



ANNUAL REPORT

EUROPEAN NETWORK OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (PES)



JANUARY - DECEMBER 2020

Social Europe



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Directorate B — Employment

Unit B.1 — Employment Strategy

Contact: PES Secretariat

E-mail: EMPL-PES-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu

European Commission

B-1049 Brussels

ANNUAL REPORT

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

LEGAL NOTICE

The information and views set out in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein. More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://www.europa.eu>).

EN PDF

ISBN 978-92-76-28597-7

doi: 10.2767/52896

KE-EX-21-001-EN-N

Manuscript completed in December 2020

The European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020

© European Union, 2020



The reuse policy of European Commission documents is implemented by the Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). Except otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective rightholders. The European Union does not own the copyright in relation to the following elements:
Cover: abstract elements; source: freepik.com

Table of contents

<i>Foreword</i>	1
1. Introduction	2
1.1 PES Network Update	3
1.2 Overview of PES Network Work Programme 2020	3
2. PES Support for Implementation of Policy Initiatives	5
2.1 Future of Work and Digitalisation	5
2.2 PES Response to the COVID-19 Crisis	6
2.3 Long-term Unemployed	7
2.4 Support to Youth	7
2.5 Activation of the Inactive	8
2.6 Research and Studies on PES Topics	8
3. PES Modernisation	10
3.1 Benchlearning	10
3.2 Mutual Learning – the Concept and Activities	12
3.3 Mutual Assistance	14
4. Performance Capacity Overview	16
4.1 2020 Assessment Report on PES Capacity	16
4.2 Integrated Services for LTU	19
5. Concluding Remarks	21
6. Annexes	22



Acronyms

AFEPAs – Advisors for European PES Affairs

ALMP – active labour market policies

BL – Benchlearning

EMCO – European Employment Committee

ESF – European Social Fund

FTE – full-time equivalent(s)

GMI – Guaranteed Minimum Income

IAB – Institute for Employment Research

IAP – Individual Action Plan

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

JIA – Job Integration Agreement

LTU – long-term unemployed

MAP – Mutual Assistance Project

ML – Mutual Learning

NEETs – ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’

PES – Public Employment Services

SMEs – small- and medium-sized enterprises

SPOC – single point of contact

STW – short-term work schemes

TLD – Thematic Learning Dialogue

TRW – Thematic Review Workshop

WG – Working Group

YES – Youth Employment Support

YG – Youth Guarantee

Foreword

2020 has been a challenging year, and one in which the PES Network has shown its strengths and fortitude. The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has given rise to major economic and social disruption. Unemployment has increased and many people are still on short-term work schemes. The PES have a key role to play in cushioning the employment impacts of the crisis. These challenges are unprecedented, but the PES are proving their readiness to meet them.

The 2019 evaluation of the PES Network had already demonstrated the Network's flexibility in targeting new topics. This flexibility has been underlined this year, and has been key to handling the situation. When the pandemic first hit hard in early March, the Network was well on track with implementing its 2020 Work Programme activities. Since March, face-to-face meetings – an important part of the Network's activities – have not been possible. Priorities have shifted from supporting medium- and long-term structural changes and challenges, to implementing immediate action to address the crisis.

The 2020 Work Programme switched to digital formats, giving priority to exchanges and learning about how to mitigate the labour market impacts of the crisis. New learning formats were introduced, and we had to adapt our flagship activity – Benchlearning – as the third cycle of site visits was put on hold due to the imposition of travel restrictions. We developed a virtual assessment model that has already been conducted successfully twice. In spite of these advances, we all hope that we will meet again soon face to face: the switch to virtual contact cannot replace personal meetings. It is thanks to the commitment and engagement of all our members, from all

over Europe, that we have achieved our targets and delivered results this year. These efforts have been rewarded and supported by the Decision taken by the European Parliament and the Council to extend the legal basis for the Network until 2027. With this new mandate, PES Network members will continue to have access to a pool of knowledge and experience, with the shared objective of better supporting our customers – jobseekers and employers.

This Decision ensures the continuity of the Network. It also takes on board new priorities at the European level, such as support to reach the objectives of the European Pillar for Social Rights, the European Green Deal and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, priorities that have already been included in the Network's 2021 Work Programme. In addition to PES support for recovery, the agenda includes topics related to future skills and career guidance, support for vulnerable groups, anti-discrimination and the fight against racism in the labour market, and gender equality.

As Chair of our Network, I would like to thank all my colleagues for their commitment. It has been impressive to witness their willingness to maintain activities and ability to draw on the Network even during a time of profound crisis. To conclude, 'It's better together'.

JOHANNES KOPF

*Chair, European Network of
Public Employment Services*

*Managing Director, AMS
(Austrian Public Employment Service)*

1. Introduction

This sixth Annual Report of the European Network of Public Employment Services (PES Network) covers the activities of the Network from January to December 2020. The ability to adapt the activities of the Network to **the COVID-19 pandemic** demonstrates that the PES Network has achieved a high degree of awareness as regards the institutional needs and capacity of exchange and learning. This has enabled PES to pursue modernisation and increasing co-operation between European PES, supporting the PES in crisis management as well as preparation for the future.

The PES Network yearly adopts an **Annual Work Programme**, which is based on learning needs, outcomes from previous Work Programmes and requests from the PES and EU institutions, and agreed upon by all members of the Network. In 2020, the Work Programme addressed strategic policy areas such as new forms of work, digitalisation and structural changes. It also intended to further support PES modernisation and improve PES performance in operational matters such as PES service delivery, as well as strengthening PES visibility.

A central part of the Network's activities relates to the **Benchlearning** exercise. This project combines the concepts of Benchmarking and Mutual Learning (ML) with the aim of improving the performance of PES. The composition of the Mutual Learning activities are based on PES' learning needs, taking into account the results achieved through Benchmarking and the previous years of Mutual Learning. 2020 was to have been dedicated to the third cycle of Benchlearning. The plans were radically changed because of the pandemic, which did not allow face-to-face assessments. The reference model (Excellence Model) was revised to include a new section on risk and crisis management.

Online assessments of two PES demonstrate that the format is adaptable to changing and difficult contexts. One of the subjects discussed during the assessment was how recommendations from the previous Benchlearning cycle have helped in managing the crisis.

Moreover, looking at the **capacity of the PES**, the annual PES capacity review demonstrates that the priorities and allocation of resources have changed because of the pandemic. Almost half the PES have already adjusted objectives or targets to COVID-19. Although there are differences across countries, the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in PES has overall been decreasing in the EU since 2016. However, for 2020, only four PES¹ planned to decrease their staff numbers. For some PES, the planned staff increases are directly related to the need to manage the increased workload due to COVID-19. Other PES report changes in the *allocation* of their staff for similar reasons.

In 2020, the Council and the European Parliament approved a proposal from the Commission to prolong the period of establishment of the Network until 31 December 2027. **Decision (EU) 2020/1782²** is based on an evaluation concluding that the Network promotes co-operation among PES, and helps them boost their performance and prepare for future labour market challenges. It provides a platform for comparing PES performance at European level, identifying good practice and establishing a Mutual Learning system. The Work Programme 2021 will be framed in line with the new Decision, continuing learning, exchange and identification of good practice. The outcomes of the PES Network activities can be found at the **PES Knowledge Centre** and **PES practices** websites³.

1 Out of 27 for which this information is available

2 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020D1782&qid=1606741261195>

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

1.1 PES Network Update

Change of Vice-Chair

Following the departure of the Network's first Vice-Chair, Ms Ligita Valalyté, Head of the Lithuanian PES, the Board brought forward the mandate of Mr Spiros Protosaltis, Head of the Greek PES, as first Vice-Chair for the period 19 May 2020 to 31 December 2021.

PES Network Decision

Decision 573/2014/EU establishes the PES Network from 17 June 2014 until 31 December 2020. The Network's geographical scope is the Member States of the EU, Iceland and Norway. The Network was set up to contribute to the European employment strategy to create more and better jobs, as an integral part of the Europe 2020 growth strategy. Relevant chapters of the European Pillar of Social Rights have also guided the setting of the Network's initiatives and actions. The Network promotes co-operation among PES, and helps them boost their performance and prepare for future labour market challenges. It provides a platform for comparing PES performance at European level, identifying good practice and establishing a Mutual Learning system.

The European Parliament and the Council agreed in 2020 on a proposal⁴ from the Commission to prolong the period of establishment of the Network until 31 December 2027. The proposal is based on positive assessments of the functioning of the Network, as confirmed through findings of a comprehensive evaluation⁵ and consultations with citizens and stakeholders.

Decision 2020/1782 ensures a continuation of the successful work of the Network. The Decision reflects the new political priorities in EU with references to the Sustainable Development Goals, the European Green Deal and the European Pillar of Social Rights. PES are crucial to deliver on the Pillar principle 4 on active support to employment. Topical issues as career guidance, the employability of jobseekers, prevention of unemployment, gender equality and the integration of workers with disabilities are also explicitly highlighted. The initiatives of the Network will also address challenges related to digitalisation, the changing world of work and work patterns, as well as demographic changes.

1.2 Overview of PES Network Work Programme 2020

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, and to promote PES modernisation and support individual PES to enhance their contribution to the implementation of the EU2020 Strategy.

Benchmarking, Mutual Learning and PES Network Governance are key to the implementation of the Work Programme 2020 (see Annex 1).

Benchmarking

During the past five years, the Benchmarking (BL) initiative has been at the core of the PES Network, anchored in the PES Network Decision. With two cycles of self-assessments followed by peer-PES external assessments, it adds value to all PES and to the Network as such, being the evidence-based starting point for Mutual Learning activities in the Network and for improving the performance of each PES.

The implementation of the third Benchmarking cycle, beginning in 2020, had to be interrupted after the first pilot assessment in Latvia in early March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further activities in 2020 have concentrated on adjusting the concept for the third-cycle of assessments, with the aim of keeping the full stocktaking and comparability of the first two cycles and adding a new focus on topics related to crisis management. In addition, two online assessments were successfully piloted in autumn 2020 in Bulgaria and Lithuania.

PES Network Governance

Network Governance is conducted by the PES Network Board and Advisors for European PES Affairs (AFEPAs). The PES Network Board is assisted by a Secretariat provided by and based within the European Commission⁶. 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 AFEPAs. The PES Secretariat can be reached at EMPL-PES-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu.

4 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1568194911042&uri=COM:2019:620:FIN>

5 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=21549&langId=en>

6 DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Unit B1 Employment Strategy

PES Network Board Meetings Summary

The PES Network Board held two meetings in 2020, on 5 June and 7–8 December:

- At the online June meeting hosted by the Croatian Presidency, specific topics for discussion were the impact of COVID-19 on the EU PES and adjustments of the PES Network Work Programme 2020 in the wake of the crisis. The Board decided to try out a new exchange format for PES on crisis-related topics entitled 'PES Jour Fixe'.
- The Board also decided to stop the physical Benchlearning site visits until the end of 2020 because of the pandemic, and to pilot one or two online assessments in autumn 2020 on a voluntary basis.
- At the online December meeting hosted by the German Presidency, specific topics for discussion were Europe's recovery and the role of PES in supporting this recovery. A presentation of the pandemic as a catalyst for the digitalisation of the world of work was followed by a marketplace, where selected PES presented their activities in this field. The Board also approved the PES Network Work Programme 2021. This included a decision to take up again the third cycle of Benchlearning assessments in a digital format.

Meetings of the Advisors for European PES Affairs

The AFEPA's used to meet physically twice a year in advance of Board meetings to review Network activities and progress on the delivery of the Work Programme, and formulate draft positions on current issues in advance of subsequent Board discussion. In 2020, the meetings were held online only, and their frequency was increased to support exchange and updates on crisis-related topics. Advisors met online on 12 March, 21 April, 28 May, 10 September, 15 October and 12 November.

PES Knowledge Centre/PES Practices/PES Network Newsletter

The PES Knowledge Centre website⁷ 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 to offer tools to learn from the experiences from other countries for PES, researchers, stakeholders and citizens. Throughout 2020, 18 new resources were published in the Knowledge Centre. In the PES practices database⁸ inspiring practices from PES across Europe can be found, with nine new practices added in 2020. The selected practices focus on issues such as career guidance, vocational training and recognition of professional competence. In 2020, the PES Network published three newsletters. The newsletter can be received by subscribing to the PES Network Secretariat EMPL-PES-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu and is also uploaded on the European Commission PES website⁹. The European Commission PES website is actively used to disseminate news and information from the Network. Moreover, extra news, social media and recommended reading and regular in-depth analysis of key EU labour market issues are available on the <https://www.pes-network.eu/> website. This is an interactive complement to the existing Commission webpage.

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

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

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

2. PES Support for Implementation of Policy Initiatives

2.1 Future of Work and Digitalisation

The future of work continued in 2020 to be a central work strand with various activities. Over recent years, the world of work has changed, with employment opportunities now emerging in new technology sectors and the strong digitalisation of a large number of professions. The dramatic events brought about by the COVID-19 crisis shifted priorities quickly to short-term concerns. Structural change through job destruction and job creation is a longer term process, but even in the present shock, some structural changes are already happening or will occur soon. PES Network activities on this topic in 2020 have therefore aimed at taking into account both the immediate next steps and the more persistent and ongoing structural changes.

New Forms of Work

A PES Network Working Group on 'new forms of work' has looked into the growing relevance of platform work in the current and future labour market. An increasingly digital and globalised world has affected traditional employment relationships. Though still relatively small as a proportion of all employment, the incidence of platform work is growing and a reality for many European citizens. This new form of work is challenging traditional work patterns in many ways and the European Commission has urged Member States and their institutions, including PES, to search for strategies to benefit from its opportunities and to cope with its challenges. Categories of platform workers have been among the most exposed during the pandemic crisis.

The outcomes of the Working Group include a background paper¹⁰ and an opinion paper¹¹ on platform work, which was adopted by the Board and shared with the Council and the European Parliament as input to the ongoing discussions of this topic. The opinion paper sets out a number of ideas and suggestions to adapt regulatory and support systems, thus recognising that platform work offers both opportunities and challenges for workers.

In the second part of its work, the Working Group focused on the PES role in modernising the labour market and managing structural change and preparing for post-COVID-19 labour market challenges. A further background paper¹² and a contribution to the recovery strategy¹³ was adopted by the Board presenting some recommendations on key activities and measures to ensure that the PES can fulfil their role in the recovery. This includes sufficient budgets, further ICT investments, new strategies for service delivery, up- and reskilling of the workforce, partnerships, as well as review and adaptations of relevant legal frameworks.

PES Support for Structural Changes

The PES Network organised in 2020 an online webinar and seminar to discuss the role of public employment services in identifying and supporting structural changes in the labour market through measures such as increased anticipation, expertise and partnerships.

The Network seminar highlighted the important role of PES in addressing effectively structural changes in the labour market. In particular, they can add value through measures aimed at: (i) identifying upcoming changes; (ii) meeting new skills requirements; and (iii) mitigating the im-

10 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22851&langId=en>

11 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22850&langId=en>

12 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23234&langId=en>

13 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23271&langId=en>

pect of mass redundancies. Discussions suggested that PES can usefully broaden their scope of action to include further preventive as well as proactive measures targeting both companies and workers. Recommended actions included: intensive co-operation with individual companies or interventions for specific sectors, developing tailored approaches for supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and vulnerable groups, and engaging in continuous co-operation with other key actors.

The outcome of the event was a thematic paper¹⁴ available in the PES Knowledge Centre. It puts into perspective the progressive shift of PES' roles from curative and ex-post interventions to anticipatory and proactive measures with a different focus: forecasting and anticipating the activities of PES, the role of PES in supporting structural changes in a preventive way, dealing with mass redundancies, whether potential or occurring, and the consequences of such evolutions on the way PES provide and combine their services, either internally or along with other partners. The paper flags the importance of preventive measures, the necessity for PES to provide reliable information on labour markets, and to play the role of co-ordinator on the labour market, in particular in the territories and to assist SMEs. It was also presented and discussed at the PES Network Board meeting in December 2020.

EU Innovation Lab for PES

A PES Network seminar in January 2020 presented and discussed the outcomes of a Working Group in 2019 that elaborated a concept for a PES EU Innovation Lab, including an implementation plan, a set of objectives, how it would be set up and the subject matter it would deal with. Following the changing priorities due to the pandemic, the originally envisaged piloting of lab sessions was put on hold for 2020 and 2021. However, in order to keep this activity current, a meeting of the EU Innovation Lab team will be organised by the PES Secretariat in the first semester of 2021.

2.2 PES Response to the COVID-19 Crisis

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health measures have had a major impact on economic activity and the labour market. PES have a key role in responding to the emerging labour market situation, through immediate actions as well as support for the recovery. Moreover, PES need to ensure safe working conditions for their own staff and safe delivery of services, in light of the imposed challenges due to sanitary conditions. A major activity for the PES Network in 2020 has been to map, share and analyse measures and activities implemented by PES to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis and to prepare for the recovery of the labour market. The activities have explored how PES are responding to the COVID-19 crisis, in particular (i) the measures that are preventing unemployment (supporting employers); (ii) the measures that are addressing jobseekers; and (iii) the measures/elements of measures that are preparing for the recovery phase and potential structural labour market changes.

Regular updates from PES on implemented labour policy measures to cushion the effects of COVID-19 have facilitated timely sharing of information across the member PES, and also served as important input to other activities and for stakeholders.

To support PES needs to swiftly adapt service delivery and support the recovery after the crisis, a series of five webinars have been delivered on the topics of: i) how PES can develop or adapt effective methods for planning and distributing capacities to meet urgent needs generated by the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁵; ii) analysing labour market needs and skills requirements in the context of the COVID-19 crisis¹⁶; iii) PES support for recovery;¹⁷ iv) services to SMEs¹⁸; and v) support to vulnerable groups¹⁹. These webinars attracted many participants with various institutional backgrounds. The webinars have served as a forum for contact with, and involvement of, a broad group of partners and stakeholders. This has been important in a period when other traditional events, such as the annual stakeholder conference, are put on hold.

14 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23004&langId=en>

15 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1644&furtherEvents=yes>

16 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1662&furtherEvents=yes>

17 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1672&furtherEvents=yes>

18 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1740&furtherEvents=yes>

19 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1757&furtherEvents=yes>

Based on the accumulated information, the Network has published a study²⁰ looking into differences and common issues in the design of measures to meet the crisis, their potential impact and the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the organisation of work, processes and crisis management at PES. The overview demonstrates that short-term work schemes (STW) so far are the most important measure in terms of labour market policies.

The take-up rates are higher than under previous crises and new countries have implemented the measure. Further research can be expected to increase the knowledge about the impacts of these schemes, and particularly during the COVID-19 crisis. To provide a baseline and informational input, the Network has also published a stocktaking survey providing an overview of: i) STW schemes and their principal characteristics; ii) comparative data on national levels and trends in uptake and expenditure in EU countries; iii) experience of combining training with short-time work; and iv) the main findings of evaluation research on STW schemes²¹.

actions to tackle long-term unemployment, in particular in terms of integrated services and SPOC, provide input to Benchlearning activities, and complement quantitative and qualitative monitoring done by the European Employment Committee (EMCO). PES play an important role in implementing single and co-ordinated support to the long-term unemployed (LTU).

European countries have put in place some measures in line with the Recommendation concerning the SPOC. In the majority of the European countries, an institution has been appointed or identified as a SPOC (usually PES or PES in co-operation with other partners). All PES work in close co-operation with a variety of partners, at national and local level.

But there is also room for improvement to ensure full operationalisation and to strengthen the capacity to deliver integrated and co-ordinated support to LTU. The key for all necessary improvements is the capacity of main actors to steer and lead integration across several organisations. This calls for changes that are often structural and require political backing.

2.3 Long-term Unemployed

The EU Council adopted in 2016 the *Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market* to support Member States in their efforts to reduce long-term unemployment and to help people back into sustainable jobs. The Recommendation requested that the PES Network contribute to the monitoring of its implementation.

In response, in 2016, the PES Network designed and adopted a set of minimum, intermediate and advanced quality standards for implementing a single point of contact (SPOC) and a Job Integration Agreement (JIA). As part of its 2020 Work Programme, the PES Network continued the monitoring of the implementation of the Council Recommendation on long-term unemployment by the PES within its PES capacity survey (see section 4.2). This monitoring focused on the delivery of integrated services and the SPOC. The aim is to support qualitative monitoring and analysis of PES

2.4 Support to Youth

Every year since 2014, more than 3.5 million young people have been covered by Youth Guarantee (YG) schemes, taking up job offers, or going into continued education, traineeships or apprenticeships. Young people's labour market performance has improved in recent years. However, too many young people are still at risk of being excluded from the labour market, and have been hard hit by the crisis. A reinforced YG was presented in 2020 as part of the Youth Employment Support (YES) package²², one of the priorities of the European Commission. The YES package emphasises that the PES play a crucial role through their long-standing experience in the fields of career transition management, placement, continuing professional development, upskilling and reskilling. Based on PES experience as one of the main implementing institutions of the YG, the PES Network published an opinion paper²³ to contribute to the reinforced YG.

20 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22859&langId=en>

21 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22758&langId=en>

22 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_.2020.372.01.0001.01.EN-G&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2020%3A372%3ATOC

23 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22519&langId=en>

2.5 Activation of the Inactive

In the context of the rapidly ageing population and in view of current and future labour shortages, it has become increasingly important to activate specific sub-groups of the economically inactive population (those neither employed nor unemployed) to ensure a sufficient labour supply, to secure the financial stability of social security systems and to promote social inclusion and a more inclusive labour market.

As the inactive population is not a traditional target group for most PES, the Network organised a thematic review workshop²⁴ in 2020 to gain new insights and to learn about good practice and expertise to activate the inactive population willing to work. The aim was to provide an overview of the size and composition of the economically inactive population and to explore the main institutional and individual barriers that people outside the labour market must face in taking up employment. The workshop also focused on sub-groups of the inactive population central to current policy discussions and reported on the approaches of the participating PES to support the activation of the relevant target groups.

2.6 Research and Studies on PES Topics²⁵

The Role of PES in Talent Recruitment from Third Countries

Most EU Member States suffer from a long-term shortage of skilled labour in various sectors due to demographic and structural changes. Although the COVID-19 crisis may break the recent trend of increasing labour shortages, technological change and the ageing workforce suggest that skills shortages are likely to remain a challenge in the long run in certain occupations.

A study was therefore undertaken to explore the role and activities of PES in alleviating skills shortages through talent recruitment from outside the EURES area (third countries)²⁶. PES in most countries have the potential to play, or they al-

ready play, some role in this field as they have a deep knowledge and up-to-date information on changes in the labour market, experience with labour market programmes and well-established co-operation with many stakeholders. The main focus of this study is on how PES may contribute to meeting some of the challenges of easing labour shortages by recruiting third-country nationals.

Dematerialisation of PES Services

The PES Network commissioned an ad-hoc study²⁷ of the dematerialisation of PES services – assuring full access to them for people with limited opportunities. The process of the dematerialisation of services is a widespread practice across all public services. Broadly defined, dematerialisation means the reduction in the quantity of materials required to provide a product or service – essentially doing more with less – and fundamental to achieving this is the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the delivery of services. PES have been prime movers in this development, principally through the digitalisation of services, though for most PES this has been blended with more traditional delivery channels such as face-to-face contact with job-seekers through jobcentres (or their equivalent). However, the pace of change is accelerating, and in some PES, online services have become a significant channel of delivery and it is conceivable that some PES will soon be delivering most (though maybe not all) of their services virtually. Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis has provided an unexpected stimulus to online services and it will be interesting to assess if this has contributed to the speed at which digital services will be embraced by PES customers in the future. For most users of PES services, the dematerialisation process is likely to have been relatively painless and can offer more efficient delivery in terms of factors such as speed of access to services and greater transparency in the range of support available. In short, there will be some customer sub-groups that may not be well-served by the changes in the methods of service delivery, such as those with limited digital skills, limited access to internet services, or those with certain disabilities that may require an enhanced approach to accessibility.

24 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22474&langId=en>

25 Finalised publications can be found on the PES Knowledge Centre website.

26 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23180&langId=en>

27 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22954&langId=en>

Gender Equality and Underemployment and Involuntary Part-time Work

An ad-hoc study commissioned by the PES Network reveals that a number of PES report practices to address labour market gender discrimination, describing these initiatives as effective.

The initiatives relate to the following aspects of gender discrimination: gender stereotyping, supporting work–life balance, supporting women in vulnerable positions to overcome labour market discrimination (including from recruitment practices stigmatising women from disadvantaged groups), structural youth unemployment compounded by gender discrimination, women returners to work, and gender mainstreaming policies.

Most PES report at least one or in some cases several objectives to at least partly consider the advocacy of inclusion through promoting themes such as women’s employability, standard working contracts, the employment of women in non-traditional occupations, women’s career pathways/addressing pay gaps, supporting work–life balance, and particularly assisting women from vulnerable groups.

However, only 20% of PES reported gender equality as being explicitly addressed in their employment strategies. PES personalised services, described as gender-neutral approaches, are unlikely in themselves to be sufficient as instruments to combat and alleviate structural and systemic labour market gender bias. Consequently, action-orientated programmes will be necessary to ensure that gender considerations are mainstreamed in all areas of PES activity, with bespoke active labour market policies (ALMPs) provided that can, where necessary, specifically address barriers to labour market equality.

European Labour Market Barometer

Within the PES Network, the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) initiated a project to construct leading indicators for the labour market by drawing on the expertise of PES. The first version of the European Labour Market Barometer was published in October 2020²⁸, and will be published on a monthly basis. Fifteen Network member PES are contributing to the Barometer, which is based on a monthly survey among local branches of the employment services in the respective countries. The branches are asked about the expected development of unemployment and employment in their district.

28 <https://www.pesnetwork.eu/> and <https://www.iab-forum.de/en/launch-of-the-european-labour-market-barometer/>

3. PES Modernisation

3.1 Benchlearning

Benchlearning is central to the PES Network's activities, as defined by the PES Network Decision. It is the process of creating a systematic and integrated link between Benchmarking (both quantitative and qualitative) and Mutual Learning activities. The ultimate aim is to support each PES in improving its 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 a convergence of labour markets, thereby demonstrating the added value of PES.

Benchmarking

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

Each year, PES are asked to provide data on 20 indicators that are calculated from the PES data and 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.

In contrast to the first two cycles of Benchmarking, which were conducted seamlessly in 2015-2016 and in 2017-2018, it was decided to dedicate 2019 to the process of Benchacting (Thematic Learning Dialogues; TLDs) as well as to the revision of the Excellence Model. This way, PES are given more time between the assessments during which they can achieve progress and implement their change agenda presented during the second cycle.

Plans and Actions prior to COVID-19

After conducting TLDs among all PES and revising the Excellence Model for the assessments, the regular third cycle of on-site visits was planned to start in the spring of 2020. In order to gain experience with the implementation of the revised Excellence Model and the focus on the outcome of the TLDs, two pilots were scheduled for March 2020: a first one in Latvia (3-5 March) and a second one in Hungary (17-19 March). While the first pilot was conducted according to plan, the second pilot – as with all other site visits initially planned for 2020 – had to be put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the situation has changed drastically, for PES in general as well as for the PES Benchlearning project, it should be noted that the feedback for the first pilot on-site visit was overwhelmingly positive. A full stocktaking based on the revised Excellence Model proved feasible, as did the focus on the outcomes of the TLD participation of the host PES. Evaluation of methodological details, such as 'blind scoring' by assessors without reference to prior scores or scores from the self-assessment, was left open and included in the evaluation that took place after the online pilots.

Changes and Adaptations due to COVID-19

The challenges posed by managing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a temporary postponement of all practical activities of the PES Benchlearning project. During this phase, approaches for continuing external assessments under the given circumstances were discussed, considering both practical and methodological feasibility and implications.

After weighing up the pros and cons of different options, it was decided to adjust the Benchlearning methodology to the new situation and explore the possibilities for virtual assessments. During this process, two core tasks were carried out: the

addition of a new section on crisis management to the Excellence Model, and the adaptation of the on-site visits to a virtual format. Furthermore, the data-collection period was extended to give PES more time to provide the relevant data.

Adaptation of the Excellence Model: Introduction of a New Section on 'Crisis Management' and Modification of the Self-assessment Template

The relevance of crisis management as an important task for any organisation has increased significantly over the last years. With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, this issue has gained an even higher priority, not least among PES. To do justice to these developments, this aspect was to be directly addressed by adding a new section to the Excellence Model exclusively dedicated to this topic. Three enablers were developed based on the available literature on the subjects of risk management and organisational resilience, and discussed among the committees of the PES Benchlearning community. The new Section I, 'Crisis management', contains the following three enablers:

- I. 1: Organisational resilience
- I. 2: Reaction to an emergency situation
- I. 3: Communication, information and empowerment for a culture of error tolerance

This section will now be used during the third PES Benchlearning cycle to take stock of the state of play of all PES in the field of crisis management.

In addition to these structural changes to the Excellence Model, the templates of the self-assessment were also adjusted to the new situation. While the focus on the outcomes of the participation in TLDs was moved to an optional annex, new lines were added on the nature and foreseen duration of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all enablers.

Development of a Methodology for Online Assessments

The methodology and practical arrangements of the on-site visits were adapted to a completely virtual format. To this end, all discussion rounds in the head and local offices of the host PES were replaced by virtual meetings, as were the internal meetings of the team of assessors.

Finally, two alternative schedules for the virtual assessments were developed: the first one lasting for three days and a second one lasting four days. The schedule of the three-day assessment was designed in strict analogy with the schedule of the on-site visits, while the four-day agenda displays a reduced density of discussion rounds, spreading the assessment out over one additional day.

Experiences from the Virtual Pilots in Lithuania and Bulgaria

During the month of October 2020, two virtual assessment pilots applying the newly developed methodology for online assessments were conducted. A first virtual external assessment of the Lithuanian PES was carried out on 5–7 October, using the schedule for a three-day assessment. Two weeks later, on 19–22 October, this was followed by a second virtual pilot in Bulgaria, this time based on a schedule covering four days. The pilot external assessments were not hampered by any significant technical difficulties and the process of self-assessment was completed according to plan, proving the general practical feasibility of an online-based approach. Apart from that, the feedback of the external assessors as well as the representatives of the assessed PES on the content and results of the external assessments proved to be favourable. The recommendations were found to be helpful by the assessed PES, also with regard to approaches to dealing with the current challenges. Thus, judging by the experience gathered during the piloting phase, external assessments in a virtual format are a feasible and appropriate alternative to on-site visits, given the restrictions connected to the COVID-19 pandemic. Evaluation of the pilots only revealed a need for small fine-tunings of the Excellence Model.

3.2 Mutual Learning – the Concept and Activities

The Mutual Learning concept uses evidence such as the Benchmarking results to identify and address PES learning needs. The Mutual Learning activities of the PES Network support PES modernisation and the improvement of PES performance by addressing PES learning needs identified through Benchmarking. They also facilitate PES learning on subjects that contribute to the goals of the EU2020 Strategy and the implementation of PES-related country-specific recommendations.

The PES Network's Mutual Learning Work Programme 2020 has been shaped and enhanced using direct and comparable evidence from the Benchmarking data collection and assessments. This evidence has enabled Mutual Learning activities to continue to be increasingly designed, delivered and targeted in relation to PES learning needs.

The Mutual Learning activities in 2020 were focused on strategic and operational matters that support the modernisation of PES, and improve the reach and impact on those who need PES in order to progress in their working lives. Mutual Learning activities continued to be structured around the thematic strands of the future of work and digitalisation (see Section 2. 1), PES service delivery and PES performance management, with an additional transversal strand on strengthening PES visibility and responding to emerging challenges compared with 2019. Within these thematic strands, activities included, inter alia, PES support for the implementation of policy initiatives described below ('Upskilling and Unemployment Prevention'), partnership management and evidence-based service delivery. In spring 2020, the Work Programme was adjusted to accommodate the needs of PES to respond to the crisis activities in 2020 (see Annex 1), which took the form of learning events (seminar, Thematic Review Workshops (TRWs), Mutual Assistance Projects (MAPs) and webinars) as well as written outputs (reports, a toolkit, practices and studies), accessible on the

PES Network website²⁹. In addition, the new format of a Jour Fixe was introduced to allow for informal discussions among PES on pressing issues under Chatham House rules. All activities since March 2020 were held virtually. The PES Network activities attract a broad range of participants (see Annex 2).

Upskilling and Unemployment Prevention

While PES have traditionally concentrated on services to unemployed people, prevention of unemployment has gradually received more attention. The PES Network published a thematic paper³⁰ in 2020 following the PES Annual Mutual Learning Conference, 'How to prevent unemployment in a changing world of work?' The paper considers current issues in the prevention of unemployment, discusses strategic responses and approaches for PES and stakeholder partners in preventing unemployment, summarises key issues and presents recommendations.

A Thematic Review Workshop was held on prevention in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on planning and implementing up- and reskilling programmes in times of crisis. The event featured several good practice examples from PES, providing a balanced mix of well-established programmes and new activities. Discussions focused on the impact of COVID-19 on PES up- and reskilling plans and activities and how PES can offer up- and reskilling in a flexible format that suits workers and takes account of the changed circumstances due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Partnership Management

A PES Network Working Group on Partnership Management was established to explore which methods are effective in strengthening different categories of PES relationships with partners, and how PES manage their ecosystems at the strategic and operational level. It also looked at the evolving nature of PES partnerships for effectively meeting modern labour market needs. After mapping PES partnerships, the Working Group identified four main typologies for promising partnerships, but established that it was often both desirable and possible for PES to adopt an '**à la carte**' approach to service delivery, utilising ele-

29 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1163&langId=en>

30 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22428&langId=en>

ments from various models in order to best meet client needs: agile partnerships, subcontracted partnerships, co-constructed partnerships and supportive partnerships. It also concluded that partnership is an essential component of PES delivery and stressed the importance of investing in developing the partnership working skills of participants. Monitoring, review of progress and good governance are essential enablers for a successful partnership.

The conclusions of the Working Group highlight the need for flexible approaches and the increasing added-value of including clients in the design of services. PES could adopt an à la carte approach to selecting, designing, implementing and revising the most effective partnership-based solution for current and future labour market challenges, according to their needs. The outcome of the Working Group is a thematic paper³¹ on successful partnership management, which is available in the PES Knowledge Centre.

Evidence-based Service Delivery

The general argument for using reliable evidence for the development of PES measures and services is that it helps increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the PES if presented in a user-friendly format. Evidence can inform and improve the decisions not only for PES managers and policymakers, but also for PES frontline staff, employers and jobseekers.

A toolkit³² was developed to assist PES in designing and implementing more evidence-based services. The toolkit aims to serve as a practical guide for PES to efficiently build, disseminate and use evidence within their organisation in order to improve their services. It provides guidance and tools for PES to develop systems to: gather and use data, information and insights to best target services to customers; make better informed decisions on what works, when and for whom; and continually review, improve and develop existing tools and systems. The toolkit helps PES to answer the following key questions on how to: plan, design and implement evidence-based services; use evidence to improve service delivery and performance; work actively to create an evidence-based culture; and understand the key prerequisites

and supporting tools for implementation. This toolkit builds on previous activities of the 2019 PES Network Working Group on evidence-based service delivery and the 2018 PES Network Seminar on piloting and evaluation.

PES Performance Management

The Network organised three webinars in 2020 exploring topics related to PES performance management. The webinars combined input from a keynote speaker and presentation of some PES practices.

A webinar on 'Fair Performance Comparisons'³³ confirmed the importance of a good Benchmarking system as core requirement for fair performance comparisons. Among the main lessons learnt, the participants stressed the following points: PES need access to good data associated with key performance indicators; PES need staff with the appropriate (statistical) skills to adequately interpret the data; PES must have the ability to communicate data to local offices in a meaningful and transparent way; PES must generate staff buy-in; and performance management has an evolving nature – there is no 'one-size-fits all'. PES organisations around Europe and beyond are facing growing human resource management challenges, including those related to staff motivation and leadership. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges of successful delivery of PES services are increasing requiring high agility and proactivity. Increased workloads, remote work, new priorities and internal reorganisation of service delivery, resulting in the relocation of tasks among employees and the need for increased managerial support and empowerment, are affecting staff motivation and supportive leadership. Key points of this webinar³⁴ were: challenges related to digitalisation (impact on job descriptions, staff training); leadership as a source of inspiration instead of control; a focus on internal (intrinsic) motivation; and thinking of 'spiral' careers instead of vertical paths.

Profiling tools are commonly used to identify people requiring additional assistance and support to enter the labour market. With advances in technology, machine learning and use of big data, statistical profiling is likely to become more prevalent. However, there is increasing evidence

31 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23014&langId=en>

32 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23149&langId=en>

33 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1639&furtherEvents=yes>

34 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1671&furtherEvents=yes>

that for unemployed people with complex needs, soft outcomes are valid measures of progression in Active Labour Market Programmes. A PES Network webinar illustrated the effectiveness of so-called 'distance travelled' to employment models based on soft measures, and emphasised good-quality client-counsellor objectivity as a means of properly assessing soft outcomes³⁵. This approach is still relatively new, but the webinar illustrated the use of a tool to measure employability, combining statistical counselling and counsellor discretion. It also demonstrated how artificial intelligence can be used to measure distance from the labour market through different types of machine learning, neural networks and learning from data to recognise patterns and classify data.

Self-driven Activities by the PES Members

The Network started in 2020 a series of so-called 'Jours Fixes' as a new learning format that is self-driven by the host PES and supported by other participating PES and the PES Secretariat. Jour Fixe is a flexible discussion format for ad-hoc PES challenges and held under Chatham House rules. The first Jour Fixe was launched on 25 June and chaired by PES Finland. The second took place on 17 July and was chaired by PES Netherlands and the third one took place on 16 October and was chaired by PES Germany. They touched upon lessons learnt of the PES services during the state of emergency caused by COVID-19, dilemmas faced by PES in the area of human resources and dilemmas faced by PES in organisational development and renewal.

A new self-driven Working Group that met three times and is chaired by Sweden has the objective of establishing a dedicated arena for Mutual Learning for people working operatively with labour market taxonomy. Even if the practices differ across PES, the main challenges around taxonomies are quite similar. Topics include sharing of practice, exploring innovation and technologies, adaptation to ESCO, reducing complexity and how to keep up with developments in the labour market.

Strengthening PES Visibility

A PES Network Working Group explored national PES image and branding and how these can be improved. To support this, the Working Group compiled a set of good practices and branding work. The aim is to develop guidelines to help PES improve their public image and raise stakeholders' awareness of the PES added-value in the labour market. The discussions indicated that there are areas in need of development and further consideration to ensure successful visibility of PES. Three areas identified for further focus are social media use, interactive events and evaluation of campaigns. The Working Group also acknowledged the need for strengthening co-operation on communication at the level of the PES Network, through common dedicated communication initiatives to be planned in the future.

3.3 Mutual Assistance

The PES Network continued to provide Mutual Assistance (technical assistance through peer PES support) for PES modernisation in Greece and in Belgium (Brussels region).

Greece

The Greek PES (OAED) took up the opportunity to request a Mutual Assistance Project (MAP) and therewith peer PES support on its pathway of change. The objective of this MAP was strengthening of the client-employer matching system, including through improvements in client profiling, client referrals, employer engagement, use of technology and overall monitoring.

The Estonian PES was providing peer experts and sharing insights from its counselling and performance management systems, including a specific focus on approaches to forecasting, data infrastructure, performance monitoring and impact analysis.

The first online workshop focused on OAED learning objectives and on presenting the Estonian model, as well as on identifying potential enablers and elements of transferability to the Greek PES. The second online workshop focused on the client journey within the Estonian PES, including focusing on client-counsellor relationships, counselling approaches and tailored support.

³⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1598&furtherEvents=yes>

Belgium-Actiris

The Benchlearning 2019 feedback report to Belgium-Actiris showed the following recommendation (amongst others): 'a digitalisation strategy and a complete channel management approach should be developed and rolled out in the near future'. Following this recommendation, the Brussels-Capital regional PES set up a unit dedicated to digital transformation as part of the Actiris' Management Contract 2017-2022. A related MAP was requested in September 2020 with two specific conferences planned on two questions: i) What is the useful data to be collected and for what purposes? and ii) What strategies and tools are needed to efficiently and qualitatively collect this data from Actiris' clients (jobseekers, active workers and companies)? The first activity took place on 4 December 2020, supported by PES experts from IE, the NL, SE and SI. Fruitful input has been provided in the field of data management and analytics.

Czech Republic

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Czech PES cancelled the activity planned under the Work Programme 2020.

Spain

The Spanish PES requested support from the PES Network to accompany the Spanish EVADES project (Support for Spanish Best Practices Programme with the regions). Two topics were identified: how to optimise future ESF+ investments in view of the country-specific recommendations on the effectiveness of public employment services in Spain, and priorities on the modernisation of the PES; and how to fight the demographic challenge (depopulation, ageing and youth employment, essentially) from public employment services. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, both activities have been postponed. However, an online meeting to follow up the 2019 MAP support to Spain was organised. This meeting stressed the positive effects of the MAP on the improvement of the Spanish PES service delivery, in particular the discussion with PES stakeholders on the new methodology to identify skills needs and the active profiling tool that is in construction.

4. Performance Capacity Overview

As part of its Annual Work Programme, the Network traditionally conducts the PES Capacity Survey, which consisted of two parts in 2020: one on PES capacity and an ad-hoc module on integrated services for LTU. The main findings from these surveys are summarised below.

4.1 2020 Assessment Report on PES Capacity

The 2020 PES Capacity Report is primarily based on information received from 27 PES in July and August 2020³⁶. Supporting information came from the annual PES Benchlearning data-collection exercise, in which 30 PES participated³⁷. This year, PES had to deal with the influx of the newly unemployed and applications for short-term work schemes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the data-collection period was extended. This report, as well as the report on 'Integrated services for the long-term unemployed', will be published in the PES Knowledge Centre on the European Commission website.

Tasks and Responsibilities Generally Stayed the Same

Roles and responsibilities remained the same for all PES, with the exception of Luxembourg PES, which was tasked with supporting the anticipation and development of future skills in the context of the Future Skills Initiative. Also, in the fourth quarter of 2019, Jobsplus, the Maltese PES, became fully responsible for the provision of employment advisory services for the long-term unemployed, whereas previously it had worked in partnership with external stakeholders.

Several PES reported changes in their organisational structure (HU), operational changes (CZ, BE-VDAB and LT), or further developments in their digital services (BE-VDAB, BG and SE).

This year's survey revealed more detail on the involvement of PES in national European Social Fund (ESF) structures. Two PES act as the Managing Authority (BE-Actiris and FI) for the ESF in their country, 15 PES as the intermediate body (BE-Le FOREM, BE-VDAB, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, LV, MT, PL and PT), while another eight receive co-financing from the ESF for the activities but they are not involved in the organisation (AT, BG, DK, LT, LU, NL, SE and SI). No information was available for IE and SK.

Most PES are Independent, but Sometimes the National Context Creates an Interesting Variety in Legal Status

The legal status of the vast majority of PES (19 out of 26) is that of an independent public institution. The classification of their legal status was created in close consultation with the PES, as definitions and the use of terms such as 'independent' or 'legal entity' vary according to national legislation. Important distinguishing features are that the PES is not a department or directorate-general of a ministry and that it has its own director or governing board. The fact that a PES is placed 'under the authority of' or is 'supervised by' a ministry does not detract from this classification. From a comparative EU perspective, the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR) has been classified as an independent agency, although in the Danish context, the STAR comes under the Ministry of Employment. The Ministry includes the actual department itself, two government agencies and a research

³⁶ The network includes 27 Member States of the EU (the three regional PES in Belgium are separate), together with Iceland and Norway. Iceland, Italy, Norway and Romania are not included in this year's analysis, due to the non- or late completion of the survey.

³⁷ All PES Network members except Italy submitted data as part of the 2020 BL data-collection exercise.

centre. Furthermore, in certain countries such as Denmark and The Netherlands, the municipalities are responsible for the provision of employment services and ALMPs at the local level.

In four countries, the PES is an integral part of the national ministry responsible for employment affairs (CY, CZ, FI and IE). In two additional countries, Spain and Poland, the national PES is integrated into the national ministry, while the regional PES are under the authority of regional governments. Finally, in Hungary, the PES is a department in the Ministry for Innovation and Technology, while the county and local units come under the responsibility of the Prime Ministers' Office.

Labour Market Situation already Taking 'a Turn for the Worse' in 2019

The latest 2019 figures on the labour market show that even before the start of the pandemic, the labour market situation was already starting to worsen, and COVID-19 naturally dramatically exacerbated this situation during the course of 2020.

During 2019, the longer term trend of a decreasing number of unemployed PES clients seems to have weakened³⁸. In 2018, the overall decrease (EU PES clients as a whole) compared with the previous year amounted to -6.4%, while the average change in the PES concerned was -10.1%. In 2019, these figures shrank to -4.0% and -3.2% respectively. Six PES had already seen the number of registered jobseekers increasing in 2019, compared with three PES in 2018. Target groups such as young people, older people and the long-term unemployed (LTU) also showed a similar pattern.

Vacancies, on the other hand, have been increasing since the 2008-2009 crisis. This increase was already very small (0.4%) between 2017 and 2018, and then turned into a decrease of -5.5% between 2018 and 2019 (data for 30 PES).

PES Expenditure Overall Remains Stable

To ensure comparability across PES, the financial comparisons in this report do not include expenditure on unemployment or other benefits, or pro-forma expenditure.³⁹ Overall, total expenditure excluding these two categories hardly changed, with a 0.2% increase between 2018 and 2019. In addition, almost equal numbers of PES increased or decreased their expenditure between 2018 and 2019, in contrast with the relatively high number of PES that increased expenditure in the previous period⁴⁰.

For individual PES, an expenditure increase from 2017 to 2018 often became an expenditure decrease the next year, and vice versa. Exceptions to this pattern are six PES with continued expenditure increases over the past two years (BE-Le FOREM, DK, EE, IS, MT and SK) and two PES with repeated decreases in their expenditure (LT and SE).

The division of expenditure across categories also remains more or less the same over time.

Total PES Staff Employed in the EU Decreasing

Information on total staff numbers is available for 25 European PES, excluding IE and PL where not enough data was available. Collectively, the total number of PES staff, measured in full-time equivalents (FTE), has been decreasing over the last four years, although the -0.5% decline between April 2019 and April 2020 was somewhat lower than in previous years⁴¹. More or less equal numbers of PES saw their staff decreasing or increasing. Contrary to previous years, PES staff turnover rates (i.e., the proportion of total staff leaving the PES in a given year) decreased overall in 2019 in the 25 countries for which this information was available⁴².

38 See Annex 3, Figure 1. Number of registered unemployed by target groups and vacancies reported to PES, 2014-2019.

39 Expenditure items that feature in the PES budget but are transferred to other organisations without any PES involvement in their further spending.

40 See Annex 3, Figure 2. Number of PES reporting changes in total expenditure, excluding benefits paid and pro-forma expenditure, 2010-2019.

41 See Annex 3, Figure 3. The number of PES experiencing an increase or a decrease in staff (in FTE), 2014-2020 (30 April).

42 See Annex 3, Figure 4. Overall staff turnover, 2018-2019.

COVID-19 Affecting Staffing Policies in 2020

In 2020, only four PES planned to decrease their staff numbers. Of the 12 PES that planned staff increases, five PES reported that these were directly related to the need to manage the massive inflow of unemployed people as a result of COVID-19. Four PES reported changes in the allocation of their staff for similar reasons in 2020: BE-Actiris had already upgraded its call centre (on a temporary basis), while the Cypriot PES prepared for staffing needs resulting from services having to be delivered digitally. In Spain, 1,000 temporary employees from the COVID-19 programme joined the PES in 2020, with the possibility of appointing 500 more temporary employees. In Slovenia, the PES reallocated part of the staff on the basis of temporary organisational changes to cope with the new epidemic-related tasks. At the same time, changes in staff volume and deployment due to budget considerations, adjustments in PES services or a focus on specific target groups continued in several PES. A recent overview of measures taken by PES can be found in the EU's PES Knowledge Centre⁴³.

New Labour Market Measures more often Aimed at Job Creation

In total, 58 labour market policies and services were newly introduced, and 45 existing ones modified in 2019. New policies and services were reported by 17 PES (AT, BE-Actiris, BE-Le FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, LV, PT, SI and SK), while 14 PES reported modifications (BE-Actiris, BE-Le FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EL, ES, FR, HR, MT, SE and SI). The largest group of new measures were those aimed at providing employment incentives (30 new measures), followed by new measures for client services, training and direct job creation. The latter category was higher than in previous years, with five PES introducing 12 direct job-creation measures (DK, EE, LV and several measures in EL and SK). In terms of modifications, the largest group of adaptations concerned training measures, followed by client services and employment incentives. The most cited modifications were: an extension of the measure to other target groups, a budget increase, programme extension and changes in financial compensation or financial incentives.

Vulnerable Groups: an Important Target Group for New Measures

Both new and modified measures target a broad range of client groups, as in previous years. However, amongst the target groups for new measures, the importance of the most vulnerable groups, including difficult-to-place people or people distanced from the labour market, stands out. Given the importance of measures specifically targeting young people in the past, including NEETs, it comes as no surprise that the largest groups of modifications occurred in these measures.

COVID-19 Means almost Half of the PES already Adjusting Objectives or Targets

At the time of the survey – the first half of 2020 – nine PES said they had adapted their objectives to the new situation (BE-Actiris, BG, CY, CZ, HR, HU, LU, LV and SE). Two more PES (BE-Le FOREM and EE) were considering such changes and planned to discuss them later in 2020. Some other PES drew attention to new measures related to COVID-19 without reporting a change in objectives, such as AT, DK and PL.

At the time of the survey, six PES had already adapted their targets to the new situation (AT, BG, CY, LU, LV, SE and SI) and two PES planned to do so in the future. BE-VDAB is currently adjusting its targets for 2020, in the light of the COVID-19 crisis and uncertainty about the development of the labour market. The Latvian PES plans to revise the targets related to the performance indicators in its 2020-2022 Operational Strategy by including branch office performance indicators and indicators from its Employers' Strategy.

PES Refocus Objectives in Response to the Pandemic

Adjustments occurred in specific objectives and often consisted of refocusing these objectives to accommodate new approaches. A relatively new objective, which has been given a new impetus by the COVID-19 pandemic, is keeping employees in employment and saving workplaces from collapsing, e.g., in Poland, Bulgaria and Croatia.

43 <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22859&langId=en>

New Approaches Accompanying New Specific Objectives

The Cypriot PES increased the focus on the 'unemployed Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) benefit recipients' and the 'unemployed over age 50' target groups. In Hungary, a specific wage subsidy was designed to help realise the Government's aim of maintaining companies' capacities. The Latvian PES developed a specific support offer for employers in need of staff in seasonal work, while the Bulgarian PES provided support for enterprises and self-employed people whose economic activity was directly affected by the adverse effects of the state of emergency imposed on the country. The Anti-virus Programme managed by the Czech PES supports the objective of maintaining employment through a partial reimbursement of wages paid to employees.

New Ways of Working Introduced – or Reinforced – in PES

BE-Actiris aims to have a holistic, inclusive and non-discriminatory approach to avoid excluding the most vulnerable from its services during the pandemic. The Swedish PES increased its focus on starting early with active measures to prevent long-term unemployment for those who became unemployed as a result of COVID-19. The need for social distancing boosted digital services in PES. The Luxembourg PES reinforced the digitalisation of its services, while BE-Actiris aimed to ensure 100% digital transformation of services to facilitate remote working. In Hungary, the PES management has been trying to move towards online registration opportunities for new job-seekers' claims.

4.2 Integrated Services for LTU

Integrated Services for LTU

The report on 'Integrated services for long-term unemployed' is focused on the delivery of these services and, specially, on the single point of contact (SPOC), which is part of the Council Recommendation on long-term unemployment. The reported findings are based on the responses to the questionnaire received from 27 PES (AT, BE-Actiris, BE-Le FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, LT, LU, LV, NL, MT, NO, PT, PL, SE, SI and SK).

Single Point of Contact

An institution has been appointed or identified as SPOC in 19 out of 27 of the PES (AT, BE-Actiris, BE-Le FOREM, BE-VDAB, CZ, DK, EE, ES, FI, HR, IE, LT, LU, LV, NO, PL, PT, SI and SK). Only in few countries has no institution been appointed as SPOC so far (BG, CY, DE, EL, FR, MT, NL and SE). However, even in these countries, PES alone or in co-operation with other institutions actually perform the role of a SPOC, or co-ordination of support is in place and it works due to a clear division of responsibilities between relevant institutions dealing with LTU, which is defined either by specific regulations or by nationwide strategic plans.

Partnership Agreements

All PES work in close co-operation with a variety of partners, at national and local level. More than half the PES have partnership agreements in place (AT, BE-Le FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, DK, ES, FI, FR, HU, PL, PT, SE, SI and SK). The other (nearly half) PES (BE-Actiris, CZ, DE, EE, EL, HR, IE, LT, LV, MT, NL and NO) applied different approaches in working with partners, e.g., co-operation takes place via project-based partnerships, or it is defined by legal obligations, in specific contracts for implementing the support, in specific regulations or legislation, or informal agreements are in place to ensure co-ordinated support to LTU.

Individualised Support for LTU

An individualised offer aimed as a minimum at finding a job is provided by all 27 PES. One-third of PES also provide at least one other offer, tailored to individual needs (CZ, ES, FI, HR, IE, LV, NL and PT). To assist LTU in their integration/re-integration into the labour market, more complex support (a combination of several individualised offers) is used by over half of the PES (BE-Le FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, DE, DK, EE, FR, LT, LU, MT, PL, SE, SI and SK). Most of the PES (BE-Actiris, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, HR, IE, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SE, SI and SK) offer services to LTU that are different from services offered to other categories of clients.

Services Available to Employers

The majority of PES offer to employers additional services and subsidies to hire LTU (AT, BE-Actiris, BE-Le FOREM, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, PL, SE, SI and SK). Over one-third of PES (AT, DK, ES, IE, LU, NL, NO, PL, PT, SE and SI) have partnership agreements in place with the aim of hiring LTU. Post-placement support aimed at achieving sustainable and meaningful employment for LTU is provided by just over one-third of PES (AT, BE-VDAB, BG, DE, EE, FR, MT, PL, SE, SI and SK).

Data-sharing

Most of the PES reported practices of data-sharing mechanisms among partners (AT, BE-Actiris, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE, SI and SK). Six PES (AT, BG, ES, FR, HR and IE) transmit client information to counsellors of other service providers or SPOC partners. In eight of the PES (DE, EE, FI, FR, IE, MT, SI and SK), counsellors from different service providers have shared access to discretionary client information. Shared access to the full client information is reported by only four PES (BE-Actiris, LU, NL and DK).

Approaches for Assessing Needs of LTU

PES case managers are responsible for and conduct LTU's needs assessment. Joint assessment, involving case managers from PES and from the other support service providers, is used only by a few PES (BE-VDAB, DK, LV and SI), while a practice of a single case manager assessing LTU needs on behalf of all service providers is almost inexistent (only IE).

The Job Integration Agreement

Most of the PES reported that JIAs (or Individual Action Plans (IAPs) for LTU) are in line with recommendations, from the point of view of content, including aspects related to individual assessment (24 PES), the method of contact (24 PES), frequency of follow-up meetings (24 PES) and re-assessment and services offers (18 PES). PES also identified JIA features that make it different from the IAP: LTU's assessment or re-assessment is deeper and more comprehensive, and when necessary, joint assessment/re-assessment with social services is performed. In most cases, the contacting method is face to face, the frequency of follow-up meetings is higher, and the offers are more personalised and tailor-made to their specific needs.

Referral Pathways

Referral pathways for LTU have been reported by only just over one-third of PES (BE-VDAB, BG, CZ, DE, ES, HR, IE, LU, LV, MT and PT). The practices in establishing or defining the referral pathways for LTU differ among the 11 PES.

Monitoring Co-ordinated Support for LTU

All countries monitor different areas or aspects of the co-ordinated support for LTU. The most common areas of monitoring are progress of LTU towards employability, employment/integration outcomes and effectiveness of the co-ordination of services/support. Monitoring is less common with regard to the situation of LTU after exits from the PES register (AT, BE-VDAB, DE, DK, LT, MT, PL and SI).

5. Concluding Remarks

This sixth Annual Report covers an exceptional year: PES are among the key actors to meet the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. This has put them under tremendous pressure. The number of job-seekers has increased. At the same time, they must ensure safe working conditions for staff as well as safe service delivery.

Against this background, this report proves that the Network is a pillar of support to PES across Europe. It offers strong collaborative learning through a variety of activities related to policies and PES practices. While in the past the Network was swiftly responding, for example to the migration crisis, it has again shown in 2020 its ability to respond to the economic and social challenges in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, confirming its understanding as a learning organisation.

The 2020 Work Programme of the Network was rapidly adapted to the new situation by a change from physical to digital formats, as well as focusing on exchange and learning about new measures and practices to cushion the labour market impacts of the crisis.

The Network has also managed to keep a focus on support for the recovery and ongoing structural development, as well as continuing the achievements from the two first cycles of Benchmarking, giving orientation to PES on their way to modernisation and change.

The well-established co-operation between the PES Secretariat and the members of the Network has facilitated this flexibility and ability to re-orientate. Co-operation and exchange across PES are acknowledged as valuable sources to draw on to meet the emergent situation and to set the direction forward.

The strategic approach of the proposed 2021 Work Programme continues the main thematic strands of the 2020 Programme, complemented by a strong focus on PES strategies and activities to support the recovery, and in line with the new PES Network Decision and Commission priorities. Building on experience from this year, the Network is well-equipped to tackle the uncertainty and volatility ahead.

6. Annexes

Annex 1 – Work Programme 2020

Future of Work and Digitalisation	PES support to structural changes How PES support structural changes in greening/digitalised economies via up-/re-skilling, promoting life long learning or recruiting talents from outside the EU. PES Network Seminar 24 June	New forms of work and digitalised/greening economies Which position are PES taking towards new forms of work and how they contribute to digitalised and green economies. Working Group (Opinion paper) Meeting 1: 5 May, Meeting 2: 9 October, Meeting 3: 9 November.	EU PES Lab PES Network boosting innovation via co-creation – PES following up on Working Group outcomes. 3 pilot EU PES lab exercises	Skills shortage Sharing knowledge about potential data sources and how they can be used to identify skills shortages in the short and medium term.	Strengthening PES visibility and responding to emerging challenges Partnership and Recovery Stakeholder Conference (Postponed 2021) PES Added value PES branding and communication towards stakeholders. Working Group Meeting 1: 12 May, Meeting 2: 4-5 November Webinars PES Responses to the COVID-19: PES capacity planning 14 May PES analysis of labour market needs 11 June PES responses to support recovery 8 September PES employers services 29 October PES responses to vulnerable groups 3 December
	PES Service Delivery	Reinforcement of the Youth Guarantee PES Network opinion and consultation on policy initiatives. Opinion paper	Prevention Innovative outreach and employer-oriented measures, partnerships. 2 Thematic Review Workshops TRW 1: 22-23 October	Partnership Management How PES involve partners, offering effective measures to LTU, youth, migrants, older people, women. Working group Meeting 1: 27 March, Meeting 2: 13 May, Meeting 3: 27 May	
PES Performance Management		Benchmarking PES quantitative and qualitative performance assessment			
	Data collection Site Visits of up to 15 PES: postponed 2021 Online pilot assessments	Measuring employability Webinar 27 February	Fair performance comparisons Webinar 30 May	Staff motivation and leadership Webinar 24 September	
Other activities	Mutual Assistance Projects: Spain – Greece – Belgium 7 May 26 October 4 December		Studies and research: PES Capacity, LTU, Short Time Work schemes, Dematerialisation of services, gender equality, talent recruitment from 3rd countries	PES Practices and videos - Weekly update of PES responses to the COVID-19 crisis	
	Meetings	2 Board meetings Online	6 AFEPA meetings Online	Benchlearning Working / Steering Group	

Annex 2 – ML Events, Learning Resources and Evaluation

Overall, around 1,900 participants took part in ML events in 2020, of whom almost 1,400 were PES representatives..

The following ML activities were conducted:

- *Planning, delivering and carrying out 22 learning events in 2020:*
 - » **Two** Thematic Review Workshops on ‘Activation of the inactive’ (carry-over from 2019) and ‘Upskilling and prevention’.
 - » **Four** Working Groups on ‘Partnership management’ (three meetings), ‘PES visibility’ (two meetings) and ‘Future of work’ (three meetings). In addition, a self-driven Working Group focused on ‘Taxonomies’ took place.
 - » **Two** PES Network seminars on ‘WG outcomes building up a PES EU Innovation Lab’ (carry-over from 2019) and on the PES role in restructuring.
 - » **Eight** webinars, including ‘Fair Performance Comparisons’, ‘Planning of PES Capacity’, ‘Staff Motivation and Leadership’, ‘Measurement of Employability’, ‘Labour Market Analysis’, ‘PES Support for Recovery’, ‘PES Support to SMEs’ and ‘PES Support to Vulnerable Groups’.
 - » **Three** Mutual Assistance Projects with the Spanish PES (carry-over from 2019), the Greek PES and Belgian PES, Actiris.
 - » **Three** Jour Fixe on crisis-related topics.
- *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.
 - » Maintenance of the PES Network CIRCABC group, which currently has 273 members
 - » Developing new methods of subscription to the PES Network newsletter
 - » Three editions of the PES Network newsletter.
- *Developing and/or publishing 18 learning resources in 2020:*
 - » The role of PES in supporting structural changes
 - » PES partnership management
 - » Background paper of the Working Group on New Forms of Work
 - » Opinion paper: New forms of work – platform work
 - » Contribution to the initiative of the European Commission to reinforce the Youth Guarantee 2020 – Opinion paper
 - » Practitioner toolkit on knowledge management
 - » Opinion paper on the PES role in modernising the labour market and managing structural change – preparing for post-COVID-19 challenges
 - » The role of PES in modernising the labour market and managing structural change
 - » The role of PES in talent recruitment from third countries
 - » Practitioner toolkit on evidence-based services
 - » Activation of the inactive: PES initiative to support the activation of inactive groups
 - » Dematerialisation of services in EU PES
 - » How to prevent unemployment in a changing world of work? PES Conference 2019
 - » PES measures and activities responding to COVID-19
 - » Short-term work schemes in the EU
 - » Integrated services for long-term unemployed – SPOC
 - » PES approaches to the promotion of gender equality
 - » 2020 PES Capacity Report
 - » Nine PES practices.

Note: the PES Network Conference on ‘Partnership Management’ was postponed to spring 2021.

Evaluation of Activities

The satisfaction of beneficiaries is measured consistently via a post-event satisfaction survey after each Mutual Learning event – physical or virtual. In 2020, this survey was distributed to those PES participants who agreed to be contacted for post-event surveys (866 out of 1,286 in total). In total, 364 replies were received. In response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, several events, originally designed as physical, were transformed into online events (i.e., Working Groups, Thematic Review Workshops and Network seminars). Contrary to expectations, the overall satisfaction of the participants remained stable compared with the 2019 physical events. Around 90% of the survey respondents considered that the event met their needs and an equally high proportion of the participants (91%) affirmed that they had gained relevant knowledge. Most of the post-event survey respondents participated in webinars (233). In this type of event, the participants were highly satisfied with the topic selected (96%⁴⁴) and the work done by the moderator(s) (93%). Participants in the Mutual Assistance Projects were particularly pleased with the content, including the topic selection (96%), balance of the programme (100%), quality of the presentations (100%) and discussions (96%). The most positive assessment given by participants in the Working Groups and the Thematic Review Workshops focused on event preparation, namely, initial communication (WG: 98%; TRW: 97%), clarity on the attendee role (WG: 93%; TRW: 94%) and the quality of the materials received prior to the event (WG: 96%; TRW: 94%). New approaches and case studies presented were often mentioned as ‘inspiring’ and valuable to the PES. PES respondents also expressed their wish to deepen their knowledge of some cases presented, either through additional documents or extra time for discussion.

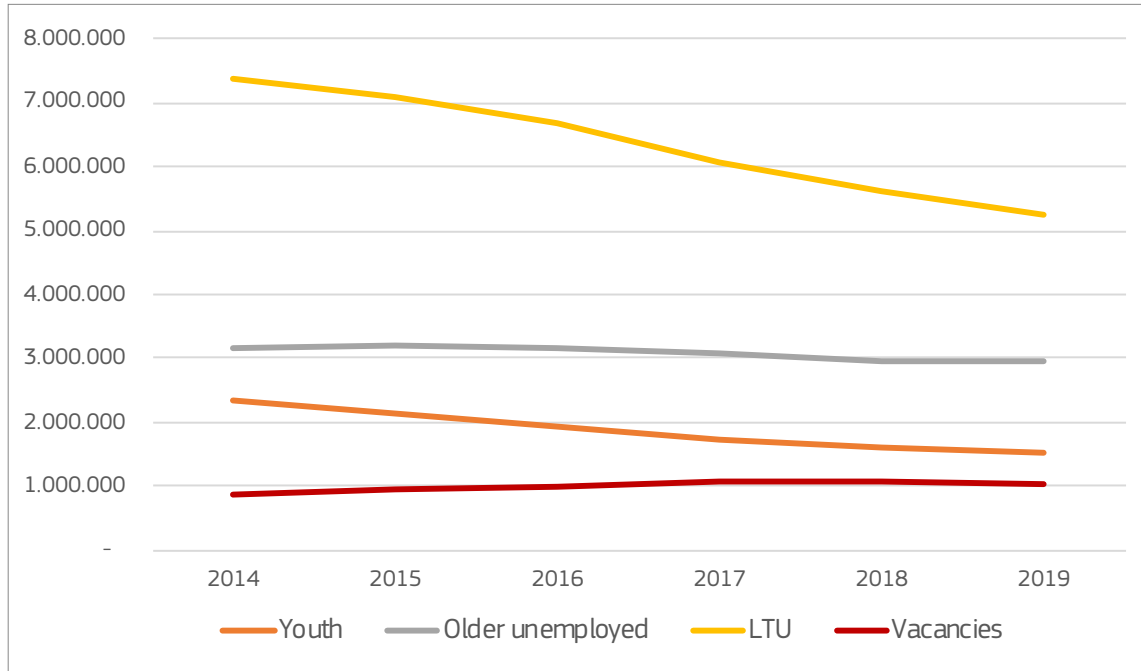
In addition to the post-event satisfaction surveys, a survey of all participants in the ML events over the 2019 contract year was held between January and February 2020. A total of 181 PES representatives responded, out of 561 participants invited. Feedback from participants in a range of ML events shows that overall satisfaction levels were high, meeting the expectations of participants and some significantly exceeding expectations. In terms of their usefulness to PES, all events emerged as helpful to some extent in improving knowledge, identifying new ideas and sharing what other PES are doing. Furthermore, the survey results suggest that all event types played a positive part in influencing the pace of change in PES. Much of this positivity came from being close to key experts on relevant subjects, and interacting with colleagues from other PES and being able to draw on their experience. In some cases, the changes would not have happened at all without the influence of the ML events. Contacts established during the events continued afterwards for many PES at a bilateral or multilateral level, working on specific issues or establishing ongoing communication.

The use of the ML platforms varied. Few respondents used the PES Knowledge Centre on a regular basis, with two-fifths using it occasionally and around half never or almost never. CIRCABC had similar levels of usage, though most users found it convenient to use. Survey results suggest the need to encourage the use of the PES Knowledge Centre and CIRCABC forum, possibly through awareness-raising activities at future ML events.

⁴⁴ Satisfaction is measured via a categorical scale with the following options: very good, good, average, poor, very poor, do not know/not relevant for me, no answer. Positive feedback is measured by adding categories of ‘very good’ and ‘good’.

Annex 3 – PES Capacity Report Figures

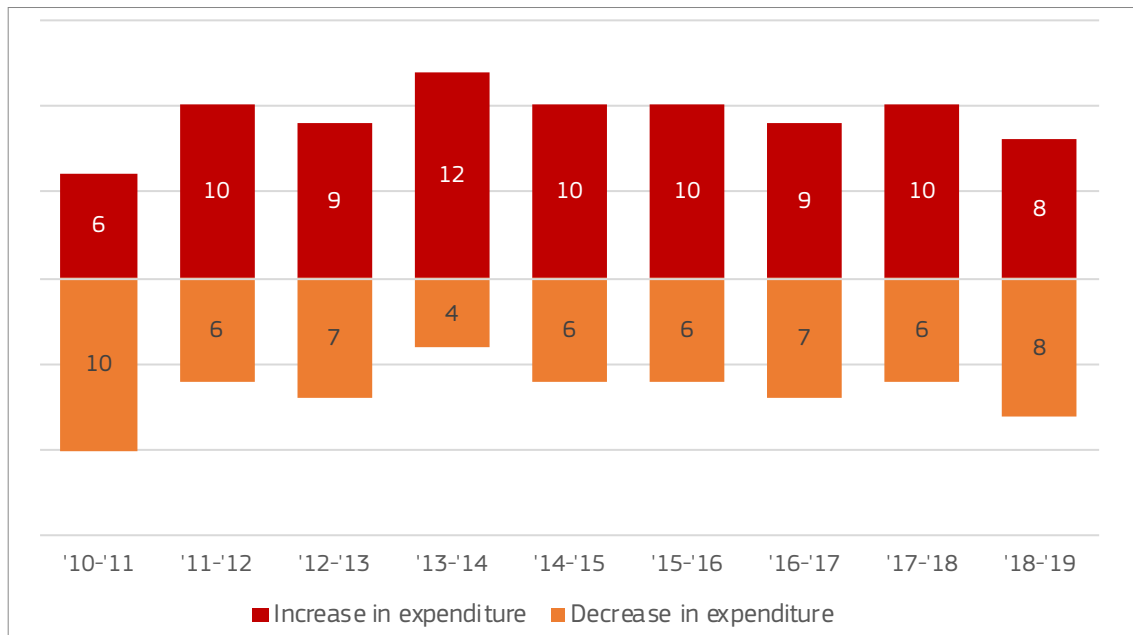
Figure 1. Number of registered unemployed by target groups and vacancies reported to PES, 2014-2019



Source: Annual PES Benchmarking Data Collection.

Note: Based on the data for 22 PES – no or insufficient information is available for CY, CZ, EL, IE, IS, IT, NL, NO and RO.

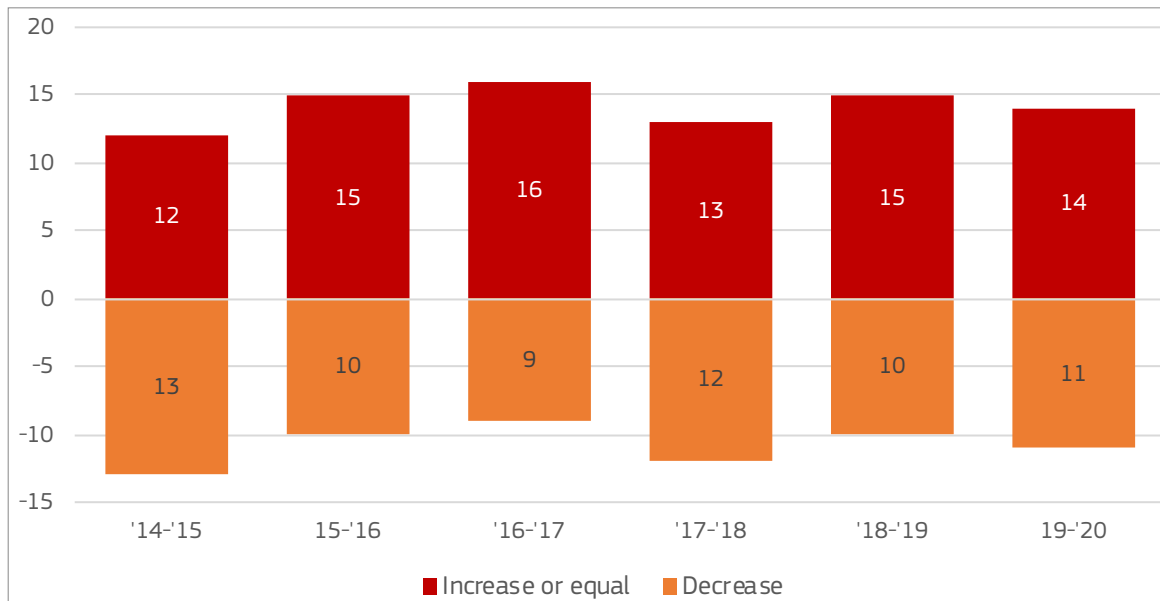
Figure 2. Number of PES reporting changes in total expenditure, excluding benefits paid and pro-forma expenditure, 2010-2019



Source: Annual PES Benchmarking Data Collection.

Note: Information for 16 PES. No information – or insufficient information – is available for BE-Actiris, BE-Le FOREM, BE-VDAB, CY, DE, EL, ES, HU, IE, IT, MT, NL, NO, PL and RO.

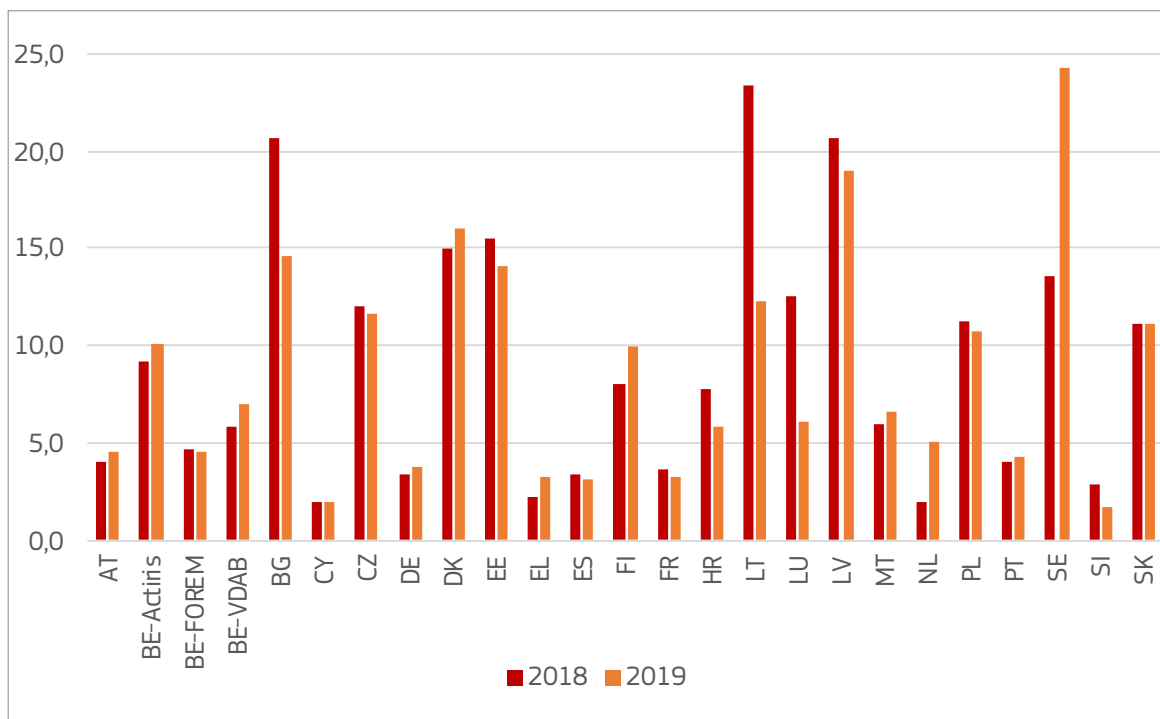
Figure 3. The number of PES experiencing an increase or a decrease in staff (in FTE), 2014-2020 (30 April)



Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaires, 2015-2020.

Note: Based on 25 PES, no information – or insufficient information – is available for IE and PL. All data refer to 30 April or the closest date to this date where data was available.

Figure 4. Overall staff turnover, 2018-2019



Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaires, 2018 and 2019.

Note: no information or insufficient information for HU and IE. Staff turnover is defined as 'the proportion of total staff leaving the organisation over a set period of one year for whatever reason' (including retirement, leaving voluntarily, redundancy, etc.).

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

- by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
- at the following standard number: +32 22999696 or
- by email via: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en

EU publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications at: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publications>. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en).

EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1952 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused

