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'How to prevent unemployment in a changing world of work?'

Workshop 7 "Mapping of responsibilities"

Discussion paper



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¹ DECISION No 573/2014/EU

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	4
1. CURRENT MEASURES IMPLEMENTED BY SOME PES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS.....	4
1.1 Early registration of workers at risk and training voucher in Germany	5
1.2 Belgian-Flemish partnership initiatives for career development	5
1.3 Work and Study Programme and employers' engagement in Estonia.....	6
1.4 Up-skilling of unemployed and (at-risk) employed people in Malta.....	6
1.5 Joint skills governance systems in different countries	6
2. CHALLENGES FOR PES.....	7
2.1 Anticipate the skills that will be (no longer) needed due to technological change .	7
2.2 Promote a common vision among the different stakeholders.....	8
2.3 Include at-risk employed workers and employers of at-risk employees as clients of PES, and design or adapt measures and programmes to prevent unemployment	8
2.4 Identify at-risk employees: who, how and where are they; how to reach out to them; how to motivate them to undertake training courses	9
2.5 Identify employers who employ at risk-employees: who, how and where are they; how to reach out to them and how to motivate them to train or facilitate that their employees get trained in and out of training hours.....	9
2.6 Promote and facilitate the adaptation of education and training schemes so as to prevent employees from losing their jobs	10
2.7 Produce, analyse and share quantitative and qualitative information on at-risk employees	10
3. SOME GOOD PRACTICES	12
3.1 European Skills Council in the Audiovisual and Live Performance Sectors.....	12
3.2 BU.G.S. – BUilding Green Skills	12
3.3 Knowledge Centre for Renewable Energy Jobs	13
3.4 SKILLS4JOBS for addressing the changes in the labour market	13
4. QUESTIONS FOR THE WORKSHOP.....	13
REFERENCES	14

Introduction

Continuous and radical technological advances are changing the world of work and reshaping labour markets. They provoke displacement effects when machines replace the work, or the tasks previously performed by humans, but they also create new types of work, providing clear opportunities from digital jobs and the broader use of digital tools.

Thus, as a result of digitalisation and rapid technological changes, different tasks and occupations are disappearing, while, at the same time, new ones are emerging. Consequently, skills so far required to develop existing occupations are becoming less important and even disappearing. Similarly, there are new tasks, occupations and jobs that have not existed until now, which are becoming increasingly relevant. The ability to take advantage of these opportunities will vary among individuals, according to their capacity to adapt to job-to-job transitions and their skills. Thus, workers with higher levels of adaptability and skills are more likely to benefit, while those with lower flexibility and skills might be less prepared and hence more exposed to risks of lower job quality and job loss (The World Bank Group, 2015).

Public employment services (PES) are at the centre of these processes, as they are involved in the daily functioning of the labour market and in government interventions to address market failures. Within this context, they are required to transform services to meet these new challenges. They can serve as a critical gateway to life-long learning, supporting timely job-to-job transitions and improving the employability of people seeking to change jobs. Therefore, this continuous technological change means that PES will have to deal with a broader customer agenda: those already employed. Preventing unemployment in the context of technological change requires anticipation of the skills that will be (no longer) needed; to identify the jobs and the workers who are at risk; to adapt education and skills, training schemes, and contents to the needs of employed workers so as to ease their transitions towards safe jobs; to rethink the role of PES counsellors in guiding employed workers (not only the unemployed).

Indeed, PES need to play a leading role, but cannot do it alone. The efforts of many institutions need to be aligned: employees (through their representatives in the trade unions), employers, training providers, education institutions, technological institutes. And PES can be the natural leader of this alignment: in many EU countries, strong social dialogue has paved the way to sound reforms. Also, skills governance systems gather workers, employers, sectoral representatives, public employment, and education institutions.

1. Current measures implemented by some PES and other stakeholders

PES in the European Union have not (yet?) widely adopted a preventative approach towards employed workers who are at risk of losing their jobs due to technological change; perhaps even less so in countries with high unemployment rates and high rates of long-term unemployment. Yet, some experiences are worth discussing². The key question in this context is 'who does what', under the shared leadership of PES.

Some examples can be found of current measures implemented to prevent unemployment in the context of technological change. In this context, the participation of other stakeholders is highlighted.

² Partially based on Márton Csillag and Ágota Scharle (2019), How do PES act to prevent unemployment in a changing world of work?

1.1 Early registration of workers at risk and training voucher in Germany

Since the economic crisis, in 2008, in Germany, all workers who have received a notice of dismissal or have a fixed-term contract which is approaching its end are required to register at the German PES as job seekers. This entails an innovative approach, focused on unemployment prevention that requires the active **participation of employed**. Given the early registration of those threatened by job loss, employed registered jobseekers can have access to the full range of services (albeit not all active measures) that those registered as unemployed can use.

Regarding measures coordinated by other stakeholders than PES, in 2008, the **Federal Ministry of Education and Research** introduced a training voucher for employees at the federal level (*Bildungsprämie*), in order to encourage them to participate in lifelong learning. This voucher was aimed at low- and medium-income people above the age of 25 and covers 50% of training course costs up to EUR 500 for work-related courses. Eligible people can receive a voucher every two years. Beneficiaries can be employees or self-employed, as well as individuals on maternity or parental leave, involving two-thirds of the German workforce. **Collaboration among the Federal Ministry and research organisations**³ was also implemented to evaluate the effectiveness of this training programme.

1.2 Belgian-Flemish partnership initiatives for career development

The Belgian-Flemish PES has been one of the most active PES in working with employees to prevent unemployment in the context of technological challenges. Within this approach, collaboration with other stakeholders is key and **partnerships are built at the regional level**, including a number of different regional actors (employers, local authorities, education and training providers and others), to discuss employment policies and initiatives.

As an example of the implementation of this collaboration, career guidance within a system of 'career counselling vouchers' is offered at a low cost for employed and self-employed by **private and non-profit providers**, which are recognised guidance centres, with the PES acting to assure quality control.

On the other hand, the Belgian-Flemish PES works within a sectoral approach, and services are provided according to six economic sectors, with dedicated staff. Within this context, in close contact with **employers and jobseekers**, PES design '**sectoral business plans**' containing all types of services for 'their' sector, including training needs. PES also work with employers that are experiencing difficulties, such as restructures or closures, supporting the organisation of tailor-made training courses which can be subsidised.

Companies also have an essential role in assessing future skills needs. Thus, the Department of Work and Social Economy developed a skill forecasting methodology (VLAMT, *Vlaams ArbeidsMarktonderzoek van de Toekomst*) to anticipate skills needs at the sectoral level. The methodology is mostly qualitative and involves conducting interviews with the most innovative firms in emerging industries as these are believed to have the best grasp on the future skills needs of the sector⁴.

³ Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (RWI), the Gesellschaft für Innovationsforschung und Beratung (GIB Berlin) and the Institute for Applied Social Sciences (infas).

⁴ OECD (2019). OECD Skills Strategy Flanders: Assessment and Recommendations. OECD Skills Studies. OECD Publishing, Paris.

1.3 Work and Study Programme and employers' engagement in Estonia

The Estonian PES introduced a series of measures aiming to prevent the onset of unemployment through supporting up-skilling of **at-risk employees** in the Work and Study Programme. They give financial aid to employees (and the unemployed) and employers for a) studying skills which are general and thus easily transferrable, such as the Estonian language or IT skills; or b) supporting the development of knowledge in professions for which there is an increasing demand in the near future.

Collaboration with companies is also key to the prevention of unemployment in Estonia. As an example, in 2015, the country introduced the **employer counsellors**, which have improved the cooperation of companies and PES. Interestingly, the PES recently developed an '**occupation barometer**', based on information about employers' labour needs collected through employer counsellors. On the other hand, as it happens in many other EU countries, the Estonian PES specifically identify large nationwide companies to offer them a single route by which to cooperate. Thus, in 2017, 30 framework cooperation agreements were held with large employers in the country⁵.

1.4 Up-skilling of unemployed and (at-risk) employed people in Malta

The Maltese PES launched a set of measures aimed to promote up-skilling of unemployed and (at-risk) employed people, involving **private training providers**. Similarly to other PES, the Maltese PES bases the offer of its training courses on information from a variety of sources, including feedback from employers. One of the central points for this feedback is the **Employer Relations Unit**, created in 2016, with dedicated staff to enhance the relationship between the PES and the companies. More specifically, the findings of the National Employee Skills Survey are compared with those obtained by the Employer Relations Unit and, following this review, a plan of new courses is drafted.

1.5 Joint skills governance systems in different countries

In many Member States, skills governance systems include PES, education and social partners working together. In Spain, the **Sectoral Joint Committees** (*Comisiones Paritarias*) are responsible for assessing the skill content of qualifications and the adequacy of training provision in relation to businesses' needs. Thus, skills needs are anticipated at the sectoral level, and training reference plans are developed. On the other hand, the Observatory of Occupations (*Observatorio de las Ocupaciones*), a public body under the Spanish PES, periodically analyses the skill gaps of approximately 200 selected occupations which are growing every year, including regional groups of the regional network of the observatory, who contact experts from the observatory network. Experts include employers, Human Resources managers, trade unions and business associations representatives, high skilled workers, VET centres and universities.

In France, the skills approach (*approche compétences*) is now the basis of the diagnosis between the French PES (Pôle emploi) and its users. Thus, Pôle emploi has defined a repository of 14 professional skills that serves to create a common language for both jobseekers and employers. Within this context, the PES offers jobseekers the identification of their skills beyond the diplomas and experience and helps them to create their own 'Profile of Competences'. At the same time, it helps companies to define their skills needs. Another initiative, the French Job Skills Network (*France's Réseau Emploi Compétences*, REC), aims to bring together different providers of skills needs exercises and decision-makers from related fields. The objective of the REC is to create a dialogue between the

⁵ Oberholzner, T. (2017). Engaging with and Improving Services to Employers European Commission, Thematic Paper. December 2017.

different players at the national, regional and sectoral levels, in order to strengthen the diffusion of knowledge⁶.

On the other hand, Denmark conducts skills anticipation activities based on collaboration and dialogue amongst **ministries, public authorities and stakeholders, including social partners**, which are involved in funding and direct research collaboration, mostly undertaken at trade and regional levels. These partners share the aim of ensuring that young people and jobseekers base their decisions on empirical evidence and that the education and training system is effective. The governance of skills anticipation activities is a highly developed, decentralised operation in Denmark.

In Austria, the PES together with the **Austrian Institute of Economic Research as well as other research institutes** develop the Skills Barometer, an online tool that provides information on trends in skills demand and provides detailed occupational profiles related to jobs in demand in the labour market. Its output is aimed at young people, career counsellors, PES advisers, educational institutions, employers, jobseekers, and policymakers. Social partners are involved in the process of skills anticipation through their roles on the regional platforms and on the Committee for New Skills at the national level.

2. Challenges for PES

Within this context of rapid change in the world of work, PES face a series of challenges derived from the technological evolution of the services they provide and from the need to provide their clients – employees, unemployed and companies – with adequate solutions to face the impact that technological changes impose on labour markets.

2.1 Anticipate the skills that will be (no longer) needed due to technological change

As advanced, technological changes are increasingly rapid and radical, causing exponential changes in tasks and occupations, part of the current occupations will disappear, and new ones will emerge. This does not mean that those many people will be out of work, as some of those who are working in those occupations will transition successfully to other jobs. Therefore, PES require instruments and tools that allow them to anticipate changes to provide adequate responses to unemployed, employees and employers.

On the one hand, and as emphasised by the EU Network of Public Employment Services⁷, PES must introduce smart techniques to improve understanding of how labour markets are functioning and to foresee the skills which are lagging behind as well as those which will be demanded in the coming future. These techniques include, among others, big data, data analytics or advanced statistical methods, which will help them to have a clear view of the following: a) which professions and workplaces are most at risk; b) which professions are likely to be in high demand in the near future and what skills are needed for these jobs; and c) to what extent workers at high risk of losing their jobs have competences and skills which can be easily transferred to jobs that are in demand.

Within this regard, **it is also essential to work with employers and all relevant labour market actors** to understand their needs, promote good practices, and develop appropriate policy responses. Additionally, statistical agencies and research institutes are key to establish high-quality comprehensive analysis, including the effects of demography in labour market shortages, as they will ensure the collection of timely and adequate data.

⁶ ILO and OECD (2018). Approaches to anticipating skills for the future of work.

⁷ EU Network of Public Employment Services (2019). Strategy to 2020 and beyond.

Finally, a **close connection with the education and training system** is also key to promote the capacity of future workers to adapt to the increasing technological changes, as well as to avoid labour shortages in certain occupations.

2.2 Promote a common vision among the different stakeholders

There are many different stakeholders affected by the challenges imposed by the continuous technological change, including not only PES but also workers, employers, education authorities, training providers and technology producers. Within this context, it is essential to **facilitate mutual understanding and a unique language** and to provide common definitions, in order to ensure a common approach to the challenges faced.

Many PES are used to working with social partners with a strong culture of social dialogue, which can be an appropriate framework to promote this common understanding, but this does not happen in all the countries of the EU. Therefore, it would be desirable to increase EU and member states' support for **capacity building of social partners organisations** to devise tools to manage change, so they can improve their contribution to effective and balanced solutions to the challenge of preventing unemployment due to technological change. This is essential in particular in those countries where social dialogue is weak, or where there is insufficient capacity to get involved.

As a potential response, at a European level, it would be interesting to increase the use of the **Open Method of Coordination** (OMC) to support member states to benchmark progress in the field of preventing unemployment due to technological change, promoting the exchange of experiences, mutual learning, and the creation of common visions and definitions. The OMC is a 'soft-law' system of the EU, applied to policy areas where Member States are in full control, but where they wish to coordinate their policies on a particular subject. In order to do so, those Member States jointly identify and define objectives to be achieved, before establishing measuring instruments. Finally, benchmarking and comparison of EU countries' performance are carried out, along with the exchange of best practices (monitored by the Commission).

2.3 Include at-risk employed workers and employers of at-risk employees as clients of PES, and design or adapt measures and programmes to prevent unemployment

So far, the traditional focus of PES in the EU has been the unemployed. However, PES will have to deal with a broader customer agenda: those already employed, including those in the collaborative economy with uncertain levels of work, as well as employers of at-risk employees. Therefore, there will need to be an enhanced emphasis on a career management approach – to ensure citizens retain a constant labour market attachment – as well as on recruitment patterns of employers. Addressing these changes will require new approaches, improved communication with customers and transformed service offerings.

On the other hand, the labour market faces the challenge of the ageing population, and age is an essential variable when it comes to studying technology adaptation and workers' employability. Many European economies are already suffering the effects of a shrinking labour force in terms of skill shortages in many occupations and sectors of the economy. A well-functioning labour market will require PES to place a greater focus on improving the employability and skills of individuals according to the different challenges they face at different ages (Inter-American Development Bank et al., 2015).

As in the previous point, most findings on age and technology also revolve around skills, particularly on skills obsolescence and adaptability problems of older workers in the labour market when it comes to the use of ICTs (Khatiwada and Maceda Veloso, 2019).

2.4 Identify at-risk employees: who, how and where are they; how to reach out to them; how to motivate them to undertake training courses

As a result of the evolving technological changes, certain individuals face particularly important employment barriers. There is a risk that technology may contribute to polarising the labour market. As remarked by Csillag and Scharle (2019), **workers with lower levels of education** are more likely to perform routine tasks that could be replaced by automation. At the same time, the likelihood that a worker receives on-the-job training through their employer is three times lower for those in automatable jobs than for those in non-automatable jobs (Nedelkoska and Quintini, 2018). As advanced in the previous point, another analysis emphasises that **older workers** are more likely to be at risk due to digitalisation processes (Voss and Riede, 2018).

However, currently, there are no precise data available about the extent to which employees are at risk of job loss or have become unemployed due to technological advances. The collection of such information from workers is not easy, as they are not necessarily aware of the reason behind their job loss, and no pan-European employer survey involving these questions exists.

Within this context, PES should aim to have instruments closely linked to those mentioned above in anticipation of skills (no longer) needed, to identify workers at risk of losing their job due to digitalisation. With this data, they can guide appropriate matching, plan decisions to adjust and complement formal education and training, develop flexible online or on-the-job training opportunities for those employees at work, and provide them with the flexibility to combine work and training.

Besides, in-depth analysis at European level should be periodically developed in order to detect who, how, and where are they, including a European Barometer on labour market trends, skills supply and demand, together with a continuous monitoring of the sectors requiring innovative skills, in order to identify them and then prepare sectoral plans at a EU level to support their workers (including with ESF funding).

Close collaboration with employers will be also an effective way to identify at-risk persons in the workplace, as they are those that will first detect skills shortages in their companies. Thus, it will be essential to integrate employers' associations in the decision-making process of PES regarding the needs for up-skilling pathways for their workers.

Trade unions can also play a role in identifying and encouraging at-risk workers to take up training. Besides, PES should work closely with employers' organisations and trade unions to explore options for financially supporting workers at risk in transitions from job to job or from one employment status to another.

Finally, specific **assistive technology** or accommodations might be necessary for workers with disabilities or older workers to ensure that they have access to digital tools along with the knowledge to use them.

2.5 Identify employers who employ at-risk-employees: who, how and where are they; how to reach out to them and how to motivate them to train or facilitate that their employees get trained in and out of training hours

In order to identify employers who employ at-risk employees, it is essential that PES work closely with companies and employers' organisations and that they continuously monitor and collect information, including the development and launching of employer surveys, hiring (or outsourcing) staff skilled in statistical analysis, as well as staff with a background in the analysis of vocational skills needs. Furthermore, if employer relations units in PES do not exist or do not regularly consult employers about future skills needs, these should be developed.

On the other hand, as proven by the experience of the German PES, **information and counselling services for employers** are essential. This became clear recently, as companies are faced with declining numbers of skilled jobseekers, and therefore must rethink their recruitment and training strategy. First, the counsellors from the employers' service regularly contact employers to discuss how far the employer is willing to consider applicants who do not meet all the selection criteria. Second, the German PES has developed 'qualification counselling', which is part of its labour market consultation services. This is a service targeted at SMEs, who do not have well-developed HR units. Specialised consulting staff support employers' planning processes and start with the identification of overlooked potentials among existing staff, especially among lower-educated and older workers.

2.6 Promote and facilitate the adaptation of education and training schemes so as to prevent employees from losing their jobs

Ongoing development of the skills and knowledge of the labour force are critical in the new kind of economy toward which the world is moving. PES can serve as a critical **gateway to lifelong learning**, and as such can potentially be a key instrument to improving the opportunities available to the disadvantaged.

As remarked by the EU Network of Public Employment Services⁸, this could also mean PES improving **collaboration with employers, schools and universities**. Lifelong learning, suitable training, and access to careers advice for people who are in work are all necessary for workers to adapt to a changing labour market and to make the transitions that best suit them.

Investment in basic skills, though important, is a first step, and is not enough in itself to transform labour market operation. Education systems and labour markets must be more closely aligned, and investment in transformative skills is needed. Access to lifelong learning will become increasingly necessary for workers to adapt to the pace of technological advancement.

Besides, it will be required to **assist workers during the transition**. Some workers might not be able to adapt to technological change quickly enough for a range of reasons. Specific programmes to assist these workers through this transition might be necessary to ensure that they do not bear an inappropriate burden, even as society prospers as a whole. This might require an inclusive dialogue on how the benefits of technological progress might be shared across society.

Noting that the links between employers and educators are often weak, PES could improve skills development programmes by creating stronger links, especially to identify what skills are most in-demand in the market and thus prepare jobseekers to get better jobs, while reducing the delays businesses face in securing human resources. PES could provide appropriate skills development advice and implement targeted programmes to address the challenge. This could be a significant opportunity to quickly address existing youth unemployment, for example, while closing skills gaps.

2.7 Produce, analyse and share quantitative and qualitative information on at-risk employees

Information on the following needs to be produced and shared among relevant stakeholders: the training needs of at-risk employees for their transition toward new jobs and/or their permanence and due adaptation in their current job; the skills needed by companies, deficits today and in the future (forecast); education and training supply by

⁸ EU Network of Public Employment Services (2019). Strategy to 2020 and beyond.

providers. The skills governance systems of Member States can take on the role of analysing current and future trends while contributing to designing measures and programmes.

As mentioned, PES need to be increasingly aware of the evolving situation in a rapidly changing labour market, and they require instruments and tools that allow them to **anticipate changes** to provide adequate responses to employees and employers, in addition to unemployed people.

In order to achieve this, besides the use of technological solutions, PES must operate in **close collaboration** with employers and employers' organisations, trade unions, and other stakeholders that have information, know-how, or simply operational capacity that can help PES (Inter-American Development Bank et al., 2015):

- **Partnerships with Employers:** Employers have information on current and emerging skills needs and skill mismatches in their own company. Hence, working closely with employers is key for PES to have valid knowledge about trends in the labour market.
- **Partnerships with Employers' Organisations:** Employers' organisations also have knowledge about current and emerging skill and competency needs as well as about skill gaps in their own sector. Cooperation with employers' organisations is regularly mentioned as an innovative and effective strategy, as well as an important way to obtain information at the micro and macro level about dynamics and skill needs in industries and sectors.
- **Partnerships with Trade Unions:** Trade unions have information on skill shortages and surpluses within companies. They also have information on training policies and wage benefits related to training and are sometimes involved in the implementation of training. Unions can also play a key role in developing a lifelong culture. In the workplace, they can also help employees to develop transferable skills to increase employability and readiness to progress within the job market (World Economic Forum, 2014). Trade unions are also traditionally strong in offering training for workers and can help PES to provide lifelong training for successful job transitions.
- **Partnerships with Education and Training Institutions:** Several education providers, particularly universities, technical colleges, and research centres, have access to knowledge about future labour market trends. Chiefly, education and training institutions are the labour market actors in charge of providing people with the right knowledge, skills, and competencies so that they are employable and able to contribute to the development of the economy. PES can develop partnerships with education and training institutions to ensure the timeliness and relevance of education and training at all levels – including through legal frameworks, institutional structures, and financing mechanisms – and to develop criteria to measure, monitor, and evaluate progress (Danish Technological Institute et al., 2010).
- **Partnerships with Private Employment Agencies:** PES generally cover only a portion of the vacancies in the labour market. Temporary work agencies and providers of specialised employment services (e.g., targeting labour markets for the highly skilled) frequently deal with a group of employers in market segments with sector or qualification levels that PES are less likely to be in contact with. Therefore, private employment agencies may have access to information on future trends in skill supply or demand which is relevant for the unemployed in the future. For example, developments in information technology may not be relevant for the unemployed today, but future workers will need to develop skills to use this technology.
- Finally, **partnerships with non-profit organisations should be analysed:** Although, as described above, collaborations with profit organisations are frequent in different matters affecting employees (mainly as training providers), no practices

affecting those employed have been identified involving non-profit organisations, whose work is persistent in unemployed groups. The establishment of collaborations between PES and this type of organisations would be desirable in order to face the challenges of those at-risk employees.

3. Some good practices

3.1 European Skills Council in the Audiovisual and Live Performance Sectors

The new digital environment, with its fast-paced development of technology, has affected production and distribution channels, demanding more content creation. The audiovisual and live performance sectors are no exceptions and specific skills are required to operate the new technology and equipment. Thus, individual workers are under enormous pressure, as they are required to expand their skill set far beyond their initial training.

Within this context, the project 'European Skills Council in the Audiovisual and Live Performance Sectors', developed between 2014 and 2016 and funded by the EaSI Programme, was coordinated by the main social partners in the EU Social Dialogue on audiovisual services and in live performance. The project had four main objectives, including the creation and consolidation of a network of contacts between national and European stakeholders engaged in the development of skills in two audiovisual sub-sectors, as well as the collection of data on the employment situation and trends in the audiovisual and live performance sectors.

As a result, the project collected extensive statistical data on employment trends in the audiovisual sector and reported the employment situation, the evolution of skills and necessary competences.

3.2 BU.G.S. – BUilding Green Skills

Renewable energy and energy efficiency in construction has a high potential for creating new job opportunities. To keep this sector growing, training measures to develop the green skills of professionals need to be foreseen.

Within this context, the BUilding Green Skills (BU.G.S.) project was implemented between 2014 and 2016 by a consortium of different organisations from Italy, Austria, Croatia and Slovenia. It was funded by the EaSI Programme and targeted to professionals and SMEs working in the construction sector, national institutions focusing on education of professionals to gain demanded skills, and policymakers.

The BU.G.S. project had three main objectives: a) to foster partnerships between the public and private sectors in the labour market to boost the job creation potential of green skills; b) to fill the gap between labour market demand and supply of green construction skills, namely green skills for energy efficiency, renewable energies, energy performance of buildings, energy diagnosis, eco-design, lifecycle analysis, energy management systems; and c) to disseminate and exploit the tools and methods to manage and detect green skills bottlenecks that can be identified as 'bugs' in the construction field throughout the EU.

As a result of the project, a web platform (<http://datamining.bugsproject.eu/>) was designed to identify green skills which are in demand in the green construction sector. The platform is adapted for different types of end-users including SMEs, public bodies, trainers, and SMEs associations, to provide relevant information regarding the specific needs of actors in the green construction sector.

3.3 Knowledge Centre for Renewable Energy Jobs

The renewable energies sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors in terms of jobs creation. In 2015, about 7.7 million people worked in the field worldwide. It is a sector that is highly dependent on technological development. While the lack of engineers is well documented in Europe, a lack of information on the job market is making it difficult for stakeholders to have a clear picture and plan for the future.

In this context, between 2014 and 2016, a partnership of European associations from the energy sector developed the Knowledge Centre for Renewable Energy Jobs, funded by the EaSI Programme, and aiming at creating an online platform to provide job intelligence (i.e. identification of skills gaps, availability of relevant training and most needed profiles) to industry, jobseekers, as well as academic and training institutions in the field of energy.

Among others, the project identified gaps and bottlenecks between the skills needed by the renewable industry and the competences available on the market, and defined areas where training is needed to reduce the knowledge and competence gap. It also created a 'Renewable Energy Jobs barometer', providing an overview of jobs trends per sector and highlighting the critical skills and competences the renewable energy sectors need for a successful deployment. Finally, it provided information on the trends and forecasts per sub-sector and on the 'most needed profiles'.

3.4 SKILLS4JOBS for addressing the changes in the labour market

The SKILLS4JOBS Project ('New Skills for Career Guidance in Response to the Need for Restructuring the Labour Market and the Creation of New Jobs') was a pilot project funded by the EaSI Programme, implemented between January and December 2014 by a consortium of partners composed by the Regional Employment Agency of the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy), the Centre of Entrepreneurial and Social Initiatives (Portugal), the Southampton City Council (United Kingdom) and the Social Innovation Centre (Lithuania).

Targeted to regional and local authorities, as well as to social and economic partners, its goal was to contribute to the restructuring of the professional profile of the labour counsellor as a change promoter agent and to define the new skills, competences and tasks that are required to face new challenges of unemployment. In this perspective, the project focused on restructuring the career guidance profiles and on defining the regulations and functions of the labour counsellor.

It also defined the competences and skills required by career counsellors who are mandated to actively support companies in the identification of their workforce and training needs, for better organisation of human resources and accurate job matching.

4. Questions for the workshop

- How to promote a shared understanding of the need to prevent unemployment in countries with weak social dialogue?
- How to make at-risk workers and employers anticipate change and how to convince them to prevent the loss of their jobs/companies? What could be the role of trade unions?
- How to ease job-to-job transitions of workers at risk?
- Should loss of companies, in particular of SMEs, also be prevented? Is this the same process as the loss of jobs? Who should lead this process? Should it be coordinated with the efforts to prevent unemployment?

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