order to take this into account. The results of this

exercise are summarised in **Table 1<sup>28</sup>**, which provides an overview of maturity indicators by enabler section and PES. Maturity indicators are also displayed in the PES BL dashboard.

Most importantly, this table illustrates the potential for organisational improvements in every PES. Based on the recommendations made to the PES following the external assessments the table also suggests those PES that can serve as a reference point to assist within the selected thematic areas. The table indicates that **in each and every section there is more than one PES that can be considered mature or well-developed**, and those PES differ in their 'business models' as well as their institutional contexts. Hence, there is more than one opportunity to study the approaches of peer PES for organisational development. Overall, the PES of Austria, Estonia and the Flanders region of Belgium (VDAB) are considered mature. The PES of Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Sweden are classified as well-developed.

<sup>28</sup> Maturity indicators are, of course, also available for all 32 performance enablers.





**Table 1.: Distribution of organisational maturity by PES, 2<sup>nd</sup> BL cycle (2017-2018)**

The information bases on individual assessments by peer-PES (assessors' teams compositions differ) using the EFQM model and serves as orientation of the maturity level on different PES performance fields. The purpose is collecting the qualitative information behind the clusters outlined and therewith giving indications for learning from each other.

PES	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION C	SECTION D	SECTION E	SECTION F	SECTION G	SECTION H	OVERALL
Austria	Mature	Well-developed	Developing	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Mature	Mature	Mature
Belgium - VDAB	Well-developed	Mature	Well-developed	Mature	Well-developed	Mature	Well-developed	Mature	Mature
Bulgaria	Developing	Developable	Developable	Developing	Developable	Developing	Well-developed	Developable	Developable
Croatia	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Cyprus	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable
Czech Republic	Developable	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developable	Developing	Developing	Developable	Developing
Denmark	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Mature	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed
Estonia	Mature	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Mature	Mature
Finland	Developing	Well-developed	Developing	Well-developed	Developing	Developing	Developing		Developing
France	Well-developed	Well-developed	Developing	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed
Germany	Well-developed	Developing	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Mature	Developing	Well-developed
Greece	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developing	Developable	Developable	Developable
Hungary	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developing	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable
Iceland	Developable	Developable	Developing	Developing	Developing	Well-developed	Developing	Developing	Developable
Ireland	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Well-developed	Developing	Well-developed	Well-developed	Developing
Italy	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable
Latvia	Developable	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developable	Developable	Developing	Developable	Developable
Lithuania	Developing	Developing	Developing	Well-developed	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developing	Developable
Luxembourg	Developable	Developable	Developing	Well-developed	Developable	Well-developed	Developing	Developable	Developable
Malta	Developing	Developing	Well-developed	Developing	Developable	Well-developed	Developing	Developable	Developing
Netherlands	Well-developed	Well-developed	Developing	Developing	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Developing	Well-developed
Norway	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developable	Developing	Developable	Developing
Poland	Developable	Developing	Developing	Well-developed	Developable	Developing	Developable	Developable	Developable
Portugal	Developing	Developable	Developing	Developing	Developable	Developing	Developable	Developable	Developable
Romania	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developing	Developable	Developable
Slovakia	Developable	Developing	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developing	Developable	Developable
Slovenia	Developing	Well-developed	Developing	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed
Spain	Developing	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developable	Developing	Developing	Developable
Sweden	Well-developed	Developing	Developing	Well-developed	Developing	Developing	Well-developed	Well-developed	Well-developed

#### 4. Combined Quantitative-Qualitative Analyses

The empirical analysis of the first cycle already identified statistically significant associations between performance outcomes and maturity indicators while controlling for a small set of important context factors (see Annual Report 2016).

After having completed the second cycle of Benchlearning, a broader data set now allows for a refined performance analysis. However, it has to be kept in mind that using both cycles there are 59 observations available. In statistical terms this is still considered to be quite small. Therefore, the results have more validity than after the first cycle, but still have to be **interpreted carefully**. The potential for organisational improvements in every PES will serve as a reference point for the ongoing Mutual Learning activities.

#### 5. Findings from the second Cycle

Benchlearning is by its very nature an ongoing process. Its ultimate aim is to support each PES in improving its performance. As a general observation from the nearly concluded second cycle, PES profit by receiving detailed and tailor-made feedback from informed external assessors on their change efforts to date.

This feedback is again supposed to be a 'helping hand' to illustrate to PES the strengths of their organisational development while also highlighting those areas for which improvements could further enhance the results and the impact of these. Participating PES further receive practical suggestions on how to proceed in addition to information on peer PES with comparable organisational development objectives. This information is also used to develop topics for mutual learning events and/or for bilateral exchanges on common challenges and potential solutions to them.

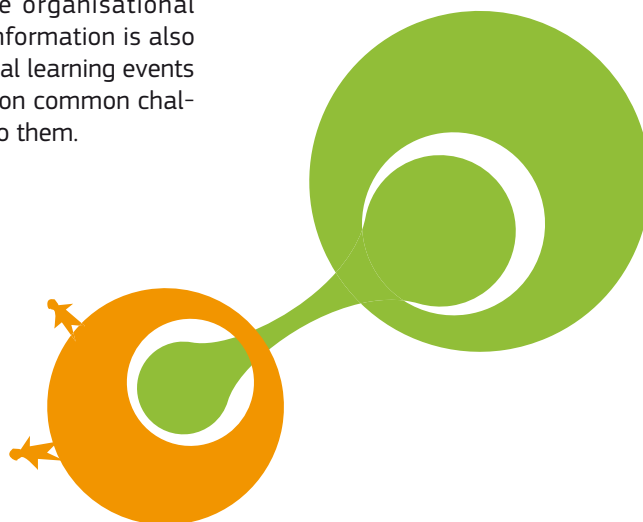
Summarising the findings of the 29 PES visited in 2017 and 2018, while considering the information of the PES change agendas, several challenges occur for most of the PES throughout the Network, although the level of maturity differs. Most of the PES are further developing their organisations with a focus on the following topics:

- Cooperation with employers, especially in a context of a substantially increasing number of vacancies
- ICT systems and e-Services accurately following clear processes
- Systematic performance management ranging from the head office to the local offices, including the review of indicators (small set, smart and easy to communicate), target setting, overall organisational structure
- Competence-based profiling and matching
- Training, motivation and impact of introduced changes on staff, including leadership and ownership of employees at all levels.

So far, some major areas shared by many PES with regards to management of change, can be summarised as well:

- Integrated and consistent Change Management
- Effective communication
- Bottom up processes and staff empowerment
- Systematic monitoring of results and implementing measures for improvement.

The next chapter (Annex 2) demonstrates concrete changes by PES and underlines the progress achieved through Benchlearning.



## Annex 2 – Reports from PES follow-up on Benchlearning Activities

### Austria

Following the priorities from the first Benchlearning-cycle in 2015, PES continued in risk management. A strategy map is now available and is used for internal communication. Based on the results of the second Benchlearning visit in 2017, PES has focused on:

- Recommendation on segmentation: Activities have been restarted. IT implementation of customer codes according to their integration chances on the labour market start in November 2018. (Strategy is agreed in the AMS mid-term plan).
- Second focus is on a recommendation to set up a system of causal impact evaluation of ALMP measures. This has meanwhile been implemented in the AMS mid-term plan and includes a pilot project.

The Austrian PES, AMS, and the German 'Bundesagentur für Arbeit' began exchange on expert level (study visit in Austria and Germany). Following the recommendation to exchange with Estonia, an expert delegation visited Estonia in January 2018.

### Belgium – VDAB

Based on the results of the first Benchlearning site visit, in combination with other evaluation and policy initiatives, the VDAB has defined several change projects:

- Following the Benchlearning assessment, one of the change projects, that has a high priority, is the sectoral approach. This will be rolled out in all the VDAB services and furthermore reflected in the new organisation model. Another project is ensuring that the Business Process Management stays on track and will be integrated in the management tools and forums. This will also be reflected in the new organisational model.
- These matters have been worked out as planned, at the moment VDAB is still rolling out the change process.

The second Benchlearning visit took place in July 2018.

### Belgium – Le Forem

Based on the recommendations from the first Benchlearning visit, Le Forem focused on:

- Strategic performance management: the PES has adopted impact indicators, reduced the number of indicators and strengthened performance dialogue at all levels of the organisation.
- Development of the multi-channel approach: new on-line services and new facilities in local 'open services' units have been deployed.
- Knowledge strategy: progress has been made in co-constructing knowledge with partners, fostering knowledge exchange within Forem as well as improving evidence-based decision-making.

The second assessment visit took place in December 2018.

### Belgium – ACTIRIS

Actiris has undergone the first Benchlearning assessment in January 2018. Based on the results and its Management Contract 2017-2022, ACTIRIS has focused on the following areas:

- Based on the strong performance of the Youth Guarantee, the Brussels Government and ACTIRIS have decided to extend this approach by implementing a Solution Guarantee within the 12 months to all those who register with Actiris for the first time or for any jobseeker who requests.
- Enhance the quality of services through improvements of the customer experience. ACTIRIS is implementing a project aimed at increasing the satisfaction rate at its main 'customer touch points'.
- ACTIRIS is working to create a new version of the single jobseeker file in order to allow automatic matching based on the up-to-date skills of jobseekers.

### Bulgaria

Based on the results of the second Benchlearning site visit in 2017, in combination with other evaluation and policy initiatives, the PES is in the process of a complete modernization of: service delivery, implementation and monitoring at all lev-

els of the organization, and the management and planning mechanisms.

The new focus on performance management is in the following areas:

- The Employment Agency – an effective labour market mediator for all people: Expanding the scope and coverage of IT services, by digitalization of services and developing an e-Labour Exchange; creating an electronic library.
- Institutional Strengthening of the Change Process: Transforming the existing monitoring system into a performance management system; Apply a systematic evaluation approach. Regional and local units to take an active part in the evaluation process; Evaluate projects and reform activities in the light of their potential to increase the efficiency of service provision; Further strengthen internal Benchmarking activities; Define an improved set of indicators for efficiency.

- Customer Segmentation.
- IT self-Service Provision.
- Services to Employers.
- Evidence-based design /delivery of ALMP services.
- Performance Management.

Through this Project targeted actions for each area have been implemented as well as two pilot projects regarding the development of special services to employers and a minimum customer segmentation model. Furthermore, a new online platform for employers was developed facilitating the recruitment of personnel without the PES intervention and also an electronic system for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of ALMP's. In 2018 the PES capacity in dealing with vulnerable groups was strengthened through the recruitment of 30 counsellors.

The second Benchmarking external assessment was realised in July 2018.

## Croatia

Based on the results of the second Benchmarking visit in 2017, the PES has focused on the following:

- The activities for employers have been increased which should ensure attracting workers to all kinds of employment, especially seasonal employment.
- Statistical profiling is in the full implementation stage for all newly registered unemployed persons in all PES regional offices. The aim is to identify persons who are at risk of long term unemployment and ensure employment preparation activities for them as well as faster entrance into employment.
- The pilot version of employers' satisfaction survey on employment mediation was implemented. The workers' satisfaction survey on seasonal employment was implemented with the aim of identifying areas which should be improved in order to attract new workers and retain the existing ones.

## Cyprus

The PES in 2018 participated in a Mutual Assistance Technical Support Project of the PES Network aiming to improve the delivery of services in the areas:

## Czech Republic

Based on the results of the second Benchmarking visit in 2017, The Labour Office of the Czech Republic has focused its attention on the three main areas in its change agenda:

- Process standardization.
- Cooperation between non-insurance benefit department and employment department.
- A strategy towards increasing cooperation with employers.

The PES is actively focusing on these areas and is making considerable efforts to improve the services provided.

## Denmark

Based on the result of the second Benchmarking visit in 2017 the PES (STAR) has focused on the implementation of the many employment reforms and on proposals from the Benchmarking-evaluation report:

- A further development of a benchmarking concept to provide the municipalities with an easily accessible overview of the most important key performance indicators on the employment area.

- Exploring whether benchmark data can be made available by use of an app. To further support benchmarking and sharing of best practice, a new tool [www.jobevidens.dk](http://www.jobevidens.dk) where municipalities can find and share best practice is going to be launched at the end of 2018. STAR has continued the development of a dashboard for citizens, case managers and companies to provide citizens and companies with relevant information on the employment opportunities.
- Development of a new four year strategy to support the core tasks of the organization and to address the challenges and opportunities of the future labour market.

### **Estonia**

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The PES has undergone the second Benchlearning external assessment in October 2018. In the Benchlearning change agenda, the PES focused on the implementation of three major reforms that have brought along new tasks for the PES:

- A work ability reform.
- Provision of new unemployment prevention measures.
- A career counselling services reform.

The reorganisation of career services will expand the PES client group. From 2019 onwards the PES will be responsible for the provision of career counselling to young people from the age of seven besides adult population. Moreover, the PES will be responsible for the methodological development of career services in Estonia. In addition, the PES focuses on enlarging the use of e-services and big data for labour market prognosis and performance evaluation, upgrading clients' profiling model, developing measures to support sustainable employment and providing more trainings for future skills.

### **Finland**

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The PES has undergone the Benchlearning external assessment in October 2018. Based on the results, the PES will focus on the following areas, which support the shift from the current PES organisation to the regional government reform and growth services taking place in January 2021:

- Criteria for success, objectives and KPIs.
- Agile development of external IT.

- External and internal Benchlearning.
- Creating and using evidence.
- Developing national quality standards.

### **France**

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Based on the results of the second Benchlearning study visit in 2017, and regarding the context of a new Tripartite agreement preparation for 2019-2022, and of a new Strategic Plan elaboration within Pôle emploi, the PES is at this time focused on the following areas:

- Implementing a more comprehensive diagnosis (enriched, and regularly updated), on needs and professional opportunities, based on Data use and labour market knowledge and performance; for delivering a quicker, adapted, strengthened support for jobseekers and employers, and for guiding better choices for jobseekers building pathway (with more information shared on personal file between jobseekers and assigned advisers).
- Being skilled oriented rather than occupation oriented in order to expand job opportunities for job seekers, to improve competences approach (focusing on self-assessment on competences, including soft skills), and to propose unexpected profiles to employers.
- Further developing Performance management ('It's our performance' project), by increasing counsellors commitment with a team participative way for steering performance and KPI's at the local office level, and for reinforcing the role of local offices in the change management process (including also the Agency for Tomorrow and 'Nouveau Pari de la Confiance' project).
- Enhancing open Innovation inside Pôle emploi and with partners for creating new services.

### **Germany**

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The German PES 'Bundesagentur für Arbeit' (BA) has undergone the second Benchlearning assessment in May 2018. The main findings were in line with the results of the first assessment in 2016, and demonstrate that the new strategy 'BA 2025' has launched initiatives in the right direction to meet future challenges.

One central issue is the further development of performance management characterized by a stronger incorporation of quality aspects. This is directly inter-

connected with the promotion of bottom-up innovations and co-creation in an agile environment.

The two assessments were very helpful to feed and to confirm the BA's strategic considerations. Several bilateral study visits were inspired by the results of the Benchlearning exercise and the knowledge transfer in the PES network.

The BA will pick up the recent recommendations on quality management, employee empowerment, co-creation and communication and is going to intensify the mutual exchange on these topics.

### Greece

The PES has undergone the Benchlearning external assessment in September 2018.

The 2017-2018 Implementation Plan is structured around five key axes:

- Staff training: training of internal trainers on the new profiling methodology and of new counsellors. Training of staff on the new IT applications is about to be completed.
- Modernisation and effective management and development of PES' human resources. Design of a HRM-unit. A new organisational chart is about to be in place in 2019.
- Implementation of a performance management system: strategic and operational goals and targets for 2019 are in place and a guide aiming to standardise the procedure of the Organisation has been prepared.
- Procedure simplification and automation.
- The goal is to streamline key operating procedures and services provided to the users of the Organisation, and improve the quality of these services.
- Communication Plan Development: All levels of the Organisation and the external environment have been informed about changes in the Organisation's service model, a communication plan of social media is in place and a brand strategy is about to be completed in the coming months.

### Hungary

The PES has undergone the second cycle Benchlearning external assessment in 2017. In 2018, due to a mid-year organizational restructuring, the

Hungarian PES is professionally coordinated by the Ministry of Finance. A change in priorities and in the management has taken place and certain developments (including Benchlearning related ones) have slowed down.

However, regardless of this momentum loss, decision makers are aiming to maintain and improve the quality of the functioning and the services of PES. This effort is seen by the fact that currently three major assessments are being (or have been) carried out by external consultants focusing on:

- The review of the profiling system targeting vulnerable job-seekers.
- The review the PES service model at the shop-floor and to pilot a possible new service model aiming to address the workforce shortages in the country.
- The overview of the profiling and customer segmentation process as well as the relation with employers.

These processes will come to an end in 2019 and may provide base ground for future strategic changes in the Hungarian PES management and functioning. The idea is that these new results are channelled into the Benchlearning process.

### Iceland

Based on the results of the second Benchlearning self-assessment and site visit in 2018, the PES continues to focus on:

- Further development of performance management with increased involvement and engagement of staff in the identification and monitoring of strategic objectives and the relevant KPIs.
- Strategy implementation, with a focus on increasing the efficiency aspect of strategic management.
- Process management.
- Increasing the focus towards employers through additional employer services.
- Overall upgrade of our software systems, utilising more advanced digital technology with increased interactivity and automatization.

### Ireland

The EU PES Benchlearning second cycle assessment report on the Irish PES was received in early

2018. It acknowledged that considerable achievements have been made in the past 2 years which inter alia, included:

- The introduction of the activation and case management IT system which manages and monitors the client's progression through the prescribed activation journey.
- Updating of the Employer Relations Management Strategy.
- Conducting a rolling programme of robust external performance/impact evaluation studies to assess effectiveness and inform future policy direction.
- To deliver an expanded range of on-line services to jobseekers and employers the introduction of a digital service strategy with an enhanced jobseekers online application informed by stakeholder consultation is ongoing.
- Further enhanced functionality added to JobsIreland – the on-line job searching/matching platform to facilitate employer-candidate communication.

In relation to those suggested areas for improvement identified by the assessment team, a prioritisation and scoping of those suitable/feasible recommendations is being conducted to support their progression. PES has expressed interest in participation in the mutual learning dialogues scheduled for 2019.

The above actions will continue to serve to improve the quality of the service provided by Ireland's PES to all its clients and stakeholders and by so doing will consolidate the progress made to date.

## Italy

Based on the results of the first and the second Benchlearning visit in 2017 and on the MAP activities, the PES has focused on:

- The continuous implementation of the unified IT-system for ALMPs and employment services.
- Adoption of the strategic guidelines, on a three years based, and annual objectives, with a first work on the standard of services and of standard of costs, that will be developed in the next year, taking into account the previous adoption of the minimum level of performances.
- The adoption, in cooperation with regions, of the first methodology of qualitative profiling of clients, at national level.

- The adoption, in cooperation with regions, of the PES national strategy for employers and of the LTU national strategy.
- Replacement voucher: implementation of the measure on large scale, also enlarging the target of the measure, taking into account the new legislative provisions.
- Setting up a management information system.
- Coordinating the activities of the agency for ALMPs, taking into account the joint programme of work.

## Latvia

Based on the results of the second PES Benchlearning visit in November 2017, the PES of Latvia has focused on:

- Implementation of the structural changes of the PES, in order to strengthen the PES capacity and improve the monitoring of activities that are being implemented. The stronger emphasis is paid on evidence based outcomes.
- Developing initial proposals for the implementation of the Public Administration Reform 2018-2020 by setting up a work group:
  - » Creating a new position in branch offices that combines the functions of the current agent and organizer
  - » Modelling of the regional territorial units of the PES
- Updating Employers Strategy for 2017-2019: Working on the creation of a new speciality – consultant position whose main task will be the provision of services to employers only.
- Elaboration of the Channel Strategy in order to differentiate the communication channels for different clients.
- Horizontal cooperation with other state institutions dealing with the issues of the labour market.
- Improvement of services offered to clients by PES as well as participation with other state authorities in the campaign of the 'Life events' programme.

## Lithuania

Based on the results of the second Benchlearning visit in 2018, the PES has focused on:

- Finalising the structural reform using a PDCA-cycle based organisational structure at the central office and local offices.

- Implemented a new client services model and a new management structure for the territorial offices based on 'one face to customer' principle.
- Implemented a quality management system and provided additional training for the territorial offices staff on the use of it. The organization is ready for the evaluation of the quality management system (ISO 9001).
- Updated management processes, core operational processes and supporting processes.
- Improved and expanded electronic document management and exchange system where employers can prepare and sign electronic documents and the job seekers can register online
- Implemented the third phase of the restructuring process. From October the services are provided by a new unit Employment Service under the Ministry of social security and labour with five client departments in the regions of Lithuania.

### Luxembourg

Based on the results of the second Benchlearning visit that took place in April 2018, the PES has made significant progress by:

- Setting up a data warehouse and operational dashboards thus empowering the evidence-based management of the PES.
- Fostering the HR management through the definition of work plans and detailed training plans for all PES employees.
- Improving the registration process and the personalised support of jobseekers.
- Developing new training offers that meet the demand of the national labour market and help jobseekers improve their digital skills.
- Implementing new ALMPs thus facilitating the labour market integration of jobseekers (i.e. long-term unemployed).

### Malta

Based on the results of the Benchlearning visit in 2018, the PES has implemented some recommendations as indicated below:

- Embarked on the development of a comprehensive IT strategy that will be based on the outcome of business and systems analysis and that will keep the customer in focus.

- Started implementing a project to facilitate integration of migrants, whereby Jobsplus is offering: language courses; work readiness training; development of manual for migrants and its translation in five languages; the services of interpreters and cultural mediators.
- Established closer collaboration with the Association of career guidance practitioners working within schools in order to strengthen mutually complementary efforts and keep school advisers informed of labour market trends.
- Jobseekers have been segmented into three categories – unemployed jobseekers, migrants and job changers – so that advisory services are offered according to the needs of each client group. Caseloads of employment advisers have been segmented accordingly.
- A large-scale satisfaction survey among users of Jobsplus services was being carried out.
- The labour market analysis team has been strengthened to advise the Ministry on labour market issues.
- A career progression system was implemented that rewards employees for long service to the organisation or for obtaining additional qualifications.
- First steps have been taken to align the staff performance appraisals with the Corporation's objectives and targets.
- A business intelligence tool is being developed and results are feeding management with effectiveness indicators.

### Netherlands

As a result of the second Benchlearning cycle in 2018, recommendations from the Assessment Report have been analysed. The recommendations that will be incorporated in the Annual Plan 2019 are very much in line with existing developments in the field of:

Evidence based service delivery, which will contribute to:

- Effective service delivery for jobseekers.
- Enhancement of our role as a knowledge partner and knowledge centre.
- Enhancement of our accountability.

Employer Services with the emphasis on:

- Development of a broad advisory role.



- Investment in an inclusive labour market.
- Contribution to strengthen the regional cooperation.

### Norway

Based on the submitted change plan from July 2017 and the second cycle site visit in Norway in August 2018, NAV will focus on areas of improvement where both the help of the partners in the network as well as the assessment team may be of valuable assistance. There are several ongoing processes in NAV, such as the Reform Programme; which is based on two overarching initiatives:

- A new model for regional structure and the development of NAV offices. The aim is to strengthen our organisation, thus ensuring the ability to deliver better services and increase transitions to work.
- A new regional structure changing from 19 counties to 12 labour market regions, and on a more local level – municipalities will also merge over time. Two counties have merged into one new region in 2018. Steps are being taken to ensure that lessons from this merger can be used in succeeding mergers. A limited number of NAV offices have already merged or are in the process of doing so.

### Poland

In Poland, a visit within the second benchlearning cycle took place in June 2018. Currently, the results of the report and the recommendations included in the report are analysed by the Polish PES with regard to their potential use and the introduction of implementation activities, also in the context of planned legislative changes. Analysis of good examples of other countries indicated in the report is also planned. The report was distributed to all regional and local labour offices – for potential use. Results of the self-assessment will be discussed during the annual meeting with the employees of regional labour offices too.

### Portugal

Based on the results of the second Benchlearning visit in 2018, the PES has continued to keep the focus on understanding and anticipating its customers' expectations:

- The employer engagement strategy has been redefined – a new methodology is in force since last April and expected to enable a trustworthy and closer dialogue with employers. The aim is a better and timely understanding of employers' needs and consequently allow the PES to put forward an action plan that may help frame innovative schemes for better managing and coping with labour market transitions.
- Early intervention methodology to avoid risk of long term unemployment is steadily implemented and the online portal has been upgraded making it easier for customers to access available services.

### Romania

The European Commission and the EU PES network have continued their support for the development and modernisation of the Romanian PES in 2018. The Mutual Assistance Project helped to the PES analyse and identify the best practices for improving services for employers, for labour market analysis and forecasting models, an ESF project fiche being drafted and submitted for approval.

As a result of the Benchlearning exercise, recent developments can be noticed as regards jobseekers' profiling, introducing case management, improving the support measures for long-term unemployed and improving jobseeker's geographical mobility, expanding the support for apprenticeships and internships, while the national funding for ALMPs is better correlated with the financial resources allocated by the European Social Fund.

### Slovakia

Based on the results of the second Benchlearning visit, the Slovak PES has elaborated two new projects in cooperation with Slovak Academy of Science and with Slovak Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing:

- The first project with Science Academy is aimed at elaborating performance indicators for introducing key performance indicators and management by objectives to the local labour offices.
- The second project with Slovak Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing is establishing grounds for ISO certification preparation of public employment services and its subsequent certification to ISO 9001.

## Slovenia

Based on the results of the second Benchlearning visit in July 2017, the PES has focused on implementation of recommendations in the following areas:

- Renewal of fully integrated IT system with development of competence-based automatic matching and new portals for employers and job seekers, along with more systematic development of multi-channelling.
- Further development of performance management by emphasising the bottom-up approach in annual target setting and, planning of activities and innovations (pilot 'Room for ideas' in one RO).
- Strengthening the system of bilateral performance dialogue with RO and systematic exchange of good practices among organisational units.
- Introduction of Randomised Control Trial approach in piloting and evaluation.
- Better use of partnerships with key stakeholders.
- Development of new HRM IT system with competences and knowledge required for each working post.

## Spain

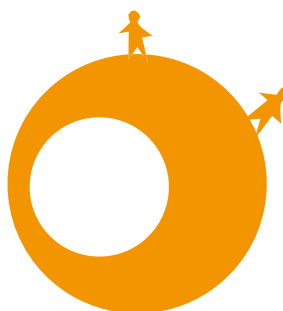
Still in the absence of the recommendations of the second Benchlearning site visit to Spain, last September, the National Employment System (NES) has focused on three main areas, led by SEPE and included in the Spanish Employment Activation Strategy 2017-20 and in the Change Agenda of the NES:

- Promote the sharing of best practices and mutual learning within the Spanish Public Employment Services.

- Modify some of the proposals in the 2017 Change Agenda, in accordance with the Benchlearning Recommendations for Spain, in relation to the National Reforms Programme 2018. In particular, the aim is to improve collaborations at local level between different agents and administrations, in order to prevent the risks of vulnerability and social exclusion, especially among young people and long-term unemployed.
- Within the framework of the internal Benchlearning and Mutual learning project in Spain for regional PES, and as a result of the activities from the second Benchlearning Cycle, the Spanish NES is working on the identification and dissemination of best practices, Benchmarking, among the Spanish Public Employment Services.

## Sweden

The second Benchlearning external assessment of Arbetsförmedlingen, the Swedish PES, took place in May 2018. Arbetsförmedlingen's Benchlearning working group and steering group prepared for the visit by completing the self-assessment and supporting colleagues for participation during the visit. During autumn 2018, the working group is responsible for reviewing the analysis and the recommendations in the assessment report in relation to our on-going reform process the Journey of Renewal and developing an action plan for how to integrate relevant recommendations and learning into business planning and development. Arbetsförmedlingen has chosen the recommendation about profiling and matching as the theme for the learning dialogues for 2019. The working group will also look at how to combine Benchlearning with the PES's own cluster analysis model, an internal/national Benchlearning model.



## Annex 3 – Mutual Learning Events and Evaluation

### Mutual Learning Events

Overall, 483 people participated in ML events during 2018, of whom 341 were PES representatives. ML activities supported PES leaders, managers and practitioners by:

#### Planning, delivering and supporting 17 learning activities in 2018:

- 2 Thematic Review Workshops on ‘Being digitally strategic’ and ‘Talent management: how to attract, retain and develop talent’.
- 3 Follow-up Visits from Thematic Review Workshops on ‘Being digitally strategic’, ‘Talent management: how to attract, retain and develop talent’ and ‘Engaging with and improving services to employers’. (The latter was rescheduled from the 2017 Work Programme and took place in early 2018).
- 1 PES Network Seminar on ‘Trends and developments in digitalisation and data analytics’ (scheduled to take place in January 2019).
- 2 Webinars linked to the topic of the future of work on ‘Agility of PES organisations’ and ‘The future of work: implications and responses by the PES Network’.
- 3 Mutual Assistance Projects to the Cypriot, Italian and Spanish PES.
- 3 Working Groups on: ‘The future of work’, ‘Increasing PES connections & the use of analytics’ and ‘Strategic HRM’.
- 2 Study Visits on: ‘Cité des Métiers: a practice to be transferred?’ and ‘Methods of quality management’.
- 1 PES Network Conference on ‘The future of work and the PES of tomorrow’.

#### Developing and/or publishing 72 learning resources in 2018:

- 1 Analytical Paper on ‘Addressing automation: how do PES act to prevent unemployment?’.
- 1 Position Paper on ‘PES awareness and ability to face change’.
- 2 Practitioner’s Starting Guides on ‘Creating digital strategies’ and ‘Using KPIs’.
- 1 Summary Report from a Conference on ‘The future of work and the PES of tomorrow’.

- 2 Summary Reports from Study Visits on ‘Cité des Métiers: a practice to be transferred?’ and ‘Methods of quality management’.
- 2 Thematic Papers from Thematic Review Workshops on ‘Being digitally strategic’ and ‘Talent management: how to attract, retain and develop talent’.
- 3 Summary Reports from Follow-up Visits on ‘Being digitally strategic’, ‘Talent management: how to attract, retain and develop talent’ and ‘Engaging with and improving services to employers’. (The latter was rescheduled from the 2017 Work Programme and it took place in early 2018).
- 60 PES practices. (This includes those from 2017 that were finalised and published in 2018, as well as all those that were published or were in the process of being published in 2018).

#### Enhancing the web presence of the PES Network:

- Maintenance of the PES Knowledge Centre to disseminate the key outputs and learning resources of the Network.
- Maintenance of the PES Practice Repository, as a searchable, growing directory of PES practices.

#### Evaluation results released in 2018

Evaluation surveys continuously informed the development of ML activities and helped to identify their benefits and impact for PES. A full evaluation report was produced in December 2018, covering surveys of activities which took place in 2018. This section presents the evaluation results from 2018.

#### Evaluation of activities taking place in 2018 (published in 2018)

The results from the evaluation of the 2018 activities demonstrate that the **strategic objectives** for PES Mutual Learning were met throughout the implementation of activities in 2018, by delivering learning activities and supporting material with a strong focus on:

- Providing thematic support to PES in relation to macro-organisational issues, including better anticipation of future requirements from the PES services, increased agility of the PES to respond to changing demand for their services, more empowerment of PES staff

across the organisational levels to respond to the changes and improved partnerships with the key stakeholders such as employers.

- Making sharing of good practice an integral part of all the activities and the thematic support provided to PES, right from the moment of preparing discussion papers, through to facilitation methods on the day of learning events – followed by Analytical Papers, Summary Reports and Practitioners' Toolkits.

In 2018, **operational objectives** for PES Mutual Learning were also met, notably by:

- Redesigning the learning groups for Thematic Review Workshops. A greater focus was placed on providing more targeted group activities and this took into account the different organisational development stages of each PES. This ensured more targeted learning outcomes for participating PES by grouping PES according to their organisational needs.
- Mutual Learning activities were communicated to the PES Network and other relevant labour market stakeholders, as well as the wider stakeholders through the PES website, the PES Network newsletter and more recently, via the Collaborative Platform. The PES Network newsletter reflected PES 'success stories', testimonies of learning experiences, the latest publications and a timetable of the Benchmarking site visits and activities in 2018.
- Mutual Learning activities stimulated, informed and supported organisational learning, initiatives and changes within PES. Within each Mutual Learning activity, any practices presented highlighted the challenges and success factors (echoed in the PES practices available online) as well as these demonstrated how specific barriers (such as resources, political support and engagement from stakeholders or target groups) can be addressed – and thus appealed to all PES, no matter what stage of 'development'. Mutual Learning events provided PES with practical tools and techniques to take home to their organisations as shown through practical in-depth discussions. In addition, Follow-up Visits and Study Visits continued the sequential learning experience for those Thematic Review Workshop attendees and provided an opportunity to look in focus at one approach.

**Survey results from all 2018 activities** show that most participants felt the objectives related to cooperation between PES and stakeholders through

peer-to-peer activities were met 'highly' or 'very highly', notably:

- Providing the opportunity to identify learning points and practices which were relevant to participants' organisation (92%) (compared to 87% in the 2017/2018 evaluation period);
- Allowing for critical self-reflection and comparative assessment of PES strategies and practices (86%) (compared to 84% in the 2017/2018 evaluation period).
- Providing the opportunity to exchange information and experiences (93%) (compared to 98% in the 2017/2018 evaluation period); and
- Encouraging networking and the identification of further opportunities for Mutual Learning (87%) (compared to 93% in the 2017/2018 evaluation period).

The **content** of Mutual Learning events and the material disseminated through the PES webpages were deemed 'highly' or 'very highly' relevant by the majority of participants and users, notably:

- With regard to the content, Mutual Learning activities were deemed highly or very highly relevant by the majority of participants and users; 100% of participants considered the overall content across several Mutual Learning activities to be relevant (compared to 99% in the 2017/2018 evaluation period);

Survey results also show how most participants felt that the objectives related to **learning methods** were met 'highly' or 'very highly', notably:

73% of participants held the view that events helped to provide guidance and practical tools on to how to embed the learning in their organisation (compared to 78% in the 2017/2018 evaluation period).

- Providing them with guidance and practical tools on how to embed the learning in their organisation (73%) (compared to 73% in the 2017/2018 evaluation period).
- 88% of participants found that the practices presented at events highlighted key success factors and challenges (compared to 88% in the 2017/2018 evaluation year).

There were positive signs that PES were not only sharing and identifying good practices, but also actively **following-up on their participation in learning events**. PES have communicated results

and key messages from learning activities *within* their own organisations or with their immediate stakeholders. Results from onsite and post-event surveys showed that PES participants in learning activities communicated and disseminated the information and learning from ML events to their colleagues. In many cases, the preparation of reports and feedback after an ML activity is an essential component for PES participants (with clear instructions from their PES for reports, notes or presentations from learning events). This demonstrates the commitment and 'buy-in' of PES in being actively involved in events and considering how the learning points can be taken forward within their own contexts. Additionally, the evaluation activities highlighted that feedback is often shared within teams and to the senior managers and directors where the learning can be considered alongside their current approaches or ideas. The evaluation activities highlighted that some PES use the information to reconsider their current approaches or, in some cases, to take the learning forward as a basis for new provision or approaches.

### Evaluation of activities taking place since 2015 (to be published in 2019)

In 2018, there was an enhanced approach to the monitoring and evaluation of ML activities. The focus of the enhanced evaluation was to understand the potential impact of ML activities, with the acknowledgement that some changes and reforms (and the degree to which they have been taken up) are also often influenced by Benchlearning activities, such as site visits and other external factors.

As part of the enhanced approach to monitoring and evaluation in 2018, the following activities were completed:

- Third stage qualitative interviews with PES who attended the learning sequence of a Thematic Review Workshop plus a Follow-up Visit in 2015 (building a continuum with interviews undertaken with 2015 cohorts in 2017 already);
- An online ML participant survey, implemented between May and June 2018;
- Follow-up interviews with the respondents to the ML participant survey who agreed to such an interview to be undertaken during summer 2018; and
- Case studies to explore the impact of ML activities in three PES (Cyprus, Denmark and

Lithuania), for which additional interviews with PES staff and desk research were conducted.

The results of the enhanced evaluation and monitoring was presented in a report to DG EMPL in December 2018. This covered the evaluation participants' view of ML activities and learning materials and it also looked at the types of changes that have taken place as well as the barriers to and enablers for change.

The findings demonstrate that **participants are generally very satisfied** with ML activities and that the available resources are useful in the development of changes, initiatives and reforms in PES. This included:

- 72% said that the learning topic during the ML activity they attended was relevant to their PES' strategic priorities at the time;
- 69% rated the PES Practices learning resources as useful or very useful in the development of changes, initiatives or reforms in their PES;
- 56% rated the summary reports of ML activities as useful or very useful in the development of changes, initiatives or reforms in their PES; and
- 55% rated background papers or thematic papers, as useful or very useful in the development of changes, initiatives or reforms in their PES.

The evaluation also found that the extent to which PES **apply learning to initiate change** or support existing reforms differs. Knowledge from ML activities was used by 70% of respondents, and around a third of respondents reported that ML activities allowed a new change or influenced an existing change in their PES.

The **types of change** that have occurred often related to concrete and specific operational changes. These include:

- Development of new measures for young people and the long-term unemployed;
- Development and launch of evaluations of ALMPs;
- Redesign approaches to measuring customer satisfaction; and
- Redevelopment of web based resources.

Other types of change include:

- An increased knowledge base;

- Changes to a strategic approach;
- Changes in priorities among senior or middle management; and
- Raised awareness of a specific topic or approach.

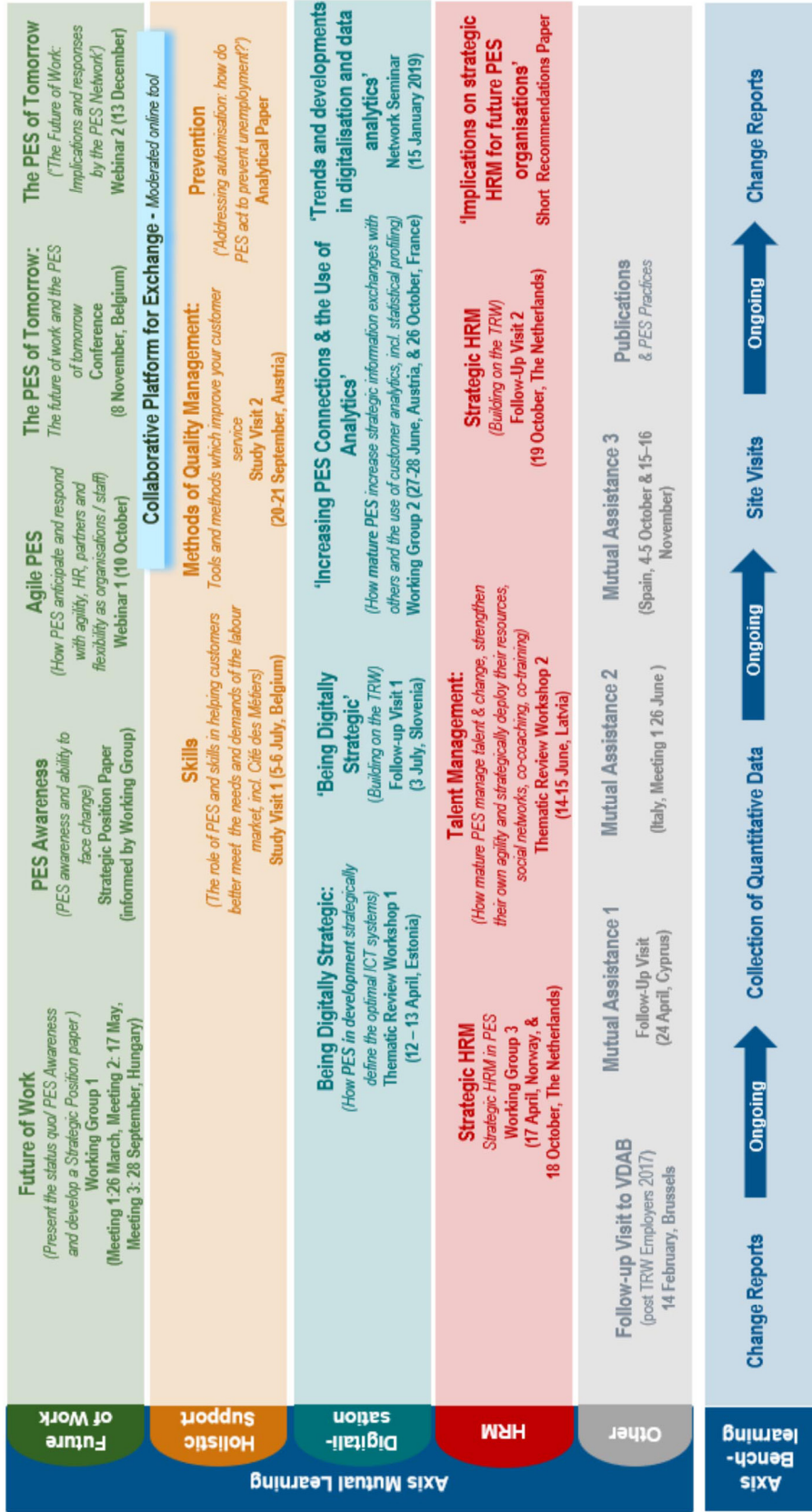
The evaluation identified a number of concrete PES examples, showing how the PES are applying the ML to instigate or support the ongoing reforms, including examples of significant changes identified in the detailed case studies. The number of changes and their depth indicate that the changes observed were not a one-off occurrence, but part of the broader pattern of using the Benchlearning to both initiate parts of and support the implementation of the ongoing PES reform agenda. The evaluation highlighted that time is a very important factor in taking the learning forward after an ML activity and thus initiating and achieving change.

In terms of **taking forward change**, PES reported that internally there are many different enablers and barriers to allow this to be taken forward. Over 60% of PES said that internal factors such as a fit within strategic PES priorities and commitment from leadership to change are the top factors in implementing change.

Finally, it is also important to recognise the **barriers to change**. PES reported that the lack of human and financial resources are the top barriers to change taking place. In addition, changing national priorities also influence whether change can take place.

# Annex 4 – Work Programme 2018

## PES Network Work Programme 2018



**WG A**

1<sup>st</sup> Benchmarking Working Group Meeting

01-02/03/2018

21-22/02/2018

**B**

PES Network Board Meeting

07-08/06/2018

**A**

2<sup>nd</sup> AFEPA's Meeting

11-12/10/2018

**WG**

2<sup>nd</sup> Benchmarking Working Group Meeting

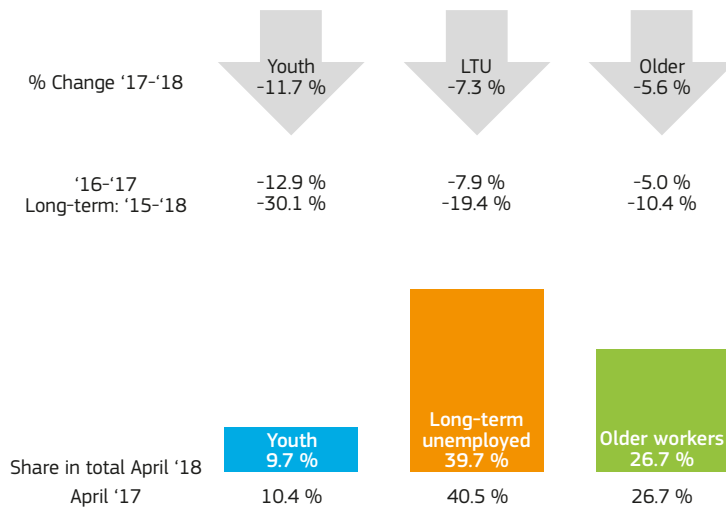
21-22/11/2018

**B**

PES Network Board Meeting

10-11/12/2018

## Annex 5 – PES Capacity Questionnaire Figures



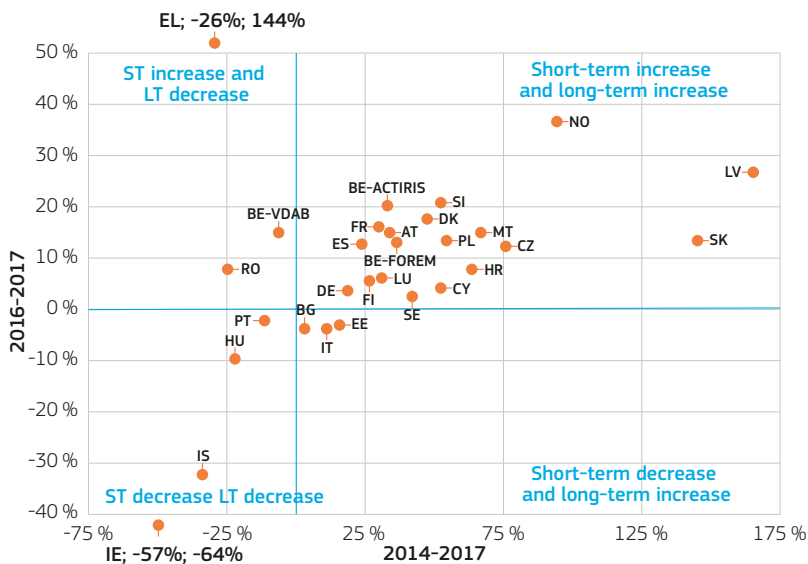
**Figure 1: The development in the presence of specific groups and in their share of the total number of job-seeking clients over time**

Source: Responses to PES Capacity questionnaires 2017 and 2018.

Note: No, insufficient or not compatible data for HU, IT and NL for young people and LTU; no, insufficient or not compatible data for EL, HU, IT and NL for older workers (data provided are (partly) not compatible with the requested information and definitions).

People may belong to more than one category e.g. long-term unemployed young people or older long-term unemployed people.

All data refer to 30th April. If this data was not available, PES chose the definition that most closely approximated this date.



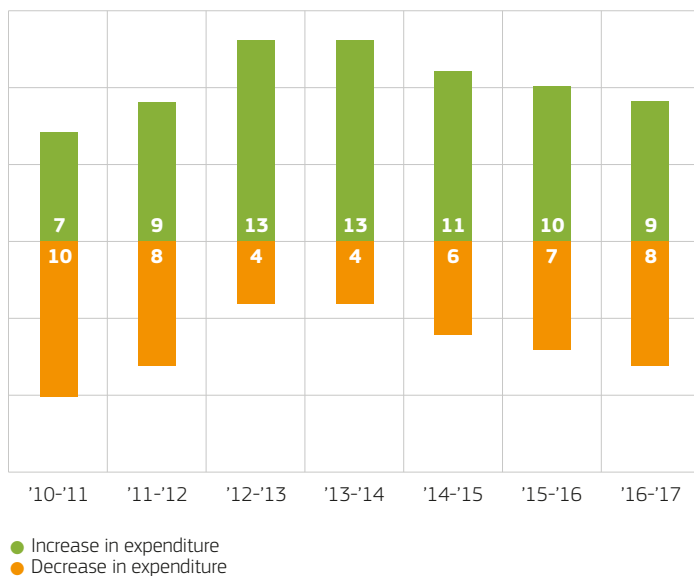
**Figure 2: Longer-term change in the number of vacancies (2014-2017) compared to the most recent short-term change (2016-2017)**

Source: PES data provided via PES data collection for the Benchmarking project, 2018.

Note: The numbers refer to the annual average of the number of vacancies notified each month.

No or not compatible data for IT and NL (data provided are (partly) not compatible with the requested information and definitions).

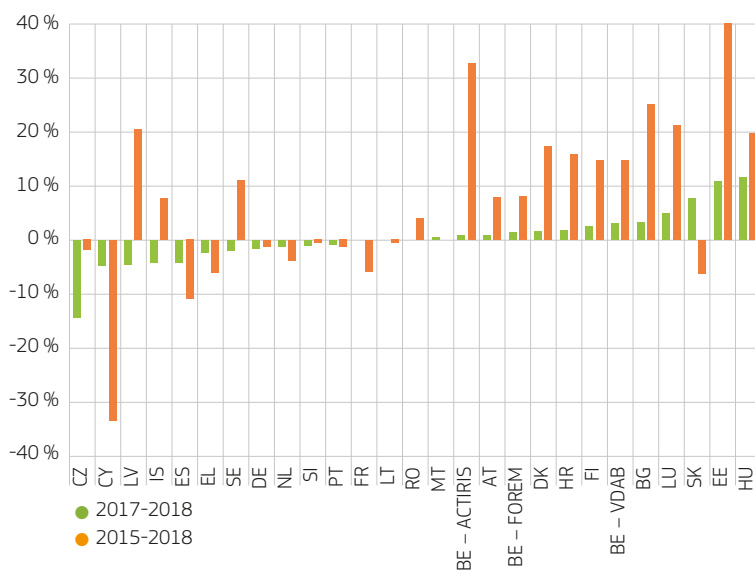




**Figure 3: The number of PES reporting changes in total expenditure, excluding benefits paid and pro forma expenditure, 2010-2016**

Source: PES data provided via PES data collection for the Benchmarking project, 2018.

Note: 17 PES. No, insufficient or not compatible information for BE-FOREM, CY, DE, EE, EL, ES, HU, IS, IT, MT, NL, NO, PL and RO (data provided are (partly) not compatible with the requested information and definitions).

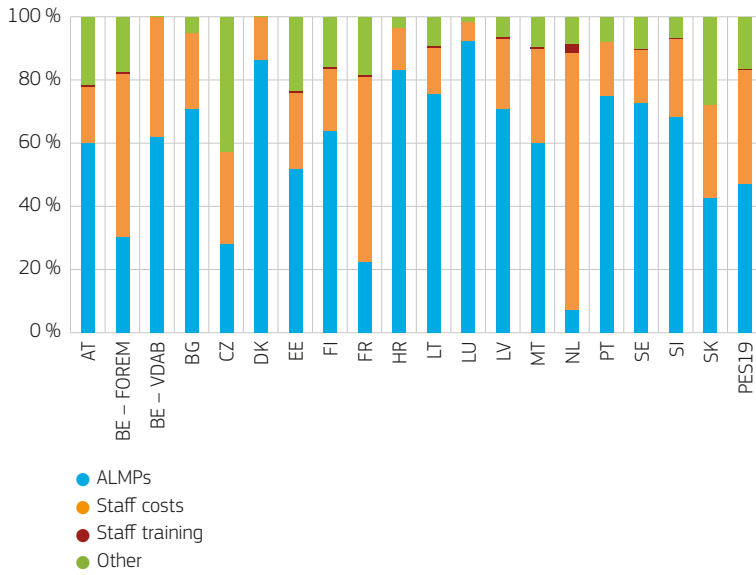


**Figure 4: Percentage change in the number of staff last year, April 2017 – April 2018 and longer term trends, April 2015 – April 2018**

Source: Responses to PES Capacity Report questionnaires 2015-2018.

Note: Based on 27 PES, insufficient or not compatible data available for IE, IT, NO and PL (data provided are (partly) not compatible with the requested information and definitions).

All data refer to 30th April or the closest date to this date for which data were available in a PES.



**Figure 5: Expenditure by item in 2017, as a percentage of total expenditure excluding benefit payments and pro forma budget items**

Source: PES data provided via PES data collection for the Benchmarking project, 2018.

Note: No, insufficient or not compatible information for BE-ACTIRIS, CY, DE, EL, ES, HU, IS, IE, IT, NO, PL and RO (data provided are (partly) not compatible with the requested information and definitions).

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