



# The European Job Mobility Action Plan 2007-2010

## Implementation Report





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## 1. Introduction and Strategic context

The European Job Mobility Action Plan (2007-2010) adopted in December 2007<sup>1</sup> emphasised the necessity to increase scope and levels of mobility in an evolving labour market challenged essentially at that time by the competitive global economy and by the changing demands of an ageing society. While these challenges remained, the disruptive crisis in global financial markets late 2008 affected the global economy and strongly impacted EU labour markets. The challenge of a growing unemployment set new concern on limiting the social impact of the crisis and on creating favourable conditions to support rapid transitions back to work once economic activity recovers. From the European Economic Recovery Plan endorsed by the European Council<sup>2</sup> three key priorities for employment policies were agreed by the Member States notably the promotion of overall labour mobility to give actual access to employment<sup>3</sup> and more job opportunities which this action plan directly contributes to.

In relation to mobility flows in the context of the transitional arrangements on free movement of workers for EU enlargements 2004 and 2007, the situation on 1 January 2009 is that 15 countries have opened their labour markets for workers from Bulgaria and Romania: Denmark, Estonia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, Hungary, Greece, Spain and Portugal.

Transitional measures for workers from the EU-8 Member States are currently in the third and final phase of transitional measures (from 1 May 2009 to 30 April 2011). All member states have lifted restrictions except Austria, Germany and UK.

In March 2009, the Council of ministers endorsed a Commission communication<sup>4</sup>, which concluded that mobile workers from the countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 have had a positive impact on Member States' economies and have not led to serious labour market disturbances.

The Action Plan had 15 actions covering four main goals:

1. Improving existing legislation and administrative practices regarding worker mobility;
2. Ensuring policy support for mobility from authorities at all levels;
3. Reinforcing EURES as the one-stop instrument to facilitate mobility of workers and their families;
4. Foster awareness of the possibilities and advantages of mobility among the wider public.

The aim of this report is to provide main points of information update regarding these four goals.

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<sup>1</sup> COM (2007) 773

<sup>2</sup> COM(2008) 0800, December 2008

<sup>3</sup> The three key priorities are: 1. maintaining employment, creating jobs and promoting mobility, 2. upgrading skills and matching labour market needs and 3. increasing access to employment

<sup>4</sup> COM(2008) 765 final, November 2008, "The impact of free movement of workers in the context of EU enlargement". See also Employment in Europe, chapter 3 "Geographical labour mobility in the context of EU enlargement"

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=113&newsId=415&furtherNews=yes>



## 2. Improving existing legislation and administrative practices

### Social security coordination

EU law on the coordination of social security schemes successfully ensures that people working in another Member State do not lose their social security protection. However, it is not obvious that these provisions apply as easily and work as well for those types of geographical intra-EU mobility where mobility is an inherent element and implies that work is performed frequently and for short or very short periods of time under varying employment statuses in different Member States. Consequently, the trESS (Training and Reporting in European Social Security) network examined the social security coverage for such forms of geographical intra-EU mobility<sup>5</sup> as well as for intra-group mobility<sup>6</sup>.

Member States' experts discussed the findings within the Administrative Commission on Social Security Coordination and agreed on the need for interpretative guidelines to be followed by, eventually, legislative amendments for the specific case of international transport. The more general topic of social security coverage of groups of highly mobile workers will be subject of a communication to be presented in 2011. It will look at the existing rules determining the social security coverage of highly mobile groups of workers with mobility as a typical characteristic of their work (such as artists, researchers), its possibilities and limits, and elaborate guidelines for the implementation of the current legal framework and explore possible adjustments.

### Administrative practices and cooperation

The new Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009 that enter into force on 1 May 2010 aim to modernise and simplify the rules on the coordination of the national social security systems. One of the innovations that will be introduced, and that will have a major effect in the field of administrative cooperation, is the set-up of a system to exchange electronically social security data for persons who move within the EU (EESSI: **Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information**). This will lead to a speedier, more efficient and reliable exchange of information. The system will be available from December 2010 and Member States will have a period of two years until April 2012 to prepare and connect the national applications to the new electronic environment.

## 3. Ensuring policy support for mobility from authorities at all levels

### Involvement of all stakeholders including member states authorities, social partners and employment services.

During the last couple of years, some studies on mobility (July 2008)<sup>7</sup> and opinion report from the EESC (March 2009)<sup>8</sup> provided more hints on drivers and barriers to geographic and job to job mobility and concluded that the current mobility situation is sub-optimal and that increased intra-European mobility would increase the welfare of the vast majority of Europeans. The recommendations included the rewarding of mobility experiences in the labour market, the creation of more effective information and social networks to strengthen awareness and integration strategies and the strategic importance of the

<sup>5</sup> 2008, 'Towards a new framework of applicable legislation - New forms of mobility, coordination principles and applicable legislation' [http://www.tress-network.org/TRESSNEW/PUBLIC/EUROPEANREPORT/ThinkTank\\_Mobility.pdf](http://www.tress-network.org/TRESSNEW/PUBLIC/EUROPEANREPORT/ThinkTank_Mobility.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> 2009, 'Intra-group mobility'. [http://www.tress-network.org/TRESSNEW/PUBLIC/EUROPEANREPORT/ThinkTank\\_Mobility\\_2009.pdf](http://www.tress-network.org/TRESSNEW/PUBLIC/EUROPEANREPORT/ThinkTank_Mobility_2009.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> "Geographical mobility within the EU: Optimising its economic and social benefits"; "Job mobility within the EU: Optimising its economic and social benefits". July 2008: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/incentive\\_measures/activities\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/incentive_measures/activities_en.htm)

<sup>8</sup> 2009/C 228/03 "Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the identification of outstanding barriers to mobility in the internal labour market", adopted on 25/03/2009



involvement of all stakeholders including member states authorities, social partners and employment services.

In relation to this, a wider recognition and visibility of the role of Public Employment Services (PES) in the implementation of the European Employment Strategy and therefore to support labour mobility at national, regional and local level has emerged during the past years and especially since the crisis. The Member States' employment services are indeed in direct contact with the European citizens and businesses. They are therefore in a unique position to provide information on workforce/skills demand and supply, and anticipate skills requirements to better support mobility and smooth transitions. Heads of PES issued a joint opinion in December 2008 which presented the concrete contribution of PES to the implementation of the European common flexicurity principles<sup>9</sup>. Consequently, the measures undertaken by the PES include job mobility and workers mobility between Member States and regions, to help redress labour market imbalances. Furthermore in December 2009, an opinion was issued on PES' contribution to the "New Skill for New Job" communication<sup>10</sup> which aims at improving the capacity to anticipate and match labour market and skills needs in the EU and at promoting a European labour market for jobs and training that corresponds to citizens' mobility needs and aspirations.

Private employment services contribute to these efforts by exchanging information and providing data and analysis on employment which help the Commission to issue the monthly labour market monitor<sup>11</sup> and facilitates the identification of where new job opportunities are and in which sector.

At an event organised in May 2009 for the PES<sup>12</sup>, one of the primary conclusions of the discussion on partnerships and cooperation among labour market stakeholders was that the crisis had brought along a common consensus regarding the necessity of a collective investment to tackle workers' transitions and mobility and cooperation with other actors. It was also agreed that in the context of insufficient or reduced State resources, PES should also examine the assistance available from the European Social Fund (ESF) to support their activities during the recession.

### **The European Social Fund facilitates labour mobility**

Labour mobility is eligible for support of the ESF: the ESF Regulation explicitly mentions the promotion of job mobility as a means for enhancing the access to employment of job seekers and inactive people and for their sustainable inclusion in the labour market<sup>13</sup> in the current period 2007-2013.

A recent analysis of ESF support to labour mobility<sup>14</sup> reports that:

- Almost two thirds of EU Member States and more than one third of the ESF programmes explicitly address labour mobility;
- About 675 000 persons benefited from ESF supported activities with an explicit link to labour mobility;

<sup>9</sup> European Network of Heads of Public Employment Services: "The contribution of the public employment services to flexicurity". Joint Opinion adopted during the 23rd meeting of European Heads of Public Employment Services. Nice, 11th of December 2008. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=118&langId=en>

<sup>10</sup> COM (2008) 868 final: web site: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=568&langId=en>

<sup>11</sup> Monthly Labour Market Monitor: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=120&langId=en>

<sup>12</sup> "Labour Market Institutions In Times of Crisis: Challenges & Experiences" conference Brussels, 14-15 May 2009. Final Report on the Main Discussion Points:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=105&langId=en&eventId=198&furtherEvents=yes>

<sup>13</sup> Art. 3.1.b) iv) of Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999

<sup>14</sup> "Reporting on ESF interventions in the EU" - Summary fiche from the background report 'ESF and Labour mobility'. ESF website library: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/esf/library/library\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/library/library_en.htm)



- At least 17 000 organisations, mostly companies, were encouraged through the ESF to adjust and/or improve their organisational functioning with the aim to further mobility;
- More than 100 000 workers and trainees were supported to move jobs or perform a first on-the-job training away from home;
- Almost 100 000 researchers benefited from scholarships, most of which were granted to work in another region or country;
- Almost 60 000 people had their competences and skills recognised and certified.

In this context, it is useful to note that many of the actions relating to the core policy fields of ESF like adaptability of workers and enterprises, active labour market policies and lifelong learning have an influence on labour mobility without necessarily having it as an explicit objective. In total approximately 10 million people benefitted from ESF interventions per year between 2000 and 2006. Hence there are many ESF supported actions that play a crucial role in the decision of individual workers, jobseekers or students to move to another job, another region or another country.

Very often the foreseen interventions concern actions that should contribute to reducing or removing specific mobility related obstacles and take place in a broader setting, for instance the modernisation of public employment services. The ESF support to labour mobility mainly relates to two types of intervention addressing a variety of obstacles: information and guidance services; and recognition and certification of skills. For example in Portugal, a system was set up across 182 regional centres for Recognition, Validation and Certification of Skills which resulted in that almost two third of the beneficiaries (50 000 workers and unemployed since 2000) were employed after their skills were certified.

Young or unemployed people with limited financial resources may find it difficult to cover the cost of relocation, let alone the cost of a non-remunerated stay abroad. ESF supported students through scholarships to study in a different region or in a different Member State and return home. It is worth mentioning in this context that in complement to this ESF support, other programmes and tools were activated to facilitate the special case of moving for young people, including through EURES (see section 5 below).

### **The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) and mobility**

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 to support workers who lose their jobs as a result of changing global trade patterns so that they can find another job as quickly as possible. When a large enterprise shuts down or a factory is relocated to a country outside the EU, or a whole sector loses many jobs in a region, the EGF can help the redundant workers to find new jobs as quickly as possible. A maximum amount of € 500 million per year is available to the EGF to finance such interventions.

The EGF can fund active labour market measures focused entirely on helping the workers made redundant as a result of globalisation. Mobility allowances<sup>15</sup> are eligible actions insofar as they facilitate the re-integration into employment of workers in areas, sectors, territories, or labour market regions suffering the shock of serious economic disruption.

<sup>15</sup> Art. 3 (b) of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund ( OJ L 406, 30.12.2006 )



## Mobility of learners

The need for more and better mobility of learners continues to be an important dimension in policy debate, both in an overarching lifelong learning perspective and in relation to developments in education, training and non formal learning.

The new initiative "Youth on the Move", called for by President Barroso, will provide inspiration and legitimacy to specific policy action addressing learning mobility as well as mobility in general. Learners' mobility is identified as a strategic objective in the Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training. The European Credit system in Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) was formally adopted as a Recommendation of the EP and Council. The Commission green paper on learning mobility of young people triggered a wide consultation exercise with around 270 written contribution and almost 2800 completed online questionnaires. The feedback to the Green Paper will serve as the basis for a Commission Communication "Youth on the Move", to be adopted in 2010, which will explain how the Commission is planning to orient its policies and programmes to make "Youth on the Move" a reality.

The economic crisis may have an impact both in terms of reduced funding resources, reduced industry participation (stages become more difficult) and less motivation among learners, families of young learners, and institutions. In a time of crisis the temptation is high to remain on safe, well-known ground at home, besides learners may be worried that an experience abroad slows down their final qualification.

The recent EQF<sup>16</sup> and ECVET instruments, the revised ECTS (credit transfer and accumulation system for higher education) and the main Europass elements share the approach based on learning outcomes, which promotes mobility because it is not dependent on country based systems<sup>17</sup>. The Commission strongly promotes this approach and will ensure that it underlies any new initiative as well as possible revisions of existing tools, such as the Diploma Supplement and the Certificate supplement. In the near future, further convergence of the various operational instruments based on learning outcomes will be pursued and will make the object of a publication in 2010. The Commission will start in 2010 the development of a European personal skills passport, building on the Europass experience.

Following the consultation based on the green paper on the mobility of young people, the Commission will prepare a proposal for a recommendation on the learning mobility of young people, taking note that, nine years after the Recommendation on the mobility of students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers of 10 July 2001, many of the obstacles to mobility for learning are still there.

<sup>16</sup> The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a voluntary reference framework. Member States were recommended to relate their national qualifications levels to the EQF – three of them (IE, MT, UK) have completed this process – so that their individual qualifications can bear an EQF reference from 2012.

<sup>17</sup> The Europass CV service was enriched: more than 7,000 CVs completed every day in 2009, while work proceeds towards a general revamp of the website, to be implemented throughout 2010.





## 4. Reinforcing EURES as the one-stop instrument to facilitate mobility of workers and their families

EURES continues to be a key support service providing appropriate information, advice and placement services for employers looking for talents and workers wishing to move or to cross border within the EU<sup>18</sup>.

A recent opinion survey<sup>19</sup> illustrates that moving intentions are strongly linked to the perceived chances of finding a job abroad and that only 17% of Europeans envisage to work abroad. Out of these, one in five (21%) said that they would use employment services to find a job abroad. 12% have heard of EURES and 2% say they have used EURES.

At this time of crisis, EURES network and portal are increasingly known and used by jobseekers, employers and public employment services themselves as labour mobility provides work opportunities and helps adapting resources according to fast changing market supply. Data still show that while unemployment is rising in certain areas, in others there are shortages of qualified workers.

Currently there are more than 700 000 job vacancies on the EURES web site, and the number of jobseekers CVs posted on line and employers registration increases steadily (more than 400 000 CVs and 20 700 registered employers). The number of visitors has grown almost exponentially in 2009, reaching more than 4 million by end of 2009 beginning of 2010 and showing the critical need for jobseekers to get support in their job search.

The evaluation of EURES activities during 2006-2008<sup>20</sup> shows that the portal is appreciated by jobseekers, job changers and employers who clearly see benefit in being able to access or post information on vacancies across Europe. More than 20% of the jobseekers and job changers surveyed as EURES users reported that they found a job via EURES. For them, the most appreciated EURES service is the CV posting on line facility. The portal has however not yet reached its potential as a job matching tool.

The EURES adviser network adds value to the services provided by the portal, for example through advice on tax or recognition of qualifications or on how to navigate the portal, speeding up in this way the job search process. In 2008 EURES advisers had recorded over a million contacts (1,093,998) having taken place with jobseekers, job changers and employers, on average 1,286 per adviser<sup>21</sup>. On average, 86.0% of these contacts were with jobseekers and job changers.

Special working groups are set up within EURES to work on specific challenges and provide improvements to the whole network. For example the two EURES Working Groups on graduate sector and on Employers' Services collaborated with the objective of enhancing the cooperation among education sector and employers. It resulted in the delivery of tangible tools such as a toolbox for graduated jobseekers and dedicated information sections accessible on the EURES portal.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Established in 1993, EURES is a network involving the European Commission and the public employment services of the Member States of the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland. It consists of a network of more than 850 EURES advisers based in the public employment services, in social organisations and employers representations in the Member States. EURES portal is at: <http://eures.europa.eu>

<sup>19</sup> Special Eurobarometer 337 "Geographical and labour mobility" March 2010

<sup>20</sup> Ex-post evaluation of the EURES programme covering the period 2006-2008, p5, p9, p215, p 198

<sup>21</sup> Please note that this information is based on an average response rate in the study of 64.3% in 2008. It is likely therefore that that total number of contacts is higher.

<sup>22</sup> "Six steps to start a professional career abroad" - hints and tips: <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?lang=en&acro=job&catId=7576&parentId=52>



The EURES adviser network and the portal complement each others and mutually reinforce EU added value. EURES twin roles of information provision and job matching contributes to open and accessible European labour markets by providing mediated and unmediated information and guidance service, therefore contributing to European Employment Strategy and moving towards sustainable growth and social cohesion.

### The modernisation of EURES

The changes on the labour market, the economic crisis in particular and the overall modernisation of PES are main challenges for EURES in the coming years. In order to address these changes, and taking full account of the evaluation studies, mobility studies<sup>23</sup> and suggestions made in reaction to the publication of the Job Mobility Action plan, notably from the European Parliament<sup>24</sup>, the Committee of the Regions<sup>25</sup> and the European Economic and Social Committee<sup>26</sup> the Commission is engaged in the modernisation of EURES:

- A revamped EURES website is under testing and will be launched in 2010. The objective is to make the EURES website the 'first' European jobs website, free of charge and accessible in 25 languages. Improvements will include more user-friendly CV search functions, a social networking section for jobseekers and a platform for a 'virtual fair'.
- In the next phase, the website will be extended with a specific service to young graduates, allowing institutions to promote their students profiles available to enter the labour market. Furthermore, a Match and Map project will be launched. The aim is to set up a user-friendly, innovative online service which will provide in one click some user-tailored information on vacancies, skills, learning and training opportunities across the EU. Once fully developed, Match and Map will help match a particular jobseeker's profile with the vacancies available, give feedback on where the jobs are, why jobs and skills may not fully match, and provide information on the corresponding learning opportunities in the European Union (through the PLOTEUS web site).
- An important prerequisite to the development of this new service is the availability of a common multilingual dictionary linking skills and competencies to occupations. Such work is strategic to bridge the gap between labour markets and the world of education and training. To this aim, co-operation with relevant market players is ongoing under the name ESCO for European Skills, Competencies and Occupations taxonomy. Building upon the Classification of Occupations (ISCO) from the International Labour Organisation as well as developments related with the implementation of the European Qualification Framework (EQF), ESCO has the potential to become the European standard classification for skills and competencies.
- Regarding the functioning and the activities of the EURES network, a set of new strategic guidelines was set up following an evaluation study<sup>27</sup> and in consultation with

<sup>23</sup> See 2009 studies on workers' mobility "Short term international assignments" and "Scientific report of cross border workers withing EU-27/EEA/EFTA countries" <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=24>

<sup>24</sup> A6- 0463/2008, 18/12/2008, "Report on the European Job Mobility Action plan (2007-2010)", committee on Employment and Social Affairs, Rapporteur: Monica Maria Iacob-Ridzi, EURES items: 46-59. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?language=EN&reference=A6-0463/2008>

<sup>25</sup> ECOS-IV-023, 8/10/2008, 30pinion of the Committee of the Regions on the European Job Mobility Action plan (2007-210), Rapporteur : Councillor Dave Quayle, <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/DocumentTemplate.aspx?view=folder&id=f31fdade-9fac-4462-a3ea-07fd71019b44&sm=f31fdade-9fac-4462-a3ea-07fd71019b44>

<sup>26</sup> SOC/296, 29/05/2008, "Opinion on better promoting the mobility of young people in Europe, Rapporteur Rodriguez Garcia-Caro [http://www.eesc.europa.eu/sections/soc/education\\_training\\_youth\\_culture.htm](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/sections/soc/education_training_youth_culture.htm)

SOC/324, 25/03/2009, "Opinion on the identification of outstanding barriers to mobility in the internal labour market", Rapporteur: Mrs Drbalova [http://www.eesc.europa.eu/sections/soc/employment\\_working\\_conditions.htm](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/sections/soc/employment_working_conditions.htm)

<sup>27</sup> Ex-post evaluation of the EURES programme covering the period 2006-2008



EURES stakeholders, which establishes key work priorities from June 2010 to May 2013. For this period, the emphasis is placed on reinforcing the recruitment, placement and matching support services of EURES, while maintaining the current high level of effort in information and advice provision.

In relation to the Job Mobility Action Plan 2007-2010 objectives, the new strategic guidelines include the following activities<sup>28</sup>:

- The reinforcement of EURES awareness specifically towards "intermediaries" working in direct contact with the EURES potential clients such as employment services staff. The aim is that EURES becomes part of every first contact information set to jobseekers, and employers, and is recognised as conveying "fair mobility" where labour standards and legal requirements are always fully respected.
- The development of more and better quality services: well customised to the end users' needs, engaging commitments of stakeholders and including active follow up and swift interaction means. Emphasis is put on targeting employers and workers being jobseekers, job changers and unemployed to be supported before, during and after their move. Networking activities are supported, with stakeholders such as NGOs, universities and local authorities so as to support better each category of workers.
- The improvement of data collection to better identify and anticipate surpluses and shortages on labour markets and for the analysis of mobility flows.

To respond to a request from the European Parliament, EURES will provide information and assistance for the integration of mobile workers and their families. This should be done in cooperation with NGOs, in particular by host countries. This will be done by establishing cooperation mechanisms with organizations active in the provision of information and assistance for the integration of workers and their families, in particular vulnerable groups. Host countries in particular should carry out this action.

### **Extension of EURES'- like services to third country nationals**

EURES is a well established tool, where all PES co-operate to provide services that improve labour mobility within EEA and Switzerland. Third country nationals can be provided services by EURES as long as they have the right to work in another EU/EEA country and Switzerland.

Regarding migrants workers, the European Commission is developing an EU Immigration Portal. The aim is to provide direct and rapid access to practical, correct, complete, reliable, factual, accessible and up-to-date information on European and national immigration policies and laws. The EU Immigration Portal primarily serves as a tool for improving communication on immigration issues with third-country nationals wishing to migrate to the EU. The EU Immigration Portal will be launched during the second half of 2010.

<sup>28</sup> See EURES call for proposal VP/2009/008 text section 4 at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=630&langId=en&callId=243&furtherCalls=yes>



## 5. Foster awareness of the possibilities and advantages of mobility among the wider public.

### Your First Job Abroad

"Your First Job Abroad"<sup>29</sup>, a small scale pilot project, was developed in 2008 as part of the implementation of the European Job Mobility Action Plan. The objective was to promote geographic mobility by offering support from the advisors of the EURES network to young job seekers wishing to work in another EEA country for the first time.

The lessons learnt from this initiative were that the scheme was highly appreciated and was felt very useful; however many opportunities of placement were lost due to the lack of funding to host companies and young job seekers (for example to organise first interviews). The lessons learnt from this experience will enrich the discussion for an envisaged new initiative to offer support to young people to move for their first job, which would include the provision of some funding to facilitate the process.

### European Job Days

Since 2007, September and October each year, more than 500 events such as job fairs, seminars, lectures, workshops and cultural events are organised in cooperation with EURES in around 200 cities in Europe, all aimed at improving labour mobility in Europe. A wide range of organisations such as local businesses, public and private employment services, social partner organisations, universities, learning and training centres and chambers of commerce are taking part to provide factual and unbiased information and for direct contact between employers and jobseekers. More than 200 000 people took part each year in the Job Days. The European Commission co-organises the Brussels European Job Day in the Berlaymont Building, the Commission headquarters.

### Mobility Partnership

The Mobility Partnership was launched in 2009. The Commission has set up a network of stakeholders committed to developing overall job mobility in the EU. The network should provide scientific background and support in the mobility field. The network is expected to provide the European Commission with information on the EU Member States, EFTA/EEA countries and candidate and potential candidate countries. The partnership will provide a means through which policy ideas can be challenged by a combination of academics and practitioners in order to find out what will work and what will not in relation to labour mobility. Moreover, the partnership aims at raising awareness of mobility issues and promoting debate through a series of seminars, workshops and high profile reports. A European Job Mobility Day will be organised every year to bring together key European and national policy makers. Finally, the outputs of the mobility partnership should contribute towards the development of new policy guidelines by providing feedback on existing policy, resulting both from analytical work and directly from policy implementers.

<sup>29</sup><http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?type=52&policyArea=24&subCategory=0&country=0&year=0&advSearchKey=first+jobs+in+Europe+-+EURES+Stories+%282008%29&mode=advancedSubmit&langId=en>



## PROGRESS call for proposals

Since 2007, annual calls for proposals were organised<sup>30</sup> resulting in the support of 13 projects which addressed the facilitation of geographic mobility of workers for two third of the projects, the remaining covering job to job mobility. The projects were either combined with up-skilling and competence issues (apprentice, lifelong learning), or focused on a specific sector (health and social care, construction, agriculture), some also consider vulnerable groups (integration of migrants, women back to work, youth, second generation from immigrants). A similar call will be organised in 2010.

## Eulisses and the new social security coordination website

In December 2006, at the end of the European Year of Workers Mobility, an online portal dedicated to pension rights of mobile workers was launched: Eulisses. A post-implementation review of this portal was completed in June 2009, underlining the need for a more effective information tool on social security rights for mobile workers. Moreover, the duty to inform citizens of their rights has been reinforced by new Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009 (see section 2).

A new [section on social security coordination](#) has therefore been created on the DG Employment Web site<sup>31</sup>. The new contents offer a general overview of each of the social security fields covered by the EU provisions and more detailed information under specific "frequently asked questions" sections. The Web site also offers updated links to national social security information and to the new directory of European social security institutions. This public directory is part of the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information project (EESSI, see section 2). It will allow citizens to find the contact details of institution competent for their claim, wherever it is in Europe. These new tools will be online as from 1 May 2010.

## 6. Conclusion: towards "balanced mobility"

The Job Mobility Action Plan was set up to keep the momentum of effort engaged to reduce obstacles to workers mobility (job to job and geographic mobility) at a time when the crisis hadn't impacted the labour market so profoundly. With the crisis the need to further and strongly act on employment policies and unemployment issues has amplified.

Labour mobility which includes all forms of job mobility, be it occupational (within the job, from job-to-job) and / or geographical (between regions or countries) was acknowledged by the Council of the European Union<sup>32</sup> as contributing to social mobility while enhancing human capital development and alleviating the search for talents. Further analysis on flows and transitions<sup>33</sup> suggested that the positive development of transitions could contribute significantly to the improvement of the labour market. Furthermore, the Employment Committee underlined<sup>34</sup> the importance of increasing efforts at national and

<sup>30</sup> Call number VP/2007/014, VP/2008/014, VP/2009/007 awarded grants at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=632&langId=en>

<sup>31</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social-security-coordination>.

<sup>32</sup> The Conclusions adopted by the Council of the European Union (23 Feb. 2009) on the mobility of the workforce acknowledged that the effective professional, geographical and social mobility of the workforce was a high priority of the European Union, as labour mobility contributes to the creation of more and better job opportunities, to the efficient use of human resources, and to adapting the economy to rapid changes, also in a time of economic crisis, as well as to reducing social exclusion and poverty and that mobility also had positive effects on economic growth and the EU's competitiveness in the global economy. See <http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/press-releases/epsco-in-luhacovice:-labour-mobility-to-cure-financial-and-economic-crisis-7480/>

<sup>33</sup> Employment in Europe 2009, Chapter 2: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=113&newsId=642&furtherNews=yes>

<sup>34</sup> The opinion <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st10/st10132.en09.pdf> was endorsed at the Council of the European Union meeting of 8-9 June 2009 see press release number 9721/09 at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=549&lang=en>



EU levels to promote mobility and skills upgrading, through the strengthening of the institutional framework for mobility (including employment services), the development of effective information networks and tools, and the easing of other mobility barriers such as social security rights.

Labour mobility is therefore recognised as a major contributor to a better functioning of the labour market in Europe for short and longer term. In line with flexicurity policy and contributing to flexicurity reforms<sup>35</sup>, a strategy for "balanced labour mobility" is to be encouraged which facilitates all forms of voluntary mobility, while making forced mobility like transitions from unemployment to a new job more secure. It pursues to induce further flexicurity reforms to make employment transitions pay for all and to manage labour market transitions effectively so as to provide access to all job opportunities.

Future actions towards the implementation of balanced labour mobility include the modernisation of public employment services to make them customer-focused mobility/transition agencies; to create national, regional and local partnerships for employment, grouping all forces for labour market integration and including private employment agencies; and to re-position EURES as a key tool for international placement in Europe.

In the future, this type of policy will be more necessary than ever as problems resulting from the current economic crisis added to the long term challenges (ageing population, globalisation, greening of the economy and technological innovation) will lead to increasingly rapidly changing and dynamic labour markets characterised by high rates of job destruction and job creation. This new dynamics will impose more and faster transitions between different jobs, occupations, sectors, and employment statuses.

This challenge is addressed in the Europe 2020 strategy<sup>36</sup>, the Union policy for the next decade, which objective is for the EU to come out stronger from the crisis and turn into a green, knowledge and innovation based economy, fostering high level of employment, productivity and social cohesion. The focus on labour mobility and transitions falls under both priorities of Europe's smart and inclusive growth. Two of the seven specific initiatives include the fostering of mobility in the labour market: "Youth on the move" to enhance the performance of education systems and to facilitate the entry of young people to the labour market and "An agenda for new skills and jobs" to modernise labour markets and empower people by developing their skills including through labour mobility.

<sup>35</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=102&langId=en> Flexicurity attempts to conciliate both employers' and workers' needs, flexibility and security, by ensuring the worker safe transitions inside the labour market, while maintaining and improving competitiveness of the companies and also preserving the European social model.

<sup>36</sup> COM(2010)2020, 3 March 2010 targets smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It was endorsed by the European Council Conclusions on 25-26 March 2010.