



# Evaluation of the Your first EURES job preparatory action

*Final Report*

*This Final Report presents the results of the **Your first EURES job** (YfEj) preparatory action evaluation.*

*Written by Ecorys*



Disclaimer: This report was financed by and prepared for the European Commission – Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion under the tender no. VT/2012/067. It reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The research team would like to thank the various people involved in the evaluation. They contributed to the study by delivering data, factual and background information, as well as clarifying insights on the YfEJ preparatory action:

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## Glossary of terms

CfP: Call for Proposals

COM: European Commission

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

EaSI: Programme for Employment and Social Innovation

ESF: European Social Fund

EURES: European employment services

IT: Information technology

LLP: Lifelong Learning Programme

M&E: Monitoring and evaluation

MFF: Multiannual Financial Framework

MS: EU Member State

NEETS: Not in Education, Employment, or Training

SME: Small- and medium sized enterprises

PBs: YfEj Project beneficiaries

PES: Public Employment Services

PMR: Progress Measurement Report

PrES: Private employment services

QMF: Quarterly Monitoring Factsheet

SEPE: The State Public Employment Service (ES - *Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal*)

TFEU: Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

TMS: Targeted Mobility Schemes

YfEj: Your first EURES job

YEI: Youth Employment Initiative (adopted by the Commission on 12 March 2013 to support the Your Employment Package)

ZAV: International Placement Services (DE - *Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung*)

## 1. Introduction

This final report presents the results of the evaluation of 'Your first EURES job' (YfEj), a preparatory action of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Unit "Skills, Mobility and Employment Services". A preparatory action is a measure in the field of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and the Euratom Treaty designed to prepare proposals with a view to the adoption of future actions<sup>1</sup>. This particular preparatory action aims to promote the mobility of young workers aged 18-30 in the EU. Because YfEj is still on-going, this evaluation is not ex-post, but rather reflects an interim exercise to take stock of the results achieved to date and the main issues to be addressed in the future.

The aim of this evaluation were to:

***Support the Commission and the project beneficiaries with methodological issues and data collection on the YfEj in order to produce consistent and reliable monitoring data that can feed seamlessly into the evaluation of YfEj;***

***Evaluate the results, efficiency, relevance, organisation and management and EU-added value of YfEj. This backward looking evaluation relates both the intervention as a whole and to the individual projects run by labour market organisations and their partners;***

***Support the Commission in its decision to continue and upscale the intervention via a forward looking evaluation. The necessary evidence-based arguments and hands-on information are captured in a tool-box.***

This Final Report presents the findings on the **relevance, complementarity and EU-added value, organisation and governance, effectiveness** and **efficiency** of YfEj. The **Annex** of this report includes the QMF template, a list of the literature consulted and an overview of the organisations visited. In addition, this Final Report comes along with an **Executive Summary and a Toolbox** for the future as well as a **Technical Annex**. These have been provided as separate documents. Where appropriate this Final Report contains references to these deliverables.

Following the signature of the contract in February 2013, work on the evaluation and monitoring of YfEj began in March and was concluded early March 2014. The evaluation was coordinated by a Steering Group consisting of representatives from DG EAC, DG Employment A3 on impact assessment and evaluation as well as C3 which is responsible for the implementation of YfEj.

### 1.1. Background information on YfEj

Your first EURES job (YfEj) is a preparatory action to promote labour mobility of young persons in the EU. Under EU law, preparatory actions may take up to three years and consume a budget of maximum five million Euros on annual basis. YfEj supports young people aged 18-30 to take up work in other EU Member States by contributing to the costs of conducting interviews abroad, of relocating to another EU Member State as well as to the costs of preparatory trainings. In addition, YfEj supports Small- and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) by paying for integration trainings as soon as

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<sup>1</sup> EU Financial Regulation, Art 54(2).

they hired a young person from abroad with support of YfEj. YfEj provides associated matching, placement and recruitment services for free.

YfEj has so far been implemented by nine employment organisations and their project partners from across the EU. The scheme is centrally managed by the Commission. YfEj is a first version of the Targeted Mobility Scheme (TMS) concept launched by the European Commission. The targets of this particular scheme are young people and employers, SMEs in particular. TMS are a new type of EU job mobility initiatives that offer matching, recruitment and placement services combined with financial support tailored to the needs of specific target groups, occupations, economic sectors, or countries. By providing these services, TMS are intended to address labour market imbalances and skills mismatches.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission intends to use the experience with YfEj for other future TMS to contribute to the creation of an EU labour market where EU citizens, young people in particular, can exploit more job opportunities than in their own country alone and secure employment prospects.<sup>3</sup> This ultimately makes the functioning of the labour market more efficient as it reduces the risk of mismatches and addresses labour and skills shortages. The next section will elaborate more on this.

## 1.2. The evaluation framework

The analytical tasks of the evaluation of YfEj focus on the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, complementarity and EU-added value** used in the EC guidelines for evaluation of socio-economic programmes. In addition, the evaluation analyses the **organisation and governance**. Assessing its **potential for the future** is another key-subject of the evaluation.

Since the evaluation covers both the YfEj preparatory action as a whole and the individual projects implemented by the project beneficiaries, not all standard criteria apply to each of these. Assessing the potential for the future is mainly relevant for the preparatory action as a whole. Individual projects nevertheless feed into this analysis via the experience of the different models, obstacles and success factors identified.

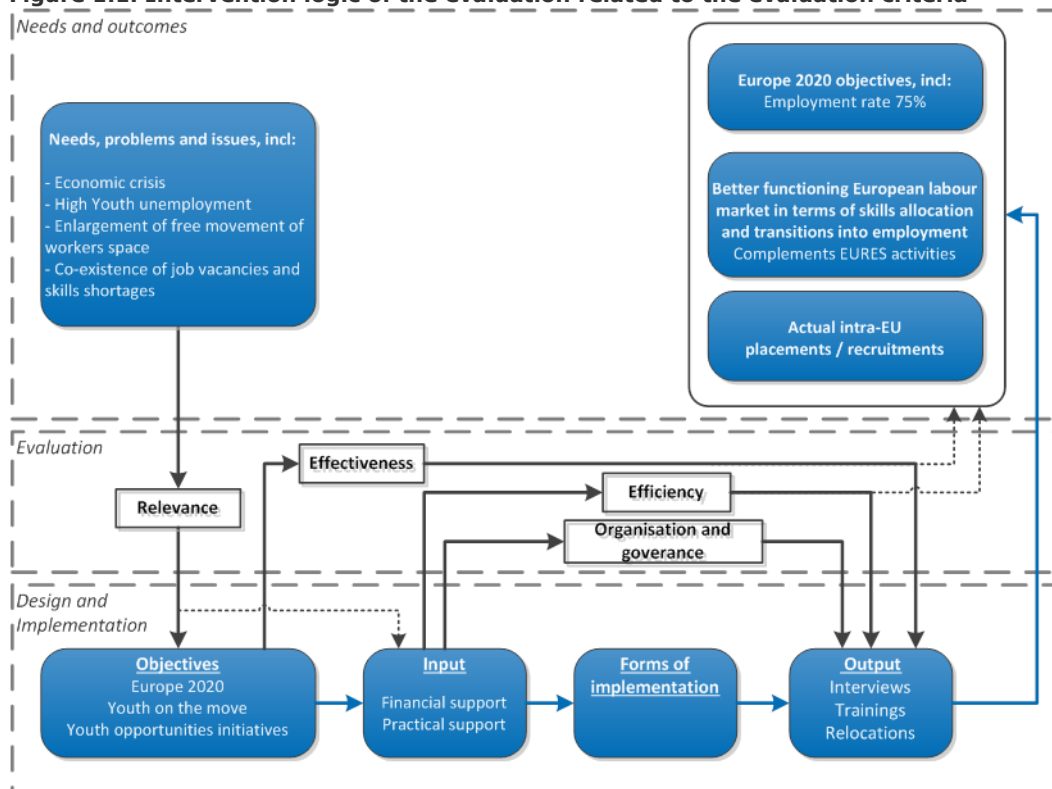
The criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, complementarity and EU-added value as well as organisation and governance will be applied to this evaluation of the preparatory action as a whole and the individual projects.

YfEj is evaluated along the lines of the intervention logic displayed in Figure 1.1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. DG EMPL presentation, ESF-EURES conference, 26.04.2013.

<sup>3</sup> COM (2012) 727 final.

**Figure 1.1. Intervention logic of the evaluation related to the evaluation criteria**



### 1.3. Methodological approach

The evaluation has been undertaken on the basis of project monitoring, desk research, EU-level interviews, project visits, and a workshop. In the following sections we describe the activities carried out during the evaluation and their main outputs.

#### Monitoring

As part of the first aim of the assignment, the activities include an extensive monitoring component. The project data collection and analysis aims to support the answering of the evaluation questions and also has been found to support the YfEj implementing organisations.

Projects are contractually obliged to provide quarterly data on the advancement of their projects through Quarterly Monitoring Factsheets (QMF). The template for this factsheet has been adapted during the evaluation in line with the project design and evaluation needs. See the Annex for the QMF template. A form to monitor budget consumption of project beneficiaries was added to the QMF from the second half of 2013 onwards.

The findings from these quarterly monitoring factsheets have been captured in Progress Measurement Reports (PMR). A total of four PMR have been published, one for each quarter in 2013. A final review combines the results of these. The PMRs have been distributed among the Commission and the project beneficiaries. Associated Progress Summary papers have been made available for the wider public via the Commission's website.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/yourfirststeuresjob>.



The PMRs, the Progress Summary papers, the template for the QMF as well as a list with tips and tricks to complete the QMF have been made available to implementing organisations and the wider public via a dedicated Ecorys website.<sup>5</sup>

## Desk research

The desk research exercise has two main purposes:

1. Contribute to answering the main evaluation questions;
2. Provide a solid basis for the development of scenarios for the future up scaled YfEj preparatory action.

Consulted literature provided contemporary insights in intra-EU mobility, barriers and drivers to intra-EU mobility, labour market policies and labour market information. These sources have been extensively used for answering the evaluation questions and the formulation of the business case for the future YfEj. Reports on the surveys held by the projects also contributed to this.

Because of the focus of the interim phase on the future of YfEj, sources consulted contributed largely to the elaboration of the policy options. When establishing the approach for the policy options, we relied to a large extent on the insights obtained from other EU mobility schemes. Therefore much effort was placed on the analysis of policy documents and programme evaluations.

Finally, literature has been consulted for facilitating a better understanding of the YfEj projects as well as for the drafting of performance monitoring reports. A list of the literature consulted is presented in the Annex.

## EU-level interviews

Interviews with European Commission officials took place in the inception phase and served to obtain key insights on the design and management of YfEj and EU mobility programmes. Table 1.1. presents an overview of Commission officials that have been interviewed.

**Table 1.1 Overview interviewed Commission officials**

Ms. Alice Santos, Mr. Doede Ackers	DG EMPL C3
Ms. Lorenzo Leronés, Ms. Atanassova	DG ENTR – EYE
Ms Resa Koleva	DG EMPL, E1 ESF
Ms Wallis Goelen	DG EMPL C3
Mr Paul Tzimas	DG EAC – Leonardo
Mr Luca Pirozzi	DG EAC – Erasmus
Ms Ulrike Storost	DG EMPL C2

Comparing the YFEJ preparatory action with other EU mobility schemes was a key issue for these interviews. Topics that have been discussed included the relevance of schemes, the governance framework, programme design, funding, the YFEJ projects, and the future of YFEJ and other EU mobility schemes. Particularly interesting was the possibility to obtain insights from other EU mobility schemes on relevant issues and the pros and cons of choices that will have to be made for the future of YFEJ. The

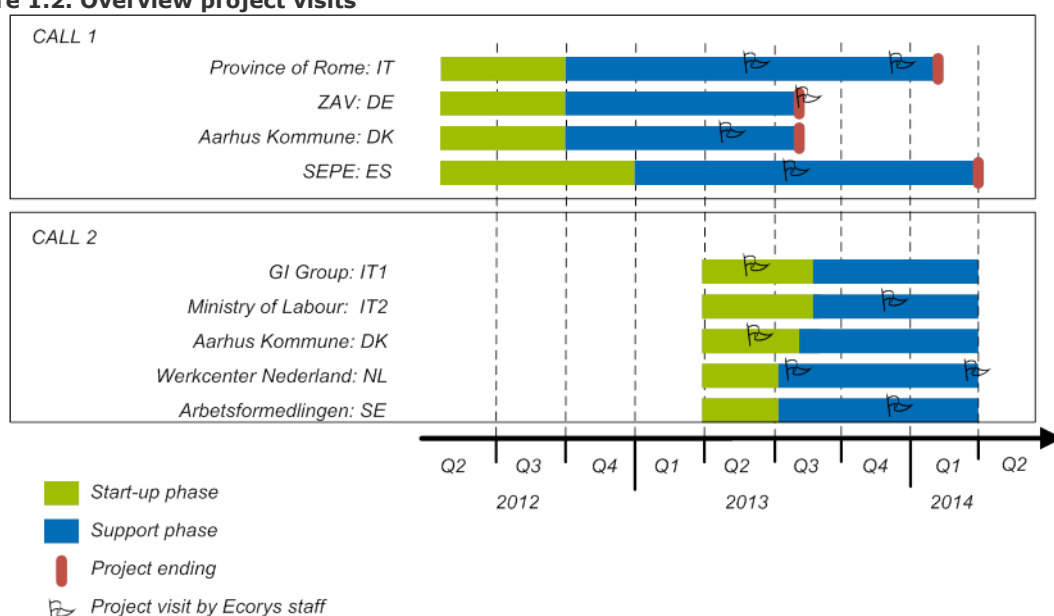
<sup>5</sup> <http://english.ecorys.nl/yourfirststeuresjob>.

interviews also provided valuable input for the establishment of the variables that were taken into account when developing the scenarios for the future.

## Project visits

Project visits provided the opportunity to learn from projects as they progressed. Most of the projects visits have been undertaken when project implementation was well under way. The project of GI Group was visited during the start-up phase whereas the project of the ZAV (*Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung* of the German *Bundesagentur*) was visited at the finalization phase. In this way, insights from all phases of project implementation were collected. Figure 1.2 provides an overview of the projects visited by Ecorys. An overview of the timing of the project visits is provided in the Annex.

Figure 1.2. Overview project visits



Most of the interviews were undertaken with YfEj project managers and staff involved in the implementation of the project. Interviewees have been selected by project managers on the basis of a list with types of interviewees we wished to talk to. Projects were also asked to organise interviewees with participants, but this was often not possible due to privacy reasons and their location abroad.

Project visits proved especially beneficial for understanding the project design and for explaining the monitoring tools, leading to a greater cooperation to deliver and explain data throughout the running time of this evaluation.

Two projects (from SEPE and Werkcenter) have been visited twice essentially to obtain more insights in their performance as their projects advanced. SEPE was also visited twice to obtain a better understanding of simultaneous involvement in YfEj as a project beneficiary and partner and the functioning of the EURES network, especially regarding bilateral and multilateral cooperation within the network.

## Workshop

An expert workshop on the future of YfEj and the development of targeted mobility schemes was organised by the Commission on 25 September 2013 to generate an informal debate among a diverse group of practitioners on the future of the YfEj preparatory action and on TMS in general. The outcomes of this workshop intended to inspire the European Commission in its development for future plans for YfEj. At the same time the workshop contributed to answering some unresolved issues of the evaluators. The workshop was split into four sessions:

- Session I: What does YfEj provide what EURES does not today?
- Session II: Do we see a role for 'targeted mobility schemes' in the future? Which dimensions are important?
- Session III: What would an ideal mobility service package look like?
- Session IV: What is the role of financial support in that kind of package?

A report on the outcomes of the expert workshop is available online at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/yourfirsteuresjob>.

### 1.4. This report

The structure of this report follows the main research questions, starting from a more general YfEj scheme perspective and moving into issues and results of the current ongoing projects.

In section 2 the **relevance** of YfEj is discussed. Current issues related to (youth) unemployment and (bottleneck) job vacancies are linked to potential solutions of stimulating labour mobility. Current obstacles for labour mobility and the related business case for YfEj are then elaborated on.

Provided the business case of the scheme, the **complementarity** (i.e. EU-added value) of such a scheme is discussed in section 3. The main element in this section comprises of an analysis of the differences and complementarities of YfEj and the EURES network.

In section 4 the **organisation and governance** of the scheme is discussed by taking into account the organisation of the preparatory action by the Commission as well as found risks and challenges on project level. Furthermore, the appropriateness of quarterly monitoring is considered.

Section 5 concerns the **effectiveness** of the YfEj scheme. This included an overview of the overall, and project-specific, outputs and results of the current preparatory action. The successfulness of partnerships and communication strategies as well as general obstacles and success factors are also discussed.

In section 6 the **efficiency** of the YfEj scheme is elaborated on. Here, the cost-effectiveness of the services is evaluated.

The last sections, **conclusions and recommendations**, summarizes the conclusions from sections 2 to 6 and formulates recommendations based on these conclusions.

The **Annex** includes the QMF template, a list of the literature consulted and an overview of the organisations visited.

## 2. Development of the YfEj preparatory action

### 2.1. Drivers of YfEj

YfEj was launched by the Commission in a broader framework of EU policy measures to counteract high and persistent levels of youth unemployment that result from the current economic crisis. Today almost six million young people are unemployed, in particular in the Southern Member States. Almost six million young people are unemployed across the EU, which reflects a youth unemployment rate of 20 %.

The Commission therefore defined young people as a priority target group in several measures over the last years. The flagship initiative "Youth on the Move", <sup>6</sup> the "Youth Opportunities Initiative"<sup>7</sup> and the "Youth Employment Package"<sup>8</sup> include key actions to stimulate transitions and labour market participation of European young people. YfEj is one of the key tools to boost the mobility of young people.

In addition, YfEj was prompted by the Commission in response to more structural issues, in particular to help fill bottleneck vacancies, to support SMEs when hiring from abroad and to address obstacles to labour mobility, including the obstacles that young people face when they first enter the labour market.

Given the limited size of the preparatory action, YfEj is not an instant solution to the current youth unemployment problem in the EU. On the long term however, this and other similar targeted mobility schemes (TMS) for young people may seek to generate significant impacts, such as increased levels of labour mobility among European young people and therewith contribute to reducing youth unemployment. This will however require a greater investment than the budget of a preparatory action allows for.

### 2.2. Intervention logic of the preparatory action

The intervention logic links the needs for the YfEj preparatory action with its overall objective. The overall objective of the YfEj preparatory action consists of the creation of a EU labour market for young people. In this labour market all young persons can explore more real job opportunities in other Member States and employers, SMEs in particular and recruit more from abroad. Given the experimental nature of YfEj, the Commission services aimed to define short-term and realistic objectives. The preparatory action mainly intended to support EU residents aged 18 to 30 to find work in another Member State by removing barriers to mobility.

Intra-EU job mobility of young people and the filling of (bottleneck) vacancies by jobseekers from abroad contributes to the creation of an EU-wide labour market. Through the realisation of these two intermediate objectives the functioning of existing labour markets in the EU would already improve. These two characteristics of the EU labour market constitute the intermediary objectives of the preparatory action as they follow from the overall objective.

As a precondition, these objectives require a corresponding institutional framework through which matching, placements and recruitments are organised and which cover the EU entirely. The European partnerships set up via the YfEj preparatory action

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<sup>6</sup> COM (2010) 477 final.

<sup>7</sup> COM (2011) 933 final.

<sup>8</sup> COM (2012) 173.

foresee the establishment of such an institutional framework, which is another intermediary objective.

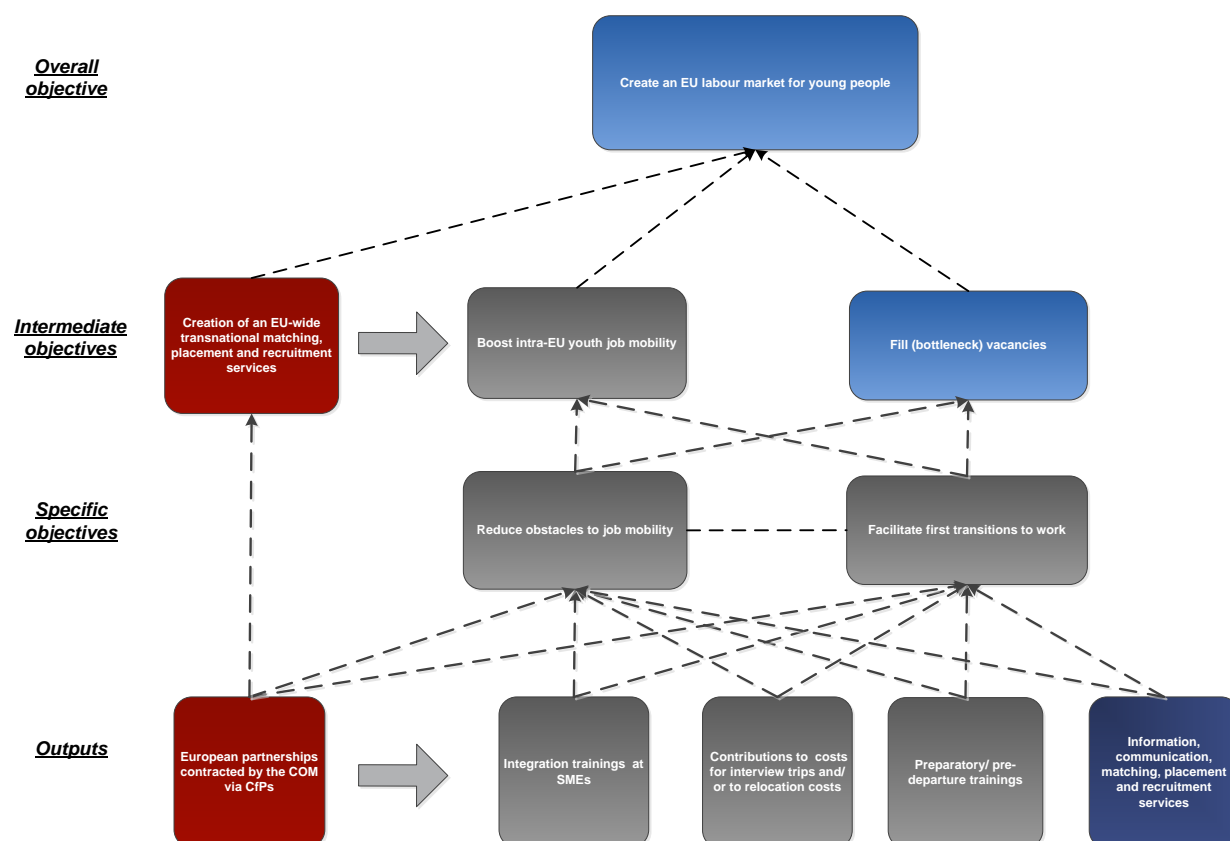
The YfEj preparatory action furthermore intends to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To facilitate first transitions to work;
- To reduce obstacles to job mobility.

The achievement of these specific objectives are of crucial importance for the participation of young people into the programme and to render them internationally mobile. A series of operational objectives allows them to do so. These operational objectives can be assessed by looking at what has been achieved by the YfEj preparatory action in terms of outputs.

These outputs include: Integration trainings for new mobile workers at SMEs, contributions to travel and subsistence costs for interview trips and/ or for moving abroad to take up duty, preparatory/ pre-departure trainings. In addition, the flanking outputs that are necessary for the delivery of the outputs above include the European partnerships contracted by the COM via Call for Proposals (CfPs) and the number of information, communication, matching, placement and recruitment services provided. The intervention logic is presented in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1. Intervention logic of YfEj**



The intervention logic provides an overview of the multiple objectives of the YfEj scheme and the means to achieve these. The advantages of a preparatory action are to find out whether these objectives can be achieved in practice. The various ways this scheme is implemented are presented in the next sections.

### **2.3. The need to target mobility schemes**

YfEj is a first version of a TMS. As a preparatory action, it allows the Commission to experiment with different modes of implementation and to identify useful pathways for the future of TMS in general and of YfEj in particular. These pathways or 'policy options' are explored in this evaluation.

If there were to exist a role for labour mobility schemes, it is held that these schemes need to be targeted in order to be effective. "Targeted" can refer to sectors, countries, professions and types of jobseekers. If mobility schemes are, for example, intended to solve bottleneck vacancies, they need to be targeted at those sectors where the bottleneck vacancies are.

The need to target the services of mobility schemes follows from the personal characteristics of mobile workers. The different types of intra-EU mobile workers have different needs, which require different services. For example, workers who move abroad with their families would benefit in particular from information on schools or child allowances and perhaps job-opportunities for their spouses. Young mobile workers benefit particularly from financial contributions to the costs of their interviews abroad.

In order to effectively reach these specific groups, channels of service delivery as well as communications need to be targeted. Social media in particular can be used to create new, cost-effective services using the community building potential of these media platforms. These are however most likely to be used by younger jobseekers. Similarly, smaller companies may require a far more focused approach than larger companies with dedicated staff for recruitment. The 'modus operandi' of companies depends on size, e.g. SME versus large companies, and communication is more effective when it is tailored towards these differences.

### **2.4. Implementing YfEj**

As a preparatory action, YfEj allows for experimentation and divergence in implementation and service delivery. The budget for the preparatory action has been allocated for three years and will therefore cease in 2014.

The programme consists of projects that are implemented by employment organisations ('project beneficiaries') and their partners. These have been selected by the European Commission via calls for proposals. Two calls for proposals have been launched in 2011 and 2012, resulting in the start-up of nine projects. The first four projects had a combined goal of 2000 placements. The second round of projects aimed to support approximately 1500 young people to find a job placement in another EU Member State. Altogether, YfEj aims to facilitate 5000 job placements of young people over three years (2012-2014).

Three first call project beneficiaries have finished their projects but continue to stimulate intra-EU youth mobility through other means.<sup>9</sup> One of the projects (by the

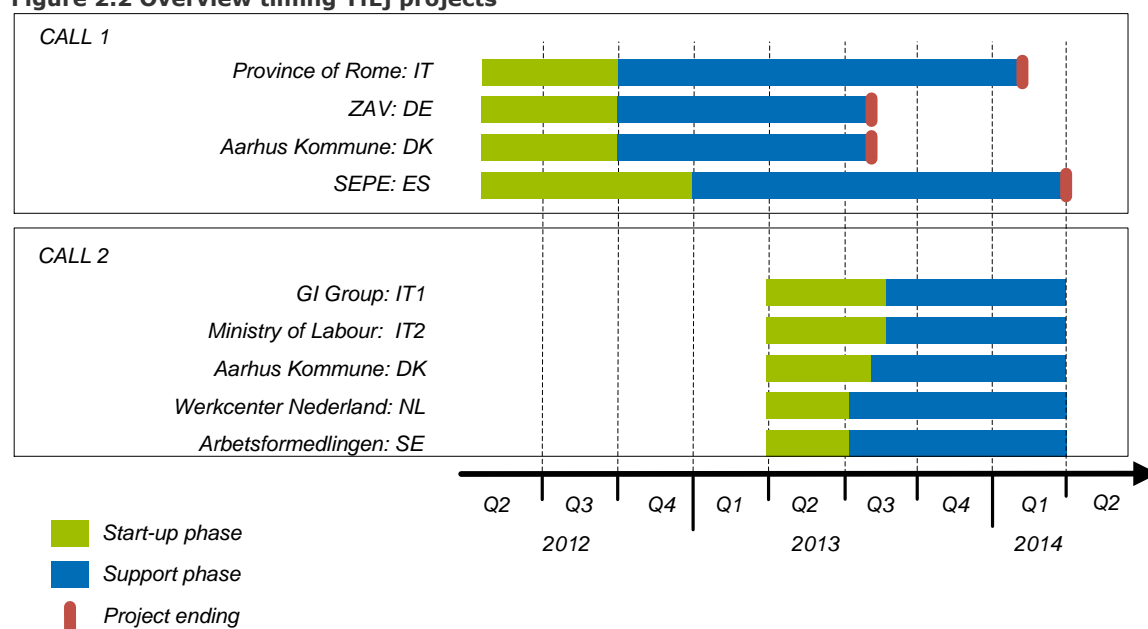
<sup>9</sup> At the time of writing this report, the YfEj project from SEPE wasn't finished because of an extension to 31 March 2014. Because SEPE is partner in.

municipality of Aarhus) started a new project under the second call of YfEj, another one (by the ZAV services) launched a national programme called MobiPro-EU otherwise known as "The job of my life" (hereafter referred to as MobiPro-EU 'the Job of My Life'), independently of YfEj.<sup>10</sup> The Provincia di Roma finally, arranged the continuation of their intra-EU mobility project by cooperating with the Italian Ministry of Labour. The Provincia di Roma will use its own funds for the continuation of its YfEj activities and expands these to other Public Employment Services (PES) in the region whereas the Ministry pays the grants to jobseekers, job-finders and employers.

Finally, the Commission decided on a six-months prolongation of the contracts with GI Group, the Italian Ministry of Labour and Werkcenter NL in order to allow them improve their performance and achieve the best possible results. All three project beneficiaries are now committed to less ambitious placement targets than originally foreseen.

The following figure 1.1 provides an overview of the timing of the projects currently implemented under YfEj.

**Figure 2.2 Overview timing YfEj projects**



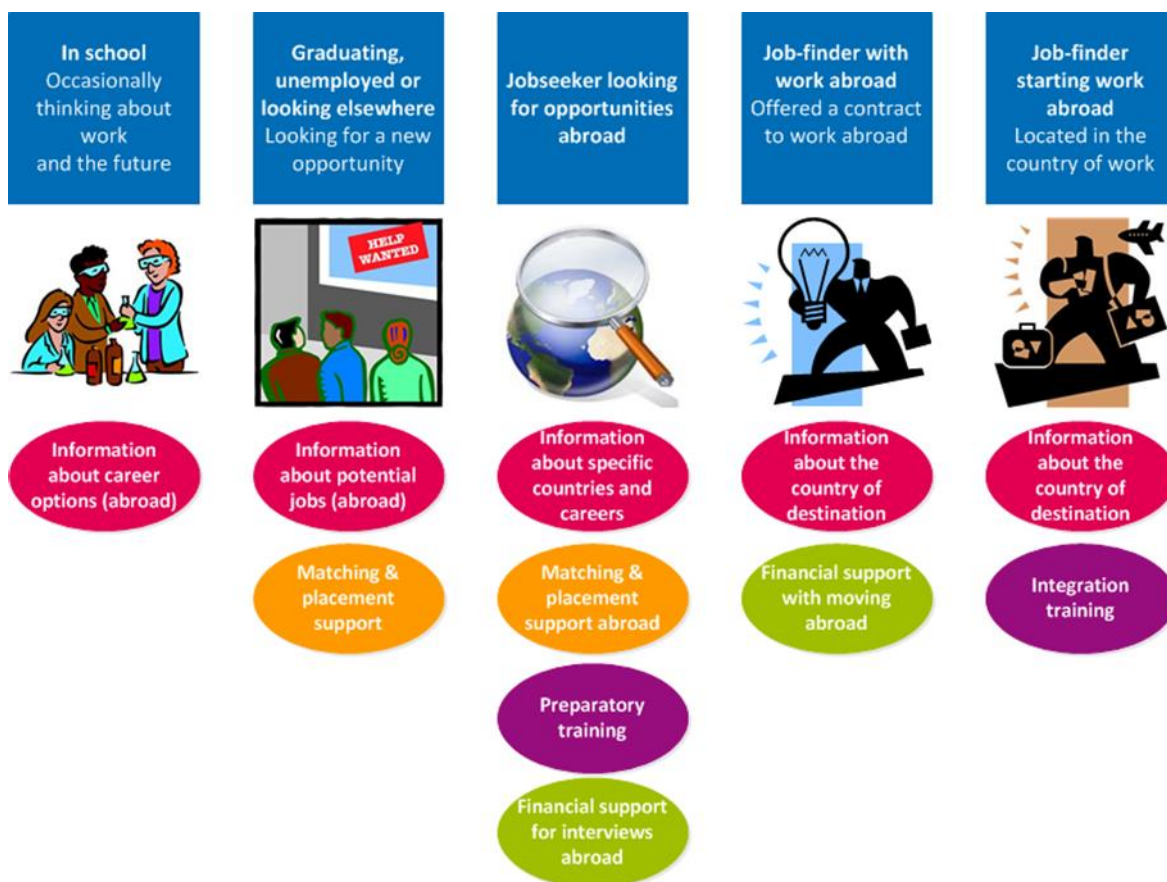
The various YfEj projects provide different types of services for young people at different stages of their job search. YfEj services range from the provision of information about working in a different EU Member State, to support with matching and placement, financial support and trainings. Services to employers coincide with the matching and placement support and integration training. Figure 2.3 provides an overview of the timing of these services.

Mobipro-EU 'the Job of my life', in the Swedish YfEj projects and in the project from the Italian Ministry of Labour, sustainability is guaranteed.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.thejobofmylife.de/en/home.htm>.



Figure 2.3 Overview timing of YfEj services



## 2.5. YfEj and the reformed EURES network

The services provided by YfEj may pave the way for future services to be provided by the EURES network. In doing so, EURES and YfEj in particular resemble each other and may be seen as taking important steps towards the realisation of Art. 47 TFEU:

*"Member States shall, within the framework of a joint programme, encourage the exchange of young workers."*

Nevertheless, there exist considerable differences between YfEj and EURES. Whereas YfEj is still an experimental programme, EURES is an established network of trained professionals from PES with a history that dates back 20 years. YfEj differs from the current services provided by the EURES network because of its emphasis on matching, placement and recruitment and because of the financial support measures it provides to jobseekers and SMEs. EURES on the contrary, focused until today to a lesser extent on matching, placement and recruitment with no financing mechanism.

The current EURES network however is under reform. In order to contribute more effectively to the Europe 2020 goals, the network will be from 2014 onwards much more focused on employment results through greater emphasis on the provision of matching, placement and recruitment services. This contribution may occur by implementing TMSs like YfEj at both EU and national level. In addition, employment organizations other than PES will be allowed to provide EURES services from 2014 onwards.



## 2.6. Recent developments in the policy framework

The future of the YfEj scheme (and of TMS in general) is closely connected with the EURES network. How the future YfEj will exactly look like is not yet entirely known as this evaluation is expected to yield ideas on the policy options for the future. Some of the recent policy developments brought along limitations for a future YfEj scheme. These developments are set out in this section.

Because of the strategic importance of intra-EU job mobility, the Commission has been able to secure funding for future TMSs via the EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).<sup>11</sup> This programme foresees an annual budget of between 5 to 9 million Euro for TMSs over the period 2014-2020. One of the key aims of this programme is to “pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people” (Art. 4, 2a). In addition, the European Parliament and the Council stated in the preamble of the EaSI regulation that:

*“The scope of EURES should be broadened to include developing and supporting TMS (...) at union level with a view to filling vacancies where labour market shortcomings have been identified. (...) TMS, such as those based on the preparatory action “Your first EURES job”, should make it easier for young people to access employment opportunities and to take up a job in another Member State, and should also encourage employers to create job openings for young mobile workers (...)”*

The EaSI programme furthermore includes an EURES axis. Here, it is stated that TMSs will be developed in the future “to fill job vacancies where labour market shortcomings have been identified, and/or to help workers with a propensity to be mobile, where a clear economic need has been identified”<sup>12</sup>. Where an economic need is identified, innovative initiatives of a limited size will be developed to deal with job vacancies in certain occupations, sectors or Member States through tailor-made recruitment campaigns to facilitate intra-EU job mobility.

In addition, the Commission offered support to national and local authorities in the EU to safeguard the freedom of movement in the EU. As laid down in the Communication on the free movement of EU citizens and their families from November 2013,<sup>13</sup> the Commission recognised several potential pitfalls of free movement that could cause a burden for these authorities. Such pitfalls include social welfare fraud and abuse of marriage law (i.e. marriages of convenience). The Commission proposed the following five actions:

- Helping Member States fight marriages of convenience;
- Helping authorities apply EU social security coordination rules;
- Helping authorities meet social inclusion challenges;
- Addressing the needs of local authorities by promoting the exchange of best practices;
- Helping local authorities to apply EU free movement rules on the ground.

The promotion of youth employment remains a policy priority. YfEj has been set within the European Commission’s wider agenda on youth. In the Communication to the European Council “Working together for Europe’s young people” dating 19 June 2013, the Commission stressed once more that combatting youth unemployment should be a top priority in Europe. The Commission also urges Member States in this

<sup>11</sup> Cf. COM (2011) 609 final.

<sup>12</sup> Art. 20 b of the EaSI Regulation COM(2011) 609 final.

<sup>13</sup> Communication on Free Movement (COM (2013)837).

Communication to make use of ESF funding opportunities and national funding sources to promote intra-EU labour mobility.

Actually the Commission views YfEj as a potential part of the national guarantee schemes to which the Member States have committed themselves. These youth guarantee schemes foresee young unemployed jobseekers receiving either a learning and training offer or a job offer within four months after the start of their unemployment spell. This job, work-based learning or education offer may also be based in another EU Member State.

The Commission's proposals were discussed at the Council meeting on 26-27 June 2013.<sup>14</sup> At this meeting the European Council agreed to accelerate the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative by frontloading the funding made available for the implementation of the Initiative. However, no separate funding has been made available to develop a stand-alone YfEj programme yet.

## **2.7. Key findings**

YfEj reflects the Commission's first experiment with a TMS. The experimental setup of the target scheme generated different ways of implementation in practice. A variety of employment organisations are involved in the implementation.

Several options for the future are therefore still open, including the option to end the scheme and to integrate it into the EURES network.

Future TMS for young people will benefit from the experience with YfEj as the various implementation models may serve as formats for future TMS. In addition, experienced YfEj project beneficiaries can become involved in future schemes as service providers. The subsequent chapters on the various evaluation criteria are expected to contribute to the development of such a scheme.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. European Council (27/28 June 2013). Conclusions. Internet:  
[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/137634.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/137634.pdf).

### 3. Relevance of the YfEj preparatory action

**Relevance is the extent to which the aims of an intervention are pertinent to needs, problems and issues to be addressed.** The main questions for the relevance evaluation criterion are to what extent was the intervention relevant to the problems and needs identified and whether there has been an evolution that required reshaping of the intervention (level of projects/ intervention as a whole)? Five sub-questions have been formulated during the inception phase in order to answer these questions. These questions concern:

***The simultaneous existence of high levels of youth unemployment and high vacancy rates in EU Member States;***

***The obstacles for entering the labour market experienced by young persons;***

***Difficulties of young people when willing to move abroad;***

***SMEs usually not hiring from abroad;***

***Existence of a solid business case for YFEJ.***

This chapter is structured along these questions.

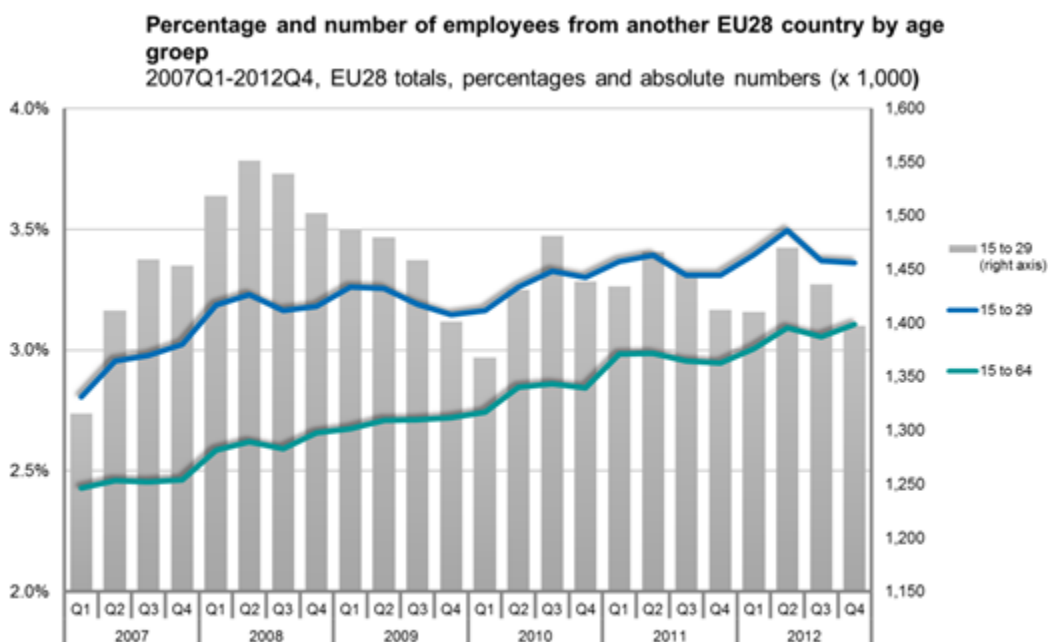
It was originally foreseen that the relevance of YfEj would be mainly evaluated on the basis of desk research and project visits. The vast majority of information on the relevance of YfEj stems indeed from research papers and statistical information. In addition, the project visits allowed for insights in the practical obstacles that young people face when entering the labour market for the first time or when willing to move abroad. Finally, the workshop provided extensive input for the business case.

#### 3.1. Youth unemployment and job vacancy rates

##### **Youth unemployment in the EU**

Unemployment rates among young people in the EU are high and increasing. Youth unemployment is particularly high in the Southern EU Member States that have been severely hit by the economic crisis. Figure 3.1 shows that the younger the age groups are the higher the unemployment rate.

Figure 3.1 EU-28 employees working abroad



During the project visits, project beneficiaries indicated that young people finishing tertiary education may not be ready for their first job abroad until the age of 27. The relation between education and age, however, does not go two ways: whereas most job-finders with a high education are between 27 and 30 years old, not all job-finders aged 27-30 have had a higher educational background.

The unemployment rate among young people seems also more volatile than the total 15-64 age group: From 2009 onwards the unemployment rate of young people aged 20-24 and 25-29 years old increased much faster. For the group aged 20-24 the employment ratio – the %age of the unemployed in the reference population- is the highest in Spain and Greece of all EU 28 countries.<sup>15</sup>

High youth unemployment in Southern EU Member States point to limited employment opportunities for starters in these countries. In other Member States however, opportunities for young jobseekers seem to be increasing. According to the European Vacancy Monitor<sup>16</sup> the number of jobs vacancies in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and the UK increased in the fourth quarter of 2012 compared to the fourth quarter in 2011.<sup>17</sup> In addition, labour markets in Southern European countries, except for Greece, are less dynamic than in countries like Luxembourg, Sweden Cyprus but also Bulgaria, Hungary and Ireland where the number of job-finders increased.

### Job vacancy rates

YfEj aims to increase intra-EU youth job mobility and to fill (bottleneck) job vacancies. Given the continued simultaneous existence of high levels of (youth) unemployment in

<sup>15</sup> Cf. CEPS (2013).

<sup>16</sup> *European Vacancy Monitor* (no.10, September 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Internet: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=955>

the EU, these objectives remain pertinent to existing needs. The filling of bottleneck vacancies per se, appears less relevant for the YfEj scheme in practice.

Project beneficiaries are not obliged to fill bottleneck vacancies, i.e. vacancies that are hard to fill with domestic supply. It already suffices when a regular vacancy is filled with a young jobseeker from abroad. For the majority of project beneficiaries, in particular from the Southern Member States, supporting jobseekers to take up work in a different EU Member State has a priority over the filling of bottleneck vacancies. The ZAV is the exception here, since its YfEj project strives to fill (bottleneck) vacancies in Germany with young people from abroad and therewith to reduce the labour shortages in the country.

Project beneficiaries moreover, indicated to be only to a limited extent aware of the types of jobs that exactly have been filled and whether these concern bottleneck job vacancies.<sup>18</sup> The preparatory action however appears to contribute to the filling of job vacancies in sectors that are known to be hard to fill with domestic workers, such as the health sector.<sup>19</sup> The German and Spanish YfEj projects for example, focused almost exclusively on the filling of vacancies in the (German) health care sector with Spanish professionals. Another example of jobs that proved hard to fill with domestic jobseekers and for which YfEj provided a young person comprise positions in Cypriot hotels, for which Swedish language proficiency is required.

### **3.2. Obstacles to first time labour market entry**

YfEj aims to facilitate first transitions to work. It therefore rests upon the assumption that –among others- young people face particular obstacles when entering the labour market for the first time, i.e. obstacles that are not or to a lesser extent faced by other (elder) groups when entering the labour market. First time labour market entry reflects in particular the transition from education to work.

The monitoring data unfortunately did not produce conclusive evidence on whether the YfEj preparatory action really helped first time entrants entering the labour market, because project beneficiaries hardly collect this data. The data did however show that vacancies requiring high-level skills (ISCO 1-3) have been filled with elder job-finders. Because university students usually graduate at higher age, it may be very well possible that first time entrants found a job with YfEj support. In addition, surveys among YfEj participants, which were undertaken by SEPE, showed that participants usually have less than six months of work experience.

Desk research has revealed a wide range of obstacles that young people may face when entering the labour market. These include:

- Employer's dissatisfaction with the quality, relevance and the level of skills gained during formal education;
- Labour market characteristics which prevent quick and efficient allocations of human resources, such as high labour costs that makes it expensive for employers to hire young people without experience;
- Prevalence of Low quality jobs, for example entry level employment without training attached to it, temporary, part-time and agency work as well as low pay, boring and/ or unpleasant work;

<sup>18</sup> Consult for more information on this issue the report on monitoring YfEj in the annex.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *European Vacancy Monitor No. 10*.

- Under-employment of young people with regard to working hours, skills-mismatches and over-qualifications.

In the light of these obstacles YfEj is only to a limited extent relevant. The majority of these (potential) obstacles are simply too complex and extensive to be tackled by a preparatory action. Nevertheless, YfEj can deliver a significant contribution to lower obstacles to first time labour market entry of young people. The relevance of YfEj is at this point particularly linked to the provision of labour market information.

A recent research paper by Edward Keep (2012) points at the importance of careers information, advice and guidance for young people in the UK.<sup>20</sup> The paper lists two important reasons for why this information provision is so important. First, complex and narrowly divided job openings (as well as the qualifications, education and training that leads towards them) require high quality labour market information to make sure that young people know what choices they have and that they can make the proper choices between them. Second, young people's decisions on their career possibilities are usually based on insufficient information. They therefore often need to alter their initial choices which may require a substantial change in direction of the future career and the associated training and education.

Project visits revealed that obstacles to first time labour market entry are especially dominant in Southern European Member States. Hence, reducing these obstacles is mainly relevant in these countries. However, YfEj projects do not necessarily focus on these countries. At the same time, not all projects provide labour market information.

For young people in Southern European Member States, several related issues are at stake. In the first place, educational programmes in Southern European Member States often insufficiently tailored to the needs of the labour market. Studies are generally viewed to provide young people with the necessary cultural skills instead of the skills needed to practice a profession. This leaves educated young people often with degrees that are not in line with labour market demands. In the second place, it is in these countries not common for young people to have a small job next to school or studies. Young people therefore often lack elementary skills, i.e. daily routines that are valued at the labour market. This increases their distance to the labour market.

YfEj project beneficiaries and their partners do provide services that tackle exactly those obstacles. In Italy for example, YfEj projects contribute to the obstacles for labour market entry by providing preparatory trainings to young people on how the labour market works, how to write a CV and how to do a job interview. Such trainings are for example provided during the GI job days that are organised by the GI Group across Italy. In addition, with the exception of the Danish projects, all project beneficiaries provide transnational matching, placement and recruitment services that are to a high extent tailor-made delivered to jobseekers, job-finders and employers.

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<sup>20</sup> Keep, E. (2012). "Youth Transitions, the Labour Market and Entry into Employment: Some Reflections and Questions." SKOPE Research Paper No. 108 May 2012.

### Non-financial obstacles to intra-EU labour mobility

YfEj also aims to eliminate obstacles for young persons to move abroad. Multiple factors (potentially) hinder young persons from working abroad. The Eurobarometer 2009 revealed several main factors that discourage workers to move abroad. The top ten of these discouraging factors are (in order of relevance): <sup>21</sup>

1. Don't want to leave home;
2. Unwillingness to impose big changes on family and/ or children;
3. Don't want to leave friends behind;
4. Difficulties of learning a new language;
5. Unwillingness to give up house or other property;
6. Already have a good job;
7. It's too much of an effort to go and work abroad;
8. The costs of living is too high abroad;
9. The quality of life abroad is worse;
10. The attitude towards foreigners abroad is hostile.

Several of these obstacles are not applicable for young people in the age category 18-30, since this group is less likely to have mortgages, children or spouses for whom a career abroad also needs to be arranged.

In fact, young people are more likely to move abroad than elderly persons exactly because the lack of these obstacles.<sup>22</sup> The Eurobarometer survey even found that persons become less willing to move abroad with increasing age. This however, doesn't mean that young people don't face obstacles to move abroad.

### *Institutional obstacles*

The literature on EU mobility schemes as well as literature on labour mobility in general refer to a variety of obstacles. These include on the one hand **institutional obstacles**. Such institutional obstacles include first and foremost the lack of cross-border recognition of professional qualifications. Despite the existence of a wide variety of EU tools to foster recognition of qualifications abroad<sup>23</sup> *"the lack of legal certainty and recognition of qualifications remains a key barrier for EU workers willing to move."* <sup>24</sup> Diploma's or skills obtained in one country are still not always recognized by employers from other countries, which makes it difficult to qualify for jobs in other countries.

Other institutional obstacles are registration procedures and requirements at local level, the non-transferability of social security rights, access to social institutions or housing market problems.

<sup>21</sup> European Commission (2010). Geographical and labour market Mobility. Special Eurobarometer 337.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. IZA (2008); IZA (2009); Deutsche Bank Research (2011).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Stakeholder consultation on the European area of skills and qualifications – *Background Document – Annex 6* (European Commission, DG for Education and Culture) p.14-15.

<sup>24</sup> Bernadette Vergnaud, MEP and Rapporteur on the Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications. Op cit. European Policy Centre (2013). "Making progress towards the completion of the Single European Labour Market." *EPC Issue Paper 75*, May 2013, p. 41.



### *Individual obstacles*

Individual obstacles seem to be the most important determinants for an individual's willingness to move abroad, also of young people.<sup>25</sup> Such obstacles include in particular the lack of (sufficient) language proficiency, especially knowledge of languages less widely used in the EU, and of cultural particularities. In addition, fear of finding suitable employment prevent people from moving abroad.

There are thus plenty of known non-financial obstacles to intra-EU labour mobility. Not all of these are relevant for young jobseekers to start working abroad. YfEj potentially entails measures to anticipate on *all* of these obstacles.

Most of the current YfEj projects offer preparatory and –to a lesser extent- integration trainings. The latter often are language courses in practice. Language issues play a particular important role when taking up work in Germany, because it is less common for young people to be proficient in German than in English for example. Project visits showed that German employers seem to acknowledge this fact and hire young jobseekers with insufficient German proficiency on the condition that they take German courses during their stay.

With the exception of the Aarhus project, all current YfEj project beneficiaries provide information on living and working conditions abroad. This is of course an area where the members of the EURES network members have a competitive advantage. Project visits revealed however, that the other project beneficiaries are also willing and able to provide such information upon request of young people.

Finally, the future third call YfEj projects will start with the provision of support for the recognition of qualifications of young people to tackle obstacles related to the recognition of skills.

### **3.3. Financial obstacles to intra-EU labour mobility**

Obstacles to labour mobility of young people in the EU can also be of a financial nature. There are of course costs associated with moving abroad. Aside from the travel costs, there are costs of finding an accommodation, of social integration, etcetera, which require often a substantial investment. The current employment and social situation of many young people in the EU suggests that they are increasingly incapable of fetching such means.<sup>26</sup>

In the literature on labour mobility, the costs of moving abroad are considered a major obstacle. An IZA study for example (2009) points to the fact that married couples are less inclined to move abroad because of the high moving costs.<sup>27</sup> Moving costs furthermore increase with the presence of children in the household and hence lower the propensity to move abroad. Again, these obstacles tend to be less relevant for young jobseekers, who are usually unmarried and without children.

The literature on the different EU mobility schemes occasionally includes accounts of financial obstacles to intra-EU mobility that are relevant for the mobility of young workers and hence useful for this evaluation. In particular the Interim evaluation of Erasmus Mundus II (2012) found some indications for the fact that student exchanges

<sup>25</sup> Cf. IZA (2008). *Geographic Mobility in the European Union: Optimising its Economic and Social Benefits*. IZA Research report No. 19.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. for the following paragraph European Commission (2014). *Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2013*.

<sup>27</sup> Zimmerman (2009). "Labor Mobility and the Integration of European Labor Markets." IZA DP No. 3999.



and mobility are likely of a much lower scope in the absence of EU grants. While financial considerations are important for students seeking to go abroad as part of their studies, the experience of Erasmus shows that grants at the level of the Erasmus programme make a clear difference for young people in their decision to study abroad. Further evidence of the attractiveness of the programme is the small but growing number of students who choose to study abroad with Erasmus on a zero-grant basis (i.e. when the Erasmus funding in any given country has been fully allocated), which, while it does not finance their study period, means that students then benefit from the conditions of being an Erasmus student (including a waiver of fees, where they exist at the host higher education institution).

The persistent effects of the economic crisis on the labour markets in the EU caused an increase in the number of young people who are neither in employment, education and training (NEET). In addition, the period 2008- 2012 witnessed a decrease in the number of transitions of study to work, an increase in the number of students, and a relative decrease in the number of young workers aged 15-29. Those young people who have a job are most likely to work under part-time and temporary contracts in labour markets that have become increasingly segmented: Whereas temporary jobs may pave the way for entering into secure employment, young workers have become more likely to remain stuck in low paid (part-time) jobs for longer periods of time.

Financial obstacles among young people can also be derived from the fact that young adults increasingly live with their parents until later age because of economic pressures. A recent study from the Commission<sup>28</sup> found evidence that young people aged 15-24 have been delaying their move out of the family home to live independently during the crisis (over the years 2008-2011). This effect can mostly be observed in countries hit hardest by the recession such as Greece, Ireland and Spain.<sup>29</sup>

Whether young people are and can be financially independent from their parents tends to be closely related to whether they are employed or not. Financial independence turned out to be low in many of the new EU Member States, especially in Bulgaria and Romania, but also in Greece and Italy.

YfEj financial support is thus particularly relevant in those instances where financial obstacles to mobility need to be overcome. These obstacles become particularly apparent when young people are unemployed or working under precarious conditions in low paid employment relationships and/ or are still (financially) dependent on their parents. Having sufficient funds available when moving abroad may very well positively influence the psychological state of mobile workers as it reduces insecurities and fear of contingencies. Especially for those young people with limited available financial means at home, financial support may provide comfort when going to a foreign country for a job interview or when moving abroad to start working.

### **3.4. Other obstacles**

#### *Hesitance to hire from abroad*

Next to obstacles for jobseekers, several obstacles for companies can be witnessed, such the (un-) willingness of SME's to hire (young) people from abroad. Project visits revealed that SMEs are often not hiring from abroad not only because they lack capacity in terms of HR management, but also because they do not want to. They

<sup>28</sup> See for more information the European Commission's Research note 5/12 on young people in the crisis.

<sup>29</sup> High housing prices should here also be taken into accounts.

often fear that employees from abroad lack the cultural and language skills to integrate socially into the firm.

### *Populist sentiments*

YfEj appears also relevant in the light of current discussions on intra-EU mobility in some Member States. Such discussions emerged in several Member States after the ending of the transitional regimes for Bulgaria and Romania. It is feared that the freedom of movement generates influxes of poor unemployed people from these two countries and therewith creates a large burden on national social security systems. In some Member States, this fear was amplified in politics and even used for questioning membership of the EU.<sup>30</sup>

The freedom of movement is a fundamental European right and pivotal to YfEj. It is unclear whether the end of the transition regimes indeed caused inflows of large number of poor Bulgarians and Romanians to Western Member States and whether this will be the case in the future.<sup>31</sup> The current negative political attitudes however prevent young people from seeking a better life with more opportunities in other EU Member States. This is not only the case for Member States with high youth unemployment rates, but also for Member States like the UK that are doing fairly well.

It is said that those who have experienced living, working or studying abroad, are more open to mobility.<sup>32</sup> YfEj may herewith function as an instrument to safeguard the freedom of movement in the EU in the future.

## **3.5. The business case for YfEj**

Even though the YfEj preparatory action appears relevant in the light of existing obstacles to labour market entry and to labour mobility of young persons, the necessity of (public) labour mobility schemes is subject of public debate.<sup>33</sup> There exist a variety of arguments as to why intra-EU mobility should be stimulated.

Labour mobility schemes can contribute to solving market imperfections in the EU labour market. Such schemes potentially contribute to a more efficient allocation of human resources by removing obstacles to mobility as they direct people to where the jobs are, especially to those jobs that proved hard to fill with domestic jobseekers (bottleneck vacancies).

From the perspective of the demand side, labour mobility schemes can be helpful because bottleneck vacancies can pose a particular problem for SMEs. SMEs tend not to have sufficient resources or the know-how to recruit skilled workers from abroad. A labour mobility scheme can partially provide a solution to fill bottleneck vacancies at SMEs in particular.

From the supply side perspective, labour mobility schemes can be helpful because when jobseekers are hired, it relieves an immediate strain on public resources in the

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<sup>30</sup> In April 2013 the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany and Austria send a common letter to the Commission to express their worries about the possible abuse of social security rights by mobile EU citizens. Cameron announced strict measures to limit the influx of mobile EU-citizens to the UK in the *Financial Times* of 27 November 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. European Commission (2013). *A fact finding analysis on the impact on the Member States' social security systems of the entitlements of non-active intra-EU migrants to special non-contributory cash benefits and healthcare granted on the basis of residence*.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. IZA: Literature\Reports\iza\_report\_19 (Geographic Mobility in the European Union. Optimising its Social and Economic Benefits).pdf.

<sup>33</sup> See for this discussion: EPC (2013).

sending countries.<sup>34</sup> Their departure leads to savings on government contributions to health care, educational and social expenditures. In some cases, the job-finders may also send remittances back to their home countries and thereby contribute to their home country's economy. Mobility schemes can thus provide a (partial) solution to those EU Member States where unemployment levels are so high that the potential of activation policies is exhausted because jobs are insufficiently available or cannot be created.

Labour mobility is however a complex phenomenon that depends on several crucial preconditions at the level of the individual, including language skills, and expertise to matching job opportunities in the country of destination. Mobility schemes can contribute to achieve these preconditions.

For the Eurozone countries, labour mobility schemes also potentially function as a structural economic shock-absorber to combat unemployment insofar as, with the introduction of the euro traditional currency, adjustment mechanisms to increase the demand for labour (e.g. devaluation) have become obsolete.

Opponents of labour mobility schemes often point to the fact that such schemes stimulate the loss of human capital that is needed to build up economies in certain EU Member States (brain drain). Mobility furthermore may increase demographic imbalances since young people who move abroad likely start a family in their new country rather than in their home country.

Labour mobility schemes like YfEj however, also offer many possibilities for young people in particular. Aside from income security, a job abroad also offers a unique cultural experience and the possibility to learn a foreign language properly. Such 'soft skills' may also enhance the career perspectives of young mobile workers back in their home countries as they may return to their home countries as soon as the economic situation improves.

Finally, labour market stakeholders pointed during the workshop on 25.09.2013 at the possibility that European schemes like YfEj could serve as catalysts for action at national level. In addition, the stakeholders stressed that intra-EU labour mobility has become a part of the EU employment strategy and that TMS are expected to address obstacles to labour mobility. All stakeholders also agreed that EU schemes like YfEj are necessary because quite a few EU Member States are confronted with similar sector shortages (e.g. the health sector) as well as with similar needs (e.g. to attract high skilled labour).

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. CEPS (2013).

## Key findings

The preparatory action reflects a relevant intervention. YfEj clearly anticipates on several profound needs on labour markets in the EU, most notably on youth unemployment. By matching labour supply and demand, it appears relevant to existing needs of both young jobseekers and employers with (bottleneck) vacancies.

YfEj also provides a relevant service package to reduce the obstacles to first time labour market entry and thereby facilitating the transition from education to work.

The scheme provides services tailored to overcome individual non-financial obstacles to labour mobility, such as the lack of labour market information and appropriate language skills. In addition, institutional obstacles related to the recognition of qualifications are expected to be tackled with new services delivered by the third call project beneficiaries via a financial contribution to the applicant for the process of recognition.

In addition, support may indeed overcome financial or other obstacles to labour mobility. These financial obstacles are particularly prominent among young people who are unemployed or working under precarious conditions in low paid employment relationships and/ or are still (financially) dependent on their parents. By providing these services, a scheme like YfEj may serve in particular as a cushion to provide psychological comfort for those going or moving abroad.

Finally, from a stakeholder point of view, a scheme like YfEj can provide incentives at national level to start similar initiatives. This can be particularly helpful since quite a few Member States are confronted with the same labour market challenges that require coordination at EU level.

## 4. Complementarity and EU-added value

**Complementarity and EU-added value refers to the degree of coordination between different policies, programmes or activities seeking to contribute to the same objective.** In this context, complementarity and EU added-value refers to the complementarity of YfEj with other horizontal EURES activities delivered by the Commission and to its complementarity with national activities delivered by EURES, PES and PrES. In addition, the preparatory action may also complement other EU mobility schemes such as Erasmus.

With regard to the YfEj preparatory action, complementarity and EU added-value thus mainly concern the relationship with existing (EURES) activities at the level of the Commission and EU Member States and is directly linked with the incentives for and motivation of jobseekers to work abroad and employers to hire from abroad.

The overarching question for this evaluation criterion is *what was the EU added value of the intervention?* Three sub-questions at programme and project level have been formulated to answer this question focusing on the financial incentives and the relationship with existing (EURES) activities as well as with similar activities at Member State level:

***What is the added value of financial incentives at EU level to support mobility for (young) job seekers from one Member State to another Member State? To what extent do financial incentives make a difference compared to mere delivery of 'normal' services to young people looking for a job abroad?***

***To what extent could this action be carried out by at least some Member States without EU funding support?***

***What has been the role of the existing EURES network and its Portal in the implementation of projects? How were synergies made and what could be improvements?***

These questions are answered in the subsequent sections. Input stems from desk research, EU level interviews, project visits, and from the surveys undertaken by project beneficiaries.

### 4.1. Key considerations

YfEj has become an increasingly important as a structure to promote intra-EU mobility of young workers. Albeit still a preparatory action, it has strengthened organisational ties and the discussion on the approach required to facilitate labour mobility both in Brussels and across the EU.

YfEj and EURES currently provide the main infrastructure for the provision of EU-wide transnational matching, placement and recruitment services. The implementation of the scheme relies to a significant extent on the EURES network. Several EURES members are either project beneficiary or partner in YfEj projects. At the same time, other YfEj project beneficiaries like GI Group, Werkcenter, the Provincia di Roma and the Aarhus Municipality are completely detached from the EURES network. YfEj differentiates itself from regular EURES services through its intensive focus on matching and on the mobility of young workers aged 18-30 years.

EU Member States are to a lesser extent involved in the promotion of labour mobility. Only two national schemes for the promotion of labour mobility that are not funded by the EU have been found during the evaluation.

In addition, the YfEj scheme is far from the only intra-EU mobility scheme of the European Commission. In the area of education and training the Erasmus+ programme will offer mobility opportunities for more than 4 million people between 2014-2020. Under Erasmus+, there are, among others, schemes in place for higher education students and staff (Erasmus), and for students (including apprentices and trainees) and staff in vocational education and training (Leonardo). Erasmus+ also offers the opportunity for recent graduates to spend a traineeship abroad. Moreover there is an EU scheme for young entrepreneurs (Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs – EYE) and for others. Up to YfEj however, not a single scheme aimed to stimulate the intra-EU mobility of young people who are willing to work abroad after their graduation. It is precisely at this point where the complementarity of YfEj with other EU mobility schemes becomes evident.

The complementarity of YfEj with Leonardo is potentially compromised by the fact that the third call for YfEj projects is opened up to apprenticeships and traineeships abroad for young people. Those who will be interested in YfEj support however, are likely to be older than those who use the Leonardo scheme. Also, Leonardo mobility is always based within the education system and often for short term periods between a few weeks and a few months. YfEj is open to open-market apprenticeships and traineeships and could be the start of a long-term stay in the company. It is therefore unlikely that complementarity with the Leonardo scheme is reduced in practice.

YfEj services for young people proved to be relevant in the light of their needs. The added value of YfEj services however, is unequally distributed since some services offer more added value than others.

These issues will be further explored in the following sections.

## **4.2. Complementarity with EURES**

The EURES network plays an important role in the implementation of the YfEj preparatory action since four out of nine YfEj project beneficiaries are EURES member (DE, ES, IT, SE). In addition, EURES members can be project partners (PT, SL, SK)<sup>35</sup>.

The EURES network provided project beneficiaries with a solid infrastructure for the implementation of their projects. This infrastructure includes the transnational network of PES able to supply vacancies and jobseekers through personal contacts between the EURES Advisors and employers abroad as well as through the EURES portal. In addition, EURES allows for the implementation of YfEj by skilled staff since EURES advisors are experienced in intra-EU mobility issues. Finally, EURES represents already a brand for intra-EU labour mobility, which facilitates the communication of YfEj to young people and employers, particularly in Member States where the EURES brand is well known.

The EURES network was traditionally focused on enhancing the transparency on labour markets in the EU by providing information on living and working conditions abroad and the clearance of vacancies through the portal. In that process, it has generally not

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<sup>35</sup> And some have become informal partners, such as the Dutch EURES in the Werkcenter project.



yet developed much experience with the provision of transnational matching, placements and recruitments.

The EURES network is in the process of reform into a network that is more focused on the realisation of employment results. 2014 is as a 'transitional year' for the network: The Commission's proposal for the new EURES Regulation (COM 2014/6 final) is now under negotiation with the European Parliament and the Council. In addition, after the text of the new EURES Charter was endorsed by the Heads of PES (in their constellation as the High Level Strategy Group under the 2003 Decision ) in December 2013, the implementation of the EURES reform can truly start. This Charter is the key guidance document for the development of measures by EURES members at national level to achieve the new focus on employment results, such as the introduction of a new service catalogue, the launch of the programming cycle to improve practical cooperation for matching as well as the inclusion of employment organisations other than PES in the EURES network to complement the existing services.

The complementarity of YfEj to the EURES network becomes especially apparent in the light of these reforms. The preparatory action turned out to be an excellent opportunity for the piloting of EURES members to render their procedures and organisations more employment focussed and to improve cooperation among themselves and with other types of employment organisations.

YfEj prepared some members of the network in two ways for their new tasks: First, it encouraged some EURES members to introduce procedures to achieve transnational matching, placements and recruitments and adapt their organisation accordingly. Second, it encouraged those members to cooperate with organisations other than PES, which may qualify as EURES (associate) partners in the near future.

YfEj also stimulated EURES to acquire vacancies and jobseekers through more intensified cooperation with other EURES members. In addition, EURES advisors became more actively engaged in the search for possibilities abroad for young people, contributing to the formulation of vacancies and in active matching of young people. This clearly reflects a shift from the rather 'passive' flagging of vacancies and inserting them in the vacancy database on the portal (if applicable) and providing jobseekers interesting in moving abroad with information on their possibilities in other EU Member States.

The YfEj grants contributed to this 'active approach'. EURES project beneficiaries reported that YfEj presented the opportunity to offer jobseekers a complete package that ideally consists of information, a matched vacancy and financial support. The grants allowed EURES to offer something tangible to young jobseekers to facilitate their individual mobility project.

In Sweden YfEj also paved the way for the introduction of result-based operational procedures. The YfEj employment targets that exists for YfEj inspired the Swedish PES to implement a similar target system for activities listed in the new EURES service catalogue from 2014 onwards.

In some EU member states the implementation of YfEj caused a reinforcement of EURES in their country. In particular in Spain, the implementation of YfEj created the opportunity for the Federal SEPE to align the Spanish EURES members at regional level to achieve the common goal of providing Spanish young unemployed persons with a job abroad.

In Italy, YfEj is also implemented by the Ministry and regional EURES members. The project reinforced the relations between the Ministry and a selection of regional PES for which EURES is a priority. Together they cooperate closely to make their YfEj project a success, whereas regional PES that are only to a limited extent involved in EURES do not participate in the project.

YfEj also changed the way of cooperating between EURES members. EURES Sweden started cooperating with the entire EURES network in other countries, instead of local EURES partners only. This was considered a more efficient approach to establish working relations for YfEj. In addition, some EURES members started bilateral cooperation projects in the framework of YfEj. A prime example is the cooperation between Spain and Germany. These countries agreed upon a clear division of tasks to implement YfEj in line with their needs as sending and receiving countries: Whereas Germany needs qualified workers from Spain, Spain needs German vacancies to offer to the growing number of unemployed young people. Even though the German YfEj project meanwhile has ended, this operation is continued in the framework of the national German scheme. Finally, the multilateral cooperation between the Southern European countries that is currently being developed was largely inspired by YfEj.

Some of the challenges to the implementation of YfEj encountered in this evaluation are similar to those that can be found within the EURES network. Since EURES works different in every Member State, which results out of the different needs of being a sending or a receiving country, a lack of proper coordination quickly leads to EURES members working along each other instead of with each other. This causes for example, situations in which EURES Advisors acquire vacancies abroad via own personal relations with employers without informing EURES in that country. In addition, large numbers of jobseekers from one country have been placed by YfEj abroad without notifying EURES in that country.

EURES members, like the other types of YfEj project beneficiaries, were clearly not ready for the implementation of YfEj, which resulted in the long start-up periods discussed elsewhere in this report. Apart from the organisational and procedural changes that were needed to facilitate the implementation of YfEj, EURES staff members also required preparation.

Project visits finally revealed that EURES staff, EURES advisors in particular, experienced the provision of grants as something completely different from their regular work for EURES. As a result, EURES staff needed to be extensively informed and trained to be able work with YfEj. The provision of grants relies in the majority of YfEj projects on a centralised decision-making structure. In addition, project managers also revealed that they have doubts whether EURES Advisors are able to decide upon the eligibility of applicants for grants and preferred to keep this competence reserved for specialised staff.

### **4.3. Mobility schemes for young people without EU funding**

The evaluation found two mobility schemes for young people that are not financed by EU means. One exists in Sweden and another in Germany.

The project visit to the Arbetsförmedlingen, revealed that the Swedish PES provides different types of financial support financed through national means. A first type supports jobseekers when undertaking a job interview abroad. The grant of approximately 300 Euro is available for jobseekers aged 18-20 years. It is predominantly used in practice for interviews in other Scandinavian countries,



including Norway. Grants can be provided multiple times. A condition for receipt is that the vacancy needs to be published on the EURES portal.

A second type of financial support of the Swedish PES are relocation allowances that entirely cover the costs of moving. This type of support is available for job-finders of over 20 years of age who were previously registered unemployed at the PES and found a job abroad.

A third type of financial support provided by the Swedish PES is a grant to cover the costs of cross-border commuting.

All grants can in principle be provided in combination with YfEj financial support.

The German mobility scheme Mobipro-EU 'the Job of My Life' for young people is far more extensive than the Swedish scheme. The scheme was inspired by YfEj and supports young people who are unemployed or just interested in vocational training in Germany with a successful placement in in-company training and in qualified employment in Germany. The scheme is available for young adults aged between 18 and 35 and includes a range of support measures that is much broader than in YfEj. For example, Mobipro-EU 'the Job of My Life' includes more extensive possibilities for young people to learn the German language both at home and in Germany. It also offers financial support to young people from abroad when learning the language in Germany before they start working or participate in vocational training. The available budget of 139 million Euro until 2016 is also much higher than for YfEj.

Complementarity and EU added value of YfEj is high in the light of national mobility schemes:

- There exists only a limited number of such schemes. The EU herewith provides with EURES and YfEj the main infrastructure for young people to look for work abroad;
- In Sweden YfEj support can always be provided in combination with the Swedish support;
- The project visit revealed that the German Mobipro-EU 'the Job of My Life' was largely inspired by YfEj. The Directive also includes references to YfEj and to the EURES network;
- The German scheme is only available for young people willing to work in Germany, not in other EU Member States;
- The German scheme is only available for unemployed young people willing to work in regular employment in Germany.

With the exception of the Swedish and German schemes, YfEj is the main intra-EU mobility scheme for young workers. Complementarity with national schemes not funded by the EU is therefore limited.

In Sweden, benefits from the national scheme can potentially be provided to jobseekers in combination with YfEj support. In such instances, the Implementation Guide requests the project organisation, in this case Arbetsförmedlingen, to check that there is no double funding for a similar purpose, in particular with regard to support for interviews abroad and relocation grants. The project visits however didn't reveal that young people indeed received both YfEj and national support in practice.

From the beginning of 2013 onwards, YfEj and Mobipro-EU 'the Job of My Life' existed simultaneously in Germany. ZAV staff had therewith the possibility to deploy support

from both schemes in line which one was considered appropriate. Even though the ZAV services seem to have focussed predominantly on Mobipro-EU 'the Job of My Life', EURES staff from the ZAV services indicated that they preferred to provide YfEj support until the end of the project in September 2013. The main reason for this concerned the administrative burden of support provision. The German scheme is much more complicated to handle. YfEj for example foresees the possibility to pay in advance and requires less paperwork to be completed by participants.

Given the limited existence of national schemes, the potential of YfEj to provide added value is significant.

#### **4.4. The added value of financial services**

YfEj project beneficiaries provide a wide array of services to young jobseekers, job-finders and SMEs. Some of these services were already provided by project beneficiaries before their engagement in YfEj. GI Group for example, already provided large scale labour market information to (young) jobseekers during their 'GI Days'. In addition, matching and recruitments constitute the core elements of the business of GI Group. The prior provision of intra-EU labour market information is even more evident for the EURES project beneficiaries.

The main distinctive feature of YfEj is the provision of financial support for trainings, interviews abroad and relocation allowances. YfEj financial support proved relevant in the light of the situation in which many young Europeans unfortunately find themselves nowadays. Not all types of financial support provided by YfEj however, also provide added value.

During the project visits all project beneficiaries stressed that financial support provides young people a 'final push' to start seriously considering a job abroad. Project beneficiaries indicated that many of these youngsters would not have looked for a job abroad if such YfEj support wouldn't exist.

##### **4.4.1. Financial support for interviews abroad**

Given the uncertain outcomes of job interviews, spending (scarce) resources on job interviews abroad constitutes a risky investment for a young jobseeker. Young people with little financial means available often choose not to take such a risk on their own. Financial support for undertaking interviews abroad is therefore for the young jobseekers of particular added value.

*"It was essential because I could not pay a job interview in foreign country and because of this opportunity I could make the job interview and got my job."*  
(respondent to ZAV survey 2013Q3)

##### **4.4.2. Financial support for relocation costs**

Whereas the added value of interview support seems fairly straightforward, it is less so for relocation grants. This grant constitutes by far the largest expenditure of the programme; of the 1950 placements 1455 were achieved with -amongst others- a relocation grant. In Spain for example, only 26 % of participants use interview support whereas 74 % use relocation grants. Surveys among participants indicate that this is a very popular grant. It also involves significantly higher amounts of money, albeit to different extents since the level is dependent on the cost of living of the destination countries.

The rationale of this type of financial support is connected with the conviction that moving abroad potentially brings along significant costs. In addition, labour market entrants in particular usually receive their first pay check at the end of the first month worked. YfEj support contributes to the costs of moving abroad and to bridge the first month. It is therefore only available to job-finders.

The literature indeed suggests that the costs of relocation constitute a major obstacle for moving abroad for jobseekers. However, it remains unclear what problem for job-finders this type of support exactly intends to tackle. Having an employment contract should enable job-finders to arrange the necessary financial means for moving abroad by themselves. Such financial means could be provided as a loan by family members, friends or by the bank. This possibility renders the practical problem of having insufficient funds available less pressing.

A factor that potentially limits the added value of relocation support even more, concerns the level of support. If support levels are too low, the scheme may become less popular. This calls for a continuous assessment whether the level of support is still suitable for the purpose of the scheme.

In addition, relocation expenses may be very well covered by employers. It is actually quite common among larger employers to provide their new employees with sufficient means to relocate themselves for work purposes. A premium British car manufacturer for example, approached the EURES and YfEj from the Italian Ministry and SEPE for qualified staff to be placed in their factory in the UK. This company had its own relocation compensation system in place and explicitly refused to use YfEj relocation grants.

It is unfortunate that the current YfEj scheme also allows temporary work agencies acting as an employer and recruiting young workers from abroad to use YfEj support as a means to subsidize their own business activities. Such agencies declare that they (or the employers they represent) do not cover the costs of the interview trip or relocation and have stimulated their newly recruited workers to apply for YfEj support. In addition they may benefit from preparatory training grants they provide themselves as a subcontractor. There are indications that this happened on a (relatively) large scale with Polish YfEj participants recruited by a temporary work agency for the transport sector in the UK. In this way YfEj may amount to provide support as an ordinary subsidy for these temporary work agencies.

This calls for scrutiny from the side of the project beneficiaries. There could be a limitation of the number of recruitments by temporary work agencies that any given YfEj project can support. In addition, such agencies should not be able to benefit from preparatory training grants if they have been involved in the recruitment process. Appropriate cooperation between project beneficiaries may also be called for.

In case companies are unwilling to pay relocation grants, in particular to attract low-skilled workers as described in the case above, they may be advised to hire local workers instead.

Literature on mobility shows that the provision of more financial support via intra-EU mobility schemes doesn't automatically succeed in attracting more participants, because it may provide limited added value without some necessary flanking measures.<sup>36</sup> Participation in the Danish PIU-scheme for mobility in VET for example,

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<sup>36</sup> European Commission (2012). Study on Mobility Developments in School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and Youth Exchanges.

didn't increase -and even stagnated- after the introduction of a funding guarantee. One of the reasons for this stems from the fact that the target group do not particularly favour long term exchanges abroad.

Indeed, more financial support doesn't seem to increase added value of the scheme per se. Based on the responses to surveys from the various project beneficiaries, other types of support are considered at least equally important as financial support when it comes to finding employment abroad. Although respondents generally indicate that they appreciate the financial support, it is not always the most necessary support.

39 % of the respondents to the Swedish web survey (n=83) indicated that the relocation grant was necessary to take up work abroad, whereas the majority of 56,1 % indicated that 'it helped a lot'. In the words of two respondents:

*"The costs of the first month's rent of house and travel costs. The first month is very difficult to make these costs because I have yet to be paid."*

*"It was great to receive some money/ relocation support to get me started, as it was a lot of things that I needed to pay for in advance such as the deposit on the flat etc."*

If more money were to become available, some respondents replied that financial support for the initial living costs (if a job is found) or accommodation and a daily subsistence allowance (for interviews) would improve the programme.

#### **4.4.3. YfEj trainings**

The project visits revealed that the majority of project beneficiaries expect to combine preparatory and integration trainings to deliver most significant results, since this enables YfEj participants to learn a language over a longer period of time. Because languages cannot be learned over night, participating in language courses both as a preparatory means and in order to integrate in a company and society seems to add value to the scheme.

Project visits also revealed that it is not always obligatory for a foreign job-finder to speak the language of the host country to get a job in that country, since English may be sufficient. Speaking the local language however is of crucial importance for social integration with native colleagues in the company and in the country.

43.9 % of the respondents to the Swedish survey (n=83) indicated that they were not expected by their new employers to speak the language of their new host country.

Respondents to the ZAV 2013Q3 survey regularly highlighted the importance of the language training.

*"German language course financing- gave me the opportunity quicker integrate in the new country"* (respondent to ZAV survey 2013Q3)

Facilitating extensive language courses may finally contribute to lowering the threshold for employers (SME's) to hire young people from abroad. They often consider lacking language skills a major obstacle for hiring from abroad since it complicates social integration in the company.

#### **4.4.4. Other YfEj support**

When asked what improvements could be made to YfEj however, many respondents however indicated that information provision appears essential. In order to improve the scheme, more information should be provided on:

- Living and working conditions abroad;
- The labour market situation and employment opportunities abroad;
- About experience of young people with YfEj;
- About YfEj itself.

Other types of support are thus considered by YfEj participants as equally important to financial support measures. These also include the preparatory and integration trainings provided by YfEj and which are essentially language courses.

#### **4.5. Key findings**

YfEj reinforces the EURES network by adding new measures –financial support- to the service catalogue. In this way YfEj is complementary to EURES. This seems however less the case for matching, placement and recruitment services since the EURES network already provided these services. In practice, YfEj turned out be an opportunity for the piloting of EURES members to render their procedures and organisations more employment focussed and to improve cooperation among themselves and with other types of employment organisations. The possibility to provide financial support to participants contributed to this. The introduction of YfEj coincided with the launch of the EURES reform and could be said to have indirectly contributed to demonstrating its added value, pointing out a way forward on how to operationalize the general idea of the reform, a more result-oriented and employment focussed approach in the EURES network. At project level however, complementarity is high, both among YfEj project beneficiaries that belong to the EURES network and those which do not.

Complementarity with other EU mobility schemes is also high because of the focus on young workers.

Because only few non-EU funded national mobility schemes for young workers exist, the complementarity of YfEj with such mobility schemes is limited. The added value of the preparatory action is potentially high, since it constitutes together with EURES the main infrastructure for labour mobility in the EU. The main difference with EURES is to be found in its exclusive focus on young people and existence of a funding mechanism for target groups.

By delivering services to young people, YfEj achieves considerable added value, in particular when providing financial support to jobseekers for undertaking interviews abroad.

Added value is less for relocation support. Despite the fact that it most often provided and highly popular among users.

The Commission should take measures in order to prevent YfEj of becoming a vehicle of support to temporary work agencies.

YfEj achieves additional added value through the provision of services like matching, placement and recruitment and the provision of information in particular.

## 5. Organisation and governance

**Organisation and governance refers to the implementation of the preparatory action at both project and EU level.** The overarching questions for the evaluation of the organisation and governance of the preparatory action are whether the different management arrangements and tools for implementing the intervention, both at project and EU level, were appropriate and whether there have been challenges encountered in operational and financial terms and to what extent did the management and organisation of the intervention favour or inhibit the achievement of the objective?

A total of five sub questions on the appropriateness of management arrangements and tools for the implementation of YfEj as well as to the challenges encountered for achieving the objectives were formulated during the inception phase:

***How is the YFEJ preparatory action organised?***

***Has the implementation approach by the Commission based on a regular open CfP been adequate with regard to the participation of appropriate service providers?***

***Is a quarterly reporting mechanism to the Commission appropriate? Proportionality of the QMF and the requirements to complete it with regard to the size and complexity of the projects?***

***Are risks and contingencies sufficiently covered within the organisational framework?***

***How did partnerships established in each project contribute to the searching, matching and placement process carried out for the target groups, to monitoring and follow-up in the relations with the target groups (communications) as well as the overall results of the project?***

These questions have been answered on the basis of desk research, data analysis and project visits. This approach was originally foreseen in the inception report.

### 5.1. Organisation of the preparatory action

The YfEj preparatory action is centrally managed by the European Commission and implemented by employment organisations that operate as project beneficiaries. The central management of YfEj by the Commission places a heavy burden on the Commission's available human resources (1FTE). This arrangement is not compatible with the complexity of the scheme and the responsibilities of the Unit.

### 5.2. Response to Call for Proposals

The Employment organisations implementing YfEj projects are selected by the Commission's services via Call for Proposals (CfPs). Two CfPs on YfEj have been finalised A third CfP (VP/2013/014) was launched on 16 September 2013 and was closed on 10 December 2013.



The first CfP (VP/2011/006) generated limited interest of employment organisations as only eight proposals were received by the Commission, out of which one turned out to be not-eligible. The second call (VP/2012/006) generated a response of 11 proposals out of which three proposals did not meet the eligibility criteria, for example because of missing letters of commitment from partner organisations. The third call (VP/2013/014) already generated a higher response: A total of 34 proposals were received. Winning proposals are being selected by the Commission at the time of writing this report. These numbers are still relatively low in comparison with other CfPs launched by the Commission. The Commission sometimes receives hundreds of applications.

There exist various reasons for the increase in interest for the third call. Firstly, YfEj has become more known among employment organisations. Secondly, the inclusion of apprenticeships and traineeships in the projects generated interest of (potentially) eligible organisations other than employment organisations. The calls drew attention of workplace organisations with experience with intra-EU mobility in the context of ESF measures and lifelong learning programmes. The increase in interest can also be traced back to the fact that DG EAC deliberately disseminated the CfP among its networks. Thirdly, there are multiplier effects at play. Organisations who were initially YfEj partners now opted for the possibility to tender to become project beneficiary themselves.

A quick survey among EURES managers revealed that many did not respond to the Commission's call for proposals because of a lack of human resources, a high expected workload or uncertainty regarding the added value of YfEj.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, our practical exploration of the on-going YfEj projects raises some questions about the viability of the current scheme. One of the key issues of concern are the real existing workload and the hidden costs of implementation.<sup>38</sup>

Four projects were selected from the first call and five from the second. Successful proposals were selected on the basis of:

- A good understanding of the objectives of YfEj as defined by the Commission;
- A proper project design and methodology;
- Assurance of the visibility of YfEj;
- Acceptable costs/ efficiency ratios;
- Proposed geographical coverage.

**Table 5.1 Overview response to CfPs**

CfP	Received	Evaluated	Selected
VP/2011/006	8	7 (one proposal non-eligible)	4
VP/2012/006	11	8 (three proposals non-eligible)	5
VP/ 2013/014	34	27 (no information)	Yet to be selected

Nevertheless the relatively limited response to CfPs may require more marketing efforts to attract an increased number of potential competent (employment) organisations. This may include a revision of the type of funding provided by the EC for implementing the scheme. For employment organisations operating on a commercial basis, such as private employment services (PrES), the current form of

<sup>37</sup> 14 EURES managers who did not apply as a leading member for YfEj responded to an Ecorys telephone survey.

<sup>38</sup> And in particular the opportunity cost of the staff who are not officially documented as administrative costs under YfEj but instead are paid from the organization's own budget to work on YfEj.

contracting may appear unattractive because of the no-profit principle. In accordance with the Financial Regulation the grants for implementing YfEj may not be used for making profits. Article 125 (4) on the general principles applicable to grants specifies that these shall not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action or the work programme of the beneficiary.

GI Group participates in YfEj as a project beneficiary because of considerations related to corporate social responsibility (CSR) but also to test the viability of financial incentives to jobseekers to move abroad for their own organisation.

Other private employment organisations participate as partners in YfEj projects. Adecco is a partner of the Italian Ministry. While it remains to be seen how Adecco performs for YfEj, GI Groups already indicated that for commercial companies, it is difficult to shift their operations from profit making to not-for-profit operations due to the limitations imposed by the EU Financial Regulation. The new Financial Regulation<sup>39</sup> appears to allow beneficiaries to make profits, which is afterwards partially deducted from the grant. This may make future mobility scheme nevertheless more attractive for private organisations.

### **5.3. The appropriateness of quarterly monitoring**

Experience has taught that the start-up phase of a project may be forgotten or minimised in the discussions that take place towards the end of the project. The advantage of monitoring all projects on a regular basis is that the experience related to all phases of the implementation become evident as they occur. This serves both the project beneficiaries, the centralised management by the EC and the evaluation process. Furthermore, having clear rules and objectives lined out from the beginning of the project implementation, regular monitoring and reporting forces project beneficiaries to consider the intervention logic of their projects and to develop appropriate monitoring systems. The optimum frequency of monitoring and reporting is however less evident. A quarterly interval seems to fit the purpose.

The decision to monitor on a quarterly basis has been made in view of the duration of each project, which lasts between 12-18 months.<sup>40</sup> Four monitoring moments per project turned out to sufficiently capture the changes throughout the project whilst not overburdening the project beneficiaries with too much administration. Project beneficiaries confirmed that quarterly monitoring is sufficient to collect useful data.

Alternative monitoring frequency options could have been:

- Monitoring on a monthly basis;
- Monitoring on a bi-annual basis.

Whilst monitoring on a monthly basis could provide more up-to-date information with further detail, the burden on the project beneficiaries would have been heavy in light of the overall activities. Furthermore, as projects have taken between 3-6 months to start their activities and produce less than 100 placement results per month, the added value of monthly monitoring would be minimal. Lastly, the support process, starting when a jobseeker enters the projects' administration, up until the jobseeker is provided with the movement grant, easily takes more than a month. Such overlap in

<sup>39</sup> REGULATION (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002.

<sup>40</sup> Depending on the call for proposals: Call 1 projects last 18 months, call 2 and call 3 projects last 12 months.



different monitoring periods creates difficulties in identifying progress and results per month.

The alternative of bi-annual monitoring would be insufficient to capture the progress during the start-up phase and in particular how long it takes for new projects to start placing young people and what obstacles they encounter in this process.

#### **5.4. The appropriateness of the Steering Group meetings**

In total three Steering Group meetings have been organised by the European Commission so far.<sup>41</sup> These meetings take usually two days and provide the opportunity for the Commission to provide guidance to the project beneficiaries and to help them focus on the precise purpose of the scheme. During these meetings the Commission also presents the novelties that were introduced in the Implementation Guide. Amendments are often introduced as a result of the experiences of project beneficiaries and new insights on the side of the Commission.

For the project beneficiaries the Steering Group meetings provided the opportunity to present their projects and to exchange their experiences with other project beneficiaries. The meetings were particularly helpful for 2d call project beneficiaries to discuss their projects with more experienced 1st call project beneficiaries. Furthermore the informal character of those meetings, including the social events organised by the Commission in parallel to some of those meetings, has facilitated the networking among project beneficiaries. As a result, project managers and their colleagues from all the projects got to know each other on a personal level. In addition, experiences were exchanged in depth, also in the margins of the meetings, and possibilities for cooperation were further explored.

For the evaluator the Steering Group meetings were particularly useful to become familiar with all the individual projects and the staff members. In addition, the meetings provided the opportunity to present the monitoring and evaluation exercises to the project beneficiaries and to explain in-depth the monitoring tools like the QMF. This facilitated agreement on the definition of indicators and to obtain support for monitoring among the project beneficiaries.

#### **5.5. Coverage of risks and contingencies**

Experiences with implementing YfEj revealed two types of risks and contingencies: start-up and operational challenges. These have been faced to different extents by the various project beneficiaries. Hence their response differed as well.

##### **5.5.1. Start-up challenges**

All project beneficiaries had start-up phases that ranged from approximately six months (in most cases) to more than a year (in the case of SEPE). The long start-up phase of the project in Spain resulted from the fact that SEPE lacked a proper legal basis for the implementation of YfEj.

At the time of applying for YfEj, SEPE was not aware of the fact that Spanish subvention law didn't allow SEPE to distribute financial support to individuals without a public procurement procedure. In order to amend the subvention law a Royal Decree

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<sup>41</sup> Ecorys attended the meetings on 9-10 April 2013 and on 23-24 September 2013.

was required (Real Decreto 1674/2012, 14 December). The organisation of this Royal Decree was very time-consuming and took over a year.

It is questionable whether a small-sized project like YfEj, justifies a procedure like the drafting of a Royal Decree. Perhaps the scarce time and resources could have been spent on different activities. SEPE however, remained motivated to continue the project given its potential added value in the light of increasing youth unemployment.

Given the amount of time and resources it took to amend the law in Spain, it may justify the inclusion of a call for an obligatory statement on legal compliance to implement YfEj in future CfP's by the Commission.

Typical challenges encountered by other project beneficiaries when starting the project include setting up proper internal procedures for the registration of jobseekers and vacancies as well as for the payment of grants. This preparatory work also includes the provision of training to staff members. The ZAV reported that training was challenging because staff members were being asked not only to excel in matching and placements but also in the provision of financial support. The Provincia di Roma even developed an entire new ICT system for registration and matching purposes. In Spain (and elsewhere) the payment procedure needed to comply with internal financial management procedures.<sup>42</sup> Adjusting internal procedures turned out to be very difficult for GI Group as this included a shift in operations focused on profit making to not-for-profit operations. For a commercial organisation it is difficult to engage in non-profit activities especially when the market is extremely competitive.

Finally, the long start-up phases also resulted out of difficulties in establishing clear arrangements with project partners. Sometimes cooperating with a partner in practice turned out more problematic than originally foreseen. Problematic cooperation may arise from very simple issues such as long delays in replies to emails. The Dutch project beneficiary for example replaced their Spanish partner after the original partner proved permanently unavailable for communication and cooperation.

In the light of these start-up challenges and the time it takes project beneficiaries to get their projects on track, the current contract duration ranging from 12 to 18 months is clearly insufficient, if one is to stay within the framework of *open* call for proposals. In order to ensure sufficient quality of service delivery minimum a future YfEj contract should take into account a start-up phase of at least three to six months for a new project beneficiary. In addition, project implementation is also affected by the Christmas and summer periods. In order to reduce the impact of these periods in terms of low matching, placement and recruitment activity, each project should last ideally about 24 months.

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<sup>42</sup> The streamlining of payment procedures is necessary in order to avoid lengthy procedures for the payment of grants, especially when this requires multiple authorizations of high level staff from different departments.

### *Operational challenges*

Operational challenges refer to those challenges encountered by project beneficiaries when implementing their projects and reported upon towards the evaluator. These challenges concern the organisational capacity of project beneficiaries, the nature of YfEj and quality standards.

### *Organisational capacity*

Operational challenges that concern the organisational capacity of project beneficiaries may arise from the workload for the available staff. The number of staff working on YfEj differs significantly between projects. In Aarhus YfEj is operated mainly by one project manager and a part-time student assistant. Here the main manager of the department and the marketing manager are only involved one day per month. On the contrary, YfEj is implemented by the Provincia di Roma by about 17 staff members of Porta Futuro. The projects implemented by members of the EURES network moreover, seem to a large extent to rely on staff (e.g. EURES advisors) that is only indirectly involved in YfEj or at best paid by non-YfEj resources. These 'hidden' staff members make it difficult to account for a conclusive statement on workload and the appropriate staff size for implementing YfEj.

Both the Provincia di Roma and the Municipality of Aarhus do not have such additional manpower at their disposal reported at times heavy workloads, albeit for different reasons. The Danish project beneficiary reported insufficient human resources to deal with the large requests for information from interested jobseekers, which was finally tackled through an Q&A page on the website. The project beneficiary from Rome reported an insufficient number of human resources to handle the large amount of job vacancies.

In addition, such operational challenges concern difficulties in acquiring suitable job vacancies for young jobseekers. These difficulties may follow from the lack of an effective strategy for the acquisition of job vacancies. In other cases, project beneficiaries experienced that employers are not willing to open up their job vacancies to jobseekers from abroad.

Finally operational obstacles related to organisational capacity include delays in the payment of grants. Project beneficiaries have these delays because of the internal red tape mentioned above, but also because jobseekers and employers are often late with the submission of the necessary documents.

### *Nature of the preparatory action*

A more fundamental issue mentioned by all project beneficiaries concerns the age limit of eligible jobseekers. Project beneficiaries stated that they were confronted with a large number of applicants, about 50% of all applicants at the ZAV, who are potentially mobile and interested in YfEj services, but who are aged over 30 years old and therefore not eligible. Applicants for the health care sector for example, where the ZAV realises about 70% of its placements are often aged between 30 and 40 years old.

### *Quality standards*

Project beneficiaries are obliged to check the quality and legality of proposed job vacancies and labour contracts to ensure fair mobility. Many project beneficiaries collect information on the qualitative aspects of the employment relationships via surveys. As long as surveys are not completed however, project beneficiaries often don't know whether they comply with the criteria on fair mobility as set out by the Commission in the Implementation Guide.

Project visits revealed that many jobs are acquired by project beneficiaries via long-standing relationships with employers. At the same time however, not all projects perform quality and reliability checks of employers and job vacancies on a structural basis. Background checks may include:

- enquiry at PES on registration of company;
- enquiry at the relevant chamber of commerce;
- internet search;
- enquiry at colleagues from EURES or other project partners.

Such checks are undertaken to some extent by project beneficiaries from Germany, Sweden and Spain, to a high extent in the Netherlands and to a lesser extent by the other project beneficiaries.

In order to force projects to undertake these quality checks, the Commission may introduce more audits or make interim payments dependent on evidence that checks have been undertaken.

Even among those projects that undertake background checks however, case managers have reported to solely rely on their 'gut feeling' before deciding to run a check. This reliance is insufficient to avoid supported job-finders ending up working under questionable conditions. Such a situation would potentially have disastrous consequences for the individual project that provided support and for the YfEj scheme as a whole.

The so-called "Erfurt Mobility Programme" is an example of an intra-EU mobility activity gone terribly wrong.<sup>43</sup> In 2013 a group of 180 young Spaniards were placed in Germany by a private recruitment agency. They were promised a three-year dual course combining practical and theoretical trainings at companies, a language course in Spain, accommodation, and a salary in Germany. The Spaniards did receive the language course, but after their arrival in Erfurt however, local firms did not know anything about their arrival, the young Spaniards didn't receive neither a salary nor accommodation and they had to pay for their stay by themselves. In the end, they were helped by the authorities in Thuringia, the Spanish Embassy, civil society and local employers, but many young Spaniards were forced to go home prematurely. The German authorities took the necessary actions against the company involved.

There was quite some media coverage on the situation. Even though the private recruitment agency in question acted independently from both EURES and the German PES, questions on this matter were raised to the German government and to the Commission. Exactly because this "mobility programme" was so much at odds with the principles of fair mobility, the case had resonance and may impact on the discussions on the future EU mobility schemes. This case shows again the need for adequate quality assurances.

A final operational challenge that concerns the quality of services follows from potential fraudulent behaviour of participants. Jobseekers are free to register at as many projects as they like, which enables them to receive similar support from multiple projects directly and herewith increase their chance to find a job. This is possible because projects are active in different countries and mobility flows between these countries is not coordinated by country representatives. Indeed the project visits

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. internet:  
<http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2013-10/auszubildende-spanien-arbeitsvermittler>  
See also for a more recent assessment: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/eurokrise/spanien/wie-deutschland-jungen-spaniern-die-hoffnung-nimmt-12894189.html>.

revealed that job seekers asked questions to one project about a job vacancy at another project, assuming that these were the same projects.

The possibility to support jobseekers and job-finders twice is possible in those cases where job-finders found a job vacancy by themselves. In practice however, project beneficiaries mostly support jobseekers and job-finders with vacancies that they manage themselves and not by another YfEj project. This allows project beneficiaries to 'control' the provision of support and to avoid double funding. Another risk arises from the possibility that job-finders accepted a job and received support before moving abroad, and then give up, for example because a better job option presented itself, possibly even via another YfEj project.

Despite the limited risk, this calls for improved coordination between the projects and for the introduction of a shared database in which all jobseekers, job-finders and employers who received YfEj support are registered.

### **5.5.2. The role of partnerships**

Project beneficiaries cooperate closely with partner organisations to acquire job vacancies and jobseekers. Cooperation with different partners also ensures sufficient geographical spread. Because of this cooperation, YfEj currently covers the EU-27. In order to improve cooperation with partner organisations abroad, the project beneficiaries need to 'network' with them. Networking basically includes visiting partner organisations and to invite them over, to learn from each other's experiences and to develop (informal) arrangements to share information and cooperate further. Improving the functioning of the network of project beneficiaries and their networking with other partners comes at costs which do not seem to be sufficiently covered under the grants awarded to the project beneficiaries.

Partner organisations diverge as much as the project beneficiaries as they include PES/ EURES, NGOs and PrES. In the case of Spain, SEPE functions both as a project beneficiary (for the 1st call) and as a partner organisation for the Italian Ministry and EURES Sweden. The table below presents an overview of the project beneficiaries and their partner organisations.

**Table 5.2. Overview project beneficiaries and partners**

<b>Project beneficiaries</b>	<b>International partner organisations</b>
<i>Call 1 projects</i>	
ZAV	Incoming: EURES ES, PT, EL, HU, BG and two voivodships in PL (Gdansk Wanbrzych); Outgoing: EURES SE and Flanders.
Provincia di Roma	H.U.S.C.I.E: EU consortium of ngo's with extensive networks of regional and local authorities and unions providing support in six EU MS (ES, PT, NL, DE, IE, SE).
Aarhus	Employment service of SI Swedish PES Office Stockholm
SEPE	Outgoing: EURES DE (LoC), AT, SE (LoC), UK, NL. Incoming: IT (LoC from Ministry). and FR.
<i>Call 2 projects</i>	
GI Group	Gi group offices in PL, RO, DE and in ES, IT, UK

Project beneficiaries	International partner organisations
Werkcenter NL	Berlin (U.bus) (LoC), Glasgow (Light on the Path) (LoC), ONLUS (Tempo Libero) Brescia (LoC) and <i>Fundacion Nuestra Sra Bien Aparecida</i> (Santander, ES), <i>Fundacion Laboral del Metal</i> (Santander, ES)
Aarhus	SK: Epic employment service inc. PL: Powiatowy Urzad Pracy w Lodz
Arbetsförmedlingen	PES Slovenia (LoC) PT: Instituto do Emprego e Formacao Profissional, IP (PES) (LoC) Es: SEPE (LoC) EL: the manpower employment organisation OAED - Eures Greece IE: FAS
Ministry of Labour IT	Pes in FR ( pole emploi) ES (sepe) PT (iefp) and Adecco (multinational job agency)

LoC= Letter of Commitment provided in the proposal.

According to all beneficiaries, a well-functioning network of partners crucially contributes to the success of YfEj projects. Project beneficiaries are generally satisfied with their partners. Visits to partners to ensure a proper understanding of the project is considered very important. In addition, close relations with partners need to be maintained because not all partners have a clear financial incentive to participate in YfEj projects: Not all partners receive a fee for matching, placement and recruitment services, like the EURES partners or the partner offices of GI Group.

Networking depends very much on the available resources as it involves travel and subsistence costs as well as costs for venues to meet with all partner organisations. In those cases where staff costs are entirely financed by the YfEj grant, the possibilities for networking are rather limited given the low reservation of 20% of the budget for management costs. If financial means for networking can be made available from other resources however, networking is more likely to occur. Here the strength of involving the EURES network becomes apparent. EURES is a strong network of PES from across the EU where individuals already built a legacy of cooperation. By using the EURES infrastructure, some project beneficiaries are able to keep the (staff) costs at a low level. This is particular the case with the Swedish YfEj project. Here an average job placement costs 1792,- Euro, whereas the average job placement costs of the GI Group equals 2012,- Euro and of Werkcenter NL 2254,- Euros. Average costs for these projects tend to decrease over time.

Not all project beneficiaries can tap into the EURES infrastructure but at the same time need to maintain their network with partners abroad.

## **Key findings**

The YfEj projects resemble complex undertakings. Their implementation is prone to challenges. Many of these challenges are unique and are less likely to occur again. It might therefore be worthwhile to consider ways of keeping project beneficiaries involved in YfEj over longer periods of time to increase the return on investment.

Keeping experienced employment organisations involved in the implementation of YfEj is also likely to guarantee the involvement of strong networks that are crucial for the successful implementation of the projects.

The scheme could also benefit from the introduction of several additional quality standards and risk containment procedures to reduce fraud and to avoid jobseekers undertaking work that does not comply with the standards on fair mobility as defined by the Commission.

The fact that YfEj was initiated through open calls for proposals resulted in the identification of a broad range of project beneficiaries. This has contributed to the innovative nature of YfEj. It may well have enabled the EURES members participating in the projects or those examining from a distance the development of YfEj, to reflect on the overall benefits of a more open network and to review the modalities under which such benefits outweigh any possible costs or risks perceived with the opening up of the network and the interaction with employment services of another nature than the PES.

The two CfPs resulted in many different types of employment organisations that fit the experimental character of the preparatory action. Divergence in the types of employment organisation is likely to increase now that the third call of YfEj opened up to apprenticeships and traineeships.



## 6. Effectiveness

**Effectiveness is the extent to which aims are achieved in terms of the results and impacts.** The overarching question for the effectiveness evaluation criteria is to *what extent have the selected projects contributed to achieving the overall objective of the intervention?* To answer this, YfEj is assessed on its results achieved, partnerships established, ability to overcome obstacles, recognize success factors and create sufficient communication and awareness of YfEj.

***Evaluation sub-questions to assess the extent the selected projects have contributed to achieving the overall objective of the intervention.***

### ***Outputs and results***

***Have the projects delivered the planned project results 3500 placements (2000 first call, 1500 second call)? And to what extent were the planned outputs delivered?***

***Has the quality of outputs delivered been of minimum acceptable level for institutions and individuals involved?***

### ***Partnerships***

***To what extent have partnerships been established?***

***Has the YFEJ preparatory action expanded cooperation between the different project beneficiaries and their partners?***

### ***Communication***

***Was communication sufficient to raise target groups' awareness?***

### ***Obstacles and success factors***

***What success factors influenced the achievement of objectives?***

***What obstacles have delayed or prevented the achievement of the goals, if any?***

The effectiveness of YfEj has been assessed based on:

- Data collected through the quarterly monitoring factsheets;
- Survey results;
- Desk research;
- Project case studies;
- EU interviews;
- Two Steering Group meetings.

At the time of writing, YfEj is still active. Projects under the first and second call for proposals have been monitored until 31-12-2013. The projects under the third call for proposals are still to be selected and are thus not part of this assessment. The assessment of the effectiveness of YfEj is based on the data collected until 31-12-2013. Since then, additional interviews have been carried out and updates have been provided by some of the projects which is used as anecdotal evidence and as input for the assessment of the potential in the near future.

### **6.1. Outputs and results**

In this section we discuss the following evaluation sub-questions:

- Have the projects delivered the planned project results 3500 placements (2000 first call, 1500 second call)?

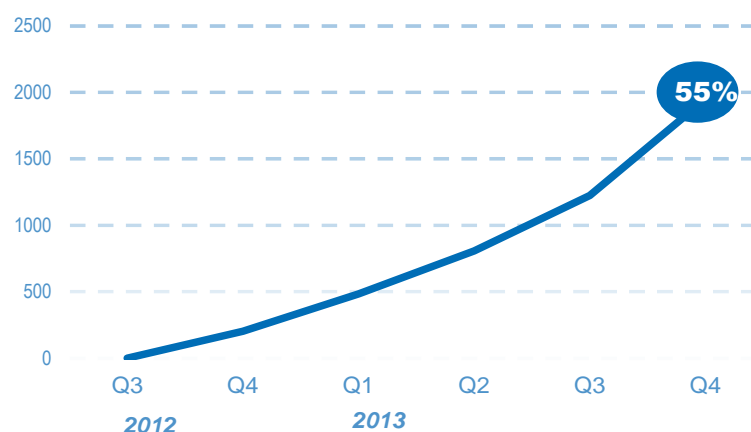
- To what extent were the planned outputs delivered?
- Has the quality of outputs delivered been of minimum acceptable level for institutions and individuals involved?

### 6.1.1. Placement results

The four projects under the first call for proposals were given a target of 500 placements each, whilst the five projects under the second call for proposals could indicate their own target. The selected projects under this second call established a target higher than initially planned (1570 instead of 1500 placements). The first and second call therefore had a combined target of 3570, which is slightly more than 70% of the total YfEj scheme target of 5000 placements.

At this stage of the implementation of YfEj, the nine projects have reached a total of 1950 placements, equal to 55% of their combined target.

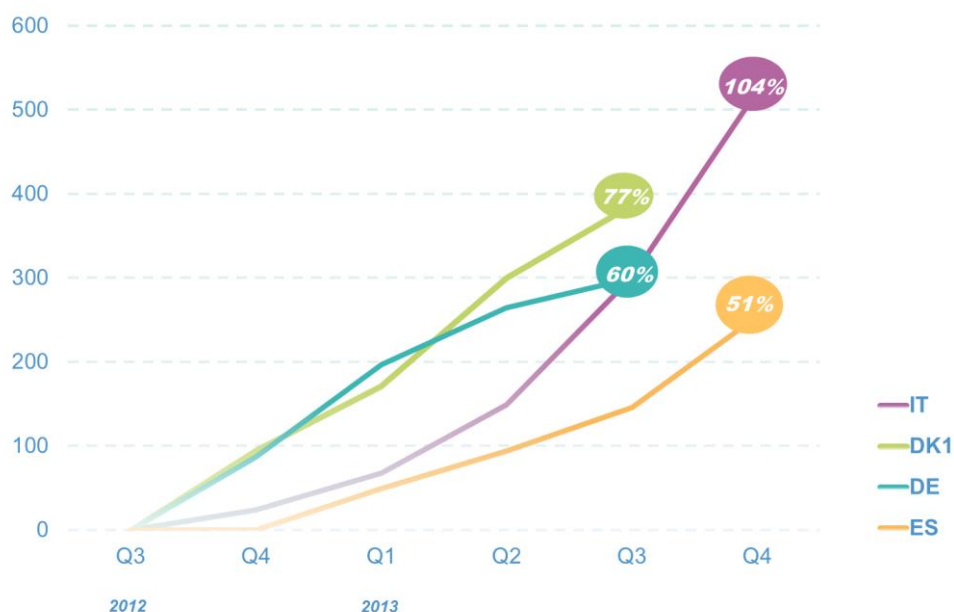
**Figure 6.1. Placement results**



According to the original timeframe, projects under the second call for proposals still have three months of providing services and two first call projects have been given an extension into the beginning of 2014, which will increase this placement result. With 1620 placement to go until the combined target achievement, the remaining active first and second call project will have to place more than 2.5 times the jobseekers than they did in the last quarter of 2013. Even if all current active projects would achieve their individual target, the difference of 314 placements between the achieved placements and the target would require additional investments beyond their targets for the current projects. Therefore, despite an increase in number of placement in each quarter, it is unlikely that the planned 3570 placements will be fully achieved.

### Projects under the first call for proposals

According to the initial plans, the four projects under the first call for proposals should have finished their services and achieved 2000 placements (500 each) by 31-12-2013. By this time, however, only two projects (from Aarhus (DK) and the ZAV (DE)) had finished their services. All four projects together achieved 73% of their total target. The two other projects (from SEPE (ES) and Provincia di Roma (IT) ) received an extension into the first quarter of 2014, which will increase this target achievement rate. but even then, they are unlikely to achieve more than 85% of the target of the call.



Neither the German nor Danish projects that finished their services in line with the original planning achieved their target by the end of their project. The ZAV (DE) achieved 60% and Aarhus (DK) 77% of its target. Nevertheless, both projects had demonstrated great potential, having reached over a third of their target by the end of the first quarter in 2013. If they had continued at the same speed, they would have been able to make an even greater dent into their target and had potential for reaching it. Both projects, however, noted lower results in the subsequent quarter and finished slightly earlier than anticipated by September 2013.

#### 6.1.2. Results from the ZAV project

The ZAV project stopped providing YfEj services during the summer of 2013 in order to facilitate a shift from the temporary services that YfEj provides to a more permanent newly developed programme called Mobipro-EU 'the Job of My Life'. This new programme has in great part been designed through the experiences of YfEj. Despite the fact that they did not reach their YfEj placement target, they did achieve a noteworthy result with the establishment of a nationally funded up-scaled version of services similar to YfEj. YfEj thus played an important incubator function for the ZAV and ultimately for the German national programme. Recognizing that they stopped their services earlier, the ZAV returned the unused budget.

### **6.1.3. Results from the Municipality of Aarhus project(s)**

The Municipality of Aarhus technically stopped providing YfEj services earlier than anticipated under the first call for proposals because they were awarded a new project under the second call for proposals. In reality, they continued the services they had provided under the first call for proposals, but with improved working processes and stronger relations with other (especially private) employment organisations. The success of the Danish project under the second call for proposals demonstrates that the investment of the first call for proposals can lay the foundations for greater success when more time is given. The costs for the start-up phase were significantly lower for the second project, leading to instant results; by the end of 2013 (less than 4 months into the second project) they had well achieved their second target. They had thereby achieved 90% of their combined first and second call target and still have, at the date of this report, another 5 months for further service delivery.

### **6.1.4. Results from the Provincia di Roma project**

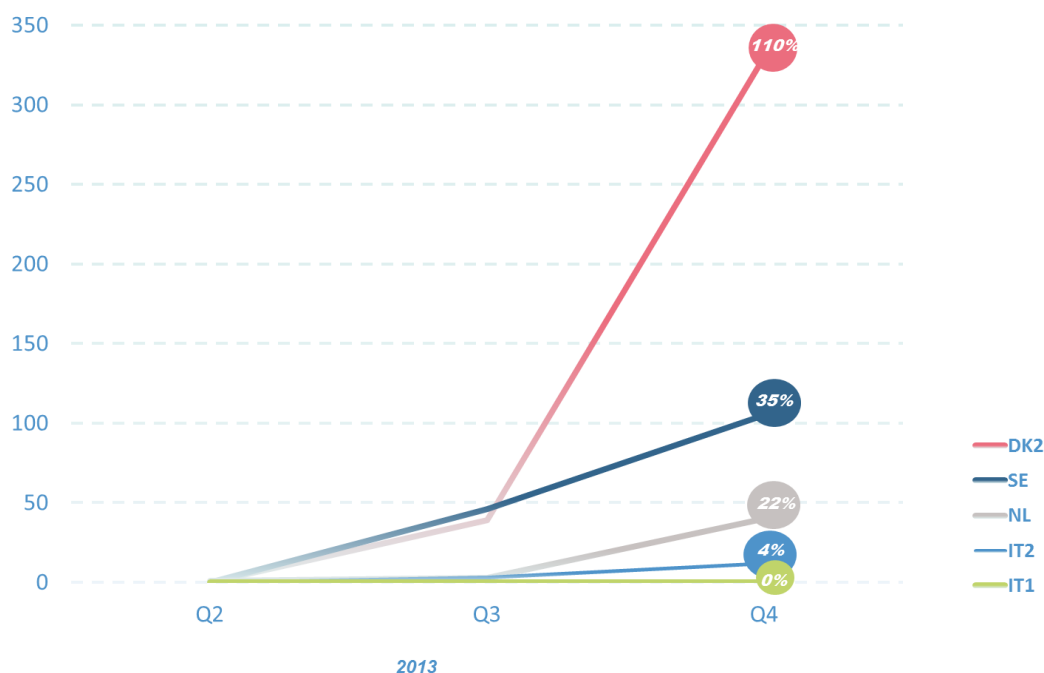
The Provincia di Roma is the only project under the first call for proposals to achieve its target in 2013. At the start of the project a significant investment was placed into designing the systems to facilitate matching and placements, which resulted in a relatively slow start in terms of results. They therefore did require an extension of their project to achieve this target. The initial investment paid off and in each quarter the project achieved around 1.5 times the number of placements compared to the previous quarter, in total having reached 104% of their target at the end of 2013 and still had a few weeks of support to go in 2014.

### **6.1.5. Results from the SEPE project**

SEPE demonstrated to have encountered the greatest obstacle in YfEj by requiring to change the law (with a Royal Decree) to provide the financial services under YfEj. To overcome this obstacle a significant amount of time and resources were invested in adapting the law. By the start of 2013, they were able to start actual financial support and achieve job placements. Like the project in Roma, the extensive set-up of the project limited the number of placement at first, but demonstrated a real learning curve. The project required an extension to complete its target, which, if it continues its current trajectory, is likely to achieve by the end of the first quarter of 2014.

### **6.1.6. Projects under the second call for proposals**

Projects under the second call for proposals should officially end between the end of March and the end of May and thus should have achieved 75% of their results by the deadline, assuming a relative constant number of job placements over time. However, by then they only achieved 31% of their combined target. Three of the projects have therefore been given an extension. In quantitative terms the planned outputs have thus not all be delivered. Three of the five projects have however shown increased efficiency and thereby increased results over time and the ability to deliver the planned outputs with extra time.



All projects under the second call for proposals, except for the Municipality of Aarhus, indicated similar start up delays as the projects under the first call for proposals. They did however, learn from the previous call in particularly with regard to ensuring that all organisational aspects were in place before starting placement services. This has for many of the projects led to a delay in the start-up, but at the same time, greater effectiveness between the 3rd and 4th quarter of 2013. The delay has mostly been found in the set-up of the external communications activities and establishing agreements with their partners in other Member States. It is well possible that the project managed by Arbetsförmedlingen (SE) and Werkcenter (NL) demonstrate a significantly higher result in the first quarter of 2014, and with an extension may well achieve their target. The two Italian projects (from GI Group (IT1) and the Ministry of Labour (IT2)), however, struggled not only with their partners and communication, but are also experiencing serious obstacles in attracting employers to participate in the project and open up job vacancies to foreign candidates.

#### 6.1.7. Placement results from interviews

During the proposal phase the projects decided whether or not they would provide interviews and or trainings. Supported interviews are a direct output of the preparatory action, but the results in terms of the interview having led to a job placement can add to the total number of placements achieved with YfEj support. Organisations that decided to provide (financial) support with interviews abroad, have encountered difficulties with tracing the results particularly when no financial support for relocation was requested after a successful interview (see the report on monitoring YfEj in the Technical Annex). It is therefore possible that financially supported interviews have led to successful placements without the knowledge of the leading organisations. With 1022 interviews having been funded through YfEj, it may well be possible that the projects (particularly under the first CfP) are closer to achieving their goal than is reported.

### 6.1.8. Delivery of outputs

YfEj projects could provide five types of services, namely:

- Matching jobseekers to vacancies;
- Supporting job interviews;
- Providing preparatory trainings;
- Providing a relocation allowance;
- Supporting SMEs with integration trainings for job-finders.

Due to the differences in the design of the projects, not all projects provide all services. The table below provides an overview of the projects providing each service.

**Table 6.1. Overview of services provided by the projects**

	Matching	Financial support for interviews	Preparatory training	Relocation allowance	Integration training
Call 1 projects					
Aarhus (DK)		X	X	X	X
ZAV (DE)	X	X	X	X	X
Roma (IT)	X	X	X	X	X
SEPE (ES)	X	X		X	
Call 2 projects					
Aarhus (DK)		X	X	X	X
GI Group (IT)	X	X	X	X	X
Ministry of Labour (IT)	X	X	X	X	X
Werkcenter (NL)	X	X		X	
Arbetsförmedlingen (SE)	(x)	X		X	X

Based on interviews during the project visits, it has become evident that each project has a different approach to recruitment, matching and placement services. These approaches range from:

- No direct matching services (DK);
- Informal information about jobs and careers abroad (SE);
- Searching appropriate people for specific (bottleneck) vacancies (GI Group IT & DE);
- Searching appropriate jobs for specific people (NL, ES, SE);
- Matching jobs and jobseekers (IT Roma, IT Ministry of Labour).

Due to the large differences between projects we find that it is not possible to use matching results as a comparable output for this preparatory action. Regardless of the approach, it can however, be determined how many trainings and financial support were provided. Whether a project achieves a high level of outputs not only depends on whether or not it planned to and provided the service, but also whether and how it promoted the service. Three general types of projects can be distinguished:

- The projects by Werkcenter, Provincia di Roma and GI Group for example, provide all services in one 'package' to a jobseeker. It therefore follows that these projects (should) present higher outputs in terms of matching services, support for interviews and preparatory training than relocation allowances and integration trainings, i.e. a higher number of young people may have benefited positively from YfEj than who have found placements abroad. In the case of Provincia di Roma, for example, large groups of young people participate in work-preparedness trainings (CV building, interview techniques etc.) as a

method of preparatory training, but only a selection subsequently finds a job abroad;

- The projects managed by EURES members from Germany, Spain, Sweden and Italy, on the other hand, may provide matching, training and financial support for interviews through existing EURES channels and instead use YfEj for the 'final push' through relocation allowances and integration trainings. Their results thus nearly match one-to-one in terms of relocation grants and placement results;
- The Danish model relies on the self-sufficiency of young people to find a job abroad and also only uses YfEj as a final push. It thereby follows that these projects only incidentally make use of the available budget for preparatory training and interviews and have higher numbers of relocation allowances.

As a result, the planned outputs should be considered in light of these project designs. The outputs vary per project both in the model/approach as well as the actual outputs. The table below presents the outputs by project per service provided by 31-12-2013.

**Table 6.2. - Overview of outputs achieved by the projects by 2013Q4**

	Financial support for interviews	Preparatory training	Integration training	Confirmed placements
Call 1 projects				
ZAV (DE)	169	117	46	299
Aarhus (DK)	168	84	7	387
SEPE (ES)	85	0	1	254
Provincia di Roma (IT)	490	1012	291	522
Call 2 projects				
Aarhus (DK)	60	126	6	330
GI Group (IT1)	2	45	0	1
Ministry of Labour (IT2)	1	0	1	12
Werkcenter (NL)	2	39	0	40
Arbetsförmedlingen (SE)	45	0	6	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>1022</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>1950</b>

These results indeed demonstrate some of the abovementioned differences, most notably that:

- Larger numbers of job-seekers used preparatory training under the project of the Provincia di Roma and GI Group than actually found a job. This has not been the case for the project managed by Werkcenter as they have been rather successful with the participants, although have not yet achieved a high placement result;
- EURES members and the Aarhus project tend to have a higher rate use of relocation allowances than preparatory trainings (with three of the EURES members not providing any preparatory trainings);
- The Provincia di Roma and the ZAV have been the most successful in attracting SMEs to use the integration training.

It is noteworthy that the two completely opposite models have generated the most successful results, namely the 'all-in' package of the Provincia di Roma and the self-sufficiency model of the Municipality of Aarhus. Neither are EURES members, but



demonstrated throughout the course of their projects, to be flexible and adaptable in establishing partnerships with employers and private employment agencies in other Member States.

#### **6.1.9. Obstacles encountered**

There are multiple reasons why the projects did not yield the target result, many related to the short duration of the project in relation to the investment required to start up the projects. Start-up difficulties are a combination of the newness of YfEj, an underestimation of external awareness raising required and an underestimation of internal procedural complications.

The most frequently cited reasons for delay in the service delivery have been:

- Time required for awareness raising, both in designing the materials as well as in attracting employers willing to open up job vacancies for young people from abroad;
- The short time frame of the project and the 'summer period' in which both employers and job-seekers demonstrate lower activities than the rest of the year;
- Involving partner organisations and holding them to the agreements;
- Organisational delay in procedure implementation (including 'red tape');
- Aligning YfEj with organisational priorities, particularly if these were not the target group of YfEj.

To prevent and overcome obstacles related to newness and unanticipated obstacles, the European Commission had designed an elaborate framework with implementation guidelines for the projects. However, as these were the first projects, not all potential obstacles could have been anticipated. It does appear that a significant component of the obstacles were not the lack of guidance by the EC but instead the result of an underestimation of efforts required by the project beneficiaries themselves to get their systems and support units in place. Even though organisations had at least some experience with job matching and placements, the organisational preparedness was relatively low, especially with respect to building and maintaining a well-functioning and employment-focused international network of partners concerned with intra-EU labour mobility.

The development of marketing and communication materials proved to be time-consuming for all leading organisations. There has also been some overlap in communication to the potential target audiences (see also the section on communication further in this chapter).

#### **6.1.10. Lessons learned**

Based on the results and the obstacles encountered, there are multiple lessons to be learned on the effectiveness of YfEj, including that:

- All projects demonstrate a learning curve and most improved results with each passing quarter;
- 18 months is too short to achieve 500 placements unless the leading organisation has prior experience and a well-established internal system in place;

- 12 months is too short to dedicate to the delivery of services if the leading organisation has no prior experience; the start-up phase is a crucial component of YfEj;
- Legal frameworks may prevent the provision of financial grants by public institutions to individuals.

## **6.2. Effective partnerships**

YfEj projects require partnerships in other Member States to deliver the appropriate services. Each project thus comprises of pre-proposal established partnerships, whether they be within the organisation (such as Gi Group), within a selected group of EURES members (SE, ES, DE and IT) or with external partners (such as Aarhus). Measuring the effectiveness of these partnerships is done by answering:

- To what extent have partnerships actually been established?
- Has the YfEj preparatory action expanded cooperation between the different project beneficiaries and their partners?

### **6.2.1. Extent to which partnerships have been established**

In terms of establishing and maintaining effective partnerships, all project beneficiaries have indicated during interviews and in their reporting that a good partnership is an essential component of the success of their projects. The information needed from both jobseekers and employers requires the transnational presence and pro-active involvement of the project partners. Throughout the first and second call for proposals the following types of partnerships have been established:

- Employers;
- Public employment services;
- EURES;
- Private employment services;
- Unemployment benefit agencies;
- Secondary, tertiary and VET schools;
- Language training schools.

The strength of the selected partners to deliver the services required under YfEj varied greatly from project to project. Those who collaborated with other EURES partners who also managed their own YfEj project indicated that there were competing conflicts of interest. This points to a lack of clarity amongst ownership and responsibility and should be addressed if YfEj were to be up-scaled in the future. Non-EURES partners encountered such issues in their own way; several partners were found to be more focused on their organisational priorities which did not match the needs for YfEj.

All project beneficiaries have indicated that their relationship with their partners required more attention than expected and led to more unanticipated obstacles. To deal with these issues, two routes have been taken, namely to invest additional time and effort to improve the partnerships or the cancelation of a partnership. In the latter case, projects either chose to reduce their coverage in that specific country or search for new partners.

As projects evolved, different needs that could not be met by their partners also led to new partnerships. New partners included language schools and private employment services. Several projects managed by non-EURES partners also indicated that they sought out to increase their collaboration with EURES in their own Member State.

The need for the multi-country presence of the project and thus the need for partners, has also led to benefits. For example, some EURES members who did not have the capacity to lead a YfEj project could still participate as a partners of another (EURES) project.<sup>44</sup>

### 6.2.2. Expansion of cooperation between the partners and projects

Indeed, there are multiple signals that YfEj has been a catalyst for increased and improved partnerships, including beyond the duration of the preparatory action. Three types of partnerships can be defined:

- Increased collaboration amongst the EURES network;
- New partnerships between EURES and non-EURES organisations;
- New partnerships between YfEj project beneficiaries and non-EURES non project partners, such as universities, employers, interim agencies and employment agencies.

The most prominent example of these partnerships is the 'bridges for cooperation' between EURES in Spain (SEPE) and Germany (ZAV). Through the funding of Mobipro-EU 'the job of my life' the partnership between Germany and Spain is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. In the time of economic crisis and high (youth) unemployment, the concept of 'bridges of cooperation' has especially taken traction in Spain. Discussions are on-going with other EURES members to further develop such partnerships. On the whole there are strong signals that YfEj strengthens the partnerships amongst EURES members, for example through discussions on the priorities and methods within the EURES service catalogue, organisational changes towards providing more and targeted matching services and ensuring quality of services. These partnerships amongst EURES members do not only exist because of YfEj, but however, have been found to be strengthened by the experience of YfEj.

Some of the collaboration between EURES and non-EURES members may last beyond the duration of YfEj. By opening up the call for proposals to non-EURES members, organisations who are able to set-up transnational mobility networks are able to participate. Due to the close relation between YfEj and the core services of EURES, the organisations can benefit from working together. One such example is the Werkcenter in the Netherlands who has used the start-up phase of the project to come to establish a strategic partnership with EURES in the Netherlands (who is not an official partners of any of the projects) for YfEj and other services provided by both organisations.

Lastly, in terms of partnerships with employers; the majority of YfEj project beneficiaries are jobseeker-oriented rather than employer oriented and the projects have helped expand or improve the relationships with employers. An example is the Aarhus project, which due to YfEj has established a working partnership with interim-agencies and large employers. The Swedish project is learning from this example. On the other hand, for a project such as that of GI Group, which is employer-focused in its day-to-day working processes, the entire YfEj project is an experiment to investigate whether they can further develop partnerships with employers to create a full-scale (self-sustained) business model from supporting the mobility of young people.

<sup>44</sup> A telephone survey amongst a sample of non-YfEj leading EURES members confirmed that they would not have been able to participate as lead partner and that they welcomed and appreciated the partner role they could hold within YfEj.

When it comes to partnerships, it has become evident that the 'recipe for success' are the priorities of the partners. If their organisational model is aligned with the needs of YfEj, they can be the key success factor in a project. At the same time, when their priorities are not sufficiently in line with YfEj, their lack of involvement can lead to underperformance. It has thus become evident that partners are a crucial component to the success of YfEj.

### 6.3. Communication

The leading organisations are responsible for their own communication activities. They can therefore choose who to aim their message to; whether they are employers, jobseekers (employed, unemployed or students) partners or other stakeholders. As the brand of YfEj did not yet exist prior to the first CfP, the communication activities of the projects are the first channels to the general public along with the dedicated website created by the European Commission. In addition, the Commission supported the project beneficiaries with various communication tools such as banners, leaflets and websites.

Based on the interviews, desk research and quarterly monitoring it has become evident that many of the projects consider YfEj awareness raising an important part of their activities. This can be explained by the relative recent launch, resulting in a need to inform people of the existence of the scheme.

However, the way project beneficiaries implement communication activities varies greatly. Depending on the purpose and design of the project, there are differences in the types of communication tools used and the (potential) audience reached. The German project, for example, aimed to attract jobseekers from countries where the unemployment level is high. Prior to YfEj they experienced that a public communication campaign towards such jobseekers leads to significant inefficiencies (large number of applications, many not appropriately qualified) and therefore chose to spend their efforts on face to face marketing to a targeted group. There is also a difference in the way YfEj is marketed to be an independent activity or part of the regular service portfolio of the project beneficiaries. For example, the Aarhus project uses its own organisation's website to promote YfEj, whereas the project from Provincia di Roma developed a separate project-dedicated website.

**Table 6.3 Types of communication methods used by the project**

	DE	ES	IT	DK	NL	SE	IT GI	IT MIn
YfEj Website			✓	✓	✓			
Organisation's Website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
YfEj Facebook			✓	✓	✓			
Organisation's Facebook			✓		✓		✓	✓
YfEj Twitter			✓		✓			
Organisation's Twitter			✓					✓
YfEj LinkedIn			✓		✓			
Organisation's LinkedIn			✓				✓	
Press releases	✓		✓	✓				
Leaflets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Face to face via staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Via job fairs and events	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Via partners	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Via (other) job centres	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Via educational institutes			✓	✓	✓			
Via the media (tv/radio)			✓	✓	✓			

There is little quantitative data on the reach and satisfaction of the communication activities of the projects at this stage of the preparatory action. This is partly due to the timing and partly due to the monitoring priorities where the reach of such communication methods is not measured by all projects. The anecdotal available information available does allow for some preliminary findings:

- Although there is limited activity on the social media sites, particularly LinkedIn (few members, little interaction with posts), the projects using these methods do indicate a positive experience. During interviews the use of social media was highlighted as a means to quickly spread information and generate a large audience for their project;
- Both jobcentres and educational institutes have been found an important source for finding eligible jobseekers (unemployed and graduating students), particularly when the projects target specific sectors or are looking to fill a specific job vacancy;
- The message of Your first EURES job can be made of interest to the media; several projects indicated that their press releases have been picked up by major radio, tv, and newspaper outlets and/ or that they have been requested for an interview;
- The awareness of the jobseeker or company in the country partners are highly dependent on partner activities, stressing the importance of ensuring good agreements and relations amongst the partners;
- Projects providing matching services, strongly benefit from, but also depend on, the organisational structure and incentives of their staff to spread the message of YfEj during 'regular' information and matching service activities.

Regardless of the methods, reaching jobseekers has been found to be easier than reaching employers. When asked for the causes for not achieving YfEj goals, none of the projects indicate a lack of jobseekers. In certain instances, this is due to the organisation's set up, which can be more oriented towards jobseekers than to employers, meaning that being successful in YfEj requires a shift in working methods for some of the projects. For all projects, however, the search for job vacancies is significantly hindered by the economic crisis, which creates a difficult labour market context for the activities of the project, particularly for starters. Furthermore, several of the interviewees have indicated that even if they have good relations with employers and are able to find appropriate job vacancies, they experience a significant obstacle in convincing employers that they should open up vacancies to young, inexperienced jobseekers from outside of their own Member State.

#### **6.4. Key findings**

Research on effectiveness provided valuable insights on the contract duration and the importance of well-established networks for the success of YfEj projects and ultimately the scheme as a whole. There are multiple lessons to be learned on the effectiveness of YfEj.

All projects demonstrate a learning curve and most of them produced improved results with each passing quarter. Yet, only two projects achieved their targets.

With regard to contract duration, the evaluation found that 18 months is too short to achieve 500 placements unless the leading organisation has prior experience and a well-established internal system in place. In addition, 12 months is too short to

dedicate to the delivery of services if the leading organisation has no prior experience; the start-up phase is a crucial component of YfEj.

In order to be effective projects furthermore crucially depend on their own dedication and on the commitment and reliability of a network of partner organisations. The YfEj projects of Aarhus, Provincia di Roma and Werkcenter NL characterised themselves through a dedicated staff and management. This dedication generated innovative approaches, take for example the web platform from the Provincia di Roma, and subsequently high level results.

The evaluation also produced a key insight on the conditions under which services are provided by YfEj projects are highly effective. The Aarhus project only offers financial support to jobseekers and job-finders that arranged a job abroad by themselves. Since they don't or only to a minimum extent provide other types of services, their success rate shows that young people can become mobile by themselves. They only seem to require financial support.

The YfEj project of the Provincia di Roma however, illustrates that if sufficient financial means are made available, a project that provides extensive matching services and genuinely supports young seekers to find a job abroad by deploying all types of support that YfEj allows for, can become just as effective as the project from Aarhus in terms of the number of placements achieved.

## 7. Efficiency

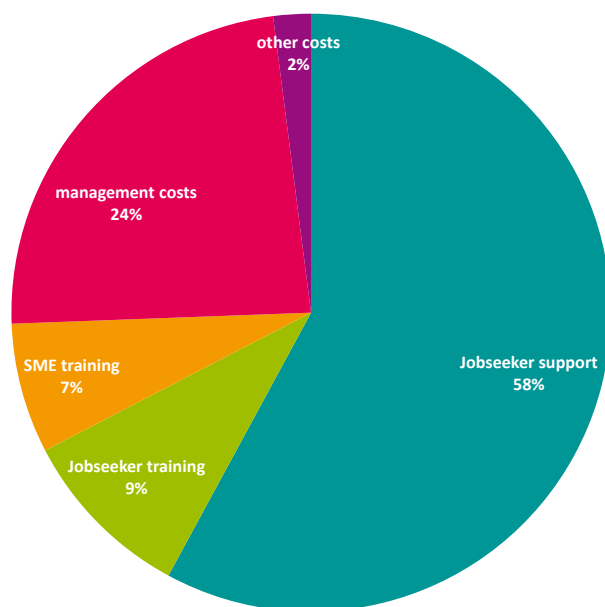
Efficiency relates to the cost-effectiveness of the preparatory action. Cost-effectiveness can be measured by assessing whether it would be possible to achieve the same level of results with less or no funding or if it is possible to achieve better results with the same level of funding. These two questions are indeed the core for the evaluation of the efficiency of the preparatory action.

The efficiency of YfEj has to be considered in light of the state of the preparatory action. Seven out of the nine projects are still in the process of implementing services. Thus, the burden of the overhead (particularly in terms of the start-up costs) may still be reduced with an increased number of placements, whilst the overall expenditure will increase. With this in mind, there are few conclusive statements that can be made about the efficiency of YfEj. The next pages explore the reported costs by the project beneficiaries in light of their service model and target achievements up until 31-12-2013.

### 7.1. Trends in budget spent

From the start of YfEj until the end of 2013, the nine projects combined reported to have spent 2 625 919 EURO on YfEj, equal to 35% of the total budget allocated under the two calls for proposals. Three quarters of the budget used has reportedly been spent on direct services to jobseekers and SMEs, with the large majority spent on relocation grants or interview grants (see figure).<sup>45</sup>

**Figure 7.1 Distribution of YfEj services until 31-12-2013**



The first four projects alone spent in total 1.88 million EURO on YfEj from the start of their project until the end of 2013, equal to 45% of the allocated budget. By then, the services of the project were completed or would finish within three months. There was

<sup>45</sup> There are some minor discrepancies in the reporting of costs per project for example in the under-reporting of staff costs, allocating preparatory trainings under staff costs headings and allocating technical assistance under direct support provided.



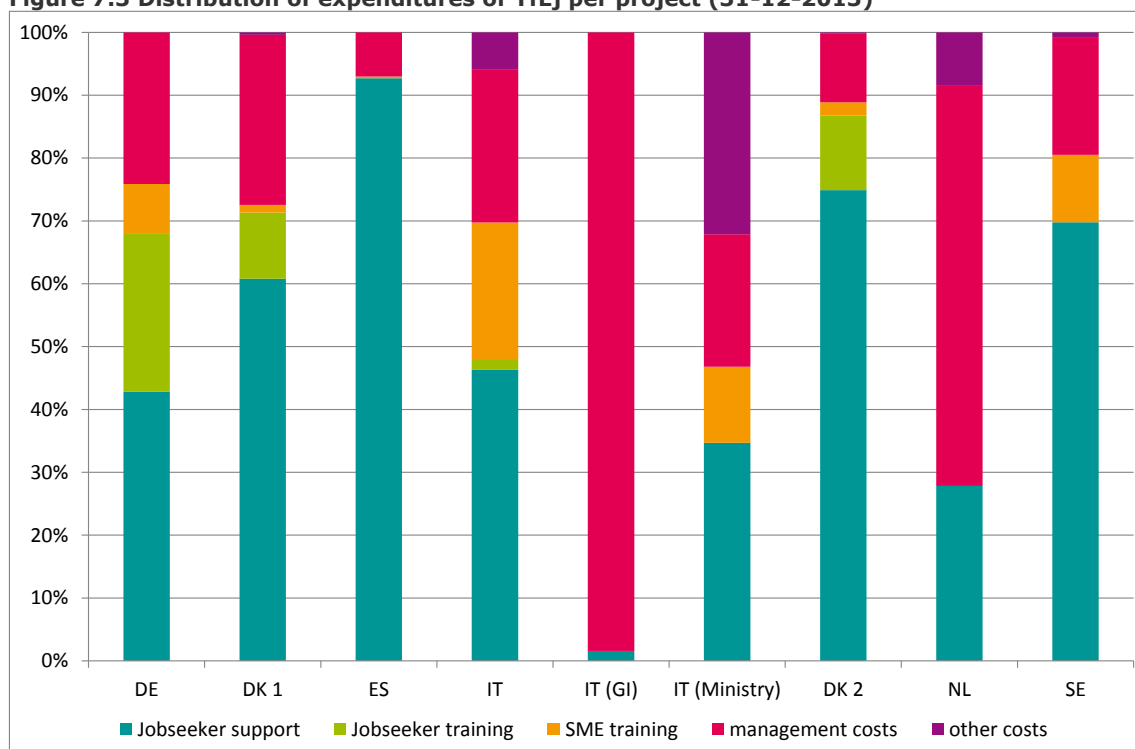
thus a significant level of under-spending, reflected in the total number of placements achieved. The projects under the second call for proposals spent 750.073 EURO on YfEj by the end of 2013, equal to 22% of the total budget allocated to these projects. Three of the five projects received an extension for services beyond the first quarter of 2014. The expenditures are thus likely to increase significantly for this group of projects. Regardless of the level of spending, by the end of 2013, the distribution of the costs is rather similar between the first and second call projects. Projects under the first call spent proportionally only slightly more on trainings and slightly less on financial grants and management costs than the second call projects (see figure 7.2).

**Figure 7.2 distribution of YfEj services for call 1 and call 2 by 31-12-2013**



On a per project basis however, there is a much greater discrepancy between the distribution of costs amongst the projects, both in absolute terms and %age as can be seen from the following two figures.

**Figure 7.3 Distribution of expenditures of YfEj per project (31-12-2013)**

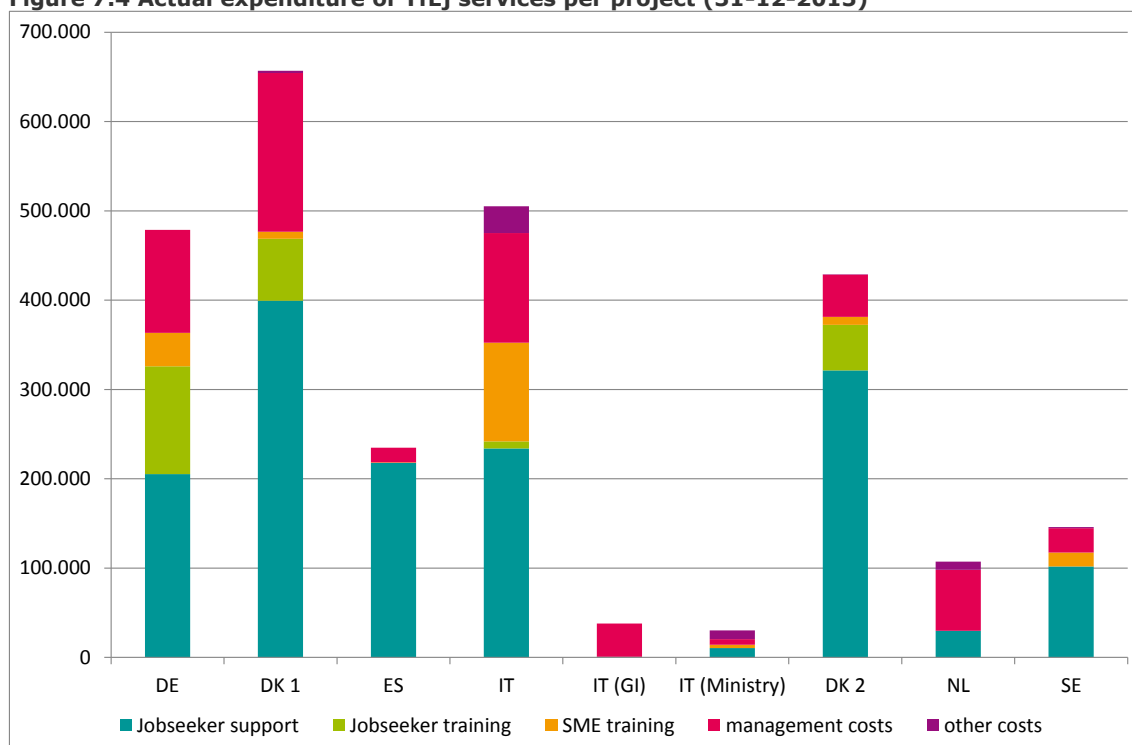


Based on the data provided by the projects, three projects spent more than half of their budget on management costs and other overheads, namely Gi Group (IT), the Ministry of Employment (IT) and Werkcenter (NL). However, considering their level of placement results (less than a third) this is very likely to balance out as soon as the level of placements increase and start-up costs have been completed; bearing in mind all three projects have received an extension until the third quarter of 2014.

The design of the project model plays a role in the distribution of the costs. The projects managed by ZAV (DE), Aarhus (DK), Provincia di Roma (IT), The Ministry of Employment (IT) and Arbetsförmedlingen (SE) have a lower distribution amongst direct jobseeker support than SEPE (ES) because they offer more preparatory and or SME trainings.

In the case of the projects managed by Aarhus (DK) it has become evident that the costs associated with the start-up and overhead are significantly lower than during the first project, both in %age of the total costs as well as in absolute numbers (see figure 7.4).

Figure 7.4 Actual expenditure of YfEj services per project (31-12-2013)



The Danish, Italian and German project under the first call for proposals have spent the highest amount of the budget (in that order). This is in line with their earlier start than the second call projects, but not in line with their results achieved thus far as the Italian project has been far more successful than the Danish project (522 versus 387 placements). In other words, the project by the Provincia di Roma has been more cost-effective than the Danish project under the first call for proposals.

## 7.2. Average placement cost

Based on the placements achieved and the budget used to achieve them, an average placement cost per project can be calculated as can be seen from the table below.

Project	Target achieved By 31-12-2013	Target	Budget used By 31-12-2013	Average cost per placement
ZAV	60%	500	€ 478.822	€ 1.601
Aarhus (1 <sup>st</sup> call)	77%	500	€ 656.946	€ 1698
SEPE	51%	500	€ 234.825	€ 925
Provincia di Roma	104%	500	€ 505.253	€ 968
GI Group	0%	490	€ 37.808	-
Ministry of Labour IT	4%	300	€ 30.133	€ 2511
Aarhus (2d call)	110%	300	€ 429.069	€ 1300
Werkcenter NL	22%	180	€ 107.165	€ 2679
Arbetsförmedlingen	35%	300	€ 145.838	€ 1389

Based on these calculations, it would seem that the model of the project managed by SEPE and the Provincia di Roma are the most cost-effective and that the projects managed by Werkcenter and the Ministry of Employment in Italy are the least cost-effective.

However, there are many caveats to these calculations, namely:

- The costs of the activities required to start up the projects and the general overhead of the projects become less when more placements are achieved. It is thus only predictable that projects that have not reached their targets (particularly under the second call for proposals) are more expensive now – on an average per placement cost. They will become less expensive towards the end of their project;
- Not all projects had paid all the grants yet to the job-finders who had been included in the placement result calculations (delayed registrations);
- Not all overhead costs which have facilitated the results have been paid out yet (such as contracts for technical support);
- Several projects were able to benefit from internal contributions towards the management of the projects, whereas others strictly calculated the associated costs. There is thus a tendency for unreported (hidden) costs, (especially the case in the public organisations).

The Danish and German project under the first call for proposals did finish their services completely. Based on their data provided, it can be determined that the Danish project was slightly more expensive (97 euro per placement). This calculation assumes there are no hidden costs in either project. The differences between the two models are distinctive, with the German project providing targeted matching services and the Danish project depending on the self-sufficiency of the jobseeker. This implies that the German project was slightly more efficient; having both fewer costs on average and providing an additional service to the jobseeker.

Nevertheless, the German project is very likely to have benefited from an important partner in terms of marketing the project to potentially qualified job-seekers, namely the EURES network and particularly their Spanish counterparts (SEPE) who played an important role in the recruitment at the start of the project. Not being part of the EURES network meant that the Danish project had to invest more heavily in the set up of its partnerships. The pay-off of this set up is notable; during its second project (under the second call for proposals) the average placement costs dropped down to 1300 euro. This is a reduction of nearly 400 euro (25%) per placement and implies that the costs of the set-up of the project, especially the marketing and partnership building, is high. It also indicates that within less than two years, the pay-off for the start-up phase can be achieved.

### **7.3. Same results with less budget?**

Based on these budgets a projected budget can be determined as required to reach the total target per project. These projections are most realistic the closer the target achievement as the burden of the management and other overhead costs reduces over time. The following table presents the project budget projections to reach the target based on expenditure patterns by the end of 2013.

Project	Budget used By 31-12- 2013	Projected budget required to reach the target	Actual budget available	Budget granted project required	vs
ZAV	€ 478.822	€ 798.037	€ 1.050.000	€ 251.963	
Aarhus (1st call)	€ 656.946	€ 853.177	€ 1.090.196	€ 237.019	
SEPE	€ 234.825	€ 460.441	€ 939.278	€ 478.837	
Provincia di Roma	€ 505.253	€ 485.820	€ 1.108.616	€ 622.796	
GI Group	€ 37.808	-	-	-	
Ministry of Labour IT	€ 30.133	€ 753.325	€ 710.721	€ -42.604	
Aarhus (2d call)	€ 429.069	€ 390.063	€ 676.695	€ 286.632	
Werkcenter NL	€ 107.165	€ 487.114	€ 427.304	€ -59.810	
Arbetsförmedlingen	€ 145.838	€ 416.680	€ 537.630	€ 120.950	

In the case of the two projects that may not reach their target within the budget (Werkcenter and the Italian Ministry of Labour), an improved efficiency by increasing placements and reducing overhead costs may bring their projects into a positive budget (which is likely to occur considering their low placement rates achieved at the time of reporting).

If the projects have correctly reported their project costs and if there are no outstanding contracts to be paid, then all but two projects should be able to reach their targets well within the budget allocated to them. For the overall preparatory action, this comes to having reached 55% of the target with 35% of the allocated budget. If the reporting on successful interviews will be improved, this difference may in fact be increased even further. This would indicate that the same results may be achieved with less funding. However, this conclusion is in stark contrast with the feedback from the project beneficiaries who have reported struggling with the management costs and overhead budget available. We have found strong indications that several (if not all) projects are using other funding sources to cover the cost of overhead, such as ICT services, database management, administrative support and matching services.

## 7.4. Key findings

With the reported 35 % of the budgets, 55 % of the targets have been achieved. This indicates that the same results may be achieved with less funding. This is a strong indicator that there are significant hidden costs, particularly among public organisations.

On average 75 % of the budget has been used for direct costs, i.e. jobseeker and SME support, although this varies in practice.

From the one example that exists, namely the Danish project, it can be determined that projects operate more efficiently in the second year.

Not been part of the EURES network means significantly higher start-up costs, particularly to set up a partner network.

## 8. Conclusions

The YfEj preparatory action is the Commission's first experiment with a TMS for young persons. The experimental setup of the YfEj scheme and the individual projects generated valuable insights on the relevance, complementarity and EU-added value, organisation and governance, effectiveness and efficiency. The key conclusions on these evaluation criteria are listed below.

### Conclusion 1: relevance

The preparatory action overall reflects a relevant intervention. YfEj clearly anticipates on several profound needs on labour markets in the EU, most notably on youth unemployment. By bringing supply and demand together, it appears relevant to existing needs of both young jobseekers and employers with (bottleneck) vacancies. When doing so, YfEj also provides a service package to reduce the obstacles to first time labour market entry and thereby facilitating the transition from education to work. In addition, the scheme provides services tailored to overcome individual non-financial obstacles to labour mobility, such as the lack of labour market information and appropriate language skills. Non-financial institutional obstacles related to the recognition of qualifications are expected to be tackled with new services delivered by the third call project beneficiaries. Financial support furthermore, may indeed overcome financial obstacles to labour mobility. These financial obstacles are particularly prominent among young people who are unemployed or working under precarious conditions in low paid employment relationships and/ or are still (financially) dependent on their parents.

The relevance is somewhat limited by the findings that the age group 18-30 seems insufficient to reach the full potential of young jobseekers. Prominent reasons for this are the high level of interest of young adults aged over 30 and the fact that bottleneck vacancies often require a certain level of experience among candidates that cannot be expected among the current target group.

### Conclusion 2: Complementarity and EU-added value

YfEj reinforces the EURES network by adding new measures –financial support- to the service catalogue. In this way YfEj is complementary to EURES. This seems however less the case for matching, placement and recruitment services since the EURES network already provided these services. In practice however, YfEj turned out to be an opportunity for the piloting of EURES members to render their procedures and organisations more employment focussed and to improve cooperation among themselves and with other types of employment organisations. The possibility to provide financial support to participants contributed to this.

Because only few non-EU funded national mobility schemes exist, the complementarity of YfEj to such mobility schemes is limited. Complementarity with other EU mobility schemes is also high because of the focus on young workers.

The added value of YfEj is potentially high since it constitutes together with EURES the main infrastructure for the promotion of labour mobility in the EU. Of course, with the main difference that YfEj is exclusively targeted at young people.

YfEj also has proven to be of added-value for the EURES network. Engaging into YfEj turned out to be an excellent opportunity for EURES project beneficiaries and partners

to prepare themselves for the EURES reform and to adapt their internal procedures to render themselves able to provide matching, placement and recruitment services as well as financial support. In addition, their engagement also improved the functioning of the network both within the EURES member state, i.e. the alignment of local EURES to common objectives, and between EURES members through new forms of bi- and multilateral cooperation.

### **Conclusion 3: Organisation and governance (projects)**

The implementation of YfEj is complex and requires many resources. For the project beneficiaries this follows from the simultaneous provision of matching, placement and recruitment services as well as of financial support, which project beneficiaries didn't do before. In addition, in order to facilitate YfEj service provision, project beneficiaries also need to arrange a proper foundation such as the network of partners, an appropriate ICT infrastructure and a sufficient legal basis. At the same time, the duration of project is fairly limited and effectively even further reduced by the long start-up phases.

The-project beneficiaries of the preparatory action seem not as experienced with transnational matching, placement and recruitment as originally envisaged. This can be exemplified by the long start-up phases of all projects. Organisations with most potential for such expertise (particularly EURES members) have furthermore been in the middle of a shift in terms of the relevant service provision.

### **Conclusion 4: Organisation and governance (Commission)**

For the European Commission moreover, the preparatory action generates a heavy workload because it represents a new type of targeted mobility programme, its future hasn't been entirely secured and all the different YfEj projects constitute different realities that require much attention. The Commission is managing this workload by deploying so far only 1 FTE staff member for the elaboration and management of calls for proposals, financial and contractual management, a helpdesk function, the organisation of Steering Group meetings, elaboration and coordination of communication deliverables, monitoring and evaluation, follow up of reporting cycle as well as for policy development and reporting.

A certain level of centralisation remains necessary. In light of the European dimension of targeted mobility schemes, the Commission may well be the best placed organisation to continue to facilitate the exchange of information, good practices, and team building via the organisation of Steering Group meetings, monitoring and evaluation of the scheme and to ensure coherence between projects through the programme logic that has been created by the detailed Implementation Guide under the YfEj preparatory action 2011-2013.

### **Conclusion 5: Effectiveness (operational)**

Research on effectiveness provided valuable insights on the contract duration and the importance of well-established networks for the success of YfEj projects and ultimately the scheme as a whole. There are multiple lessons to be learned on the effectiveness of YfEj.

All projects demonstrate a learning curve and most of them produced improved results with each passing quarter. Yet, only two projects achieved their targets.



With regard to contract duration, the evaluation found that 18 months is too short to achieve 500 placements unless the leading organisation has prior experience and a well-established internal system in place. In addition, 12 months is too short to dedicate to the delivery of services if the leading organisation has no prior experience; the start-up phase is a crucial component of YfEj.

In order to be effective projects furthermore crucially depend on their own dedication and on the commitment and reliability of a network of partner organisations. The YfEj projects of Aarhus, Provincia di Roma and Werkcenter NL characterised themselves through a dedicated staff and management. This dedication generated innovative approaches, take for example the web platform from the Provincia di Roma, and subsequently high level results.

### **Conclusion 6: Effectiveness (service provision model)**

The evaluation also produced a key insight on the conditions under which services are provided by YfEj projects are highly effective. The Aarhus project only offers financial support to jobseekers and job-finders that arranged a job abroad by themselves. Since they don't or only to a minimum extent provide other types of services, their success rate shows that young people can become mobile by themselves. They only seem to require financial support.

The YfEj project of the Provincia di Roma however, illustrates that if sufficient financial means are made available, a project that provides extensive matching services and genuinely supports young seekers to find a job abroad by deploying all types of support that YfEj allows for, can become just as effective as the project from Aarhus in terms of the number of placements. In terms of quality of services however, the current level of service provision by the Provincia di Roma clearly exceeds that of the level provided by Aarhus.

### **Conclusion 7: Efficiency**

With the reported 35 % of the budgets, 55 % of the targets have been achieved. This indicates that the same results may be achieved with less funding. This is a strong indicator that there are significant hidden costs, particularly among public organisations.

On average 75 % of the budget has been used for direct costs, i.e. jobseeker and SME support, although this varies in practice.

From the one example that exists, namely the Danish project, it can be determined that projects operate more efficiently in the second wave of projects.

Not been part of the EURES network means significantly higher start-up costs, particularly to set up a partner network.

## 9. Recommendations for the continuation of YfEj (TMS)

YfEj has demonstrated to be relevant and providing added-value. The services provided have furthermore demonstrated the potential for innovation and improving effectiveness and efficiency over time. There are thus reasons to continue some form of the preparatory action, but with adjustments, in particular to ensure an up-scaling can be sustainable. The recommendations are therefore based on the findings during the evaluation phase. The first set of recommendations is founded on the similarities found between YfEj and existing mobility schemes. The subsequent recommendations are based on the findings associated with the evaluation criteria and the monitoring of the projects.

### 9.1. Learning from other EU mobility schemes

1. **Continue to manage YfEj at EU level.** Following the experience of Erasmus mobility activities, it is recommended that a continued intervention should have an EU dimension. Allowing for EU-level measures enables the possibility for reallocating funding between implementing bodies or geographical locations, where needed.<sup>46</sup>
2. **Actively steer to ensure a balance of project types and geographical coverage.** The creation of a balanced group of project beneficiaries in terms of type and geographical location is not likely to occur naturally. Both in YfEj as well as in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs scheme there was a clear overrepresentation of implementing organisations from Italy and Spain (four out of nine projects under YfEj and 40% of all Implementing Organisations in Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs). A likely cause for this geographical concentration is that organisations in these countries tend to be more focused on, experienced with, and therefore better geared up for application procedures for EU funding opportunities.<sup>47</sup>
3. **Avoid high administrative burdens on partner organisations.** The administrative burden for application and implementation for partner organisations can be an important factor for success. In both mobility schemes Comenius<sup>48</sup> and Leonardo da Vinci,<sup>49</sup> partner involvement is considered an important factor for success, which can easily be reduced by a high administrative burden. YfEj has not encountered a high burden for partners yet, but has encountered significant delays in problems with partnership agreements. This should be reduced or resolved without adding unnecessary administrative burden.

<sup>46</sup> European Commission (2012). *Interim Evaluation of Erasmus Mundus II (2009-2013)*.

<sup>47</sup> European Commission (2011). *Interim evaluation of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Pilot Project/ Preparatory Action*.

<sup>48</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/llp\\_en.htm#tab-4](http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/llp_en.htm#tab-4).

<sup>49</sup> European Commission (2007). *Joint Report on the Final Evaluation of Socrates II, Leonardo da Vinci II and eLearning*.

4. **Continue to avoid a high administrative burden on both the implementing organisations as well as the jobseeker/participant.** In several mobility schemes (e.g. Leonardo da Vinci, Youth in Action<sup>50</sup>), the lack of an efficient or user friendly application or selection system is in some cases found to be an important burden on the implementation of the scheme.<sup>51</sup> Developing such systems may require a relative long period of development, as for example is concluded in the evaluation of Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs.<sup>52</sup> The experience with these schemes shows that simplifying application procedures quickly translate in higher user satisfaction.
5. **Invest more in visibility at centralised level.** The recommendations for several schemes (e.g. Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs,<sup>53</sup> Youth in Action,<sup>54</sup> Comenius<sup>55</sup>) include better branding and more visibility. In the context of the Comenius scheme, it is recommended that an EU dissemination tool is used in order to achieve this goal.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, under YfEj this has been found to be an obstacle as well and should thus be addressed by keeping in mind the lessons learned from these mobility schemes. Linking YfEj closer to the EURES network, for example by restricting participation to EURES members and partners, may facilitate to take benefit from the EURES portal and the EURES brand.
6. **Continue to provide implementation guidelines and continue to monitor the progress of the activities, both at process and result level.** Within several mobility schemes (e.g. Leonardo da Vinci,<sup>57</sup> Youth in Action<sup>58</sup>) the availability of proper monitoring tools, including central management (e.g. the appointment of a single unit or person to coordinate the supply of information<sup>59</sup>) and measurable indicators, is important. A lack of the implementation of such tools from the start of a project can result in the inability to identify progress and results on scheme level. The implementation guideline for YfEj is thereby an innovative and important tool and should continue to be used and updated as the design of the intervention evolves.

## 9.2. Improving the relevance of YfEj

Overall, YfEj has been found relevant to the needs it aims to address. To further increase its relevance the following adaptations can be considered:

1. Continue to address real obstacles to intra-EU labour market mobility for young people, as determined by evidence-based research. These obstacles may change over time, as EU and Member State policies and actions may reduce existing obstacles. The relevance of the support provided should thus continue

<sup>50</sup> European Commission (2011). *Youth in Action. Interim Evaluation*.

<sup>51</sup> See European Commission (2007). Joint Report on the Final Evaluation of Socrates II, Leonardo da Vinci II and eLearning and: European Commission (2010). Ex-post Impact Assessment study concerning the „Marie Curie Actions“ under the Sixth Framework Programme.

<sup>52</sup> European Commission (2012). Interim Evaluation of Erasmus Mundus II (2009-2013).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> European Commission (2011). *Youth in Action. Interim Evaluation*.

<sup>55</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/llp\\_en.htm#tab-4](http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/llp_en.htm#tab-4)

<sup>56</sup> This tool is called the European Shared Treasure: [www.europeansharedtreasure.eu/](http://www.europeansharedtreasure.eu/)

<sup>57</sup> European Commission (2007). Joint Report on the Final Evaluation of Socrates II, Leonardo da Vinci II and eLearning.

<sup>58</sup> European Commission (2011). *Youth in Action. Interim Evaluation*.

See the Leonardo da Vinci recommendations in:

European Commission (2007). Joint Report on the Final Evaluation of Socrates II, Leonardo da Vinci II and eLearning

to be assessed over time. Thus, the intervention should remain flexible to respond to structural changes.

2. Consider increasing the age limit of the intervention to 35. By increasing the age limit, the intervention will be in line with the greater EU objectives, namely the EU2020 objectives for both education and mobility. Increasing the age limit to 35 would furthermore respond to the obstacles encountered by the project beneficiaries under the first and second call for proposals, particularly in relation to bottleneck vacancies, but also in regards to the late graduation age of those following tertiary education.

### **9.3. Improving the complementarity and EU-added value of YfEj**

The complementarity of YfEj has been found limited at programme level but high at project level, indicating that the services provided through the intervention are appropriate, but lacking a structural framework. The added value has been found to be high, especially serving an incubator function for change. To improve the complementarity of YfEj the following changes could be made:

1. Embedding YfEj within the services of EURES, thereby guaranteeing continuity placed within the structure tasked with intra-EU job mobility and allowing for the flexibility and change required in a continuously changing labour market. This recommendation is also in line with the findings related to the necessary partners and network for an efficient and effective implementation.
2. Allow for and encourage the incorporation of specialised (public and private) employment organisations into the delivery of services. Keeping the intervention accessible for organisations that have proven to be successful, are motivated and innovative will provide the renewal and specialisation required for these services and target group. This recommendation is in line with the reform of the EURES network with regards to its opening to EURES partner organisations.
3. Continue to assess the added value of the types of services provided and focus the intervention on those that generate the highest level of added value. At this interim stage of the preparatory action this appears to be the financial support to interviews rather than relocation grants.

### **9.4. Improving the organisation and governance of YfEj**

Despite its relative straight-forward set-up and the high level of commitment of the EC services to YfEj, there have been several significant issues related to the organisation and governance of YfEj at programme and project level. These are likely to continue and may increase if un-addressed in an up-scaled version. To reduce and overcome these obstacles, we recommend:

1. Outsourcing the management of the programme to an external agency. This would reduce the burden on the EC and allow them to focus on their priority services.
2. Embedding a permanent but limited, in terms of demand, role for the EC staff involved in EURES into the intervention. By doing so, the intervention will continue to benefit from the knowledge and network from the unit and have a close line to those involved in the policies and actions relevant to its setting.

3. Provide more communication and marketing materials from the centralised level to avoid an overlap in activities/ unnecessary cost by the project beneficiaries and reduce time lost during the start-up phase. Support project beneficiaries with the translation of these EU communication tools to the needs of their particular target groups.
4. If it is chosen to continue YfEj on a project basis, be them EURES members or other labour market stakeholders: involve implementing organisations for longer periods of time to overcome the obstacles of the start-up phase, also allow them to apply again for a second project when they are finished. A fairly simple way of resolving this is to prolong the duration of contracts to 24 months.
5. Strengthen obligatory procedures via the Implementation Guide and the CfP to prevent fraud and to avoid jobseekers undertaking work that does not comply with the fair mobility principles set by the Commission. These procedures include the registration of all participants in a common database and an obligatory background check of employers. This should be designed with minimal administrative burden on the jobseeker and employer.

### **9.5. Improving the effectiveness of YfEj**

Only two of the nine projects were able to achieve their target thus far. However, many demonstrate the potential to do so with more time. We therefore recommend:

1. Increase the tasks of the centralised (EC level) support services to reduce the burden of the start-up phase at project level. Areas for improvement include the centralisation of design of the communication materials, providing templates for contract agreements and further expanding the implementation guide towards the needs of the projects. This may also be achieved by limiting the range of service providers via restricted CfPs.
2. Increase the running time of the projects to take advantage of the learning curve. This is in line with the recommendation to allow projects to apply for a second and subsequent call for proposals (if this form is chosen for up-scaling).
3. Only allow the provision of interview grants if the implementing organisation can demonstrate its ability to track the success of the interview.
4. Continue to allow for variation and flexibility in the model of implementation; it is evident that young people benefit from YfEj after finding a job abroad themselves as well from a full support package providing matching and placement services. These models also take into account the different needs of young people (employment status, education background, and financial means) and employers. Projects with both types of designs have demonstrated to be effective.

### **9.6. Improving the efficiency of YfEj**

There are only few conclusive results on the efficiency of YfEj as the projects are still ongoing and may thus incur more (management and overhead) costs that will alter

the average placement cost. Some recommendations can however already be made, namely to:

1. Continue to strongly monitor the distribution of costs per project. This should provide insights into the different expenditures per budget line in general and per project model, and thus allow for the calculation of the average placement cost as well as compare the efficiency between the different project models.
2. Ensure the real costs of the intervention become evident during the next phase of projects, thus stringently monitoring the investment of the leading organisations (particularly in terms of staff costs). This is essential to determine the required investments and potential for co-funding in the future.
3. Only select projects that demonstrate that their intra-EU partnerships are well established and can come into action swiftly after the awarding of the projects. This seems essential to avoid crucial start-up time being lost to significant investment in building partnerships.
4. Build in the flexibility for the leading organisations to change their service model if it is found that a new model or part of the model can be made more efficient.

### **9.7. Improving the monitoring of YfEj**

It has been found that quarterly monitoring is appropriate to the cycle of the projects as they are designed at this stage. The methods used have been adapted to the projects and evaluation needs throughout the duration of the year. However, there are some changes that can improve monitoring in the future, namely:

1. Establish a common database in which all YfEj participants are registered. This would not only ensure that valid information is gathered, but will also reduce the chances of fraud from the job-finders (by not being able to apply for support at multiple projects).
2. Ensure that more basic background details (age, gender, employment status, educational achievement etc.) are collected from the recipients of the financial support before the payment is made, for example via obligatory surveys.
3. Consider adding new indicators in line with the objectives of an up-scaled programme to measure the impact of the intervention beyond placement results (i.e. soft skills from trainings).
4. Ensure that sufficient time is reserved in the Steering Group meetings to explain the importance of monitoring, to agree upon indicators and generate support for the monitoring exercise.

## Annex

### QMF template

#### Indicators in QMF as proposed by Ecorys.

QMF number	Description
<b>PART A: Overall assessment</b>	
Identification	
A1	Organisation Name
A2	Country
A3	Contact person
A4	Countries covered by your YFEJ project by the action undertaken during this quarter
Description by YFEJ Beneficiaries	
A5	Budget consumption during reference period: Financial support for jobseekers and SMEs
A6	Implementation of the preparatory action: please provide a brief overview of the actions taken in this reference period
A7	The implementation of Your First EURES job is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiencing many difficulties</li> <li>Experiencing some difficulties</li> <li>Going as planned</li> <li>Going better than planned</li> </ul>
A8	Achievements during the reference period
A9	Obstacles encountered
A10	Main support activities for both jobseekers and employers, including SMEs (e.g. pre-selection of applicants, workers' pre-departure/preparatory training, info on LWC, elaboration of an integration programme, allowances payment, etc.)
A11	Management and operational resources
A12	YFEJ target groups' satisfaction
<b>PART B: Quantitative monitoring</b>	
Matching, recruitment & placement activities	
Recruitment	
B1	Total number of job vacancies available for YFEJ in your project
B2	What are the sources of the job vacancies referred to in question B1?
B3	Total number of YFEJ vacancies involved in a matching procedure
B4	Total number of YFEJ vacancies filled by a jobseeker from another Member State
B5	Number of SMEs having applied for financial support for integration training
B6	Number of SMEs having received financial support for integration training
Placement	
B7	Total number of jobseekers' registrations within your YFEJ project
B8	What are the sources of the jobseekers referred to in question B1?
B9	Total number of YFEJ jobseekers involved in a matching procedure
B10	Number of job interviews (all modalities)
B11	Number of jobseekers receiving financial support for interviews
B12	Please specify the number of jobseekers conducted 1, 2-3 or more than 3 interviews when interviews in another Member State have been supported
B13	Number of jobseekers having received an allowance to move to another Member State
B14	Total number of job placements in another Member State
B15	Number of jobseekers having received preparatory training
B16	Number of placements of jobseekers having received YFEJ support for moving abroad, and or preparatory/ pre-departure training, placed in SMEs who have also been supported by YFEJ through integration training
Jobseekers and job-finders' profile	
B17	Number of jobseekers by gender
B18	Number of jobseekers by age group
B19	Number of jobseekers per country of residence
B20	Number of jobseekers by highest level of education obtained



QMF number	Description
B21	Number of jobseekers in the following situations that most closely resembled the jobseeker at the time of application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition from (completed) education to work;</li> <li>• Former trainee or apprentice;</li> <li>• Early school leaver;</li> <li>• Inactive;</li> <li>• Other/ Unknown.</li> </ul>
B22	Number of jobseekers registered as unemployed at the time of application
B23	Number of jobseekers with previous work experience
B24	Number of jobseekers with previous work experience abroad
B25	Number of jobseekers having participated in other EU mobility schemes (e.g. Erasmus, Leonardo)
Vacancy profile	
B26	Number of vacancies per country
B27	Number of vacancies by economic sector (NACErev2).
B28	Number of vacancies per main occupational group (ISCO1D-08)
B29	Average duration of labour contracts (=6 or >6 months)

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## Overview project visits

YfEj projects	Country	Date of visit
GI Group	IT	11-12 June 2013
Provincia di Roma	IT	13-14 June 2013 10 December 2013
Municipality of Aarhus	DK	18-19 June 2013
Werkcenter Nederland B.V.	NL	8 July 2013 8 April 2014
Servicio Publico de Empleo Estatal (SEPE)	ES	22-23 July 2013 6 March 2014
ZAV, Bundesagentur für Arbeit	DE	26-27 August 2013
Arbetsförmedlingen/ EURES Sweden	SE	6-8 November 2013
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	IT	10-11 December 2013