



PARES – PARtnership between Employment Services

**Stakeholders Conference, 2-3 October 2012,
Brussels**

PARES activities in 2012

The PARES initiative aims to improve cooperation between different types of employment services (public, private and non-profit) and to define the areas in which they can deliver complementary services, with the underlying objective of improving the efficiency and quality of employment services provided to all client groups.

The second PARES Stakeholders conference took place on 2-3 October 2012 in Brussels. More than 120 participants attended the event to take stock of the evolution of the PARES initiative in 2011 and 2012. The first part of the plenary session was dedicated to the reporting the results of PARES in 2012.

In 2012 PARES consisted of three mutually reinforcing strands:

1. **The PARES – Strategic Dialogue** that provided for a forum for exchanging and further conceptualizing good practices of co-operation and complementary service provision between employment services. Two PARES Strategic Dialogues – 1. Fields and forms of cooperation 2. 'Working in Partnership at the Local and Regional Level – were held in 2012.
2. **The PARES call for proposals** was directed at projects that showcase the mixed provision of employment services for 'green jobs'.
3. **WEESP the Webtool for Evaluated Employment Services Practices** that includes so far 80 evaluated organisational practices, tools and ALMP measures related to service delivery for jobseekers and employers.

The main conclusions of the two workshops held at the conference are:

Workshop 1: 'Commercial contracting'

- In case of contracting-out of services and ALMP measures for unemployed or inactive jobseekers result- (performance) based contracting is the key. This means to replace the traditional input-oriented approach of public services by an output/outcome oriented approach focusing on results achieved in return for the resources invested. Currently only a part of PES have a fully-fledged output-oriented scheme in place.
- Result-oriented contracting leaving the responsibility for the achievement of the results to the contractor as precondition to get paid implies that the latter should dispose of a relatively large extent of autonomy how to work to this end ("black box approach").
- This form of contracting-out can include two levels: Firstly, contracting-out the whole organisation of a supply chain for certain target groups to a limited number of prime-contractors at national or regional level who then contracts/coordinates other public, private or third-sector service-providers. Secondly, result-oriented contracting can be applied to each of the services or

measures contracted at regional or local level, while much of the organisation and management of supply chains remains with the PES.

- Obligatory creaming effects, i.e. placing the easiest to place first, can to a large extent be avoided by differentiated pricing depending on the complexity of the problems of those to be placed.
- Merely result-oriented contracting has to develop a concept for quality assurance. For the work with prime contractors the definition of standards how to work with sub-contractors in the supply chain is key. Similarly this applies to the work with clients including customer charters or other mechanisms to define certain quality criteria for service delivery. For both mechanisms an accreditation system can be introduced.
- One open question remains: Step-wise payment depending on the duration of a placement into a job helps to ensure sustainability of employment. However, in difficult cases, where unemployed due to the labour market situation, or lack of certain skills and requirements (e.g. language knowledge or recognition of qualifications of migrants) are limited to jobs below their potential the issue is how to ensure career development perspectives at the longer term.
- For those furthest away from the labour market placement this can only be seen as the last step in a complex and longer integration process. Therefore an issue for further discussion is how to measure "soft outcomes", progress in terms of increasing employability.

More info on study "Forms of contractual arrangements between employment services" is available at:

<http://www.mobilitypartnership.eu/Documents/EJML%202012%20SSS%20Contracting%20out.pdf>

Workshop 2: 'Partnerships 4 youth'

- To ensure a smooth transition from school to work preventing unemployment programs need to focus on the development of career management skills as part of school curricula, while offering individual career guidance in as far as possible. Such programmes are only effective if built upon partnerships of education institutions with relevant labour market actors (PES - labour market information, employers, and social partners) to make the link to the world of work. Parental involvement and participation is essential for a rounded and comprehensive approach.
- For those young people at risk of or being unemployed or NEET a more comprehensive partnership approach is needed including additionally welfare services, public youth services, private providers, NGOs. When young people drop out of school, it is mostly PES that should take the central role in orienting and guiding.
- To develop a well-functioning partnership for the whole country a multi-layered approach has to be taken starting with the cooperation of the relevant

ministries at national level, to be continued with partnerships of the relevant public bodies at regional level and also at local level. These partnerships are a necessary precondition to implement youth guarantees for school leavers and unemployed young persons.

- Young people most at risk of drop-out tend to come from disadvantaged backgrounds and share a history of generational joblessness and inherited benefit dependence. In such cases, the initiator and conductor employment partnerships can also be a housing-estate association (non-for profit company?) together with the municipalities, thus embedding the project in the local area and creating win-win situations for all.
- To build up a network and close relationships with local (community) employers, above all SMEs, it is a key to place disadvantaged youth (and adults) into work trials, internships and work from as early as possible thus diminishing the period out of employment and subsequent intervention costs.

PARES activities in 2013

PARES Strategic Dialogues

The second part of the plenary session was dedicated to the PARES Strategic Dialogue (SD) in 2013. Two SDs will be organised in 2013 with topics selected by participants at the annual PARES stakeholders' conference. For 2013 these topics were chosen: 1. "Drafting a Memorandum of Understanding on a national level" and 2. "Evaluation of Partnerships".

PARES goes national

As part of the evolving PARES initiative, during 2013 the European Commission will assist Member States in exploring the role that employment service partnerships can play in helping to address the challenges of today's labour market. Whilst certain Member States have a long standing tradition of cooperation between employment services, the largest majority are still in the early stages of such a culture of employment service delivery. PARES will therefore seek to assist interested Member States in bringing together the relevant employment service actors in an attempt to jointly identify areas for further cooperation.

The suggested working method is to organise two one day seminars in two different countries. These will have the support of the European Commission in terms of logistics, administration, content preparation and travel and accommodation for around 20 participants from PES, PRES and other relevant organisations.

PARES Stakeholders conference

The PARES Stakeholders conference will take place on 24-25 October 2013 in Brussels.

For more information on the PARES initiative, please contact DG EMPL C3:
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