



Questions and Answers: Effective Active Support to Employment following the COVID-19 crisis (EASE)

Brussels, 4 March 2021

What is the Commission Recommendation on Effective Active Support to Employment, and why do we need it now?

As a concrete action under the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Commission today presents a **Recommendation on Effective Active Support to Employment following the COVID-19 crisis (EASE)**. It outlines a strategic approach to gradually transition between emergency measures taken to preserve jobs during the pandemic and new measures needed for a job-rich recovery. With EASE, the Commission promotes job creation and job-to-job transitions, including towards the digital and green sectors.

EASE provides guidance to Member States on active labour market policies and indicates how Member States could use **EU funds to support EASE policies, including those available under NextGenerationEU and the Recovery and Resilience Facility**.

Member States are invited to develop coherent policy packages, combining temporary and permanent measures, to address the labour market challenges triggered by the pandemic, bridge the skill shortages that are likely to hold up economic growth during the recovery, and help every individual to successfully navigate the green and digital transitions.

These policy packages should comprise three components: **(1) hiring incentives and entrepreneurial support, (2) upskilling and reskilling opportunities, and (3) enhanced support by employment services**, with a special focus on young people and workers of all ages in the sectors worst affected by the pandemic.

The measures should be based on a mapping of skills needs across economic sectors and regions, and should be complemented by the implementation of the relevant country-specific recommendations adopted by the Council in the European Semester. Social partners should be closely involved in the design and implementation of these policies.

How can Member States support more jobs and entrepreneurship?

Member States' support for hiring and job transitions through incentives for businesses can effectively promote quality job creation, notably in the initial phases of the recovery. Such measures should be targeted, with support phased out gradually and safeguards to ensure that the newly created jobs are maintained after the incentives have expired.

In particular, supporting apprenticeships, especially in SMEs, can be effective to develop the skills required on the labour market and help young people and other vulnerable groups into employment. Support should be linked to the relevant frameworks fostering job quality, such as the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships.

Member States are also invited to provide start-up grants, loans and equity to promote entrepreneurship, accompanied by improved access to social protection for the self-employed. Advice and support for entrepreneurship, with a special focus on youth, women and social entrepreneurs, can usefully complement such measures.

How can upskilling and re-skilling help recover from the crisis?

“Re-skill and up-skill” is one of the seven European flagship initiatives proposed by the Commission for Member States to implement under the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#). Europe needs to invest in people to respond to the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis and to prepare and accompany the green and digital transitions.

This is why Member States should put in place comprehensive skills strategies for the different economic sectors, supporting for this purpose the cooperation among companies, social partners, education and training institutions, public employment services and other relevant stakeholders, in

line with the [Pact for Skills](#) and the [European Skills Agenda](#).

These measures should cater to the needs identified in the labour market and the needs of each individual. In particular, vocational education and training (VET) programmes should offer a balanced mix of vocational skills and competences and create work-based learning and apprenticeships opportunities. Short courses more aligned with the needs of working professionals, can facilitate flexible career pathways, including for older people.

What role should employment services play in the recovery?

Well-functioning and targeted employment services are critical to deliver policies that foster job creation and job-to-job transitions, helping people to find the opportunity that is right for them. To this end, Member States are invited to improve their capacities to offer individualised support to jobseekers, including counselling and mentoring, job-search assistance, entrepreneurship support, and referrals to social services when needed.

Public employment services should also be able to support workers affected by company restructurings, in close cooperation with other companies in search of additional skills and workers. Such support can include personalised career paths and equipping people with the skills needed to transfer to different jobs in the same or a different company or sector. This should come together with facilitating cross-border mobility and promoting the recognition or validation of skills, to ease the skill shortages affecting some sectors.

What funding is available at the EU level to support Member States' EASE policy measures?

In order for the Effective Active Support to Employment (EASE) to have a real impact on people's lives and contribute decisively to the economic recovery, Member States should dedicate adequate resources for the financing of EASE measures.

The Commission calls on Member States to make full use of support available at EU level, notably from the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Just Transition Fund, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) and the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU).

Member States should also propose EASE measures in their Recovery and Resilience Plans submitted to the Commission for support under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). In line with the RRF legal framework, the eligibility of such measures will depend on, among other criteria, their alignment with the scope and objectives of the Facility, their contribution to addressing challenges in the relevant country-specific recommendations, and their complementarity and coordination with other EU instruments.

For More Information

[Press release: The European Pillar of Social Rights: turning principles into actions](#)

[Questions and Answers: the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)

[Factsheet: European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)

[Factsheet: Effective Active Support to Employment \(EASE\)](#)

[Communication: European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)

[Staff Working Document accompanying the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#)

[Commission Recommendation on an effective active support to employment following the COVID-19 crisis \(EASE\)](#)

[Eurobarometer Report on social issues](#)

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