



Study supporting the evaluation of Decision 573/2014/EU on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES)

Annexes 3 to 9

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ANNEX 3: BASELINE ANALYSIS

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In this Annex, we set out the baseline situation at the time of the implementation of the Decision 573/2014/EU on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES). This baseline situation has allowed a comparison point for the assessment of the influence of the Decision throughout the evaluation final report, and in particular in Section 6 (EU Added value). It is important to note of course however that any comparison can only be indicative due to the influence of other contextual factors over time.

European cooperation between Public Employment Services prior to the PES Decision 573/2014/EU: trends and EU support

In recognition of the changing roles for Public Employment Services, and their increasing centrality to the delivery of the European Employment Strategy, there had been a growing trend before the adoption of the PES Decision towards greater cooperation between PES in Europe.

European PES cooperation dates back to 1997 when the European Commission set up an informal advisory group of PES. The HoPES Network (European Network of Heads of Public Employment Services) was created in 1997 to promote cooperation, exchange and mutual learning between its members, and to receive specialist feedback on policy initiatives in the employment field¹. In 2010, HoPES established a 'PES 2020' high-level working group to outline the strategic role of Public Employment Services in the delivery of the Europe 2020 Strategy².

Cooperation initiatives between smaller groups of PES also took place formally or informally alongside the HoPES Network, supported sometimes by EU funding. The Swedish PES for example led a project on PES cooperation in 1998-1999 with some other Member States (FR, ES, NL and BE-Wallonia), which received some EU funding via the French partner. This project developed into the "PES Partners in Development (PPD)" project, involving 17 PES, which ran over two years. Each PES contributed €17,500, which was used for activities such as working groups on guidance or services to employers.

In order to facilitate labour market reforms, the European Commission also supported mutual learning between European PES through initiatives within the previous PROGRESS programme. Specifically, in September 2010, it launched the PES to PES Dialogue programme, the European Commission's mutual learning support programme for PES in the EU³. Under this programme, peer review meetings focusing on particular themes or challenges were conducted between 2010-2014 in order to help PES anticipate new trends and needs which require adjustment of their service offer and business models. The activities of the PES to PES Dialogue were guided by, and contributed towards, the work of the European Network of Heads of Employment Services (HoPES). Funding was also provided via PROGRESS for the original, voluntary-based PES benchmarking project.

A complementary initiative to the PES to PES Dialogue, the Partnership between Employment Services initiative (PARES)⁴, part of the EU's Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, was launched in 2011. PARES focuses on cooperation between different employment

¹ European Commission (2013), Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on enhanced co-operation between *Public Employment Services (PES)*, COM(2013) 430 final

² See: *Building Bridges. Shaping the Future of Public Employment Services towards 2020*. Ed. F. Leroy and L. Struyven. die Keure, 2014

³ European Commission (2011), *New Developments, Good Practices and Lessons Learnt: one year of the PES-to-PES Dialogue*, Author: Agota Scharle

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=991&langId=en>

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services (public, private and non-profit) in order to make publicly funded employment services more efficient, whether delivered by public or private employment agencies. PARES strategic dialogue encourages employment services to share and develop good practice in cooperation and complementary service provision through stakeholder conferences and dialogue events⁵.

The Web-tool for Evaluated Employment Services Practices (WEESP) – a part of the PARES initiative – was established in 2012-13, and aimed at promoting partnerships and cooperation between employment services in Europe by gathering evidence of evaluated employment services practices and interventions across the EU and sharing them through an online repository⁶.

The PES themselves responded to these challenges by adopting the PES 2020 strategy⁷, which sets targets for the changes in the role and function of PES that are necessary in view of the implementation of the EU 2020 strategy.

The European Council in 2013⁸ called for partnerships between public and private employment services, employers, social partners and youth representatives when delivering Youth Guarantee schemes.

Baseline: PES Cooperation prior to the PES Decision 573/2014/EU

In summary, at the time of the adoption of the PES Decision 573/2014/EU, four main forms of PES cooperation were in operation:

- Voluntary mutual learning opportunities via the PES to PES Dialogue programme funded by the EU;
- Strategic dialogue between different employment services (public, private and non-profit) in the context of the PARES initiative;
- Informal, voluntary, top-down⁹ cooperation of the Heads of Employment Services via the HoPES Network, set up and led by the European Commission;
- Bilateral or multilateral bottom-up cooperation between PES in the context of self-funded exchanges or EU-funded projects.

Available evidence from the PES to PES Dialogue programme (annual reports, dissemination conference papers¹⁰) indicates that the programme focused strongly on exchanges around specific guidelines from the European Employment Strategy. Guidelines addressed for example in 2014¹¹ were in particular:

- Guideline 7: Increasing labour market participation of men and women, reducing structural unemployment and promoting job quality. This guideline was addressed in particular in 2014 by exploring tailored approaches to activation and the role of engaging with employers;

⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=991&langId=en>

⁶ <http://www.fondazionebrodolini.it/en/projects/weesp-web-tool-evaluated-employment-services-practices>

⁷ *Public Employment Services' Contribution to EU 2020*, PES 2020 Strategy Output Paper, 2012

⁸ EPSCO conclusions 28 February 2013

⁹ The HoPES Network was top-down because (a) it involved principally the Heads of PES rather than operational representatives from PES and (b) it was set up and led by the European Commission rather than driven by the PES

¹⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=fr&catId=1005&newsId=2134&furtherNews=yes>

¹¹ European Commission (2014), *PES to PES Dialogue Report 2014*, Authors: Roger Sumpton, Isabelle Puchwein-Roberts, Helen Metcalfe

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- Guideline 8: Develop a skilled workforce responding to labour market needs and promoting lifelong learning. This guideline was addressed in particular in 2014 via a focus on skill-based profiling and matching and the work first versus train first debate in the context of the long-term unemployed¹².

In terms of activities, the programme involved:

- 8 Dialogue Conferences (2010-2014), including 4 Dissemination Conferences¹³. The final conference in 2014 for example focused on PES organisation and service delivery: digitalisation, decentralisation, performance and activation;
- Peer reviews. These events focused on a particular theme and were hosted by a PES that presented its particular experience in this field and shares this with other PES as a starting point for fruitful discussions with peer PES. PES Peer Review meetings aimed at identifying good practice, explore it and transfer its core elements¹⁴. For example, the second Peer Review focused on "Integrated Multi-channelling", showcasing how some PES increasingly offered online services such as: registration, vacancies advertisement, job search, automatic matching of jobseekers' profiles with jobs or communication via social media, and closely aligned with the Europe 2020 Digital Agenda¹⁵;
- Follow-up study visits in the form of ad hoc support provided when needed and requested by PES. High-level advice and expertise was delivered by peer PES experts with the aim to increase the operational capacity of PES, to improve service offer and delivery or implement good practices of the Peer Review. A follow-up visit for example took place in Vienna in September 2013 on benchmarking and individual performance management¹⁶;
- Ad hoc analytical papers, for example a paper from December 2013 on Successful partnerships in delivering public employment services¹⁷.

The PARES programme has involved¹⁸:

- PARES strategic dialogue: a forum where employment services can share and develop good practice in cooperation and complementary service provision. It took form of stakeholder conferences on 28-29 September 2011, 2-3 October 2012 and 24-25 October 2013, and dialogue events on:
 - Effective E-Services (17 March 2015)
 - Delivering a coordinated service offer (20 May 2014)
 - Evaluation of partnerships (14 May 2013)
 - Drafting a Memorandum of Understanding on a national level(26 April 2013)
 - Fields and forms of cooperation (13 March 2012)
 - Working in partnership at the local and regional Level (29 March 2012);

¹² European Commission (2014), *4th PES to PES Dialogue Dissemination Conference: PES organisation and service delivery: digitalisation, decentralisation, performance and activation*, Authors: Roger Sumpton, Isabelle Puchwein-Roberts, Helen Metcalfe

¹³ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=fr&catId=1005&newsId=2134&furtherNews=yes>

¹⁴ European Commission (2009), *Specifications - Invitation to tender No VT/2009/022 "PES to PES dialogue" service contract*

¹⁵ European Commission (2011), *New Developments, Good Practices and Lessons Learnt: one year of the PES-to-PES Dialogue*, Author: Agota Scharle

¹⁶ European Commission (2013), *PES to PES Dialogue Report 2013, Dissemination Conference: Results from the third year of the PES to PES Dialogue programme*, Authors: Helen Tubb, Ellen Murray, Tina Weber, Isabelle Puchwein and Eleanor Breen

¹⁷ European Commission (2013), *Successful partnerships in delivering public employment services*, Author: Anette Scopetta, ZSI (Zentrum für Soziale Innovation) / ZSI (Centre for Social Innovation)

¹⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=991&langId=en#navItem-2>

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- PARES call for proposals¹⁹: for projects by employment services that showcase the mixed provision of employment services for vulnerable groups;
- PES Practices database²⁰: including organisational practices, tools and active labour market policies related to service delivery for jobseekers and employers. This database currently exists alongside the examples in the PES Knowledge Centre.

Assessments of benefits and limitations of PES cooperation prior to the PES Decision 573/2014/EU

A number of positive outcomes of the programmes existing prior to the implementation of the PES Decision are reported in various Commission reports, essentially based on surveys of PES representatives participating in the existing mutual learning processes. The 2013 report on PES to PES Dialogue²¹ for example states that “the results of the European Commission survey (self-assessment process) carried out among PES in 2013 confirmed that the PES to PES Dialogue had been a highly valuable initiative in bringing about and influencing positive changes in PES across Europe, and particularly in enabling the comparison, qualitative review and benchmarking of PES services, business models and concepts”.

The 2014 PES to PES Dialogue report also underlined changes which had made in PES which had been influenced by the programme, based on a survey of participants in events in 2013 and 2014. In total, 136 instances of change were reported by the PES in 2013 and 2014, of which 72 were apparent in 2014 alone. Of these 72, 22 took place where change had already been implemented and could therefore be the continuation of activities reported in the 2013 survey. Positively, there are 27 instances where change started during the last year and 23 cases where change is planned for the future. With the exception of three respondents, all PES reported at least one impact following attendance at one or more event in the programme. In terms of fields of practice, participants mostly reported changes to PES activities in quality management and professionalism of employment counsellors, services for employers and blended service delivery for jobseekers²².

Targeted consultations carried out for the current evaluation also underlined that the cooperation activities prior to 2014 provided a good starting point for PES cooperation, with important outcomes in terms of beginning collaboration between certain PES, sharing good practices, learning and innovation in important fields linked to PES performance and practice, and mutual learning. However, the consultations also highlighted that PES cooperation prior to 2014 had a number of shortcomings²³:

- It was too top-down (led by the Commission agenda rather than by the PES themselves).

¹⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=105&langId=en&callId=307&furtherCalls=yes>

²⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1206&langId=en>

²¹ *European Commission (2013), PES to PES Dialogue Report 2013*, Authors: Helen Tubb, Ellen Murray, Tina Weber, Isabelle Puchwein and Eleanor Breen

²² *European Commission (2014), PES to PES Dialogue Report 2014*, Authors: Roger Sumpton, Isabelle Puchwein-Roberts, Helen Metcalfe

²³ Evidence gathered through targeted consultations under the current evaluation with stakeholders who had knowledge of PES cooperation prior to 2014 including European Commission officials (past and present), current and former PES Board members and AFEPA, representatives from other international organisations.

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- Not all PES/countries were involved in cooperation, and often least of all those with the least mature PES and greatest labour market challenges. PES were developing their own tools and approaches (e.g. for digitisation) at national level, rather than saving time and money by learning from the more advanced PES;
- The cooperation had no formal/legal status and so could not feed formally into any policy- or decision-making processes or provide a collective voice for PES;
- There was no named representative for PES cooperation at an operational level within each PES;
- Mutual learning and targeted assistance (e.g. follow-up visits after Peer Reviews) were not based on detailed assessments of PES capacity and performance;
- Good practice examples were not sufficiently accessible online;
- There was not a stable budget line dedicated to PES cooperation. EU funding for cooperation was fragmented across different sources. While this improved under PES to PES Dialogue, there was room for further streamlining and targeting;
- The cooperation did not provide a vehicle to demonstrate the added-value of PES in addressing labour market challenges.

These shortcomings, as well as others, are highlighted in the 2013 proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on enhanced co-operation between Public Employment Services²⁴, which states that - despite progress over the years - the cooperation model in operation showed 'considerable limitations'. The proposal states that the voluntary participation of national PES hampered the prospects of early identification of low performance by PES, which could result in structural labour market problems. It also underlined that there was also no reporting mechanism, meaning that policy-makers at national and EU-level were not systematically informed about the results of the existing benchmarking and mutual learning practices.

The proposal also states that efforts to make PES more comparable by clustering them according to business models had not been successful. Linkages between benchmarking and mutual learning activities were weak and inconsistent and the evidence-base for the activities of the existing Mutual Learning Programme was not scientifically robust. Participation in mutual learning was limited to a small group of PES and therefore the effects were not sufficiently widespread. Interviewees have also underlined that the top-down management of the informal PES cooperation (led by the European Commission) did not facilitate the bottom-up ownership and collegiality of the Network by the national PES.

The PES representatives themselves participating in the PES to PES Dialogue events surveyed by the Commission in 2013-2014 suggested a number of more operational changes to activities to improve cooperation including²⁵:

- Working in smaller groups at events;
- Greater dissemination of best practices;
- Undertaking smaller follow-up activities to go into further detail about practicalities and follow-up studies;
- Using shared online platforms to facilitate discussion between events;
- Temporary twinning of PES, work shadowing or secondments to other PES;

²⁴ European Commission (2013), *Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on enhanced co-operation between Public Employment Services (PES)*, COM(2013) 430 final

²⁵ European Commission (2014), *PES to PES Dialogue Report 2014*, Authors: Roger Sumpton, Isabelle Puchwein-Roberts, Helen Metcalfe

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- Showcasing best practices in a more accessible way, such as including presentations from events as part of event reports; having a dedicated web page for best practices;
- Ensuring that two people from each PES participate in each event - one technical and one from a strategic point of view;
- More room for debate at events - which could allow for greater discussion of daily PES activities and deeper feedback and assessment on the lessons learnt from PES activities.

Baseline indicators on PES maturity levels (2015-2016)

The PES Annual Report 2015-2016 provides an assessment of the maturity of the PES on the different benchmarking indicators by 'section', based on the first benchlearning cycle in 2015-2016²⁶, set out in Table A3.1 below. The different levels of maturity are defined as follows²⁷:

- A **mature** organisation with respect to the potential performance enabler X is achieved when all four self-scores in the PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act)²⁸ cycle are 5 or higher;
- A **well-developed** organisation with respect to the potential performance enabler X is achieved when at least three of the four self-scores are 4 or higher;
- A **developing** organisation with respect to the potential performance enabler X is achieved when at least three of the four self-scores are 3 or higher.
- In all other cases, the maturity of the organisation is considered '**developable**'.

These indicators provide a comparison point between the first and further benchlearning cycles (see the comparison set out in sub-section 3.3 of the main body of the report, and further detailed in the appendix of Annex 4). As underlined, it is however important to recognise that the influence of the PES Decision on any change registered is likely to be one of a number of influences.

The table also illustrates the potential for organisational improvements in every PES. Based on the recommendations made to the PES following the external assessments, the table also suggests those PES that can serve as a reference point to assist within the selected thematic areas. The table indicates that **in each and every section there is more than one PES that can be considered mature or well-developed**, and those PES differ in their 'business models' as well as their institutional contexts. Hence, there is more than one opportunity to study the approaches of peer PES for organisational development.

The levels are set out below:

²⁶ European Commission (2017), *European Network of Public Employment Services (PES): Annual report 2015-16*, p.21

²⁷ European Commission (2017), *PES Network Benchlearning Manual*, October 2017, p.19

²⁸ The PDCA cycle (Plan, Do, Check, Act) forms the basis of the scoring process (see European Commission (2017), *PES Network Benchlearning Manual*, p.11 for further detail)

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Table A3.1 Baseline PES maturity levels

PES	Section A Strategic performance management	Section B Design of operational processes	Section C Sustainable activation and management of transitions	Section D Relations with employers	Section E Evidence-based design and implementation of PES services	Section F Management of partnerships and stakeholders	Section G Allocation of PES resources	Overall
Austria	mature	well-developed	developing	well-developed	developing	mature	mature	mature
Bulgaria	developing	developable	developable	developing	developable	developable	well-developed	developable
Croatia	developing	developing	developing	developing	developing	developing	developing	developing
Cyprus	developable	developable	developable	developable	developable	developable	developable	developable
Czech Republic	developable	developing	developing	developing	developable	developing	developing	developing
Denmark	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed	developing	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed
Estonia	mature	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed	mature
Finland	developing	well-developed	developing	well-developed	developing	developing	developing	developing
France	well-developed	developing	well-developed	well-developed	mature	mature	developing	well-developed
Germany	well-developed	developing	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed	mature	well-developed
Greece	developable	developable	developable	developable	developable	developable	developable	developable
Hungary	developing	developable	developable	developing	developable	developable	developable	developable
Iceland	developable	developable	developing	developing	developing	well-developed	developing	developable
Ireland	developing	developing	developing	developing	developing	developing	developing	developing
Latvia	developable	developing	developing	developing	developing	developable	developing	developing
Lithuania	developing	developing	developable	well-developed	developable	developable	developable	developable
Luxembourg	developable	developable	developable	developing	developable	developable	developable	developable
Malta	developing	developing	developing	developable	developable	well-developed	developing	developing

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Netherlands	well-developed	well-developed	developing	developing	well-developed	well-developed	developing	well-developed
Norway	developing	developing	developing	developing	developing	developable	developing	developing
Poland	developable	developing	developing	developing	developable	developing	developable	developable
Portugal	developing	developable	developing	developing	developable	developable	developable	developable
Romania	developable	developable	developable	developable	developable	developable	developing	developable
Slovakia	developable	developing	developable	developable	developable	developable	developing	developable
Slovenia	developing	well-developed	developing	well-developed	developing	developing	developing	developing
Spain	developing	developable	developable	developable	developable	developable	developing	developable
Sweden	well-developed	developing	well-developed	well-developed	developing	developing	well-developed	well-developed
UK	well-developed	well-developed	developing	developing	well-developed	developable	developing	developing
Belgium - VDAB	well-developed	mature	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed	well-developed	mature
Belgium - ACTIRIS	developing	developing	developing	well-developed	developing	well-developed	well-developed	developing
Belgium - LE FOREM	developing	developable	developable	well-developed	developing	developing	developing	developable

ANNEX 4: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY MAPPING

INTRODUCTION

In this annex, we examine the evidence collected in the country mapping exercise and carry out an overall comparative analysis across the PES. Evidence from this mapping exercise is also used as a source of evidence to answer the evaluation questions. The analysis identifies trends as well as interesting examples and good practices across the different PES over four dimensions relating to the degree to which:

1. The set-up of the PES Network led to increased cooperation and exchanges between EU Member States, Iceland and Norway in the area of PES responsibility;
2. Changes in PES performance, in particular in organisational processes and service delivery (e.g. setting up employer services, redefining strategic performance management systems, etc.) in 32 PES between mid-2014 and mid-2018 have been influenced by the PES Network activities and outcomes;
3. PES contributions to the implementation of policy initiatives in the field of employment were encouraged through the PES Network; and
4. There was any influence on ESF programming and funding, where applicable.

In introduction, it is important to note that, as outlined in our initial proposal, the PES Decision presents a number of challenges for undertaking an analysis of causal attribution, notably because its results and outcomes are heterogeneous, diffuse, vary in different PES contexts, and are subject to a wide range of contributory factors (e.g. labour market and governance context, strategic and budgetary constraints and priorities at the national level, etc.). Taking these considerations into account, which have been confirmed during the different stages of the research and the evidence we have collected thus far, it is important to note that the analysis can draw out evidence on the contribution made by the PES Network to certain outcomes (e.g. changes in PES performance), but cannot state direct causal links, due to the existence of other factors that will influence the outcomes.

Approach to clustering

In order to explore the prevalence of particular trends or features under each dimension, we have clustered countries on specific features, based on specific characteristics of PES. These clusters were discussed and agreed with the European Commission following the interim meeting in November 2018. Based on the qualitative evidence relating to cooperation between PES, we assess whether, where possible, there are patterns in the data, in terms of PES maturity levels and level of autonomy. This is set out further below, in addition to the grouping of countries that this involves.

- a) **PES maturity level** clusters PES into developable, developing, mature, and well-developed. Maturity levels are based on indicators such as strategic performance management, design of operational processes, sustainable activation and management of transitions, relations with employers, evidence-based design and implementation of PES services, management of partnerships and stakeholders, and allocation of PES resources. See A4.1 below:

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Table A4.1 PES maturity level*

Developable	Developing	Mature	Well-developed
Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain	Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Slovenia, United Kingdom	Austria, Belgium - Flanders (VDAB), Estonia	Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden

Source: European Commission (2017), *European Network of Public Employment Services (PES): Annual reports 2015-16*, p.21

*No data for Bruxelles (ACTIRIS), Belgium – Wallonia (Le Forem), and Italy

- b) **Level of autonomy** clusters PES into high (independent body with some ministerial/government influence), medium (independent body with significant ministerial/government influence) and low (part of the ministry/government). See below.

Table A4.2 PES level of autonomy*

High	Medium	Low
Austria, Belgium - Flanders (VDAB), Belgium - Bruxelles (ACTIRIS), Belgium - Wallonia (Le Forem), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden	Italy, Luxembourg, Slovakia	Lithuania, Poland, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, United Kingdom

Source: own classification by Ecorys

*Data not available for Romania

The following text sets out our findings for each dimension in turn.

Dimension 1: Increased cooperation and exchanges between PES in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway in the area of PES responsibility

Using the data gathered for each research task, this section comparatively assesses the contribution of the PES Network to increased cooperation and exchanges between PES by analysing trends and observed similarities and differences across them. The analysis illustrates different types of enhanced cooperation with examples from the evidence collected.

From the qualitative evidence gathered, it is clear that the Network has improved cooperation and exchanges between PES overall in a variety of ways. This was summarised in the AFEPA workshop (see Annex 6) that was held in October 2018, in which participants cited the main benefits of the PES cooperation since 2014 as follows:

- After 2014, PES have had **more ownership** of the process and the decisions that are made about what the Network focuses on. Previously, PES were not involved in putting together the meeting agendas, and were predominantly given the room for intervention at the end of the meeting during the AOB
- Despite a **formal process** (based on the Decision), the Network continues to reinforce many **informal exchanges** between members, which is believed to be positive
- The exchanges have been **more focused** after 2014. It was noted that pre-2014 there was a tendency to just focus on PES activities, whereas now the focus had been broadened through the Network, and as a result of the Decision on PES cooperation, to cover strategy, organisational improvement and key processes linked to this.
- PES have also been more **committed** to participating in the Network than before 2014

More detail on cooperation between the PES in individual Member States is given in the sections below.

New contacts and cooperation with other PES

From the interviews conducted with PES Network members, it is clear that there is a great deal of activity in terms of developing new contacts and cooperation. Although direct causality with Network activity cannot be proven in all cases, there is a large body of evidence suggesting that the Network has strongly supported the initiation of contacts and sustained cooperation between PES over time through a range of activities including the mutual learning events, PES Network meetings, Working Groups and benchmarking process. Consultees also underlined that cooperation has significantly increased, across all PES Network members (not just small groups of countries), compared to the period before 2014.

In some countries, PES interviewees attributed the increased quality of this cooperation directly to the Network. In Austria, for example, where there is a high level of cooperation with a range of different Member States, the quality of this cooperation was held to have increased after 2014 due to the introduction of a standardised/formalised cooperation process. In Bulgaria also, it was reported by PES interviewees that after 2014 there was more sustainable collaboration with other PES, including the opportunity to work on daily

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issues. The German PES has also been very active in terms of cooperation with other PES, and after 2014, it was reported that cooperation increased significantly and was more structured, with the agenda organised around common interests. Benchmarking was felt to be particularly useful in enabling the different PES to compare their situation and how they can improve. One PES reported that pre-2014, cooperation was unsystematic, which made it more difficult for shortcomings to be addressed. Post-2014 cooperation is targeted at topics of interest and at the needs of the different PES.

Most countries are involved in a range of different types of cooperation with other PES, with most participating both as teachers and learners, and some specific examples are given below:

- Latvia is involved in strategic cooperation and information-sharing with the PES that they believe implement excellent models from which it can learn (Germany, Austria and Luxembourg). The particular areas in which Latvia has been involved as a learner are quality management and IT systems (Austria), the set-up and monitoring of Key Performance Indicators and feedback loops into policies (Germany) and the development of a tool implemented aimed at helping individuals to improve their IT skills (Luxembourg).
- In Lithuania, the main cooperation is with PES in Estonia, Latvia, Germany, Sweden and Poland relating to organisational aspects: human resources, improvement of management activities, staff training.
- The Hungarian PES is dominantly in a learner position, which has involved study visits in Germany and Sweden. It also learns from cooperation with Belgium (VDAB), the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Estonia, and Austria.
- Estonia has visited Finland to learn about reintegration services for jobseekers with disabilities and labour market training. Finland has also visited Estonia to learn about Estonia's e-government system. Other than the Nordic countries, Denmark also has a particularly close cooperation with Germany as both a tutor and a learner.

The **PES in Iceland** cooperates with the PES in NL, as it was interested in how the NL PES cooperates with employers. This cooperation started before 2014, but continues post-2014 and interactions are facilitated as a result of the Network. The Iceland PES also cooperates with Scotland: Iceland made a study visit in Glasgow in 2015 to understand more about the link between PES and trade unions representing unemployed individuals. The PES in Iceland also undertook a study visit to Norway to understand more about the job counselling process. Iceland has also been advising other PES on measures to integrate women from rural areas into the labour market.

Since 2014, it is reported that cooperation is a lot more structured and the role of the European Commission is stronger in terms of steering.

Geographical proximity plays an important role in cooperation between PES. Although some of this cooperation predates the PES Decision of 2014 and would be likely to exist in the absence of the Network to some degree, consultees confirm that the PES Network has also facilitated the sustainability and regularity of contacts and cooperation.

For example, there is practical cooperation between the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), which predates and operates independently from the PES Network,

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although the Network has encouraged these PES to continue this type of information exchange and sharing of best practices. This cooperation is flexible in terms of the topics covered and the roles that the PES play. For example, Latvia operates as a learner in the case of disability reform, as the Estonian PES is very advanced in this policy area.

The Luxembourg PES has been mainly involved as learner with regional PES of neighbouring countries (Germany, France and Belgium) and in particular Actiris and Forem (Belgium), Lorraine (France) and Rhine and Palatinate (Germany). The types of activities and cooperation include the organisation of days with neighbouring regional PES, and the digitalisation of services and implementation of IT systems (mainly based on the example provided by the French PES). It should be noted, however, that it can be difficult to differentiate the different types of cooperation, as they are sometimes quite informal.

There is also strong cooperation between the Nordic countries, where the PES meet at least once a year. This cooperation includes regular Nordic PES meetings ahead of formal meetings with the Network at large.

The Irish PES has cooperated mostly with the UK PES. For example, the UK PES hosted the Irish PES to show how universal credit is implemented and operates in the UK. The Irish PES also cooperates with Estonia on performance and quality management and the Netherlands on employer engagement.

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In Eastern Europe, the Slovakian PES participates in mutual events, with regular cooperation with the PES in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Since the establishment of the PES Network, **PES Estonia** has very actively participated in Network activities and events, as well as hosting events. Close contacts have been established with colleagues in other countries and joint activities and meetings organised both within the framework of the Network and outside its scope. The Estonian PES participates and contributes to all types of PES Network activities, such as benchlearning, mutual learning and mutual assistance projects (for example as a participant in the Cyprus mutual assistance project in 2016-2017*), as well as participating in a range of workshops and conferences. Currently the organisation participates mainly in workshops relating to IT (information technology) and HRM (human resource management). Estonia has a strong reputation for IT and contributes actively to the work of the IT group, and its contribution is respected by the other members.

The most significant reforms that have taken place between the two benchlearning periods in Estonia include a Work Ability reform and a reform aimed at preventing unemployment. In May 2017, the PES initiated new unemployment prevention measures, targeting those who need support in terms of changing employer or remaining in the labour market, as well as supporting employers in developing and training their workforce. From 2019 the Estonian PES will start delivering career counselling services.

The view of interviewees from Estonia is that these reforms would have taken place without the Network, but the way that they have been implemented and their success can be now assessed very clearly against the experience of other countries. The Network provides a very clear channel to introduce the results related to the Work Ability reform to other countries. There is also clear interest in the Network to learn from the Estonian experience in this area.

*European Network of Public Employment Services (PES) Annual Report 2017

New topics for cooperation with other PES since 2014

The PES of many different countries reported engaging with other PES on a range of different and new topics since 2014 thanks to the various channels for cooperation offered by the PES Network, such as migrants, refugees, digitalisation and career counselling:

- **Migration:** Poland requested information from the Romanian PES about the implementation of programmes supporting Romanian migrants who wish to return to their home country. Further, in 2016, a representative of the Norwegian PES was asked to chair the work on integration of refugees into the labour market. There is also cooperation between Norway and Germany on key considerations for refugee integration. The European Commission notes in its report to the European Parliament on the application of the PES Decision that many PES in Europe are offering services to a growing number of refugees and, in some cases, asylum-seekers. Although the situation in the Member States varies widely, there are many common challenges and significant possibilities to learn from innovative approaches across Europe²⁹.

²⁹ COM (2017) 287 final. 6 June 2017

- **Digitalisation:** Cyprus has cooperated with Estonia on this issue; the UK is also interested in digitalisation strategies and has been looking to learn from other countries in this area. The UK PES has cooperated with the PES in NL, DE and FR on this topic.
- **Segmentation and profiling:** The UK PES has cooperated with the Irish PES on the topic of segmentation and profiling. The Cyprus PES is also developing tools for segmentation and targeting special groups, and the Estonian PES is also working on the profiling and segmentation of clients
- **Other new topics** include HRM strategy and organisational change (Norway) and evidence-based benchlearning (France).

Different types and levels of cooperation

A number of observations about the types and levels of cooperation can be made, based on the qualitative data that has been collected. Each of the types of cooperation below has the potential to lead – and in many cases, has contributed to – changes in the reform agenda of the PES, as well as concrete changes in PES organisational processes and service delivery. Many countries have of course engaged in more than one type of cooperation.

Formal cooperation through **benchlearning** has been cited by the PES in many countries as a particularly valuable activity, leading to interactions that are much more intense, systematic and better targeted to different PES needs and interests. Most participants in the AFEPA evaluation workshop held in October 2018 emphasised the role and effects of benchlearning, which is generally believed to be at the core of the Network and its most successful activity. Participants also felt that benchlearning led to some of the most significant changes in their home contexts, in terms of informing (in different contexts) developments, like for example enhancing the focus of the PES on SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), improving the service offer to employers using a 'key account manager' model, developing and improving IT systems, providing evidence of the need to upskill frontline PES workers, which in one case resulted in an accredited course being developed with a university. The role of benchlearning as acting 'like a window into other PES', hence facilitating learning, was also noted.

Cooperation via benchlearning was also seen by AFEPA workshop participants (see Annex 6) as helping to influence high-level policy makers and stakeholders in ministries, with benchlearning reports being used as evidence of the need to change systems and structures, providing a 'backing' to influence change. As well as benchlearning acting as a catalyst for change, and evidence for the need for such change, it was also noted that it had the effect of accelerating developments in some contexts, i.e. where change was being considered, benchlearning provided the impetus for this to happen quicker than it would otherwise have done. It was also noted, however, that the success of benchlearning also lies in the fact that it is complemented by the mutual assistance and informal learning activities.

These findings are backed up by the interviews with national PES members. For example, in Portugal, the PES feels that cooperation through benchlearning has led it to better understand its weakest and strongest features and consequently to better shape its national reform agenda. The Italian PES also feels that it has benefited through this form of cooperation: it participated in two external benchlearning assessments in 2015 and 2017. The first identified a need to strengthen, harmonise and standardise the PES

throughout Italy and to complete the transition of the PES from relatively bureaucratic bodies to more customer-oriented organisations.

For example, the French PES, as all other PES, took an active part in the two cycles of benchlearning, by participating in assessments to PES in other countries and by hosting in France. The result of these assessments was reported to be a focus on new approaches to supporting jobseekers and employers, and the digitalisation of both the service offer and the internal organisation of the PES. In Slovakia also, the greatest area of change is reported to have been as a result of benchlearning: interactions are much more intense, much more structured and better targeted to different PES needs.

Other types of cooperation which exist as a result of the PES Decision include:

- **Working groups (WGs)** are seen as useful by the PES in many countries, which have taken a role either as participants or leaders. For example, the WG on Evidence-based knowledge sharing was found to be particularly useful by the Danish PES, as the PES involved in the WG were all very experienced in piloting and evidence-based implementation (Germany, Estonia, Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and Denmark).
- **Mutual learning** activities were held to be particularly successful by PES interviewees and AFEPA evaluation workshop participants, since they are based on the needs identified through the benchlearning process. In addition, they are seen as providing new horizons and introducing new areas of discussion for participants.
- **Mutual assistance activities** were held to be particularly effective, in particular by less developed PES (as underlined in the AFEPA evaluation workshop), as they focus on the individual needs of PES. The Italian PES believes that its participation in the mutual assistance project has enabled it to understand and deal with a range of issues, including the importance of profiling, the importance of management information systems (MIS) and internal coordination issues.
- **Informal contacts**, which were common before the Network, have continued after 2014, facilitated by a more structured cooperation. For example, in the Czech Republic, informal co-operation between PES organisations, especially in border regions, took place before 2014 and has continued after 2014, involving PES organisations in Germany, Austria, Poland and Slovakia. This informal cooperation involves the exchange of information about the labour market and examples of good practices. Many other PES area continuing to engage in informal contacts.

Formalisation of cooperation

Formalisation is seen by the PES as one of the key positive effects of the Network, enabling and supporting cooperation to a much greater extent. Some national examples are given below:

- In Romania, it was reported that cooperation is now formal and structured, whereas before 2014 it was the decision of individual PES to cooperate and participate in activities. PES members in Romania state that the Network has catalysed cooperation and that it has been easier to meet colleagues and obtain access to information. In particular, the cooperation with Germany has been useful for Romania.

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- In Slovenia, cooperation was reported to be rather unstructured before the Network. Post-2014, there are now exchanges with the PES in Flanders, Austria and Croatia.
- In Denmark, although there was a high degree of informal cooperation before 2014, the current cooperation is much closer and effective. This was attributed to the Network by the PES interviewee from Denmark, who describes the formalisation of the cooperation as the various countries having to create 'the same language to cooperate in a sense', and particularly points out that the heads of divisions are more involved than before.
- Sharing of good practice has also increased in many countries as a result of the Network. In Norway, for example, there is now reported to be more sharing of good practices than before and more structured dialogue.
- In France, a significant impact of the Network was reported by the PES, mainly in terms of providing much more structure to activities, which are now conducted on a much less *ad hoc* basis.
- In Ireland, participation in the Network activities after 2014 have contributed to increasing knowledge about measures, models and processes in other countries with whom cooperation had not previously existed (for example in Estonia). The interviewee in Ireland emphasised that PES cooperation after 2014 is more formalised, mature, developed and there is a higher commitment to working more closely together.

Le Forem, Belgium

Le Forem was already cooperating with the PES in France, Germany and Luxembourg before 2014. However, cooperation with the existing PES partners is seen as having been intensified by the Network. More recently, Le Forem has cooperated with Ireland, Denmark and Netherlands. Le Forem states that it has learnt from other PES in relation to digitalisation and online tools that support jobseekers or the services that are offered to them. For example, Irish colleagues shared details about the client segmentation tool they use, and French colleagues from Pôle Emploi shared information about an online tool they offer to the public (Emploi Store). In turn, given its strong tradition in partnership management, Le Forem was selected to teach other PES about this practice.

Overall, cooperation between Le Forem and other PES is seen as stronger now than before 2014. The Network is seen as having contributed to this positive development.

Trends by clusters of PES

It is difficult to attribute with certainty any trends to the **level of autonomy of PES**. It does appear, however, that the countries with low levels of autonomy (Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland and the UK) reported a high level of informal cooperation before 2014 and the fact that the Network has now formalised and structured the cooperation. For example, in Denmark, it is reported that more senior individuals, such as heads of divisions, are now involved. More formalisation was also reported in Hungary. In Ireland, it was reported that PES cooperation after 2014 is now more formalised, mature, developed and there is a higher commitment to working together more closely. However, a number of countries with high levels of autonomy (e.g. France, Portugal and Germany) also reported more formalisation after 2014.

In countries with high levels of autonomy (the largest number of countries), it was also reported that cooperation had become more formalised after 2014, although informal contacts were also continuing in some countries (e.g. Austria and the Czech Republic), and that the focus was also more on the quality of the cooperation and the targeting of the cooperation in terms of subject matter (Germany). In Belgium (Le Forem), it was reported that the cooperation is now more intense and thorough, while in Bulgaria, the cooperation was described as more sustainable post-2014.

When clustering the data by **PES maturity level**, the well-developed PES showed a high level of activity, both before and after 2014, as would be expected. They were also possibly more likely to operate as a teacher rather than a learner. This was the case in Denmark, but also in France, where it was reported that activities were now more structured. In the case of the mature PES, there were also a variety of long-standing activities and cooperation described, which have become more formalised and structured since 2014. This is reported to be the case, for example, in Austria and Germany, where it was also reported that cooperation has increased significantly since 2014. In Estonia, it was noted that a number of reforms had taken place since 2014, which had been aided by the Network, although as the PES here is mature, they would have taken place in any case.

Looking at the developable PES, as these PES are less experienced, they have found the Network has helped significantly in improving cooperation and developing activities (e.g. Bulgaria), and in hearing what the PES in other countries are doing, in order to learn from more experienced PES. The benchlearning exercise has been particularly valued among these PES (e.g. Lithuania, Slovakia). Trends in the developing PES appear to be similar to those in the developable PES, although some countries have particular areas of expertise that they have now been able to share more widely, such as the Finnish experiences with the Youth Guarantee. Geographical proximity is also important, however, supporting cooperation between PES with different levels of maturity (e.g. the Nordic cooperation and the Baltic cooperation).

Increased cooperation between PES is one of the objectives of the Network, but not an end in itself. Cooperation is a means to support PES to modernise and strengthen. Therefore, analysis on this dimension (degree of increased cooperation) is linked to the second dimension of interest (degree to which the Network has influenced PES performance), which is the focus of the next section.

Dimension 2: Changes in PES performance, in particular in organisational processes and service delivery

The PES Network seeks to contribute to a set of high-level objectives relating to PES capacity, effectiveness and efficiency, and operates through a relatively broad range of tools and mechanisms, with a long and indirect causal chain, in which external factors are present. It is important to note therefore that other factors – such as national funding for PES, economic context, political context and priorities - are likely to influence changes in PES.

We have nonetheless uncovered examples of concrete results (i.e. changes in PES performance) that have occurred within each PES on both organisational processes and service delivery dimensions linked to the influence of the PES Network. In these cases, there were also other contributing factors, but since the changes were implemented within the framework of the benchlearning process, our assessment is that the Network has had a relatively direct role in bringing about these changes (e.g. by providing an additional

incentive to address an existing objective or highlighting good practice examples that would guide reform processes and/or persuade decision makers in Member States to support and facilitate change).

This section therefore assesses the contribution of the Network activities and outcomes to the changes in PES performance, in particular to organisational processes and service delivery (e.g. setting up employer services, redefining strategic performance management systems, etc.) in the 32 PES between mid-2014 and mid-2018.

Overall, looking at progress made by national PES across seven sections related to PES maturity (see the Appendix to this Annex for more details), Lithuania made progress in at least one performance enabler for six sections, and Belgium (VDAB), Netherlands, Malta and Luxembourg made progress in five, while Slovenia made progress in four. Some countries have not exhibited progress in any performance enabler in the seven sections (Czech Republic, Germany, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden).

Conversely, Sweden has shown a deterioration in at least one performance enabler for three out of the seven sections relating to PES maturity levels. Austria, Hungary, Latvia, and Belgium (VDAB) showed deterioration in two, and Poland and Slovenia in one. On the other hand, several countries have not exhibited any deterioration (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia).

Changes in organisational processes in PES

A key impact of the Network activities in terms of changes in organisational processes, as noted by participants in the AFEPA evaluation workshop, is the professional development of PES staff and the opportunities that the Network provides to better understand the EU policy arena and how it links to the national level. It also found that participation in PES Network activities in other EU countries also strongly motivates PES staff.

From the interviews with PES members, a range of changes in organisational processes were reported. Improving IT processes and systems in order to better manage measures and information systems was cited by a large number of PES as a key change (i.e. Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Malta, Slovakia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Cyprus, France). Other changes in organisational processes cited include:

- Increased awareness of monitoring and evaluation (Iceland);
- Increased sharing, communication and a willingness to make mistakes in order to learn (Latvia);
- Faster and more effective implementation of new procedures and services, as result of mutual assistance and learning practices and exchanges (Luxembourg);
- Classification of professions based on the French PES model (Luxembourg);
- Activities to support PES managers to develop managerial and leadership skills (Romania, Slovenia);
- Performance management and management by objectives (Slovakia, Cyprus);
- Reduction in resources spent on management and an increase in resources (20% increase in staff) allocated to providing services directly to PES clients (Lithuania);
- Quality management projects: standardised forms for evaluation of services and certification of competences (Lithuania, Ireland);
- Evidence-based delivery of labour market programmes (Cyprus);

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- SWOT analysis and comparisons between regional offices (Slovenia);
- Modernisation and strengthening of the PES (Spain).

Specific changes by country include the following:

- In Greece, one of the main changes has been improvements in the staff training system, a direct result of collaboration with other PES, with PES internal trainers acting as multipliers.
- In Malta, the PES has adopted different performance management systems throughout the PES, thus looking at departmental and individual performances. Here, the PES has set up departments for different sectors of employment, looking at trends, vacancies, and how to improve services.
- The Icelandic PES is working on a new data system, for which found inspiration during cooperation with the Dutch PES (before and after 2014). The reinforced cooperation on this topic after 2014 is reported to be due to the Network.
- In Denmark, the view from the Labour Ministry was that, following the first and second benchlearning visits in 2015 and 2017, the Danish PES has focused on the implementation of the proposals from the evaluation reports, and particularly on the development of a benchmarking concept to provide the municipalities with an easily accessible overview of the most important key performance indicators in the area of employment area and to ensure that municipalities learn best practices from each other.
- In Luxembourg, the PES Network initiatives and exchanges have provided the opportunity to rapidly implement a large number of changes in the working methods of the Luxembourg PES.

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- In Ireland, it was reported that the PES has been training case managers on process systems, an action that derives from cooperation within the Network.

Le Forem, Belgium

In terms of overall progress, one PES that stands out is Le Forem in Belgium: the second benchlearning report recognised that this PES had made significant progress, related in particular to a number of tools and processes that were in embryonic stages during the first benchlearning cycle and had since been implemented. This include:

- a tool for jobseekers, which describes their profile (a competence/ skill-based tool) and which can be used to build their CVs;
- a competence-based recruitment tool for employers, which have access to jobseekers' competences linked to job requirements
- improvements in performance management: Le Forem has reduced the number of indicators from around 90 to around 13, of which nine are impact indicators;
- an increased focus on evidence-based decision-making and the need to collect data to support decisions and measures. For example, vocational training subsidised by Le Forem now takes into account the result of labour market analysis, and this is seen as progress in terms of good governance.

Such rapid progress has not previously been experienced in the history of Le Forem and is perceived to have been partly incentivised by the PES Network.

The second benchlearning report gives a very positive overall assessment, noting that 'Le Forem has recently (since the middle of 2016) started a fundamental reorganisation process with the aim of increasing the impact and the efficiency of its activities by increasing the autonomy of the territories and 'breaking the silos' between employment-orientated jobseeker services, training, and employer services. Better integration of activities and (re-)focusing on the core business to simplify the 'customer journey' and increase service quality are at the heart of the reform. This is a very ambitious change agenda, similar to jumping over hurdles at a sports event, and Le Forem deserves every support as it puts the change agenda into practice. Based on the impressions collected during the site visit, the external assessor team were convinced that with its considerable achievements within one year, Le Forem has now laid the basis for a successful completion of its reorganisation'.

European Commission (2017): Benchlearning Initiative. External Assessment. Summary report – LE FOREM.

Changes in PES service delivery

From the AFEPA evaluation workshop (see Annex 6), it was reported that the Network – through its different activities, and through the structure and rigour it offers – has facilitated exchanges of information, knowledge and expertise that have resulted in some concrete changes in several PES. For example, in Romania, a new jobseeker profiling system is being implemented and new IT tools and employer services are being developed.

The **PES in Portugal** has reported a great many changes in service delivery, including the introduction of online-based PES vacancies, call centre services for jobseekers and employers, personal support services for employers, targeted visits to selected employers to raise demand, customer segmentation, and engaging customers in the feedback process through surveys. Further, the Portuguese PES has introduced a new personalised monitoring model, aimed at supporting and guiding unemployed people, promoting their activation and monitoring their compliance with legal obligations around unemployment benefits.

Through the interviews with PES members, the PES in many countries reported making changes in PES service delivery since the establishment of the Network. These include:

- **Overall modernisation and improvement of PES.** In Bulgaria, the PES interviewee stated their belief that this was a direct result of the post-2014 cooperation. In Germany, overall improvements in the performance of the PES were reported, alongside the fact that there is now better transfer of knowledge and practices to other policy areas. In Cyprus, the service has been expanded and 30 new counsellors have been recruited. An interviewee from the Malta PES stated: 'We learned a lot in these last four years and significantly improved our service';
- **The development of new tools.** In Austria, a new type of competency-based job placement tool/ practice has been developed;
- **The development of new models.** In Croatia, a tailored jobseeker support model has been introduced, based on a statistically-assisted profiling system, which has led to improvements in the quality of service provision to jobseekers and employers;
- **Improving client services.** The Latvian PES has been awarded a prize for its client management services, assessed through the benchlearning process as having significantly improved client services and satisfaction. In Luxembourg, it was reported that there is now increased awareness that the PES need to be more client- and service-oriented. This is held to be a result of the learning experiences within the Network context;
- **Improving relationships with employers** (Romania, Czech Republic, UK, Luxembourg, Estonia, Greece, France, Belgium (Forem), Italy). In the UK, one of the key outcomes of the first benchlearning cycle was to incentivise the UK PES to improve its relationship with employers, rather than focusing solely on building the self-sufficiency of jobseekers in terms of liaising with employers and finding a job. In Greece, it was reported that there had been an increase in the number of employers being assisted by the PES. In Croatia, key account managers have been introduced to deal with significant employers and SMEs. In Luxembourg, satisfaction surveys have been introduced for employers and jobseekers;
- **Reducing bureaucracy.** Simplification of services was reported in Greece and Slovenia and streamlining the registration of jobseekers and faster matching between jobseekers and vacancies in Greece. In Lithuania, there has been a reduction in the time spent on filling job vacancies (by 25% in a year), by reducing the time spent on procedures for matching jobseekers and employers and

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permitting jobseekers to apply for jobs without being registered with the PES (Lithuania);

- **Digitalisation of services.** Changes in job counselling practices, including digital counselling (Iceland, modelled on Norway), introduction of an online job matching system (Malta);
- **Improvements in customer segmentation and profiling** of jobseekers (Luxembourg, Romania, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Latvia);
- **Diversification of performance indicators** (Romania);
- **A greater focus on those held to be furthest from the labour market.** In Romania and Lithuania, training measures have been developed that are aimed at integrating the most disadvantaged categories into the labour market. Further, in Lithuania, there has been greater focus on requalification programmes for those who have upskilling needs in order to remain in the labour market. In Estonia, the responsibility of the PES has been widened to include new target groups.
- **Increased activation measures** (Cyprus, Czech Republic);
- **Improvements in service delivery based on regional autonomy** (Italy)

The PES in France: establishing targeted employment services through active cooperation with employers

The French PES wanted to provide target-oriented services to employers through a transparent employer strategy. Employers are seen as important strategic partners and the aim is for the PES to run a specialised unit responsible for pooling all contacts with employers and for managing their requests.

In 2010, the French PES established HR Clubs, a Network consisting of 1,800 member companies (at national and regional level) dedicated to fostering exchange between the PES and employers on HR practices and employment. The goals of the Network are threefold:

- Share – exchange with employers on their needs and expectations, for instance, in recruitment, skills and competencies, training and digital innovations.
- Act – discuss how to better tailor PES services to labour market demands.
- Innovate – jointly develop better knowledge and understanding of labour markets and create new services for jobseekers and employer.

Since its establishment in 2010, this Network has held over 250 events such as workshops, conferences and roundtables with around 40 companies attending each event.

Source: Shaping the future of Europe through benchlearning. PES Network.

Following the main recommendations of the benchlearning summary reports, the **Croatian PES** has implemented the following incentives:

- key account managers were introduced for key SMEs employers a Statistically Assisted Profiling System (StAP) was introduced to support jobseekers
- customer satisfaction surveys were introduced for several key business processes, including career guidance counselling services, workshops for improving career management skills, training for the labour market as well as the monitoring and measurement process of the counsellors' work itself.

One example of an initiative that significantly raised the visibility of the PES Network in Croatia is European Employers' Day, which was organised in all regions of the country and which brought together employers and other key stakeholders. The focal benefit of this type of cooperation between PES is to exchange examples of good practice, develop mutual learning and identify PES policies and work processes which could be improved on the basis of recommendations.

The types of support received from the Network which have contributed to these outcomes

The **benchlearning process** in particular was reported to have contributed significantly to the initiation of change in many PES. Other areas cited include the opportunity for exchange and learning that the Network offers. In Portugal, for example, the PES Change Agenda comprises a set of reform intentions and actions that are partly the result of the benchlearning exercise, which enabled this PES to gain a deeper understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and to be able to plan strategically. In Slovakia, the PES noted that the fact that recommendations for change in the benchlearning process come from a European level mean that they are more likely to be implemented than if they had merely been produced at national level.

The PES Network Benchlearning Manual (2017) highlights the iterative process of benchlearning, noting that this "implies a gradual evolution in PES performance, and involves an approach that builds on its past achievements to create better results. Continuity of the process will allow PES to involve more staff, to improve progressively the overall working culture and knowledge, and to provide an opportunity to transfer a rise of the individual competence into overall institutional competence" p. 25³⁰. Further, the PES annual report for 2017 notes that the PES Network's mutual learning programme has been shaped and enhanced through the use of direct and comparable evidence from the benchlearning data collection and assessments. This evidence has enabled ML activities to be increasingly designed, delivered and targeted in relation to PES learning needs and to identify, disseminate and facilitate the transfer of good practice amongst PES³¹.

The view from other PES stakeholders interviewed was that the Network is an invaluable

³⁰ PES Network Benchlearning Manual. October 2017.

³¹ European Network of Public Services (PES). Annual Report 2017.

support to the PES of all EU Member States, including those that are more advanced, as it offers a valuable opportunity to engage, share best practice and learn from others. The **benchlearning and mutual learning** exercises are seen as particularly valuable. In terms of specific areas, the Network was seen as most effective in the identification of skills shortages, better matching of skills of jobseekers with employer needs, the integration of vulnerable groups, improving the overall functioning of the labour market, and the implementation of active labour market policies (ALMPs). Other points made by the stakeholders included the importance of sharing learning, for example on ICT issues, which is particularly beneficial for less developed PES. Creating a climate of collegiality and trust between PES was also felt to be an achievement of the Network. The PES annual report for 2017 states that the format of mutual learning activities in 2017 provided PES with access to more targeted, support-orientated and peer-based learning activities, which have been reflected in the growing prevalence of workshops, mutual assistance and working group-based activities³².

Suggestions for the future included a greater focus on operational management support and learning, including digitalisation, HRM and performance management. There was also a view from some stakeholders that there is currently little focus on mobility, since it is covered by EURES, and there is scepticism about the effectiveness of EURES. In Italy, however, it was reported that excellent interaction with the EURES Network has been developed. Stakeholders would also like to see more focus on decent and sustainable work.

The Network as an enabler was cited by many national PES. In Bulgaria, for example, the PES reported that the Network has enabled the PES to reach out to other PES across the EU. The view from the Austrian PES was that the easy contact between AFEPA and other PES staff is facilitated by the Network activities, which makes bilateral cooperation on concrete themes and issues easier than it was before. In Germany, the view from the PES was that the Network has supported PES by helping them to improve their overall performance, increasing their visibility and facilitating transfer of knowledge and practices to other policy areas.

The Network is also key in providing ongoing support for future reforms. For example, in Romania, the PES has developed a project that will be financed by the ESF, and this will further support PES reforms. This is cited as a result of the impact of Network activities.

Trends by clusters of PES

When clustering the PES by **level of autonomy**, no clear pattern emerges in terms of progress in PES performance. The PES with low autonomy (Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland and the UK) do not show significant levels of progress, and Hungary deteriorated on two of the seven performance enablers relating to PES maturity (shown in Annex 3). Among the PES with high levels of autonomy, some made significant progress (e.g. Belgium (VDAB), Malta, Iceland, Netherlands and Slovenia). Where data was available, out of the PES with medium levels of autonomy, Luxembourg and Lithuania made significant progress.

When clustering the PES by **level of maturity**, it would be expected that the mature and well-developed PES would show less progress in performance, as they have less far to travel. This not necessarily the case, however, looking at the data relating to performance

³² Ibid.

enablers for PES maturity (in the Appendix). Although the data is not available for all countries, it shows that significant progress was made in Belgium (VDAB) on five out of seven performance enablers, and that progress was also made in Austria, Denmark and Germany (on two out of seven performance enablers).

Significant progress was also reported in some of the developable PES, such as Lithuania (on six out of seven performance enablers), Luxembourg (five out of seven), and Iceland (three out of seven). Lithuania is also showcased as having made a number of very significant improvements over the past four years. However, deterioration was reported in Hungary and Poland, classified as developable PES, on two enablers. With regard to the developing PES, there was significant progress reported in some countries, such as Malta (on four performance indicators), and Croatia and Ireland (on three performance indicators). However, deterioration was reported in Latvia on two performance indicators and also in Slovenia.

Dimension 3: Degree to which PES contributions to the implementation of policy initiatives in the field of employment were encouraged through the PES Network

One of the key initiatives established by the PES Decision (Article 4) for the PES Network is to 'contribute to the implementation of relevant policy initiatives' (initiative e). In this part of the mapping analysis, we will therefore seek to provide an overview of the trends across the different countries in terms of influence of the PES Network in implementing policy initiatives.

Evidence gathered suggests that the Network and the Decision are seen as generally supporting employment policies at the national level, but not in a direct way. It was often emphasised by the PES representatives that the Decision and the Network are part of a coherent policy framework with objectives that are shared across the EU, and which aim to improve the functioning and outcomes of labour markets. The influence of the Network in this sense is diffuse, acting through different mechanisms in different contexts. Likewise, other influences are likely to be at play.

From the interviews with EU and international level stakeholders, there was a clear view of the **importance of the Network in terms of the implementation at national level of EU policies**. For example, it was held to be important that the Network supports the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, as Member States need to develop the framework and capacity for this, and at present there is rather uneven capacity between Member States. There was also a view that although the Network has supported the implementation of different employment policies in areas such as youth employment, the effects are limited in the countries where the PES have structural problems (i.e. low capacity) and as such are facing difficulties in effectively implementing employment policies. There was also a view that there is untapped potential in that the Network could do more in this area.

From the interviews with PES Network members, there is evidence that the Network has **contributed to the national implementation of a range of EU initiatives, such as the Youth Guarantee, the Youth Employment Initiative and the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market**. Good practice exchanges were seen as particularly helpful. The way in which the Network has supported the implementation of EU policies in Member States has been largely through activities such as events and studies, which have enabled the sharing of experience and best practice. The overall view from the interviews with PES members was that the Network was a support for national

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employment policies as a whole, and could help with awareness-raising on how best to implement a range of EU programmes and initiatives and how to improve national implementation.

Overall, the Network has supported the implementation of the **Youth Guarantee** in a great number of Member States. The range of activities carried out by national PES in this area are cited by the European Commission in its report to the European Parliament on the application of the Decision³³. Interviewees from Ministries and PES highlighted influence in particular in this area in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Malta, Czech Republic, Italy, Malta, Hungary, Romania, Sweden, Latvia, Slovakia, Spain and Finland, where there were reported to be strong links to the Network. In Malta, an interviewee from the Ministry of Labour reported that the Youth Guarantee has led to a range of changes in most PES, and has been a driver for structural reforms. In Ireland, national policy on the Youth Guarantee was said to have been influenced by the exchanges that have taken place within the Network, although it is difficult to pinpoint the role of the Network in supporting outcomes. The PES in Ireland also adopted as part of its implementation of the Youth Guarantee a particularly intensive and frequent engagement approach to its unemployed under-25 year-olds. In Greece, the focal point for the Youth Guarantee is reported to be

In **Luxembourg**, the Youth Guarantee is considered to be very important for the PES. Before this, a range of different stakeholders worked together and targeted young people. It then became clear that the PES could become one of the main actors for this target group and now the PES has a prominent role in this initiative, due to its experience and knowledge of the labour market. The development of this central role was also reported to have been possible by the cooperation in the Network and the opportunities has given for the PES to examine good practices around Europe.

the Ministry of Labour, although the PES is involved in some capacity. In Croatia, the implementation of the Youth Guarantee was seen as is a good example of cooperation at the EU and national level, involving a wide range of institutions and associations at all levels and dovetailing with the activities of the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Welfare, the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, and the municipalities.

The Network was also seen to have had an influence on measures to support the **integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market** in most EU Member States. For example in June 2016, the Network held a conference bringing together representatives from the PES, the third sector, private employment services and other partners to discuss implementation of the Recommendation on the long-term unemployed³⁴. Our interviewees from PES and Ministries highlighted particular influence in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Latvia, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden. However, in Ireland, the PES interviewees felt that national policy on the long-term unemployed was ahead of the curve and therefore that the Network had limited influence.

In some countries, the influence of the Network was reported to have been on the **labour market integration of vulnerable groups** more widely. In the Czech Republic, for

³³ COM(2017) 287 final. 6 June 2017

³⁴ Ibid.

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example, it was reported in a Labour Ministry interview that Network activities have helped in particular to support the development of coordinated and individualised services for the most vulnerable groups (including the long-term unemployed) and improved evaluation and effective implementation of active employment policy instruments and measures. Further, in the Netherlands, the PES is reported to have extensive exchanges on the issues of youth employment, long-term unemployment and other vulnerable target groups, and is also involved in supporting the implementation of legislation (introduced in 2015) to increase labour market participation. In Hungary, it was reported in the PES interviews that there are clear synergies between the Network and national implementation of policy, as topics and programmes referring to specific sub-target groups, such as young people, long-term unemployed people and other vulnerable groups, are included in the discussions and objectives of the PES Network.

Other areas in which the Network was reported to have supported implementation of national employment policy include policies for migrants (Bulgaria, Slovenia), apprenticeships and VET reform (Croatia), career guidance and lifelong learning (Estonia), women, low-skilled people and older workers (Netherlands), the most vulnerable labour market groups (Slovakia).

In some countries, such as Latvia, the PES interviewees reported that there was a connection between the Network and national employment policies, although no direct examples were given. Similarly, in the UK, there was a view from the PES interviewee that there had been support, but no particular examples were given. Similarly, in Estonia, it was reported from the case study research that although the Network forms part of a coherent policy framework at national and EU level for supporting the development of PES, it does not support directly other relevant policies and programmes. The relationship is therefore rather indirect. In France also, the Network is not seen as having directly influenced decisions taken by the French PES, even though it was able to influence them indirectly.

In **Lithuania**, it was reported in the PES interviews that the Network had made it possible to increase communication and exchanges with the educational sector: together with the Ministry of Education, the Lithuanian PES has developed a framework for the evaluation of informal competences and programmes. This has made it possible to shorten the time needed for requalification and qualification of competences, thus making possible for people to enter or re-enter the labour market more quickly. It was reported that this is the direct result of the practices and experiences shared within the Network and the collaboration with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Ministry of Education in Lithuania.

For example, many meetings take place between Pôle Emploi, and Ministry staff in charge of employment policies and the activities of Pôle Emploi and the International Department of Pôle Emploi has participated in drawing up and implementing the national ESF Programme, in which a background of PES cooperation has helped.

Finally, in the Italian case study, it was reported that Italian participation in the PES Network was aimed at dealing with the structural conditions which would enable implementation of new ALMP initiatives, rather than at implementing specific policy initiatives.

Trends by clusters of PES

When clustering the PES by **level of autonomy**, it would seem that the PES with the higher levels of autonomy have been more active in policy development and implementation, as might be expected. Accordingly, the French PES is active in policy development and implementation, as is the PES in the Netherlands, Estonia and Cyprus.

In addition, some of the PES with medium levels of autonomy, such as Lithuania, Luxembourg and Slovakia, have also been active, working with a range of actors. The Italian PES has also been active in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

There does seem to be reports of less activity in countries with low autonomy, such as Hungary and the UK. However, Ireland, which has a low autonomy PES, is reported to have been very active in the area of youth employment.

When clustering the PES by **level of maturity**, there is some evidence that the mature and well-developed PES are more active and have been more able to use their national status and influence to influence national policies more strongly and reach out to other actors such as the government, municipalities and employers. In the case of France, for example, as evidenced above, Pôle Emploi cooperates with the Labour Ministry and has been involved in drawing up and implementing the French national ESF Programme. In the Netherlands also, the PES is reported to have extensive exchanges on the issues of youth employment, long-term unemployment and other vulnerable target groups, and is also involved in supporting the implementation of legislation (introduced in 2015) to increase labour market participation. In Estonia, which is characterised as having a mature PES, the PES works with the Labour Ministry on implementing the Youth Guarantee and reaching NEETs. It also organises seminars that are attended by a range of actors.

At the other end of the scale, some of the developable PES have also been very active, although often in the context of mutual assistance. This is the case in Cyprus, where there has been a lot of activity and development of the PES. The Lithuanian PES, characterised as developable, has also worked closely with the Ministry on developing policy. The Luxembourg and Slovak PES, also developable, also appear to play a prominent role in policy development and implementation. Although the Irish PES is characterised as developing, youth employment activities in that country are described as advanced and the PES is very active in this area. Influence of the PES is more limited in countries such as Greece and Hungary.

Dimension 4: Influence on ESF programming and funding

This part of the comparative analysis presents an overview of the results of the mapping in respect of the influence of the PES Decision on ESF programming and funding. Based on the evidence gathered, this section seeks to provide an overview of the:

- Influence of the PES Decision on ESF programming (Operational Programmes) (where applicable);
- Influence of the PES Decision on ESF funding (where applicable);
- Influence of the PES Decision on ESF-funded actions (where applicable).

Evidence gathered to date on the **influence of the PES Decision on ESF programming and funding** shows limited, although some, evidence of impact. Since ESF Operational Programmes were written before the PES Decision was published, there was no direct

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influence on the original programming. While ESF does fund a lot of PES activity under different measures (for example in Lithuania), the ESF Annual Implementation Reports examined do not mention any explicit link to the PES Decision or the PES Network.

From the first and second cycle benchlearning reports, some insight can be gained into the influence of the Network on ESF programming and funding in some Member States. In the Czech Republic, for example, the first benchlearning report for the Czech Republic³⁵ notes that ESF funds have been available since EU accession in 2004 and this has given the Czech PES a strong technical foundation upon which to build a modern and inclusive PES into the future. There is, however, reported to be some over-reliance on ESF funding in some of the newer Member States. In Bulgaria, for example, there is a strong financial dependence on the ESF, due to factors such as a high level of structural unemployment, which affects specific target groups in the labour market³⁶. In Hungary, the first benchlearning report³⁷ notes that the PES is heavily reliant on ESF funding to operate ALMP and to increase staff capacities and recommends that it consider the reestablishment of local employment pacts with clear definitions of partnership/Network objectives, transparent and regular (annual) assessment procedures as well as mechanisms to ensure their continued functioning post-ESF. In Latvia and Lithuania, ESF funding also represents a significant part of the PES budget. This is also the case in Italy, where the first benchlearning report³⁸ recommended a reduction of the dependency on European funds of Italian AMLP and of PES service provision.

Our qualitative research has highlighted that, in several countries, the PES actively cooperate with the ESF Managing Authorities or are in some cases themselves managing ESF funds alone or in partnership with other institutions. In many countries, ESF funding supports national ALMP measures aimed at disadvantaged jobseekers in the labour market, such as young people and long-term unemployed people. The influence documented here largely relates to initiatives under the Youth Guarantee or the Youth Employment Initiative.

From the interviews with Managing Authorities in Member States, specific areas of impact of the PES Decision on ESF programming and funding in individual Member States include:

- in Cyprus, under the ESF Operational Programme 2014-2020, a project for the enhancement and modernisation of PES is being implemented according to the policies and procedures that the PES Network promotes and supports in alignment with the instructions and recommendations given by the benchlearning experts;
- in Lithuania, the practices of the PES Network are deemed to have had a significant influence on the ESF projects of the Lithuanian PES. This includes the country's innovative project for young people 'Discover yourself', and two ESF projects, targeting long term unemployed people and disabled people;
- in Slovakia, it is reported that there has been some indirect influence on national ESF projects.

From the interviews with PES members, some influence of the PES Decision on national programmes was observed. In Austria, for example, the Decision has supported the

³⁵ Benchlearning Initiative External Assessment Summary report 1st cycle – Czech Republic

³⁶ Benchlearning Initiative External Assessment Summary report 2nd cycle – Bulgaria

³⁷ Benchlearning Initiative External Assessment Summary report 1st cycle – Hungary

³⁸ Benchlearning Initiative External Assessment Summary report 1st cycle – Italy

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implementation of the Youth Guarantee, as well as programmes aimed at the integration of older workers. In Germany, it is also reported that the Network has very much supported the implementation/monitoring of the Youth Guarantee.

The view from the PES interviews in Malta was that the Decision has affected all policies, particularly in the area of youth. In Portugal, it was reported that the Network contributes to awareness-raising for the implementation of different EU programmes and initiatives, and discussions on how to best implement them. In Greece, there is indirect influence but good cooperation between PES and the Ministry of Labour in relation to ESF projects. Similarly, in Luxembourg, there is close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, for example in respect of training measures that are also financed through the ESF.

There is some evidence of the influence of the Network on ESF funding and programming in **Romania**. Here, the PES has developed a project on the integration of NEETs that is expected to be funded by the ESF programme and which was developed as a result of the PES Network. From the Romanian case study, the Romanian PES has been a key potential beneficiary of ESF funds (aimed at supporting vulnerable groups such as NEETs, workers over 45, long-term unemployed into employment) since the start of the current ESF programming period. Although no evidence could be identified in the first benchmarking report for Romania that indicates that there was a direct influence of the PES Network in the early stages of ESF programming, the ex-ante conditionalities however stipulated that in order for Romania to access ESF funds for the employment axis, measures aimed at improving the institutional capacity of the PES had to be improved.

In Hungary, where the PES has a strong knowledge and expertise, it contributes to the implementation of ESF or other structural funds programmes, although this does not happen with all programmes. The PES interviewees reported that there are clear synergies, however, as topics and programmes referring to the specific sub-segments of society are always included in the discussions and objectives of the PES Network (for example in respect of long-term unemployment, youth unemployment or other vulnerable groups), and for this reason programmes such as the Youth Guarantee or the Youth Employment Initiative are helpful and important.

In France, the evidence suggests that the only interaction between the ESF and the enhanced cooperation activities of the PES Network is related to EURES national mobility support. Specifically, on the French side there has been PES contribution to the implementation of the EURES Regulation, participation of PES in EURES governance, implementation of the Mobility Service offer and its integration into the Pôle Emploi service offer, and the continuation of the various international mobility programmes. However, the ESF did not play a role in other enhanced cooperation activities and there is no evidence of any direct contribution of enhanced cooperation on ESF programming.

Trends by clusters of PES

In terms of **PES maturity**, developable PES such as in Portugal, Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Lithuania and Slovakia reported some influence of the Network on ESF programming and funding, as did Latvia, which is a developing PES. Overall, there is strong reliance on ESF

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funding for PES activities in many of the developable PES, such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, and in the developing PES in Latvia and the Czech Republic, as evidenced by the benchlearning reports. There was less evidence of Network influence in the mature and well-developed PES, although there was some reported influence in Austria, which is a mature PES.

It is very difficult to assess with any reliability whether **level of autonomy** of PES has any significance in terms of the influence of the Network on ESF programming and funding, as it would seem that the correlation is more with PES maturity (see above). Nevertheless some PES with high levels of autonomy reported some influence of the Network, such as Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Portugal. Some PES with medium levels of autonomy also reported influence, such as Lithuania and Slovakia. No PES with low levels of autonomy reported significant levels of influence.

Appendix: PES Maturity Levels

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The current analysis is based on the data generated by the first and second benchlearning cycles³⁹ through the qualitative assessments of the maturity levels of PES across the 29 single performance enablers⁴⁰ (grouped into seven sections). We carried out an assessment of the changes incurred in each of the sections taken into account during the period between the two cycles. This evidence contributes to the evaluation and the interim report by providing an overview of the changes across the qualitative indicators for each PES. While direct causal links cannot be established, we believe this evidence is useful in understanding the role of the PES Network in supporting PES performance and the attainment of the objectives set out in Decision 573/2014/EU. The analysis takes into account the most recent available data for the PES that have completed both benchlearning cycles to date.⁴¹

Given the qualitative nature of the data, in order for the assessment to generate relevant and valid results, rather than simply comparing the numeric equivalents of the maturity levels on a PES-by-PES basis, we employed the following approach.

In the case of each section enabler assessment, we assigned numeric values to the existent qualitative assessments, according to the following equivalence table:

Table 1 Equivalence Table

Assessment level	Numeric Value
Mature	4
Well-developed	3
Developing	2
Developable	1

Qualitative assessment of PES Maturity levels

Once the recoding completed, we calculated the numeric differences between the values obtained during the 1st cycle on each section enabler on a PES-by-PES basis and those obtained during the 2nd cycle. Following this, if the values obtained were higher than 0, the result was coded as 'Progress' while, if they were less than 0, we considered them a 'Deterioration' and, if they were equal to 0, they were labelled as 'No change'.

After finalising this stage, at the level of each PES and inside each section, we calculated the percentage represented by the number of enablers categorised as 'Progress', 'Deterioration' or 'No change' from the total number of enablers within each section. We took into account the numbers of enablers comprised in each section and counted the number of those that have changed from one cycle to the next.

As an illustration of the outcome of this process: a PES obtains a set of scores of 50% 'No change', 25% 'Progress' and 25% 'Deterioration' for a section containing 4 performance enablers (such as Section B – "Design of Operational Processes"). These scores show that

³⁹ The first benchlearning cycle took place between 2015-2016 and the second started in 2017.

⁴⁰ As defined by Background paper 2 – Qualitative Benchmarking of the 2017 Final Technical report (Annex 9).

⁴¹ Provided by the Commission to the core research team in November 2018.

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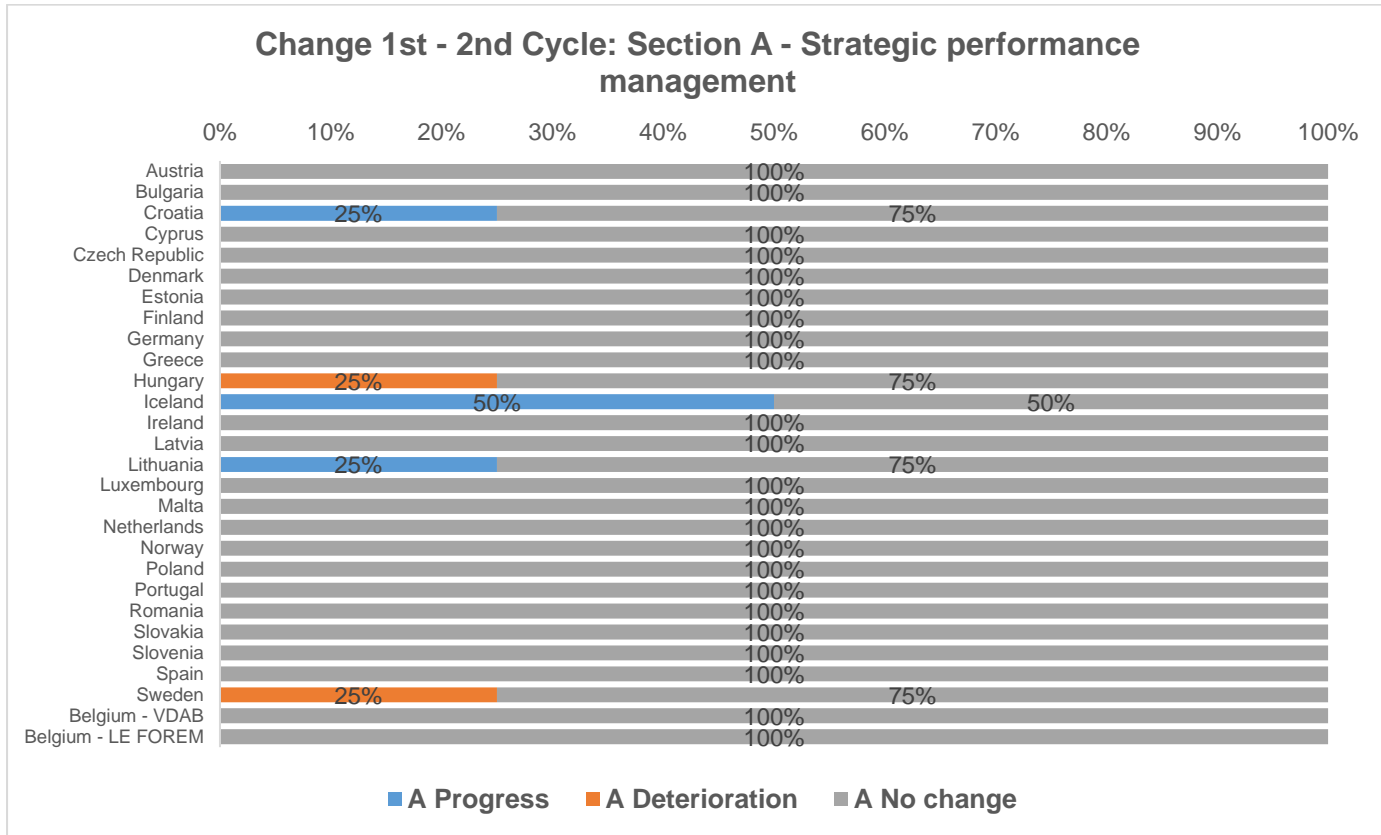
the PES in question, in the period between the 1st and 2nd cycles, exhibits an improvement on one performance enabler, a decline on a second performance enabler and no change in the case of the remaining 2 performance enablers in that section.

As such, after completing the required recoding and calculations, the procedure generated an assessment of the changes in maturity levels between the 1st and 2nd cycles in the case of all PES covered by both cycles. Due to the lack of data availability, no results were obtained for the following PES: Belgium – ACTIRIS, France, Italy, and United Kingdom.

The following section contains a graphic visualisation of the most important results, on both a section by section and direction of change basis.

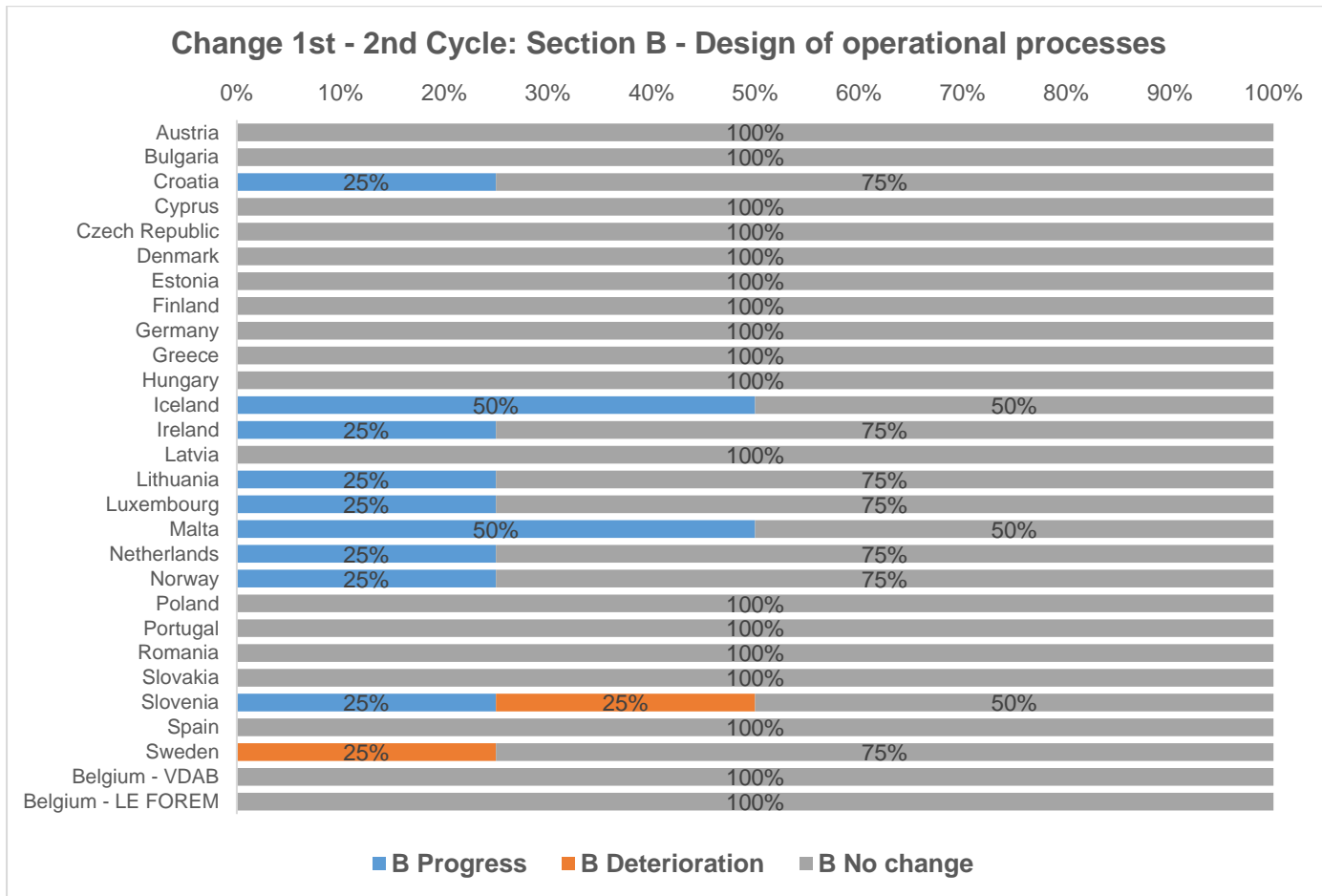
Results - By section

Figure 1 Change for Section A



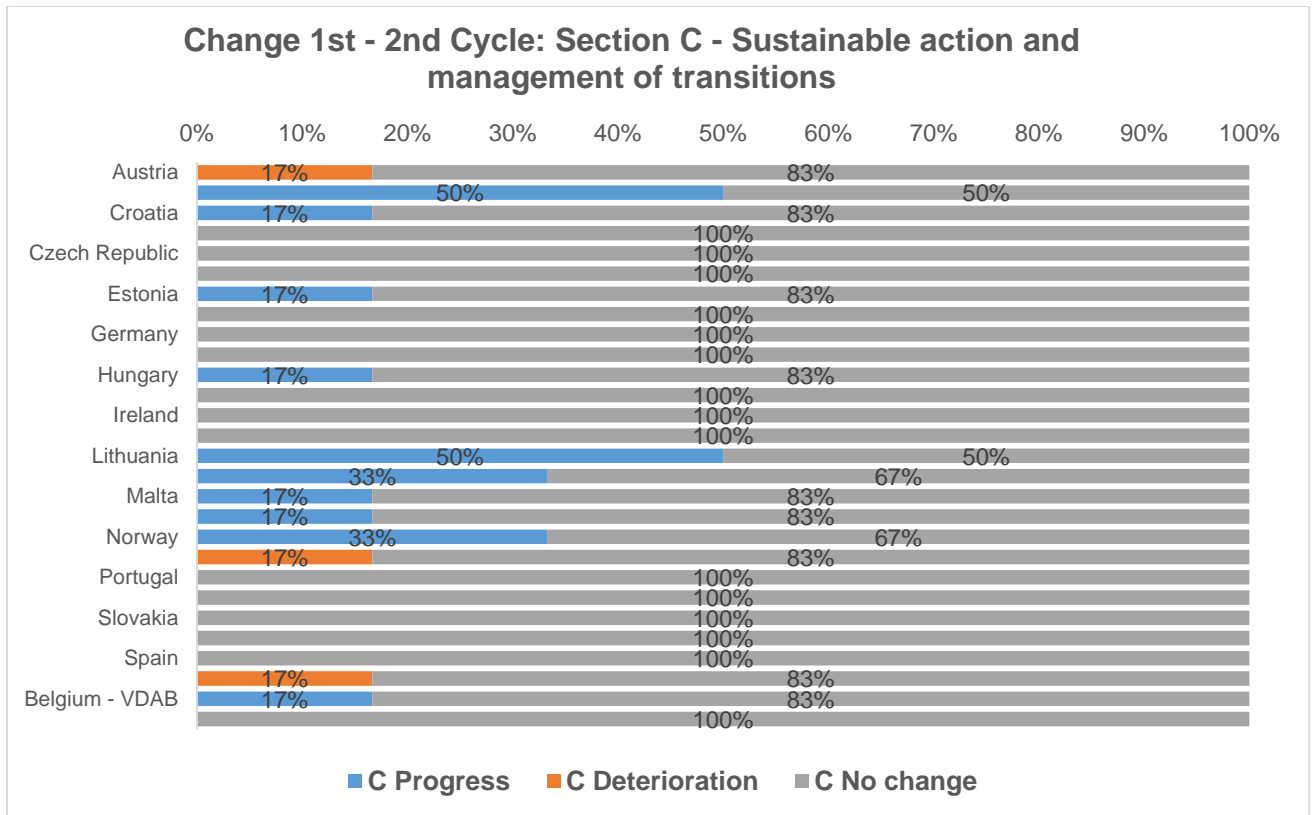
The above figure shows that the greatest progress in the field of strategic performance management, consisting in progress in two of the 4 performance enablers in section A (i.e. 50% of total possible change), took place for Iceland. Based on the same graph, both Hungary and Sweden showed a decline in one performance enabler out of four (hence a 25% overall deterioration).

Figure 2 Change for Section B



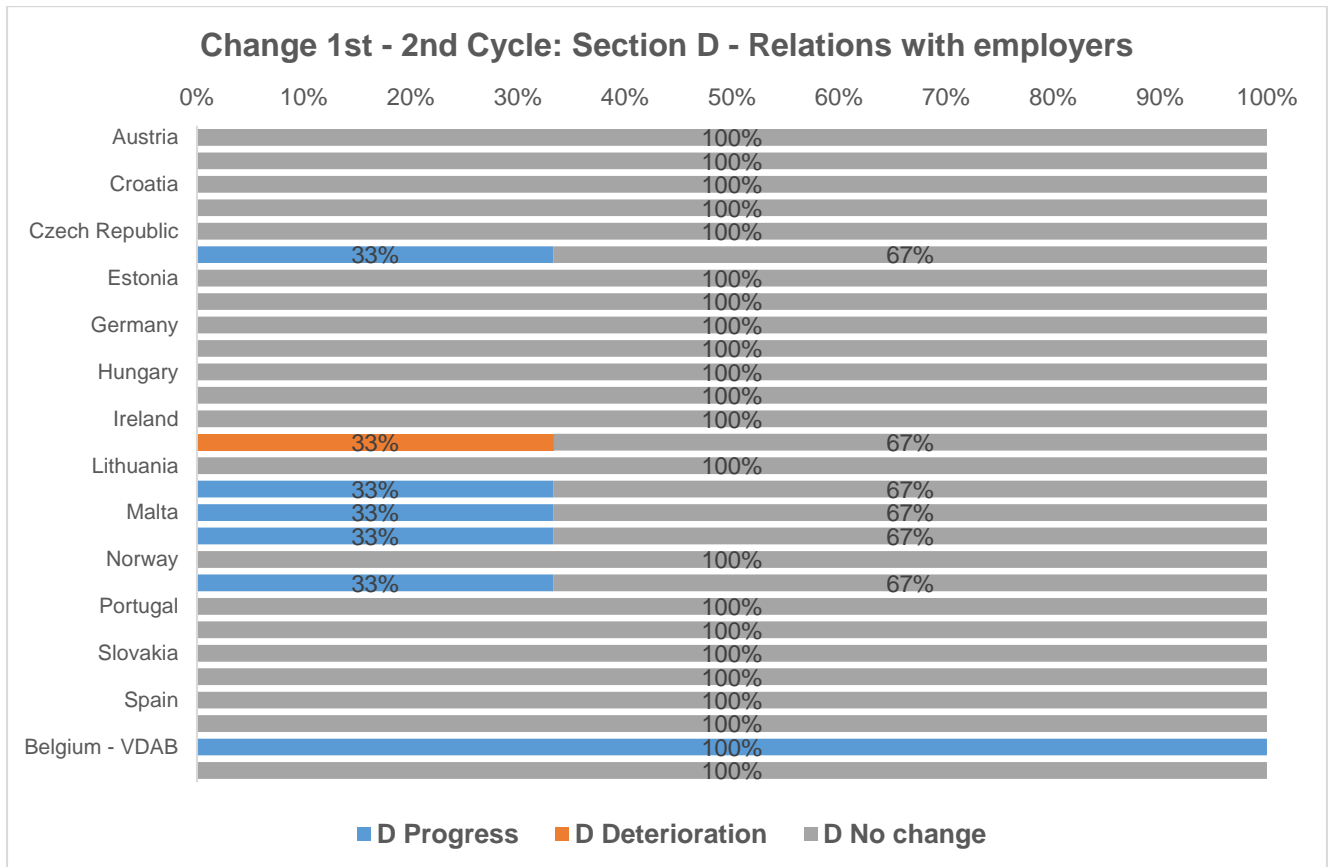
As shown in the figure above, the greatest progress in terms of design of operational processes could be observed for Malta and Iceland (i.e. 50% of the total possible change). Both Sweden and Slovenia have shown a deterioration on one performance enabler out of four (25% deterioration); Slovenia however, showed progress on another enabler, while in Sweden the other values showed no change across the two cycles.

Figure 3 Change for Section C



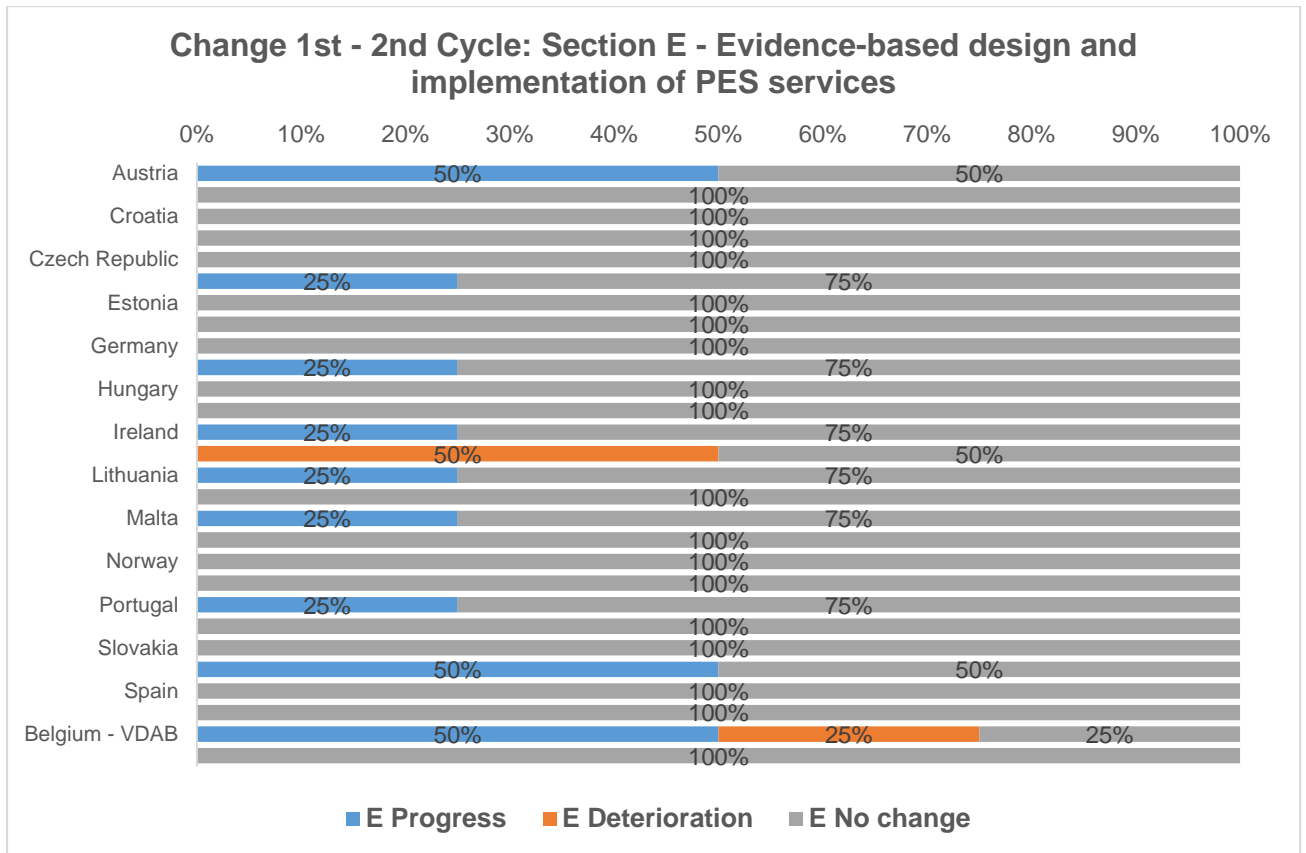
The figure above shows that both Lithuania and Bulgaria have shown progress in three out of the six performance enablers (i.e. 50% of the total possible change) relating to "Sustainable action and management of transitions". Austria, Poland and Sweden show a deterioration in one of the six performance enablers .

Figure 4 Change for Section D



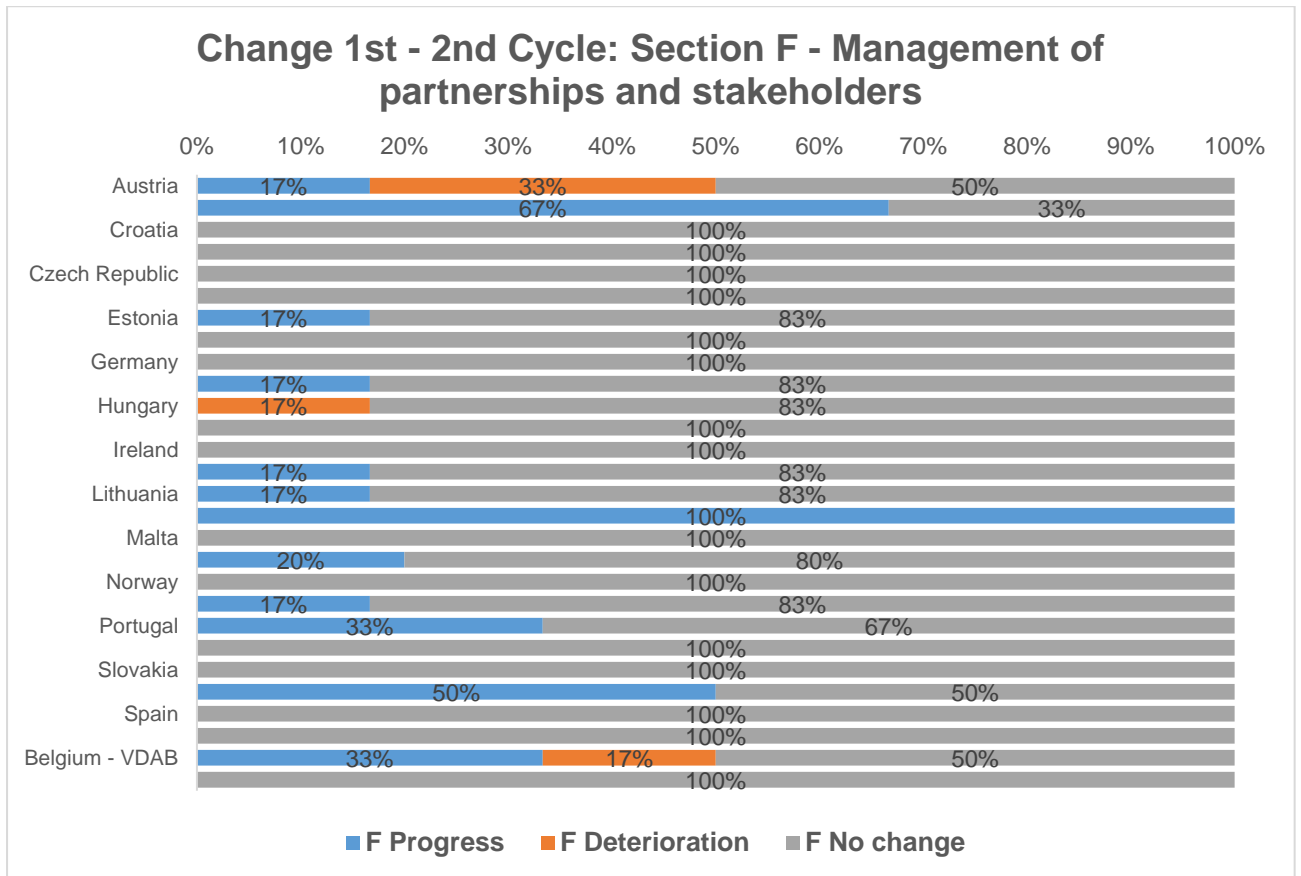
The figure above outlines the main changes in terms of relations with employers (Section D). In this case, Belgium – VDAB displayed progress in all three performance enablers, while Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands and Poland progressed in one of the three performance enablers (i.e. 33% of the total possible change). Latvia shows a deterioration on one indicator out of three.

Figure 5 Change for Section E



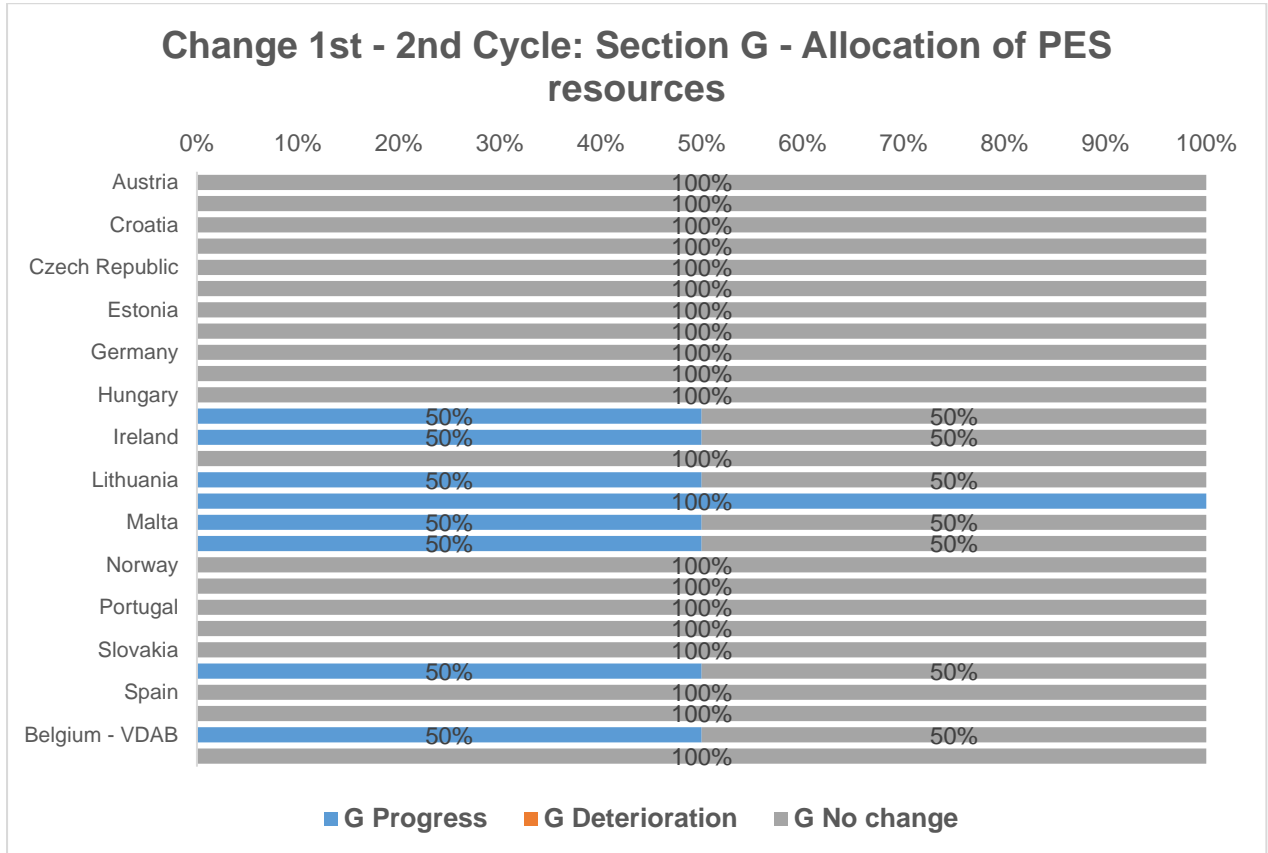
As shown in the figure above, the greatest progress in terms of “Evidence-based design and implementation of PES services” (section E), is for Austria, Belgium-VDAB and Slovenia, consisting of progress in two performance enablers out of four. However, Belgium –VDAB also shows a deterioration in one performance enabler while Latvia in two.

Figure 6 Change for Section F



The figure above outlines the main changes relating to the “Management of partnerships and stakeholders” (section F). Luxembourg is the country that exhibited the greatest changes, with progress in all the six performance enablers (100% progress). On the other hand, Austria showed a deterioration in two indicators out of six . Belgium – VDAB shows progress in two performance enablers and a deterioration in one.

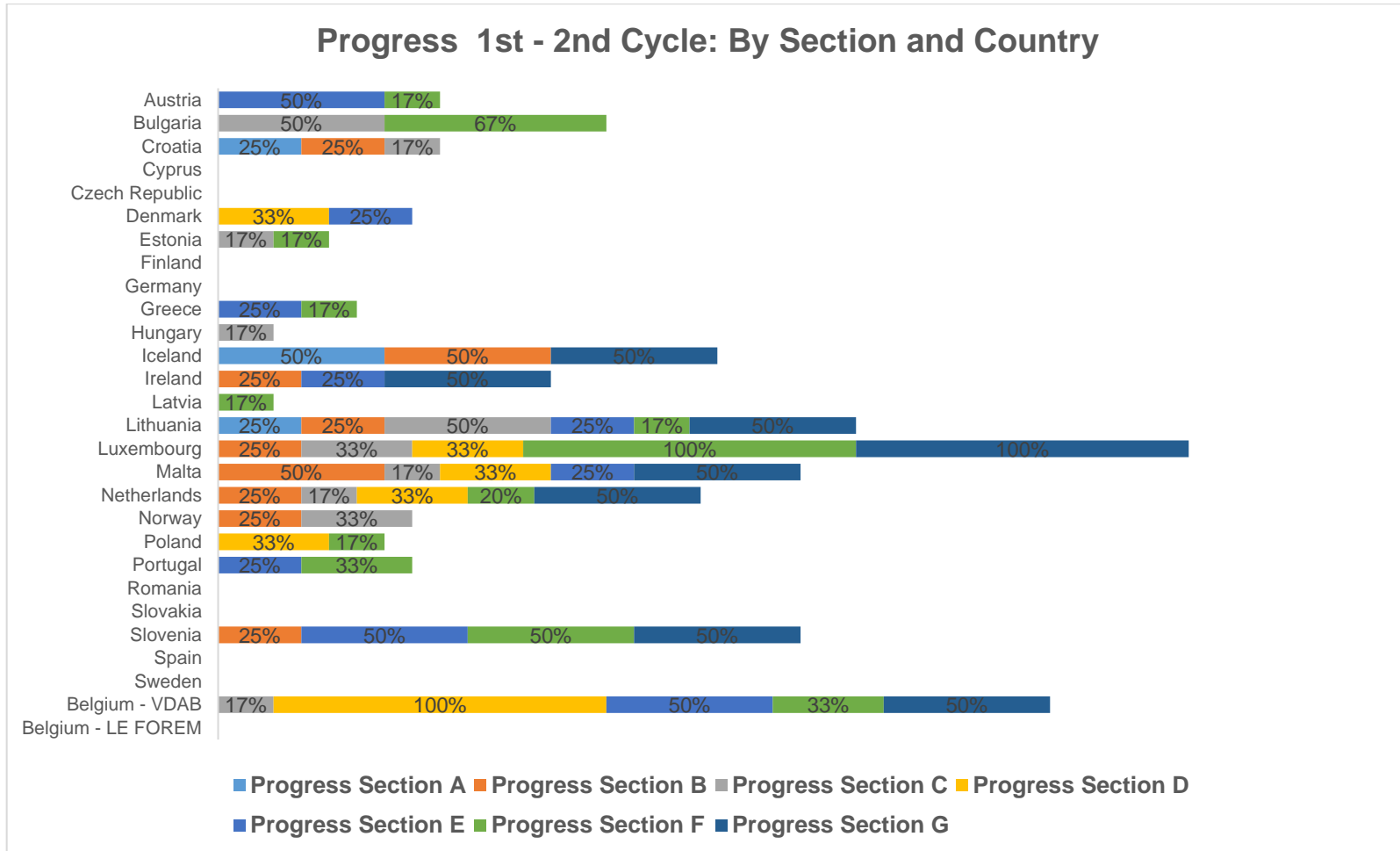
Figure 7 Change for Section G



The above figure shows that Luxembourg has had the greatest progress in terms of “Allocation of PES resources” (section G), with changes in both performance enablers (i.e. 100% of the total change). Other PES, such as Belgium – VDAB, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands and Slovenia progressed in one of the two performance enablers. None of the considered countries deteriorated in relation to this enabler.

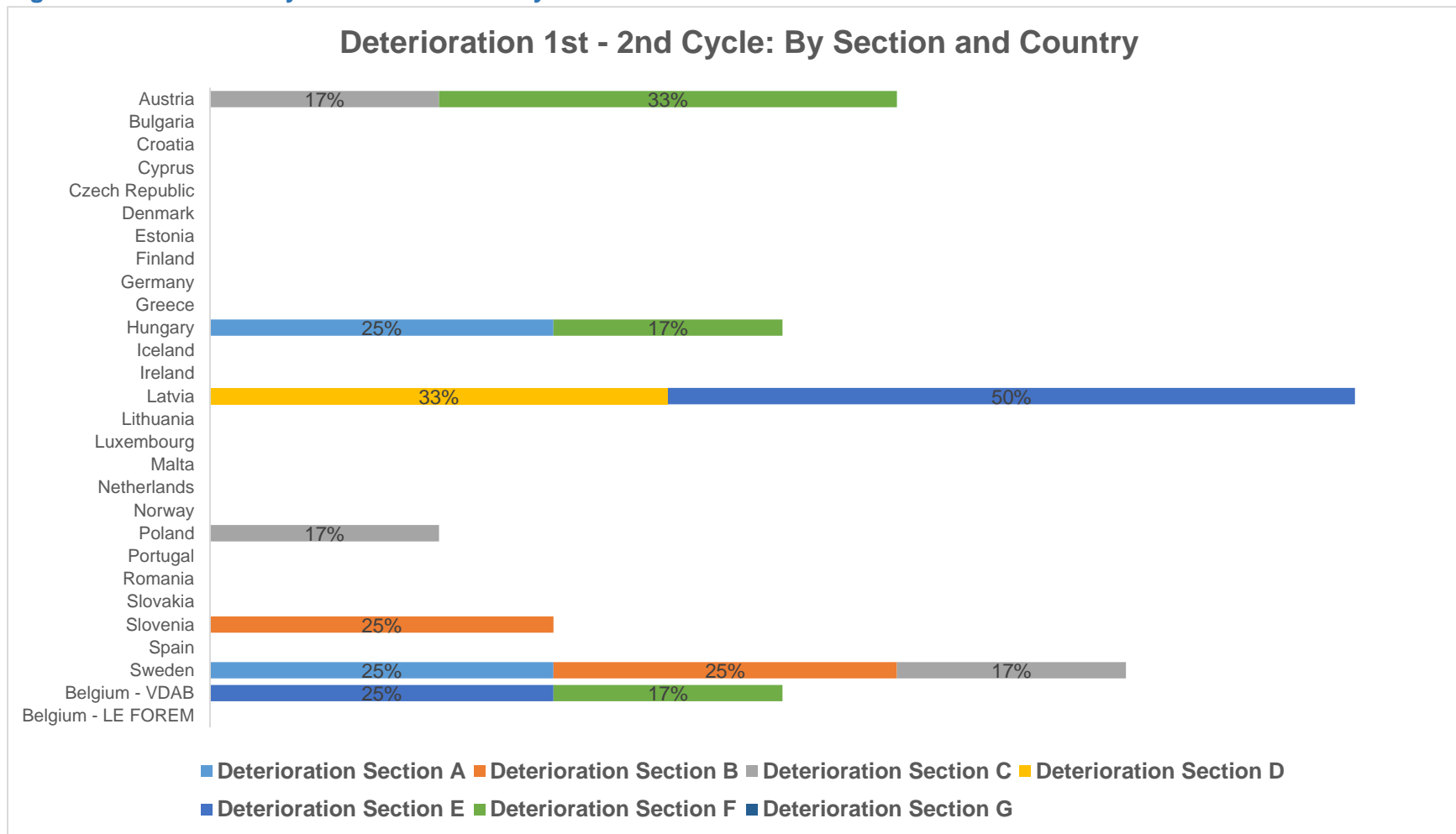
Results - By type of change

Figure 8 Progress by Section and Country



The figure above summarises the progress of the different countries in each of the sections relating to the PES maturity levels. Lithuania shows progress in at least one performance enabler for six out of seven sections. On the other hand, some countries have not exhibited progress in any performance enabler of the sections (i.e. Czech Republic, Germany, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden).

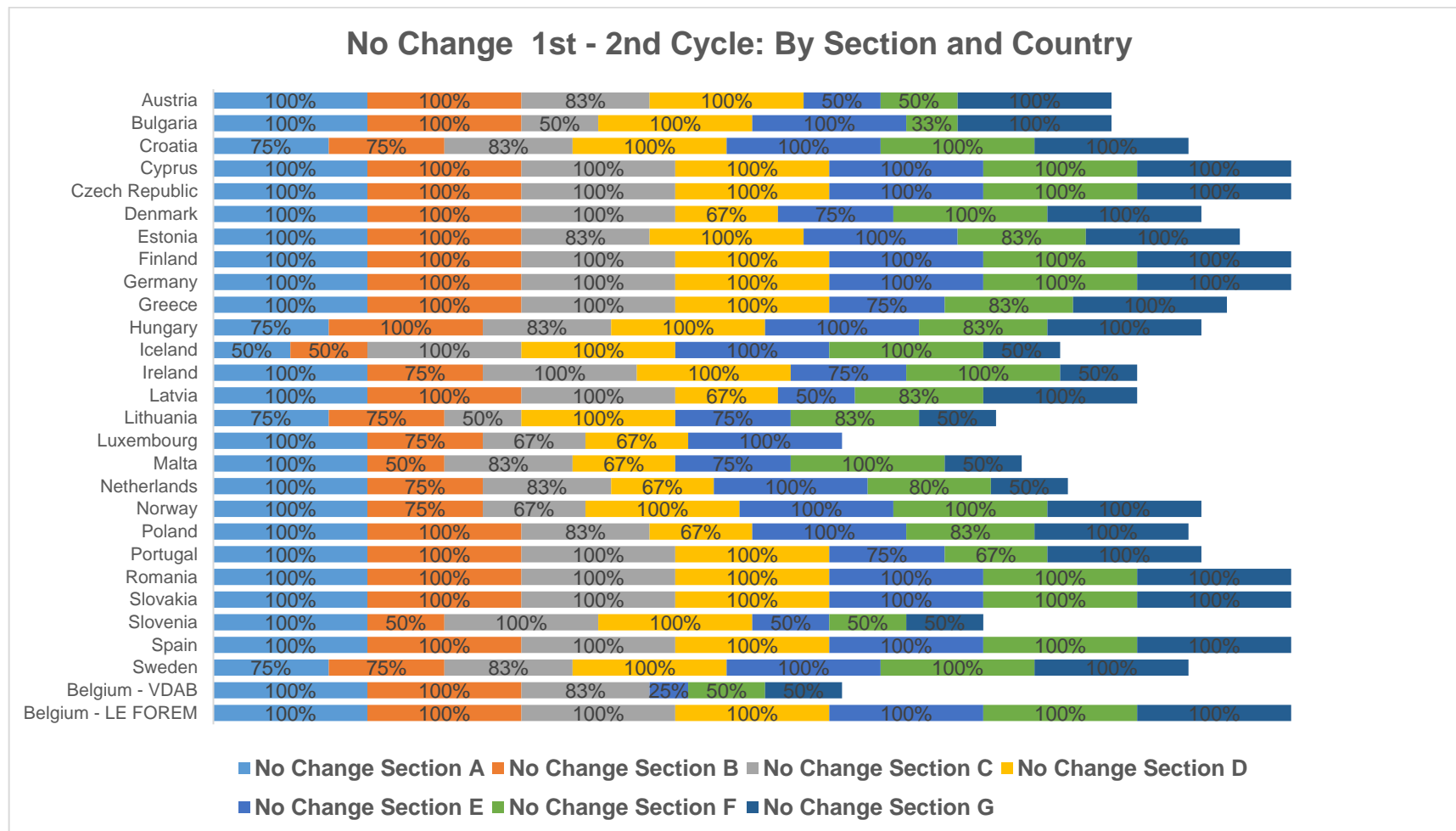
Figure 9 Deterioration by Section and Country



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The figure above summarises the degree of deterioration in each country per section. It is possible to observe that Sweden has shown a deterioration in at least one performance enabler for three out of the seven sections relating to the PES Maturity levels. On the other hand, several countries have not exhibited any deterioration (i.e. Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia).

Figure 10 No change By Section and Country



ANNEX 5: COST BENEFIT TABLES AND INFORMATION

In this Annex, we provide additional information and detail in relation to the analysis of costs and benefits set out in Section 4 of the main body of the report on efficiency. The Annex includes three main sections: (I) an overview of the methodology used to calculate costs; (II) the overview of cost estimates and, (III) the overview of benefits.

1. Methodology for cost calculations

In this sub-section, we briefly summarise the methodology adopted to estimate the costs of Network activities from the data provided to us by Member State PES and the Commission. It should be noted that many PES had considerable difficulty⁴² making estimates of staff time and costs, and given the uncertainties involved were, in some cases, reluctant to provide these data or to have them made public in a report. Reassurances were given where appropriate that we would use the data only in aggregate form, and would not present individual country data in the report, and for this reason data at country level are not included in the report.

Member State PES staff costs

Member State respondents were asked to estimate how many staff days are spent on average yearly on PES Network activities, distinguishing between different staff roles/levels (PES Network Board Members, AFEPA's, other PES members and other staff), or to estimate the input in terms of Full-Time Equivalents (FTE).

Overall, after several reminders and after giving reassurances to respondents (as noted above) about the use of the data, we received a good response, and were able to secure usable data on staff time from 28 of the 30⁴³ countries (26 Member States plus Norway and Iceland).

The data were then, where possible, converted to a common format in FTEs, assuming - unless other evidence was provided - an average of 220 working days per year, excluding paid holidays and public holidays etc. Where a range of days was given for a particular country and/or staff category, the mid-point of the range was taken as a point estimate. The values for the two non-responding countries were estimated to be equal to the average value of total days per country of the 28 responding countries⁴⁴; while this is a fairly strong assumption, given the wide range of total days given by the responding countries, the high response rate means that the overall EU-level estimate is relatively insensitive to the assumptions made for the two missing countries.

Salary information (for July 2017) relating to the average (gross) remuneration (monthly or annual) of AD level central government staff, was then drawn from European Commission sources, in particular: the various 2017 A65 Annex 2 reports in Eurostat⁴⁵.

In cases where these salary data were denominated in national currency, they were converted to Euro using the official European Central Bank exchange rate prevailing on 31

⁴² Typically this difficulty reflected the nature of different accounting and time recording systems, and the fact that in some PES staff time and costs devoted to Network were not separately recorded from time and costs devoted to other activities (either national PES activities, or non-Network related international activities).

⁴³ Note that there are 32 PES in the scope of the PES Network, since in one Member State (Belgium) there are three distinct PES (for Brussels, Flanders and Wallonie respectively). We received full data from two of the three PES in Belgium (and it was thus necessary to make estimates for the third case), and Belgium as a partial respondent is thus included as one of the 28 responding countries in this analysis.

⁴⁴ The average number of staff days devoted to the Network by responding PES was 217 working days per year, i.e. equivalent to around 1 FTE.

⁴⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/civil-servants-remuneration/publications>

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July 2017⁴⁶.

Data from three Member States (Croatia, Greece and Romania) were not available from these reports, and other country-specific or international sources were used to identify (largely) comparable salary data for these MS as well as for Norway and Iceland. In particular:

1. **Croatian** data (for 2016) were drawn from a national statistical website⁴⁷;
2. **Romanian** data were estimated by the evaluation core team, after discussions with the AFEPA respondent, drawing on a) information in Framework law No 153/2017 on the remuneration of civil service staff, published in the Official Monitor no. 492/28 June 2017⁴⁸; and b) public domain information available on the internet on the 2017 income declarations of Romanian civil servants. These were converted to Euro as above, using the official European Central Bank exchange rate prevailing on 31 July 2017;
3. **Greek** and **Icelandic** data (for 2015) were calculated from the *OECD Government at a Glance Database*. In these cases we used data on the average annual compensation for central government senior managers, (D2 position), again converted from USD at the official European Central Bank exchange rate prevailing on 31 July 2017;
4. **Norwegian** data for 2017 based on the average monthly salary of senior (central) government officials, were calculated from the *Statistics Norway* earnings database⁴⁹.

Salary data were then combined with staff days data for each country to provide an overall cost estimate per country which was then aggregated across all 30 countries to provide a total global cost estimate of staff time.

Other Member State PES costs

While acknowledging the difficulties faced by respondents in estimating these other costs (travel, accommodation, translations, expert inputs etc.), we encouraged them, via a follow-up questionnaire to provide such estimates at least in broad ranges, and where (in most cases) it was not possible to provide these data for all years of the Network's operation, they were asked to focus on estimates for 2017. We were (in some cases after ongoing follow-up dialogue with respondents) able to obtain estimates, mainly in range form, for 22 of the 30 countries⁵⁰. For half of these (11) estimated costs were €10,000 per annum or less, for a further nine the estimate was between €10,000 and €20,000 per annum, and the remaining two were between €20,000 and €50,000 per annum. In order to estimate a total for all countries, we made point estimates at the mid-point of the range for those countries which gave a range, and for non-responding countries we estimated costs as the average value for responding countries. As noted in the main report, this yielded a total estimated annual cost across all 30 countries for these other aspects of participation of €340,000.

⁴⁶ https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/policy_and_exchange_rates/euro_reference_exchange_rates/html/index.en.html

⁴⁷ https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2017/09-01-03_01_2017.htm

⁴⁸ https://static.anaf.ro/static/10/Anaf/legislatie/L_153_2017.pdf

⁴⁹ <https://www.ssb.no/en/statbank/table/11418/>

⁵⁰ Note that for this part of the analysis, due to incomplete information, data for the three public employment services in Belgium were combined into a single estimate.

European Commission costs

Drawing on information provided by the European Commission, we were able to make estimates of the total average annual cost of the Network to the Commission's budget. The costs fell into a number of broad categories. For some of the cost categories the Commission provided precise annual data, for each of the years 2016-18 (in which cases an average was taken); in other categories data were provided for an exemplary year (2017); finally, in some cases no precise data were available and the Commission's best estimate was used in the calculation.

In calculating the salary cost of Commission staff deployed in the operation of the Network, an average value at the mid-point of the range of staff grades AD5 to AD12 that is allocated to the job position was taken, based on the most up-to-date official salary information available⁵¹.

The total average annual cost to the Commission was estimated at approximately €3.45m.

2. Summary of cost estimates

We set out below in Table A5.1 the summary of the cost estimates set out in Section 4 (Efficiency) of the final report.

⁵¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0781>

Table A5.1 Cost estimates

Costs	Administrations		Employers		Individuals/citizens	
	Qualitative	Quantitative	Qualitative	Quantitative	Qualitative	Quantitative
Staff costs	Time investments by PES staff differed quite widely by Member State and by type of participant (AFEPAs, Board members, other managers, other staff, experts).	On average, those PES which were able to provide information estimated that 217 days of staff time per year were committed to PES Network activities. The total annual cost of this in 2017 was estimated to be €1,740,000.	None	None	None	None
Non-labour costs (travel, administration, translation, expert inputs etc.)	Other costs of participation for PES representatives were hard to estimate, and to separate from other budget lines within national PES/ministries. Overall, however, the costs were assessed as relatively minor and not a barrier to participation in Network activities.	For half of those countries providing data estimated costs were €10,000 per annum or less, while for most of the remainder, the cost was between €10,000 and €20,000 per annum (p.a.). The total annual (2017) cost across all 30 countries for these other aspects of participation was estimated at €340,000.	None	None	None	None
European Commission costs	In addition to the major item, namely the core budget for the PES Network Work Programme, the Commission incurred costs for staff allocated to the Network Secretariat (both Commission staff and some of the costs of national PES staff seconded	The PES Network WP budget is €3.12m annually. In addition, annual average costs were occurred for: Commission staff (estimated at €106,000 p.a.); Seconded National Experts (estimated at €44,000 p.a.);	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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	<p>to the Secretariat), as well as mission costs for Secretariat staff and Commission representatives, and the costs of organising meetings (both Board and AFEPA meetings), and reimbursement of participants' costs.</p>	<p>mission costs, for Secretariat and Commission representatives to the Board (estimated at €50,000 p.a.); Presidency grants for Board meetings (€98,000 p.a.); AFEPA meeting costs (€20,000 p.a.); and participant reimbursements (€12,000 p.a.). The total combined cost of these items to the Commission is estimated to average €3.45m annually.</p>				
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3. Overview of benefits (selected qualitative examples only⁵²)

We set out below in Table A5.2 examples of the benefits set out in Section 4 (Efficiency) of the final report.

Table A5.2 Benefits for various parties

Benefits	Administrations	Employers	Individuals/citizens
	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
<p>1. Positive influence on PES policy and practice as a result of co-operation, policy learning, and knowledge exchange through Network activities</p>	<p>There are many examples of Network participation having influenced concrete changes at MS level. In several MS (e.g. RO and PT), a new jobseeker profiling system is being implemented and new IT tools and employer services are being developed, as a result of learning through the Network. Similarly good practices shared between PES at meetings or in the repository have led to changes e.g. the introduction of profiling in CY.</p> <p>benchlearning, in particular, was highlighted by most PES respondents as a source of key benefits, and has been influential in affecting policy and practice at national level, informing developments including providing evidence of the need to upskill frontline PES workers resulting in an accredited course being developed with a University</p> <p>In the words of one PES: <i>'benchlearning is a 'marvellous project' that is not easy to find elsewhere. The visits have enabled the</i></p>	<p>Network participation (esp. benchlearning) produced many examples of the development or enhancement of employer services, including developments such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enhancing the focus of the PES on SMEs; - improving the service offer to employers using a 'key account manager' model; developing and improving IT systems; 	<p>As a result of Network participation, one PES (LV) has changed the way it deals with long-term unemployed (e.g. training being driven by a full LM needs assessment, not solely by the preferences of the individual)</p>

⁵² No formal cost-benefit analysis was undertaken and the evaluation was not designed to collect quantitative data on direct and indirect benefits of Network participation.

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Benefits	Administrations	Employers	Individuals/citizens
	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
	<p><i>Iceland PES to better understand where they are, how they should plan going forward and also evaluate what is currently implemented. The comparison with other PES has been beneficial.'</i></p> <p>One PES (LU) noted that Network initiatives and exchanges have provided the opportunity to rapidly implement a large number of changes in working methods. The main change is the development of a more institutional working approach since 2014. This, has in turn, provided the opportunity to be faster and more effective in the implementation of new procedures and services, as result of mutual assistance and learning practices and exchanges. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site visits in DE supporting the establishment of new customer and employer services which were operational within a year. • A new professional classification based on the example of FR <p>Customer segmentation: job-seeker profiling based on the example of the Flemish PES.</p> <p>One PES (EL) highlighted the following practical benefits emerging directly from Network participation:</p>		

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Benefits	Administrations	Employers	Individuals/citizens
	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved staff training system: as result of the collaboration with other PES, it has been possible to have PES internal trainers in Greece acting as 'multipliers'; Digitalisation and simplification of services; Improved performance management system; <p>New roles of the counsellors (both for employers and jobseekers) based on the models used in Germany, Sweden and France, but adapted to the Greek context.</p>		
	<p><i>'Since 2014 as a result of the PES decision, the Malta PES has adopted different performance management systems. These go from the top level to bottom organisation, thus looking at departmental performances but also at individual performances.'</i></p>	<p><i>'Malta has set up departments for employment sectors, aimed at understanding what is the need for meeting employers and get feedbacks from them about trend, vacancies, how to improve our services. We have produced satisfaction survey for employers and jobseekers, an online job matching system because we heard about its usefulness through the PES network. We learned a lot in these last four years and significantly improved our service.'</i></p>	
	<p>One PES (SK) claimed that the organisation's 'way of thinking' is changing as a result of benchlearning activities. Specifically, <i>'following benchlearning visits we have been implementing in the Slovak PES a number of changes (introducing elements of performance management and management by objectives, launching quality management,</i></p>		

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Benefits	Administrations	Employers	Individuals/citizens
	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
	<i>enhancing our e-services and strengthening PES frontline capacity)</i> '.		
		In EE, the value of the benchlearning assessment in influencing the PES approach to employers was emphasised: <i>'We have also taken into consideration recommendations made by benchlearning assessors for us, and tried as much possible and relevant to improve our performance and services accordingly. For example, we developed the Employers' Strategy suggested by the assessors which now describes our principles and priorities in the cooperation with employers.'</i>	
	In BE, the Wallonian PES (Le Forem) implemented a number of new initiatives rapidly between the first and second benchlearning cycles, including: a skills-based profiling tool for job-seekers; a competence-based recruitment tool for employers, which have access to jobseekers' competences linked to the job requirements; Emploi Box and other IT developments; a new performance management system; and a strong new emphasis on (labour market) evidence-based decision-making. The PES noted that <i>'Such quick progress has not happened previously in the history of Le</i>		

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Benefits	Administrations	Employers	Individuals/citizens
	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
	<p><i>Forem and is perceived to have been partly but for sure incentivised by the PES Network.'</i></p>	<p><i>'The key change for the UK has been facilitated by the 1st BL cycle, when they were given recommendations about improving their relationship with employers. The UK PES was at the time in the process of reforming its employer strategy and the recommendations were timely. In short, the approach in the UK is that the main role of the PES is to build the self-sufficiency of jobseekers in liaising with employers and finding a job, but due to the recommendations received in the BL process, they understood and considered other approaches, whereby the PES has an active role in matching demand and supply and thus has a closer relationship with employers by understanding the challenges they face in filling their vacancies. As a result of the BL process, the UK PES understood the effectiveness of working closely with employers and this strengthened their practices.'</i></p>	
	<p>From a PES perspective in HR, a key benefit is an efficient system of evidence-based monitoring, and associated improvements in</p>	<p>As a result of the benchlearning summary reports the HR PES improved services to employers by</p>	<p>Wider benefits from the changes introduced following HR Network participation,</p>

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Benefits	Administrations	Employers	Individuals/citizens
	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
	services, operational processes and performance management systems.	introducing key account managers in the PES in order to deal with significant employers but also SMEs employers. In addition, they implemented the tailor-made jobseeker support model based on the statistically assisted profiling system. A system of monitoring counsellors' work and measuring counsellors' satisfaction was introduced.	include the impact of these changes on performance and customer satisfaction, as the quality of service to users (job seekers, unemployed and employers) has increased.
	Following the benchlearning assessment, in PT, the ' <i>PES Performance Management System has also been improved so to ensure PES services and programmes are being adequately provided and implemented, that they are having the expected impact and that resources are being used efficiently. PT PES performance follow up system aims at representing a governance tool not only for our different level Directors but also for the whole staff as a means of accurate information on their efforts, as a means of assistance to their performance improvement and as a means of accountability.</i> '	One PES (PT) noted that, arising out of the self-assessment benchlearning exercise: ' <i>Our employer engagement strategy has also been redefined leading to the implementation of a new methodology, in force only since April this year but already with very interesting results. This new approach is expected to enable a trustworthy and closer dialogue with employers which we hope will lead us not only to a better and timely understanding of their needs but also to assess their interest and reaction on the emergence of new forms of work.</i> '	Also in PT, the PES reported, drawing on Network learning, the ' <i>Strengthening of services to vulnerable people namely the long term unemployed – a technical intervention named 'Intervenção e acompanhamento na procura de emprego' (Supporting Job search) is ongoing and focuses over real job search actions carried out by unemployed. It's a collective intervention that comprises the following themes: mobilizing to job search, how to reach employers and to act during a recruitment interview.</i> '

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Benefits	Administrations	Employers	Individuals/citizens
	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
<p>2. Network facilitating enhanced bilateral relationships between PES</p>	<p>One PES (IS) is working on a new data system, inspired by bilateral cooperation with Dutch colleagues: the reinforced cooperation on this topic after 2014 is due to the Network. Additionally, representatives of this PES visited NO to learn about job counselling practices (including digital counselling).</p> <p>As another PES interviewee put it: <i>'Benchmarking is however the key activity, which is well organised and benefits from the input of excellent colleagues. The Austrian PES would not have travelled to Iceland for example for a study visit were it not for the Network.'</i></p> <p>In another PES (PT) it was reported that <i>'performance indicators were diversified as a result of exchanges with other colleagues in the Network'</i>.</p> <p>The Slovakian PES described various new initiatives (including digitalisation, and the introduction of performance management, and quality management) stressing that <i>'for the implementation of various elements we get a lot of information and know-how since 2014 from our peers through mutual learning programmes, study visits'</i>.</p> <p>Similarly, in another PES (LT): <i>'The most important is the newly implemented quality</i></p>		<p>Strengthened bilateral contacts have facilitated rapid exchange of information and addressing queries on specific topics between PES, e.g. on how best to support migrants. As one interviewee put it: <i>'The Network was very reactive to some key events in the past years, for example the refugee crisis, when a working group was established, where the PES that were faced with important challenges from this perspective could exchange information, ideas and practices'</i></p> <p>One PES (LT) noted that <i>'as a result of the cooperation with Estonian PES, the services for people with disabilities have been improved, such as the organisation of training programmes for employers on how to better integrate these vulnerable groups'</i></p>

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Benefits	Administrations	Employers	Individuals/citizens
	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
	<p><i>management system, as it was inspired by the benchlearning activities.'</i></p> <p>Additionally a PES representative (CY) reported a very useful mutual exchange, involving a visit to another PES (EE), to learn about digitalisation of services, and how to implement such an approach. It was noted that this was equivalent in benefit to what would have otherwise involved expensive consultancy. As the representative said: <i>'in the private sector this type of mutual learning will be very costly'</i>.</p>		
<p>3. Stimulation of internal learning, reflection and policy debate via Network Activities</p>	<p>Benchlearning, and discussions of practices and approaches in other PES, encourage and support review and self-reflection on existing practice. Benchlearning has been a catalyst to (or accelerator of) change, helping to influence high level policy makers and stakeholders in Ministries etc., with evidence of benchlearning reports being used as evidence of the need to change systems, structures etc.</p> <p>Mutual assistance (particularly in the case of 'less developed' PES) and informal learning activities have offered key benefits in reinforcing the influence of Benchlearning here. For example <i>'assessment from outside helped the Bulgarian PES to understand their current position in the context of the other EU PES; to adapt theoretical system to their</i></p>		

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Benefits	Administrations	Employers	Individuals/citizens
	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
	<p><i>business model, which they appreciate; reassurance externally that they are on the right direction'</i></p> <p>There is evidence of Network activities being replicated at national level e.g. some national PES (ES, EE) are now using the benchlearning methodology to assess and provide learning structures for their own services internally.</p> <p>One PES (PT) highlighted its Change Agenda which <i>'comprises a set of reform intentions and actions that have resulted not only from that internal dialogue but also from the self-assessment Benchlearning exercise, one of the PES Network important initiatives, which allowed us to a deeper understanding of our Institution's weakest and strongest features and to an adequate strategic planning.'</i></p>		
		<p>For one PES (LU) learning experiences within the Network made it clear that the PES needs to become more client- and service-oriented, rather than simple 'controllers' of the labour market. For example, the development of a customer satisfaction survey (designed for both jobseekers and employers) was inspired by Network colleagues. This has had a great impact, in showing to both types of customers that the PES is interested in their opinions.</p>	
<p>4. Network participation has positive influence on PES staff development</p>	<p>Many PES see a key benefit of the Network as being the professional development of PES staff and the opportunities it provides to better understand the EU policy arena and how it links to the national level. Additionally for some PES, being able to offer participation</p>		

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Benefits	Administrations	Employers	Individuals/citizens
	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
	<p>in Network activities is a strong motivator for PES staff</p>		
	<p><i>In this context, one PES (PT) notes that 'PES performance follow up system aims at representing a governance tool not only for our different level Directors but also for the whole staff as a means of accurate information on their efforts, as a means of assistance to their performance improvement and as a means of accountability. Staff motivation is also a priority for our Institution. Indeed, PT PES is very much aware that challenges to the delivery of efficient and effective services in today's current environment require developing new professional skills related not only to new potential tasks but also to new tools, never forgetting the necessary non-financial incentives to enhance and reward their performance.'</i></p>		

ANNEX 6: OUTCOMES OF THE EVALUATION WORKSHOP AT THE MEETING OF THE ADVISORS FOR EUROPEAN PES AFFAIRS (AFEPAs)

PES NETWORK EVALUATION: TARGETED CONSULTATION WORKSHOP

11 OCTOBER 2018, 14.15 – 17.30, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

WORKSHOP WRITE-UP

On the 11th of October 2018, four members of the Ecorys evaluation team joined the meeting of the Advisors for European PES Affairs (AFEPAs) to conduct a short consultation workshop to gather insights into the main impacts, benefits and challenges of PES Network activities across 2014-2018 as well identify areas for improvement for future PES Network activities. The agenda of the workshop was:

14.15	<p>Plenary presentation of the evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Presentation by Ecorys of the evaluation aims, approach and timetable of the evaluation, including the role of AFEPAs</i> • <i>Q&A with participants</i> • <i>Introduction to the evaluation workshop</i>
14.45	<p>Group discussions (part I): Impacts, benefits and challenges of PES Network activities 2014-2018</p> <p><i>4 sub-groups, facilitated by an evaluator from Ecorys, to discuss:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main benefits and positive impacts of the PES Network activities to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At national level ○ At EU level • The PES Network activities which have been most successful in generating positive impacts and why • The main benefits of the PES cooperation since 2014 compared to the informal cooperation pre-2014 • The main challenges of and barriers to participating in PES Network activities • How the Network has helped meet the objectives of the PES Decision
15.45	<i>Coffee break</i>
16.05	<p>Group discussions (part II): Future aims, improvements and activities of the PES Network</p> <p><i>4 sub-groups (the same as in part I), facilitated by an evaluator from Ecorys, to discuss:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for future PES cooperation: main aims and focus • Suggestions for improvements for the 3rd cycle (and any subsequent cycles) of the benchlearning process

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggestions for other changes to improve PES cooperation post 2020:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Activities to be continued / discontinued○ Activities to be increased / reduced○ Amendments to existing activities○ The introduction of new cooperation activities• The most suitable legal basis for a new Network (e.g. EU Decision, Recommendation, etc.)
17.00	<p>Wrap-up plenary session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Rapporteurs from each sub-group will share the key findings of the discussions in plenary session</i>• <i>Participants will be invited to share any final remarks or questions</i>

The AFEPAs were split into four groups for the targeted discussions and each group was facilitated by a member of the Ecorys evaluation team. The main outcomes of the discussions are summarised below:

PART I: IMPACTS, BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF PES NETWORK ACTIVITIES 2014-2018

The main benefits and positive impacts of the PES Network activities to date

At national level:

Increased cooperation, openness and exchange

- The Network – through its different activities, and through the structure and rigour it offers – has facilitated exchange of information, knowledge and expertise that have resulted in some concrete changes in several PES
 - e.g. in Romania, a new jobseeker profiling system is being implemented and new IT tools and employer services are being developed
- Personal/ bilateral contacts between different PES representatives have been created/ reinforced by the Network, which in turn further facilitate access to information. It was particularly valued that questions could be posed and they would immediately get a response by experts from across the EU (e.g. on how PES can support the integration of migrants)
- Discussions about different practices and services in PES, which facilitates reflection about own development needs and strengths in comparison with other countries
- Benchlearning also contributes to this through encouraging self-reflection and assessment within PES where this may not previously have been traditionally undertaken.
- Transparency and open dialogue reinforce commitment from the Network members to Network activities

Opportunities for the development of PES staff

- A key benefit of the Network is the professional development of PES staff and the opportunities it provides to better understand the EU policy arena and how it links to the national level
- Participation in PES Network activities in other EU countries also strongly motivates PES staff

Impacts on other PES staff and beyond

- Awareness of PES management of common challenges faced by different PES across the EU which can be used to strengthen arguments in favour of policy changes at home
- Knowledge and insights for PES policy makers and those who develop strategies
- Better awareness by other stakeholders of the challenges faced by PES and the importance of the work they do

Inspiration from good practices

- Another key benefit are the good practices shared between PES at meetings or in the repository. This has led to changes e.g. the introduction of profiling in Cyprus
- Comparisons and exchanges also allowing seeing what works and doesn't work
- Allows 'zooming out' from the national level to get a European perspective on issues

Transfer of the PES Network methodologies for national use

- Some national PES are now using the benchlearning methodology to assess and provide learning structures for their own services internally e.g. ES or EE

At EU level:

- More visibility and identity for PES as a Network than as single voices
- Contributions to EU policy-making e.g. Youth Guarantee, LTU Recommendation
- Enabling a link to be made with other EU level platforms and organisations (e.g. ETUC, EMCO)
- Cooperation with external stakeholders
- "Speaking with one voice" as PES representatives to the Commission

The PES Network activities which have been most successful in generating positive impacts and why?

Benchlearning:

- Most participants emphasised the role and effects of benchlearning, which is generally believed to be at the core of the Network and its most successful activity.
- Participants also felt that benchlearning led to some of the most significant changes in their home contexts, in terms of informing (in different contexts) developments including enhancing the focus of the PES on SMEs, improving the service offer to employers using a 'key account manager' model, developing and improving IT systems, providing evidence of the need to upskill frontline PES workers resulting in an accredited course being developed with a University etc.
- The role of benchlearning as acting 'like a window into other PES', hence facilitating learning, was also noted.
- Benchlearning was also seen as helping to influence high level policy makers and stakeholders in Ministries etc., with benchlearning reports being used as evidence of the need to change systems, structures etc. (hence providing a 'backing' to influence change).
- As well as benchlearning acting as a catalyst for change, and evidence for the need for such change, it was also noted that it had the effect of accelerating developments in some contexts (i.e. where change was being considered, benchlearning provided the impetus for this to happen quicker than it would otherwise have done).
- It was also noted, however, that the success of the benchlearning also lies in the fact that it is complemented by the mutual assistance and informal learning activities.

Mutual learning activities:

- Mutual learning activities are particularly successful since they are based on the needs identified through the benchlearning process
- They provide new horizons for other PES colleagues participating in events

Mutual assistance activities:

- Emphasised in particular by less developed PES: Mutual assistance activities that focus on the individual needs of the PES, as they are deemed to produce the highest added value; Other activities are also appreciated, but perceived as more general and with less concrete added value in comparison with mutual assistance activities
- On the other hand, more developed PES emphasised that in the role of the evaluator going on missions, there are also lessons to be learnt (e.g. regarding one's own strengths)

Other tools:

- The PES Knowledge Centre and papers produced by working groups were also referenced in some discussions as being beneficial activities
- Toolkits, success stories and manuals are also very useful on specific topics

Wider comments:

- Some participants emphasised that changes are gradual and PES Network activities are contributing to changes, but progress takes time.
- In a number of cases, participants stressed the informal support, peer learning, and advice between Network members on a bilateral basis as being a key beneficial activity facilitated by the cooperation involved.
- The overall structure – including the synergy between activities – is what generates the most positive impacts

The main benefits of the PES cooperation since 2014 compared to the informal cooperation pre-2014

- After 2014, PES have **more ownership** of the process and the decisions that are made about what the Network focuses on. Previously, PES were not involved in putting together the meeting agendas, and were predominantly given the room for intervention at the end of the meeting during the AOB
- Despite a **formal process** (based on the Decision), the Network continues to reinforce many **informal exchanges** between members, which is believed to be positive
- The exchanges are more focused after 2014. It was noted that pre-2014 there was a tendency to just focus on PES activities, whereas now the focus had been broadened through the Network, and as a result of the Decision on PES cooperation, to cover strategy, organisational improvement and key processes linked to this.
- PES are also more **committed** to participating in the Network than before 2014

The main challenges of and barriers to participating in PES Network activities

- **English language skills** make participation difficult for some countries, especially when particular expert knowledge is requested (which results in a twofold pressure on PES to identify experts that also have good English skills)
- The **workload of PES staff** is high, and the activities of the PES Network (events as well as filling out data requests from the Commission) are adding increasing pressure as time goes by, due to increasing requests that have to be honoured

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- In particular, the need to respond to multiple surveys/questionnaires with similar or identical themes and questions was raised as a concern, with this being linked to the Better Regulation requirements for public questionnaires for studies, policy developments etc. Given the increased visibility of the PES Network, there are now also many international actors seeking to gather information (e.g. OECD) which adds to the workload.
- Some countries mentioned **financial resources** as a barrier, as not all costs related to activities are covered by the Commission budget
- **Changes in PES staff** is also regarded as a challenge, as it interferes with continuity and participation of the same individuals over a long period of time
- The **expectations** from own PES colleagues based on the AFEPAs' participation in Network meetings is very high and that can cause challenges for individuals when returning home to disseminate the information and results; in turn, there are also very high expectations from the countries where AFEPAs go as an evaluator/expert, which is also perceived as a challenge
- Partly in contrast to the above, in some contexts it was noted that engaging the wider PES so that they can benefit from the outcomes of Network activities can be challenging (particularly in terms of engaging very senior staff).
- It was felt (by the less developed PES) that there is **a pressure to develop and change in a similar manner at a similar pace**, which was viewed as neither feasible, nor desirable, given the different features of the PES and the contexts in which they operate
- It was moreover seen as challenging for individuals from a country where there is less appetite for EU-level comparison and learning to find sufficient support to dedicate time and resources to PES Network activities (and share the learning across the national offices).
- It was noted that the Network has maybe been less successful than it might have been in producing reports and other outputs for the Council and Parliament – this was seen as a resource issue but also relating to a lack of opportunity to do so.
- In terms of benchmarking, it was noted that **political willingness** is key and where this is lacking full participation and gaining benefits from that can be more challenging.

How the Network has helped meet the objectives of the PES Decision

- Agreement about challenges associated to measuring the effects of the Network activities in isolation from other intervening factors
- Youth unemployment has decreased, so this could be a sign that PES are functioning better, to which the Network may have contributed
- It was felt that in some areas, employers are the key actors (e.g. for ensuring decent and sustainable work conditions), and that PES did not have a key role to play.
- Encouraging a focus on operational improvement and enhancing PES processes through acting as a mechanism through which to learn from other PES

PART II: FUTURE AIMS, IMPROVEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE PES NETWORK

The need for future PES cooperation

Main aims and focus

- The Network and the cooperation it supports are deemed **relevant and necessary** in the coming years, especially with a view to facing challenges caused by rapidly changing labour markets, demographic changes etc.
- **PES need to increase their capacity to react quickly** to these trends/ changes in the labour market and the wider society and the Network supports improvements in capacity/ performance.
- Some specific thematic issues were seen as important for the Network to focus on in future – in particular, the challenges faced by refugees and migrants, along with the challenge for Member States of how to integrate them into labour markets, in addition to more of a focus on entrepreneurship, those with disabilities, and the theme of post-employment support were mentioned as considerations for the future.

Suggestions for other changes to improve PES cooperation post 2020

Activities to be continued / discontinued:

- The majority of activities were seen to be beneficial and as such it was felt that they should continue – in particular, mutual learning, mutual assistance, benchlearning, and the more formal and informal cooperation facilitated through mechanisms such as PES network meetings.
- It was seen as positive that there were particular profiles for experts attending activities as it ensures that individuals attending the events are expert in their respective fields (this is slightly more challenging to fulfil for smaller countries).
- It was also seen as important to continue to focus on the “how” not just the “what” (i.e. themes).
- There was a view that the approach of using league tables in the context of benchlearning was politically problematic, ran the risk of discouraging engagement and participation, and that the overall validity of this approach could be questioned.
- Some AFEPAs felt that there could be less indicators in future, and also that the benchmarking structure could be simplified.

Activities to be increased / reduced:

- Greater involvement of decision-makers (e.g. EMCO/ national labour ministries)
- Improve the visibility of the Network in reaching local PES and disseminating knowledge/ affecting changes
- A better match between demand (PES needs for assistance) and supply (experts from other PES that are well equipped to act as advisors)
- A stronger connection between employment and the education system should be included in the Decision objectives post-2020
- It was also noted that there could be improved coordination within the Commission between employment and education Directorates, with this being seen as potentially helping to support the Network and individual PES in helping to link these

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spheres together better. This was also underlined in relation to events and activities organised in parallel by various Commission services on similar topics.

- In terms of revising Decision objectives it was also noted that this is contingent on high level policy developments – i.e. revising Articles 3 and 4 will depend on what follows Europe 2020.
- Caution was also advised on making objectives too specific as with the current focus on the long-term unemployed and NEETs (particularly as the labour market context can shift and the required focus on particular target groups can change).

Amendments to existing activities:

- Some also highlighted that on the one hand, the diversity of the activities covers a lot of needs, but they are also very fragmented (e.g. including different concepts/ labels to describe similar issues), which makes it difficult to convey a systematic message about the network activities to colleagues in PES
- Similarly, there is now fragmentation in the sources of information for PES. Information is available on the AFEPA website, the knowledge centre and the dashboard. It could be beneficial to centralise this.
- It was noted that if the Network is to be used as a consultative body by the Commission this needs to be genuine, with adequate time given to respond – e.g. it was felt that the decisions concerning ELA had already been made by the time the Network was consulted and hence this process was perceived as not being genuine.
- Linked to this some discussants felt that the role and remit of the Network in relation to decision making and policy could be further clarified – i.e. what role and influence it was expected to have, if any, and how work undertaken and perspectives within the Network should feed into EU policy.
- Some perceive the Benchlearning process as too complicated, 'academic' and scientific and suggest a simplification of the process and the indicators used, in addition to enhancing the focus on PES operational issues rather than more academic ones; it was felt that it should also be more flexible and amenable to changes proposed by PES. While this was a common view it was also noted that the 3rd benchlearning cycle already has some streamlining and simplification within its design, so it would be preferable to see how this works in practice without suggesting any further changes.
- There is a shared feeling (mostly from the less developed PES whose performance on indicators is not ideal) that the aim of Benchlearning should not be to rank countries (see above for more detail on the objection to 'league tables of PES' and the perceived problems and consequences that could arise).
- Some attendees felt that encouraging convergence between PES and MS was an implicit and unstated aim behind the PES cooperation Decision and the Network; it was questioned whether this was the right path to be on, even implicitly, and it was also noted that in reality national governments and policy makers had ultimate control in the employment sphere.
- The need for the Secretariat to ensure documentation came out with sufficient time ahead of events etc. was noted as an improvement that could help cooperation, and the role of Network members, function more effectively. Linked to this reducing the volume of documentation for members to read was cited (i.e. summarising things more effectively, given that many members undertake network activities in addition to the main jobs).

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- More consideration of the timing of events was also raised – e.g. not scheduling events for a Monday or Friday meaning that Network Members had long journeys to make to Brussels affecting their weekends / family lives.
- Developing a shared IT protocol for use in webinars etc. was seen as important – it was noted by PES representatives that they can request specific software if they know what they will need in advance. By organising more (professional) webinars, it was noted that there could be a wider reach as more individuals would be able to participate in PES activities as they would not need use any resources to meet travel and subsistence needs.
- There were also calls for a rationalisation and centralisation of Network resources, web presence etc. so as to create ‘...a common platform with everything in one place...’

The introduction of new cooperation activities:

- There was a suggestion encouraging the set-up of a funding mechanism for PES to work together and deliver projects or activities
- The potential benefits of increasing cooperation with WAPES on the part of the Network was also raised.
- A study visit programme
- It was felt that the values of PES should also be included in a new PES Network Decision.
- “Erasmus+ for PES” programme to allow exchanges and temporary placements between PES
- An ‘innovation lab’ was suggested as a useful additional activity alongside the regular PES Network activities. This would be a research and development unit of PES staff and other experts to think about innovative ways to address prevailing issues. Some countries already have these labs at national level (e.g. BE, FR and SE) but it was suggested that an EU-wide innovation lab could be beneficial.
- New topics which could be the focus of the next PES Network Decision/activities included:
 - PES values
 - New forms of work e.g. platform work
 - Better anticipating the future of work and impacts on PES
 - Prevention of unemployment
 - Helping the most excluded: those who are left behind by digitalisation, globalisation and new forms of work
 - Innovation in delivery, and how to fund it
- It may be interesting to consider in future ensuring the voice of European PES not only on the European stage but also the international stage.

ANNEX 7: PUBLIC CONSULTATION ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

Background to the consultation and report

This report presents the results of the public consultation carried out as part of the Study supporting the evaluation of the Decision 573/2014/EU on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES) (VC/2018/0292). The study is implemented within the context of the DG EMPL multiple framework contracts for the provision of services related to the implementation of the Better Regulation guidelines (VC/2017/0372).

The main aim of the public consultation is to gauge the views of a wider group of stakeholders on the effectiveness and impact of the enhanced cooperation of PES, as well as future needs.

The main research instrument of the public consultation is a questionnaire. The core research team developed the draft version of the questionnaire during the inception phase, based on the comments received from the Steering Group on the draft version included in our tender. Consequently, in close cooperation with the Commission, several other minor changes were agreed. Once the set of questions for the public consultation was agreed in English, the text was translated by Ecorys into French and German in appropriate formats (XML), and were subsequently uploaded onto the Commission's public consultations website.

Respondents' views were examined through a combination of closed questions and open ended questions. Closed questions provided respondents with either different categorical answers (on the challenges faced by PES and the most important areas for improvement) or with rating on the Network's importance, strength of complementarity, success, efficiency and necessity.

The public consultation was open to any interested party or individual citizen. However, for the results to be as relevant as possible by ensuring that a range of key viewpoints are represented, the core research team worked closely with the Commission in order to:

Disseminate the survey in a sufficiently broad manner so that it goes beyond the close circle of those familiar with the 2014 PES Network set-up;

Encourage the participation of key stakeholders not expressly targeted by the targeted consultations carried out as part of the study's Task 4.

The analysis of results was carried out using both quantitative (to analyse the frequencies of the closed answers) and qualitative methods (for the open questions, in order to substantiate and interpret the quantitative data with any insights). In addition, the research team categorised the responses through a range of relevant typologies (respondents answering in an individual/professional capacity, types of organisations and involvement or not in the Network).

As with any public consultation, caution should be taken in interpreting and using the results, especially in light of the relatively low response rate in this case, even further where results have been disaggregated (e.g. by direct involvement in the Network). By nature, a public consultation cannot and should not be considered representative.

Timing of the consultation

The public consultation was launched on 20 September 2018 on the Commission’s consultation page⁵³. The public consultation remained open until 13 December 2018. By this date, the consultation had a total of 126 respondents.

Methodology for analysing the results

Responses to the closed questions in the public consultation questionnaire (see Annex 2) were analysed using Excel and SPSS.

To prepare the results for analysis, some re-coding of responses and re-categorisation of respondent types was required. To ensure transparency and clarity in the interpretation of these results for the reader, this process is described in detail below.

A process of re-coding and re-categorisation of responses was implemented in the case of respondents that declared they were taking part in the public consultation in their professional capacity or on behalf of an institution. Once their professional or institutional capacity established, they were then asked about the nature of association they have with PES based on a list of eleven single-choice potential answers. Given the relevance of the answer for the analysis of the entire data collected, in order to reduce the answer categories to a manageable and relevant number of possible categories, we grouped the original responses into fewer categories. In order to do this, we have recoded the original variable into a new one, with fewer categories, according to the following correspondence table:

Table A7.1: Original and recoded labels: association of professional/institutional capacity respondents with employment policies and practices

Original label	Recoded label
Government body / Ministry (not Public Employment Service)	Government Body and Other Public Authority
Public Employment Service	PES
Other public authority (national, regional, etc.)	Government Body and Other Public Authority
Private enterprise	Non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders
Professional consultancy, law firm, self-employed consultant	
Pan-European non-governmental organisation, platform or Network	
National non-governmental organisation, platform or Network	
Research and academia	

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Social partner – pan-European organisation	
Social partner – national / regional / local organisation	
Other	Other

The report contains a presentation of the responses to the public consultation questions by cross-tabulating the responses against three variables considered relevant:

The capacity of the respondent: whether the respondent takes part in the public consultation in individual or in professional capacity or on behalf of an institution;

The past and present involvement of the respondent with the PES Network;

For respondents taking part in professional capacity or on behalf of an institution, the above-presented newly created categorisation of the association with PES, indicative of the type of stakeholder represented by the respondent.

Throughout the presentation of the respondent profile and analysis of results, standard rounding conventions are used when displaying percentages to present these as whole numbers.

Due to the relatively low number of responses received when results are disaggregated, inferences should not be made with caution with regards to the results.

Overview of Replies Received

Profile of respondents

The total number of consultation responses received by the cut-off date (13 December) was 126. Their profile is presented in the following subsections.

Country of respondent

Out of the 126 responses taken into account for the interim report, the highest numbers originate from Italy (23) and France (22).

Table A7.2: Distribution of respondents by country

Country	Respondents
Pan-EU / European umbrella organisation (n = 6)	4.8 %
Belgium (n= 15)	11.9 %
Bulgaria (n= 1)	0.8 %
Croatia (n= 1)	0.8 %
Czech Republic (n= 1)	0.8 %
Finland (n= 3)	2.4 %
France (n= 22)	17.5 %
Germany (n= 13)	10.3 %
Greece (n= 2)	1.6 %
Hungary (n= 1)	0.8 %
Italy (n= 23)	18.3 %
Latvia (n= 1)	0.8 %
Lichtenstein (n= 1)	0.8 %
Netherlands (n= 2)	1.6 %
Portugal (n= 3)	2.4 %
Slovenia (n= 2)	1.6 %
Spain (n= 19)	15.1 %
Sweden (n= 2)	1.6 %
United Kingdom (n= 1)	0.8 %
Other (n= 7)	5.6 %
Total (n= 126)	100 %

As regards the overall split between those participating in their individual capacity and those answering on behalf of an organisation or in their professional capacity, there are 60 participants responding in a personal capacity and 66 participants responding in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation. In the case of Italy, the country with the highest number of participants, the respondents are almost equally split between the two categories (10 respondents in personal capacity and 13 in professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation). On the other hand, in the case of France, there are about three times more respondents participating in a personal capacity than those responding in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation (17 respondents in personal capacity and 5 in professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation).

Table A7.3: Distribution of respondents by country and capacity

Country	Personal capacity		Professional capacity / on behalf of an organisation	
	n	%	n	%
Pan-EU / European umbrella organisation (n = 1)	0	0%	6	9%
Belgium (n = 15)	3	5%	12	18%
Bulgaria (n = 1)	1	2%	0	0%
Croatia (n = 1)	1	2%	0	0%
Czech Republic (n=1)	0	0%	1	2%
Finland (n = 2)	0	0%	3	2%
France (n = 16)	17	28%	5	8%
Germany (n = 5)	8	13%	5	8%
Greece (n = 1)	2	3%	0	0%
Hungary (n = 1)	0	0%	1	2%
Italy (n = 19)	10	17%	13	20%
Latvia (n = 1)	0	0%	1	2%
Lichtenstein (n = 1)	0	0%	1	2%
Netherlands (n = 1)	1	2%	1	2%
Portugal (n = 3)	1	2%	2	3%
Slovenia (n = 2)	0	0%	2	3%
Spain (n = 8)	11	18%	8	12%
Sweden (n = 1)	1	2%	1	2%
United Kingdom (n = 1)	1	2%	0	0%
Other (n = 5)	3	5%	4	6%
Total (n = 126)	60	100%	66	100%

When asked about their past or current direct involvement in the PES Network⁵⁴, the overwhelming majority of respondents (85.7%) reported the absence of any such involvement.

Table A7.4: Distribution of respondents by current or past involvement in the PES Network

Current or past involvement in the PES Network	Respondents
Yes (n = 18)	14.3 %
No (n = 108)	85.7 %
Total (n = 126)	100 %

Sector of activity

According to the responses received, in terms of their sector of activity, the highest number of respondents mentioned Public Administration (54.8%).

⁵⁴ In the public consultation questionnaire, the question asked was: 'Do you have any current or past direct involvement with the PES Network i.e. Member State representative on the Network Board; Advisor for European PES Affairs; involvement with PES Secretariat; contractor supporting the PES Network; other?'

Table A7.5: Distribution of Sector of Activity – all respondents

Sector of activity	Respondents
Public Administration (n = 69)	54.8 %
Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry (n = 2)	1.6 %
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities (n = 1)	0.8 %
Construction (n = 1)	0.8 %
Mining and Quarrying (n = 1)	0.8 %
Education (n = 9)	7.1 %
Health and Social Work (n = 3)	2.4 %
Other Community, Social and Personal Services (n = 7)	5.6 %
Wholesale and Retail Trade (n = 2)	1.6 %
Extraterritorial Organisations and Bodies (n = 1)	0.8 %
Transport, Storage and Communications (n = 1)	0.8 %
Other (n = 26)	20.6 %
Total (n = 126)	100 %

Profile of individual respondents

As regards the characteristics of those participating in an individual capacity, fourteen respondents were jobseekers registered with PES, while ten declared to be jobseekers not registered with PES. The majority of the individual capacity respondents categorised themselves as Employed (13 respondents) whereas the rest categorised themselves as Other (13 respondents).

Table A7.6: Distribution of association with employment policies and practices - Individual capacity respondents

Association with employment policies and practice	Respondents
Jobseeker registered with PES (n = 14)	23.3 %
Jobseeker not registered with PES (n = 10)	16.7 %
Employed (n = 23)	38.3 %
Other (n = 13)	21.7 %
Total (n = 60)	100 %

Profile of organisational respondents

In the case of the participants responding in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation, when asked about the nature of their association with employment policies and practices, the largest share (45.5%) referred to the Public Employment Services as their association with employment policies and practices. 12.1% of the respondents participating in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation referred to 'Private enterprise' (8 respondents) as their association with employment policies and practices.

Table A7.7: Distribution of association with employment policies and practices – Professional/Organisational capacity respondents

Association with employment policies and practice	Respondents
a) Government body / Ministry (not Public Employment Service) (n = 7)	10.6 %
b) Public Employment Service (n = 30)	45.5 %
c) Other public authority (national, regional, etc.) (n = 3)	4.5 %
d) Private enterprise (n = 8)	12.1 %
e) Professional consultancy, law firm, self-employed consultant (n = 4)	6.1 %
f) Pan-European non-governmental organisation, platform or Network (n = 2)	3 %
g) National non-governmental organisation, platform or Network (n = 2)	3 %
h) Social partner – national / regional / local organisation (n = 7)	10.6 %
i) Social partner – pan-European organisation (n = 3)	4.5 %
Total (n = 66)	100 %

Table 8 below sets out the distribution by country of respondents categorised according to this association with employment policies and practices. For greater readability, and due to the small numbers for certain categories, the full set of professional categories (as set out in Table A7.7) has been grouped, and the responses recoded, into three groups in Table A7.8 and in subsequent figures and graphs: (1) Government bodies and other public authorities (categories a and c in Table A7.7); (2) PES (category b in Table A7.7); and (3) Non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders (covering categories d-i in Table A7.7).

Table A7.8: Distribution of recoded association with employment policies and practices by country – Professional/Organisational capacity respondents

Country	Government body & Other Public Authorities		PES		Non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Pan-EU / European umbrella organisation (n = 6)	0	0%	0	0%	6	23%
Belgium (n=12)	0	0%	12	40%	0	0%
Czech Republic (n=1)	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%
Finland (n = 3)	2	20%	1	3%	0	0%
France (n = 5)	2	20%	2	7%	1	4%
Germany (n = 5)	0	0%	2	7%	3	11%
Hungary (n = 1)	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%
Italy (n = 13)	4	40%	3	10%	6	23%
Latvia (n=1)	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
Liechtenstein (n=1)	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
Netherlands (n=1)	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%
Portugal (n = 2)	0	0%	0	0%	2	8%
Slovenia (n = 2)	0	0%	2	7%	0	0%
Spain (n = 8)	1	10%	2	7%	5	19%
Sweden (n=1)	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%
Other (n = 4)	0	0%	4	13%	0	0%
Total (n = 66)	10	100%	30	100%	26	100%

The main results were:

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- Most respondents state that they represent a PES (30 respondents out of a total of 66), at either national or regional level;
- The countries with the highest number of respondents participating in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation are Italy and Belgium⁵⁵.

When those representing government bodies, PES and other public authorities were asked about the level of their institution, the highest number of respondents overall declared that they worked at the regional level. However there was a big difference between those responding on behalf of government bodies and other public authorities, and those representing PES; 80% of those responding on behalf of government bodies and other public authorities represented the national level, compared to only 33% of those representing PES.

Table 2: Distribution of recoded association with employment policies and practices by level – Professional/Organisational capacity respondents

Level	Government body & Other Public Authorities		PES	
	N	%	n	%
National level (n = 18)	8	80%	10	33%
Regional level (n = 22)	2	20%	20	67%
Total (n = 40)	10	100%	30	100%

Results of the consultation

This section presents the results of the public consultation questions broken down, where relevant, by the stakeholder categories identified in Section 2 above.

Current context for the Public Employment Services

Main challenges faced by Public Employment Services

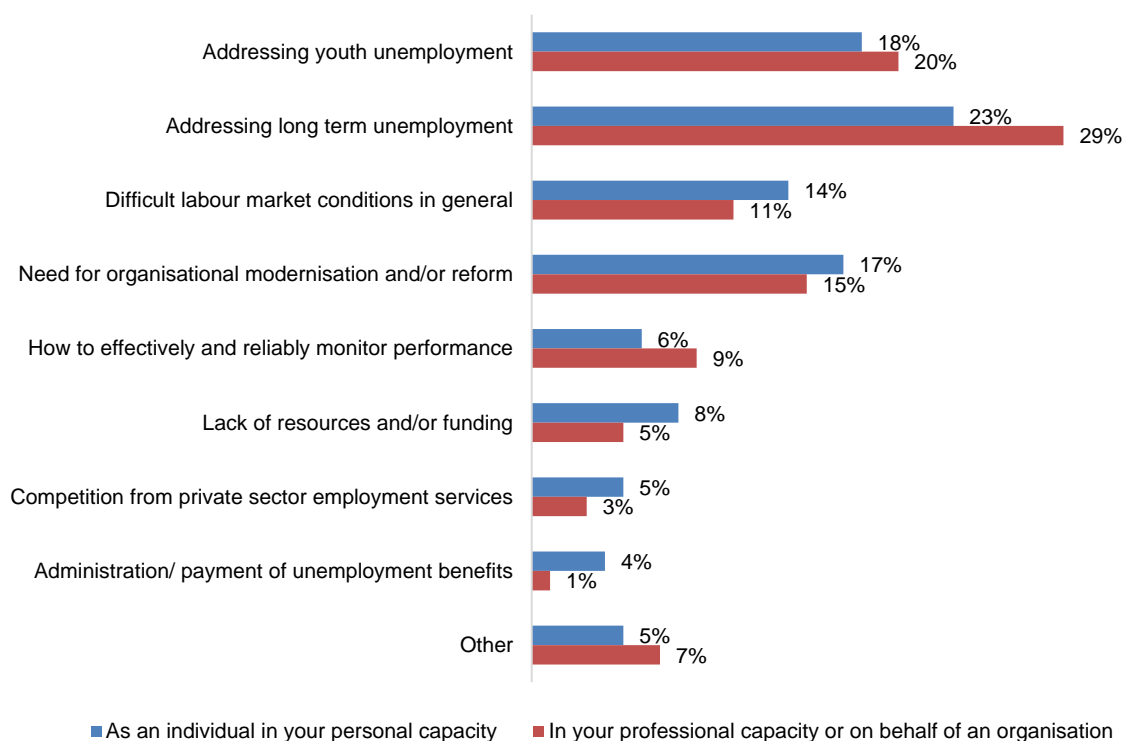
Respondents were asked to select the main challenges that the PES are facing in their countries from a list of nine potential challenges. Those responding at EU level were asked about the main challenges that PES are facing across Europe. Respondents were allowed to select multiple answers and the analysis provided below adds up the total mentions that each challenged received. Overall, the three most mentioned challenges across all types of respondents were **addressing long term unemployment** (mentioned 89 times from a total of 335 mentions), followed by **addressing youth unemployment** (mentioned 65 times) and by the **need for organisational modernisation and/or reform** (50 mentions).

The percentages presented are the percentage of mentions of a specific challenge by a specific group over the total mentions of that type of respondent or specific group. They were also provided with the option to select Other and describe the challenge. The responses received to this question are set out in Figure A7.1 below, broken down by type of respondent (individual or professional capacity).

⁵⁵ The high number of respondents from Belgium may be due to the location of certain European bodies in Brussels.

Figure A7.1: Main Challenges faced by PES – By type of respondent

Q: In your opinion, what are the main challenges Public Employment Service (PES) are facing in your country (or, if you are responding at EU level, the main challenges PES are facing across Europe)?



Base: Answers from individuals or respondents in personal capacity (60)

Base: Answers from respondents in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation (66)

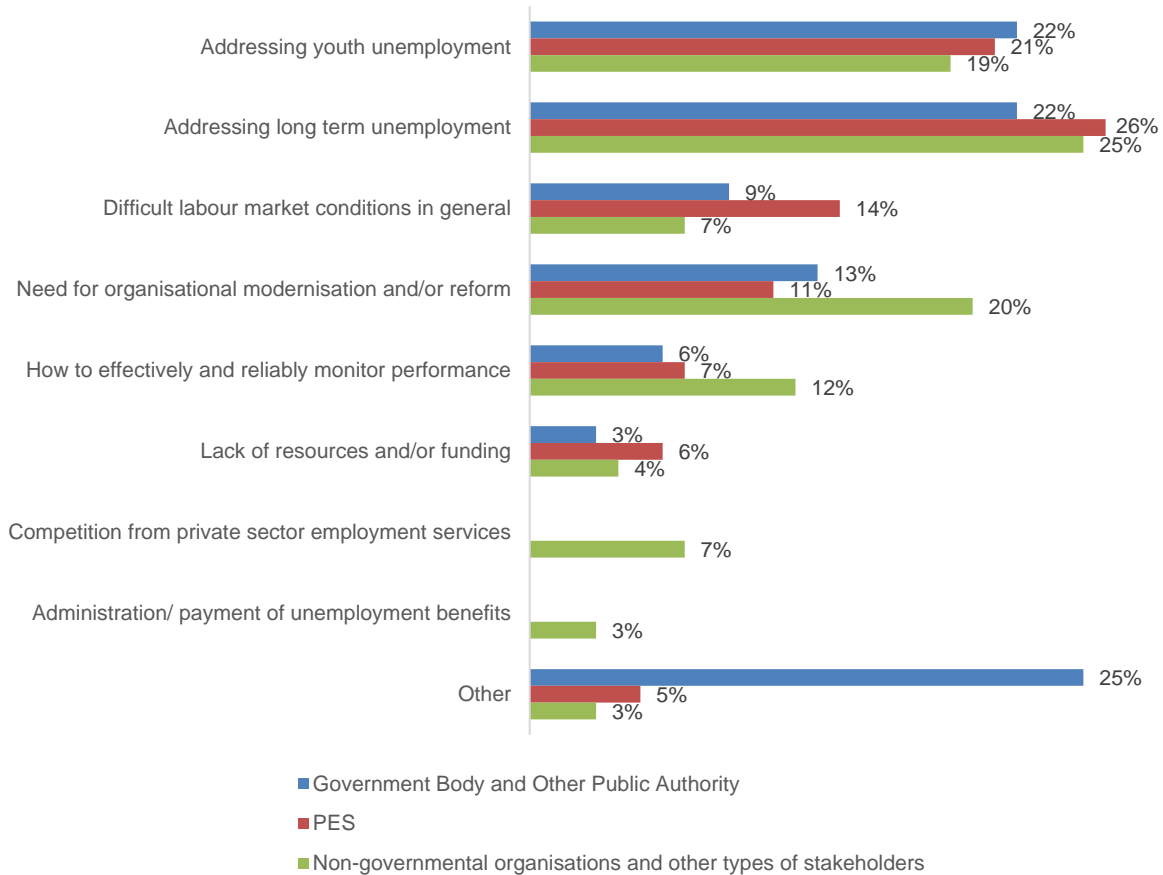
According to the responses included in this analysis, the most mentioned challenge by both respondents answering in their personal capacity and in their professional capacity is **addressing long term unemployment** (23% and 29% respectively), followed by **addressing youth unemployment** (18% and 20% respectively). The third most mentioned challenge for both types of respondent is the **need for organisational modernisation and/or reform** (17% and 15% respectively).

Figure below provides a breakdown of the main challenges faced by PES among those respondents answering in their professional capacity or on behalf of their organisation, categorised according to their association with employment policies and practices.

According to the data, the two most mentioned challenges for all three types of respondents answering in their professional capacity are **addressing long term unemployment** and **addressing youth unemployment**, receiving between 19% and 25% of the mentions of each category of professional capacity. In terms of the third most mentioned challenge, for respondents from government bodies and NGOs it is the **need for organisational modernisation and/or reform** (13% of all mentions of respondents from government bodies and 20% of all mentions from respondents from NGOs), while for respondents from PES it is the **difficult labour market conditions in general** (14% of all mentions by PES respondents).

Figure A7.2: Main Challenges faced by PES – By Professional/Organisational capacity respondents

Q: In your opinion, what are the main challenges Public Employment Service (PES) are facing in your country (or, if you are responding at EU level, the main challenges PES are facing across Europe)?



Base: Answers from individuals representing government bodies and other public author (10)

Base: Answers from individuals representing PES (30)

Base: Answers from individuals representing non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders (26)

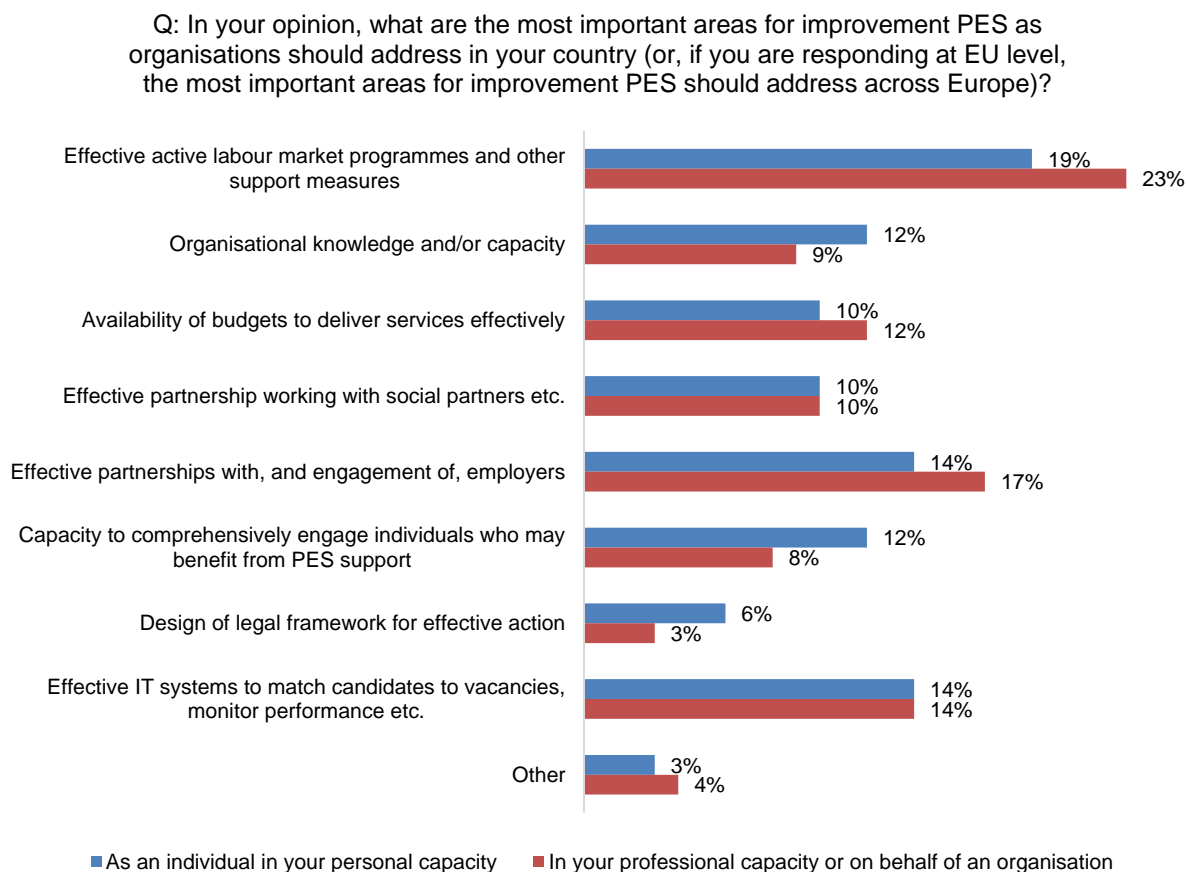
Other challenges mentioned by respondents as an open response mainly include: the integration of disadvantaged groups in the labour market (specifically, respondents identified older people and migrants) (mentioned by 6 respondents), and the impact of digitalisation on the labour market (mentioned by 3 respondents), and skills shortages in certain occupational groups (mentioned by 2 respondents).

Most important areas for improvement

As part of the Public Consultation, respondents were asked to state the main areas for improvement that the PES as organisations should address in their countries or across Europe. Overall, the three most important area for improvement are the **need for effective active labour market programmes and other support measures**

(mentioned 68 times), followed by the **need for effective partnerships, and engagement of, employers** (mentioned 51 times) and the **need for effective IT systems to match candidates to vacancies, monitor performance, etc** (mentioned 47 times). Figure A7.3 below provides a breakdown of responses to this question according to the respondents' capacity.

Figure 8 Most important areas for improvement - By respondent capacity



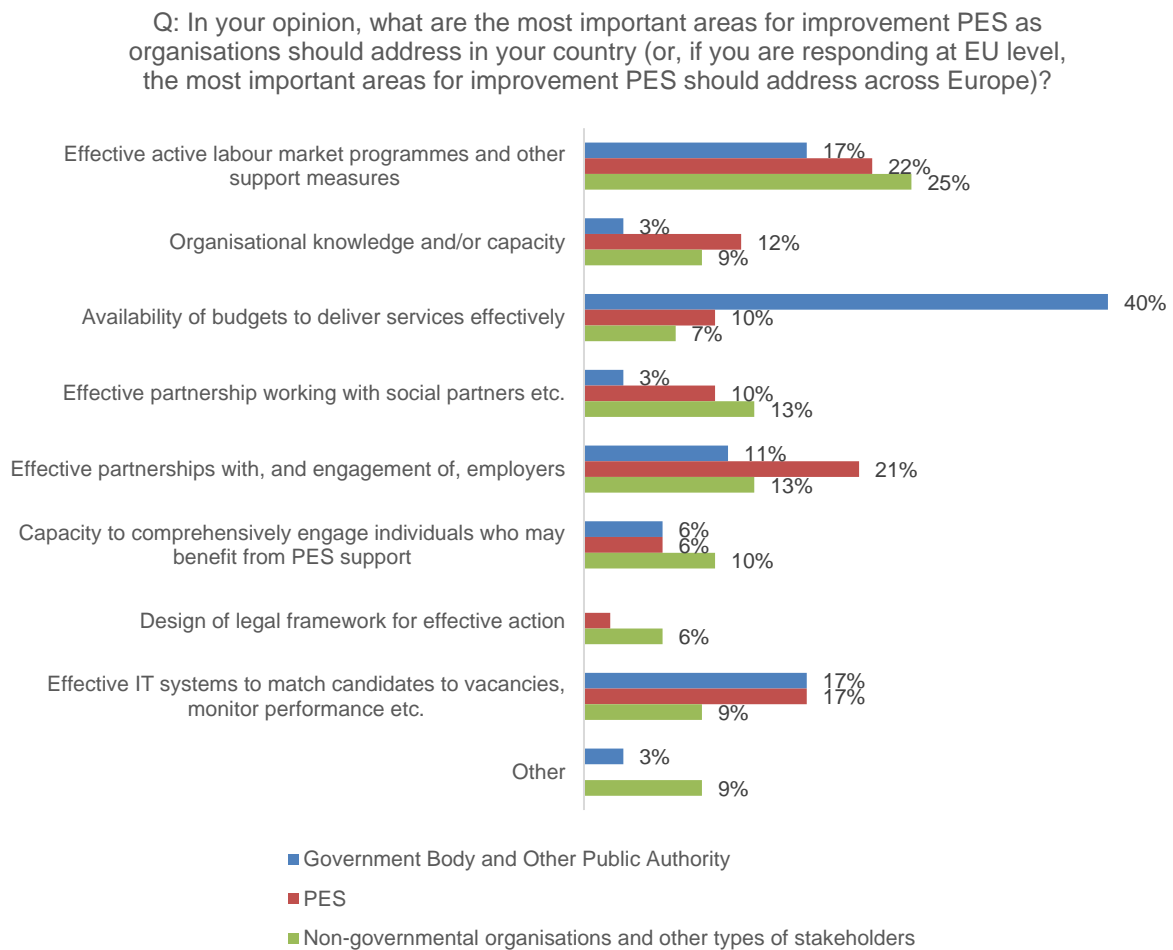
Base: Answers from individuals or respondents in personal capacity (60)

Base: Answers from respondents in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation (66)

For respondents answering in their personal capacity and in their professional capacity, the key areas for improvement are the **effective active labour market programmes and other support measures** (19% of mentions of respondents in their personal capacity and 23% for those answering in their professional capacity) and the **effective partnerships with, and engagement of, employers** (14% and 17% for those answering in their professional capacity).

Figure A7.4 below provides an overview of the main areas for improvement that PES should address according to respondents answering in their professional or institutional capacity, and broken down by their type of association with employment policies and practices.

Figure A7.4: Most important areas for improvement - By Professional/Organisational capacity respondents



Base: Answers from individuals representing government bodies and other public authorities (10)

Base: Answers from individuals representing PES (30)

Base: Answers from individuals representing non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders (26)

For individuals representing PES institutions, the most important areas for improvement relate to the **effective active labour market programmes and other support measures** (22%), followed by **effective partnerships with, and engagement of, employers** (21%). For individuals representing government bodies, the improvements that PES should address mainly relate to **availability of budgets to deliver services effectively** (40%). For respondents representing non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders, the most important areas for improvement are the **effective active labour market programmes and other support measures** (25%) and the **effective partnership working with social partners** and the **effective partnerships with, and engagement of, employers** (both 13%).

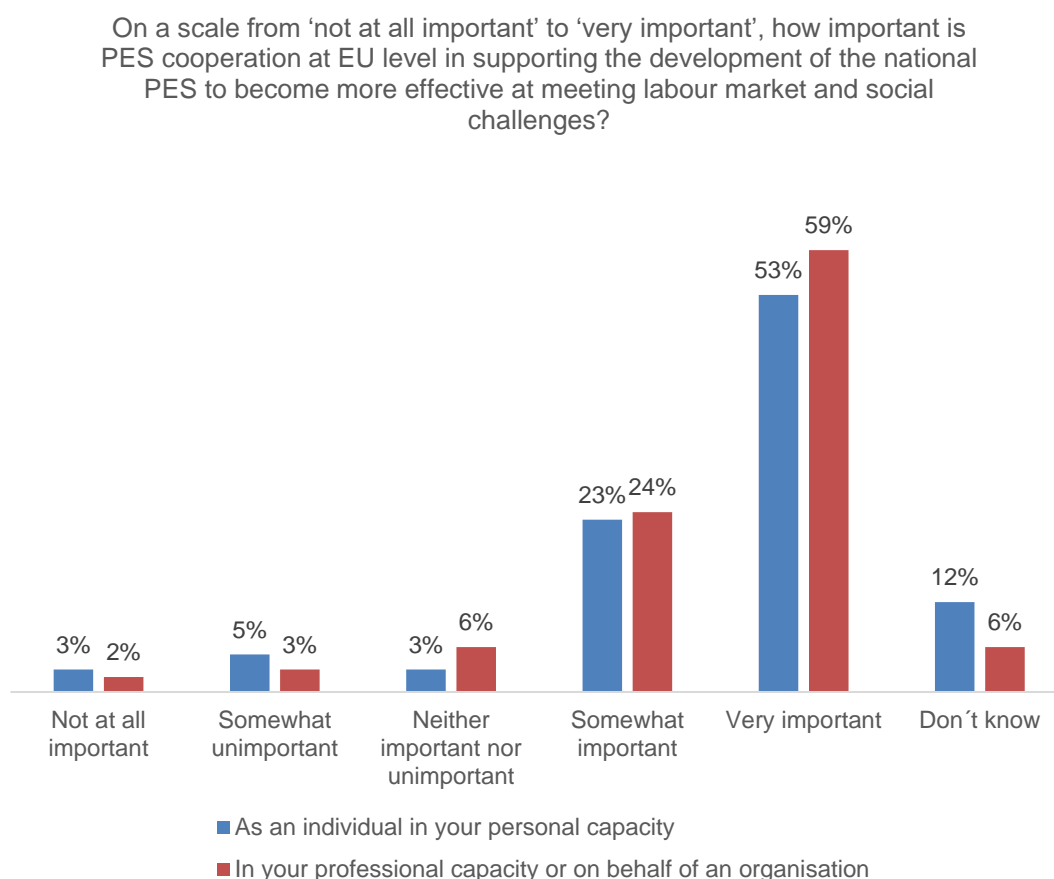
RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE OF THE PES NETWORK AND COOPERATION

Importance of PES cooperation at EU level in supporting the development of the national PES

Respondents were asked how important the cooperation among PES is at the EU level in order to support the development of the national PES to address social and labour market challenges. Respondents could provide answers on a scale from not at all important to very important.

Figure A7.5 below shows that, for both respondents answering in their individual or professional capacity, the PES cooperation at EU level is very important for developing the effectiveness of national PES in addressing social and labour market challenges (53% of respondents answering in their personal capacity and 59% of respondents answering in their professional or institutional capacity). Moreover, between 23% and 24%% of all respondents reported that the PES cooperation at the EU level is somewhat important.

Figure A7.5: Importance of PES cooperation at EU level in supporting the development of the national PES - By respondent capacity



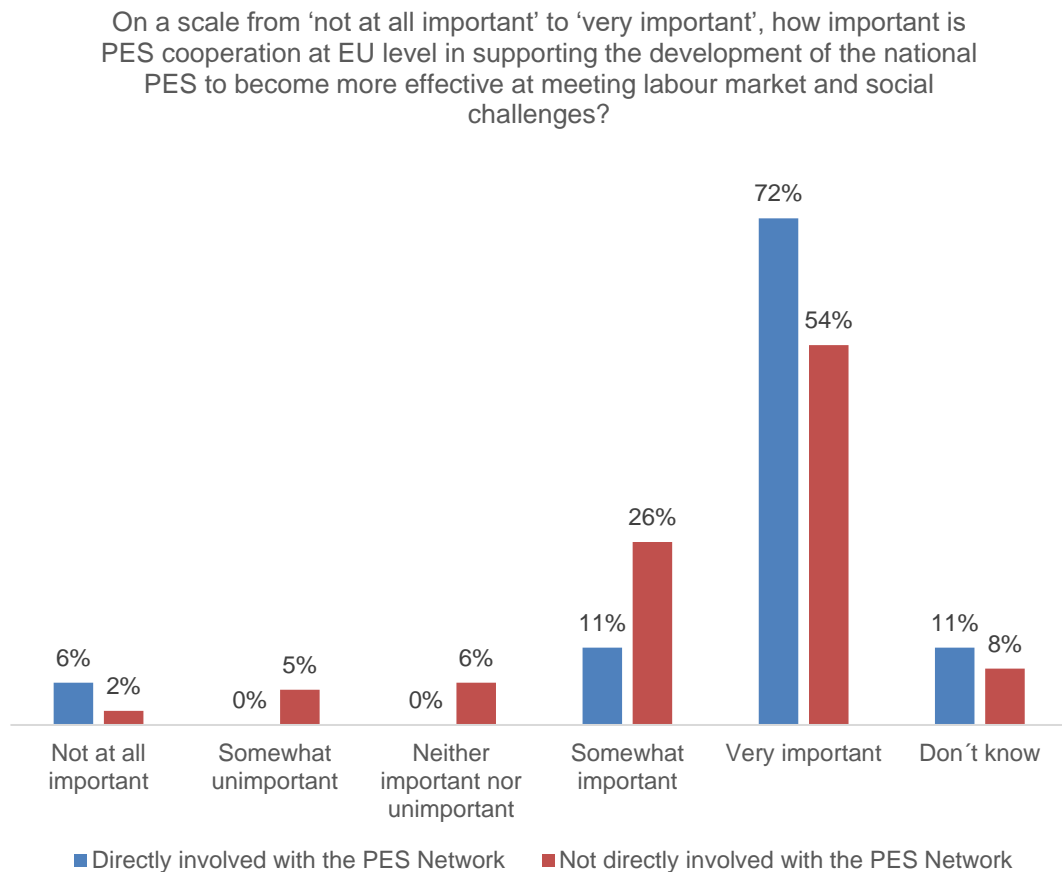
Base: Answers from individuals or respondents in personal capacity (60)

Base: Answers from respondents in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation (66)

Figure A7.6 below illustrates the extent to which PES cooperation at EU level is very important for developing the effectiveness of national PES in addressing social and labour market challenges, according to respondents who have been directly involved with the Network and those who have not. Most respondents, both those involved in the Network

and those not directly involved, consider it is very important (72% for those directly involved in the PES Network and 54% for those not directly involved in the Network).

Figure A7.6: Importance of PES cooperation at EU level in supporting the development of the national PES - By respondent involvement with the PES Network



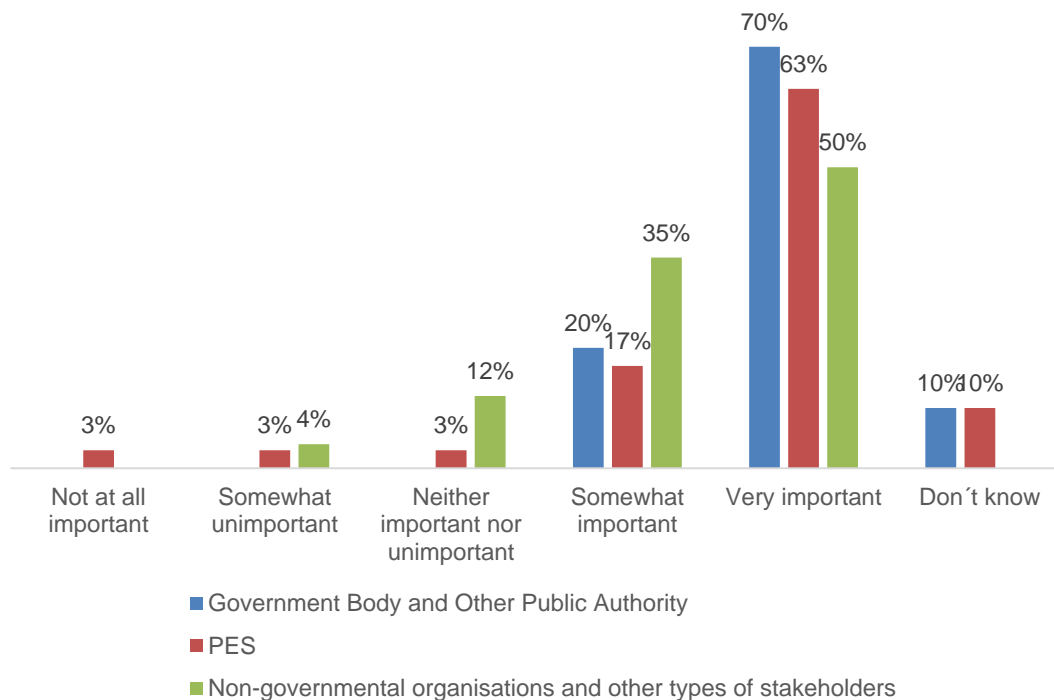
Base: Answers from respondents directly involved with the PES Network (18)

Base: Answers from respondents not directly involved with the PES Network (108)

As can be seen in Figure A7.7 below, among respondents answering in their professional or institutional capacity, the majority of representatives of government bodies and other public authorities consider PES cooperation at the EU level as very important (70%) in order to improve the effectiveness of national PES to address social and labour market challenges. A large share of respondents answering as representatives of PES (63%) or non-governmental organisations (50%) also consider PES cooperation as very important.

Figure A7.7: Importance of PES cooperation at EU level in supporting the development of the national PES - By Professional/Organisational capacity respondents

On a scale from 'not at all important' to 'very important' how important is PES cooperation at EU level in supporting the development of the national PES to become more effective at meeting labour market and social challenges?



Base: Answers from individuals representing government bodies and other public authorities (10)

Base: Answers from individuals representing PES (30)

Base: Answers from individuals representing non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders (26)

To conclude, it is clear that most respondents found that PES cooperation at the EU level is very important in order to support the development of national PES. Given the opportunity to justify their answers, responses included that: an exchange of good practices is fundamental (this was stated by nearly half of those who justified their very important answer); the mobility of workers is also very important (3 respondents); PES cooperation has rendered jobs available via PES more accessible to a wider audience (3 respondents).

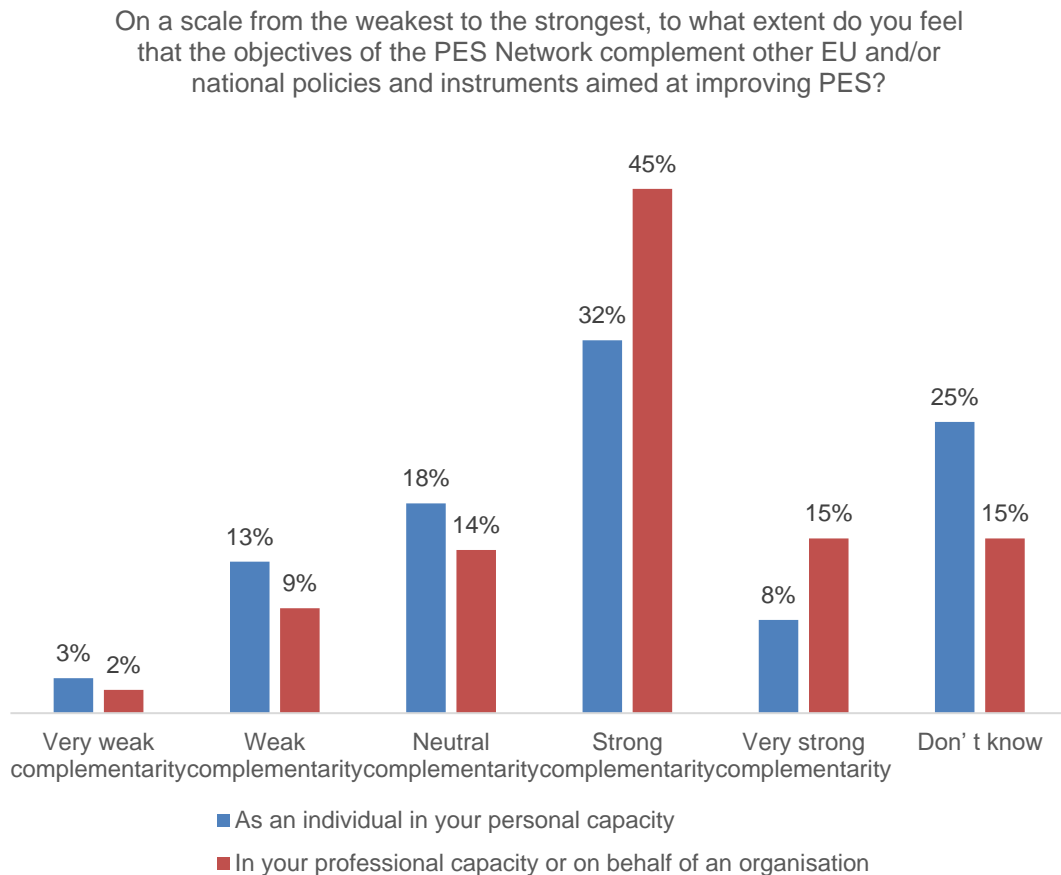
Strength of complementarity between the objectives of the PES Network and other EU/National policies and instruments

Respondents were asked to what extent the objectives of the PES Network complement other EU and/or national policies and instruments aimed at improving the PES. Respondents could provide answers on a scale from the weakest to the strongest complementarity.

Over half of the respondents answering in their professional or institutional capacity report that there is a strong or very strong complementarity between the objectives of the PES

Network and other EU and/or national policies aimed at improving PES (60%). 40% of respondents answering in their personal capacity believe that there is a strong complementarity. However, 25% of respondents answering in their personal capacity reported that they do not know whether there is complementarity between the PES Network objectives and other EU and/or national policies, compared to only 15% of those answering in their professional capacity.

Figure A7.8: Strength of complementarity between the objectives of the PES Network and other EU/National policies and instruments - By respondent capacity



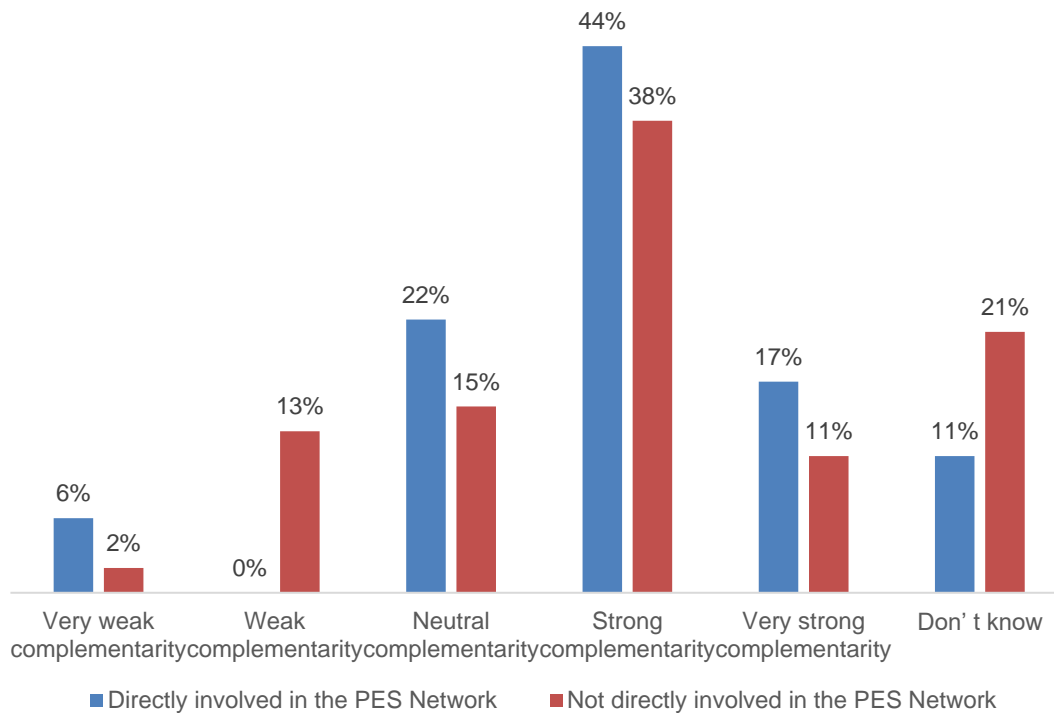
Base: Answers from individuals or respondents in personal capacity (60)

Base: Answers from respondents in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation (66)

Figure A7.9 below illustrates the extent to which the objectives of the PES Network complement other EU and/or national policies and instruments aimed at improving the PES, according to respondents who have been directly involved with the Network and those who have not. The data shows that 61% of respondents who have been directly involved in the PES Network consider there is strong or very strong complementarity between the Network and other EU or national policies and instruments. Similarly, 49% of respondents who have not been directly involved in the Network also consider that there is strong or very strong complementarity.

Figure A7.9: Strength of complementarity between the objectives of the PES Network and other EU/National policies and instruments - By respondent involvement with the PES Network

On a scale from the weakest to the strongest, to what extent do you feel that the objectives of the PES Network complement other EU and/or national policies and instruments aimed at improving PES?



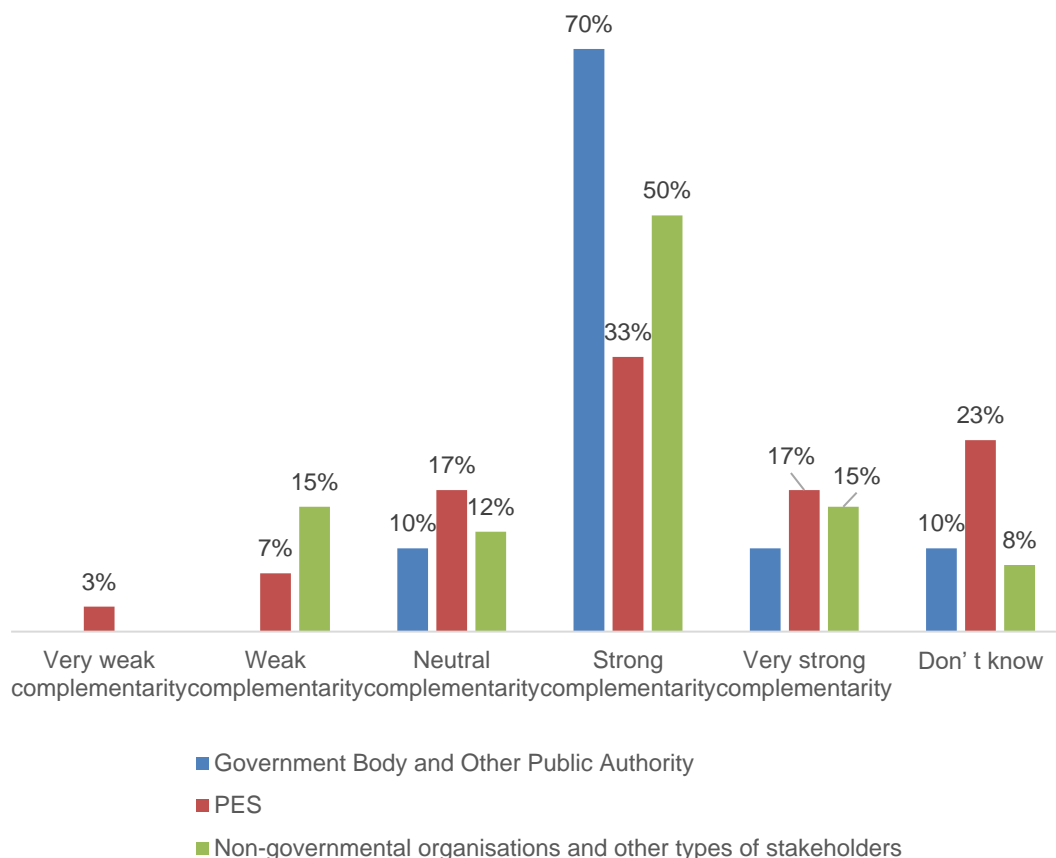
Base: Answers from respondents directly involved with the PES Network (18)

Base: Answers from respondents not directly involved with the PES Network (108)

Figure A7.10 below provides a breakdown of the responses collected through the public consultation in relation to the strength of complementarity between the objectives of the PES Network and other EU and/or national policies according to respondents answering in their professional or institutional capacity.

Figure A7.10: Strength of complementarity between the objectives of the PES Network and other EU/National policies and instruments - By Professional/Organisational capacity respondents

On a scale from the weakest to the strongest, to what extent do you feel that the objectives of the PES Network complement other EU and/or national policies and instruments aimed at improving PES?



Base: Answers from individuals representing government bodies and other public authorities (10)

Base: Answers from individuals representing PES (30)

Base: Answers from individuals representing non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders (26)

The majority of respondents from government bodies, PES organisations and non-governmental organisations consider that there is a strong or very strong complementarity between the PES Network objectives and other EU and/or national policies aimed at improving PES (80% of respondents from government bodies, 50% of respondents from PES organisations and 65% of respondents from non-governmental organisations). Participants who chose to justify their responses considered that complementarity is strong because within the PES Network there is an **exchange of best practices** and EU unemployment problems are relatively similar across Europe (6 respondents).

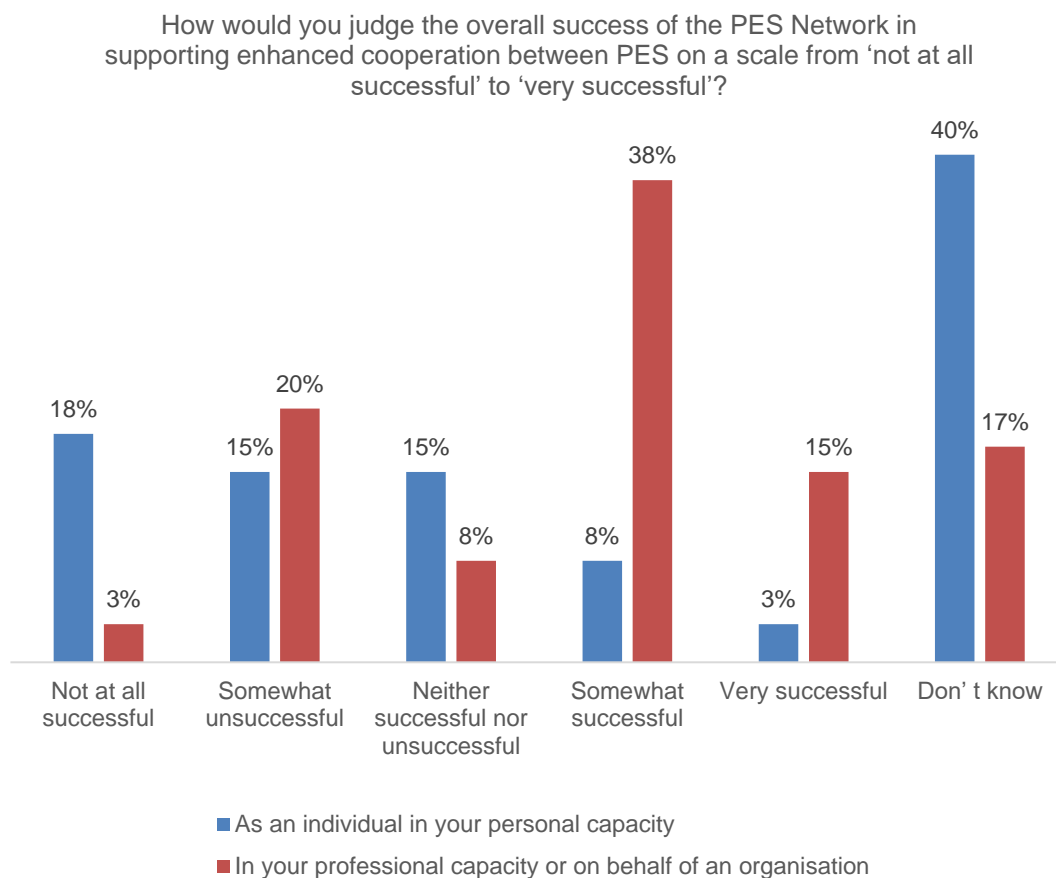
A larger share of respondents from PES than from government bodies or non-governmental organisations (23% vs. 10% and 8% respectively) reported that they do not know whether the objectives of the PES Network complement other EU and/or national policies aimed at improving PES.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE PES NETWORK AND COOPERATION

Success of the PES Network in supporting enhanced cooperation

The public consultation also collected views on the overall success of the PES Network in supporting enhanced cooperation between PES. The results have been broken down by type of respondent (individual or professional capacity). Respondents could provide feedback on a scale from not at all successful to very successful, as set out in Figure A7.11 below:

Figure A7.11: Success of the PES Network in supporting enhanced cooperation - By respondent capacity



Base: Answers from individuals or respondents in personal capacity (60)

Base: Answers from respondents in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation (66)

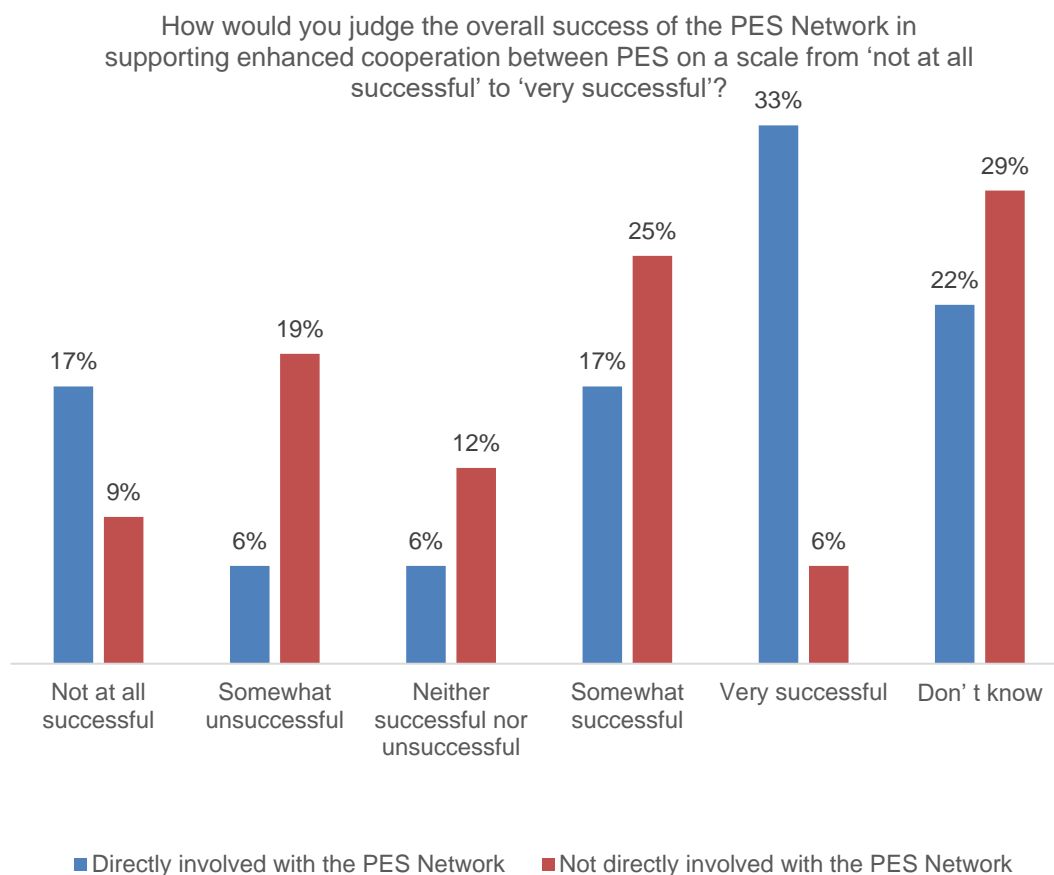
The highest number of respondents answering in their professional or institutional capacity reported that the PES Network is somewhat successful in supporting enhanced cooperation (38%); a further 15% felt that it was very successful, while 17% of them reported that they do not know. 40% of respondents answering in their individual capacity reported that they do not know to what extent the PES Network has been successful in supporting enhanced cooperation among PES, with only 11% considering that it was somewhat or very successful.

Figure A7.12 below illustrates the extent to which the PES Network is considered to have been successful in supporting cooperation between PES, according to respondents who

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have been directly involved with the Network and those who have not. 33% of respondents (the highest proportion of responses) who have been directly involved in the Network consider that it has been very successful in supporting enhanced cooperation, and a further 17% consider that it has been somewhat successful. Less than 2 in 10 (17%) respondents directly involved with the Network, and less than 1 in 10 (9%) not directly involved in the Network, consider that it has not been successful at all. 25% of respondents who have not been directly involved with the Network consider that it has somewhat successful in supporting enhanced cooperation, with only 6% considering that it has been very successful. The proportion of respondents who answered that they did not know is higher amongst those who have not been involved in the Network (29%) than those who have (22%).

Figure A7.12: Success of the PES Network in supporting enhanced cooperation - By respondent involvement with the PES Network

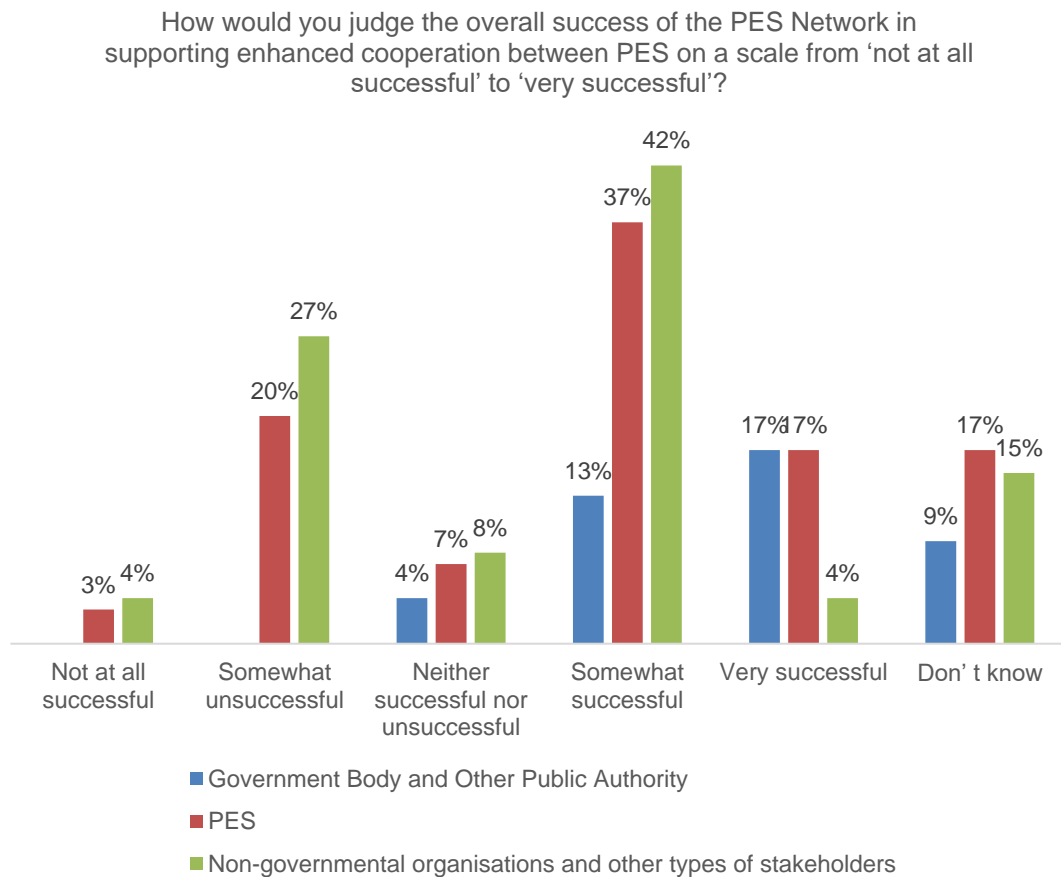


Base: Answers from respondents directly involved with the PES Network (18)

Base: Answers from respondents not directly involved with the PES Network (108)

Figure A7.13 below illustrates the extent to which the PES Network is considered to have been successful in supporting the cooperation between PES, according to respondents in their professional or institutional capacity.

Figure A7.13: Success of the PES Network in supporting enhanced cooperation - By Professional/Organisational capacity respondents



Base: Answers from individuals representing government bodies and other public authorities (10)

Base: Answers from individuals representing PES (30)

Base: Answers from individuals representing non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders (26)

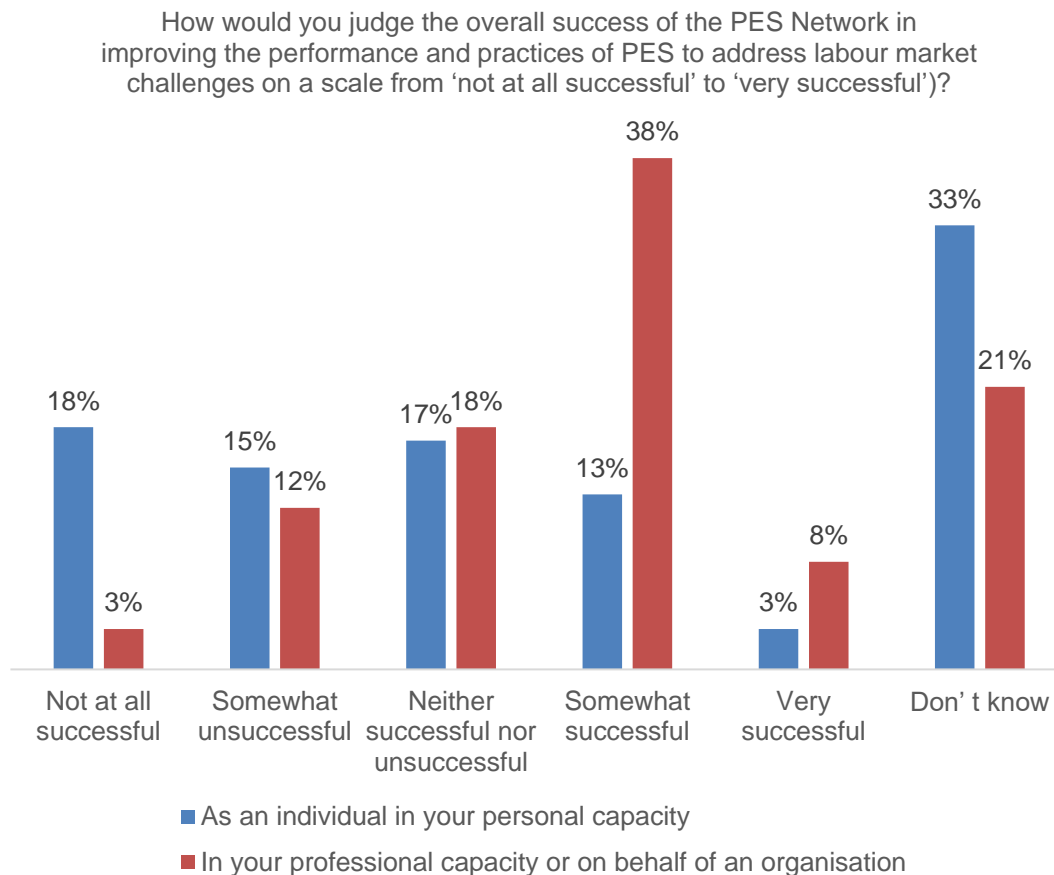
The results show that the largest share of respondents from PES and non-governmental organisations consider that the PES Network has been somewhat successful in enhancing cooperation between PES (37% and 42% respectively). However, 20% of respondents from PES and 27% of non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders consider it has been somewhat unsuccessful. Moreover, 13% of respondents from governmental bodies or public authorities report that the PES Network is somewhat successful in supporting the enhanced cooperation between national PES and 17% consider it has been very successful.

When justifying their responses, those who found that the PES Network had been very successful in supporting enhanced cooperation stated in particular that the PES Network had promoted the exchange of best practices, benchmarking and benchlearning resulting in targeted action (5 respondents) and that it had strengthened cooperation (2 respondents).

Success of the PES Network in improving the performance and practices of PES

The consultation also included a question on the overall success of the PES Network in improving the performance and practices of PES to address labour market challenges. The respondents were asked to select an option on a scale from not at all successful to very successful. Figure 9 below provides an overview of responses according to the respondents' capacity.

Figure 9: Success of the PES Network in improving the performance and practices of PES - By respondent capacity



Base: Answers from individuals or respondents in personal capacity (38)

Base: Answers from respondents in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation (29)

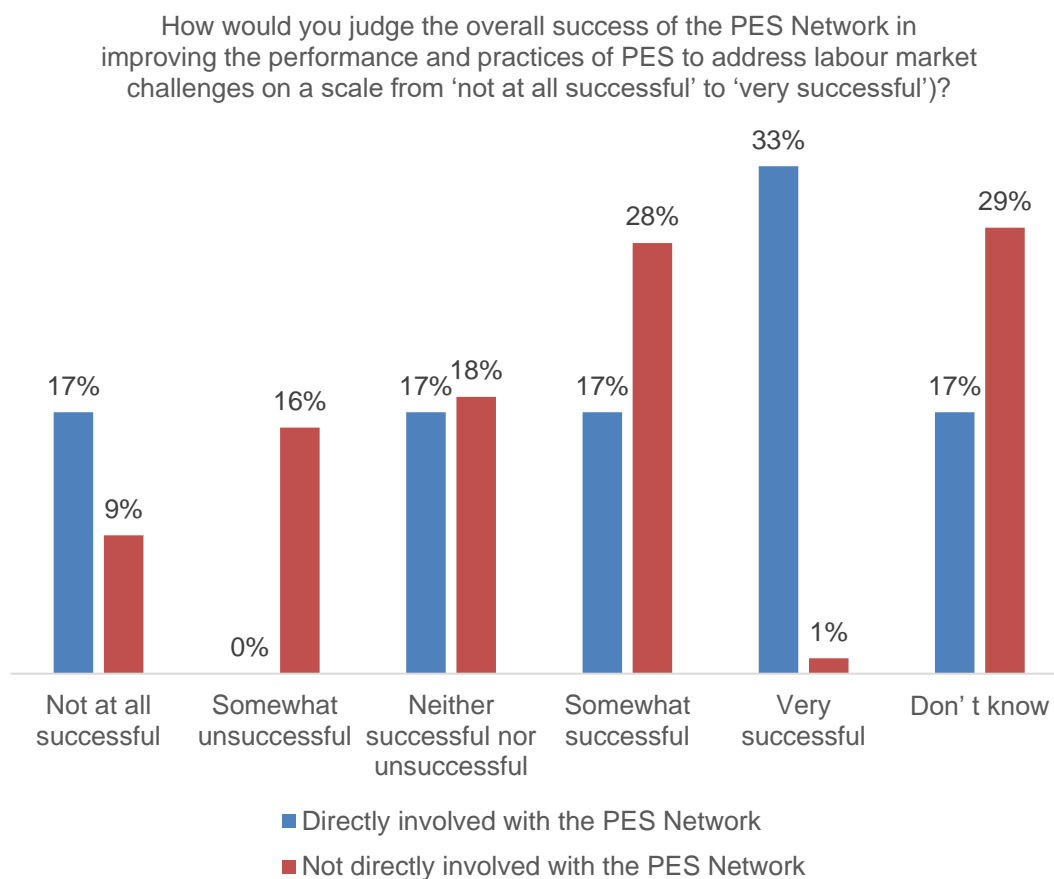
According to over a third (38%) of those responding in their professional or institutional capacity, the PES Network is somewhat successful in improving performance and practices of the national PES; a further 8% felt it was very successful. 18% of those responding in their professional or institutional capacity believe the Network has neither been successful nor unsuccessful in improving the performance and practices of the PES. One respondent justified their negative response by stating that, within the PES, there is not enough transparency, decompartmentalisation, or cooperation at more operational levels (from territory to territory for example, or from sector to sector, region to region depending on skills) in order for it to be fully successful.

On the other hand, 13% of individuals responding in a personal capacity consider the PES Network as somewhat successful in improving the performance and practices of the PES in

addressing the labour market challenges, while only 3% considered it had been very successful: a third answered that they do not know.

Figure below illustrates the extent to which the PES Network is considered to have been successful in improving performance and practices of the national PES according to respondents who have been directly involved with the Network and those who have not. While a third (33%) of respondents who are or have been directly involved with the PES Network consider it has been very successful, only 1% of those not involved responded it has been very successful. Out of those not directly involved with the Network, 28% answered that it has been somewhat successful. However, 29% of respondents not directly involved answered that they did not know whether it has been successful or not in improving performance and practices of national PES.

Figure A7.15: Success of the PES Network in improving the performance and practices of PES - By respondents' involvement with the PES Network



Base: Answers from respondents directly involved with the PES Network (18)

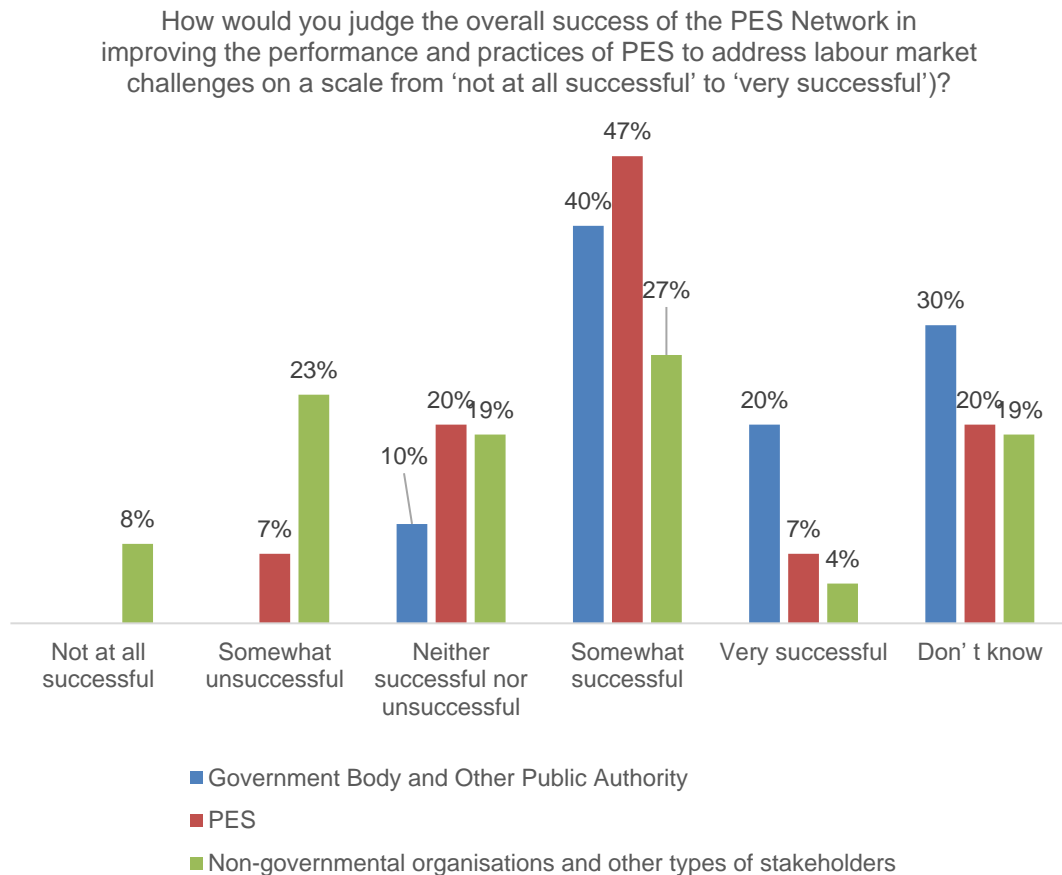
Base: Answers from respondents not directly involved with the PES Network (108)

FigureA7.16 below shows the extent to which the PES Network is considered to be successful in improving the performance and practices of PES according to the different respondents in their professional or institutional capacity (public authorities or governing bodies, PES representatives or non-governmental representatives). The results show that the majority of respondents from governmental bodies or public authorities consider that the PES Network has been somewhat successful in improving the performance and practices of PES (40%), while a further 20% consider that it has been very successful. This result is similar to respondents from PES, 47% of which consider it has been somewhat

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successful and 7% that it has been very successful. Out of the non-governmental organisations and other stakeholder respondents, less than one third (27%) consider that it has been somewhat successful, and only 4% that it has been very successful, while a large proportion (23%) consider it has been somewhat unsuccessful.

Figure A7.16: Success of the PES Network in improving the performance and practices of PES - By Professional/Organisational capacity respondents



Base: Answers from individuals representing government bodies and other public authorities (10)

Base: Answers from individuals representing PES (30)

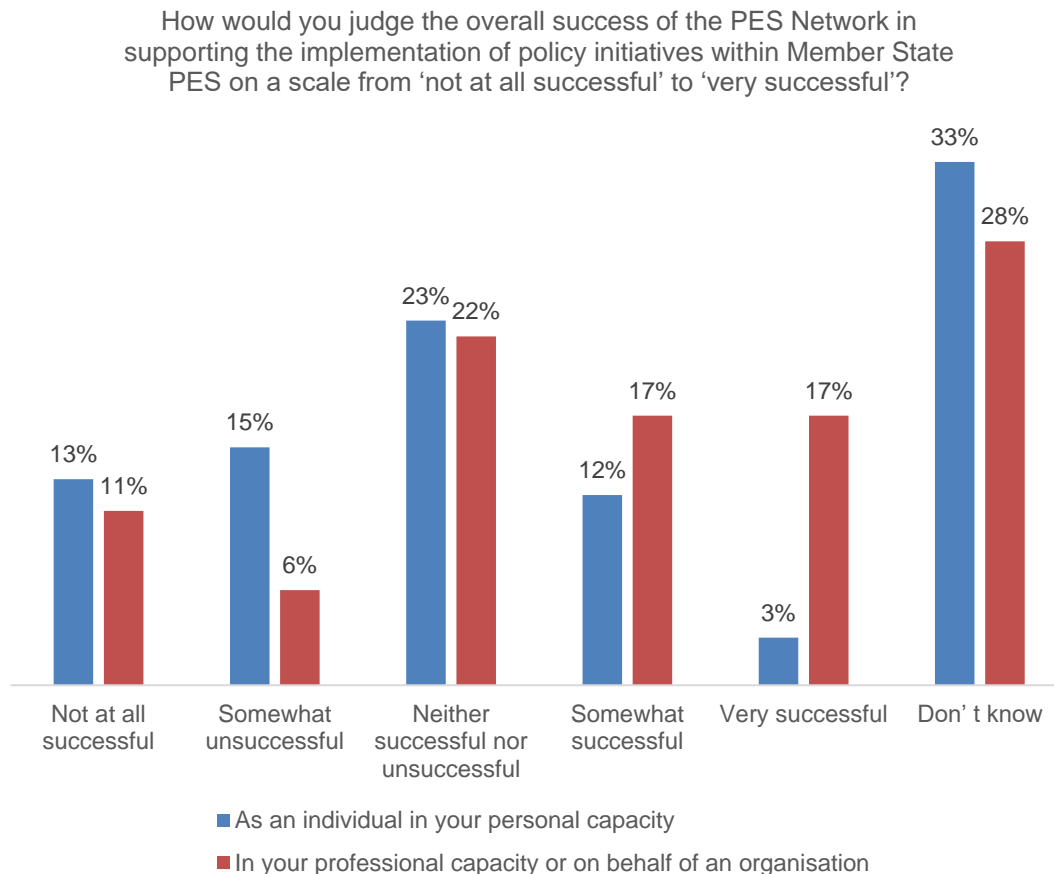
Base: Answers from individuals representing non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders (26)

When justifying their responses, those who found that the PES Network had been very successful stated for example that benchlearning and e-learning could be considered important successes (2 respondents). Those who believe that the PES Network has been somewhat successful and chose to justify their responses underlined that the main positive results are due to cooperation within the Network, the exchange of good practices and common principles (3 respondents). One respondent however underlined that it is difficult for the Network to achieve all its aims when national long-term and youth unemployment are high.

Success of the PES Network in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives within Member State PES

Respondents were also asked whether the PES Network was successful in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives at the national level. The responses have been broken down by respondent type (personal or professional capacity), providing feedback on a scale from not at all successful to very successful. The results are presented in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Success of the PES Network in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives within Member State PES - By type of respondent



Base: Answers from individuals or respondents in personal capacity (60)

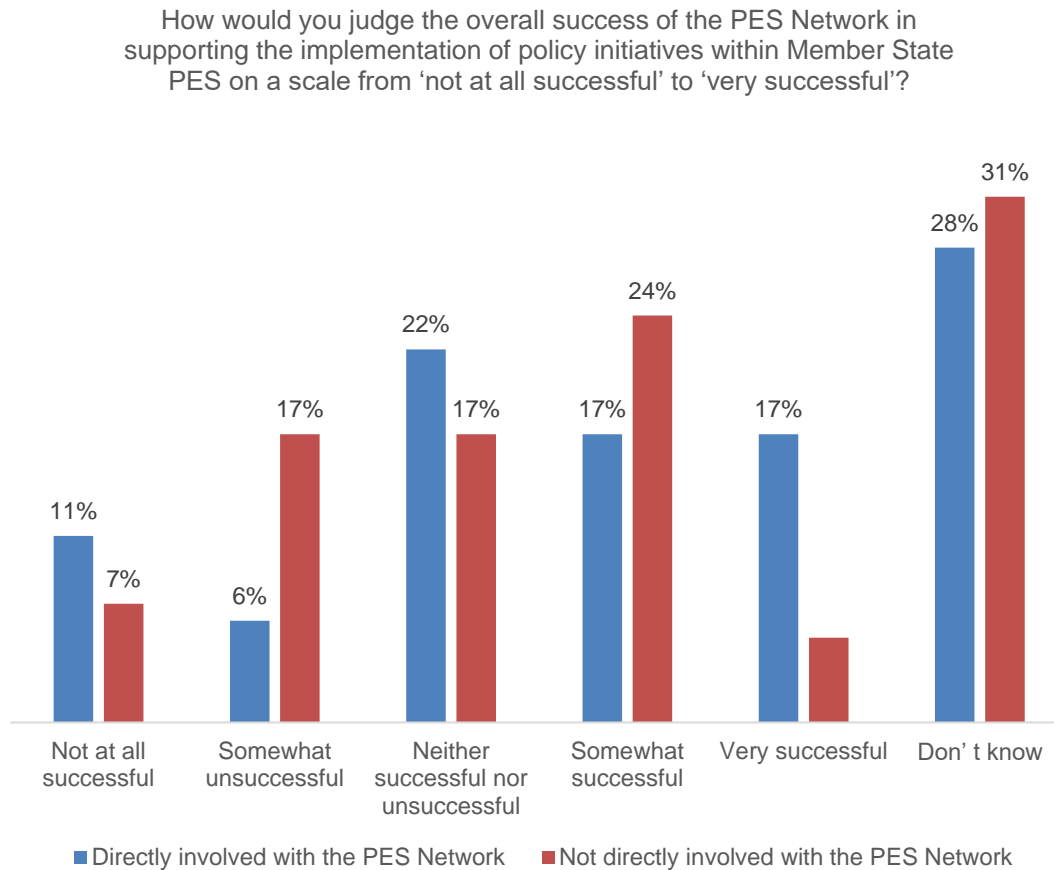
Base: Answers from respondents in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation (66)

Almost one third of respondents in their professional capacity (28%) reported that they did not know whether the Network has been successful in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives in their Member State, while 34% of these respondents considered it has been somewhat or very successful. Similarly, approximately one third of respondents in their personal capacity (33%) reported that they do not know whether the PES Network has contributed to the implementation of policy initiatives in their Member State; but only 15% felt that it had been somewhat or very successful. Respectively 22% and 23% of respondents consider the Network has neither been successful nor unsuccessful in this area.

Figure 11 below illustrates the extent to which the PES Network is considered to have been successful in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives within MS PES, according to respondents who have been directly involved with the Network and those who have not. The results show that almost a third of respondents, both those involved and those not

involved in the Network, did not know. Amongst respondents directly involved in the PES Network, 22% consider that it has neither been successful nor unsuccessful in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives in their MS.

Figure 11: Success of the PES Network in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives within Member State PES - By respondent involvement with the PES Network



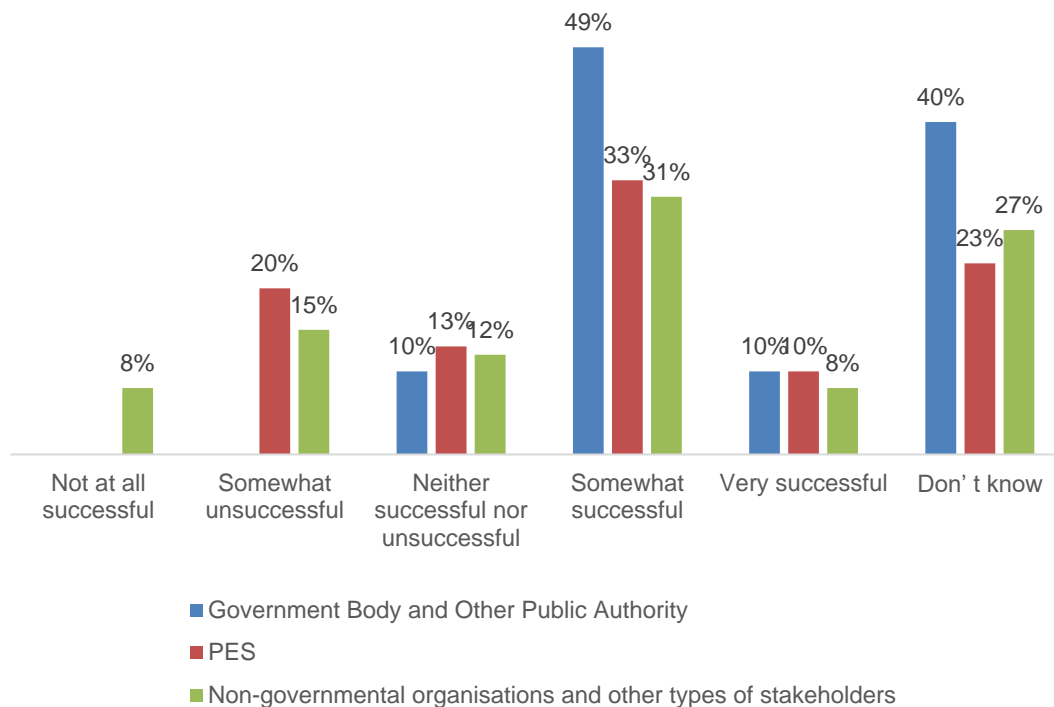
Base: Answers from respondents directly involved with the PES Network (18)

Base: Answers from respondents not directly involved with the PES Network (108)

Figure A7.19 below shows to what extent respondents in their professional capacity considered the PES Network as being successful in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives within their Member States. In particular, 49% of respondents from governmental bodies or public authorities consider the Network support as somewhat successful (with a further 10% considering it had been very successful), but 40% reported that they do not know to what extent the PES Network has been successful in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives within Member States. One third of respondents from PES (33%) consider that the PES Network has been somewhat successful (with a further 10% considering it had been very successful). 31% of respondents from non-governmental organisations reported that the PES Network has been somewhat successful (with a further 8% considering it had been very successful).

Figure A7.19: Success of the PES Network in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives within Member State PES - By Professional/Organisational capacity respondents

How would you judge the overall success of the PES Network in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives within Member State PES on a scale from 'not at all successful' to 'very successful'?



Base: Answers from individuals representing government bodies and other public authorities (10)

Base: Answers from individuals representing PES (30)

Base: Answers from individuals representing non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders (26)

One respondent who justified their response regarding the overall success of the PES Network in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives within Member State stated that it was very successful because it allowed for the exchange of best practices (especially from a legal perspective). Among those who believed that the Network was somewhat successful, reasons stated were: the mutual assistance projects are an extremely valuable tool (1 respondent) and that the implementation of the Youth Guarantee has also been very positive (1 respondent). Respondents who believe that the PES Network has not been at all successful in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives at national level justified their responses by stating that the situation in their Member States has not improved (4 respondents).

Efficiency of the PES Network in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives

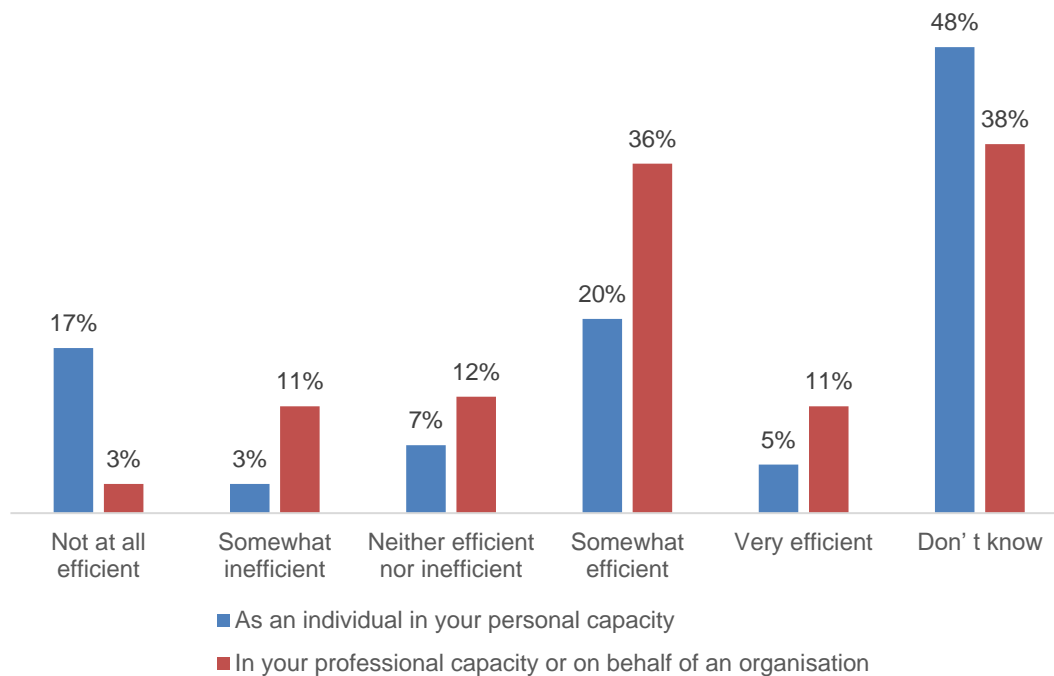
As part of the public consultation, respondents were asked to what extent they considered that the PES Network has been efficient (in terms of cost) in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives. Responses have been broken down according to the respondents' capacity and the feedback was provided on a scale from not at all efficient to very efficient.

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Figure A7.20 shows that nearly half of the respondents (48%) answering in their personal capacity did not know whether the PES Network has been efficient in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives, while 20% of them considered the Network as having been somewhat efficient and a further 5% that it was very efficient. Similarly, 38% respondents in their professional or institutional capacity also did not know to what extent the PES Network has been efficient to date in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives, while 36% of respondents in this capacity consider it has been somewhat efficient and a further 11% that it has been very efficient.

Figure A7.20: Efficiency of the PES Network in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives - By respondent capacity

To what extent do you consider that the PES Network has been efficient (in terms of cost) to date in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives on a scale from 'not at all efficient' to 'very efficient'?



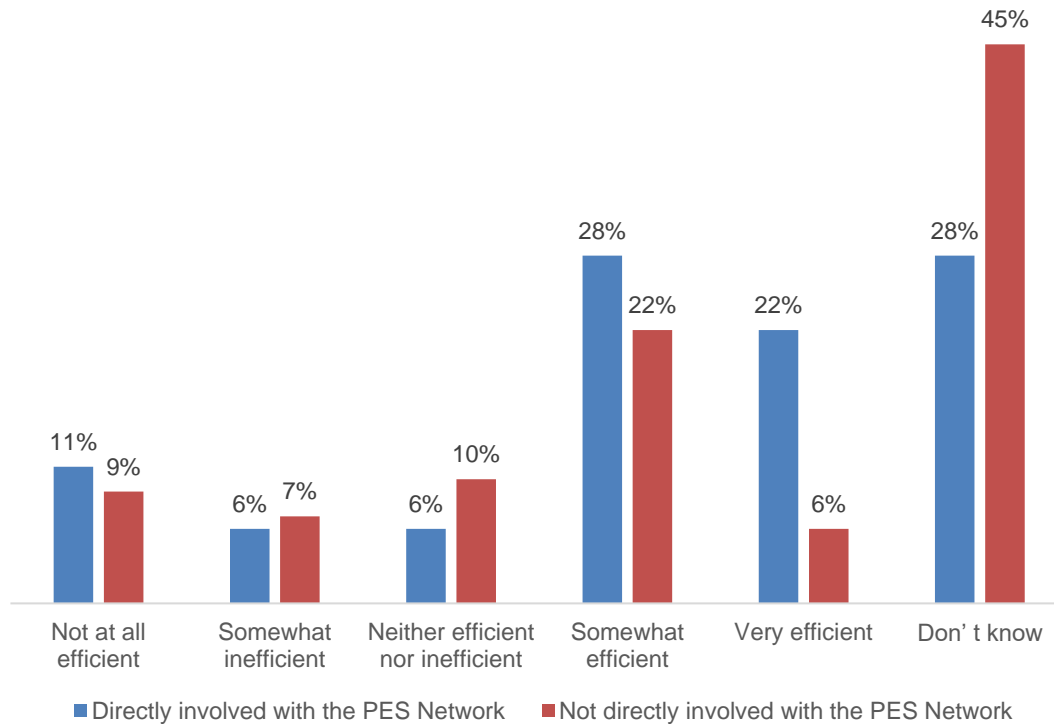
Base: Answers from individuals or respondents in personal capacity (60)

Base: Answers from respondents in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation (66)

Figure 12 below illustrates the extent to which the PES Network is considered to have been efficient to date in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives, according to respondents who have been directly involved with the Network and those who have not. The results show that 50% of those who have been directly involved with the Network consider it has been somewhat or very efficient. Almost half of the respondents who have not been involved with the Network answer that they do not know to what extent it has been efficient (45%).

Figure 12: Efficiency of the PES Network in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives - By respondent involvement with the PES Network

To what extent do you consider that the PES Network has been efficient (in terms of cost) to date in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives on a scale from 'not at all efficient' to 'very efficient'?



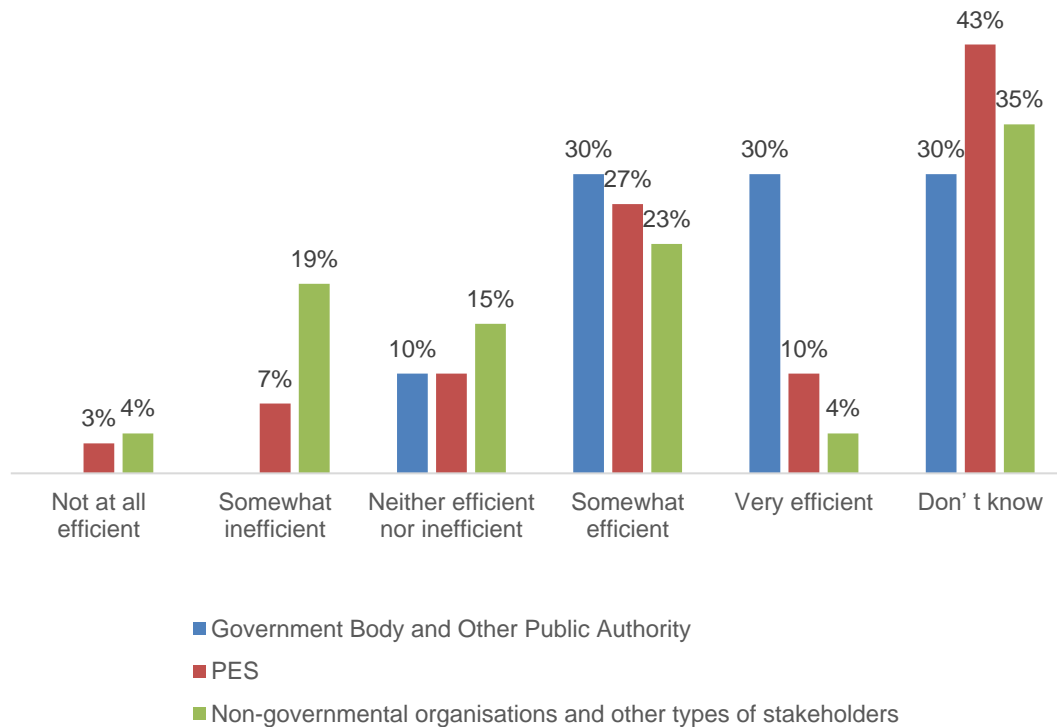
Base: Answers from respondents directly involved with the PES Network (18)

Base: Answers from respondents not directly involved with the PES Network (108)

Figure A7.22 below shows the degree of efficiency of the PES Network in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives according to those responding in their professional capacity. In particular, 43% of respondents from PES, 35% of respondents from non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders and 30% of respondents from non-governmental bodies indicate they do not know whether the Network has been efficient to date in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives. 60% of respondents from government bodies however consider that it has been somewhat or very efficient, compared to only 37% of PES and 27% of NGOs and other types of stakeholders. 19% of NGOs and other types of stakeholders considered that it was somewhat inefficient.

Figure 13: Efficiency of the PES Network in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives - By Professional/Organisational capacity respondents

To what extent do you consider that the PES Network has been efficient (in terms of cost) to date in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives on a scale from 'not at all efficient' to 'very efficient'?



Base: Answers from individuals representing government bodies and other public authorities (10)

Base: Answers from individuals representing PES (30)

Base: Answers from individuals representing non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders (26)

Role of EU action

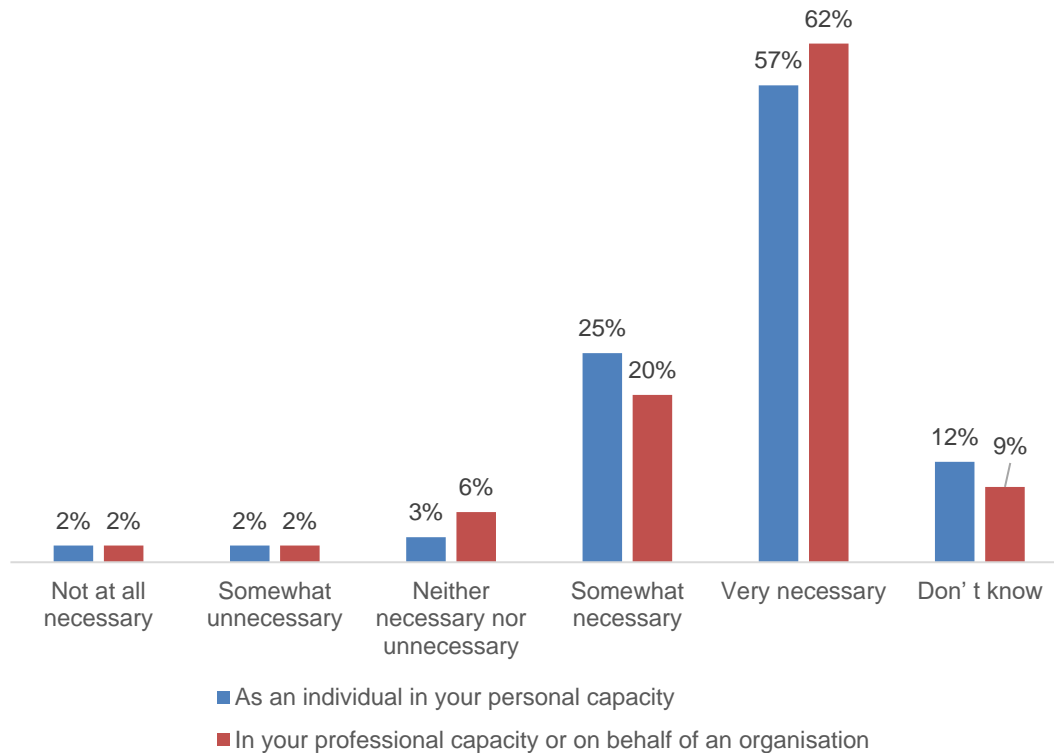
Necessity of EU action for strengthening the cooperation between PES

The respondents also provided their feedback on the perceived necessity of EU action aimed at strengthening cooperation between PES. The responses have been broken down by type of respondents (whether they answered in their personal or professional and institutional capacity). Respondents' feedback were based on a scale from not at all necessary to very necessary.

As Figure A7.2314 below shows, the large majority of respondents answering in their professional or institutional capacity (62%) reported that an EU action for strengthening the cooperation between PES is very necessary (with a further 20% stating that it was somewhat necessary). Although to a slightly lesser extent, half of respondents in their individual capacity (57%) also considered the EU action as being very necessary (with a further 25% stating that it was somewhat necessary).

Figure A7.2314: Necessity of EU action for strengthening the cooperation between PES - By respondent capacity

To what extent is EU action necessary for strengthening the cooperation between PES on a scale from 'not at all necessary' to 'very necessary'?



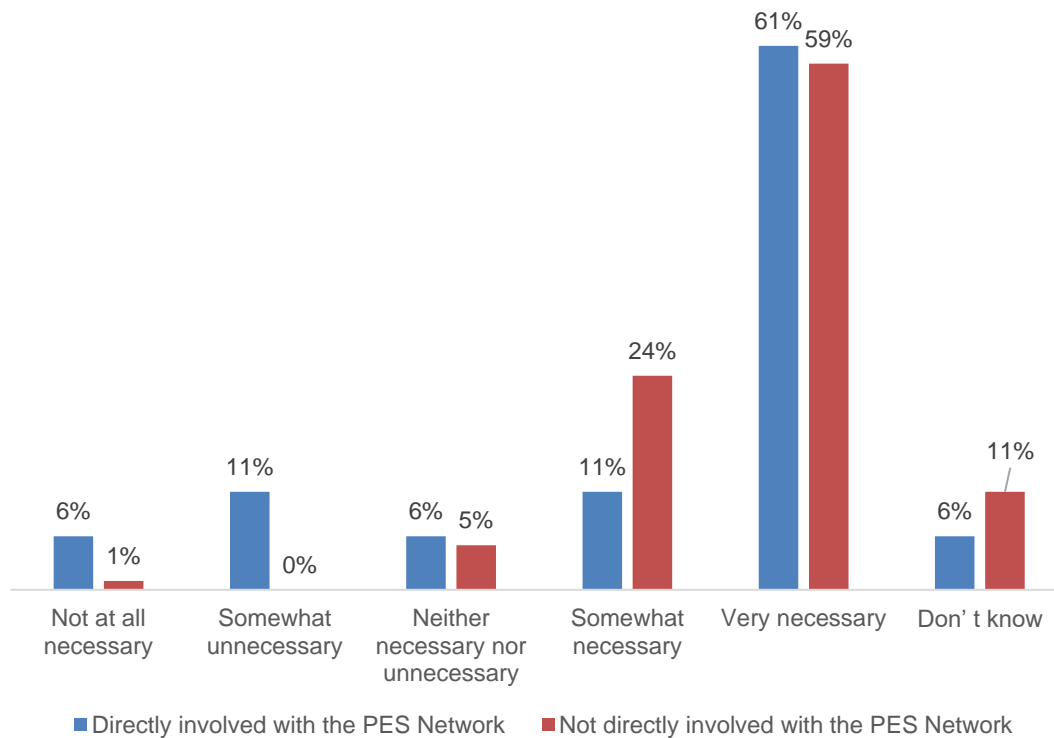
Base: Answers from individuals or respondents in personal capacity (38)

Base: Answers from respondents in a professional capacity or on behalf of an organisation (29)

Figure A7.24 below illustrates the perceived necessity of EU action aimed at strengthening the cooperation between PES, according to respondents who have been directly involved with the Network and those who have not. The majority of both respondents directly involved in the Network and those not involved responded that they consider EU action aimed at strengthening cooperation between PES very necessary (61% and 59% respectively), with a further 11% and 24% respectively stating that it is somewhat necessary.

Figure A7.24: Necessity of EU action for strengthening the cooperation between PES - By respondents involvement with the PES Network

To what extent is EU action necessary for strengthening the cooperation between PES on a scale from 'not at all necessary' to 'very necessary'?



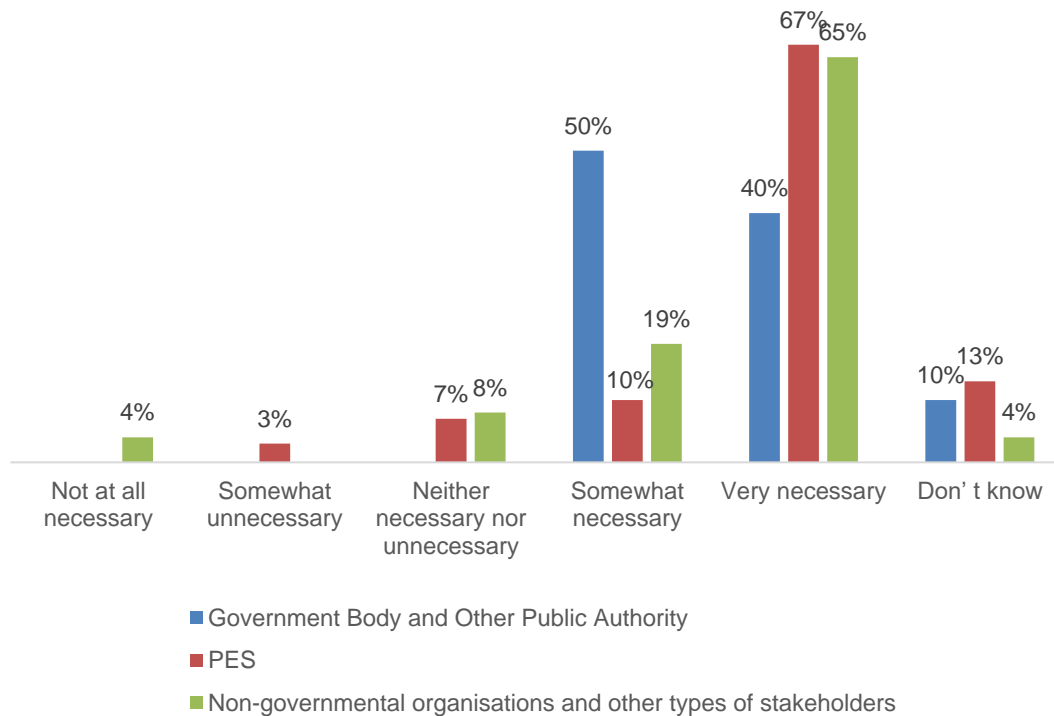
Base: Answers from respondents directly involved with the PES Network (18)

Base: Answers from respondents not directly involved with the PES Network (108)

Figure A7.25 below shows that the large majority of respondents in their professional capacity from PES or from NGOs consider that EU action aimed at strengthening the cooperation between PES is very necessary (67% and 65% respectively), with a further 10% and 19% respectively considering that it is somewhat necessary. Half of the respondents (50%) from government bodies consider that an EU action is somewhat necessary, and a further 40% that is very necessary.

Figure A7.25: Necessity of EU action for strengthening the cooperation between PES - By Professional/Organisational capacity respondents

To what extent is EU action necessary for strengthening the cooperation between PES on a scale from 'not at all necessary' to 'very necessary'?



Base: Answers from individuals representing government bodies and other public authorities (10)

Base: Answers from individuals representing PES (30)

Base: Answers from individuals representing non-governmental organisations and other types of stakeholders (26)

As mentioned above, most respondents find that EU action is very necessary for strengthening the cooperation between PES. Some respondents justifying their responses believe that, if the EU were to give more inputs, there would be further cooperation among PES (exchange of good practices) and the guidelines would be followed more strictly. Furthermore, some respondents considered that the EU could improve cooperation by increasing cooperation with other actors, such as the ETUC, and by incentivising cooperation with private employment services. Finally, it was also stated that the EU could further disseminate research results and organise more regular exchanges between PES organisations.

Conclusions

Ecorys has conducted a public consultation carried out as part of the Study supporting the evaluation of the Decision 573/2014/EU on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES) (VC/2018/0292).

The public consultation was launched as an online questionnaire on the Commission's public consultation website on the 20 September 20 and was open to any interested party or individual citizen. However, the core research team worked closely with the Commission in order to get responses from relevant stakeholders beyond those who are very familiar with the PES Network, many of whom have participated in targeted consultations.

The consultation closed on the 13 December 2018 with a total of 126 respondents. Respondents were a mix of people answering in their individual capacity and their professional capacity from a total of 17 EU countries and a few countries outside of the EU. Respondents answering in their professional capacity were mostly representatives of PES institutions (45.5%), while 10.6% were representatives from government bodies and the rest from non-governmental organisations or other types of organisations. Out of the total sample of respondents, only 18 claimed to have been directly involved with the PES Network.

The main aim of the public consultation is to gauge the views of a wider group of stakeholders on the effectiveness and impact of the enhanced cooperation of PES, as well as future needs. Respondents' views were examined through a combination of closed questions and open ended questions. Closed questions provided respondents with either different categorical answers (on the challenges faced by PES and the most important areas for improvement) or with rating on the Network's importance, strength of complementarity, success, efficiency and necessity.

The analysis of results was carried out using both quantitative (to analyse the frequencies of the closed answers) and qualitative methods (for the open questions, in order to substantiate and interpret the quantitative data with any insights). In addition, the research team categorised the responses through a range of relevant typologies (respondents answering in an individual/professional capacity, types of organisations and involvement or not in the Network).

Quantitative analysis included the analysis of frequency distribution for each of the variables related to the closed-ended questions, cross-tabulations between specific variables and characteristics of respondents⁵⁶ and analysis of variability, calculating averages and measure distances from the average to allow for comparison. Qualitative data analysis was used on the one hand to enrich and make more meaningful the analysis carried out on quantitative data.

As with any public consultation, caution should be taken in interpreting and using the results, especially in light of the relatively low response rate in this case, even further where results have been disaggregated. By nature, a public consultation cannot and should not be considered representative. The results can however provide general indications on the perspectives of wider stakeholders, and as such provide interesting contextualisation for the examination of the evaluation criteria. The evidence from the public consultation has been integrated into the relevant sections of the main body of the evaluation report, where it confirms or qualifies certain trends identified from other research tasks. Indications of lack of knowledge ('do not know' answers) can also be interesting pointers

⁵⁶ The data has been disaggregated by the capacity in which the respondent is answering (individual or professional), the respondents' involvement with the PES Network and the type of organisation that respondents answering in their professional capacity come from (government body, PES or non-governmental organisation and others).

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about the visibility for example of the benefits of the Network. Appropriate caveats have been used where needed when using the results.

In summary, the results of the consultation show that:

- The main challenges faced by public employment services are addressing long term unemployment, youth unemployment and the need for organisation modernisation and/or reform.
 - Respondents from non-governmental organisations differ slightly from the average as a higher proportion than the average believe that the main challenge is the competition from private sector employment services (42%) and how effectively and reliably they monitor performance (31%).
- The three most important areas for improvement are the need for effective active labour market programmes and other support measures, followed by the need for effective partnerships, and engagement of, employers and the need for effective IT systems to match candidates to vacancies, monitor performance, etc. PES cooperation at EU level is considered very important for developing the effectiveness of national PES in addressing social and labour market challenges.
 - The percentage of those holding this view is higher for those directly involved in the Network (72% vs. an average of 56%)
- Almost half of the respondents answering in their professional or institutional capacity report that there is a strong or very strong complementarity between the objectives of the PES Network and other EU and/or national policies (60%).
 - 80% of respondents from government bodies consider that there is a strong or very strong complementarity, compared to only 50% of PES respondents.
- Over a third (38%) of respondents answering in their professional or institutional capacity reported that the PES Network is somewhat successful in supporting enhanced cooperation (38%); a further 15% felt that it was very successful. 33% of those directly involved with the Network think the Network is very successful in this area, and a further 17% consider that it has been somewhat successful
 - Over one third of respondents (40%) answering in their individual capacity reported that they do not know to what extent the PES Network has been successful in supporting enhanced cooperation among PES, with only 11% considering that it was somewhat or very successful.
- According to over a third (38%) of those responding in their professional or institutional capacity, the PES Network is somewhat successful in improving performance and practices of the national PES; a further 8% felt it was very successful. 33% of those directly involved with the Network think the Network is very successful in this area, with a further 17% stating that it was somewhat successful. For those not directly involved in the Network, only 1% felt that it was very successful in this regard (although 28% felt that it was somewhat successful).
 - Again, a third of those answering in their individual capacity report that they do not know whether it has been successful in this area.
- Almost one third of respondents (30.5%) reported that they did not know whether Network has been successful in supporting the implementation of policy initiatives in their Member State. However, almost 50% of respondents from government bodies consider that the Network has been somewhat successful in this area.
- In terms of the efficiency of the PES Network in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives, nearly half (48%) of the respondents answering in their personal capacity – and 38% respondents in their professional or institutional capacity - did not know whether the PES Network has been efficient in delivering its activities and reaching its objectives. Similarly, also did not know to what extent the PES Network has been efficient to date.

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- Over a third of respondents (36%) answering in their professional capacity consider it is somewhat efficient, and a further 11% that it is very efficient, split similarly across the different categories (PES, governmental bodies and NGOs).
- The majority of respondents answering in their professional or institutional capacity (62%) reported that an EU action for strengthening the cooperation between PES is very necessary (with a further 20% stating that it was somewhat necessary). Although to a slightly lesser extent, half of respondents in their individual capacity (57%) also considered the EU action as being very necessary (with a further 25% stating that it was somewhat necessary). 90% of the respondents from government bodies consider that an EU action is somewhat or very necessary.

ANNEX 8: CASE STUDIES

This annex is available on request from the PES Secretariat: EMPL-PES-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu

ANNEX 9: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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⁵⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1100&langId=en>

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