



## **PES to PES Dialogue**

### **The European Commission Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services**

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

## **PES PAPER**

**Peer Review 'PES approaches for sustainable  
activation of long-term unemployed'**

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**ACTIRIS, Belgium**

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## Table of Contents

1. Long-term unemployment: recent trends and incidence in different groups....	1
2. Overall PES strategy and approach towards integration of LTU .....	3
3. Successful practices in integration of LTU .....	9
4. Conclusions .....	13

# 1. Long-term unemployment: recent trends and incidence in different groups

## 1.1 Incidence of long-term unemployment across different groups

The tables below present the proportions of LTU of the main groups in different terms.

They are based on administrative data and not those of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and include all jobseekers registered by Actiris (whether or not they are entitled to unemployment benefits).

The figures are presented in annual average and refer to 2013.

**Table 1: Proportion (%) of LTU by age and gender in 2013 (annual average numbers)**

Age group	Gender		Total
	male	female	
< 25	60.6	60.1	60.4
25-54	64.0	64.1	64.1
55 and more	85.4	87.3	86.3
Total	65.8	65.8	65.8

Source: Actiris, « Observatoire bruxellois de l'emploi » calculation

Notice: in the table 1, according to the European data, youth under 25 are considered LTU from six months inactivity (no traineeship, no job, no training).

**Table 2: Proportion (%) of LTU by gender and education level in 2013 (annual average numbers)**

rem: inactivity period: 1 year and more			
Education	Gender		Total
	M	F	
< upper secondary school	65.9	70.4	67.9
Upper secondary education	61.4	64.6	63.0
Higher education	61.7	57.1	59.3
Other school studies <sup>1</sup>	62.2	59.5	61.0

Source: Actiris, « Observatoire bruxellois de l'emploi » calculation

<sup>1</sup> The 'other school studies' are based on abroad certifications which are not recognised in Belgium.

**Table 3: Proportion (%) of LTU by gender and nationality in 2013 (annual average numbers)**

rem: inactivity period: 1 year and more			
Nationality	Gender		Total
	M	F	
BE	66.6	67.5	67.0
EU (27)	56.3	53.6	55.0
Non EU	56.4	51.3	54.4

Source: Actiris, « Observatoire bruxellois de l'emploi » calculation

**Notice regarding table 3:**

The overrepresentation of Belgian people is partly the result of the fact that they are usually found in the category of jobseekers receiving benefits (category for which the registration is without time limit).

Furthermore, due to the fact that the Brussels-Capital Region is the main entry gate for international migration in Belgium, there is a steady inflow of new registrants of non-Belgian nationality.

Finally, a distribution by ethnic origin would be very likely to yield different results when considering that BCR has seen a lot of naturalizations in its territory in the last 20 years.

## **2. Overall PES strategy and approach towards integration of LTU**

### **2.1 What are the key features of your service concepts for integration of LTU?**

There is no service dedicated to a target group LTU but there are some measures available to long-term unemployed jobseekers (for the Brussels Region and Actiris, the common standard to consider a jobseeker as LTU is a period of a two years of unemployment, which is also the criterion for some special measures for the LTU – except for young people where we apply the EU standard of 6 months).

The support offered by ACTIRIS to job seekers is systematically targeted towards all job-seekers under the age of 55 who either receive services and benefits, or are entitled to them. They all have a first appointment after being registered by Actiris (the registration<sup>2</sup> to Actiris is a legal duty in order to receive the allowance benefits if they have the right to **but also** in order to begin an accompaniment with a counsellor: a first appointment called “clarification” is followed by a second, called “diagnostic interview” ; the diagnostic is followed by an Action plan<sup>3</sup>). The frequency of the interviews and the timeliness of the beginning of the whole process depends on our target groups (We use therefore what we call “segments” of jobseekers. Each segment is defined by 2 or 3 criteria: the age (“under 30” and “30-49”), the education level, and the last criterion: is it a first registration after the studies or a re(registration)? To each segment corresponds a first diagnostic interview deadline.)

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<sup>2</sup> The registration is a first step for the jobseeker. Without appointment, the jobseekers have the right to be registered to Actiris. They will be greeted by the administrative support agent. The agent will create a job file for the jobseeker with all administrative information needed and with the whole profile of the jobseeker. The registration gives the jobseeker access to the services of Actiris and its partners. The job file enables the supply/demand matching thanks to the job offers managers and e-Actiris.

<sup>3</sup> In the Action Plan, the counsellor will define with the jobseeker what the barriers in his path to employment could be and which action plan is the best answer to his situation: training (education under certain conditions), active job search guidance, building of a professional project, autonomous job research and specific support/guidance.

Young people leaving education		
A+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Less than 30 y olds</li><li>▪ 1<sup>st</sup> registration after studies</li><li>▪ Higher education</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Diagnostic timeframe: within one month</li><li>▪ Systematic and intensive</li><li>▪ First year</li></ul>
B+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Less than 30 y old</li><li>▪ 1<sup>st</sup> registration after studies</li><li>▪ Certificate of higher secondary education (HSEC) maximum</li></ul>	
Other segments		
O+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Less than 30 y olds</li><li>▪ Other (re)registrations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Diagnostic timeframe from 3 to 6 months</li><li>▪ Systematic</li><li>▪ First year</li></ul>
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 30-49 y olds</li><li>▪ Higher education</li></ul>	
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 30-49 y olds</li><li>▪ HSEC Maximum</li></ul>	

Due to a specific demographic challenge in the Brussels Region, young people are ACTIRIS' most important target group. With the exception of some group activities targeted at young people, older workers have exactly the same access to all services (individualised or group activities) provided by the PES or its partners, on demand. These services are targeted at the individual's needs.

As a target group of the European Social Fund, the long term unemployed aged over 25 have priority for some activities organised by ACTIRIS and its partners working on several areas such as:

- Assistance in starting a company;
- Workshops for active job searching;
- Monitoring of individual, socio-professional integration processes for job-seekers who receive a social integration grant from the public social welfare centres.

Around 20 % of supported people in these measures are aged 45 or older.

ACTIRIS published in March 2012 a call for a project concerning the support of long term unemployed people aged 45 years and older. This call for a project was considered to be exploratory, considering the lack of experience in dealing with the older unemployed as a specific target group at Actiris.

The Belgian Federal entity provides some preventive measures to help jobseekers aged 50 and over to return to work, including (but not limited to):

- additional income as financial compensations for the loss of income if they find a new job
- an income guarantee for part time workers
- exemption from some of the job seeker obligations if they start an economic activity with a 'Coopérative d'activités'
- holiday entitlement.

ACTIRIS develops actions for both unemployed people and employers. Actions towards employers mainly consist of visits. ACTIRIS provides the employers with various information about the different opportunities for hiring people and financial support to employment creation.

## **2.2 PES staffing concepts for LTU**

There are no specific counsellors for LTU.

Counsellors work with all age groups to offer the whole panel of services provided by ACTIRIS. Some counsellors are meant to work with jobseekers, some with employers.

Support methods are mainly the same whether they concern young or older unemployed people. Special attention is paid to the personal project, the profile, skills and difficulties in finding a job. Elements of the profile and the highlighted solutions are adapted to the needs of the jobseeker and his/her professional ambitions.

The training topics are related more to the different aspects of the service provided and less to the specific target groups. For example, diversity consultants must know that age is a real discrimination issue, among others.

## **2.3 Have there been any recent significant changes in your service concepts for LTU?**

Except for the call for a project (see point 2.1), there is no recent change regarding to LTU and there is nothing planned for 2014.

It is important to know that we live in Belgium an important period of "regionalisation" which means that there will be important changes in the responsibilities of the Brussels Region in terms of employment.

On the other hand, we are in a pre-election period which means that no important decision will be voted before the elections of June 2014 and that, afterwards, the political situation in Belgium could change significantly.

## **2.4 Is there a specific service concept for young LTU?**

There is a service job and traineeship offer dedicated to young people. Young LTU enjoy priority for some activities organised by ACTIRIS and its partners working on several areas as explained here above (see point 2.1).

Actiris has the obligation to provide young people one of the three following solutions within six-months of registration:

- Traineeship
- Training
- Job



## **2.5 Partnership working to support integration of LTU**

All support provided by ACTIRIS is available to LTU. Similarly, each support activity led by one of the 150 ACTIRIS partners (see list in attachment) is available to any jobseeker, whatever his/her age and situation.

With a few exceptions, all partners are in the private non-market sector. The CPAS (Social Welfare Centres) are public institutions.

Examples:

- Assistance in starting a company: this activity is led by ACTIRIS's partners. It is organised as individualised support to the market analysis and elaboration of the business plan, eventually training and skills empowerment, and finally company creation. In this program, the average age was 37 years old in 2011; 20.1 % are 45 years old or more.
- Workshops for the active job search: a range of individual or group support actions have been implemented to provide assistance in searching for a job, such as:
  - Learning to establish clear and realistic career goals; to draft a CV (curriculum vitae) and a cover letter;
  - Training in effective behaviour for job interviews;
  - Learning to establish areas of employment in which the job-seeker can and will apply for work;
  - Learning to understand, analyse and assess meaningful information in a job announcement in relation to one's career goals;
  - Learning to master telephone screening interviews, to raise a potential employer's interest.
- Monitoring of individual, socio-professional integration processes for job-seekers who receive a social integration grant from the public social welfare centres. Among the broad spectrum of services and benefits offered and in partnership with ACTIRIS and with the support from the European Social Fund, the CPAS offices (Social Welfare Centres) assist eligible clients with integration or appropriate financial support so that these clients can, through a structured as well as individualised integration process, become integrated into the job market for the first time, or become reintegrated after being unemployed. In 2010, 13 275 persons benefited from a support
- Assistance for particular people, all those who are confronted with physical, psychological or behavioural hurdles which hinder their occupational integration or access to an education. This personal integration process can include intake appointments, workshops for establishing occupational goals and intensive counselling.

## **2.6 How do you cooperate with employers to integrate the LTU?**

The measures are already described in the table, page 8, under "Measures for wage subsidies and work and under "Successful working with employers to support integration of LTU adults", page 13.

Type of measure	For all LTU or a specific sub-group of LTU?	Is the measure specifically for LTU, or for a wider target group including LTU?	Brief operational description of measure	Year introduced
Professional transition premium	LTU who have not completed the upper secondary studies and benefit of unemployment allowance (or similar social benefits) + aged less than 25 (jobseekers for 9 months at least) <b>or</b> a fully entitled person for 24 months at least	Specifically for LTU (with the restrictions in the left-hand side column)	<p>The goal is to provide to under qualified jobseekers the opportunity to enhance their position on the Labour Market in order to develop their skills and their professional experience. The workers are engaged in socially beneficial activities to answer the collective needs of the society which are not enough covered in the regular work cycle.</p> <p>The employment period is for a maximum of two years and only once in the whole career.</p> <p>For the employer : reduction of the employers' social security contributions + net base salary (paid by the federal government) deduction + regional employment grant</p>	21 January 1997
"Activa" (specific measure for hiring jobseekers)	All LTU	Also available for a wider target group but the reduction (see description of the measure) for the employers is more important for LTU	<p>Measure to encourage the return to regular work for jobseekers by granting :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A reduction of the employers' social security contributions</li> <li>▪ A working allowance for the workers ( deductible from the net base salary)</li> </ul>	2002

45+ partnership	LTU 45+	Specific for 45+ LTU for 24 months at least	Coaching provided by a partner of "24 months 45+ jobseekers" for a 12 months period (details in the section below concerning the best practices)	2012
Job training	LTU Seniors	Specific for LTU Seniors far away from the labour market	Training workshop where jobseekers learn a few days a week with a coordinator who to settle back into a normal rhythm of activity and to develop again their social, communication and technical skills (details in the section below concerning the best practices)	2010

### **3. Successful practices in integration of LTU**

#### **3.1 Successful PES services for integration of LTU adults / young people**

**And**

#### **3.2 Successful PES measures for integration of LTU adults/ young people**

ACTIRIS don't have a specific service or specific PES measures for integration of LTU adults but the current strategy of ACTIRIS is based on priorities to focus on prevention for young people and all other jobseekers from 18 to 49. They will all have guidance (from six months to one year; and more, if needed and on demand) after their registration:

- A very intensive support for young people and the obligation to find one of the three following solutions for each of them within six months of their registration : a traineeship, a training or a job
- There is a new benchmarking and a working group (from begin 2014) which takes stock of the current state and of the already existing tools, measures and guidance for the seniors ("50 to 55 or 58<sup>4</sup>" and 58+): we have to make very practical proposals to our DG for the next months.

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<sup>4</sup> Even if it is not yet a target group, the « 50 up to 55 » jobseekers' segment have to actively search for a job (Activation process). In 2016, this segment will be extended up to 58 years old.

### 3.3 Successful partnership working to support integration of LTU adults/young people

<b>Start and end date of implementation</b>	2012
<b>Description of the partnership working and what it aims to achieve</b>	<p>Guidance provided by a partner of "24 months 45+ jobseekers" for a 12 months period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Career and personal assessment</li> <li>▪ How to build a professional project (information over the labour market – what are the necessary steps to achieve the objective) ?</li> <li>▪ Job-searching guidance</li> <li>▪ Contacts with employers (to raise awareness about the advantages)</li> </ul>
<b>Outputs and outcomes of the collaboration</b>	Output for 2013: 50 % of the participants have found a work and 25 % training
<b>Type of assessment</b>	<p>The jobseekers feel stronger by meeting other people in the same situation.</p> <p>The jobseekers feel secure and taken care by the partner thanks to his intensive support.</p> <p>The whole process gives better job matching results.</p>

<b>Start and end date of implementation</b>	2010
<b>Description of the partnership working and what it aims to achieve</b>	<p><b>Job training</b> for seniors far away from the labour market</p> <p><b>Training workshop</b> where jobseekers learn a few days a week with a coordinator and a counsellor how to settle back into a normal rhythm of activity and to develop again their social, communication and technical skills: according to their abilities (dispatch work, catering, crafts, carpentry,...).</p> <p>They consider with the jobseekers the whole situation: accommodation, relationship, personal finances, health,...</p> <p>When there is no barrier anymore to working, they receive the support of a jobcoach.</p>
<b>Outputs and outcomes of the collaboration</b>	Very good results for people who are so far away from the labour market : in 2012, 50 % of the participants have found a job, a training or a place in a specific new group guidance
<b>Type of assessment</b>	<p>The jobseekers gain work experience at their own pace                          They can test when they are ready to actively seek for work.</p> <p>The jobcoach raises the awareness of the employers and ensures the matching between the vacancy and the profile of the jobseeker</p> <p>The guidance can be very long: an average of 12 to 18 months, exceptionally up to 3 years.</p>

### 3.4 Successful working with employers to support integration of LTU adults

<b>Start and end date of implementation</b>	2012
<b>Description of the collaboration/service for employers and what it aims to achieve</b>	<p>"Charte diversité" (Charter of diversity)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To raise awareness and foster the Brussels business world in order to pursue an intern diversity management.</li> <li>2. To closely cooperate with the Brussels enterprises in that process.</li> </ol> <p>Measures deployed :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diversity plans</li> <li>▪ Diversity consultants</li> <li>▪ Website</li> <li>▪ Several publications</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Actions planned take account of the connection between the diversity, the fight against discrimination, and the business world.</li> <li>4. To bring together all the major players in the Brussels-Capital Region labour market</li> <li>5. To organise a wide partnership around the diversity politics with the employers, the professional bodies, the trade unions, administrations, public interest organizations and socio-professional integration bodies.</li> <li>6. This partnership continues the development and the refinement of tools available to all the players in the Brussels labour market.</li> </ol>
<b>Outputs and outcomes of the collaboration/service for employers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To fight prejudice (ethnic, gender, age,...)</li> <li>▪ Mobilisation and networking of the partnership</li> <li>▪ Direct collaboration with the social partners : strong element of the Brussels politics (in comparison with the 2 other regions)</li> </ul>
<b>Type of assessment</b>	We have no figures because the impact is more qualitative than quantitative as explained above in the point about the outputs and outcomes.

## **4. Conclusions**

### **4.1 What do you see as the main challenges in relation to delivering effective services and measures to LTU?**

We have been alerted about the situation of older workers. There is a dramatic increase in the numbers of unemployed older people. Therefore our DG has asked to start a working group on that target.

The WG is analyzing the current situation and trying to find solutions and appropriate proposals.

Thanks to the analysis, we discover that, among the older unemployed, there is an increasing big segment of under qualified older LTU.

We are working already on the YG and the Youth situation but the older LTU is our main challenge (due to the focus on the YG, the older unemployed have been left on their side: this is "a sort of discrimination...").

### **4.2 What are your conclusions on what works best in relation to the delivery of effective services and measures for LtU?**

What works best has been fully described in the best practices and in the table (page 8 to 14).

In relation to point 4.1, there are two items to add:

- The Higher Council for Employment (2012 report) insists on the combination of social dialogue and targeted support policies..

Along with the importance of recognising competences, the Council proposes to complete that package with a process for validating acquired competences as well as pushing for all aspects and measures that support intergenerational transmitting of competences. Measures to promote tutoring come to mind.

The Council also suggests to pursue and encourage diversity in the workplace (sex, age, origin, (in)\_validity), as guaranteed by the territorial pact for employment. This is probably the starting point for change in workplace culture.



#### 4.3 In the Peer Review discussions, on which of the following topics would you most like to focus and what would you most like to learn from others?

Topics	Importance of the topic (scale: 1 very unimportant, 5 = very important)	What would you most like to learn from others in the topic(s) you are most interested in?
PES services for LTU	5	As we have a complete different organisation : all our registered jobseekers have the right and even the obligation to an accompaniment from six months (young people) to one year and even more, it would be very interesting to see how the other PES are dealing with LTU. Do other PES have a dedicated service for the LTU? Is it not a sort of contradiction to consider LTU as an issue when this is precisely the condition we are trying to prevent?
PES measures for LTU	4	For the same reasons outlined above, it would be also very interesting to discover the measures implemented in their entirety by the PES (not in collaboration with partners).
Partnership working to address LTU	3	We have already a quite important developed partnership offer but is still instructive to learn more about (inspiration).
Working with employers to address LTU	5	This is a very important matter because we need to raise the awareness of the employers and this is particularly difficult in the general economic crisis context. How do the other PES work with employers to deal with this?