

PES to PES Dialogue: the European Commission Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services

Peer Review: PES approaches for low-skilled adults and young people: work-first or train-first?

The Lithuanian Labour Exchange, the Lithuanian PES, hosted the sixth Peer Review of the PES to PES Dialogue in Vilnius on 6- 7 June. Representatives from thirteen PES attended the meeting with the aim of identifying good practice in PES approaches for low-skilled adults and young people. The main messages from the Peer Review include:

PES service concepts to achieve good integration results

- **Information and orientation by PES (or by PES in cooperation with others) is crucial for young jobseekers** to help them assess the occupation options and employment opportunities, understand the reality of work and choose the right training.
- **Counselling and guidance is critical for the effective integration of both low-skilled adults and young people into the labour market;** although young people need more intensive support and earlier activation than adults.
- Apart from where legal rules apply, **PES employment counsellors have the crucial role of deciding which approach would be most effective to achieve sustainable integration of the jobseeker.** Thorough and professional assessment of the jobseeker is essential to enable counsellors to make the right decision about tailored allocation of resources.

Work-first approaches

- Work-first approaches are **most suitable for people who are job ready and with previous work experience, primarily for unemployed low-skilled adults.** They may also be used to integrate young low-skilled jobseekers where legal rules requiring

young people to be offered training do not apply.

- **Job-search assistance, monitoring and sanctions are a key component of work-first strategies;** research indicates they are an effective active labour market method in supporting the transition from unemployment to work.

Train-first approaches

- **PES counsellors must strike a challenging balance between achieving a fast placement into employment and sustainable integration.** Even where legal rules do not apply, many PES will **prioritise train-first approaches for young low-skilled** above all in an unfavourable labour market context. Train-first approaches are mainly used for adults where a jobseeker's skills are out-dated.
- **Training should be closely linked to the needs of (local) employers in order to**

be effective. This linkage can extend from using information from employers to predict future labour market skills, including through the development of labour market analysis barometers, to making employer involvement a condition of training.

- The most effective train-first approaches for young people include both **vocational training and employer-based work experience.** In general, shorter, job-specific, practical training is considered most appropriate to support integration for adults.
- PES have an important **brokering role to play in order to match skills supply and demand;** key to this is collaboration with employers, the education and training system. Cooperation with schools is particularly critical in supporting the school-to-work transition.

More information on the Peer Review is available [here](http://ec.europa.eu/social/pes-to-pes).



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Follow up study visit on PES and performance management

Following a Peer Review on 'Performance Management in PES' in Copenhagen on 21-22 March 2013, several PES expressed an interest in learning more about the practical implementation of methods for benchmarking performance, including clustering models and performance management at individual level.

The follow up study visit was hosted by the Austrian PES, and focused on their experience in using clustering models in performance management, as well as the experience of the Swiss PES in using an econometric method of taking external factors into account in benchmarking. Participants also heard about the recent development of a tool by the Swiss PES for individual-level benchmarking of counsellors' performance. In addition to Austrian and Swiss participants, PES representatives from Bulgaria, Estonia, Belgium Flanders, Spain and Hungary attended the event. The report from the visit is available [here](#).

"PES and green jobs"

This paper explores the role of PES in the wider 'green jobs' agenda, including the role played in relation to skills anticipation for a greening economy, and which PES services

and measures are effective in the reintegration of jobseekers into green jobs. The paper concludes that many 'green' skills needs are focussed at relatively high levels in jobs with specific technical expertise which do not coincide with types of vacancies that employers promote through PES. **Establishing direct partnerships with key local employers** with roles that jobseekers can fill relatively easily with some additional training is important, especially if firms are not convinced of the relevance of PES to help them fill higher skilled roles.

There is also a potential role for PES in **promoting green skilled roles as offering good careers to young and unemployed workers**. Those who are disadvantaged in the labour market may require face-to-face guidance to prepare them to consider and undertake the qualifications and training required to enter novel, complicated or technical roles in the green economy.

Finally, PES do not necessarily need to lead projects to meet employers' green skills needs; this role can be fulfilled effectively by social enterprises but there are **opportunities for PES to play a role as a broker** in supplying potential recruits or trainees with green skills, where employer demand is present. The paper is available [here](#).



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ANALYTICAL PAPERS

"Making the business case for PES" (October 2013)

The paper will explore the arguments for investing scarce resources in PES and how PES measure the cost and benefit of their interventions, as well as systems for measuring efficiency and effectiveness of PES services and measures.

"Partnerships of PES: an analysis of evaluations" (November 2013)

As envisaged by the PES 2020 strategy, PES should develop a conductor role in building bridges, cooperation and partnership. Based on literature review, this paper reviews evaluations of PES partnership working and provides PES with information on how to use partnerships as a mechanism to enhance employment opportunities when working with stakeholders such as employers.