



Contract VC/2019/0854

# Study supporting the ex-post EURES evaluation and the second biennial EURES report

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## Glossary

<i>Term or acronym</i>	<i>Meaning or definition</i>
<b>CV</b>	<b>Curriculum vitae.</b> Summary of an individual’s professional and educational qualifications, experience, additional skills and other information of relevance in applying for a job vacancy.
<b>EaSI</b>	<b>European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (2014-2020).</b> EaSI is an EU-level financing instrument managed by the European Commission to contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy and promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty, and improving working conditions.
<b>ECG</b>	<b>EURES Coordination Group.</b> The EURES Coordination Group consists of representatives of the European Coordination Office and all the National Coordination Offices. It acts as a forum for coordination and exchange of best practice to support the implementation and development of EURES activities.
<b>ECO</b>	<b>European Coordination Office.</b> The European Coordination Office acts as a coordinator, at EU level, to provide horizontal support to EURES National Coordinators, Members and Partners and to facilitate their operations and collaboration.
<b>ELA</b>	<b>European Labour Authority.</b> ELA was established in 2019 with the aim to facilitate access to information on labour mobility, support the cooperation between EU countries in the cross-border enforcement of relevant Union legislation, and facilitate solutions in cases of cross-border disputes between national authorities or labour market disruptions.
<b>EFTA</b>	<b>European Free Trade Association.</b> EFTA is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1960 to promote free trade and economic integration to the benefit of its Member States. It comprises four countries: Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
<b>ESCO</b>	<b>European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations.</b> European multilingual classification aimed at identifying and categorising skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market, education and training.
<b>EU</b>	<b>European Union.</b> The Member States of the European Union are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta,

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<b>Term or acronym</b>	<b>Meaning or definition</b>
	Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and United Kingdom (until 31.01.2020) <sup>1</sup> .
<b>EURES</b>	<p>Network of employment services and other EURES Members and Partners of the EU-28 countries (UK until 31.01.2020), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, and the European Commission. Launched in 1994, the main goal of the EURES network is the promotion of fair intra-EU labour mobility.</p> <p>EURES services are delivered through a human network of <b>EURES advisers</b> and online through the <b>EURES portal</b> (European Job Mobility Portal). In the framework of EURES services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contact</b> refers to the exchange between a EURES adviser and a jobseeker or employer interested in receiving support through the network. The exchange can be in person, via phone, email or chat. It can cover topics such as general information on EURES, placement support, information on living and working conditions, or cross-border work.</li> <li>• <b>Job application</b> refers to expressions of interest from workers handled and processed by EURES.</li> <li>• <b>Job vacancy</b> refers to offers from employers handled and processed by EURES.</li> <li>• <b>Job placement</b> is effected as a result of a recruitment and placement activity.</li> <li>• <b>Recruitment event</b> is a physical or virtual event bringing employers and jobseekers together to facilitate the recruitment process.</li> </ul>
<b>EURES countries</b>	EU-28 countries (UK until 31.01.2020), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.
<b>EURES mobility schemes</b>	EURES mobility schemes aim to provide support to specific groups of jobseekers and to help fill vacancies in sectors with recruitment difficulties. They are financed under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). For the purpose of this study, the relevant EURES mobility schemes are: Your First EURES Job, Reactivate, Targeted Mobility Scheme and Cross-Border Partnerships.
<b>EURES Regulation</b>	Regulation (EU) 2016/589 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2016 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, and amending Regulations (EU) No 492/2011 and (EU) No 1296/2013.

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement, the United Kingdom is officially a third country to the EU, as of 1 February 2020. The EU and the UK have, however, jointly agreed on a transition period. This time-limited period was defined to last until 31 December 2020 as part of the Withdrawal Agreement.

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<b><i>Term or acronym</i></b>	<b><i>Meaning or definition</i></b>
<b>Labour market imbalances</b>	Imbalance between supply and demand in the labour market, which can be driven by underlying skills mismatches, but can also be caused by other conditions.
<b>Mobile workers</b>	For the purpose of this study, mobile workers are defined as employed EU-28 citizens who reside in a Member State or EFTA country other than their country of citizenship.
<b>NCO</b>	<b>National Coordination Office.</b> In accordance with Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589, NCOs are designated by Member States “to ensure the transfer of available data to the EURES portal and to provide general support and assistance to all EURES Members and Partners on their territory, including on how to deal with complaints and problems with job vacancies, where appropriate in cooperation with other relevant public authorities such as labour inspectorates”.
<b>PC</b>	<b>Programming Cycle.</b> In accordance with Article 31 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589, the NCOs are responsible for drawing up national work programmes of the activities of the EURES network in their Member State.
<b>PES</b>	<b>Public employment services.</b> In EU countries, public employment services (PES) are the organisations, as part of relevant ministries, public bodies or corporations falling under public law, that are responsible for implementing active labour market policies and providing quality employment services in the public interest.
<b>PMS</b>	<b>Performance Measurement System.</b> In conformity with Article 32 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589, and the Commission Implementing Decision 2018/170, the PMS is a performance monitoring tool that comprises a set of jointly defined indicators which measure the performance and the activities of the EURES network, providing a basis for evaluating its functioning.
<b>Skills mismatch</b>	For the purpose of this report, skills mismatches refer to misalignment between shortages and surpluses in skills. Skills mismatches can be horizontal (by field of occupation) or vertical (by educational attainment). Skills mismatches can be one of the causes of labour market imbalances.

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## **Disclaimer**

The ex-post evaluation of EURES has been carried out during the outbreak of COVID-19.

The impact of the pandemic is not yet fully known and quantifiable. It is likely to differ depending on the duration of the situation and across industry sectors. However, it already had negative consequences on intra-EU labour mobility. It has affected the stakeholders involved in this area, as well as this evaluation exercise.

On the one hand, the decisions of the authorities to stop a number of economic activities in order to contain the spread of the virus have driven some businesses to economic problems and many workers to unemployment. This has had a significant impact on the priorities of both employers and jobseekers, as well as national coordinators of EURES. In particular, in many countries, the national coordinators of EURES have reassigned some or all of their staff to other Public Employment Services tasks, to be able to respond to the needs of the increased number of people who have become unemployed due to the COVID-19 crisis.

On the other hand, the closing of borders or the restrictions to cross-border travel have frozen new placements, resulted in obstacles to a number of cross-border workers and have sometimes led to an early termination of certain cross-border placements<sup>2</sup>.

Consequently, some aspects of this evaluation were affected. In particular, some features of the methodological approach became no longer feasible, and there was a risk that some of the data collected might have been biased by the effects of the pandemic. Nevertheless, these risks and issues were identified in advance and the study team has put in place mitigation actions to tackle these limitations and mitigate any potential (negative) impact<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The termination could be due, either to the closure of the company or to the employees' decision to return home to their loved ones.

<sup>3</sup> A detailed overview of these limitations and the mitigation actions are available in Section 4.2 on the limitations of the study.

## Executive summary

### Introduction

EURES is a cooperation network formed by Public Employment Services and other EURES Members and Partners of the EU-28 countries (UK until 31.01.2020), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, and the European Commission. Launched in 1994, the main goal of the EURES network is the promotion of fair intra-EU labour mobility. EURES services are delivered through a human network of EURES advisers and online through the EURES portal (European Job Mobility Portal).

The EURES Regulation requires the European Commission to submit by 13 May 2021 an ex-post evaluation report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Social and Economic Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the operation and effects of the EURES Regulation of 13 April 2016 amending Regulations (EU) No 492/2011 and (EU) No 1296/2013. This study supports the evaluation.

### Main evaluation findings

The evaluation concluded that the **EURES tools and services are to large extent relevant and address intra-EU labour mobility needs in an effective and efficient way**. EURES services provided through the EURES portal, EURES advisers and within the framework of EURES mobility schemes result in intra-EU placements and higher awareness of intra EU-labour mobility opportunities.

**EURES support services** are assessed as effective up to a certain point, as some limitations have been identified. In particular, EURES support services provided by EURES advisers are assessed as of high-value, good quality, and leading to sustainable results, as they are tailored to individuals' needs. However, there are differences in the quality of service provision across the network, which could be explained by differences in resources available at national level.

The **EURES portal** addresses information gaps and provides access to a larger pool of job vacancies and CVs, thus responding to the difficulties that employers face in finding profiles with relevant skills. While the portal increases the access of employers and jobseekers to job vacancies and CVs, its effectiveness in supporting the recruitment process is limited because a fully automated matching is not yet in place and the portal is not perceived by users and stakeholders as user-friendly. In addition, not all national vacancies are available on the EURES portal yet.

The **EURES mobility schemes** are closely aligned with the overall EURES objectives, but not entirely integrated in the planning of EURES activities, also due to different reporting requirements linked to their funding under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).

The EURES services address the main **needs of jobseekers and employers**. However, some specific needs such as post-recruitment assistance, tackling language barriers, and support with the recognition of qualifications are covered to a lesser extent. Some needs of specific user groups such as young jobseekers and seasonal workers are only marginally covered by the EURES services.

Looking into the **implementation context**, the EURES network has been able to adapt to contextual changes like new labour mobility trends, technological advancements and the COVID-19 pandemic, but did so in a somewhat unstructured way, depending on Member States' strategies and priorities. In addition, some aspects of the EURES Regulation have not been fully implemented in all Member States limiting the possibility to explore the full potential of EURES

(transfer of vacancies and CVs from national level to the EURES portal through single coordinated channel, broadening of the network with the admission of new EURES Members and Partners). In addition, EURES is not visible enough among labour market participants, which impacts in a negative way its effectiveness.

An overall increase in **cost-effectiveness** is observed between 2016 and 2019. Benchmarking of EURES with Public Employment Services' (PES) activities has provided evidence that the cost of EURES can be interpreted as a small top-up to the PES cost, which allows PES' to expand in a cost-effective manner the scope of the activities from national to cross-border placements.

Synergies between EURES activities and **other European initiatives**, such as Erasmus+ (e.g. promotion of Erasmus opportunities by EURES staff), Interreg (e.g. provision of additional advice in cross-border regions), European Social Fund, are in place. However, a risk of overlap has been identified between the EURES portal and two other European tools: the Europass portal, and the Your Europe portal, implementing the Single Digital Gateway.

The EURES Regulation provides an essential overarching framework and common vision for the collaboration and coordination of EURES countries in the field of labour mobility. It also ensures and promotes the protection of fair labour conditions and standards. The exchange of information on labour mobility and markets would have not happened in such a structured and coordinated manner without EURES.

### **Lessons learnt**

The evaluation has led to a series of recommendations:

- Improve the user-friendliness and visibility of the EURES portal,
- Develop automated matching,
- Foster synergies between the EURES portal and other EU portals like Your Europe,
- Further align the monitoring processes of EURES actions and EURES mobility schemes,
- Enhance the provision of post-recruitment assistance,
- Enhance complementarity between cross-border support services and EURES services,
- Initiate a discussion on the feasibility of establishing a commonly agreed definition for apprenticeships and traineeships outside the education path,
- Strengthen the communication by developing a coordinated approach,
- Reinforce the coordination between EURES countries by further developing common frameworks,
- Enhance the quality of service delivery by developing a quality measurement framework,
- Enhance transparency through reinforced monitoring efforts,
- Strengthen enlargement efforts of the EURES networks and analyse the changes in the network,
- Reduce the administrative burden of the National Coordination Offices.

## Résumé analytique

### Introduction

EURES est un réseau de coopération entre la Commission européenne et les Services publics de l'emploi et d'autres membres et partenaires EURES des pays de l'UE-28 (Royaume-Uni jusqu'au 31.01.2020), l'Islande, le Liechtenstein, la Norvège et la Suisse. Lancé en 1994, l'objectif principal du réseau EURES est la promotion d'une mobilité équitable de la main-d'œuvre à l'intérieur de l'Union. Les services EURES sont fournis par l'intermédiaire d'un réseau humain de conseillers EURES et au moyen d'outils de services en ligne via le portail EURES (portail européen sur la mobilité de l'emploi).

Selon le règlement EURES, au plus tard le 13 mai 2021, la Commission européenne doit soumettre au Parlement européen, au Conseil, au Comité économique et social européen et au Comité des régions, un rapport d'évaluation ex post sur le fonctionnement et les effets du règlement EURES du 13 avril 2016 modifiant le Règlement (UE) n° 492/2011 et (UE) n° 1296/2013. Cette étude appuie l'évaluation.

### Conclusions principales de l'évaluation

L'évaluation a conclu que les outils et services EURES sont, dans une large mesure, pertinents et qu'ils répondent aux besoins de mobilité de la main-d'œuvre à l'intérieur de l'UE d'une manière efficace et efficiente. En effet, des services EURES fournis par le portail EURES, par les conseillers EURES et dans le cadre des programmes de mobilité EURES ont résulté des placements intra-UE et une plus grande sensibilisation aux possibilités de mobilité de la main-d'œuvre à l'intérieur de l'Union.

Les **services de soutien EURES** sont évalués comme efficaces en général. Cependant, certaines limitations ont été identifiées. Plus particulièrement, les services de soutien EURES fournis par les conseillers EURES sont évalués comme étant utiles et de bonne qualité et menant à des résultats durables, car ils sont adaptés aux besoins des individus. Toutefois, il existe des différences dans la qualité de la prestation des services dans l'ensemble du réseau, ce qui pourrait s'expliquer par des différences dans les ressources disponibles au niveau national.

Le **Portail EURES** comble les lacunes en matière d'information et donne accès à un plus grand éventail de postes vacants et de CV, répondant ainsi aux difficultés rencontrées par les employeurs à trouver des profils ayant des compétences pertinentes. Bien que le portail augmente l'accès des employeurs et des demandeurs d'emploi aux offres d'emploi et aux CV, son efficacité à soutenir le processus de recrutement est limitée, dû principalement au fait que la mise en correspondance automatique n'est pas encore en place actuellement et que le portail n'est pas perçu par les utilisateurs et les parties prenantes comme un outil facile d'utilisation. De plus, tous les postes vacants nationaux ne sont pas encore disponibles sur le portail EURES.

Les **programmes de mobilité EURES** sont étroitement alignés sur les objectifs globaux d'EURES, mais ne sont pas entièrement intégrés dans la planification des activités, également en raison des différentes exigences en matière de rapports liées à leur financement dans le cadre du Programme européen pour l'emploi et l'innovation sociale (EASI).

Ces services EURES adressent les principaux **besoins des demandeurs d'emploi et des employeurs**. Toutefois, certains besoins spécifiques tels que l'aide post-recrutement, la lutte contre les barrières linguistiques et le soutien à la reconnaissance des qualifications sont couverts dans une moindre mesure. Certains besoins de groupes d'utilisateurs spécifiques tels que les jeunes demandeurs d'emploi et les travailleurs saisonniers ne sont que marginalement couverts par les services EURES.

En ce qui concerne le **contexte de mise en œuvre**, le réseau EURES a pu s'adapter à des changements contextuels tels que les nouvelles tendances en matière de mobilité de la main-d'œuvre, les progrès technologiques et la pandémie covid-19, mais l'a fait d'une manière quelque peu non structurée, en fonction des stratégies et des priorités des États membres. En outre, certains aspects du règlement EURES n'ont pas été pleinement mis en œuvre dans tous les États membres, limitant la possibilité d'explorer le plein potentiel d'EURES (transfert de postes vacants et de CV au niveau national vers le portail EURES par un seul canal coordonné, élargissement du réseau avec l'admission de nouveaux membres et partenaires EURES). En outre, EURES n'est pas suffisamment visible parmi les participants au marché du travail, ce qui a un impact négatif sur son efficacité.

On observe une augmentation globale de la **rentabilité** entre 2016 et 2019. L'analyse comparative d'EURES avec les activités des Services publics de l'emploi (PSE) a fourni la preuve que le coût d'EURES peut être interprété comme une valeur ajoutée au coût des PSE, ce qui permet aux PSE d'élargir de manière rentable la portée de leurs activités de placements nationaux vers des placements transfrontaliers.

Il existe des synergies entre les activités EURES et **d'autres initiatives européennes**, tels qu'Erasmus+ (par exemple la promotion des opportunités Erasmus par le personnel EURES), Interreg (par exemple, la fourniture de conseils supplémentaires dans les régions transfrontalières) et le Fond Social européen. Toutefois, un risque de chevauchement a été identifié entre le portail EURES et deux autres outils européens : le portail Europass et le portail Your Europe, mettant en œuvre le Portail Numérique Unique.

Le règlement EURES fournit un cadre général essentiel et une vision commune pour la collaboration et la coordination des pays EURES dans le domaine de la mobilité de la main-d'œuvre. Il assure et promeut également la protection des conditions et des normes de travail équitables. L'échange d'information sur la mobilité de la main-d'œuvre et les marchés n'aurait pas eu lieu d'une manière aussi structurée et coordonnée sans EURES.

### **Leçons à retenir**

L'évaluation a donné lieu à une série de recommandations :

- Améliorer la facilité d'utilisation et la visibilité du portail EURES,
- Développer la mise en correspondance automatique,
- Favoriser les synergies entre le portail EURES et d'autres portails de l'UE comme Your Europe,
- Aligner davantage les processus de suivi des actions EURES et celles des programmes de mobilité EURES,
- Améliorer la provision d'une assistance post-recrutement,
- Renforcer la complémentarité entre les services de soutien transfrontaliers et les services EURES,
- Entamer une discussion sur la faisabilité d'établir une définition commune pour les apprentissages et les stages en dehors du parcours d'enseignement,
- Renforcer la communication en développant une approche coordonnée,
- Renforcer la coordination entre les pays du réseau EURES en développant davantage de cadres communs,
- Améliorer la qualité de la prestation des services en élaborant un cadre de mesure de la qualité,
- Renforcer la transparence grâce à des efforts de surveillance renforcés,
- Renforcer les efforts d'élargissement du réseaux EURES et en analyser les changements,
- Réduire la charge administrative des bureaux nationaux de coordination.

## Zusammenfassung

### Einleitung

EURES ist ein Kooperationsnetzwerk, das sich aus öffentlichen Arbeitsverwaltungen und anderen EURES-Mitgliedern und Partnern der EU-28-Länder (Großbritannien bis zum 31. Januar 2020), Island, Liechtenstein, Norwegen und der Schweiz sowie der Europäischen Kommission zusammensetzt. Das im 1994 ins Leben gerufene EURES-Netz hat zum Hauptziel, die faire Arbeitskräftemobilität innerhalb der Union zu unterstützen. EURES Dienstleistungen werden auf zwei Weisen bereitgestellt – über ein Netzwerk von EURES-Beraterinnen und Beratern und online über das EURES Portal (European Job Mobility Portal).

Auf Grund der EURES-Verordnung ist die Europäische Kommission dazu verpflichtet, dem Europäischen Parlament, dem Rat, dem Europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialausschuss und dem Ausschuss der Regionen bis zum 13. Mai 2021 einen Ex-post-Evaluierungsbericht über die Anwendung und die Auswirkungen der EURES-Verordnung vom 13. April 2016 zur Änderung der Verordnungen (EU) Nr. 492/2011 und (EU) Nr. 1296/2013 vorzulegen. Diese Studie trägt zum Ex-post-Evaluierungsbericht bei.

### Zentrale Erkenntnisse

Die Studie kam zu dem Schluss, dass die EURES-Instrumente und Dienstleistungen weitgehend relevant sind und intra-EU Arbeitsmobilitätsbedarfe wirksam und effizient abdecken. EURES-Dienste, die über EURES-Beraterinnen und Berater, im Rahmen von EURES-Mobilitätsprogrammen und über das EURES-Portal bereitgestellt werden, fördern die Arbeitsstellenvermittlung innerhalb der EU und verstärken das Bewusstsein für Möglichkeiten der Arbeitsmobilität innerhalb der EU.

**EURES-Unterstützungsleistungen** werden bis zu einem gewissen Grad als wirksam bewertet, da auch einige Einschränkungen festgestellt wurden. Insbesondere EURES-Unterstützungsleistungen, die EURES-Beraterinnen und Berater bereitstellen, werden als hochwertig, hochqualitativ und zu nachhaltigen Ergebnissen führend eingeschätzt, weil diese Unterstützungsleistungen auf die individuelle Situation zugeschnitten sind. Dennoch gibt es Differenzen in der Qualität der Dienstleistungen im gesamten Netz, was mit Unterschieden in verfügbaren Ressourcen auf nationaler Ebene erklärt werden könnte.

Das **EURES Portal** schließt Informationslücken und erhöht die Zahl der verfügbaren Stellenangebote und Lebensläufe. Dadurch werden Bedarfe von Arbeitgebern adressiert, die Schwierigkeiten haben, geeignete Bewerberinnen und Bewerber zu finden. Obwohl das EURES Portal Arbeitgebern und Arbeitssuchenden einen besseren Zugang zu Stellenangeboten und Lebensläufen ermöglicht, wird seine Wirksamkeit bei der Unterstützung im Einstellungsprozess als begrenzt eingeschätzt, da ein vollautomatischer Abgleich von Bewerberprofilen und Stellenangeboten noch nicht vorhanden ist. Dazu wird das Portal von Nutzern und Hauptakteure als benutzerfreundlich wahrgenommen. Darüber hinaus, nicht alle auf nationaler Ebene vorhandenen Stellenangebote sind auch auf dem EURES Portal verfügbar.

Die **EURES-Mobilitätsprogramme** stehen im Einklang mit den allgemeinen EURES-Zielen. Allerdings sind die Mobilitätsprogramme noch nicht im vollen Umfang in die Planung der EURES-Aktivitäten integriert, was sich unter anderem aufgrund unterschiedlicher Berichtspflichten im Zusammenhang mit ihrer Finanzierung im Rahmen des EU-Programmes für Beschäftigung und soziale Innovation (EaSI) erklären lässt.

Die EURES-Dienstleistungen gehen auf die wichtigsten **Bedürfnisse von Arbeitssuchenden und Arbeitgebern** ein. Allerdings sind einige spezifische Bedürfnisse, wie Unterstützung nach der

Rekrutierung, Überwindung von Sprachbarrieren und Unterstützung bei Anerkennung ausländischer Qualifikationen, nur in geringerem Maße abgedeckt. Einige Bedürfnisse bestimmter Gruppen wie junge Arbeitsuchende und Saisonarbeitskräfte werden von EURES-Dienstleistungen nur gering adressiert.

Das EURES-Netzwerk konnte sich an **kontextuelle Veränderungen** wie Entwicklungen der Arbeitskräftemobilität, technologische Fortschritte und die COVID-19-Pandemie anpassen, tat dies jedoch auf eine etwas unstrukturierte Weise, abhängig von unterschiedlichen Strategien und Prioritäten der Mitgliedstaaten. Darüber hinaus wurden einige Aspekte der EURES-Verordnung nicht in allen Mitgliedstaaten vollständig umgesetzt (Übermittlung von Informationen über Stellenangebote, Stellengesuche und Lebensläufe über einen einzigen koordinierten Kanal an das EURES Portal, Erweiterung des Mitgliederkreises des EURES-Netztes durch Zulassung von EURES-Mitgliedern und Partnern). Deswegen können zu diesem Zeitpunkt keine vollständigen Schlüsse über das Gesamtpotenzial gezogen werden. Außerdem ist EURES für Arbeitsmarktbeteiligte nicht deutlich sichtbar, was die Wirksamkeit des Netzwerks deutlich einschränkt.

Insgesamt konnte einen Anstieg der **Kosteneffizienz** zwischen 2016 und 2019 festgestellt werden. Das Benchmark von EURES mit Aktivitäten der öffentlichen Arbeitsverwaltungen (ÖAV) zeigte, dass EURES-Kosten als eine kleine Aufstockung der ÖAV -Kosten interpretiert werden können. Durch diese Aufstockung wird es den öffentlichen Arbeitsverwaltungen ermöglicht, den Umfang Ihrer Tätigkeiten auf grenzüberschreitende Stellenvermittlungen kosteneffizient auszuweiten.

Es bestehen Synergien zwischen den EURES-Aktivitäten und **anderen europäischen Initiativen** wie Erasmus+ (z. B. Förderung von Erasmus-Möglichkeiten durch EURES-Mitarbeitende), Interreg (z. B. Bereitstellung zusätzlicher Beratungsangebote in grenzüberschreitenden Regionen) und Europäischer Sozialfonds. Es wurde jedoch ein Risiko von Überschneidungen zwischen dem EURES Portal und zwei anderen europäischen Instrumenten festgestellt: dem Europass Portal und dem Portal "Your Europe", welches im Rahmen des einheitlichen digitalen Zugangstors implementiert wird.

Die EURES-Verordnung verschafft einen wesentlichen übergreifenden Rahmen und eine gemeinsame Vision für die Zusammenarbeit und Koordinierung der EURES-Länder im Bereich der Arbeitskräftemobilität. Dazu wird durch die Verordnung die Wahrung fairer Arbeitsbedingungen und -standards gefördert und sichergestellt. Der Informationsaustausch über Arbeitskräftemobilität und Arbeitsmärkte wäre ohne EURES nicht so strukturiert und koordiniert erfolgt.

### **Gewonnene Erkenntnisse**

Die Studie hat eine Reihe von Verbesserungsvorschlägen für die Zukunft identifiziert:

- Verbesserung der Benutzerfreundlichkeit und Sichtbarkeit des EURES Portals,
- Entwicklung eines vollautomatisierten Matchings von Arbeitssuchenden und Arbeitgebern,
- Förderung von Synergien zwischen dem EURES Portal und anderen EU Portalen wie Your Europe,
- Weitere Angleichung der Überwachungsprozesse von EURES-Maßnahmen und EURES-Mobilitätsprogrammen,
- Verstärkung der Bereitstellung von Unterstützung nach der Rekrutierung,
- Verstärkung der Komplementarität zwischen grenzüberschreitenden Unterstützungsangeboten und EURES-Dienstleistungen,
- Anstoß einer Diskussion über die Möglichkeit der Festlegung einer einheitlichen Definition für Lehrstellen und Praktika, die kein Bestandteil des nationalen Bildungssystems sind,

## **Study supporting the ex-post EURES evaluation and the second biennial EURES report**

- Stärkung der Kommunikationsaktivitäten durch die Entwicklung eines koordinierten Ansatzes,
- Stärkung der Koordinierung zwischen den EURES-Ländern durch die Weiterentwicklung gemeinsamer Koordinationsrahmen,
- Verbesserung der Qualität der EURES-Leistungserbringung durch die Entwicklung eines Qualitätsmessrahmens,
- Verbesserung der Transparenz durch verstärkte Überwachungsinitiativen,
- Stärkung der Erweiterungsbemühungen des EURES-Netzes und Bereitstellung von Analysen über Strukturveränderungen des Netzes,
- Verringerung des Verwaltungsaufwands der nationalen Koordinierungsstellen.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Article 35 of the EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589 requires the European Commission to submit by 13 May 2021 an ex-post evaluation report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Social and Economic Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the operation and effects of the EURES Regulation.

The ex-post evaluation gathers evidence on the operation and effects of the EURES Regulation including the associated implementing decisions. This includes:

- the description of the implementing process and current implementation status;
- the analysis of the EURES actions in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU-added value;
- an assessment of strengths and weaknesses; and
- lessons learnt.

The geographical coverage encompasses all countries of the EURES network – the EU-27 countries<sup>4</sup> and Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and the United Kingdom.

The ex-post evaluation refers mainly to the period since 2016, but also looks into a reference period before the introduction of the EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589, for comparison purposes.

While the major part of the work looks back at the effects of the EURES activities in the last four years, the study also includes a forward-looking element when analysing potential areas for further development, taking into account the upcoming transfer of the European Coordination Office (ECO) role to the European Labour Authority (ELA).

## 2 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Description of EURES and its objectives

This section outlines the EURES intervention logic and main objectives, network composition and functioning.

#### 2.1.1 EURES legal basis, objectives and intervention logic

Given the persisting challenges hampering labour mobility in Europe and in light of the potential benefits deriving from mobile workers unlocking Single Market opportunities, the European Commission launched EURES in 1994, as a network of European employment services<sup>5</sup> and other organisations currently known as EURES Members and Partners. EURES started its operations in 1994 with the aim of enhancing mutual cooperation based on national interests and needs, and raising awareness about job opportunities and vacancies in other countries<sup>6</sup>.

The EURES network has developed over the past decades. Since 2011, it has undergone reforms to reflect changes in the market for recruitment services and new mobility patterns, and to improve its performance. This long process of reforms sought to raise the quality of services

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<sup>4</sup> As of 01.02.2020.

<sup>5</sup> Including Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland

<sup>6</sup> Available online at <https://ec.europa.eu/eures>

delivered and improve the measurement of tangible results and impacts. It culminated in 2016 with the entry into force of the new EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589.

The main changes introduced by the new EURES Regulation include improved transparency of the network and services delivered, enhanced matching between labour demand and supply through an increase of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal, the enlargement of the network through the admission of new EURES Members and Partners, and the development of minimum standards for the provision of support services.

The intervention logic of EURES, presented in full in Annex I to this report, derives from the general objectives of EURES as set out in Article 6 of the EURES Regulation and defines four main challenges:

- **Technology** is modifying jobseekers and employers' behaviours concerning recruitment activities and job searching;
- The presence of **barriers to intra-EU labour mobility** limits the exploitation of the opportunities deriving from the free movement of workers;
- Growing interdependencies of labour markets may negatively affect **vulnerable groups** and specific regions;
- **Labour market imbalances** across European countries may lead to economic losses and decreased productivity.

To properly address these challenges, EURES builds its actions on the basis of the following specific objectives:

- To achieve a nearly complete supply of job vacancies on the EURES portal, with jobseekers throughout Europe having instant access to the same vacancies, as well as an extensive pool of CVs available from which registered employers can recruit;
- To enable the EURES portal to carry out a good automated matching between job vacancies, job applications and CVs, translating in all EU languages and understanding skills, competences, occupations and qualifications acquired at national level;
- To make available basic information on the EURES network throughout the Union to any jobseeker or employer seeking client services for recruitment, and to consistently offer any interested person access to the EURES network;
- To assist any interested person with matching, placement and recruitment through the EURES network;
- To support the functioning of the EURES network through information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses and the co-ordination of actions across Member States.

EURES activities for achieving these objectives can be clustered, as follows:

- **Cluster A - EURES portal:** this cluster includes all the activities linked to the functioning of EURES portal (The European Job Mobility Portal), from providing all the available vacancies and CVs to improving its visibility;
- **Cluster B - General support services to jobseekers and employers:** the activities within this cluster concern the provision of information, matching of CVs and job vacancies, support to the recruitment processes, and post-recruitment assistance;
- **Cluster C - EURES mobility schemes:** this cluster comprises targeted activities carried out under the mobility schemes for specific target groups or cross-border regions;
- **Cluster D - Internal support and coordination:** these activities include networking events for EURES countries and the sharing of best practices, but also all the activities carried out to coordinate and monitor the network.

In terms of **expected outputs**, the intervention logic shows that the activities described were expected to lead to a better functioning of the EURES portal, improved provision of support services to jobseekers and employers, EURES mobility schemes, and stronger internal coordination of the network.

At the level of the **expected results**, the aim was to achieve smooth and effective intra-EU job recruitment processes, to facilitate placements within EURES countries, to raise visibility of intra-EU labour mobility opportunities and make them accessible, and to enhance the integration of labour markets.

Overall, these steps would contribute towards creating more and better jobs in the Union, as well as strengthening the adaptability and the skill set of the European workforce. They would also contribute to: promoting occupational, geographical and voluntary labour mobility within the EU; enhancing a secure and free of discrimination freedom of mobility among workers; favouring transitions into the labour market and the reduction of poverty, discrimination and social injustice; and an integrated, well-functioning and cohesive Union labour market, including in cross-border regions (**expected impacts**).

### *2.1.2 EURES structure and functioning*

EURES services are delivered through two complementary channels – the EURES human network, consisting of EURES staff across the network, and the EURES portal with a number of online service tools available. At the national level, EURES countries are organised and operate as such:

- The **National Coordination Offices (NCOs)**, designated by each EURES country and generally linked to either the Public Employment Services or the Ministry of Labour, act as coordinators of the national EURES networks, communicate with the European Coordination Office (ECO) and provide performance monitoring data and additional information;
- Other **EURES Members and Partners**, which can include private employment services, social partners and universities, must undergo an admission procedure before becoming an accredited EURES Member or Partner. At national level, they are tasked with operational activities within the EURES network, such as:
  - general support services to employers, workers and jobseekers, mostly in the form of information and guidance and recruitment and matching activities;
  - specific support services and programmes targeting particular demographic/geographical groups, such as, support services in cross-border regions, apprenticeships and traineeships schemes, mobility schemes and post-recruitment assistance;
  - governance and monitoring activities, including communication and awareness raising of EURES at national level and activities related to the collection of performance data.

In addition, EURES Members and, where applicable, EURES Partners, are required to provide job vacancies as well as all job applications and CVs (upon consent of the job seeker) to the EURES portal.

At the European level, the **ECO**, hosted by the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission, provides horizontal support to NCOs, such as the development and the implementation of the EURES portal. It also provides IT support and helpdesk services, training programmes for EURES staff, information and communication activities, analyses of labour mobility flows and labour market conditions within the EU, and facilitation of networking and mutual learning events.

Together, the NCOs and ECO constitute the **EURES Coordination Group (ECG)** of the EURES network, which has a coordinating role concerning the activities and functioning of the network (Article 14 of EURES Regulation).

When discussing the total EURES **budget**, a distinction should be made between the sources used at national and EU level.

**At national level**, the functioning of EURES used to be financed through annual grants deriving from a separate EU budget line, but as of 2015 EURES countries became in charge of securing their own budget<sup>7</sup>. In this framework, the financial resources used by EURES countries can derive from three main sources: the European Social Fund (ESF)<sup>8</sup>, national budgets and the EURES axis of the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) to cover activities linked to mobility schemes. The composition of the budget and its volume differs from one EURES country to another.

**At EU level**, ECO is supported by the EURES axis of the EaSI programme that provides the financing of the horizontal support activities, such as the development and maintenance of the EURES portal, the common training programme, communication, analytical and network activities, and the mobility schemes.

The following table presents the indicative<sup>9</sup> global (national and EU level) EURES budget, distinguishing between two categories of funding sources: the **EURES axis of EaSI programme**<sup>10</sup> and **ESF and national funds**<sup>11</sup>.

Table 1 Indicative EURES total budget (in million Euros)

	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>EURES axis of EaSI</b>	11.6	23.1	24.3	33.8
<b>ESF and national funds</b>	22.1	22.8	23.2	24.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.7</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>58.2</b>

Source: Annual Work Programmes of EaSI and self-reporting of NCOs in online survey

## 2.2 Baseline and points of comparison

This section presents the legal background, the state of play and key figures concerning labour mobility in Europe and related challenges.

### 2.2.1 Labour mobility as a fundamental pillar of the European Union

Labour mobility is one of the four fundamental freedoms of the European Union. Article 45(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) states that the "*Freedom of movement for workers shall be secured within the Union*"<sup>12</sup>.

Freedom of movement for workers in the EU is regulated by the above mentioned Article 45 TFEU and by secondary legislation, i.e. "*the body of law that comes from the principles and objectives*

<sup>7</sup> Documentation of ECG meeting of 12-14 December 2017

<sup>8</sup> Documentation of ECG meeting of 12-13 June 2019 - Agenda Item 3

<sup>9</sup> The budget presented is indicative because it is based on the budget as foreseen, rather than as actually implemented.

<sup>10</sup> Based on the EaSI annual work programmes 2016 to 2019, Available online at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081>

<sup>11</sup> The EURES budget is calculated based on the total budget (comprising ESF and national funding) of all EURES countries included in the analysis. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the aggregate figure because of missing data. See Annex III.a for more details.

<sup>12</sup> Available online at EUR-Lex : [http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/tfeu\\_2016/art\\_45/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/tfeu_2016/art_45/oj)

of the (European Union) treaties<sup>13</sup>. Specifically, Regulation (EU) 492/2011[4] establishes the right for EU citizens to be employed in any Member State of the EU and be treated as national workers there and Directive 2004/38/EC<sup>14</sup> sets the conditions for the exercise of EU citizens' right to move and reside in another EU Member State. Moreover, Directive 2014/54/EU<sup>15</sup> aims to ensure the provision of information and assistance to mobile workers as well as the defence of their rights.

Labour mobility is also of strategic importance in supporting competitiveness and growth in the Union. If properly supported, intra-EU labour mobility can contribute to more efficient labour markets by ensuring an effective matching between labour supply and demand across Europe. In this way, it can support job creation where labour markets are confronted with unfulfilled demand on the one hand and high unemployment rates on the other hand.

### *2.2.2 The baseline situation and its evolution during the evaluation period*

The Impact Assessment, carried out in 2014 before the adoption of the EURES Regulation,<sup>16</sup> identified a range of issues linked to the functioning of the Single Market and the role played by intra-EU labour mobility, including:

- Great potential of intra-EU labour mobility but insufficient impact on reducing labour market imbalances, with evidence of:
  - persisting unemployment gaps across EU Member States<sup>17</sup>;
  - high job vacancy rates couple with high unemployment rates;
  - employers indicating difficulties in finding employees with the skills they need.
- Weak mobility flows with respect to:
  - international benchmarks<sup>18</sup>;
  - people declaring firm intention to move<sup>19</sup>.
- Contextual factors such as the ageing workforce likely to compound labour market imbalances due to skills obsolescence.

The analysis of the labour market and its evolution carried out as part of this study<sup>20</sup> confirms that labour market imbalances have tended to persist in the period of evaluation along with barriers to labour mobility. This is further detailed below. Given the modest scale of the EURES actions, it is hard to assess based on labour market data and intra-EU mobility flows whether and to what extent EURES has influenced the baseline. The question is addressed under the effectiveness and EU added value sections (Sections 5.2 and 5.5, respectively).

#### **Drivers of labour mobility**

<sup>13</sup> Definition can be found online at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/types-eu-law\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/types-eu-law_en)

<sup>14</sup> Available online at EUR-Lex: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2004/38/oj>

<sup>15</sup> Available online at EUR-Lex: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/54/oj>

<sup>16</sup> SWD(2014) 9 final, COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT Accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European network of Employment Services, workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, Annex III.b, Data and analysis on flows, benefits and the potential of intra-EU labour mobility

<sup>17</sup> Annex 2 of the SWD(2014) 9 final part 2/2 cites, for instance, labour shortages in Germany accompanied by high unemployment rates in Spain

<sup>18</sup> Though historical and contextual factors differ, a comparison was made by the Impact Assessment among annual mobility rates in the EU-27 (estimated at 0.29%, based on OECD data), in Australia (1.5%) and in the US (2.4%)

<sup>19</sup> Potential EU movers estimated at 2.9 million per year, based on data from Gallup World Poll, analysed in the June 2013 EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review (ESSQR), pp. 38-39

<sup>20</sup> Available in Annex III.b

Labour mobility within the EU is mostly motivated by economic, cultural and social drivers,<sup>21</sup> including network effects.<sup>22</sup>

The analysis of the main economic determinants of labour mobility – income and unemployment gaps<sup>23</sup> – suggests two noteworthy trends during the evaluation period<sup>24</sup>. First, these determinants were strong and continued to be significant, though to a lesser extent than before<sup>25</sup>, between lower-income Eastern European and Baltic countries, and high income North-Western European countries. However, differences in unemployment rates were more limited between the above groups and continued to decrease.

The same determinants have been getting stronger for Southern European countries with GDP per capita (especially Italy and Greece) growing slower than the EU average. In addition, unemployment rates for these countries remained high or have decreased at a slow pace. For countries such as Spain and Portugal, the comparatively low pro-capita GDP and traditionally high unemployment rates might have been compensated by a more sustained pace of recovery of such economies, especially in terms of falling unemployment rates.<sup>26</sup>

At a more aggregated level, it is also worth mentioning that the average unemployment rate in EU-28 was down to 6.8%<sup>27</sup> in 2018 from 8.5%<sup>28</sup> in 2016 and 10.2% in 2014, and differences in GDP per capita have also decreased<sup>29</sup>.

Regarding compositional changes in the pool of unemployed, tertiary graduates have seen their unemployment levels reduce at a slower pace than the rest of the population in most of the EU Member States, though they generally fare better in the labour market. As these workers tend to be more mobile than those with lower skill levels,<sup>30</sup> they are more likely to have driven mobility flows up.

In addition, persistently high levels of **skills surpluses and shortages** were found across the EU, which, on the one hand, hampered the functioning of the Single Market and, on the other, might have led to an increase in the number of EU movers.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, as a consequence of

<sup>21</sup> Albouy, D., Cho, H., and Shappo, M. (2019) Immigration and the pursuit of amenities, *J Regional Sci.* 2020; 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jors.12475>

<sup>22</sup> Landesmann, M. & Leitner, S. M. (2015) Intra-EU Mobility and Push and Pull Factors in EU Labour Markets, Estimating a Panel VAR Model, The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (WIIW), Working Paper 120 accessed at <https://wiiw.ac.at/intra-eu-mobility-and-push-and-pull-factors-in-eu-labour-markets-estimating-a-panel-var-model-dlp-3671.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Arpaia, A., Kiss, A., Palvolgyi, B., Turrini, A. (2015) Labour Mobility and Labour Market Adjustment in the EU, IZA Policy Paper No. 106 accessed at <http://ftp.iza.org/pp106.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> In line with the most up-to-date data on labour mobility and for consistency, labour market trends have been assessed in the 2014-2018 timeframe. Whenever necessary either to further test the presence of a certain trend or in case 2014-2018 data were not available, older data were also used.

<sup>25</sup> The average GDP in parity of purchasing power of BG, CZ, EE, HR, HU, LT, LV, PL, RO grew from 67 of the EU-28 in 2014, to 68 in 2016 and 72 in 2018 (i.e. an increase of 5 p.p. in the period through 2014-2018). At the same time, for the two main receiving countries (DE and UK) it decreased by 5 p.p., so the gap was effectively cut by 10 p.p. Source: Eurostat [TEC00114]

<sup>26</sup> E.g., in ES the unemployment level sunk by 9.2 between 2014 and 2018, and by 7 p.p. for PT. In the same timespan, the reduction for Italy was of 2.1 p.p and 1.6 p.p. in Germany.

<sup>27</sup> Ranging from 2.2% (CZ) to 19.3% (EL)

<sup>28</sup> Ranging from 4% (CZ) to 23.6 (EL)

<sup>29</sup> As detailed in Annex III.b, if one looks at the distribution of GDP values in PPS for EU-28 MS using scatter plots, one can see that the central half of the EU MS were between 73% and 126% of the average EU GDP in 2014, i.e. an interval of 53 p.p.. The length of such interval was cut by 5 p.p. (from 72% to 120%) in 2018, pointing to narrower distances from the average. Also, the median value grew from 89% to 91%, hence closer to the average.

<sup>30</sup> Amior, M. (2015) Why are Higher Skilled Workers More Mobile Geographically? The Role of the Job Surplus, CEP Discussion Paper No 1338, Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics and Political Science accessed at <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/dp1338.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Particularly high skill (overqualified) workers might be motivated by the possibility of job opportunities better matching their skills in foreign countries. The prospects for upward career mobility have been found to be increasing the propensity to migrate abroad. See for instance Milasi, S. (2020) What Drives Youth's Intention to Migrate Abroad? Evidence from International Survey Data, *IZA Journal of Development and Migration* | Volume 11: Issue 1 accessed at

globalisation patterns and technological advancements, combined with the economic crisis and demographic changes, skills mismatches persisted and tended to grow in Europe. This leads to a higher risk of reduced productivity and losses in competitiveness, and a greater need for labour mobility. Key features of the skills mismatches are summarised below.

- With respect to skills surpluses:
  - The over-qualification rate<sup>32</sup> increased from 21.7% to 22.1% for the EU-28 between 2014 and 2018, thus by 1.8%<sup>33</sup>;
  - One third of higher education graduates in Europe work in occupations where their qualification was not required;
- With respect to skills shortages:
  - The EU-28 average job vacancy rate was 2.2% at the end of 2018, up from 1.5% in 2014.<sup>34</sup>
  - On average, 77% of firms reported in 2018 the limited availability of skills as an impediment to investment, up from 65% in 2016<sup>35</sup>;
  - 40% of the employers declared in 2014 they struggle to fill vacancies with suitable employees<sup>36</sup>;
  - Rapidly increasing numbers of firms declare that they experience labour shortages, especially in Eastern and Central European countries<sup>37</sup>, while the values remain more stable in Southern European countries.

Overall, the above suggests that labour market imbalances persisted across the EU and, in some cases, have even showed a tendency to grow over the evaluation period (e.g. overqualification rate, job vacancy rates and labour shortages, despite comparatively high unemployment levels in some countries), albeit associated with a certain convergence in income and employment levels.

### Obstacles to labour mobility

Even if intra-EU labour mobility is protected by European legislation and supported by several EU policies and instruments<sup>38</sup> and already involves a significant share of the population in Europe, obstacles remain that prevent workers from seeking work opportunities abroad and, likewise, employers from finding the skills they need abroad.

Several studies have investigated the key elements which play a role in hindering labour mobility, including in the broader context of barriers to the full realisation of the Single Market.<sup>39</sup> The

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<https://doi.org/10.2478/izajodm-2020-0012>. This is in line also with ICF (2018), Study on the movement of skilled labour, DG EMPL, European Commission accessed at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=it&pubId=8156&furtherPubs=yes>

<sup>32</sup> Eurostat's experimental indicator on vertical skills mismatches, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/experimental-statistics/skills>

<sup>33</sup> Such increase is even higher at 6.6% if one looks at the 2012-2018 comparison

<sup>34</sup> Eurostat, Job Vacancy Statistics (JVS). The same rate was above average, in particular, in the Czech Republic (5.5%), Belgium (3.5%), Germany (3.1%), the Netherlands (3.0%) and Austria (2.9%).

<sup>35</sup> Based on the EIB Investment Survey (EIBIS) accessed at <https://www.eib.org/en/publications/econ-eibis-2019-eu.htm>

<sup>36</sup> European skills and jobs survey, 2014

<sup>37</sup> European Business Surveys, several years. In 2014, about 10% of central European countries and 15% of eastern European countries declared to have experienced labour shortages. In 2017, 16% and 40% respectively.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. [MoveS](#), [EU Cohesion policy](#), [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), Solvit, Your Europe

<sup>39</sup> In its SWD(2020) 54 final "Identifying and addressing barriers to the Single Market" the EC "focuses first on the top 13 barriers to cross-border activity, as most commonly reported by businesses (with regard to cross-border trade or establishment) and consumers (with regard to cross-border purchase of goods or services)". Some of these barriers are related to labour mobility, but the report mostly focuses on the businesses and consumer perspective for trade or purchase of good and services. Thus, the related taxonomy of barriers is not suitable for this study.

categorisation employed in this report takes stock of the dedicated literature on barriers to labour mobility and summarises them, as follows<sup>40</sup>:

- **Barriers related to the transparency of information**, such as jobseekers' difficulties in assessing employment options in other Member States;
- **Administrative and regulatory barriers**: e.g., bureaucratic challenges workers face when moving to another country for work, including applying and obtaining social security, recognition of qualifications and competences, taxation and transport issues especially in the case of posted workers, and pension portability;
- Language barriers; and
- Cultural barriers.

Among these, **language and the recognition of competences** appear to be the most significant obstacles for intra-EU labour mobility<sup>41</sup>.

Based on available data, language proficiency was still pretty low across the EU<sup>42</sup> at 22.1% in 2016, although on an upward trend over recent years<sup>43</sup>.

The European Commission, Cedefop and the Member States have focused on a better recognition of qualifications as part of the creation and implementation of a common European Qualifications Framework (EQF). As of 2018, most EU Member States had completed the first stage, i.e. the referencing to the EQF. However, the national qualifications frameworks being adopted or refined did not show in some cases a close alignment with the EQF. Obstacles seem to remain also in regulated professions despite some improvements following the revision in 2013 of the Professional Qualifications Directive (Directive 2013/55/EU)<sup>44</sup>.

Among other administrative obstacles, steps towards a fuller harmonisation of the social security systems are expected following the adoption of the Directive 2014/50/EU on minimum requirements for enhancing worker mobility between Member States by improving pension rights. However, given its late transposition, it is not yet possible to draw conclusions about its impact<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Barslund, M. and Busse, M. (2016) Labour Mobility in the EU, Addressing challenges and ensuring 'fair mobility', CEPS special report, No. 139 / July 2016 ISBN 978-94-6138- 529-1 accessed at <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/labour-mobility-eu-addressing-challenges-and-ensuring-fair-mobility/>

<sup>41</sup> Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, obstacles to getting a suitable job; Barslund, M. and Busse, M. (2016) Labour Mobility in the EU, Addressing challenges and ensuring 'fair mobility', CEPS special report, No. 139 / July 2016 ISBN 978-94-6138- 529-1 accessed at <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/labour-mobility-eu-addressing-challenges-and-ensuring-fair-mobility/> and ECA (2018) Free Movement of Workers – the fundamental freedom ensured but better targeting of EU funds would aid worker mobility, Special Report No 6, p. 7 accessed at <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=44964> "Obstacles to moving to and working in another country (such as the recognition of professional diplomas) are long standing. Whilst the Commission and Member States have taken several actions to address such obstacles, they persist"

<sup>42</sup> Concerning languages, the comparative analysis shows that Luxembourg, Sweden, Malta, Denmark and Norway are the only countries in which more than 40% of the population is proficient in a second language, more specifically the foreign language reported as best known in the country

<sup>43</sup> More up-to-date data on language proficiency do not exist, but the existence of an upward trend is suggested on the following basis: (i) the increases recorded through 2011-2016 (2.1 p.p.) ; (ii) the fact that younger cohorts of individuals progressively replacing the pool of those in working age display above-average levels of language proficiency; and (iii) the increasing shares of tertiary graduates over 2016-2019 (see for instance EDAT\_LFSE\_12, with the share of tertiary graduates 30-34 years old increasing from 39.2% to 41.6%), given that tertiary graduates too tend to show above-average levels of proficiency in foreign languages

<sup>44</sup> In this case too, the main barriers identified appear to be the complexity and fragmentation of the recognition process, especially in some Member States, and language hindrances. The impact of the directive was positive but modest according to Adamis- Császár, K., De Keyser, L., Fries-Tersch, E., et al. Labour mobility and recognition in the regulated professions, Study for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, European Parliament, Luxembourg, 2019

<sup>45</sup> COM(2020) 291 final, Report From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council And The European Economic And Social Committee on the application of Directive 2014/50/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on minimum requirements for enhancing worker mobility between Member States by improving the acquisition and preservation of supplementary pension rights, p. 16

Information on job opportunities was considered to be insufficient overall by the European Court of Auditors in 2018<sup>46</sup>. The specific role of EURES in this respect and the progress being made are discussed in more detail in the study's results.

The analysis of the study shows that, generally, countries with higher barriers to labour mobility tended to be those with worse employment prospects, often coupled with high levels of overqualified workers. This is especially true of Mediterranean countries. In these countries, matching efficiency too appears to have significantly dropped with respect with the pre-crisis level, with only marginal improvements – if any – through 2014-2018<sup>47</sup>.

This has consequences in terms of persisting labour market imbalances, which, in turn, implies costs for individuals, firms and the economy as a whole. Such consequences spill over to countries which are relatively better off in terms of their socio-economic context and yet show increasingly high levels of job vacancy rates and struggle to meet their labour demand.

At the individual level, evidence from the literature indicates<sup>48</sup> that skills mismatches tend to compress earnings (permanently in the case of the so-call "overqualification trap"<sup>49</sup>), exert downward pressure on wages of the low skilled, and be conducive to lower skills development.

For firms, skills mismatches are traditionally associated with lower productivity and innovation potential<sup>50</sup> as well as higher costs of hiring (due to higher turnover of employees ill matched with their job).

At aggregate level, although the evidence is more mixed given the complexity of the issue from a macroeconomic perspective, skills mismatches and labour market imbalances have been associated with higher structural unemployment<sup>51</sup>, lower average productivity<sup>52</sup> and significant reductions of the economy's output<sup>53</sup>.

Hence the pivotal role that EURES is called to play in providing information on job opportunities, living and working abroad, language training as well as post-recruitment assistance<sup>54</sup>. Through

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<sup>46</sup> European Court of Auditors (2018), Free Movement of Workers – the fundamental freedom ensured but better targeting of EU funds would aid worker mobility, Special Report No 6 accessed at <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=44964> on the lack of complete information on job opportunities

<sup>47</sup> This is demonstrated by a significant outward shift of the Beveridge Curve, which describes the relationship between job vacancy rates and unemployment rates. Job vacancy rates have increased in these countries despite high and increased unemployment rates, as clarified in Brunello, G. and Wruuck, P. (2019) Skill shortages and skill mismatch in Europe: A review of the literature, European Investment Bank, ECONOMICS – WORKING PAPERS 2019/05

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> See for instance Erdsiek, D. (2017) Dynamics of Overqualification: Evidence from the Early Career of Graduates, Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW) Mannheim, Discussion Paper No. 17-020 accessed at <http://ftp.zew.de/pub/zew-docs/dp/dp17020.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> See for instance, Adalet McGowan, M. and D. Andrews (2015), "Labour Market Mismatch and Labour Productivity: Evidence from PIAAC Data", *OECD Economics Department Working Papers*, No. 1209, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5js1pzx1r2kb-en>.

<sup>51</sup> Driehuis\*, W. (1978), LABOUR MARKET IMBALANCES AND STRUCTURAL UNEMPLOYMENT. *Kyklos*, 31: 638-661. doi:[10.1111/j.1467-6435.1978.tb00664.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6435.1978.tb00664.x)

<sup>52</sup> Adalet McGowan, M. and D. Andrews (2015), "Labour Market Mismatch and Labour Productivity: Evidence from PIAAC Data", *OECD Economics Department Working Papers*, No. 1209, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5js1pzx1r2kb-en>. but also Bennet, J. and McGuiness, S. 2009, Assessing the Impact of Skill Shortages on the Productivity Performance of High-Tech Firms in Northern Ireland, *Applied Economics*, Vol. 727-737

<sup>53</sup> For instance, in Garibaldi, P., Gomes, P. and Soprasedu, T. (2020) Output Costs of Education and Skill Mismatch, IZA DP No. 12974 accessed at <https://www.iza.org/de/publications/dp/12974/output-costs-of-education-and-skill-mismatch> the cost of skills mismatches translates into differences in output for 17 OECD economies which range from -1% to +9%. The key variable that explains the output cost of mismatch is not the percentage of mismatched workers but their wage relative to well-matched workers (the larger the difference the higher the cost)

<sup>54</sup> The importance of post-recruitment assistance in this respect is linked to the support with taxation and social security matters as well as language training. Expectations over the receipt of such support are likely to incentivise the move by tackling its root barriers.

such support EURES is expected to be redressing barriers to labour mobility and helping improve matching efficiency towards a better functioning of the Single Market.

### Observed labour mobility

Different types of labour mobility that are relevant to EURES support can be measured. Their levels and trends are described below, notably:

- **Movers of working age:** since 2014, there has been an overall increase in the stock of working age EU-28 movers of 16.5%, from around 11 million in 2012 to 12.9 million in 2018<sup>55</sup>; in terms of flows (individuals moving each year) they have remained more or less stable over the years, increasing slightly from 1.3 million in 2012, to 1.6 in 2016, and then remaining stable through to 2018;
- **Movers who work and reside abroad:** focusing on employed workers who reside in another EU country, an increase of 23.9% from 2014 values<sup>56</sup> is registered, with their number reaching around 10 million in 2018;
- **Cross-Border Workers:** in 2018, around 1.8 million workers<sup>57</sup> lived in an EU-28 country and worked in another EU-28 or EFTA country. Compared to 2014, this number has increased by 12.5%;
- **Posted workers:** almost 3 million Portable Documents A1<sup>58</sup> were issued in 2018, (corresponding to approximately 1.9 million posted workers) more than 50% over the 2014 number (approximately 1.25 posted workers).

Irrespective of the type of labour mobility observed, it is clear that this has either increased or remained stable during the evaluation period. The main sending countries remained the Eastern European ones, but with an increasing prominence of Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Greece and Spain. Main countries of destination have traditionally been Northern European countries, especially the UK and Germany, with the latter showing the strongest increases in 2017-2018, partly due to the outcome of the Brexit referendum and subsequent EU-UK negotiations which led to a significant drop of flows towards the UK.

### Summing up

This brief overview suggests that although the EU has been working towards enhancing labour mobility, obstacles remain. While there are no recent data on firm intentions of EU citizens to move<sup>59</sup>, the evolution of determinants of labour mobility shows that labour mobility remained strong during the evaluation period.

Our analysis indicates that while income and unemployment gaps between Member States have tended to drop during the evaluation period, the volume of labour mobility, in its many guises, remained steady or even increased. The role of EURES and several EU initiatives aimed at reducing administrative barriers, increasing proficiency in foreign languages and joint efforts to ensure skills and qualifications have been relevant factors. A growing network of nationals living abroad is also considered to have played a role.

However, labour market imbalances identified in the Impact Assessment remained and so did, to a certain extent, obstacles to labour mobility. In particular, our analysis shows that countries with

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<sup>55</sup> The increase stretches to 31.5% if we take as a reference the 2012-2019 period

<sup>56</sup> With an average rate of increase around 3% between 2016 and 2019, and over 6.5% between 2012 and 2016

<sup>57</sup> Eurostat LFS data – provided by ECO

<sup>58</sup> 'Portable Document A1 (PD A1)' is a document issued by the Member State whose social security legislation remains applicable for workers temporarily working in another Member State, including posted workers.

<sup>59</sup> These were used by the Impact assessment as a benchmark to compare observed mobility vs desired mobility. More recent data do not exist as the latest world Gallup survey on individuals' intention to leave run through 2015-2017. It showed data in line with the previous iteration, but essentially focused on the pre-EURES Regulation period.

higher than average barriers to labour mobility tended to be also those with worse income or employment prospects, often in conjunction with a large pool of overqualified workers. Thus, the untapped potential for a better functioning of the Single Market and a continuing need for tools and initiatives supporting labour mobility remain apparent. These might provide even more crucial support to mitigate the consequences of COVID-19.

### 3 OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation status of the main aspects of the EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589 is summarised below. A number of actions are still in the process of being completed in some EURES countries<sup>60</sup>.

- **Composition of the network:** all EURES countries have already established or started preparing an admission system<sup>61</sup>. Thirteen EURES countries reported to have admitted new Members and Partners but, overall, the network enlargement happens at a slow pace as 19 EURES countries have not admitted new organisations to it.
- **Changes in IT** and the implementation of the transparent exchange of job vacancies and CVs between national databases and EURES: 31 EURES countries have set up a system for transferring job vacancies, and more than half of the EURES countries currently transfer CVs through the single coordinated channel.
- **Provision of support services:** the work towards an automated matching on the EURES portal is ongoing. In this regard, EURES countries are in the process of mapping their national classification systems to the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO), which is a necessary precondition. Additionally, the EURES portal was updated with new search functionalities and design.
- Coordination of the network and **information exchange:** templates to enable harmonised planning and performance measurement across the EURES network are in use since 2018 by all EURES countries.

At the **operational level**, the activities are planned and monitored through the Programming Cycle, a tool that provides a yearly overview of the planned and implemented activities of the EURES network through an assessment of the Work Programmes and Activity Reports of EURES countries. The overall performance of EURES is measured through the Performance Management System (PMS)<sup>62</sup>, for which the European Coordination Office (ECO) has created a reporting tool that is shared with all national coordinators.

The following paragraphs summarise the main achievements of the EURES network per cluster of activities.

#### Cluster A - EURES portal

The **EURES portal** is developed and maintained by ECO and consists of a number of central elements - database of job vacancies and CVs, information on labour mobility (e.g. living and working conditions, hints and tips for employers and jobseekers), overview of EURES services and contact details of EURES staff, and a helpdesk. A total of 566 045 jobseekers and 15 263 employers were registered on the EURES portal as of January 2020. In addition, there is an **Extranet** section of the Portal, accessible to national coordinators and EURES staff. Among others, the Extranet hosts dedicated workspaces, registration for training, performance

<sup>60</sup> The summary is based on the findings of the First and Second EURES biennial activity reports to the European Parliament and Council

<sup>61</sup> The non-EU EURES countries have not yet started the work on admission as the Regulation was adopted in late 2019 by the EEA Joint Committee and now the implementation at national level is under way

<sup>62</sup> Introduced in 2018 in accordance with the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/17

measurement forms. It also supports the coordination and exchange of information within the network.

### Cluster B - Support services to jobseekers and employers

The general support services to workers and employers, provided by EURES Members and Partners, include **matching and placement activities** and the **provision of information and guidance**. While these services are provided in all EURES countries, the exact portfolio and way of implementation differ, corresponding to national practices and labour market needs. In particular, the format (e.g. one-to-one counselling, events), way of delivery (e.g. online, onsite) or focus (e.g. sectoral approach, general labour market approach) can differ. The main EURES performance indicators in this regard are summarised below:

Table 2 Indicators relating to general support services to workers and employers

Indicators	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total number of individual contacts between EURES staff and workers	791 101	696 514	2 305 490	3 344 368
Total number of individual contacts between EURES staff and employers	113 694	111 636	194 186	194 789
Job placements facilitated through the EURES Portal or the EURES staff	N/A	N/A	84 580	83 360
Total number of recruitment events attended by EURES staff	N/A	N/A	23 315	11 159

Source: Data for 2016 and 2017 based on monthly reports by the EURES advisers; for 2018 and 2019 based on the PMS reporting. In 2016 and 2017 the response rate was around 60% and several EURES countries did not respond at all, as a result, the numbers are substantially lower than those reported in 2018 and 2019, when the new PMS reporting system was introduced.

In addition to general support services, a number of EURES countries provide specific support services. Around two-thirds of the EURES countries organise **post-recruitment activities**, which include mainly the provision of information and guidance on tax and social security issues. In some cases, support services to families of a recruited employee and/or language training are also provided. Specific support services targeting youth and linked to **apprenticeships and traineeships** are implemented unevenly across the EURES countries. In most cases, they include promotion of mobility schemes or targeted workshops and information activities.

### Cluster C - Mobility schemes

Three main **EURES mobility schemes**, managed by the European Commission, aim at reaching specific groups of jobseekers (aged 18-35 years or 35 and older) and at helping companies fill vacancies in sectors with skills needs. The main sectors in which placements were realised are Human health and social work, Information and communication, Education, Transportation and storage<sup>63</sup>.

In addition, information, placement and recruitment services tailored to the needs of frontier workers and employers in cross-border regions are implemented within the framework of EURES **Cross-Border Partnerships**. In 2018, nine partnerships received an EaSI grant from the previous year and 11 in 2019. Moreover, during 2019 eight grants were awarded to Cross-Border Partnerships for 2020 and 2021.

<sup>63</sup> Your First EURES Job and Reactivate monitoring reports

## Cluster D - Internal support and coordination

In addition to the infrastructure provided with the EURES Extranet, the work of the EURES network is enhanced by a number of support and coordination activities by ECO. This includes organisation of coordination meetings (five meetings a year), mutual learning events and working groups on specific topics, provision of a regular training programme, reports on occupational and geographic labour mobility, technical guidance and templates supporting the implementation of different aspects of the EURES Regulation.

## 4 METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

### 4.1 Short description of methodology

This section provides an overview of the methodology applied and the different tools used in the context of the present evaluation study, while further details are provided in Annex I.

#### 4.1.1 Methodological approach

The methodological approach of the study has been built on the European Commission's Better Regulation and Evaluation Guidelines<sup>64</sup> and relies on three main elements:

- The **intervention logic**, presented in Annex I, Section 1, depicts the way in which the policy intervention was expected to work.
- The **Evaluation Questions Matrix**, presented in Annex I, Section 2, links the evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU-added value) to the intervention logic, and translates its key elements into research questions, judgement criteria, indicators and information sources that guide the evaluation exercise.
- A set of **data collection, analysis and synthesis tools**, driven by the Evaluation Questions Matrix, have been selected and applied during the study to collect data and insights that contribute towards drawing robust and meaningful conclusions.

#### 4.1.2 Methodological tools

The figure below summarises the consultation tools that have been selected for the purpose of this study and the categories of stakeholders involved.

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<sup>64</sup> European Commission (2015), Better Regulation Guidelines, Chapter IV, available online at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation-why-and-how/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation-why-and-how/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en)

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Table 3 Overview of consultation tools per stakeholder groups

	Consultation tools					
	Case studies					Validation and COVID-19 workshops
	Ad hoc Interviews	Fieldwork Interviews	Field workshops	Online survey	Open Public consultation	
Private citizens (including Jobseekers/workers)		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Companies/employers		✓	✓	✓	✓	
ECO officials	✓				✓	✓
DG EMPL	✓				✓	✓
Other Commission officials					✓	✓
NCOs staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EURES Members and Partners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Employment Services		✓	✓		✓	
Private Employment Services		✓	✓		✓	
Public Authorities					✓	
Academic institutions					✓	
Employers' associations					✓	✓
Trade associations/unions					✓	✓
Civil Society/NGOs					✓	✓

The main tools used by the study are summarised below.

**Data collection tools** comprise all instruments used to gather the information needed to respond to the evaluation questions. The data collection tools selected for this study are:

- **Desk research:** desk research has been a building block of the study and it was based on multiple sources, such as the review of existing EURES monitoring data, the information contained in the EURES extranet, and statistical data. In addition, studies and academic literature were reviewed, contributing mainly to the analysis of labour market developments and drivers and barriers to labour mobility. A full bibliography can be found in Annex I, Section 7.
- **Fieldwork data collection for case studies:** the case studies provide useful inputs for answering some of the evaluation questions on specific key topics for EURES. Seven case studies covering 10 EURES countries (Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) have been carried out and are presented in Annex II.a. The topics covered by the case studies include the single coordinated channel, IT platforms / matching and monitoring tools, cross-border collaborations, extension of the network, and support services to employers and to workers. To collect the necessary information, at least seven interviews per selected country and one workshop per topic have been carried out online.

- **Online surveys:** four online surveys addressed at four target groups (i.e. NCOs, employers, workers, and EURES Members and Partners) have been conducted to collect additional information and views on EURES.
- **Public consultation:** a public consultation to gather the views of key stakeholders on EURES has been carried out. The questionnaire was tailored to different stakeholder categories, to reflect their different needs and expectations.
- **Ad-hoc interviews:** the aim of these ad-hoc interviews with national coordinators and EU-wide stakeholder organisations was to collect further qualitative evidence and fill any information gaps or outstanding questions arising from the analysis of other data collection activities (e.g. online survey).
- **Participation in meetings:** based on the relevance of the topics discussed, a member of the study team participated in the EURES Coordination Group (ECG) meetings to gather insights relevant for the evaluation.

**Data analysis tools**, building on the information collected, have been used to elaborate the responses to the evaluation questions, critically assessing and categorising the data gathered. These tools comprise:

- **Comparative analysis of the labour market:** the aim of this exercise was to identify, to the extent possible, factors that have contributed (either positively or negatively) to the effectiveness, efficiency and added-value of EURES-related operations.
- **Cost-effectiveness analysis:** this analysis contributed to the evaluation of the efficiency of EURES in achieving its objectives.
- **Case studies:** the results of the fieldwork interviews and workshops constituted the basis of the case studies which fed into the responses to the evaluation questions.

**Data synthesis tools** have been deployed to draw the conclusions and the recommendations of the study, as well as to ensure robustness and consistency of the findings. These tools include:

- **Data triangulation:** analysis of quantitative and qualitative data deriving from multiple sources to ensure the robustness of the findings.
- **Validation workshop:** to allow stakeholders and experts to provide critical inputs and relevant insights on the findings. The workshop took place on 14 September 2020, gathering together key stakeholders and ECO officials.
- **COVID-19 workshop:** a complementary workshop, organised on 7 October 2020, to discuss the potential impact of the pandemic based on relevant data gathered during the assignment, and to brainstorm about lessons learnt and any appropriate actions that could be taken in the future.

## 4.2 Limitations of the study and robustness of findings

A number of challenges were encountered during the present study. The following points summarise the main issues as well as the specific measures taken to address them:

- **Lack of availability of key data and involvement of stakeholders:** the study team faced some challenges to collect all the necessary data to evaluate EURES actions since 2016, in particular:
  - Some data required for the comparative analysis of the labour market and the cost-effectiveness analysis were not publicly available. As a mitigation measure, additional questions were included in the online survey questionnaire targeting national coordinators to fill the data gaps identified.
  - Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the consequent confinement measures in Member States and the severe restrictions to intra-EU mobility, it was not possible to conduct fieldwork for the data collection on the case studies. Moreover, certain Member States

initially selected (i.e. Ireland and Romania), were facing staff shortages because of new emerging national priorities with a different focus than EURES. To ease the burden, these countries were substituted with Italy and Hungary<sup>65</sup>. Recruiting participants in the workshops was difficult for certain categories of stakeholders, especially young people, jobseekers and workers, because the NCOs are required to respect data protection rules and cannot always provide the contacts of their beneficiaries. To address data protection issues, invitations to the workshops were issued through NCO newsletters or anonymous mailing. Overall, it was possible to complete the interviews and workshops online with the support of IT platforms.

- **Limited comparability, quality and completeness of monitoring data:** although a multitude of monitoring data exists, produced for the purpose of overseeing the implementation of EURES Regulation in Member States and at EU level by ECO, an issue of data comparability and completeness persists, as such:
  - The introduction of the Performance Measurement System (PMS) meant that the EURES countries had to establish their own national monitoring system by 2018. This replaced the previous monitoring arrangement in which EURES advisers filled in monthly reports on a voluntary basis. Hence the information between 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 is not comparable. In addition, the figures provided by the EURES countries are often not consistent (e.g. the sum of the breakdowns per certain categories does not correspond to the total) or incomplete per certain sections, especially the optional ones.
  - Under the Programming Cycle, the EURES countries are asked to provide information about their budgets (to be) spent on EURES per year. However, the information provision is not standardised, therefore, each country provides this information in a different manner with some of them choosing not to disclose full details. Furthermore, as many national networks are financed through ESF, the budget assigned to EURES is often multiannual with no overview of how much was spent in each year.
  - Cross-border Partnerships monitoring reports have changed format since 2019, limiting the comparability of data with the previous implementation periods.

## **5 STUDY RESULTS**

The aim of this chapter is to provide answers to the evaluation questions (EQ) for each of the evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value). The chapter is thus structured by evaluation criterion (sections) and question (sub-sections). Each sub-section presents a distillation of the relevant evidence obtained by the study. A detailed description of the evidence collected is available in the Annexes.

### **5.1 Relevance**

In line with the Better Regulation Guidelines<sup>66</sup>, the Relevance criterion looks at the objectives of the intervention being evaluated and how well they (still) address the (current) needs and problems.

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<sup>65</sup> These countries have been selected with the aim of ensuring the coverage of the initially selected topics.

<sup>66</sup> SWD (2017) 350, "Better Regulation Guidelines", available online at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines.pdf>

*EQ1 – To what extent the needs and problems in the labour market and intra-EU labour mobility and the objectives of the EURES Regulation fit? To what extent are the EURES tools fit for the needs of businesses and jobseekers in the digital age?*

Twenty-three out of the 26 NCOs who responded to the online survey, either strongly agreed or agreed that the objectives of the EURES Regulation are aligned to the needs and problems of the intra-EU labour mobility. This opinion of NCOs is confirmed by the analysis of links between the specific objectives of EURES and the labour market needs identified, based on desk research and feedback from employers and jobseekers, as summarised below.

Recent studies show an increase in the use of online job vacancies, as well as an upward trend in the use of social media and online job boards for recruitment purposes<sup>67</sup>. The falling unemployment rates throughout the European Union prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the growing presence of skills mismatches<sup>68</sup> have led to a higher demand from recruiters for access to a larger pool of vacancies<sup>69</sup>. Similarly, via e-recruitment, jobseekers can consult more vacancies compared to the traditional paper boards and have more chances to find positions better tailored to their competences.<sup>70</sup> In this context, the EURES specific objective of **achieving a nearly complete supply of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal** responds to relevant labour market needs, since the EURES portal could improve access to a larger pool of CVs and job vacancies.

Enabling the EURES portal to carry out a good automated matching is a suitable response to the expressed need of employers and jobseekers to reduce transaction costs and the duration of the selection process, and to facilitate and improve the matching between CVs and job vacancies<sup>71</sup>. In this vein, the development of the automated matching on the **EURES portal**, is a relevant activity to respond to labour market needs, although some shortcomings in its implementation are highlighted in the analysis under Effectiveness below.

Making basic information on the EURES network available throughout the Union to jobseeker or employer seeking assistance is well suited to respond to jobseekers and employers' needs:

- A significant need for guidance and recruitment assistance emerged from the case studies regarding **employers' needs**. The biggest challenges reported by employers consulted are finding profiles with the necessary skills (e.g. healthcare in Germany) or filling vacancies that require international profiles (e.g. tourism in Spain, call centres in Sweden). In addition, employers reported a need for guidance to tackle administrative obstacles when hiring from abroad.
- Similarly, **jobseekers** seek EURES services mostly for information and recruitment support: "lack of job opportunities in the country of residence" was the main motivation for using EURES services for 57% (258 out of 460) of the jobseekers who replied to the online survey, and "better working and salary conditions in another country" the second.

In this context, the activities linked to the provision of support services to jobseekers and employers, the mobility schemes and the section on living and working conditions in the EURES portal are relevant services to respond to these needs.

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<sup>67</sup> Cedefop (2019). "The online job vacancy market in the EU: driving forces and emerging trends". Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 72. Available online at: [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5572\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5572_en.pdf)

Blacksmit N., Poepelman T., 2014 "Three ways social media and technology changes recruitment". Application of Modern Technology and Social Media in the Workplace, Volume 52

<sup>68</sup> Until 2019. With the outbreak of Covid-19 in Europe in 2020 and the consequent economic crisis, it is possible that the situation will be different

<sup>69</sup> Cedefop (2019). "The online job vacancy market in the EU: driving forces and emerging trends"

<sup>70</sup> Blacksmit N., Poepelman T., 2014 "Three ways social media and technology changes recruitment"

<sup>71</sup> Cedefop (2019). "The online job vacancy market in the EU: driving forces and emerging trends"

Regarding the specific objective to support the functioning of the EURES network through information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses and the co-ordination of actions across Member States, the analyses performed show that this objective responds to labour market needs. In fact, before the outbreak of COVID-19, job vacancy rates were progressively increasing across the EU, reaching 2.3% in 2019<sup>72</sup>.

Overall, there are differences in labour shortages and surpluses across the EU, as documented in the EURES joint analysis reports, with some exceptions in specific sectors (e.g. recent similarities in shortages in healthcare and ICT). A possible solution to address growing job vacancies is by matching a shortage occupation in one country or region to an occupation which is in surplus in another country or region in Europe<sup>73</sup>. Hence, within the internal horizontal activities of EURES, the exchange of information on labour markets is particularly relevant to detect specific needs at national level and to enable national coordinators to plan and tailor services on the basis of these identified needs.

*EQ2 – To what extent was EURES flexible and able to adapt to changes in the implementation context, notably the evolution of mobility patterns, technological changes, new types of recruitment channels in the labour market, and new regulatory requirements?*

Starting from the **labour mobility patterns**, the Programming Cycle shows that some countries have been developing their activities on the basis of a thorough assessment of their labour market needs, but this is not widespread within the EURES network. Specifically, 15 EURES countries in 2018 and 11 in 2019 linked their activity planning to labour market conditions.<sup>74</sup> In addition, 21 out of 25 NCOs that replied to the online survey agreed that EURES objectives and tools have been responsive to labour market changes. This question was not discussed with employers and jobseekers since they often do not possess the full knowledge of EURES over a long period of time and, thus, are not in a position to assess shifts and changes.

In addition, the analysis of labour mobility flows presented in Section 2.2 identified some relevant trends in labour mobility patterns and EURES responses before the outbreak of COVID-19:

- **Skills mismatches:** several NCOs interviewed in the case studies claimed that recently EURES countries are starting to face similar skills shortages in specific sectors (e.g. healthcare and ICT). In addition, there is an increase in over-qualification in recent years, most pronounced in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Poland, Romania, and in the Baltic countries. To respond to this evolution and the need for EURES countries to retain talent, some traditionally sending countries (e.g. Romania and Cyprus), changed their strategic priorities by focusing their EURES activities on attracting foreign employees or providing services to local employers<sup>75</sup>.
- **Returning mobility:** the latest intra-EU mobility report (2019) shows that, although the available data present some gaps, returning workers significantly increased in the past decade. Nevertheless, from the assessment of the Programming Cycle reports, information activities specifically for supporting these workers appear to be rare, suggesting that the EURES network did not sufficiently take into account this emerging trend in the EU labour market.

Looking into the extent to which EURES was flexible enough to respond to challenges caused by COVID-19, NCOs participating in a workshop dedicated to this topic agreed that EURES is flexible

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<sup>72</sup> Notably, in 2020 the situation may drastically change due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe and consequent economic crisis

<sup>73</sup> EURES, 2019. "PMS joint analysis report 2019"

<sup>74</sup> EURES, 2018. Annex II: Country summary overview, "Programming Cycle: assessment of Work Programmes 2018"  
EURES, 2019. Annex II: Country summary overview, "Programming Cycle: assessment of Work Programmes 2019"

<sup>75</sup> EURES, 2019. "Programming Cycle: assessment of Work Programmes 2019"

and has the tools to address changes caused by the pandemic. For example, the offer of the European Online Job Days continued being implemented and countries such as Estonia ensured business continuity of counselling services by shifting to online service provision. However, in other instances the provision of EURES services had to be limited due to the shift of EURES advisers to national tasks and the need to re-skill EURES staff in digital competences.

Focusing on **emerging technologies and recruitment channels** in general, as discussed in the previous question there has been an increase in the use of online platforms and social media for job searches and recruitment purposes both by employers and jobseekers. In this framework, 73% (19 out of 26) of the NCOs that responded to the online survey broadly agreed that EURES is keeping pace with the latest technological developments in the area of recruitment and job seeking activities, though more than 25% (6 out of 26) of respondents disagreed with this statement.

Indeed, from the Programming Cycle reports it is noted that EURES countries seek to introduce more digital means in offering information and recruitment services. For example, in 2019, around 60% of the European Job Days were hosted exclusively online<sup>76</sup>. Nevertheless, some NCOs commented in the online survey that the level of adoption of online solutions in EURES countries strongly depends on the national level of digitalisation.

Concerning the EURES portal, the evidence shows it is adapting to the digital trends but at a slow pace. While it responds well to the upward trend of using online job platforms for job searches, some employers reported in the online survey that it could be more user-friendly and easier to navigate. In addition, a fully automated matching functionality is not yet developed. The search function provides a level of automation, but still requires manual intervention, while other online job boards already offer fully matching capabilities, also through the use of Artificial Intelligence (e.g. LinkedIn<sup>77</sup>).

The use of internet and social media has not gone up only for recruitment and job searches but also for seeking information about EU policies and instruments<sup>78</sup>, and for looking for professional training opportunities. In this context, as reported in the table below, between 2018 and 2020, there has been a major shift towards the use of social media channels for promoting EURES, with most of the EURES countries having a Facebook, LinkedIn and/or Twitter account. Similarly, ECO opened social media accounts and a YouTube channel, to keep up with the emerging information and communication channels.

Table 4 Reach of posts on social media channels of EURES countries between 2018 and 2020

Social media channel	2018	2019	Total
Facebook	3 947 673	7 092 504	11 040 177
Twitter	2 119 316	1 265 308	3 384 624
LinkedIn	412 289	1 176 639	1 588 928

Source: EURES activity report 2018 – 2020

Looking at the **changes in the regulatory environment**, NCO officials did not observe any relevant changes in this context, either hindering or supporting labour mobility. To detect changes in the implementation context, EURES can rely on three mechanisms: the interactions of the EURES Coordination Group, the exchange of information on labour mobility situations and the Programming Cycle. These mechanisms help EURES countries to identify in a timely manner changes and relevant trends in the labour market. However, their existence does not necessarily

<sup>76</sup> EURES, 2019. 'Programming Cycle: assessment of Work Programmes 2019'

<sup>77</sup> More information available online at: <https://engineering.linkedin.com/blog/2018/10/an-introduction-to-ai-at-linkedin>

<sup>78</sup> European Commission, Eurobarometer. "Communicating Europe: Where do EU citizens get their news on European political matters?". Available online at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/topics/fs7\\_communicating\\_40\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/topics/fs7_communicating_40_en.pdf)

imply a coordinated response from the EURES network, which normally depends on each national network's strategic focus and priorities.

*EQ3 – To what extent were the most relevant groups targeted and their most important needs addressed?*

It is important to analyse EURES activities in terms of specific target groups and targets achieved in order to assess its performance. However, it should also be kept in mind that EURES exists in order to facilitate the exercise of the right of free movement of citizens of the Union. While the discussion of targets and target groups is essential for its strategic management and planning, EURES actions depend on the extent to which individuals would like to exercise their right of free movement.

The EURES Regulation mentions four **target groups**: any employer interested in recruiting from within the Union (Preamble 39), all the citizens of the Union who are searching for employment opportunities in other Member States (Preamble 46), frontier workers and employers in cross-border regions (Preamble 44), young jobseekers/graduated and every person in need of upskilling and reskilling (Preamble 8).

Looking into the activities implemented by EURES countries based on their activity reports, these are also the groups that have been targeted by EURES. In particular, the majority of activities target **individuals searching for employment** opportunities in other Member States or **employers interested in recruiting from abroad**<sup>79</sup>. The results of the online survey of EURES Members and Partners confirms this, as 76% of respondents (73 out of 96) indicated that they target both jobseekers and employers with their services. In addition, EURES countries provide support for specific sub-groups: frontier workers through cross-border partnerships, young people through EURES mobility schemes, returning workers through targeted information events.

However, three out of the 26 NCOs participating in the online survey disagreed with the statement that EURES targets the correct audiences to reach its objectives. In their justification for this assessment, NCOs did not point out issues with the definition of the target groups, but the need for further differentiation and more in-depth analysis, also to improve outreach efforts. This aspect is analysed further when discussing the visibility of EURES in Section 5.2.

According to the results of the online public consultation, EURES should attribute the highest priority to young workers (850 out of 1 434), long-term unemployed (826 out of 1 434) and medium level or highly qualified jobseekers (805 out of 1 434). The answers of EURES Members and Partners to the online survey follow a similar pattern, with young workers identified by 70 out of 94 respondents as the group that should be prioritised.

Looking into the needs of target groups, **jobseekers' needs** are mostly related to the presence of obstacles to labour mobility within the EU, such as lack of transparent information, the existence of administrative, language and socio-cultural barriers, challenges in the first months of moving to another country. Among them, 'language barriers' was selected by 907 out of 1 434 or 63% of the public consultation respondents as the biggest mobility challenge.

EURES provides services that can contribute to addressing some, but not all of the needs and challenges identified in this context. The provision of information and guidance by EURES advisers and the publication of living and working conditions on the EURES portal are a valid tool to respond to these needs, filling the knowledge gap of mobile workers and jobseekers. This information is also relevant in dealing with administrative obstacles. In addition, as identified in the related case study, the EURES mobility schemes address the issues of recognition of qualifications and language proficiency. However, EURES support services do not play a central role at present in

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<sup>79</sup> European Commission 2019. "EURES Programming Cycle, assessment of Activity Reports 2019"

this field. Post-recruitment assistance is not widely developed across the network and is often provided only on demand (as required by the Regulation). Moreover, EURES advisers have limited scope to work on cultural barriers or influence political priorities.

Looking at **frontier workers and employers in cross-border regions**, overall cross-border mobility is experiencing an upward trend within the EU. As highlighted in the related case study, the persistent differences between social security schemes, tax administration and other bureaucratic processes across borders lead to the need for access to transparent and complete information on living and working conditions in the neighbouring countries. This need is felt by both workers or jobseekers and employers who are willing to work/hire across the borders.

These specific labour mobility barriers in cross-border regions, underline the relevance of this target group for EURES. In this context, the results of the interviews and workshops organised for the case study on cross-border mobility show that EURES advisers and Cross-border Partnership staff, through the provision of information and guidance, are able to offer correct, detailed and credible information to both jobseekers/workers and employers, hence responding to the users' needs.

Finally, the specific challenges for **young jobseekers** and **every individual willing/needing to upskill or reskill** highlight the relevance of this target group for EURES. The youth labour market is characterised by relatively high unemployment rates, low quality of employment contracts, and a growing demand for digital and other technical skills. At the same time, a low adaptability of the education systems is observed<sup>80</sup>.

EURES services can provide a useful support to address some of these challenges. EURES advisers, through the provision of guidance and information can offer a valid support to filling the knowledge gap concerning working conditions abroad and traineeship requirements. Moreover, the EURES mobility schemes can provide financial support and respond to the need to gain the necessary skills to access the labour market. However, the provision of EURES apprenticeship and traineeship schemes is not widespread across the EURES countries, as often it is not felt to be a priority, and persisting challenges cannot be tackled by EURES staff due to the lack of a European definition and standards and the heterogeneity of the national legal frameworks.

In addition to the needs of target groups defined by the EURES Regulation, the analysis identified two other groups of mobile workers whose needs are only marginally covered by EURES:

- **Seasonal workers:** the outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe in 2020 highlighted the dependence of certain sectors (e.g. tourism, agriculture) on foreign seasonal workers<sup>81</sup>. This category of workers faces specific labour mobility challenges, as they are more likely to temporarily move to another EU country for a short-term period, without changing their base of residence and often without registering with the social security authorities in the country of work. This increases their risk of experiencing unfair or difficult living and working conditions<sup>82</sup>. However, the latest EURES Coordination Group discussions suggest that seasonal workers have not been adequately taken into consideration in the planning and development of EURES activities by all the EURES countries.
- **Returning workers** constitute a relevant trend within the EU, accounting for 41% of the total of EU-28 movers' inflows in 2019, with an increase of 11% compared to the previous

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<sup>80</sup> ILO, 2017. "Rising to the youth employment challenge: New evidence on key policy issues". Available online at [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

<sup>81</sup> More information available online at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9738>

<sup>82</sup> European Commission, 2020. "Communication from the commission: Guidelines on seasonal workers in the EU in the context of the Covid-19 outbreak"

year<sup>83</sup>. This category of workers has specific information needs linked to administrative barriers, notably on pension portability and taxation issues. Nevertheless, only few of the concerned EURES countries have included specific activities on returning mobility in their work programmes.

However, EURES is not the only instrument to support these groups and they were not highlighted as priority groups in the online surveys and the public consultation.

## 5.2 Effectiveness

In line with the Better Regulation Guidelines,<sup>84</sup> the analysis of the Effectiveness of EURES is based on the comparison between the objectives laid down in the legislation and the extent to which these have been achieved.

### *EQ1 – To what extent the EURES portal contributed to achieving EURES specific objectives?*

The **number of job vacancies and CVs** accessible through the EURES portal over the last four years has been increasing in absolute terms. With regard to the quantity of job vacancies available on the EURES portal, the EURES Impact Assessment defined as an operational objective that “75% of the job vacancies published by employment services in the EU are accessible through the EURES network”<sup>85</sup>. The Performance Measurement System (PMS) of EURES includes indicators such as total number of job vacancies at national level and number of job vacancies made available through the single coordinated channel to the EURES portal, which can be used to assess the share of job vacancies accessible through the EURES network. However, there are inconsistencies in reporting and many NCOs mention that they are unable to provide data on job vacancies at national level because this information is not collected<sup>86</sup>.

Nevertheless, it is possible to analyse the share of job vacancies for countries that have submitted complete and valid data<sup>87</sup>. Based on the aggregate indicators of eight countries included in this analysis, 61% of the job vacancies available at national level were also publicly available by EURES Members and Partners in 2019. The share of job vacancies varies widely between the eight EURES countries from 4% to 80%, with the majority of them at ca. 50%.

To complement this and obtain a fuller picture, NCOs were asked in the online survey to estimate the share of job vacancies that they transfer to the EURES portal. As shown in Figure 1, half of the survey respondents estimated to provide a share of 76% or more of the job vacancies available at national level (13 out of 26 respondents), suggesting that not all EURES countries could meet this operational objective yet and further confirming the differences across the network in this regard.

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<sup>83</sup> European Commission, 2020. “Intra-EU labour mobility report 2019”

<sup>84</sup> SWD (2017) 350, “Better Regulation Guidelines”, available online at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines.pdf>

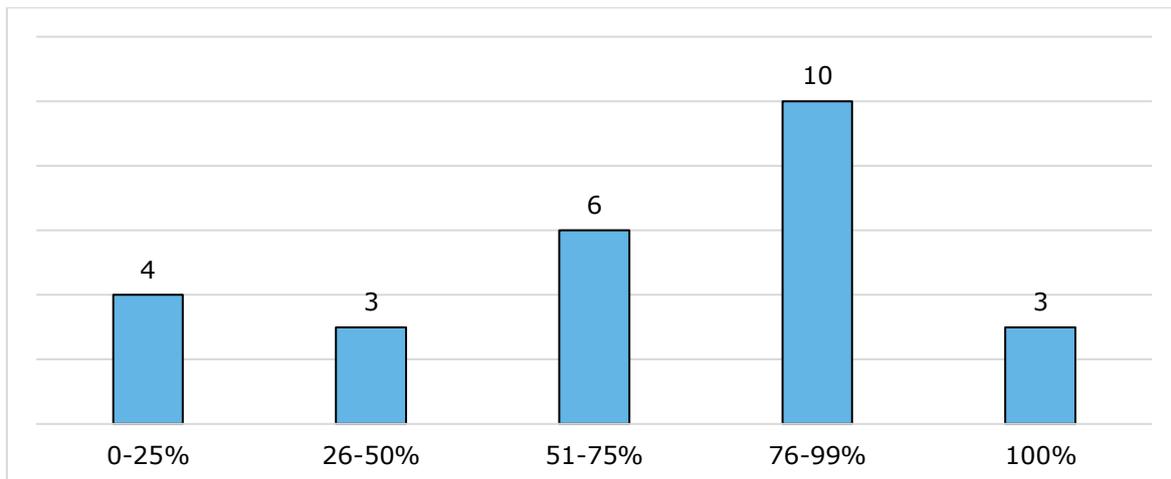
<sup>85</sup> SWD(2014) 9 final “Impact Assessment Accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European network of Employment Services, workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets”, p. 36

<sup>86</sup> The results of these indicators and their reliability are an ongoing point of discussion under the PMS as many EURES countries are experiencing difficulties in collecting these data. In principle, all publicly available job vacancies should be made available. A few exclusions are, however, possible according to Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589. Currently the disproportionality between the total number of job vacancies made publicly available by EURES Members and Partners and the total number of job vacancies at national level is explained by national EURES networks not having information or access to data regarding all the job vacancies available within their country in the specific time period. Oftentimes, even the national statistical offices do not have or at least do not publish data in this regard.

<sup>87</sup> Only nine countries that have submitted data for both “Total number of job vacancies in your country (MS level)” and “Total number of job vacancies made publicly available by EURES Members and Partners” and for which the number of job vacancies at national level was above the report number of job vacancies transferred to the EURES portal were taken into consideration. Eight countries included in the analysis are: DK, DE, ES, CY, LV, PL, SI, NO.

## Study supporting the ex-post EURES evaluation and the second biennial EURES report

Figure 1 NCOs' estimated percentage of all available job vacancies they are able to transfer through the single coordinated channel (n=26)



Source: Online survey of NCOs

A possible explanation why the benchmark of 75% is not met by all EURES countries yet could be the difficulties in collecting all national vacancies in the first place. The broadening of the network with new EURES Members and Partners is expected to increase the number of organisations contributing to the pool of vacancies. However, as discussed later on, this is happening at a slow pace.

With regard to the **quantity of CVs** accessible through the EURES portal, the discussion of the selected policy options in the Impact Assessment mentions that "the number of CVs would be increased with about 1.9 million to 3 million"<sup>88</sup>, which can be used as a point of comparison. The following table illustrates that the number of CVs on the EURES portal is still substantially below the estimate of 3 million:

Table 5 Jobseekers' CVs<sup>89</sup> on the EURES portal

Indicators	2016	2017	2018	2019
Jobseekers' CVs registered via the self-service	N/A	287 850	317 562	413 036
Jobseekers' CVs transferred through single coordinated channel	N/A	N/A	321	259 080
Total number of jobseekers' CVs on the EURES portal	N/A	287 850	317 883	672 116

Source: Study team based on PMS reports

Nevertheless, there is agreement among stakeholders (NCOs, employers and jobseekers) that the EURES portal increases the quantity of available employment opportunities, even if the operational objective of 75% has not been met fully yet. The majority of employers who responded to the online survey, 61% (78 out of 128), agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the EURES portal increases employment opportunities compared to 48% (897 out of 1 868) of the jobseekers. This suggests that the two groups have different experiences with

<sup>88</sup> SWD(2014) 9 final Impact Assessment, p. 47

The potential number of CVs from jobseekers (workers) "planning to move in the following 12 months to work in another Member State " could be some 3 million (1.2 % of the 241 million EU labour force). If all who currently are registered (1.1 million CVs) are to be considered to belong to this group of persons with "firm intentions", the number of CVs would be increased with about 1.9 million to 3 million"

<sup>89</sup> It should be considered that the Performance Measurement System of EURES refers to jobseekers' profiles and jobseekers' CVs interchangeably.

the EURES portal. Findings from the case study focusing on employers also concluded that the option to have their vacancies available on the EURES portal increases substantially the visibility of employers and is perceived by them as a main benefit of EURES, while no such finding derived from the case study focusing on workers.

Whether the enhanced access to job vacancies and CVs results in an intra-EU placement depends on the extent to which the information is complete, of good quality and up-to-date. This is not always the case according to stakeholders. In particular, job vacancies and CVs happen to be outdated, incomplete or sometimes provided only in the national language, which is partially linked to the underlying structure of the EURES portal (e.g. lack of mandatory fields, multiple transfer of same vacancies), but also caused by incomplete information provided by jobseekers and employers.

The EURES portal can facilitate the recruitment process in two ways. First, it provides **search options** to EURES advisers, jobseekers and employers, helping them filter and select relevant vacancies or profiles. Since 2016, a number of changes were implemented to the EURES portal to improve this process, including changes in the filter functions, increased compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), changes in the self-service CV lifespan, restricted access for non-EU nationals and improvement for enquiries sent by EURES staff.

Second, it is foreseen that the EURES portal will enable **fully automated matching**. The mapping of national classifications to the European one by all EURES countries is a necessary precondition for this that has to be completed by 2021. According to stakeholders (NCOs and EURES staff) its implementation is an important development step with potential to lead to better matching results and reduce search time. Developments of the EURES portal at EU level are financed by the EURES-axis of the EaSI programme and EURES countries could also apply for an EaSI grant to support their work on national classification inventories<sup>90</sup>.

In the meantime, there is no monitoring system to capture the number of placements achieved via the EURES portal.

While 20 out of 26 NCOs strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that EURES tools are effective in matching labour supply and demand across Europe, stakeholders' feedback shows that the search function of the EURES portal is not used by the majority of EURES Members and Partners and jobseekers. Challenges that hinder the effective and smooth recruitment process through the EURES portal refer to the lack of precise filter functions, resulting in irrelevant matching results. For instance, only 27% of the 2 055 jobseekers who participated in the online survey indicated that they use the search function of the EURES portal. Less than half strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the matching results were of good quality. According to stakeholders, this is linked to the programming of the search function and sometimes due to the poor quality and incompleteness of information provided in the job vacancies and CVs (not all fields are mandatory).

The case study on IT tools supports this assessment with a specific example: when a jobseeker types a keyword in the portal, the vacancies that show up are not necessarily in line with that keyword, neither in terms of skills needed, nor in terms of language requirements. This is in line with the conclusion of the 2018 Report on Free Movement of Workers by the European Court of

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<sup>90</sup> Call for Proposals VP/2019/010, available online at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en&callId=552&furtherCalls=yes>

Auditors, which often found vacancies on the EURES portal to be inadequate for a useful job search<sup>91</sup>.

The effectiveness of the EURES portal depends on its **visibility among target groups**. The number of unique visitors to the portal decreased from January 2019 (589 186 visitors) to December 2019 (291 911). No reporting issue was identified, implying that the decrease might be linked to an overall low awareness of EURES among labour market participants, further discussed under EQ5 in this section.

Nevertheless, the survey results suggest that the EURES portal is one of the most visible EURES instruments and in general, easy to find, especially for users with the ability to carry out more precise searches. Specifically, 75% (71 out of 95) of the EURES Members and Partners who responded to the online survey regard the EURES portal easy to find for jobseekers and employers. In addition, when asked to indicate their interaction with EURES, 65% (929 out of 1 434) of the respondents to the public consultation confirmed that they have visited the EURES portal to get information, while 61% (871 out of 1 434) reported to be registered on the EURES portal to use its services. These were the top two answer options selected among all EURES interactions.

However, the responses of EURES Members and Partners indicated this positive view might not apply equally across user groups, e.g. the portal is better known among jobseekers in touch with EURES advisers and among people looking specifically for it, since it is not always the first result of search engines, and less so among people with limited IT skills. Nevertheless, when performing an internet search, the EURES Portal is the first option to appear if the search key word included 'EURES portal', which shows that the EURES portal is easy to find mainly for people searching specifically for it.

The EURES portal also provides **information on living and working conditions and labour market developments**. Overall, the information provided on the EURES portal appears to be useful, up-to-date and of good quality both for jobseekers and employers, based on their assessment. The share of online survey respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing to this ranges from 60% of 1 868 for jobseekers to 70% of 128 for employers. However, jobseekers mentioned a number of specific examples of additional information that could be included on the EURES portal, (e.g. more detailed information on rights and obligations, details on taxation and cost of living in each EURES country). This suggests that the current information available is not complete. In addition, the usability of the information available appears to be hindered by challenges linked to the user-friendliness and navigation of the EURES portal, which was highlighted as an improvement point by jobseekers, employers as well as EURES Members and Partners.

#### *EQ2 – To what extent the provision of services to employers and jobseekers contributed to achieving EURES specific objectives?*

With regard to the **provision of basic information**, information provided by EURES through the EURES support services is assessed as relevant and of good quality by EURES clients and the public: 818 of the 1 332 participants to the public consultation strongly agreed or agreed to this, which corresponds to 61% in comparison to 21% strongly disagreeing or disagreeing<sup>92</sup>. In addition, National coordinators (NCOs) and EURES Members and Partners find that EURES services, and the information available, raise **awareness of intra-EU labour mobility possibilities**. For example, only one out of the 26 NCOs and three out of the 90 Members and

<sup>91</sup> European Court of Auditors, Special Report, Free Movement of Workers – the fundamental freedom ensured but better targeting of EU funds would aid worker mobility. 2018. Available online at: <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=44964>

<sup>92</sup> The other 18% indicated "I do not know" as an answer

Partners responding to the online survey did not fully agree with this statement. However, there might be differences between stakeholder groups:

- Almost half of all EURES Members and Partners who responded to the online survey (46% or 41 out of 90) strongly agreed that EURES is effective in informing jobseekers about mobility. Conversely, only 21% or 19 out of 90 strongly agreed with this statement with regard to employers. This might be linked to different levels of information needs between employers and jobseekers.
- The case studies concluded that EURES events and counselling sessions raise awareness among jobseekers about the possibility of additional career opportunities, but employers might not be aware to the same extent of EURES services, and therefore of the option to recruit from abroad.

With regard to the **outreach to jobseekers and employers**, the EURES Impact Assessment sets as an objective for EURES to provide matching, placement and recruitment assistance to all interested people, but does not provide a quantitative target that would allow to assess the result. However, stakeholders' opinions suggest that almost all jobseekers and employers seeking support could be assisted by EURES in the recruitment process, and the number of individuals assisted is increasing (performance measurement data shows an increase of 45.1% of contacts with workers between 2018 (2 305 490) and 2019 (3 344 368)).

According to discussions in two workshops, this could be linked to the admission of new EURES Members and Partners, resulting in a higher number of EURES staff and ultimately, increase in service provision. For example, it was highlighted in a case study workshop held in Italy that the network enlargement allowed for better coverage of specific geographical areas which were previously not targeted by EURES (e.g. a EURES Partner in Italy is located in Friuli-Venezia-Giulia and helps implement the Cross-Border Partnership with Slovenia). However, this effect of the network enlargement depends on the type of organisations admitted, the services that they provide and the national context.

While the overall opinion of stakeholders suggests that all interested individuals could be assisted by EURES, a very small number of interviewees indicated that the provision of support services is not equally accessible throughout the network since some jobseekers were not supported by EURES despite their interest (no response received after reaching out to EURES advisers). In addition, the analysis of national activity reports and stakeholders' feedback shows that support services targeting youth are not widespread due to the differences in national legislative frameworks for traineeships and apprenticeships, as highlighted in Section 5.1. In 2019, nine EURES countries did not provide any activity in this field, and the majority of remaining ones mostly offered information on the existing mobility schemes or other European programmes. As a result, it is likely that not all interested young people could be assisted by EURES.

With regard to the **quality of service** provided, 935 (70%) out of 1 332 respondents to the public consultation strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that EURES provides useful support and information to jobseekers/employers in their search for jobs/candidates. Jobseekers and employers are generally satisfied with the recruitment support provided, though the satisfaction rate of jobseekers tends to be lower. In particular, 29% (106 out of 365) of the jobseekers expressed dissatisfaction with the information and guidance in finding a job abroad (64% were very satisfied or satisfied), compared to 13% (8 out of 62) of employers (87% were very satisfied or satisfied). Reasons for high satisfaction are linked to the personalised support provided, while negative assessments are associated with the inability to find a placement.

Although there is no aggregate indicator for customer satisfaction across Public Employment Services in the EU, it is possible to find information on the level of satisfaction for some countries. For example, on a scale from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good), both jobseekers and employers rate the quality of counselling support that they have received by the German PES at 2.2.<sup>93</sup> Data from 2019 shows a level of customer satisfaction of 79% with the French PES, while the equivalent level of satisfaction with EURES stood at 64% among jobseekers but was higher among employers (87%)<sup>94</sup>.

The differences in the assessment of jobseekers and employers are probably due to a significant difference in the apparent effectiveness of the support received. When comparing the success rate of jobseekers and employers in finding a placement / an employee with the help of EURES, referring both to the EURES portal and support through EURES advisers, there is a marked contrast with 17% for jobseekers and 67% for employers.

With regard to the **number of placements achieved**, the evidence shows that EURES recruitment support services result in intra-EU placements, and their actual number is likely to be higher than reported. This is largely because not all cases of successful recruitment can be monitored by EURES staff or the link between a successful recruitment and EURES support is not always clear.

Due to the lack of a point of comparison, it is not possible to assess whether the number of realised placements is sufficient. However, combining the results from the performance measurement and estimations based on a customer satisfaction survey of the EURES portal, the EURES network either through the EURES portal or the national EURES networks have facilitated at least 84 580 placements in 2018 and 83 360 placements in 2019.

*EQ3 – To what extent the EURES internal support and cooperation contributed to EU labour market integration and collaboration across countries by supporting information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses and coordination of actions across Member States?*

The European Coordination Office (ECO) is responsible for the **provision of horizontal internal support** to the EURES network, with a share of the EURES EaSI budget being used for this (e.g. in 2019 ca. EUR 5.6 million were dedicated for network support and training, corresponding to 32% of the EaSI EURES axis).

The level of satisfaction of NCOs with the relationship to / internal support provided by ECO is high, suggesting that internal support provision helps the functioning of the network. Specifically, 89% of the 27 NCOs who responded to the online survey strongly agreed or agreed that the organisation of meetings and working groups by ECO supports the implementation of the EURES Regulation. Nevertheless, 11 out of the 26 NCO survey respondents (42%) saw the need for further activities to be undertaken by ECO. Specific examples mentioned by NCOs of aspects to be further developed (enhanced communication and promotion activities, alignment of programming and performance measurement cycles, increased flexibility of training programme) imply that there is scope for improving certain support areas.

Evidence from the desk research and interviews with national coordinators and EURES advisers show that **information exchange** on national labour market shortages and surpluses happens at multiple levels across the network:

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<sup>93</sup> Further information available: <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/zkm/ergebnisse>

<sup>94</sup> Pole Emploi, 2019, Résultats du Baromètre de satisfaction national 2019 de Pôle emploi auprès des demandeurs d'emploi. Available online at: <https://www.pole-emploi.org/statistiques-analyses/demandeurs-demploi/satisfaction-des-demandeurs-demploi/les-resultats-du-barometre-de-satisfaction-national-2019-de-pole-emploi-aupres-des-demandeurs-demploi.html?type=article>

- **EU level** through reporting by the European Commission. The most recent labour mobility report was published in 2019<sup>95</sup>. Information on labour market conditions is also provided on the EURES portal, accessible to both EURES advisers and EURES clients.
- **Strategic national level**, through the integration of labour market trends in the planning of activities. Almost half of all EURES countries clearly linked their activities to specific labour market conditions and systematically demonstrated that they have based their work programme on a labour market analysis in 2019. In addition, EURES staff consulted in interviews confirmed that the planning of recruitment events in specific sectors takes into consideration the labour shortages in the targeted country. Another example refers to the collection of information on challenges in cross-border regions during the COVID-19 crisis at the level of the EURES network.
- **Operational level**, through direct contact and exchange of information between EURES advisers. This exchange also takes place via geographical operational groups established in some EURES countries.

These specific examples confirm that information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses takes place across the network. A share of 85% of the 25 NCOs who participated in the online survey agreed that the information exchange contributes to better labour market integration, especially if the information is updated at regular intervals.

Self-reporting by NCOs and examples of different cooperation projects implemented between EURES countries also confirm that EURES Members and Partners **coordinate their actions** to a large extent. This assessment was confirmed by 25 out of the 26 respondents to the NCO survey who stated that they coordinate their actions. Cooperation activities reported in the EURES Activity Reports for 2018 and 2019 include Cross-Border Partnerships, participation in mobility schemes, and different recruitment activities (job fairs, European (Online) Job Days), study visits, workshops or information events. All but three EURES countries (Malta, Slovakia and Iceland) reported carrying out multilateral recruitment projects in 2018 and 2019. The sectors of cooperation are not always specified in the reports, but healthcare and tourism are mentioned the most. Sometimes a cooperation is reported only by one of the countries involved.

NCOs and EURES Members and Partners agree that the cooperation and information exchange within the network brings **added value** to the EURES countries. Having better knowledge of labour market dynamics and conditions in other EURES countries contributes to more targeted and thus, effective, provision of services. Exchanging with different organisations within the EURES network leads to mutual learning from good practices and experiences, and thus to provision of better quality services. Indeed, when asked about the main benefits of cooperation across the EURES network, 21 out of the 26 **NCO** survey respondents listed specific aspects: sharing of good practices (e.g. on the implementation of the EURES Regulation); exchanging information on topics such as labour market situation; deepening of cross-border and bilateral cooperation.

Benefits listed by EURES **Members and Partners** are linked to improvement in the provision of services (e.g. wider pool of candidates and job vacancies, more effective use of resources to increase mobility, obtaining accurate, fast and up-to-date information), while others focus on the structure of the network (e.g. exchange of knowledge and good practices, strengthening of the network, human network and spill-over effects). Additionally, it should be noted, as mentioned in the validation workshop, that the Programming Cycle and PMS reporting requirements do not

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<sup>95</sup> Annual reports on intra-EU labour mobility 2018 and 2019 are available from the EU bookshop. European Commission, Labour shortages and surpluses 2019. Available online at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8269&furtherPubs=yes>

always allow enough space for listing all new activities and services provided by EURES Members and Partners.

*EQ4 – To what extent the EURES mobility schemes contributed to achieving the EURES specific objectives?*

The policy **objectives and activities** under the EURES mobility schemes, funded through the EURES EaSI budget, complement the implementation of EURES services and are in line with the EURES strategic objectives. EURES mobility schemes contribute to EURES specific objectives because they provide information, guidance and recruitment support to specific target groups, addressing specific needs and providing financial assistance. All 18 NCO survey respondents who have indicated that they take part in EURES mobility schemes agreed that the target groups of these schemes are aligned with the target groups of EURES. In addition, stakeholders consulted (jobseekers, employers and EURES staff) for the case studies often mentioned the financial support available through EURES mobility schemes as an important service complementing the provision of services by EURES advisers. Cross-Border Partnerships mainly contribute to better awareness of labour mobility potential among frontier workers and employers in cross-border regions. They also help jobseekers receive relevant information. Several participants to the case study interviews on this topic agreed that jobseekers and workers mostly refer to Cross-Border Partnerships to seek clarifications on cross-border mobility.

Performance measurement data shows that all EURES mobility schemes have resulted in intra-EU placements and contacts with employers and jobseekers, thus contributing to EURES specific objectives. Indicators show that a total of 10 300 placements were achieved in a period of around two years.<sup>96</sup> This corresponds to a share of ca. 6% of the placements facilitated through the EURES network and EURES portal.

The EURES mobility schemes report their performance using a data collection template, separate from the one applied to the EURES services. This is due to the specific EaSI reporting requirements, defined in the Implementing Guide or Financial Guide of each Call for Proposals that require reporting at two levels: for the EaSI programme and for EURES. A separate reporting system limits the consolidation of results achieved by EURES actions and EURES mobility schemes, which reduces benefits of aligning actions in the overarching planning of EURES. The 2018 Report on Free Movement of Workers by the European Court of Auditors also found weaknesses in the monitoring of Cross-Border Partnerships, making it difficult to provide aggregate outputs and results at programme level<sup>97</sup>. However, efforts have been made to further align the monitoring and reporting cycles. For example, since 2019 Cross-Border Partnerships use a reporting template that closely follows the Performance Measurement System of EURES.

*EQ5 – How visible were the EURES actions and the EURES initiative to labour market participants?*

Increasing the visibility and awareness of EURES actions and the EURES initiative is not defined as a specific objective in the intervention logic. However, knowing about EURES is a precondition likely to impact the effectiveness of all EURES actions and, thus, the achievement of the EURES objectives. When analysing the visibility of EURES, it should be considered that EURES countries often have limited resources in this regard, as pointed out in the validation workshop.

Performance measurement indicators show that **labour market participants are aware of EURES** initiatives and actions, and their number is increasing (e.g. social media fans of the EU

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<sup>96</sup> The timescale for each of the schemes is as follows: Your First EURES Job: July 2018 – June 2020, 4 062 placements; Reactivate: October 2019 to June 2020, 852 placements; Cross-Border Partnerships, January 2018 – December 2019, 5 408 placements.

<sup>97</sup> European Court of Auditors, Special Report, Free Movement of Workers – the fundamental freedom ensured but better targeting of EU funds would aid worker mobility. 2018. Available online at: <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=44964>

EURES account increased by 9% between 2018 and 2019, and 161% for EURES national accounts). However, a significant proportion (40% to 50%) of survey respondents across stakeholder groups (NCOs, EURES Members and Partners, public consultation) assessed EURES as not sufficiently visible, suggesting improvement potential. This assessment is supported by other evidence. A relatively low share of 30% (399 out of the 1 332) of the public consultation respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that EURES is well known among jobseekers and employers. In addition, a small share of jobseekers and employers follow EURES social media accounts. For example, only one in four jobseekers (25% or 515 out of 2 040) who responded to the online survey follows EURES on social media. This limited outreach might be reducing the impact of EURES communication activities. This is in line with the findings of the 2018 Report on Free Movement of Workers by the European Court of Auditors, which indicates that there are opportunities to improve awareness of the EU channels used to provide information to EU workers about their rights<sup>98</sup>.

With regard to specific labour market participants:

- **EURES is less known among employers than jobseekers.** According to EURES Members and Partners, employers are less aware of EURES initiatives and services (51% (45 out of 89) strongly disagreed or disagreed) compared to 42% (35 out of 84) when assessing jobseekers' awareness.
- **Some EURES initiatives are better known than others.** For example, 69% of the 91 respondents to the EURES Members and Partners survey considered the European (Online) Job Days as sufficiently visible. Similarly, more employers and jobseekers considered that Job Days are visible enough, compared to other EURES initiatives.

With regard to the **effectiveness of communication activities**, performance measurement indicators and examples of communication activities show that both EURES countries and ECO have been enhancing their promotion and communication activities. Nevertheless, both NCOs and EURES Members and Partners agree that further efforts are needed to enhance the impact of such activities. In this context, NCOs mentioned in interviews several constraints that need to be overcome: limited funding; lack of cooperation with other organisations to reach wider audiences; absence of a common promotion approach at local, regional, national and European level. The case study focusing on apprenticeships and internships observed that some young people consulted knew EURES mobility schemes, but were not aware of the existence of the EURES network, nor that these projects were part of it. This raises questions about the communication of the EURES brand.

The importance of cooperation with other organisations (social partners and enterprises) was also highlighted in comments by EURES Members and Partners. When asked whether they coordinate awareness raising activities with other Members and Partners of their national EURES network, 61% (59 out of 96) of the online survey respondents answered that they do. This means that the potential of cooperation in this regard is not exploited by 39% (37 out of 96) of the EURES Members and Partners who responded to the online survey.

With regard to **different communication channels**, feedback from jobseekers and employers suggests that currently internet search engines and public employment offices are the main points of reference, which inform jobseekers and employers about EURES services for the first time. This is in line with the EURES operational objective from the Impact Assessment to further mainstream EURES services within Public Employment Services. Indeed, feedback from jobseekers and

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<sup>98</sup> European Court of Auditors, Special Report, Free Movement of Workers – the fundamental freedom ensured but better targeting of EU funds would aid worker mobility. 2018. Available online at: <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=44964>

employers from interviews in the case studies confirmed the importance of the Public Employment Services as a reference point connecting EURES with clients. A specific challenge mentioned in this context in the case study focusing on employers is the fact that in some EURES countries, due to the organisational structure of PES, public employment offices at regional level are distant from the work of EURES and might not be able to fully understand and communicate its services.

*EQ6 – Which types of actions were the most and the least effective and most sustainable, for which groups and in which contexts? What main factors had a bigger impact on the effectiveness of EURES actions?*

EURES provides a wide range of services that can differ in their implementation according to specific national contexts. Therefore, to better assess the overarching impact of the EURES actions, it is important to analyse potential differences in the effectiveness and sustainability achieved. This analysis is also particularly relevant for the future development of the EURES network.

Stakeholders' feedback does not allow to clearly identify **differences in effectiveness** between the EURES actions. While NCOs rate the provision of information and guidance and support in matching as most effective (average grade of 2.35 on a scale of 1 = most effective and 7 = least effective), the opinion of jobseekers and employers differs, reflecting their level of satisfaction. Among jobseekers, post-recruitment assistance receives the highest share of satisfaction (91% of 44 survey respondents) compared to 62% of 104 satisfied with work / apprenticeship / traineeship offers. Cross-border information is accorded the highest level of satisfaction among employers.

In addition, according to jobseekers, individual support through EURES advisers is assessed as more effective than services via the EURES portal and the provision of information and guidance is the most effective action in a cross-border context. Cross-Border Partnership stakeholders shared the perception that the most needed actions, namely the ones related to the provision of information and guidance, are also the most effective in a cross-border context.

Regarding the **mode of implementation**, each specific EURES action appears to have its own advantages and disadvantages, which can impact its effectiveness in given situations:

- **Events and one-to-one counselling:** recruitment and information events have broader outreach than individual counselling, but can provide only generic information, while one-to-one counselling addresses specific questions.
- **Online and onsite:** online events are linked to lower costs and are more accessible, but onsite events allow for physical contact perceived as vital in the recruitment process.

Looking into the extent to which the **effectiveness of the type of support provided is linked to the characteristics of certain clients**, some potential differences emerged from the interviews with employers. For example, participation in a recruitment event is more effective, compared to individual support, when employers have a higher number of vacancies to fill. In addition, it was reported that searching for profiles with more general skills (e.g. bus drivers) is easier on the EURES portal, while identifying profiles with specific expertise is more effective through individual support by EURES advisers. With regard to jobseekers, the analysis did not identify significant differences in their assessment of EURES services depending on individual characteristics.

The **sustainability** of EURES actions is linked to the conditions and outcome of the recruitment process. It refers to ensuring fair working conditions and a recruitment outcome that is satisfactory to employers and jobseekers and, thus, an employment relationship that is likely to last longer. NCOs and EURES clients consulted in interviews and workshops agree that EURES

actions are sustainable to a large extent in the long-term, especially due to the careful pre-selection and consideration of individual preferences in the recruitment process. For example, a large majority of NCOs (84% or 22 out of 26 who responded to the online survey) either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that EURES actions as a whole are sustainable in the long-term.

The importance of individual contact and advice for the sustainability of the results achieved suggests that support provided through EURES advisers might lead to more sustainable results, compared to services provided via the EURES portal. In addition, support tailored to individual needs in one-to-one counselling might be more sustainable than support of more general nature provided in events. A stronger focus on post-recruitment assistance and follow up is perceived by NCOs consulted in interviews as a way to increase the overall sustainability of EURES results.

Based on the feedback from NCOs and EURES Members and Partners, a number of external and internal **factors** impacting the end results of EURES could be identified. Factors hindering the effectiveness of EURES actions include developments of similar patterns of labour shortages across Europe, preferences of employers to recruit from third countries, differences in EURES structures, limited time and capacity of EURES staff, and low visibility of EURES. Facilitating factors include exchange of expertise across the network, good understanding of target groups' needs and the possibility to provide tailor-made support free of charge.

*EQ7 – How appropriate is the current EURES organisational set-up to meet the current labour market needs, including in cross-border regions? How effective is the mainstreaming of the EURES service delivery within PES and other EURES members and partners, in order to contribute to the objectives?*

The organisational set-up of EURES provides the structure necessary for the delivery of all EURES services. Therefore, it plays a crucial role in the assessment of the effects of the EURES activities. In addition, the EURES Regulation introduced important changes in the organisational set-up of the EURES network, such as setting up of admission systems for new EURES Members and Partners.

The majority of NCOs and EURES Members and Partners agree that the current **organisational set-up** of EURES is appropriate for addressing labour market needs (69% or 18 out of 26 NCO survey respondents). In particular, the organisational change of broadening the EURES network through the admission of new Members and Partners is perceived as relevant, since it strengthens knowledge exchange about users' needs and labour market developments, as underlined by the following points mentioned in interviews:

- Information exchange within the EURES network with organisations such as educational institutions or unions brings EURES closer to the actual needs of workers and employers. Given the increasing labour market shortages and skill-gaps, such a dialogue becomes important for the sustainable development of the labour market.
- The growing labour shortages increase demand for private employment services, which sometimes take advantage of their position, e.g. through charging excessive fees as mentioned in an interview with an NCO. However, being part of the EURES network requires them to meet minimum standards, for instance, in connection to working conditions and types of employment promoted. Therefore, the broadening of the network contributes to the promotion of fair working conditions and decreases the potential for abuse.

In assessing the positive effects of admitting new Members and Partners it should be noted that:

- The effects of the broadening of the network take time to be realised;
- Not all Members and Partners can contribute equally to the network;

- The added value of admitting Members and Partners depends on the national context, as highlighted in the validation workshop.

Also, as regards the specific situation in cross-border regions, stakeholders mention some organisational aspects that limit the extent to which Cross-Border Partnerships can provide support to cross-border workers and employers. These are mainly linked to reduced human resources due to the increase in the reporting burden, and the challenge of coordinating a partnership of diverse organisations.

With regard to **mainstreaming of EURES services**, stakeholders' feedback suggests that there could be differences in the quality of service provision, which could also be linked to the political priority accorded to EURES at national level. When asked about the degree of **standardisation** of EURES services provision across the EURES network, half of the EURES Members and Partners participating in the online survey (50% or 48 out of 96) rated it as good, followed by those who rated it as neutral (35% or 33 out of 96).

The level of client satisfaction with EURES indicates the extent to which services of the same quality are provided throughout the network. Only 9% (173 out of 1 925) of those responding to the jobseekers' survey and 17% (26 out of 164) of the respondents to the employers' survey were very satisfied with the EURES services. A share of 72% (953 out of 1 332) of the public consultation respondents saw the need to improve EURES and its tools and services in the future. This suggests there is potential to raise the quality of EURES services and, thus, satisfaction levels.

#### *EQ8 – To what extent Member States complied with EURES Regulation? How this level of Member States compliance affected the effectiveness of EURES Regulation?*

The EURES Regulation introduced a number of new elements, aiming to reinforce the structure of the network and enhance the quality of service delivery. The implementation of the EURES Regulation also requires a number of changes at national level. The achievement of the EURES specific and general objectives depends, among others, on the extent to which these changes were introduced.

All EURES countries have advanced on the **implementation of the EURES Regulation**. Organisational, communication and monitoring aspects have been fully implemented throughout the network, but some other implementation areas, highlighted below, experience delays.

The **broadening of the EURES network** happens at a slow pace. The implementation of the admission system, including the admission of new Members and Partners and informing ECO thereof, has been completed by almost all EURES countries, but only 13 have actually admitted new organisations to the network. Some reasons for the slow network enlargement were mentioned by NCOs interviewed, notably: the lack of interest of potential applicants due to not recognising the added value of membership / partnership, and financial or human resources constraints to meet the administrative burden of the application process and subsequent participation in the network.

The extent of network enlargement can influence the visibility and awareness of EURES, the supply of CVs and job vacancies to the EURES portal and the extent of provision of EURES services in some cases. However, this depends to a large extent on the specific national context and existing cooperation levels outside the formal admission process.

Thirty-one EURES countries have set up a system for transferring job vacancies, but 13 are not transferring CVs yet through the **single coordinated channel**. An **automated matching** on the EURES portal is still being developed (the mapping of national classification systems is a pre-condition and this process is ongoing). The implementation of the single coordination channel

influences the pool of CVs available to employers and EURES staff and the quality and quantity of job vacancies available, thus impacting the matching potential of EURES.

Based on stakeholders' feedback and experience with national automated matching systems, the effectiveness of an automated matching system at EU level on the EURES portal would depend to a large extent on the coherent application of the European classification of skills, qualifications, and occupations across the network, and on the completeness and quality of information on CVs and job vacancies. Thus, the level of compliance with both the European classification mapping and the single coordinated channel will make automated matching more effective.

*EQ9 – To what extent the outputs and effects of the EURES actions contributed to the achievement of the EURES general objectives?*

The answer to this Evaluation Question depends on the extent to which the specific EURES objectives were achieved and their contribution to the general objectives. Following the findings from the analysis of the previous Evaluation Questions dealing with effectiveness, the following can be indirectly concluded regarding the EURES **general objectives**:

- EURES services raise awareness of intra-EU mobility, in particular among jobseekers. As shown in more detail in the comparative analysis of the labour market in Annex III.b, one in five respondents to the online survey declared to have found a job due to EURES. In addition, this share is positively correlated with the extent of services that jobseekers received. This suggests that the outputs of the EURES actions **contribute to the free movement of workers**, but targeted awareness raising activities, especially among employers, can further enhance the achievement of this general EURES objective.
- EURES recruitment support, provided by EURES staff, results in sustainable placements. The EURES portal is also likely to contribute to the achievement of EURES placements but, due to the lack of a follow-up system, it is difficult to assess its exact contribution. Overall, as already mentioned, it is estimated that in recent years (at least) some 85 000 placements have been facilitated annually through the EURES portal and with the support of EURES staff. Limitations to the usability of the EURES portal mentioned by stakeholders suggest that its full potential in facilitating intra-EU placements is not yet exploited. The EURES actions thus support the recruitment process, but not in a fully effective and smooth way, and facilitate job opportunities in other EURES countries, but with improvement potential. Hence, EURES actions are likely to contribute to the implementation of a **coordinated employment strategy** and **voluntary and occupational mobility on a fair basis**.
- EURES internal support provision and the information exchange on labour market developments means that EURES countries coordinate their actions in view of labour shortages and surpluses and, thus, improve the **functioning, cohesion and integration of the EU labour markets**.
- The information provided by EURES, both on the EURES portal and via EURES staff in events or counselling, is assessed as up-to-date, of good quality and helpful. Thus, it raises the accessibility to job opportunities in other EURES countries, but the limited visibility of EURES might be hindering the full potential of the EURES actions to **support transitions into the labour market**.

### 5.3 Efficiency

In line with the Better Regulation Guidelines,<sup>99</sup> the Efficiency criterion aims to assess whether the activities evaluated are delivering their objectives at minimum costs and avoiding unnecessary

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<sup>99</sup> SWD (2017) 350, "Better Regulation Guidelines", available online at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines.pdf>

costs or burdens. A cost-effectiveness analysis was performed as part of the work under this criterion whose detailed description can be found in Annex III.a.

*EQ1 – To what extent were EURES actions cost-effective? What types of actions were more and less cost-effective? Is there scope for a more efficient use of EURES human/financial/technical resources? Particularly:*

1. *How justified are the running costs of the EURES portal and IT infrastructure in terms of online users and job matches?*
2. *To what extent was direct funding and associated costs proportionate to the benefits generated?*
3. *How timely and cost-efficient were the procedures for reporting and monitoring?*
4. *To what extent were the costs of final services to stakeholders proportionate to the benefits generated?*

To calculate and compare the cost-effectiveness of the various EURES actions over time, there is a need to have reliable data regarding costs and outcomes at both aggregate and disaggregate levels. Currently, this is not possible due to a number of factors, such as variability of funding sources of EURES activities, mainstreaming of EURES service provision into the one of the Public Employment Services (PES) or incomparability of datasets.

Based on available data, **an overall increase in cost-effectiveness (CE)** can be observed between 2016 and 2019 along three analysed EURES outcomes (placements achieved with the support of EURES, individual contacts with jobseekers and employers, and number of job vacancies transferred by the NCOs to the EURES portal), as presented in the table below. The table reports the results of the cost-effectiveness analysis calculations, available in detail in Annex III.a.

Table 6 Cost per unit of each EURES outcome (in EUR), 2016 – 2019

<b>EURES OUTCOME INDICATORS</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Cost per placement achieved</b>	473.53	627.00	332.95	288.10
<b>Cost per individual contact</b>	13.60	15.37	12.32	11.88
<b>Cost per job vacancy transferred to the EURES portal</b>	2.74	2.98	N/A <sup>100</sup>	2.51

The cost per placement declined by almost 40% from about EUR 473 in 2016 to just above EUR 288 in 2019, representing a substantial reduction in costs. Looking at contacts, their aggregate EURES cost in 2019 was EUR 1 188 per 100 contacts, more than EUR 400 lower than in 2017, representing a 12.6% decrease from 2016 (or about EUR 200 for 100 contacts). For job vacancies, the aggregate EURES cost decreased by less than 9% from 2016 to 2019, or EUR 23 per 100 vacancies provided. The exception to the trend is 2017, when the unit costs for all the three outcomes increased. Table 7 presents the net cost of the three EURES outcomes in 2019 as compared to 2016. To arrive at the 2019 scenario, unit costs (i.e. placement, contact, vacancy) were multiplied by the aggregate value of each outcome in 2019, resulting in the estimation of the total net cost. In order to reach the same number of placements in 2016, EURES activities would have cost EUR 15.7 million more, while the same number of individual contacts would have cost EUR 3.5 million more and the number of vacancies would have been reached with an extra EUR 2.2 million. The fact that EURES is now more cost-effective than in the past suggests that the results of its activities are increasingly efficient in relation to the costs.

From the perspective of the net outcomes, the results are even clearer. The figures can be calculated by subtracting from the 2019 figures the figures which would have been achieved with

<sup>100</sup> The extent of missing data points does not allow to calculate a EURES aggregate figure for 2018. See Annex III.a for details

the 2019 budget under the 2016 ratios. Put simply, the increase in cost-effectiveness allowed EURES, keeping the 2019 budget constant, to achieve additionally 33 148 placements, 258 683 individual contacts, and 819 827 job vacancies posted. The fact that EURES is now more cost-effective than in the past suggests that the results of its activities are increasingly efficient in relation to the cost and, thus, EURES is increasingly able to deliver satisfactory results.

While the overall trend of the evidence is clear, the figures should be treated as indicative only. The cross-time design (rather than comparing between alternative policies), comparability issues (between the different outcomes and across countries), and missing data (e.g. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the calculations) all result in strong but necessary methodological assumptions, suggesting caution in interpreting the data<sup>101</sup>.

Table 7 Net costs per Cost-Effectiveness analysis outcome (2019 vs 2016, in EUR)<sup>102</sup>

Outcome	Cost per unit in 2019	Cost per unit in 2016	Net cost per unit in 2019	Aggregate value in 2019	Total net cost	Total net outcome
<b>Placements achieved</b>	288.10	473.53	-185.42	84,652.00	-15 696 377.06	33 148.00
<b>Individual contacts</b>	11.88	13.60	-1.71	2 052 079.00	-3 517 848.86	258 683.00
<b>Job vacancies posted</b>	2.51	2.74	-0.23	9 730 468.00	-2 243 876.13	819 827.00

The efficiency of the **EURES portal** could be enhanced by improving the portal's tools and by upgrading its matching function. The analysis of available data and feedback on the funding and outreach of the portal confirm that improvements are needed in this domain. Investment in the EURES portal and corresponding services has been increasing every year between 2016 and 2019. It increased by 40% between 2016 and 2017, doubled between 2017 and 2018 and grew by 10% in 2019. However, over the same period, the number of unique visitors to the portal has overall been falling. It dropped by 21% between 2016 and 2017, by 8% between 2017 and 2018 and by further 24% between 2018 and 2019. The increase in funding combined with the drop in the number of visitors to the portal suggests a decrease in cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the EURES portal.

Investment in the **single coordinated channel** has been significantly decreasing between 2017 and 2019 as supported by the available data, while the numbers of transferred job vacancies and CVs have substantially increased between 2018 and 2019. This finding allows for an assumption that there might be a tendency for an increase in cost-effectiveness of the single coordinated channel. At the same time, it cannot be concluded with certainty that the cost-effectiveness of the single coordinated channel has been rising, as the number of available and thus transferred job vacancies also depends on external factors, such as the labour market dynamics.

Although significant advancements in the use of the single coordinated channel have been made, the use of the tool is not yet fully compliant with the requirements set in the EURES Regulation. Out of 26 NCO survey respondents, **only three indicated that their countries transfer all of their available job vacancies through the single coordinated channel to the EURES portal**. The case study on the single coordinated channel also shows that some countries are experiencing delays in their transfer due to various issues, such as privacy and data protection questions or the impact of COVID-19 on the national priorities of PES.

<sup>101</sup> The methodological details and limitations are discussed in Annex III.a

<sup>102</sup> The figures reported here are rounded to two decimal places and might, therefore, present slight inconsistencies. For a more complete picture, see Annex III.a

In order to assess whether direct funding and associated costs are proportionate to the benefits generated, a comparison between the time trend (2016-2019) of the aggregate costs and three indicators representative of EURES benefits has been carried out. The data refer to the data collection and elaboration conducted for the specific purposes of the Cost-Effectiveness Analysis, and not to official figures reported elsewhere<sup>103</sup>. The results of the analysis provide evidence that the benefits of EURES activities grow proportionally to the invested amounts.

Between 2016 and 2019, the EURES budget<sup>104</sup> grew continuously every year from around EUR 22 million in 2016 to almost EUR 24.5 million in 2019. The number of total placements achieved with the help of EURES and the number of total individual contacts between EURES staff and EURES users follow a similar path. First, they decreased slightly from 2016 to 2017, with placements and contacts going down respectively from around 45 000 to around 35 000 and from about 1.6 million to less than 1.5 million. Then, they grew considerably in both 2018 and 2019, reaching almost 85 000 placements and around 2 million contacts. By contrast, the number of job vacancies provided by the NCOs to the EURES portal first decreased slightly as well from 8 million in 2016 to around 7.5 million in 2017. In 2019, the number of provided vacancies grew to the highest level (around 9.7 million) in the period under examination, thereby regaining consistency with the other two indicators.

Table 8 below presents the results of the cost-benefit analysis of EURES activities.

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<sup>103</sup> Details on how the figures are calculated, including missing data and data manipulation, are available in Annex III.a

<sup>104</sup> The aggregate EURES budget is calculated based on the total budget of all EURES countries included in the analysis. The financial resources used by EURES countries derive from three main sources: the European Social Fund (ESF), national budgets and the EURES axis of the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). The exact breakdown of funding per source cannot be obtained due to imprecise data reporting. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the aggregate figure because of missing data. See Annex III.a for more details.

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Table 8 Cost-benefit analysis of EURES activities

		Jobseekers		Employers		National Administrations	
		Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary
<b>Cost:</b>	Economic	No costs in relation to the transfer of job vacancies and CVs from national databases to the EURES portal for jobseekers were detected.	N/A	No costs in relation to the transfer of job vacancies and CVs from national databases to the EURES portal for employers were found.	N/A	<b>Medium</b>	The number of job vacancies provided by the NCOs to the EURES amounted to 8 million in 2016, 7.5 million in 2017, and 9.7 million in 2019.  (Conservative estimation based on PMS reports)  The number of CVs transferred by NCOs to the EURES through the single coordinated channel amounted to 321 in 2018 and 259 080 in 2019.
	Transfer of job vacancies and CVs through the single coordinated channel and introduction of ESCO						

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		Jobseekers		Employers		National Administrations	
		Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary
						and related additional workload.	
<b>Cost: Insufficient contribution of the EURES portal and corresponding services to correct matching of job vacancies and CVs</b>	Economic Recurring Direct cost Not expected	<b>Medium</b> (Jobseeker survey)  The EURES portal does not allow automated matching of job vacancies and CVs, therefore, a jobseeker has to go through the job vacancy offer manually with help of specific filters. However, the filtering function is not sufficiently accurate to provide the desired matches which results in jobseekers having to spend considerable time	Unknown	<b>Medium</b> (employer survey)  The EURES portal does not allow automated matching of job vacancies and CVs, therefore, an employer has to go through the CV offer manually with help of specific filters. However, the filtering function is not sufficiently accurate to provide the desired matches which results in employers having to spend considerable time	Unknown	<b>Medium</b> (NCO Survey)  Due to unavailability of automated matching and unreliability of the filtered search, EURES staff have to manually match job vacancies with relevant CVs and vice versa.	Unknown

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		Jobseekers		Employers		National Administrations	
		Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary
		checking the results.		checking the results.			
<b>Cost: Introduction of the admission system</b>	Economic One off and recurring Compliance costs Expected	Jobseekers did not incur any costs related to the enlargement of the EURES network.	N/A	Employers did not incur any costs related to the enlargement of the EURES network.	N/A	<b>High</b> Work related to admission, on-boarding, monitoring and working with new Members and Partners caused significant additional administrative burden to EURES staff and resulted in significant additional workload. Since the EURES 2016 Regulation came into force, each EURES country admitted at least their national PES as a Member (in some countries due to internal PES set up it meant admitting even up to 42 PES Members) and 13 countries admitted also non-PES organisations to their network.	Unknown
<b>Cost: Compulsory</b>	Economic	<b>Low</b>	N/A	<b>Low</b>	N/A	<b>Medium</b>	The majority of surveyed NCOs (62%) believe that the

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		Jobseekers		Employers		National Administrations	
		Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary
<b>reporting and monitoring system</b>	One off and recurring	(Desk research)		(Desk research)		(NCO Survey)	reporting on EURES activities is partially proportional to the effects they achieved.
	Compliance costs Expected	In most countries, a jobseeker is asked a number of questions regarding their profile when interacting with EURES. Questions typically asked refer to jobseekers' level of skills and qualifications, work experience, sector of activity, desired level of seniority, motivation to find a job in another country, expected remuneration.		In most countries, an employer is asked a number of questions regarding their profile when interacting with EURES. Questions asked typically refer to employers' financial and operational capacity, the positions they seek to fill, competences required to fill these positions, proposed remuneration.		The costs incurred in relation to the development of a monitoring system depended on the already existing infrastructure in each EURES country and other national/funding requirements. For some countries this meant minimal investment while for others it meant completely restructuring their systems.	(NCO Survey)
<b>Benefit: Increased pool of job vacancies and job</b>	Social Recurring Changes in employment	<b>Medium</b> (Interviews and workshops) A greater number of job vacancies	The number of job vacancies provided by the NCOs to the EURES amounted to 8 million in	<b>Medium</b> (Interviews and workshops) A greater number of CVs available	The number of job vacancies provided by the NCOs to the EURES amounted to 8 million in	<b>Medium</b> (Interviews and workshops) Greater possibility for matching relevant job	N/A

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		Jobseekers		Employers		National Administrations	
		Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary
<b>applications available</b>	Expected	available on the EURES portal because of the transfer from national databases increases the possibility of matching with relevant job vacancy.	2016, 7.5 million in 2017, and 9.7 million in 2019.  (Conservative estimation based on PMS reports)	on the EURES portal because of the transfer from national databases increases the possibility of matching with a relevant potential candidate.	2016, 7.5 million in 2017, and 9.7 million in 2019.  (Conservative estimation based on PMS reports)  The number of CVs transferred by NCOs to the EURES through the single coordinated channel amounted to 321 in 2018 and 259 080 in 2019.	vacancies and CVs which leads to increased placement through EURES and higher customer satisfaction.	
<b>Benefit: Placements achieved with the support of EURES</b>	Social Recurring Change in employment Expected	<b>High</b> (Interviews and workshops)  Better integration in the labour market.	A total of 237 713 job placements between 2016 and 2019. The ratio between total EURES costs and placements amounted to EUR 473.53 in	<b>High</b> (Interviews and workshops)  Diversification of labour and skills and improvement of productivity.	A total of 237 713 job placements between 2016 and 2019. The ratio between total EURES costs and placements amounted to EUR 473.53 in	<b>High</b>  Increased customer satisfaction that has a spill over effect on attracting future clients.	A total of 237 713 job placements between 2016 and 2019. The ratio between total EURES costs and placements amounted to EUR 473.53 in 2016, EUR 627.00 in 2017,

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		Jobseekers		Employers		National Administrations	
		Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary
			2016, EUR 627.00 in 2017, EUR 332.95 in 2018, and EUR 288.10 in 2019.  (Conservative estimation based on total EURES budget)		2016, EUR 627.00 in 2017, EUR 332.95 in 2018, and EUR 288.10 in 2019.  (Conservative estimation based on total EURES budget)		EUR 332.95 in 2018, and EUR 288.10 in 2019.  (Conservative estimation based on total EURES budget)
<b>Benefit: Cost-saving generated by EURES activities as opposed to the national level</b>	Economic Recurring Cost-saving Expected	This benefit does not directly have an impact on jobseekers.	N/A	This benefit does not directly have an impact on employers.	N/A	<b>High</b> (NCO survey and interviews)  Benchmarking of EURES with Public Employment Services' (PES) activities has provided evidence that cost of EURES can be interpreted as a small top-up to the PES cost, which allows to expand in a cost-effective manner the scope of the activities from national to cross-border placements.	N/A

A new feature of the 2016 EURES Regulation was the introduction of an obligatory system to measure and report the performance of the EURES network. While the introduction of the Programming Cycle was implemented quite quickly, the development of the Performance Measurement System (PMS) took longer. The PMS was introduced in 2018 and, so far, the results have been uneven as not all the EURES countries have fully adapted to the new reporting requirements.

Despite the reported increase in workload, **the new reporting requirements are mostly perceived as justified** as the results produced by the new PMS offer a more accurate representation of the work of national networks and the work of the EURES network as a whole. The majority of surveyed NCOs (62%) believe that the reporting on EURES activities is not fully representative of the effects they achieved. To increase the efficiency of their efforts, NCOs would welcome more interoperability and automated options for the reporting, as well as more synergies between the various reporting requirements. Nonetheless, a large majority of NCO representatives (19 out of 24 respondents) believe that the cost of the services and tools provided by EURES is justified by their results.

EURES staff spend a considerable time on providing tailored and specialised services to both employers and jobseekers. If the EURES customer is satisfied with the service received, the advisers see the time spent as good investment. If the support provided to the jobseeker or employer has been successful, the successful service delivery is likely to create a positive knock-on effect. Put simply, the immediate and wider network of contacts of the service recipients are likely to turn to EURES with requests for services. Taking into account that the EURES brand is still not widely known in the EURES countries, word of mouth is very important in increasing the awareness about EURES services. Therefore, in this regard, the cost-quality ratio of services is considered to be acceptable as the benefits outweigh the costs.

#### *EQ2 – To what extent has administrative burden increased/decreased compared to the previous EURES Regulation?*

From an administrative point of view, the 2016 EURES Regulation introduced many new features to which the national EURES networks had to adapt. These included the requirement to expand the national EURES networks by admitting new EURES Members and Partners, the introduction of mandatory and more harmonised monitoring and reporting requirements, as well as the obligation to establish a connection between the national job vacancies and CV databases with the EURES portal through a single coordinated channel. The aim of these changes was to standardise processes with a view to reducing the administrative burden on the EURES network.

In recent years, many of the EURES countries have gone through an internal restructuring of EURES and PES. This often translated into a reduction in EURES and NCO staff numbers and their time that should be allotted to EURES services and activities. In comparison with the requirements in place before the 2016 EURES Regulation, the new one set down more rigorous requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting. This has led to an increased administrative burden on the remaining EURES staff, on top of their expanded areas of operation and service provision. Twenty-three NCOs out of 25 responding to the NCO survey either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the administrative burden has diminished compared to the previous regulation. Increase in administrative burden is caused predominantly by the new requirements set out in the EURES 2016 Regulation and to a much lesser extent by accompanying national procedures.

The introduction of an **admission system** with the EURES Regulation is also perceived as resulting in a significantly increased administrative burden both for NCOs and for potential new EURES Members and Partners. In order to comply with the admission and on-boarding requirements, the NCOs and Members and Partners have to fulfil many additional one-off and

recurrent tasks. However, the increase in workload is believed to be a good investment, as the enlarged network has a wider reach than before.

**The new reporting and monitoring requirements** also significantly increased the administrative burden of the NCOs. However, NCOs and EURES staff acknowledged that the **monitoring requirements brought numerous advantages**, such as the establishment of uniform and detailed specifications for data collection and analysis. These provide EURES staff and the NCOs with a more accurate picture of the effects that the implemented activities have on labour mobility in Europe.

The introduction of the **single coordinated channel** required considerable investments both in terms of funding and time. It required significant new IT development in the majority of EURES countries, as well as the introduction of numerous new processes and even new legislation. The majority of case study interviewees agree that the possible **increased costs and administrative burden are outweighed by the fact that the process of posting of job vacancies and CVs to the EURES portal is much more transparent** than prior to the EURES Regulation. In the long term, when the ESCO classification is fully implemented, the interviewees expect the EURES portal to have a significantly better and greater offer of job vacancies and CVs.

The possibility to apply for EaSI and in some instances also for ESF funding, connected to the development of the single coordinated channel and the ESCO mapping, was seen by EURES representatives as beneficial in easing the initial financial burden.

*EQ3 – Are there significant cost differences between countries in the implementation of the operations? What are these differences related to?*

There are differences in the budgets EURES countries assign to their activities as well as their costs. This is not surprising as each of them caters to a differently defined and predominantly national audience in terms of size, skills and needs. With the switch from direct funding of EURES activities by the European Commission to national resources and ESF, national labour policies became much more prominent as a decisive factor in allocating budgets to EURES activities.

In recent years, many EURES countries have been facing shortages and surpluses for similar skills and professions. This led to many countries being much more protective of their national labour markets and workforce. The issue of brain drain also influences the approach of national labour policies towards intra-EU labour mobility. In the surveys of NCOs and Members and Partners, the respondents mentioned that this led (and is likely to lead further in the future) to national EURES networks being in competition with each other to attract the desired jobseekers with the required skills.

Notwithstanding that the requirements set out by the 2016 EURES Regulation apply uniformly to all countries, there is some divergence in the way in which the operations are implemented. For example, there are differences in the ways monitoring is carried out by different NCOs. While in some countries the NCO staff fill in the reports every month, in others this is done only at the end of the reporting period. Another example of an efficient approach is the assignment of EURES advisers to deal with a specific country. This approach allows EURES advisers to narrow their focus and to provide services in a more efficient manner.

The added value of EURES in terms of efficiency of the services provided has been widely recognised by the interviewees. For example, without the financial support provided by the EURES mobility schemes, many of the jobseekers would not be able to accept employment in another EURES country. The information provided by the EURES portal and the EURES staff is also rated as time and resource saving by both jobseekers and employers.

EURES also provides added value to PES as without it, to achieve the same number of placements, a considerable increase in financial and human sources would be needed. Furthermore, due to the small size of many national EURES networks it is a gateway to innovative approaches and processes that could be mainstreamed into the PES and the PES services. For example, certain IT developments that are first introduced to EURES are then taken up by the PES in some countries.

In order to test and quantify the added value of EURES activities beyond the national level, **PES activities** were benchmarked with the additional expenditure on EURES by means of a cost-effectiveness analysis. Based on the data available, the calculation was performed for 16 countries<sup>105</sup> for the year 2018. As EURES relies on existing PES structures, thereby benefiting from the initial investment and fixed costs being covered under PES, the EURES cost of EUR 219.09 can be interpreted as a small top-up to the PES cost of EUR 2 924.70. The additional burden is justified by the need to expand the scope of the activities from national to cross-border placements. It follows that, for a relatively small additional investment as compared to PES, considerable cost-effective results can be achieved through EURES.

EURES activities were also benchmarked to **Targeted Mobility Schemes** (TMS) for the year 2019. The cost per placement of benchmarked TMS activities is considerably higher than those of EURES, both in aggregate terms (EUR 3 219) and for each of the two individual mobility schemes: Your First EURES Job (EUR 2 917) and Reactivate (EUR 4 294). These figures are indicative of the different scope of EURES and TMS activities. As explained above, EURES costs only include an additional investment based on existing PES structures. By contrast, the costs of TMS include the full cost of the programmes and are, therefore, a more precise proxy of what a full investment on cross-border placements actually costs. A precise benchmarking of this kind is not possible at present time given the limited data availability and the fact that TMS are aimed at target groups with specific needs (e.g. youth), but the results of this analysis suggest that its inclusion could reinforce the assessment of EURES efficiency.

Nevertheless, three key elements suggest **caution in interpreting the data**. There are several limitations in the comparability of the scope of the EURES, PES, and TMS activities. In addition, EURES and TMS rely on existing PES structures, thereby benefiting from the initial investment and fixed costs being covered under PES. Moreover, the subset of countries analysed for the EURES-PES comparison is not necessarily representative of the whole EURES network. Lastly, TMS display overlapping placements and budget figures with those reported under EURES. Therefore, the comparison of the cost-effectiveness should be considered as indicative only<sup>106</sup>.

## 5.4 Coherence

In accordance with the Better Regulation Guidelines,<sup>107</sup> the Coherence criterion investigates how well the policy works, internally and externally. Internal coherence looks mainly at how well the measures – EURES actions – complement each other. Under external coherence, the evaluation focuses on complementarities with other interventions by the EU in the field of labour mobility.

*EQ1 – How coherent is the EURES Regulation with other EU policy measures and initiatives targeting employment and mobility at EU level?*

Table 9 below summarises the legal instruments and policies selected for further analysis. It describes the links between their **policy objectives** and EURES, to assess their complementarity

<sup>105</sup> Countries included into the sample are: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain

<sup>106</sup> For further details on the methodology, data collection and elaboration, and limitations, refer to Annex III.a.

<sup>107</sup> SWD (2017) 350, "Better Regulation Guidelines", available online at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines.pdf>

and coherence. The table shows that EURES specific objectives are consistent and often complementary with the activities and purposes of legal instruments in the same field. The analysis does not identify inconsistency in the objectives.

This result is further confirmed by the stakeholders' consultation. More than 90% (87 out of 92) of EURES Members and Partners that took part in the online survey and 20 out of 24 NCOs agreed that EURES is complementary to other European policies and initiatives. Similarly, more than three-quarters of respondents to the public consultation who were able to reply agreed that EURES complements other EU policies. In particular, 50% (667 out of 1 332) of the respondents to the public consultation agreed that EURES complements other EU policies in the field of labour mobility, while, of the remaining, over 35% (466 out of 1 332) were not able to reply and only fewer than 15% (199 out of 1 332) disagreed.

In addition, it is important to assess whether synergies or duplications exist at the operational level between EURES **activities** and other European initiatives and policies. Synergies were identified with the following initiatives:

- **The European Public Employment Services (PES) network** focuses primarily on cooperation to improve PES performance and contribute to implementation of employment policies, while EURES activities provide services directly to employers, workers and jobseekers. Thus, there is no overlap in activities.
- **European classification of competences and occupations (ESCO):** EURES countries are in the process of adopting the European classification or mapping national classifications to it, thus moving towards its coherent application.
- **Erasmus+:** focuses on the provision of training opportunities abroad, which could constitute a duplication with the provision of support services to apprenticeships and traineeships within EURES. However, stakeholders (national coordinators and EURES advisers) consulted identified only synergies in this field, as Erasmus+ opportunities are promoted among EURES clients.
- **Youth Guarantee:** aims at securing a smooth transition from school to work and supporting the labour market integration of young European citizens. Within its framework, funding is provided to EURES countries for the implementation of EURES apprenticeships and traineeships, as shown in the case study on the topic.
- **Interreg's** focus on cross-border and transnational cooperation could potentially overlap with EURES activities in cross-border regions, although the focus of Interreg is not on labour mobility. Most of the participants to the fieldwork interviews had positive experiences of collaboration with Interreg projects. Some of them mentioned that often Interreg staff refer jobseekers that seek information on cross-border mobility to EURES staff. No duplications in financing have been identified.
- **European Social Fund (ESF):** ESF funding is implemented based on country-specific Operational Programmes, developed at national and regional level by national authorities and approved by the European Commission. Within the EURES framework, ESF funding can be used for national EURES structures (e.g. staff and IT costs of the Public Employment Services (PES), which are EURES Members) as well as for transnational EURES activities (e.g. job fairs). A survey among NCOs was carried out in December 2019 to provide insights about the use of ESF funding. The survey showed that the largest share of ESF funding was used for staff costs, followed by travel costs. Looking into the advantages (e.g. additional resources, long-term planning) and disadvantages (e.g. administrative burden) of using ESF funding, the survey concluded that ESF and EURES are compatible. Furthermore, the analysis

concluded that ESF offers funding for essential EURES activities that could be hard to offer at national level without ESF support.<sup>108</sup>

Only two initiatives have been highlighted as duplicating or in contrast to the EURES Regulation.

First, with the revamp of **Europass** launched in 2018<sup>109</sup>, users can prepare their CVs and directly upload them to the EURES portal. During the EURES coordination meetings, ECO often invites Europass officers in order to discuss and ensure complementarity with the EURES portal. However, national coordinators stressed the risk of confusion for jobseekers and employers as to which portal to use, since both have a job search function<sup>110</sup>. In addition, from the online survey of NCOs it emerged that the Europass portal has a section on living and working conditions in other EU countries, constituting an overlap with the information provided through the EURES portal.

A number of other websites provide information on different aspects of labour mobility (e.g. at EU level: Your Europe website, Moving & Working in Europe; and at national level: national EURES websites), which leads to potential overlap of information provision and burden in maintaining multiple information websites. These overlaps can lead to confusion among EURES clients, and thus limit the quality of service provision. Moreover, they lead to additional administrative costs at EU level for the maintenance and update of the same information on multiple websites.

Second, during the coordination meetings Commission officials in charge of the **Single Digital Gateway** are often invited to present the progresses on its implementation and to discuss its impact on EURES. National coordinators (NCOs) consulted stressed the risk of duplication in performance measurement activities by the NCOs and in some sections of the EURES portal.

Specifically, this risk arises from some of the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2018/1724<sup>111</sup> which established the Single Digital Gateway to facilitate access of citizens and businesses to information, procedures, and assistance and problem-solving services that they need in order to exercise their rights in the internal market. In Annex III of this regulation, EURES is listed as one of the assistance and problem-solving services the Gateway is required to provide information on under Article 2(c). Article 24 imposes a duty on the competent national authorities and the Commission to ensure the collection of statistics of users' visits to the gateway and webpages linked to it, of the number, origin and subject matter of requests, and of their response time. While the current Performance Measurement Tool for EURES collects most of this information, the reporting requirement concerning the response time of contacts made via digital means remains to be adopted.

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<sup>108</sup> ECG documentation of meeting of 02 – 03 December 2019

<sup>109</sup> Decision (EU) 2018/646

<sup>110</sup> Documentation of the ECG meeting of 12-13 June 2019

<sup>111</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/17 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 October 2018 establishing a single digital gateway to provide access to information, to procedures and to assistance and problem-solving services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012. Available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L\\_.2018.295.01.0001.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2018.295.01.0001.01.ENG)

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Table 9 Coherence matrix

Main field(s)	Directive/Regulation	Year	Link with EURES specific objectives
Single Digital Gateway	<b>Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 establishing a single digital gateway to provide access to information, to procedures and to assistance and problem-solving services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012</b>	2018	The Regulation established the Single Digital Gateway - online platform to provide a single point of access to information, procedures and assistance services for citizens and businesses to get active in another EU country. The provision of information and assistance constitutes a valid supporting tool for intra-EU labour mobility and complements the information provided on EURES portal on living and working conditions. As specified in Regulation 2018/1724 information already available on the EURES portal and provided by Member States should be used to cover information aspects of the Single Digital Gateway. Regulation 2018/1724 also defines a performance statistics to be collected (e.g. response time and visitors to websites), which might impact the performance indicators collected by EURES.
EUROPASS	<b>Decision (EU) 2018/646 on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC</b>	2018	The Decision aims to support the transparency and understanding of skills and qualifications across the EU. Synergies and cooperation between the Europass and EURES portals could reinforce the impact of both services, as mentioned in the Decision. While the objectives of the Decision to enhance transparency do not contradict the EURES objectives, as discussed above there are certain overlaps in the implementation of both portals.
Freedom of mobility for workers; integration of labour markets	<b>Directive (EU) 2018/957 amending Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services</b>	2018	The Directive aims at reinforcing the protection of rights of posted workers within the EU, hence complementing and supporting EURES goal of facilitating labour mobility, of which posted workers are an important component.
Freedom of mobility of workers	<b>Directive 2014/54/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement</b>	2014	Both EURES and this Directive have the support of intra-EU labour mobility as a core goal. Among the activities identified by the Directive are the transparency of information on labour mobility, hence it can be considered coherent with EURES specific objective of enabling access to information to all the interested users.
Freedom of mobility for workers	<b>Directive 2013/55/EU amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications</b>	2013	This Directive is aimed at the operational implementation of the principle of freedom of movement of workers within the EU included in the TFEU, by facilitating and allowing the recognition of professional qualifications within the EU as stated in Preamble 4 <i>"For the purposes of strengthening the internal market and promoting the free movement of professionals while ensuring a more efficient and transparent recognition of professional qualifications, a European Professional Card would be of added value"</i> . This goal is complementary to the EURES specific goals of facilitating the matching between employers and jobseekers across the EU.
Full employment and social progress	<b>Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") and amending Decision No 283/2010/EU</b>	2013	This Regulation launched EaSI, a funding programme aimed at supporting the European project and goals in the field of sustainable employment, hence linked to EURES ambition of contributing to full and sustainable employment in Europe.

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Main field(s)	Directive/Regulation	Year	Link with EURES specific objectives
			<p>In particular, the specific objectives for its EURES axis are<sup>112</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to achieve transparency of labour market information</li> <li>• to provide effective services for the recruitment and matching of workers</li> </ul> <p>and are perfectly complementary to EURES' goals of providing information on labour markets to all interested users. Indeed, EaSI is the main funding tool for EURES horizontal activities.</p>
Full employment and social progress	<b>Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006</b>	2013	This Regulation defined the mission and scope of the European Social Fund, namely to promote high level quality employment and jobs across the EU, with a strong link with EURES goals in the field of full employment and social progress. In particular, among its specific goals, the objective to "facilitate access to employment opportunities" complement EURES specific objective of enabling access to recruitment and matching services.
Integration of labour markets	<b>Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg)</b>	2013	Interreg, by supporting cross-border cooperation also aims at facilitating the integration of labour markets across the EU. Nevertheless, the main focus of Interreg projects is on regional development and integration and not strictly on labour mobility and its main goals are not directly linked to the EURES ones.
Full employment and social progress	<b>Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal</b>	2013	This regulation establishes the link between the European Regional Development Fund and investment for growth and jobs, the scope of which also includes the investments in sustainable jobs and social progress
Freedom of mobility for workers	<b>Commission Regulation (EU) No 1224/2012 of 18 December 2012 amending Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the coordination of social security systems and Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004</b>	2012	As emerged in the Relevance section above, one of the most important hindering factors to labour mobility is heterogeneity of rules to access social security across the EU, hence coordinating social security is essential to support intra-EU labour mobility. Therefore, EURES is aligned to the goals of this Regulation.
Freedom of mobility for workers	<b>Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on freedom of movement for workers within the Union</b>	2011	This Regulation aims at facilitating and supporting the freedom of movement of workers across the EU, in line with EURES goals.

<sup>112</sup> European Commission, 2017. "Mid-term evaluation of the EU programme for employment and social innovation – EaSI. Framework Service Contract VC/2013/0083. Final Evaluation Report".

*EQ2 – How complementary were the EURES tools and services to each other?*

In order to assess the internal complementarity of EURES, three different perspectives have been assessed.

**Looking into the different EURES activities,** 99% (90 out of 91) of the EURES Members and Partners that participated in the online survey and 71% (21 out of 25) of the NCOs agreed that EURES tools are complementary with each other. Indeed, it is possible to observe and argue that each activity has been designed to complement the others. For example, from the online surveys and interviews with jobseekers and employers, a potential synergy between the provision of support services to employers and jobseekers and the mobility schemes emerged. Particularly, the EURES mobility schemes provide financial support and additional resources to complement the advice provided by EURES advisers. Such specific support (e.g. financing of language courses, travel costs) is not available through the EURES services, but is an important element to support labour mobility.

However, EURES Cross-border Partnerships are often delivered in areas where EURES advisers are also providing support services in cross-border regions and, while sometimes there can be coordination and cooperation, this could also potentially lead to an overlap of services.

**With regard to the internal organisation of the individual EURES countries,** due to the enlargement of the network, in some cases multiple Members and Partners work together to achieve EURES goals. Sometimes they could have different interests in participating to the EURES network, and not the same priorities and ways of working, especially due to the differing nature of private and public organisations. This could lead to difficulties in internal coordination. For example, in the case study on the admission system, inconsistencies in the implementation of EURES services were identified linked to the fees for provision of services.

With regard to fees charged, NCOs consulted mentioned that fees can be charged to employers, as specified in the EURES Regulation (Article 21), while services provided to jobseekers are free of charge. Therefore, it is possible that private Members charge fees to employers different to the cost of these services provided by EURES staff within the Public Employment Services. In addition, incorporating new organisations in national EURES networks means that National Coordination Offices have to consolidate monitoring and planning information from multiple organisations. This increases their coordination efforts.

Furthermore, the stakeholders that participated in the cross-border mobility case study highlighted that often EURES Members or Partners are part of EURES Cross-Border Partnerships as well as of the related EURES national network. As a result, they have to meet different monitoring requirements or report twice, which increases their administrative burden, and the management of the two activities can be challenging.

With regard to coherence **between EURES activities across the network,** the following aspects were identified:

- One of the NCOs consulted highlighted that national communication channels used to promote EURES are not linked to those of other countries, thus not maximising the visibility of EURES.
- Looking at the provision of support services to jobseekers and employers, the majority of EURES countries already collaborate with each other in the implementation of recruitment projects. In particular, in 2018 and 2019 all but two EURES countries (Malta, Iceland) reported cooperation in recruitment activities with other countries. All but three EURES countries (Malta, Slovakia and Iceland) reported carrying out

multilateral recruitment projects. In addition, 25 out of the 26 NCOs reported in the online survey that they coordinate their actions across the network. The Programming Cycle assessment of work programmes 2019 highlights that the commenting exercise during the draft phase of the Programming Cycle has been actively used by a number of countries, which allowed several NCOs to identify mutually interesting target sectors and events.

However, the recommendations of the Programming Cycle report suggest that the cooperation could be further enhanced. Challenges concerning the coordination of the network have been mentioned by stakeholders consulted. Both NCOs and EURES Members and Partners, despite identifying also the benefits of intra-EU coordination, pointed out that the different financial resources available in each of the EURES countries may lead to different chances to quickly react to changes in the labour markets and technological context and to adapt the provision of services. Similarly, the allocation and availability of human resources may impact the quality of services provided within the network. Finally, also national employment policies, such as on the prevention of brain drain may be different from EURES priorities and could influence the provision of services.

## 5.5 EU added value

As per the Better Regulation Guidelines<sup>113</sup>, through the assessment of the EU added value, the evaluation looks into the effects that could not have been achieved by the Member States alone and can be credited to the EU intervention.

*EQ1 – To what extent did the EURES operations produce effects (quantified to the possible extent) that would not have taken place without the EU intervention?*

EURES is the only international mobility service in Europe which covers all jobseekers and employers, in their own languages, in all the countries of an economic region. However, given the absence of a baseline scenario and a counterfactual situation, EURES contribution on intra-EU labour mobility cannot be quantified.

As the free movement of workers is a founding principle of the EU, it goes without saying that labour mobility would have happened also in the absence of EURES support. However, the comparative analysis of the labour market, in Annex III.b, suggests that there is potential for additional labour mobility to happen and help reduce imbalances across the EU. Hence, the core of the evaluation question to be addressed here should read “To what extent EURES facilitates **additional** intra-EU labour mobility, especially for jobseekers and employers who use EURES services and tools?”.

In this context, the added value of EURES is recognised by all the categories of stakeholders consulted, though, notably, more by EURES Members and Partners and NCOs and less by jobseekers and employers. In addition, while EURES is not the only way to strengthen intra-EU labour mobility, its actions contributed to enhance certain results, especially for those users living in countries with high barriers to mobility, notably in the following cases.

**The EURES portal** is the only online platform providing access to vacancies and CVs throughout the entire Union, and offering information in all EU languages. As presented in the first evaluation question under Effectiveness, the number of job vacancies and CVs published on the EURES portal has been increasing in absolute terms over the past years, but is still limited compared to the number of vacancies available at national level. Nonetheless, approximately 50% (897 out of 1 868) of the jobseekers, more than 60% (79 out of 128) of the employers and around 80% (79 out of 92) of the EURES Members and Partners that replied to the online surveys, judged the EURES portal as increasing

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<sup>113</sup> SWD (2017) 350, “Better Regulation Guidelines”, available online at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines.pdf>

employment opportunities and, thus, facilitating the matching between job supply and demand for its users.

**Support services to employers and jobseekers:** a relatively large proportion of jobseekers responding to the online survey deemed EURES support essential to achieve certain outcomes, especially on obtaining post-recruitment assistance (47% or 22 out of 46), finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad (36% or 23 out of 64) and receiving work/apprenticeship offers in line with their skills (33% or 22 out of 130). In addition, over 21% (75 out of 356) of respondents believed that they probably would not have found a job abroad without EURES.

These views are also confirmed in the case study on support services to jobseekers, where the provision of reliable information was deemed as central to facilitate and support labour mobility. In addition, the provision of training and post-recruitment assistance is considered as a unique characteristic of EURES, which cannot be found anywhere else and, at the same time, provides jobseekers with vital support in building their careers.

Employers have a more positive view of the contribution of EURES compared to jobseekers. However, the number of total replies collected is much smaller. In particular, according to the survey results, employers deem post-recruitment assistance, finding apprentices / trainees and accessing a wider selection of candidates as the most useful EURES services to achieve outcomes that would not be possible otherwise. Moreover, from the more in-depth analyses of employers' responses, available in Annex III.b, it appears that EURES support not only facilitated employers by making it easier and quicker to obtain any of the outcomes but, in many cases, it was actually a determining factor. Again, these results are in line with the feedback received from employers interviewed in the case studies, as highlighted below.

**Labour mobility schemes:** for EURES Cross-Border Partnerships, from the related case study it emerges that, while certain results concerning the provision of information would have been obtained in any case, the enhanced cooperation in cross-border regions deriving from EURES allowed to achieve higher quality of information and to build a network of experts in labour mobility issues. Also, the EURES mobility schemes are an important tool to facilitate labour mobility across the EU according to NCOs interviewed. As stated under the Efficiency section, the financial support provided through this scheme has been deemed essential for the users to take the decision of working abroad.

**Provision of horizontal support services:** stakeholders' feedback from the interviews and workshops, shows that EURES strongly contributed to the exchange of labour market information and statistics across the network. Thus, it enhanced collaboration between EURES countries on labour mobility issues, providing an overarching framework for intra-EU cooperation. This is further confirmed by the replies to the online survey, where approximately 60% (54 out of 89) of EURES Members and Partners agreed that EURES contributed to more coordinated employment strategies. Overall, from the interviews with stakeholders it emerged that EURES countries, especially in cross-border regions, would have collaborated in any case. However, the EURES Regulation, by providing a legal framework for the establishment of the network and through the introduction of legal obligations ensured the achievement of better results than in a situation without EURES.

To sum up, EURES is not the only way to achieve results in the field of intra-EU labour mobility. However, the coordination of a European network of employment services and the provision of high-quality services facilitates labour mobility for those who seek EURES services. In addition, stakeholders' feedback suggests that the results are achieved in a quicker and, thus, more efficient manner.

*EQ2 – How significant are these effects compared to the results obtained by bilateral or multilateral Member State cooperation in this area?*

The EURES Impact Assessment concludes that, since co-operation across countries presupposes a common framework, the EURES objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by Member States alone<sup>114</sup>. This is also confirmed by NCOs' views gathered through the online survey, where 22 out of 26 respondents agreed that EURES achieves results additional to the ones that could be achieved at national level.

While EURES advisers and NCOs interviewed believe that bilateral or multilateral cooperation in the field of intra-EU labour mobility would have existed also without EURES, they agree that the cooperation has been enhanced by the EURES Regulation. This opinion is also supported to some extent by the results of the online survey of EURES Members and Partners, where only 20% (18 out of 95) strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that EURES facilitates better cooperation. While a quantification of the additional effects achieved through EURES is not feasible with the available data, it could be concluded, based on stakeholders' feedback, that EURES provides added value compared to less structured multilateral or bilateral collaborations in three areas, as outlined below.

**European-wide network and provision of an overarching framework:** from the consultations with NCOs and EURES staff it emerged that to a certain extent, EURES countries would have developed multilateral or bilateral collaborations on labour mobility issues, since this is a key topic for each country involved, especially given low unemployment rates and labour market imbalances. This suggests that the EURES added value does not lie in initiating the collaboration but rather in providing an overarching strategy for it. This also means setting clear objectives and aims.

In addition, in cases of diverging national policies, EURES provides a framework to coordinate in a transparent manner (for instance, by not targeting recruitment activities to sectors in which countries try to retain national workforce). In cases of diverging interests of EURES Members and Partners, the network provides a platform to discuss and learn from each other, which in the long-term could result in bringing different interests and ways of working closer together. The provision of a common vision and principles, also appears to increase the motivation of EURES advisers, as it enhances their feeling of belonging to a community that acts towards a common goal.

**Protection of fair labour mobility conditions:** EURES's main goal does not only concern boosting labour mobility, but also ensuring that labour mobility takes place on a fair basis. The study identified two ways in which this is achieved through EURES. First, the EURES Regulation (Annex I) sets minimum common criteria that has to be respected in the service delivery by all EURES Members and Partners. The criteria require of Members and Partners to commit themselves to fully respecting labour standards and legal requirements. It was highlighted in the interviews with NCOs from countries that have admitted private organisations that these minimum criteria lead to more awareness among private organisations about the concept of fair mobility. In this context, EURES advisers and NCOs from different EURES countries interviewed mentioned that the EURES network is perceived as a label for quality of services and transparency of information. However, the study did not gather evidence on mechanisms developed by NCOs to monitor whether newly admitted Members and Partners comply with this. Second, EURES advisers consulted in interviews provided examples of how their advice contributes to labour mobility on a fair basis. In particular, by informing jobseekers about the standards of working conditions and wages in other EURES countries, they help jobseekers recognise

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<sup>114</sup> Impact Assessment, Accompanying the document, Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European network of Employment Services, workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, SWD(2014) 9 final - PART 1/2; <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=11362&langId=en>

conditions in vacancies that might be below accepted standards. In some instances, EURES advisers mentioned that they perform background research on companies to validate their job vacancies.

**Exchange of information on labour mobility flows and labour market conditions:** as explained above, while exchange of information between EURES countries would have happened also without EURES, this would have been to a lesser extent and in an unstructured and uncoordinated manner. The EURES Regulation imposes legal reporting requirements on the Members and Partners of the network (e.g. information on EURES activities, work programmes, information on national, regional and sectoral labour supply and demand). The exchange of this information is essential to address changes in the labour market and to face increasing labour market imbalances, as explained under the first evaluation question of the Relevance criterion.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results described above, the study conclusions are presented below for each of the evaluation criteria.

### 6.1 Relevance

EURES tools and services are relevant, to a very large extent, to address the labour market needs. Particularly, the provision of **support services to jobseekers and employers** is well suited to address obstacles to intra-EU labour mobility such as lack of transparent information and administrative barriers. The **EURES portal** also addresses information gaps and provides access to a larger pool of job vacancies and CVs, thus responding to the difficulties facing employers in finding profiles with relevant skills. At the same time, EURES support services tackle to a lesser extent language barriers or challenges linked to moving and settling in another country since these support services are not widespread throughout the EURES network. In addition, limitations in the matching function and usability of the EURES portal reduce its relevance, a drawback in the digital age.

**EURES targets appropriate groups** and addresses their specific needs to an almost full extent. However, there are some differences with regard to the type of needs and specific sub-groups. In particular, general needs of jobseekers and employers that remain not fully covered by EURES include post-recruitment assistance, tackling language barriers, and support with the recognition of qualifications. With regard to particular target sub-groups, young jobseekers cannot be fully supported with employment opportunities through EURES due to a lack of harmonisation of national legislation frameworks on apprenticeships and traineeships outside the education path, although young jobseekers are identified by stakeholders consulted as one of the EURES target groups to be prioritised in the future. In addition, developments in mobility flows have recently increased the relevance of groups such as returning and seasonal workers, but so far their needs are only marginally reflected in the EURES services throughout the network.

Overall, the EURES network has been able to adapt to **changes in the implementation context (i.e. labour mobility trends, technological advancements, COVID-19 pandemic)**, albeit in a somewhat unstructured manner and depending on national strategies and priorities. For example, while certain EURES countries adopt services and activities on the basis of a thorough assessment of the labour market conditions, this approach is not widespread across the network. In another instance, while recruitment events such as European Online Job Days continue being implemented despite COVID-19,

EURES support services in some EURES countries had to be interrupted because of shifts in national priorities.

Three main mechanisms provide a platform for EURES countries to identify changes in the implementation context: exchange of information, participation and discussions in EURES Coordination Group meetings, and the Programming Cycle. However, these mechanisms have not so far ensured that the EURES network addresses the identified changes in a coordinated manner.

## 6.2 Effectiveness

**EURES services** provided through the EURES portal, EURES advisers and within the framework of EURES mobility schemes result in intra-EU placements and higher awareness of intra EU-labour mobility opportunities. The exact extent of this contribution is difficult to assess due to the lack of quantifiable targets and points of comparison.

Overall, the analysis shows that EURES services and tools are effective up to a certain point, as some limitations have been identified for most of them. In particular, **EURES support services** provided by EURES advisers are assessed as of high-value, good quality, and leading to sustainable results, as they are tailored to individuals' needs. However, there are differences in the quality of service provision across the network, which could be explained by differences in resources available at national level. While the **EURES portal** increases the access of employers and jobseekers to job vacancies and CVs, its effectiveness in supporting the recruitment process is limited because a fully automated matching is not yet in place and the portal is not perceived by users and stakeholders as user-friendly. In addition, not all national vacancies are available on the EURES portal yet. **EURES mobility schemes** are closely aligned with the overall EURES objectives, but not entirely integrated in the planning of EURES activities, also due to different reporting requirements linked to their funding under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).

Features of the **organisational structure** of EURES, such as enlarging the network and mainstreaming EURES services within Public Employment Services (PES), are suitable to deliver on labour market needs to a very large extent. First, the admission of additional EURES Members and Partners enhances knowledge exchange about users' needs and labour market developments and allows EURES to provide services to more jobseekers and employers. However, EURES services delivered in different countries or by different Members and Partners are not fully standardised, which might impact the quality of service provision across the network. Second, the mainstreaming of EURES services within Public Employment Services is important to raise awareness of EURES, since both jobseekers and employers consider the links to PES as one of the main ways to learn about EURES.

The EURES Regulation is not yet fully **implemented**: 19 EURES countries have not admitted new Members and Partners, 13 EURES countries do not transfer CVs to the EURES portal via single coordinated channel, and the mapping of national skills' classification systems to the European one is ongoing. This limits the possibility to explore the full potential of EURES.

EURES is not **visible** enough among labour market participants, which impacts in a negative way its effectiveness. In this regard, employers appear less aware of EURES compared to jobseekers. Recent communication and promotion activities raise the overall awareness of EURES but their effects are hampered by funding constraints, limited cooperation across stakeholders and lack of a common approach regarding the promotion of the network.

### 6.3 Efficiency

An **overall increase in cost-effectiveness** is observed between 2016 and 2019, along three EURES outcomes analysed by the study: placements achieved with the support of EURES, individual contacts with jobseekers and employers, and number of job vacancies transferred by the NCOs to the EURES portal. Benchmarking of EURES with Public Employment Services' (PES) activities has provided evidence that cost of EURES can be interpreted as a small top-up to the PES cost, which allows to expand in a cost-effective manner the scope of the activities from national to cross-border placements.

Although the investment in the **single coordinated channel** and the **EURES portal** is well received, the benefits are not completely visible yet. This is underlined by the fact that only three EURES countries currently transfer all their available vacancies through the single coordinated channel. Interviewed EURES staff members see the channel as being designed to reflect and respond to the requirements of a rapidly changing job market. At the same time, in order for automated matching between vacancies and jobseekers' profiles to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the matching process, a number of further developments are needed, notably, the complete integration of the European skills and competences classification into EURES.

The **administrative burden** emanating from the 2016 EURES Regulation is higher than before its introduction. This Regulation brought in many new features to which the national EURES networks had to adapt. They include the requirement to expand the national EURES networks by admitting new EURES Members and Partners (and, therefore, the need to develop new admissions procedures and in some instances also new legislation), mandatory and more harmonised monitoring and reporting requirements (which meant developing new procedures and tools) and the obligation to establish a connection between the national job vacancies and CV databases with the EURES portal through a single coordinated channel. In the longer term, the administrative burden is expected to fall with the harmonisation of certain processes, such as regarding the information that the transferred job vacancies and CVs should contain.

### 6.4 Coherence

With regard to **external coherence**, the analysis of the objectives and actions of other European initiatives found that, to a large extent, the design of EURES is complementary and consistent with such initiatives in supporting labour mobility, full employment and integration of the labour markets. Synergies between EURES activities and other European initiatives are in place, such as Erasmus+ (e.g. promotion of Erasmus opportunities by EURES staff), Interreg (e.g. provision of additional advice in cross-border regions), ESF (e.g. funding EURES staff that would not be possible otherwise). However, a risk of overlap has been identified between the EURES portal and two other European tools:

- the Europass portal, e.g. confusion of EURES clients due to job search function existing on the Europass portal;
- the Your Europe portal, implementing the Single Digital Gateway, e.g. provision of information on multiple websites, additional reporting requirements.

With regard to **internal coherence**, EURES services and tools have been developed in a consistent manner, to a very large extent, with particular synergies emerging between EURES support services and EURES mobility schemes. In addition, the majority of EURES countries coordinate their activities across the network, especially on recruitment projects, but to a lesser extent on promotion and communication activities. While the objectives of all EURES actions are coherent and no overlaps were found in their implementation, an overlap in reporting was identified for EURES Members that are part of a Cross-Border

Partnership and the national EURES network. Furthermore, differences in financial and human capital resources available to EURES countries can lead to inconsistencies in the quality and type of services delivered. At national level, there is also a potential risk of inconsistencies between EURES Members and Partners, especially between public and private organisations that are characterised by different priorities and ways of working.

## **6.5 EU added value**

All stakeholders consulted recognised the EU added value of EURES, as the services provided allow a good portion of jobseekers and employers to obtain outcomes that would not have been possible otherwise or not as fast. This refers especially to the provision of information and post-recruitment assistance, the support services to apprenticeships and traineeships and the mobility schemes.

The scale of EURES actions is relatively small in relation to the total intra-EU labour mobility flows.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, it is not possible to conclude that its actions are the only way to support intra-EU labour mobility in general. However, the study findings show that EURES resulted in quicker or better outcomes for jobseekers and employers who used EURES services.

The EURES Regulation provides an essential overarching framework and common vision for the collaboration and coordination of EURES countries in the field of labour mobility. It also ensures and promotes the protection of fair labour conditions and standards. The exchange of information on labour mobility and markets would have not happened in such a structured and coordinated manner without EURES.

## **7 LESSONS LEARNT**

The following lessons learnt, good practices and possible actions have been identified, and grouped into two categories: EURES actions, and Organisational and legislative framework.

### **7.1 EURES actions**

#### *7.1.1 EURES portal in the digital age*

The EURES portal is a central part of the EURES services. Improvements to the portal are essential for exploiting fully its potential to bridge the gap between labour shortages and surpluses across the EU. It would be important for the European and National Coordination Offices to continue placing a high priority on the completion of the single coordinated channel, the European skills and competences classification mapping and adoption, and the development of an automated matching. These aspects are necessary to increase the effectiveness of the EURES portal and its relevance as a digital tool. Hence, it would be beneficial to consider the following suggestions:

#### **Improve user-friendliness and visibility of the EURES portal**

- The European Commission and the European Labour Authority to explore the option of refining the applicable search criteria to improve the relevance of search results. Relevant experience from portals of EURES Members and Partners could be of considerable value in this area.

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<sup>115</sup> Section 3.2 of Annex III.b Comparative analysis of the labour market provides an estimation of the share of EURES inflows and outflows by clusters of countries over total immigration of working age EU/EFTA population (Figure 37 and Figure 38).

- The EURES network to review the currently obligatory information required when uploading a CV or job vacancy on the EURES portal with a view to improving the completeness and quality of information provided.
- The European Commission, European Labour Authority and the EURES network to continue raising the visibility of the EURES portal. For example, by strengthening cooperation with other European initiatives, such as Erasmus+, or performing a Search Engine Optimization analysis and ensuring that the EURES portal is among the first results in different search engines when looking up key terms connected to labour mobility and intra-EU employment.

### **Develop automated matching**

- The European Commission and the European Labour Authority to ensure that the latest technological trends in the field of e-recruitment are considered, such as the use of Artificial Intelligence and machine learning, to facilitate a fully automated matching. Closer cooperation with EURES countries that use such tools is advisable to exchange information and share knowledge.
- EURES countries to ensure the transfer of job vacancies and CVs of all national EURES Members and Partners to the EURES portal, and to complete the mapping and adoption of the European skills and competences classification, to facilitate better results for matching.

### **Align the EURES portal with other EU portals**

- The European Commission and the European Labour Authority to analyse potential duplication of services with the Europass portal and facilitate the alignment of the two portals.
- The European Commission and the European Labour Authority to analyse potential duplication of information provided on the EURES portal and Your Europe portal, implementing the Single Digital Gateway.

#### *7.1.2 Specific support services and mobility schemes*

The provision of specific support services, especially post-recruitment assistance, traineeships and apprenticeships, and EURES mobility schemes have shown to be especially relevant and effective in addressing specific target groups' needs and challenges. Nevertheless, some shortcomings have been identified in some EURES services, together with some suggestions for future actions, as follows:

### **Align the monitoring processes of EURES actions and EURES mobility schemes**

- The European Coordination Office to assess the possibility of aligning further the planning and monitoring processes of EURES actions (required by the EURES Regulation) and EURES mobility schemes (subject to the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation's requirements) to reduce administrative burden.

### **Enhance Post-recruitment Assistance**

- The EURES network to intensify the exchange good practices in the provision of post-recruitment assistance, in order to leverage on existing knowledge and experiences.

### **Enhance complementarity between cross-border support services**

- The EURES network to review good practice and obstacles to identify ways for ensuring complementarity between the provision of EURES services in cross-border regions and the services of EURES Cross-Border Partnerships.

### **Inclusion of apprenticeships and traineeships**

- The European Commission to assess the challenges deriving from the heterogeneity of national legislative frameworks and initiate a discussion on the feasibility of establishing a commonly agreed definition for apprenticeships and traineeships outside the education path.

### *7.1.3 Visibility and awareness of EURES*

The widespread awareness and knowledge of EURES among target audiences is essential to maximise the achievement of its objectives. Despite increasing efforts to promote EURES at the European and national level, the EURES initiative is not sufficiently well-known, which limits its overall effectiveness. The following suggestions can contribute towards addressing this challenge:

#### **Strengthen communication**

- The EURES network, to explore additional communication channels and targeted communication approaches, allowing the network to expand its outreach; also, to explore making better use of monitoring data for maximising engagement rates.

#### **Develop a coordinated approach**

- The European and National Coordination Offices to develop a more coherent and coordinated approach to communication and promotion activities, allowing for a unified communication strategy at different levels (regional, national, EU) and across EURES actions (EURES mobility schemes, provision of support, etc), thus, ensuring a common understanding of EURES and its services among clients. Inspiration could be taken from communication strategies of the different Members and Partners of the network.

## **7.2 Organisational and legislative framework**

### *7.2.1 Overarching framework and coordination of the network*

The EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589 provides a common vision, principles and a set of requirements to be respected, which bring together the EURES network and act as a multiplier of EURES effects. However, EURES responses to labour market changes are not sufficiently coordinated at network level but rather brought forward by each EURES country, depending on specific needs and political priorities. These responses differ in scope and manner throughout the network. Also, the quality and extent of provision of EURES services, activities and tools, including digital tools, differ across EURES countries, depending on the level of resources invested or on the national political priorities. Hence, it would be useful to consider and take forward the following suggestions:

#### **Develop response framework and mechanisms**

- The European Coordination Office to further enhance coordination between EURES countries in responding as a network to changes in the implementation context.

#### **Enhance the Quality of service delivery**

- The European Commission and the European Labour Authority to explore the possibility of developing a quality measurement framework for EURES services across the network.
- The European Commission and the European Labour Authority to support the optimisation of resources and harmonisation of quality of services across the network, enabling EURES to provide services of the same quality or at least above a certain common standard across the whole network.

### *7.2.2 Planning and monitoring*

The advancements in standardisation of planning and monitoring contribute to having a better overview of the EURES actions, their effectiveness and efficiency. However, gaps in monitoring and budgetary data and the lack of a comprehensive overview of EURES services and activities provided across the network limit the identification of particularly efficient actions to steer the EURES services and activities in a more strategic manner. These limitations could be addressed through a number of suggestions:

#### **Enhance Monitoring efforts**

- The European Coordination Office to consider compiling an overview of budgets and EURES services across countries in order to enhance transparency. Also, to analyse the possibility of further integrating the Programming Cycle and performance measurement process to enable further coordination and harmonisation of activities and their financing. For example, by integrating the EURES Performance Measurement and Programming Cycle online tools at European level could lead to savings in terms of time and resources. This can draw on the experience of some countries which are already implementing this approach in their national tools.
- The National Coordination Offices to enhance efforts in collecting and providing complete monitoring data of good quality.
- The European Coordination Office to support the National Coordination Offices in implementing additional monitoring requirements deriving from the Single Digital Gateway Regulation.

### *7.2.3 Working in an enlarged network*

The enlargement of the network has improved the effectiveness of EURES services by expanding service provision and information exchange. However, the full potential of a larger EURES network has not been fully exploited yet and is expected to lead to additional coordination challenges, deriving from the need to collaborate with different organisations. To tackle these challenges, it would be beneficial to consider and take forward the following suggestions:

#### **Strengthen enlargement efforts**

- The National Coordination Offices to enhance their efforts in identifying, attracting and admitting new EURES Members and Partners.
- The European Coordination Office to facilitate the process of network enlargement with guidance, support and knowledge exchange. In this regard, it is worth considering defining guiding principles, developing supporting material and templates, and organising mutual learning events.

#### **Analyse changes to the network**

- The European and National Coordination Offices to engage in a discussion about the strategic changes to the network due to its enlargement, ensuring that its full benefits are achieved and current and future challenges addressed.

#### **Reduce the administrative burden of the National Coordination Offices**

- The European Commission and the European Labour Authority to support the National Coordination Offices in taking up additional responsibilities and related workload deriving from the enlargement of the network.

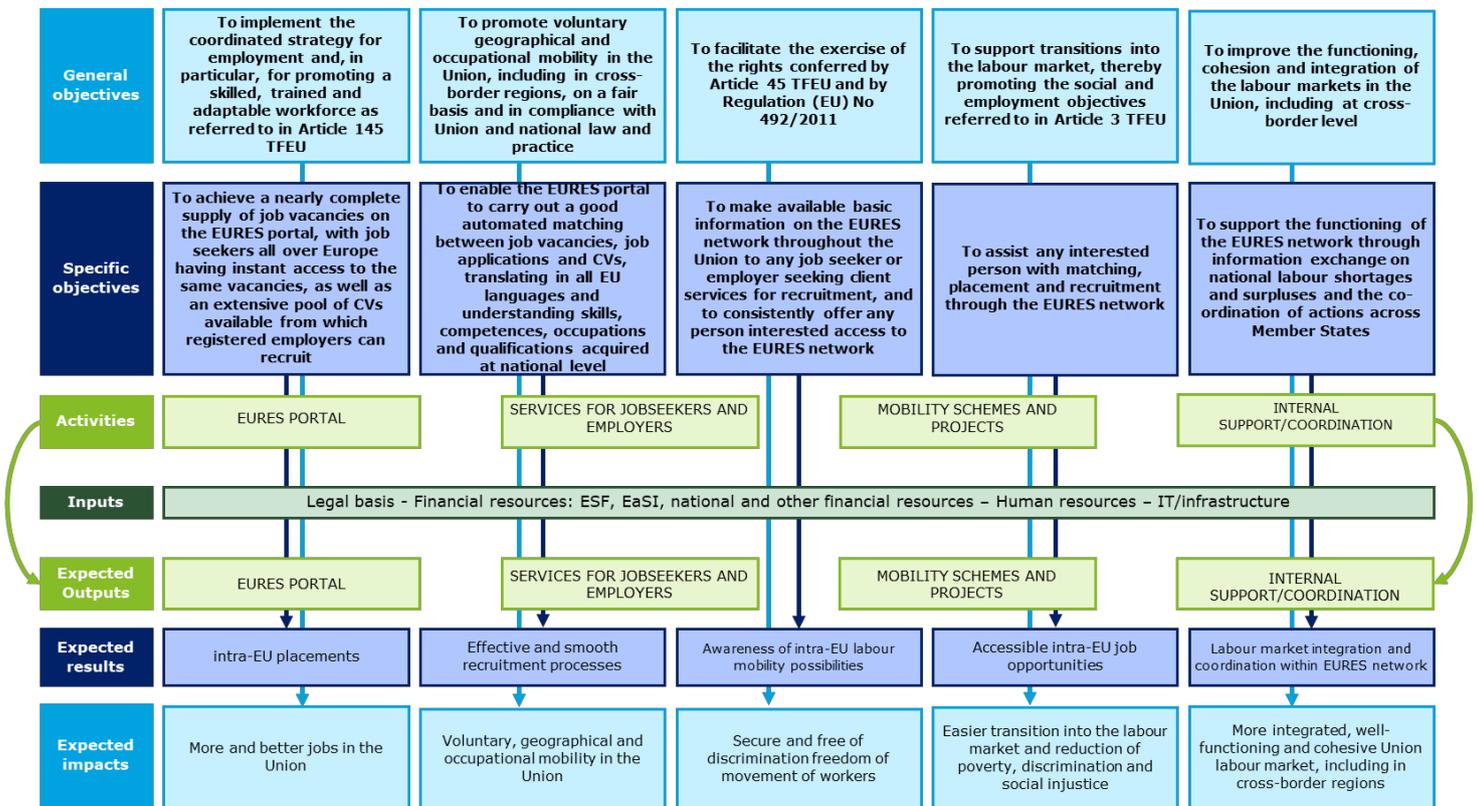
## Annex I – Methodological tools

The following sections provide a detailed description of the key methodological tools selected to carry out the study to support the EURES ex-post evaluation.

### 1 INTERVENTION LOGIC

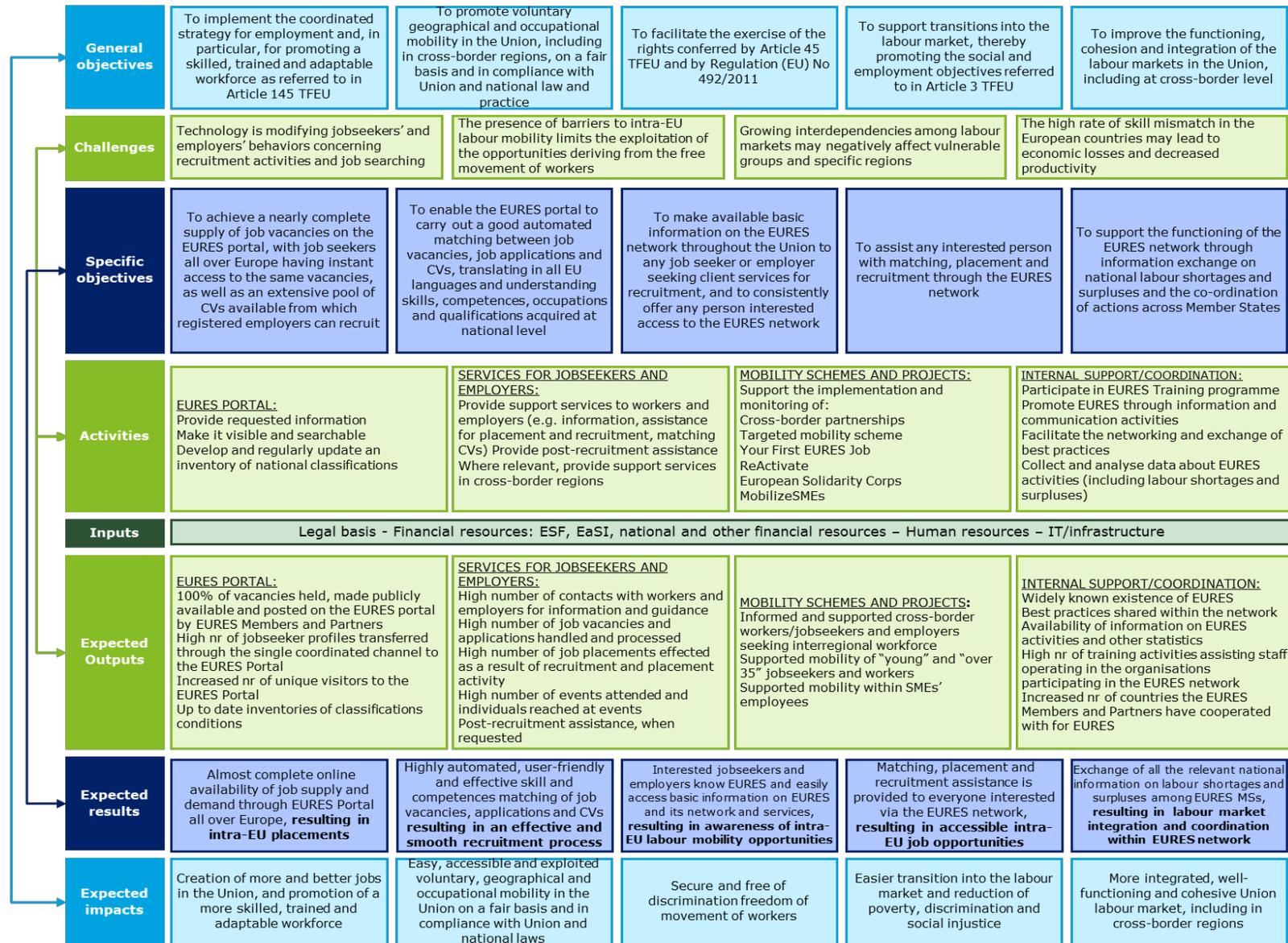
The following figures present the intervention logic of EURES action both in a simplified and detailed manner.

Figure 1 Simplified intervention logic



Source: Study team

Figure 2 Refined Intervention logic



Source: Study team

## 2 EVALUATION QUESTIONS MATRIX

The following table provides the Evaluation Questions Matrix elaborated for this study.

Table 1 Evaluation Questions Matrix

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources										
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop
<b>How relevant have the objectives and actions implemented under the EURES Regulation been?</b>														
<b>1. Relevance</b>	EQ1: To what extent the needs and problems in the labour market and intra-EU labour mobility (e.g. language and cultural issues, matching supply and demand) and the objectives of the EURES Regulation fit?  To what extent are the EURES tools fit for the needs of businesses and job seekers in the digital age?	The EURES specific objectives as defined by the European Commission are responding to the reported needs and problems of the labour market over the reference period	Developments and trends in the labour market and intra-EU labour mobility (including barriers and challenges) Market trends in use of technology in recruitment and job seeking activities Stakeholders' view on barriers / needs / challenges to intra-EU labour mobility; Stakeholders' view on the degree to which the specific objectives respond to the labour market needs and problems identified	x		x		x	x	x	x		x	x

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources												
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis	
		The EURES tools and services are appropriate to address the needs and problems of the labour market	Stakeholders' view on the degree to which the EURES actions are the most appropriate to respond to the labour market needs and problems; Stakeholders' view on the degree to which the EURES tools are the most appropriate to respond to the needs and problems (including needs of businesses and job seekers in the digital age in the digital age);					x	x	x	x			x	x	

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources												
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis	
	EQ2: To what extent was EURES flexible and able to adapt to changes in the implementation context, notably the evolution of mobility patterns, technological changes, new types of recruitment channels in the labour market, and new regulatory requirements (e.g. those stemming from the single digital gateway Regulation)?	EURES adapted to changes in the implementation context	Stakeholders' description of changes in the implementation context of EURES;  Stakeholders' views on the degree to which the implementation of EURES adopted to changes in the implementation context			X		X	X	X	X					
		The implementation of EURES has mechanisms suited to track, identify and respond to changes in the labour market	Existence of documented processes and mechanisms allowing EURES actions to reach to changes in the implementation context;  Existence of informal processes and mechanisms to respond to changes in the implementation context;  Stakeholders' view on processes and mechanisms	X				X	X							

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources														
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis			
			allowing EURES actions to adapt to changes.															
	EQ3: To what extent were the most relevant groups (e.g. cross-border workers, young people searching for international experience, EU mobile workers) targeted and their most important needs addressed?	EURES actions target the most appropriate groups to achieve its objectives	Stakeholders' view on the extent to which the EURES target groups are appropriate					x	x	x	x							
		EURES actions meets the needs of their target groups	Stakeholders' view on the target audiences' needs;  Stakeholders' view on the extent to which the EURES actions address the main needs of the target group						x	x	x	x			x	x		
<b>How effective has EURES been in achieving its objectives?</b>																		



Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources																	
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis						
		The EURES portal facilitates an effective and smooth recruitment process by carrying out a good automated matching	<p>PMS indicators: Customer satisfaction with the functionalities of the EURES Portal, Customer satisfaction with online help desk for the users of the EURES Portal;</p> <p>Stakeholders' opinion on the degree of automation, user-friendly and effective matching of job vacancies, applications and CVs of the portal;</p> <p>Stakeholders' opinion on the extent to which the portal's functionalities allow for an effective and smooth automated matching</p>		x			x		x											

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources												
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis	
		The EURES portal is available publicly and highly visible	<p>PMS indicators: Unique visitors to the EURES Portal, Number of jobseeker profiles registered on the EURES Portal, Employers registered on the EURES Portal;</p> <p>Stakeholders' opinion on the degree of availability and visibility of the EURES portal;</p>		X			X	X	X						
		The information available is relevant, complete and up-to-date (including living and working conditions and inventories of classifications)	<p>PMS indicators: Customer satisfaction with information on the EURES Portal;</p> <p>Stakeholders' opinion on the completeness and up to date information on the EURES Portal</p>		X				X	X			X	X		

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources												
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis	
	EQ2: To what extent the provision of services to employers and jobseekers contributed to:  1) increasing awareness of intra-EU labour possibilities by providing relevant information of good quality on job vacancies and living and working conditions throughout the Union to any job seeker or employer seeking client services for recruitment, And by granting any person interested access to the EURES network?	Relevant information of good quality on job vacancies and living and working conditions is available throughout the Union to any jobseeker and employer, increasing awareness of intra-EU labour possibilities	PMS indicators: Information and guidance provided to workers and employers (individual contacts); Customer satisfaction relevant for or on support services;  Stakeholders' opinion on the availability, relevance and quality of information on living and working conditions provided	x	x	x				x	x			x	x	
	2) improving the accessibility of intra-EU job opportunities by assisting interested people with matching, placement and recruitment?	All interested people are assisted with matching, placement and recruitment, improving the accessibility of intra-EU job opportunities	PMS indicators: Job applications handled and processed; Job vacancies handled and processed; Job placements effected as a result of recruitment and placement activity; Customer satisfaction  Stakeholders' opinion on the		x					x	X			x	x	

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources													
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis		
			effects of the assistance from the EURES network														
	EQ3: To what extent the EURES internal support and cooperation contributed to EU labour market integration and collaboration across countries by supporting information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses and coordination of actions across Member States?	The internal support provided contributes to the functioning of the EURES network and the coordination of actions across countries	PMS indicators: Training activities assisting staff operating in the EURES network  Stakeholders' assessment on the usefulness and effects of the internal support provided		x			x	x	x (only M&P)							
		There is information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses facilitating labour market integration	Stakeholders' assessment of the level of exchange (in terms of quality and completeness of information) on national labour shortages across Member States and its effects					x	x								

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources													
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis		
		Member States coordinate their actions	<p>PMS indicators: Number of countries the EURES Members and Partners have cooperated with for recruitment EURES activities; Number of recruitment cooperation projects carried out.</p> <p>Stakeholders' assessment of the level of co-ordination (in terms of intensity) across Member States and its effects</p>		x			x		x							
		The information exchanged is adding value to the Member States	Stakeholders' assessment of the benefits resulting from the exchange of information and co-ordination, including specific examples illustrating the effects					x		x							
	EQ4: To what extent the EURES mobility schemes and projects contributed to achieving the EURES specific objectives?	The operational objectives of each EURES mobility schemes and projects are coherent to one	Stakeholders' assessment of the coherence of EURES mobility schemes operational objectives with EURES specific objectives	x			x	x		x					x	x	

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources													
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis		
		or more EURES specific objectives	Overlap between the objectives in the Calls for EURES mobility schemes and EURES specific objectives														
		The target groups of the EURES mobility schemes are in line with the target groups of EURES actions	Stakeholders' assessment of the alignment of the EURES mobility scheme's target groups with the EURES target groups					x	x					x	x		
		The target groups per projects have been reached out	EURES mobility schemes PMS data: Number of informed and supported cross-border workers/jobseekers and employers seeking interregional workforce; Supported mobility of "young" and "over 35" jobseekers and workers; Supported mobility within SMEs' employees; analysis of survey results for employers and jobseekers;				x	x	x					x	x		

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources																
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis					
			Stakeholders' view on benefits resulting from the EURES mobility schemes																	
		The expected outputs have been generated	Number of targets reached / not reached by the EURES mobility schemes by type of action	x			x													
	EQ5: How visible were EURES actions and the EURES initiative to labour market participants	Labour market participants are aware of EURES actions and EURES initiative	Stakeholders' assessment of awareness of labour market participants of EURES and its actions								x	x								
		The promotion and communication actions implemented result in better	PMS indicators: Social media performance, Events attended, Individuals reached at events		x					x	x	x								

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources																	
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis						
		visibility and awareness	Stakeholders' view on the effectiveness of the promotion and communication actions implemented																		
	EQ6: Which types of actions were the most and the least effective and most sustainable, for which groups and in which contexts (e.g. specific cross-border partnerships, specialized targeted mobility schemas)? What main factors had a bigger impact (either positive or negative) on the effectiveness of EURES actions?	Degree to which EURES actions differ in their effectiveness	Stakeholders' views on the effectiveness of the different actions					x	x	x											
		Degree to which EURES actions differ in their sustainability	Stakeholders' views on the sustainability of the different actions					x	x	x											
		Factors facilitating and hindering the effectiveness of the EURES actions are identified	Stakeholders' views on the factors facilitating and hindering the effectiveness of the EURES actions					x	x	x (only M&P)						x	x				
<b>Other factors influencing the effectiveness of the EURES actions</b>																					

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources														
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis			
	EQ7: How appropriate is the current EURES organisational set-up to meet the current labour market needs, including in cross-border regions? How effective is the mainstreaming of the EURES service delivery within PES and other EURES members and partners, in order to contribute to the objectives?	EURES organisational set-up is suited to meet current labour market needs, including in cross-border regions	Description of the organisational set-up of EURES Stakeholders' view on the contribution of the organisational set-up to meeting current labour market needs	x		x				x								
		The provision of EURES services is standardised and of high-quality across Member States	Stakeholders' view on the degree of standardisation of provision of EURES services;  Stakeholders' view on the quality of provision of EURES services						x	x				x	x			
		Information is shared across EURES members and partners	Stakeholders' opinion on the level (in terms of quality and completeness) of information shared					x	x					x	x			



Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources												
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis	
	EQ9: To what extent the outputs and effects of the EURES actions facilitate the implementation of a coordinated employment strategy?	The outputs of the EURES actions contribute to the implementation of a coordinated employment strategy as identified in the IL (i.e. by facilitating intra-EU placements)	Stakeholders' perception of the contribution of the specific EURES objectives to the implementation of a coordinated employment strategy					X	X	X	X					
	EQ9: To what extent the outputs and effects of the EURES actions improve the functioning, cohesion and integration of the labour markets in the Union?	The outputs of the EURES actions improve the functioning, cohesion and integration of the labour markets as defined in the IL (i.e. by coordination of Member States actions)	Stakeholders' perception of the contribution of the specific EURES objectives to improving the functioning, cohesion and integration of the labour market					X	X	X	X					
	EQ9: To what extent the outputs and effects of the EURES actions promote voluntary geographical and occupational mobility in the Union on a fair basis?	The outputs of the EURES actions promote voluntary geographical and occupational mobility	Stakeholders' perception of the contribution of the specific EURES objectives to promoting voluntary					X	X	X						

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources																
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis					
		in the Union as defined in the IL (i.e. by supporting an effective and smooth recruitment process)	geographical and occupational mobility																	
	To what extent the outputs and effects of the EURES actions support transitions into the labour market?	The outputs of the EURES actions support transitions into the labour market as defined in the IL (i.e. by increasing the accessibility of intra-EU job opportunities)	Stakeholders' perception of the contribution of the specific EURES objectives to supporting transitions into the labour market					X	X	X	X									

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources										
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop
<b>How efficient has EURES been in achieving its objectives?</b>														
<b>3. Efficiency</b>	EQ1: To what extent were EURES actions cost-effective (compared over time)? What types of actions were more and less cost-effective? Is there scope for a more efficient use of EURES human/financial/technical resources? Particularly: I. How justified are the running costs of the EURES portal and IT infrastructure in terms of online users and job matches? II. To what extent was direct funding and associated costs proportionate to the benefits generated? III. How timely and cost-efficient were the procedures for reporting and monitoring? IV. To what extent were the costs of final services to stakeholders (e.g.	Degree to which EURES actions differ in their cost-effectiveness	Costs associated with the different EURES activities, including tools and services (set-up and running costs)	x		x	x	x	x					
		EURES resources are used in the most cost-efficient manner	Relation of costs and effects of the resources used per EURES action and in total	x		x	x	x	x				x	
		Degree to which the running/IT infrastructure costs per online user/job match differ from the costs for other EURES activities, including tools and services	Relation of costs and effects	x	x			x	x				x	x
		Direct funding and associated costs are proportionate to the benefits generated (estimation or comparison with PES)	Relation of costs and effects per EURES action	x	x	x		x					x	x

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources											
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis
	counselling to individual job seekers and business) proportionate to the benefits generated?	The length of reporting procedures is proportionate to the outcome produced	FTE spent on reporting Stakeholders' perception of proportionality between time spent on reporting and effects achieved	x		x	x	x	x				x	x	
		The benefits of final services to stakeholders outweigh their costs (estimation or comparison with PES)	Relation of costs and effects per EURES action	x	x	x	x	x	x					x	x
	EQ2: To what extent has administrative burden increased/decreased compared to the previous EURES regulation?	Change in administrative burden compared to previous EURES regulation is identified	FTE dedicated to EURES administrative activities under the previous EURES regulation FTE dedicated to EURES administrative activities under the current EURES regulation	x		x	x	x	x				x	x	
		Change in administrative burden is proportionate to	Stakeholders' opinion on proportionality of the change in administrative burden to change in effects	x				x	x					x	x

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources															
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis				
		the effectiveness of the EURES actions																	
	EQ3: Are there significant cost differences between countries in the implementation of the operations? What are these differences related to?	Potential differences in implementation costs across MS are identified	Estimated cost-effectiveness of EURES actions per EURES countries	x		x	x	x	x						x	x			
		Factors influencing implementation costs across EURES countries are identified	Stakeholders' opinion on the different factors influencing the type and size of implementation costs		x				x	x						x	x		
<b>How coherent have EURES actions been among themselves and with other similar actions?</b>																			

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources																
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis					
4. Coherence	EQ1: How coherent is the EURES Regulation with other EU policy measures and initiatives targeting employment and mobility at EU level?	EURES specific objectives are complementary with other EU policy measures and initiatives	Stakeholders' assessment of the level of complementarity between the EURES specific objectives and other EU policy measures and initiatives; Stakeholders' feedback on potential synergies and overlaps between the EURES specific objectives and other EU policy measures and initiatives																	
		Potential synergies between the EURES Regulation and other EU policy measures and initiatives are identified						X	X	X	X									
		Potential overlaps between the EURES Regulation and other EU policy measures and initiatives are identified																		
	EQ2: How complementary were the EURES tools and services to each other?	EURES activities, are complementary with each other	Existence of examples of overlap of objectives and targets of the EURES actions; Stakeholders' assessment of the level of complementarity																	
Potential synergies between the different		X					X	X	X	X										

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources														
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis			
		EURES actions are identified	between the different EURES actions;															
		Potential overlaps between the different EURES actions are identified	Stakeholders' feedback on potential synergies and overlaps between the different EURES actions															
<b>What is the EU added value of EURES in the field of employment and mobility?</b>																		
<b>5. EU-added value</b>	EQ1: To what extent did the EURES operations produce effects (quantified to the possible extent) that would not have taken place without the EU intervention?	There are areas in which the EURES actions are the only way to get results, to create missing links, avoid fragmentation, and realise the potential of an open, border-free Europe	Changes in the labour market indicators such as cross-border mobility, unemployment rates as a result of the implementation of EURES	x					x	x								x

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question (EQ)	Judgment criteria	Indicators	Data sources												
				Desk research	Performance Measurement indicators	Programming cycle	EURES mobility schemes performance data	Ad-Hoc Interviews	Biannual survey (National coordinators)	Online survey (Jobseekers / Employers / Members and Partners)	Public Consultation	Compliance checklist National Coordinators	Case study interviews	Case study workshop	Comparative analysis	
		There are areas in which the EURES actions created added-value compared to a situation without EURES	Stakeholders' opinion on the type and extent of EU-added value of EURES actions					X	X	X	X					
	EQ2: How significant are these effects compared to the results obtained by bilateral or multilateral Member State cooperation in this area?	There is (are) an area(s) in which the EURES actions have added the most value	Stakeholders' perception that the effects of the EURES actions are achieved more efficiently at EU level					X	X	X	X					
		The EURES actions achieve results that are additional to what could have been achieved at national level						X	X	X	X					X

Source: Study team

### 3 COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS (CEA)

This section provides a methodological description of the cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) performed for the purposes of the ex-post EURES evaluation, while the full analysis of methodology and results is provided in Annex III.a.

The analysis is composed of two complementary parts. On the one hand, we analyse and compare the **cost-effectiveness of EURES across time** for three indicators. On the other hand, we compare the cost-effectiveness of EURES to two different **benchmarks: Public Employment Services (PES) and Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS)**.

The remaining part of this section describes the selection and operationalisation of the indicators, the logic behind time period under analysis, and the expected results.

#### 3.1 Indicators

##### *3.1.1 EURES outcomes*

Given the complexity of EURES activities and the numerous changes that occurred over time, it is not currently possible, with present data availability, to define and gather data for one indicator for each EURES action. Therefore, the analysis was restricted to a limited number of key indicators. These indicators for EURES outcomes aim to capture the bulk of the activities and goals performed by EURES, in compatibility with data availability. In particular, we selected three indicators:

- the number of total **placements achieved** with the support of EURES;
- the number of total **individual contacts** between EURES staff and EURES users;
- the number of job **vacancies provided** by the NCOs to the EURES portal.

The indicators have been selected with precise and distinct rationales. The number of total placements achieved with the support of EURES is one of the key indicators of employment results, which belong to the main EURES operational objectives. Therefore, this indicator is the single most important measure of comprehensive EURES achievements.

The number of total individual contacts between EURES staff and EURES users measures the fulfilment of the following two EURES objectives: (a) to inform, guide and provide advice to potentially mobile EU workers; (b) to provide advice and guidance to workers and employers in cross-border regions. The number of job vacancies provided by the NCOs to the EURES portal measures how well the system of information sharing works.

##### *3.1.2 EURES costs*

As specified in the Better Regulation Toolbox 57, the cost component of a cost-effectiveness analysis should refer as accurately as possible to the resources disbursed for the specific outcome under analysis. This is necessary in order to make the cost of that outcome comparable to that

of a similar programme or to other activities under the same programme. Therefore, for each of the indicators selected, there would ideally be a specific and different subset of the total budget.

Nevertheless, in the context of this ex post evaluation, three main issues emerge. First, the ability to track and gather comprehensive and consistent data across time on the sources of EURES funding is limited. Second, data breakdowns on how the resources are spent, detailing individual activities and specifying quantitative outputs, are rarely available for individual countries. Third, the three outcomes under analysis, that were selected as an operational second-best, as explained above, are horizontal to different EURES activities.

Because of this, the available data do not allow to estimate a specific budget breakdown for corresponding indicators of EURES actions. Therefore, the only option available was to apply the same cost to all the indicators selected, which is the **total annual budget spent on EURES** activities in each country.

### *3.1.3 Public Employment Services (PES)*

Regarding the need to measure the cost-effectiveness of PES activities, the selection of the indicators is straight-forward. On the outcome side, the main indicator of PES activities and goals is the total number of **job placements** in a country in a given year. This indicator is in line and comparable to the corresponding indicator selected for EURES, although possible inconsistencies exist, due to the differences between PES and EURES activities, and are underlined in Annex III.a.

On the cost side, following the same logic applied to EURES for purposes of comparability, one indicator is considered: the total national **budget assigned to PES** activities in each country in a given year. As for the outcome, possible inconsistencies arise (see Annex III.a for more information).

### *3.1.4 Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS)*

In terms of indicators, the selection follows the same logic as PES. The total number of **job placements** is a good overall indicator of the activities and goals of targeted mobility schemes, while also allowing for comparability to the main EURES indicator.

On the cost side, the picture is slightly different. In fact, we consider the **total budget of all active projects** combined rather than national budgets. This is more in line with the type of activity of targeted mobility schemes, while still allowing for comparability with EURES. For both costs and outcome, possible inconsistencies with EURES exists (see Annex III.a for more information).

## **3.2 Time period**

Following the selection of the indicators, the second step was the choice of the of the time unit for comparison. Based on data availability, the selection falls on year units. In particular, we selected four years: **2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019**. The inclusion of two years before and after the full implementation of the EURES Regulation (2018) allows to appreciate the effect on the cost-effectiveness of EURES activities.

The choice to exclude further years is due mainly to data availability issues. Before 2016, an average of only 50% of EURES Advisors were filling the monthly EURES Advisors Reports, which were the main data source before 2018. In addition, there was no standard in the methodology of data reporting before, thus creating serious comparability issues.

As for 2019, while figures are available for EURES, they are not for PES. Therefore, the comparison is limited to three years (2016, 2017, and 2018) out of which only one is selected for comparison with EURES based on data completeness. By contrast, 2019 is the first year for which data for Targeted Mobility Schemes are reported on an annual basis.

Regarding 2020, the data for the full year were not available at the time of the implementation of this exercise.

### 3.3 Expected results

By looking at **descriptive statistics**, it was possible to observe the variation of the EURES budget and outcome indicators across time, establishing whether the impact of EURES activities increased. Nevertheless, in order to observe an increase in cost-effectiveness, and its extent, the necessary condition is to observe an outcome variation more than proportional to the input (the cost) variation. Were this the case, then the ratio between the input (the cost) and the outcome would be smaller in a given year ( $t_n$ ) as compared to a previous year ( $t_{n-1}$ ). That is, in order to produce the same outcome, less input is needed. Formally, this can be written as  $\frac{c_t}{o_t} < \frac{c_{t-1}}{o_{t-1}}$ , where  $c_t$  and  $o_t$  are the inputs and outputs in a given year.

The data collection and following calculations produced **three ratios** 'total budget ( $c$ ) over total outcome ( $o$ )' for each year ( $t$ ) under examination at the EURES aggregate level. That is one ratio for each outcome 1, 2, and 3 ( $n$ ), in a given year ( $t$ ). It also calculated the ratio for the main PES and TMS outcomes at the EURES aggregate: total cost in a selected year ( $c_{PES}; c_{TMS}$ ) over total outcome ( $o_{PES}; o_{TMS}$ ) in the selected year ( $t$ ):

$$\frac{c_t}{o_n t} = \text{cost per EURES outcome (placements, contacts, vacancies) in a given year (2016 to 2019);}$$

$$\frac{c_{PES_t}}{o_{PES_t}} = \text{cost per PES placement in a given year (2016, 2017, or 2018);}$$

$$\frac{c_{TMS_t}}{o_{TMS_t}} = \text{cost per TMS placement in a given year (2019).}$$

Additionally, **comparing EURES to PES and TMS** aimed to verify whether EURES has been more or less cost-effective than comparable benchmarks in achieving its main goal, notwithstanding the limitations and comparability issues underlined in the findings and limitations. Formally, this can be written as  $\frac{c_t}{o_t} < \frac{c_{PES_t}}{o_{PES_t}}$  and  $\frac{c_t}{o_t} < \frac{c_{TMS_t}}{o_{TMS_t}}$ .

The key summary indicators, calculated at the EURES aggregate level, were the **net costs and net outcomes** of EURES in 2019 as compared to 2016, and between EURES and the two PES and TMS benchmarks as it may be required for interpretation:

$$\frac{c_{2019}}{o_{n2019}} - \frac{c_{2016}}{o_{n2016}} = \pi = \text{net cost per one unit of output in 2019 as compared to 2016;}$$

$\pi * on_{2019}$  = total net cost per output in 2019 vs 2016;

$$\frac{c_t}{on_t} - \frac{cPES_t}{oPES_t} = \pi PES = \text{net cost per EURES placement as compared to PES in a selected year};$$

$\pi PES * on_t$  = total net cost for EURES placements as compared to PES in a selected year;

$$\frac{c_t}{on_t} - \frac{cTMS_t}{oPES_t} = \pi TMS = \text{net cost per EURES placement as compared to TMS in a selected year};$$

$\pi TMS * on_t$  = total net cost for EURES placements as compared to TMS in a selected year.

As a result of our analysis, it was possible to identify changes in the cost-effectiveness of the EURES actions between 2016 and 2019 and thus confirm or reject hypothesis (1) on the increase of cost-effectiveness of EURES activities. In addition, it evaluated whether EURES actions are more cost effective than similar activities, thus confirming or rejecting hypothesis (2).

## 4 METHODOLOGICAL NOTE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The purpose of this note is to provide details on the Comparative Analysis in the ex-post EURES evaluation, while the results of the analysis are included in Annex III.b.

As stated in the Request for Services (RfS), the aim of the comparative analysis of the evolution of the labour situation throughout the EU in relation to EURES activities is to identify, to the extent possible, factors that have contributed (either positively or negatively) to the effectiveness, efficiency and added-value of EURES-related operations. According to the task specifications, the comparison needs to be performed against:

- The situation before the current EURES Regulation entered into force in 2016;
- A hypothetical situation where there would not be any EURES intervention.

Thus, the task has been structured in three steps:

- Step 1: based on socio-economic as well as labour mobility data, to contextualise EURES implementation through a description and analysis of the evolution of the labour market and labour mobility, with the help of clusters of countries based on their level of barriers to mobility. This helps guide the analysis and paves the way to the next steps;
- Step 2: based on EURES data, to assess EURES implementation in the different contexts, to understand whether this is in line with the evolution of labour mobility needs;
- Step 3: based on survey data, try to understand EURES's specific contribution to its objectives, i.e. what would have happened in case EURES had not existed.

Each step is further described in the following paragraphs.

### 4.1 Step 1

The first part of the comparative analysis, relies on **descriptive statistics of trends in groups of similar countries over time, analysing socio-economic data related to the labour market, existing evidence on the main barriers to labour mobility<sup>1</sup> as well as observed mobility flows.**

The analysis of socio-economic data related to the labour market makes use of clusters of countries that allow us to group together those with similar determinants (push-pull factors) of labour mobility and trends, and with similar levels of barriers to labour mobility. Clustering countries helps the analysis and the understanding of data and trends in relation to the context in which EURES operates, but should not be viewed as creating strict categories of countries. In fact, not all relevant drivers and barriers to mobility are observable (such as cultural barriers) and therefore the clusters are merely used and considered inasmuch as they can help simplify and organise the analysis.

Operationally, two **macro clusters** are built first, based on the **level of barriers to mobility** identified through a standardised indicator built using three indicators:

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<sup>1</sup> Sources detailed in section 7, Bibliography

- The average percentage of the population being "Proficient" in the foreign language reported as best known in the country<sup>2</sup>;
- The number of other countries or regions where the national language of a country is also an official language (assigning 1 point for each country and 0.5 for each Region);
- The alignment of the NQF with EQF<sup>3</sup>, assigning -1, 0 and 1 based on the level of alignment<sup>4</sup>.

The standardised indicator for barriers is built as a weighted average of the three standardised indicators (z-scores), where the first two have a weight equal to 2, and the last one equal to 1. In fact, foreign language proficiency and geographical spread of the national language are a more precise measure of one of the main barriers to mobility – language barriers. The alignment of the NQF with EQF is not a precise measure, and thus it was assigned a lower weight. The standardised indicator obtained has values ranging from -1.6 to 1.2, where lower values indicate lower barriers to mobility. Countries with a score below 0 are considered to have barriers below average ("low barriers"), and those with a score above 0 are considered to have barriers above average ("high barriers").

Next, four other sub-clusters are built to take into account the level and variation over time of the economic context indicators in relation to labour mobility used: GDP PPP per capita, unemployment rate and vertical mismatches<sup>5</sup>. To build the four clusters, we first built two separate standardised indicators based on:

- The average value over the period 2012-2018 of the GDP PPP per capita, unemployment rate and vertical mismatches for each country;
- The average annual growth rate of the same indicators over the period 2012-2018.

In both cases, the indicator related to GDP per capita in PPP is assigned a weight of 3, unemployment rate a weight of 2 and vertical mismatches a weight of 1. This is to reflect the relative importance of each indicator as a driver for labour mobility, as discussed in section 2.2 of the main report and in Annex III.b. Indicators are built in such a way that lower values of the average level indicator correspond to a better than average economic context in relation to labour mobility (i.e. higher GDP, lower unemployment, lower vertical mismatch); lower values of the average annual growth rate indicator correspond to a higher than average improvement of the context. The standardised average level indicator has values ranging from -2.66 to 1.61. The standardised average growth indicator has values ranging from -2.36 to 1.81.

It should be noted that references to "worsening, improving" are in comparative terms and relate to a few key drivers for labour mobility<sup>6</sup> only rather than the overall socio-economic context.

By combining the barriers indicator and the two indicators of the economic context in relation to labour mobility drivers, one should in principle obtain eight clusters<sup>7</sup>. However, there are no low

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<sup>2</sup> Eurostat edat\_aes\_I54

<sup>3</sup> National Qualification Framework and European Qualification Framework. Available online at <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/european-qualifications-framework-efq>.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the categorisation made by Cedefop. We assign -1 to countries where the NQF takes a more comprehensive approach and respects countries' specificities more; 0 to countries where the NQF is mostly influenced by EQF but not completely aligned; 1 to countries where the NQF is closely aligned to EQF, thus facilitating cross-country comparisons of qualifications.

<sup>5</sup> Vertical mismatches indicate the share of individuals who are either underqualified or overqualified for their jobs. In particular, the indicator used for the analysis is the overqualification rate, based on EUROSTAT, available online at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/experimental-statistics/skills>

<sup>6</sup> These are also oversimplifications for the purpose of clustering and based on data availability.

<sup>7</sup> 3 dimensions, 2 modalities (above average or below average), thus the number of resulting clusters equals  $2^3 \rightarrow 8$

barrier countries with worse than average socio-economic condition, thus MS are present only in six clusters, as follows:

Table 2 First clustering of countries with similar levels barriers, labour mobility determinants and trends

CLUSTER	COUNTRIES
<b>HIGH BARRIERS</b>	
<b>Cluster A</b>	Czech Republic
<b>Cluster B</b>	Finland
<b>Cluster C</b>	Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Slovenia, France, Italy, Slovakia <sup>8</sup>
<b>Cluster D</b>	Bulgaria, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Poland, Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia <sup>9</sup>
<b>LOW BARRIERS</b>	
<b>Cluster A</b>	Ireland, Malta, UK, Germany
<b>Cluster B</b>	Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway

However, to better assess the data a further simplification is needed. It would be impossible to meaningfully test differences among clusters, if these are too many or too much alike. Thus, in the analysis that follows in step 2 and step 3, **we focus only on four clusters** as showed in Table 3.

Table 3 Definitive clustering of countries based on their level of barriers and economic context trends

CLUSTER	COUNTRIES
<b>HIGH BARRIERS</b>	
<b>Worsening/stable economic conditions</b>	Finland, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Slovenia, France, Italy, Slovakia
<b>Improving economic conditions</b>	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Poland, Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia
<b>LOW BARRIERS</b>	
<b>Improving economic conditions</b>	Ireland, Malta, UK, Germany
<b>Worsening/stable economic conditions</b>	Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway

In fact, among low barriers countries the level of economic context indicators is always higher than average and therefore does not add a relevant dimension to the analysis. Among high barriers countries all countries except Czech Republic<sup>10</sup> and Finland had a level of economic context indicators below average. However, on closer inspection, both of them should rather be considered as average economic context, with values just slightly above the average in mere

<sup>8</sup> Slovakia was originally found to be among countries with low barriers to mobility. However, after a closer look, it was moved to the cluster of high barriers countries because although it has a NQF that is closely aligned with EQF (causing its barriers indicator to decrease), it still has high language barriers.

<sup>9</sup> Latvia was originally found to be among countries with low barriers to mobility. However, a closer inspection showed that the low level of barriers was due to a high proficiency in the foreign language reported as best known in the country, which is mostly Russian – and therefore not particularly relevant to intra-EU mobility.

<sup>10</sup> In addition, despite the low unemployment rate, Czech Republic is a comparatively low-income country, especially in nominal terms, which is not directly used in the cluster for simplicity but might be used qualitatively to re-classify.

quantitative terms. So, they have been grouped together with countries with less favourable socio-economic context and high barriers, as their main feature is the presence of high barriers to labour mobility. Thus, of the original 6 clusters, 4 are retained for the analysis.

## 4.2 Step 2

The second part makes use of the wealth of information included in step 1, especially in the form of the clusters being created to understand the comparative position of countries with respect to push-pull factors as well as barriers to labour mobility.

In particular, the goal of the second part is to try to understand if EURES implementation shows signs of alignment with the trends identified in the labour market, to garner some insights into its relevance and adaptability.

Among the list of relevant indicators identified, we focused on those based on PMS data which are relatively stable based on the Consortium's judgement. Whenever possible, we tried to look also at EURES data collected before the PMS to check if any trends could be discerned.

The selection of indicators includes:

- Individual contacts with workers;
- Individual contacts with employers;
- Job finders.

The main judgement criteria to assess whether EURES implementation is aligned to aggregated labour market needs is to test whether:

- EURES is covering a higher share of mobility where barriers are higher (both incoming and outgoing) and / or offering more support (proxied as number of contacts) to jobseekers and employers in the same areas;
- EURES is covering a higher share of incoming mobility in countries with better than average and/or improving conditions (i.e. mostly low barriers countries with higher than average GDP per capita, lower unemployment, lower vertical mismatch) and a higher share of outgoing mobility from countries with lower than average and/or worsening conditions.

It is important to note that in the analysis in Annex III.b, we base the interpretation of results mostly on these dimensions (barriers to mobility and socio-economic context). However, as we could not include in the analysis data in relation to other factors such as **specific labour shortages by sector** in different countries, it should be kept in mind that other **factors could be at play in determining EURES's relevance**.

Results from this trend analysis can also be triangulated with the opinions of jobseekers/employers in the different clusters of countries to see if any interesting trends appear (e.g. better appraisal of EURES services in countries most in need and with increasing values of EURES output and results).

## 4.3 Step 3

The third part aims to measure the added value of a EURES intervention. This part of the analysis is based on self-reported counterfactual through survey questions directed at EURES participants

– jobseekers and employers (‘counterfactual as self-estimated by program participants’ method<sup>11</sup>, CSEPP).

The hypothetical counterfactual questions were included in the online surveys (see section 6), and ask jobseekers and employers if in the absence of EURES, the same outcome would have been achieved. Outcomes are based on the intervention logic.

- In the **survey to jobseekers**, the following counterfactual question is asked:

**For each type of services that you have used, could you please specify if the same outcome would have been achieved without EURES support?** (select the most appropriate answer for each outcome) *[Only those options will appear that were selected in the previous question]*

	<b>YES, I would have been able to</b>	<b>YES, I would have been able to but not as quickly/ea sily</b>	<b>NO, I would probably not be able to</b>	<b>NO, I definitely would not be able to</b>	<b>I do not know</b>
Find a job abroad					
Find an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad					
Receive work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers in line with your skills					
Receive training					
Obtain access to language courses/ relocation assistance/ other post-recruitment assistance					
Obtain information on living and working conditions (i.e. taxation, work contracts, pension entitlement, health insurance, social security and active labour market measures)					
Obtain information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers					
Other, please specify					

Before this question, a few identification questions relevant to the analysis were included in the survey, to gather information on:

- The labour market status of respondents
- Their level of education

<sup>11</sup> A recently introduced approach, denoted as the “counterfactual as self-estimated by program participants” (CSEPP; Mueller, Gaus, & Rech, 2014; Mueller & Gaus, 2015), capitalizes on people’s ability to think counterfactually (e.g., Roese & Olson, 2014) and builds on the idea that intervention participants are capable of directly estimating their counterfactual scenario, that is, the state they would have been in after an intervention without having participated. In previous studies it was found that CSEPP worked relatively well for assessing the effects of communicative interventions on various types of self-reported attitude and behavioral intention (Mueller, Gaus, & Rech, 2014; Mueller and Gaus, 2015).

- Their country of residence
- The type of support they have received through EURES
- In the **survey to employers**, the following question is asked:

**For each of the types of support you used, could you please specify if the same outcome would have been achieved without EURES support?** (select the most appropriate answer for each outcome) *[Only those options will appear that were selected in the previous question]*

	<b>Yes, we would have been able to</b>	<b>Yes, we would have been able to but not as quickly/easily</b>	<b>No, we would probably not be able to</b>	<b>No, we definitely would not be able to</b>	<b>I do not know</b>
Finding employees from abroad					
Finding apprentices or trainees from abroad					
Having a wider selection of job applications to fill your job vacancies					
Developing integration programmes for new employees from abroad					
Accessing measures such as language training or relocation assistance for newly hired employees and other post-recruitment assistance					
Information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers					
Other, please specify					

Previous identification questions allow to gather information on the country of origin and the type of EURES services used, in addition to the size, geographical scope and NACE sector.

There are some potential biases associated with this method that should be taken into account:

- **Self-estimation bias:** generally, using the difference between current and self-estimated counterfactual ratings of participants as an estimate for the causal intervention effect may be biased because of participants’ over- or under-estimation of the true but non-observable counterfactual. Given that the counterfactual is a scenario in which participants have never actually been, it seems reasonable to assume that there is some deviation between self-estimated and true counterfactuals. This bias, which equals the difference between the true treatment effect on a participant and the treatment effect on the same person estimated by CSEPP, is denoted as self-estimation bias (SEB)<sup>12</sup>
- **Self-selection bias:** those responding to the survey may not be representative of the population of EURES users. It is a problem that very often arises when survey respondents are allowed to decide entirely for themselves whether or not they want to participate in a survey.

<sup>12</sup> Mueller, C. E., Gaus, H., & Rech, J. (2014). The counterfactual self-estimation of program participants: Impact assessment without control groups or pretests. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 35, 8–26.

- **Lack of representativeness:** respondents may represent only some subsets of the population (such as in terms of country, gender, type of EURES activity). This means that we would need to reweigh the respondent sample to account for differential probabilities of selection among subgroups and effects arising from nonresponse and bring the respondent sample data up to the dimension of the study population.

Self-estimation bias is a problem that cannot be overcome within this study, lacking detailed micro-data on mobility flows as clarified during the inception phase with the Commission. Hence this limitation is acknowledged and will be mitigated by triangulating different sources of evidence in the overall design of the study.

In terms of self-selection bias, again answering to the survey could not be made mandatory and it is a limitation to be acknowledged. However, there is no reason to believe that respondents have overstated the difference EURES made to their life, or that the group of those benefitting the most is over-represented, as it is equally likely that people who are particularly (un)happy with the support they received might want to be vocal about it. This is because the survey is anonymous and strategic behaviour would be hard to explain in lack of, for instance, direct financial support being offered through the fund and given the low stake beneficiaries might have in the continuation or discontinuation of the service. In addition, and in order to ensure that the average opinion of the respondent calculated based on survey data is more representative of the actual average opinion of the EURES population, we calculate country-level post-stratification weights<sup>13</sup> to prevent certain countries to be over or underrepresented<sup>14</sup>. This is done for all self-reported counterfactual questions on the added value of each of the services provided by EURES.

In addition to post-stratification weights, ANOVA analysis and post-hoc tests<sup>15</sup> were used to further explore whether statistically significant differences in the opinion of the respondent existed per relevant target group (e.g. by educational attainment, by cluster of country).

Lastly, the correlation between the number of EURES services being offered and the number of jobseekers having found employment thanks to EURES was tested through a set of regressions using a probit model with age, educational attainment and the cluster of country of residence as control factors (categorical variables) and the number of services received as continuous independent variable.

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<sup>13</sup> The weights are calculated on the basis of the ratio between the number of jobseekers/employers registered on the EURES portal and the sample proportion per each Member State. This can help reduce any over(under)representation of a given country in the EU level averages. After discussion with project's partners, the number of jobseekers/employers registered has been identified as the most reliable proxy of the volume of activity within a certain MS. Frequent data gaps for the provision of other EURES services made this choice somewhat inevitable. Additional stratification criteria (e.g. age, educational attainment, sex etc.) were not included directly given no country specific values are available. In any event, differences in the opinion of such sub-categories which could potentially lead to bias have been tested statistically through the analysis of intra and inter group variance (ANOVA analysis).

<sup>14</sup> The population of reference used is the number of jobseekers self-registered on the EURES Portal, as explained in methodology, for all types of support with the exception of support received to receive information on the specific situation of cross-border workers. In the latter case, the population of reference used is the PMS indicator on the number of individual contacts with workers on the topic of cross-border work.

<sup>15</sup> The ANOVA analysis is the analysis of intra and intergroup variance. The post-hoc tests consists of statistical analyses that were specified after the data is processed through the ANOVA. In particular, the pairwise comparisons of estimated marginal means, following the Tukey's HSD (honestly significant difference) test were chosen to test if the differences in the means calculated through the ANOVA procedure were different in statistically significant terms.

## 5 PUBLIC CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The public consultation is part of the data collection tools used to collect key insights to respond to the evaluation questions. The following section provides the questionnaire of the consultation.

### 5.1 Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this public consultation to assess the performance of EURES (European Employment Services). EURES is a network to facilitate the free movement of workers within the EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, and –until the end of 2020- the UK (also referred to as 'EURES countries').

#### Would you like to know more about EURES?

- a. Yes
- b. No

*[The text below will be displayed if the respondent clicks "Yes"]*

The European Union's principle of free movement of workers is considered one of the most important rights of EU citizens. It means that you can move to any EU Member State, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland to look for and take up a job.

The purpose of EURES is to help jobseekers (unemployed or workers) and employers to find the right vacancy/candidate across Europe. This in turn can help fill vacancies in high growth areas or reduce unemployment in poorer areas.

According to the EURES Regulation (<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a311abfd-0857-11e6-b713-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>), EURES offers practical services provided by specialists to jobseekers and employers.

Most EURES services are accessible at the mobility portal: <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/>

The EURES network provides the following services:

1. Matching of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal.
2. Information and guidance and other support services for workers and employers.
3. Access to information on living and working conditions in the EU member states, such as taxation, pensions, health insurance and social security.
4. Specific support services for frontier workers and employers in cross-border regions.
5. Support to specific groups with special actions, such as Your first EURES job, Drop'pin@EURES and Reactivate.
6. Support to dynamic online recruitment events through the European Online Job Days platform (<https://www.europeanjobdays.eu/>).
7. Information on and access to post-recruitment assistance, such as language training and support with integration in the destination country.

**Your first EURES job** (<https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/your-first-eures-job-js>) is a European Union job mobility scheme to help young EU citizens (aged 18-35) to find a job, traineeship or apprenticeship opportunity in another EURES country and to help employers find qualified workforce. It aims to match young jobseekers with remunerated employment offers

across Europe. Placements must have a duration of at least six months (for jobs and apprenticeships) or three months (for traineeships).

**Drop'pin@EURES** (<https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/opportunities>) is another activity allowing companies and organisations to promote and showcase their youth opportunities designed to help young Europeans take their first steps into the labour market

**Reactivate** (<https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/reactivate-js>) helps citizens aged at least 35 to find a job, traineeship or apprenticeship opportunity in another EURES country and to help employers find qualified workforce.

*N.B.: Although some questions do not allow comments or uploading documents, please note that you will be able to do this at the end of the questionnaire.*

## 5.2 Public consultation identification questions

*[All questions in section 1.1., except for number 3 and number 12, are questions that are standard in all EU public consultations. Questions with an asterisk are mandatory for respondents, when applicable.]*

### 5.2.1 About you

#### 1. Language of my contribution\*

- |              |               |               |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| a. Bulgarian | i. French     | q. Maltese    |
| b. Croatian  | j. Irish      | r. Polish     |
| c. Czech     | k. German     | s. Portuguese |
| d. Danish    | l. Greek      | t. Romanian   |
| e. Dutch     | m. Hungarian  | u. Slovak     |
| f. English   | n. Italian    | v. Slovenian  |
| g. Estonian  | o. Latvian    | w. Spanish    |
| h. Finnish   | p. Lithuanian | x. Swedish    |

#### 2. I am giving my contribution as:\*

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| a. Academic/ research institution | g. Non-EU citizen                      |
| b. Business association           | h. Non-governmental organisation (NGO) |
| c. Company/business organisation  | i. Public authority                    |
| d. Consumer organisation          | j. Trade union                         |
| e. EU citizen                     | k. Other                               |
| f. Environmental organisation     |  |

If "Other", please specify:

**3. [This question appears only if 2. a, b, c, d, f, h, i, j, k are selected] For the purposes of assessing EURES, please indicate if you are responding to this consultation as a representative of:\***

- a. A EURES National Coordination Office (NCO), Member, or Partner
- b. A Cross-border partnership (CBP)
- c. A Public Employment Service (PES)
- d. A Private employment agency
- e. Other (please specify)

If "Other", please specify:\*

**4. First name\***

**5. Surname\***

**6. Email (this will not be published)\***

**7. [This question appears only if 2. i is selected] Scope**

- a. International
- b. Local
- c. National
- d. Regional

**8. [This question appears only if 2. a, b, c, d, f, h, i, j, or k are selected] Organisation name\***

255 character(s) maximum

**9. [This question appears only if 2. a, b, c, d, f, h, i, j, or k are selected] Organisation size\***

- a. Micro (1 to 9 number of employees)
- b. Small (10 to 49 number of employees)
- c. Medium (50 to 249 number of employees)
- d. Large (250 or more employees)

**10. [This question appears only if 2. a, b, c, d, f, h, i, j, or k are selected] Transparency register number**

255 character(s) maximum

Check if your organisation is on the [transparency register](#). It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision making.

**11. Country of origin. \***

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

[Full list of countries as per standardised Public Consultation template in EU Survey. Countries not listed to avoid excessive text.]

**12. Country of residence\***

- a. Same as country of origin
- b. Another EURES country (countries from the EU plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, and the UK)
- c. Another country in the world

**Publication privacy settings\***

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

**a. Anonymous**

Only your type of respondent, country of origin and contribution will be published. All other personal details (name, organisation name and size, transparency register number) will not be published.

**b. Public**

Your personal details (name, organisation name and size, transparency register number, country of origin) will be published with your contribution.

**[tick box] I agree with the [personal data protection provisions](#)\***

### 5.2.2 About you: additional identification questions

*[To complement the standard questions, we suggest asking the following questions to obtain further background information about the respondents. This will allow the study to better understand EURES services and who uses them.]*

**13. [This question appears only if 2. e or g are selected] Please indicate your labour market status:\***

- a. Self-employed
- b. Employed but looking for a new job
- c. Employed and not looking for a new job
- d. Unemployed
- e. Student
- f. Trainee or Apprentice
- g. Inactive (i.e. not in employment and not looking for employment)

**14. [This question appears only if 2. e or g are selected] Have you ever worked abroad?\***

- a. Yes, for more than one year in total
- b. Yes, for less than one year in total
- c. No, I have never worked abroad

**15. [This question appears only if 2. a, b, c, d, f, h, i, j, or k are selected] Please specify the sector(s) in which you are active:**

*At most 3 choice(s)*

[List of NACE codes]

### 5.2.3 Views on labour mobility

*[Explanatory text:] The questions in this section will ask you about your views on labour mobility between countries in Europe.*

Freedom of movement for people within the EU is one of the four fundamental freedoms of the European Union (Article 45 of TFEU). This includes the rights of movement and residence for workers, the rights of entry and residence for family members, and the right to work in another Member State and be treated on an equal footing with nationals of that Member State.

**16. In your opinion, are people in your country of origin interested in finding a job in another country?\***

- a. Very interested
- b. Fairly interested
- c. Not interested
- d. I do not know

**17. In your opinion, what are the main reasons for looking for a job in another country?**

*(you may choose multiple options)*

- a. Lack of job opportunities in the country of residence
- b. Better working and salary conditions
- c. Enhancement of job-related skills and competences
- d. Improvement of foreign language skills
- e. Better living conditions
- f. To become familiar with different cultures
- g. Family or social ties in another country
- h. Other

If "Other", please specify\*

**18. In your opinion, why do employers recruit from another country?**

*(you may choose multiple options)*

- a. It is difficult to find local workers with the right skills
- b. Local workers are not interested in the jobs offered
- c. Foreign workers are less expensive
- d. To promote a multilingual and multicultural environment in the company
- e. Other

If "Other", please specify:\*

**19. In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for people to find a job in another country?**

*(you may choose multiple options)*

- a. Difficult to find job vacancies in other countries

- b. Difficult to find information on living and working conditions in other countries
- c. Legal obstacles (e.g. recognition of qualification)
- d. Financial obstacles (e.g. transfer of social security rights, pensions, costs of moving abroad)
- e. Worse work-life balance
- f. Leaving family and friends
- g. Difficult for spouses/partners to find employment
- h. Lack access to affordable housing, childcare or education
- i. Cultural barrier
- j. Language barrier
- k. Fear of discrimination
- l. Other

If "Other", please specify:\*

**20. In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for employers to recruit jobseekers from another country?**

- a. The cost of hiring jobseekers from another country
- b. Difficult to obtain guidance from public/private employment services
- c. Difficult to identify candidates from another country
- d. Legal obstacles (e.g. recognition of qualifications)
- e. High wage expectations from jobseekers
- f. Mismatch of candidates' qualifications and skills, and the vacancy (e.g. level of education)
- g. Language requirements of the organisation
- h. Difficult to integrate workers from other countries into the company
- i. Other

If "Other", please specify:\*

**21. In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for employment services who offer job opportunities across borders?**

*(you may choose multiple options)*

- a. There is a lack of demand from jobseekers to seek employment in another country
- b. There are not enough job vacancies in other countries
- c. It is difficult to obtain information on employment opportunities available in other countries
- d. The pre- and post-placement preparation and support to jobseekers are too challenging, cumbersome or costly
- e. There is a fear of losing human capital and/or brain drain
- f. Other

If "Other", please specify:\*

**22. To what extent do you agree that the free movement of workers has the following effects?\***

	I strongly agree	I somewhat agree	I somewhat disagree	I strongly disagree	I do not know
It contributes to more and better jobs across Europe (e.g. by decreasing unemployment)					
It helps jobseekers to find employment that suits their skills					
It helps employers find workers with the right skills					
It offers businesses a larger pool of candidates to recruit from					
It improves workers' skills and competences					
It improves the quality of job offers					
It enhances businesses' competitiveness and innovation					

Please use this space to add any further comment(s) on the effects of free movement of workers

**23. Do you think that there is a further need to boost labour mobility across European countries?\***

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please specify why

**24. Which of the following target groups do you think should be ideally prioritised in employment initiatives?\***

	1 =to be given high priority	2 = to be given medium priority	3 = to be given low priority	No opinion
Unskilled jobseekers				
Medium or highly qualified jobseekers				
Long-term unemployed				
Cross-border workers (living in one country and working in another)				
Younger workers				
Older workers				
Other				

If "Other", please specify which group(s) you are referring to:\*

Please use this space to add any relevant comment(s) on the target group(s) to be prioritised in employment initiatives

**25. Linked to the previous question, which of the following target groups do you think that EURES should prioritise?\***

	1 =to be given high priority	2 = to be given medium priority	3 = to be given low priority	No opinion
Unskilled jobseekers				
Medium or highly qualified jobseekers				
Long-term unemployed				
Cross-border workers (living in one country and working in another)				
Younger workers				
Older workers				
Other				

If "Other" please specify which group(s) you are referring to:\*

Please use this space to add any further comment(s) concerning the target group(s) to be prioritised by EURES

**26. To what extent do you agree that the following services cover the needs of jobseekers and employers working abroad?\***

	I strongly agree	I somewhat agree	I somewhat disagree	I strongly disagree	I do not know
Provide general support workers and employers in other countries					
Provide targeted support to specific groups (e.g. young/old jobseekers, companies/workers in border areas)					
Match automatically job vacancies and CVs					
Provide information on living and working conditions in other countries					
Organise online recruitment events					
Provide post-recruitment assistance					

Please use this space to add any further comment(s) about the needs of jobseekers and employers in an international context

**5.2.4 Views on the European Employment Services (EURES)**

[Explanatory text:] The following questions will ask specifically about EURES – European Employment Services.

**27. How familiar are you with EURES?\***

- a. Very familiar
- b. Somewhat familiar
- c. I have never heard of EURES

**SKIP LOGIC: Respondents answering 'C' to Q27 will be redirected straight to Section 4. 'A' and 'B' responses will continue to Q28.**

**28. What is your level of interaction with EURES?\***

- a. I visited the EURES portal to get information
- b. I am a registered user of the EURES portal to use its services
- c. I follow EURES on social media
- d. I obtained information and advisory services from relevant Employment Services/EURES staff
- e. I registered one or more job vacancies with EURES
- f. I received assistance to find a vacancy in another country
- g. I attended a job fair / other recruitment event organised by EURES
- h. I received recruitment and/or job matching and/or job placement support
- i. I received support under the Targeted Mobility Schemes (e.g. Your first EURES job, Reactivate)
- j. I received support from the Cross-Border Partnerships
- k. Other

If "Other", please specify:\*

**29. To what extent do you agree with the following statements concerning EURES?\***

	I strongly agree	I agree	I disagree	I strongly disagree	I do not know
EURES provides relevant and modern employment services in line with the needs of European workers and employers					
EURES contributes to the mobility of workers					
EURES offers useful support and information to jobseekers/employers in their search for jobs/candidates					
EURES provides quality information on living and working abroad (such as employment conditions)					
EURES is well known among jobseekers					
EURES is well known among employers					
EURES provides services efficiently (i.e. achieves the best possible results given the resources invested)					
EURES complements other European initiatives on employment and mobility (e.g. European Structural and Investment Funds, Employment and Social Innovation programme) without duplicating them					
EURES complements other national initiatives on employment and mobility without duplicating them					

	I strongly agree	I agree	I disagree	I strongly disagree	I do not know
More can be done with EURES than with national resources only, to promote jobs and mobility					

**30. In your opinion, is there a need to improve EURES and its tools and services in the future?\***

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. No opinion

Please specify:

**31. Please feel free to add anything else about your experience with EURES.**

*3000 character(s) maximum*

*5.2.5 Concluding questions*

**32. You may share any additional remarks or statement(s) regarding the topic of this public consultation.**

*NB: Remember to remove any personal information from these documents in case you have opted for publication of your contributions in an anonymised way.*

*3000 character(s) maximum*

**33. You may upload any position paper(s) or other document(s) regarding the topic of this public consultation here.**

*NB: Remember to remove any personal information from these documents. In case you have opted for publication of your contributions in an anonymised way.*

**34. Would you like that we contact you through the email you provided in the introduction to participate in a more detailed online survey about EURES?\***

- a. Yes
- b. No

## 6 SURVEYS

The online surveys aim at gathering key stakeholders' views on EURES on specific evaluation questions. The surveys target National Coordination Offices (NCOs), jobseekers, employers and EURES Members and Partners, and are provided in the following sections.

### 6.1 EURES biennial and evaluation survey for National Coordination

#### Offices

*[Questions marked with '\*' are compulsory]*

##### 6.1.1 Introduction

This is a specific survey only for National Coordination Offices (NCOs). This survey consists of two parts, the first part will feed the biannual EURES Activity Report for 2018 – 2020 while the second part focuses on gathering feedback for the evaluation of EURES.

If needed, you can access [the Regulation here](#).

**IMPORTANT:** We are aware that the EURES activities, projects, products and results in your country have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for the purposes of our evaluation, we would kindly ask you **to reflect only on the situation before the outbreak of the pandemic** when answering the questions of this survey, **unless the question specifies otherwise**. Thank you for your cooperation.

**NOTE:** As your responses will feed both the biannual EURES Activity Report 2018-2020 and the evaluation of EURES, the questionnaire is quite lengthy. We would suggest you first consult the pdf preview of the survey [here](#) in order to familiarise yourself with the topics and questions. Throughout the survey, you will be able to save your progress should you wish to return to filling in the survey at a later date.

If you experience any technical issues with the survey or have any additional enquiries, please email [eures@vva.it](mailto:eures@vva.it).

**Please tell us the country in which your NCO is based\***

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> Austria        | k. <input type="checkbox"/> Germany       | u. <input type="checkbox"/> Malta       |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> Belgium        | l. <input type="checkbox"/> Greece        | v. <input type="checkbox"/> Netherlands |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> Bulgaria       | m. <input type="checkbox"/> Hungary       | w. <input type="checkbox"/> Norway      |
| d. <input type="checkbox"/> Croatia        | n. <input type="checkbox"/> Iceland       | x. <input type="checkbox"/> Poland      |
| e. <input type="checkbox"/> Cyprus         | o. <input type="checkbox"/> Ireland       | y. <input type="checkbox"/> Portugal    |
| f. <input type="checkbox"/> Czech Republic | p. <input type="checkbox"/> Italy         | z. <input type="checkbox"/> Romania     |
| g. <input type="checkbox"/> Denmark        | q. <input type="checkbox"/> Latvia        | aa. <input type="checkbox"/> Slovakia   |
| h. <input type="checkbox"/> Estonia        | r. <input type="checkbox"/> Liechtenstein | bb. <input type="checkbox"/> Slovenia   |
| i. <input type="checkbox"/> Finland        | s. <input type="checkbox"/> Lithuania     | cc. <input type="checkbox"/> Spain      |
| j. <input type="checkbox"/> France         | t. <input type="checkbox"/> Luxembourg    | dd. <input type="checkbox"/> Sweden     |

ee. ( ) Switzerland

ff. ( ) United Kingdom

### 6.1.2 Part 1: Biennial survey of EURES

*EURES activities in your country*

**1. What were the main trends and developments in EURES activity in your country since July 2018?**

*ECO already has much detailed information available regarding EURES activities that take place in your country from the work programmes and activity reports, and data from the Performance Measurement System (PMS). However, it would be most helpful if you could briefly indicate the main trends and developments that **you consider** to have been important in relation to the **EURES activity** in your country during the reference period (**1 July 2018 – 30 June 2020**). Please list them in the form of bullet points.*

**2. Please list important changes in network composition, policies, tools or service delivery, resulting directly from the introduction of the EURES Regulation.**

*Please list them in the form of bullet points. Where appropriate, refer to or annex sources or information you consider relevant (for instance national reports from or about the PES).*

**3. Please mention any projects, products or results that you consider best practices:**

*Please identify the practice(s) and indicate where or how to find out more detailed information.*

*Horizontal support activities by ECO*

**1. What were the main developments in the horizontal support activities of ECO since July 2018 and their impact on your work?**

*Application of the Regulation in your country*

**1. Progress identified and issues encountered per topic**

*The list of actions to apply the Regulation at Member State level can be summarised under the following topics:*

- a. Composition of the network and organisational matters (Articles 7, 9 (1), 10, 12, 13, 14, 21(2) 36, 37, and 40);*
- b. Governance and interaction with organisations outside the EURES network (Articles 9 (7), 14 and 16);*
- c. Broadening the network (Articles 11 – 12, Annex I and 40, last sentence);*
- d. Data exchange mechanisms, visibility & access to tools and interoperability (Articles 17 – 19);*
- e. Support services (Articles 4, 10, 20, 21(1), 22 to 28);*
- f. Information exchange, programming and performance measurement (Articles 29 – 30 – 31 – 32).*

*Based on the detailed information provided above, the following qualitative questions are intended to provide an overview on the progress made **since July 2018** in relation to the six areas of activity and enable ECO to compare experiences and difficulties of the NCOs in complying with the actions foreseen under the Regulation.*

**1.1. Topic (a): Composition of the network and organisational matters**

1.1.1. Have there been any changes in the composition of the national network outside the introduction of admission system?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If 1.1.1 – “yes”

1.1.2. Please elaborate these changes:

**1.2. Topic (b): Governance and interaction with organisations outside the EURES network**

1.2.1. What progress has been made to inform stakeholders about the Regulation and possible cooperation within the EURES network?

1.2.2. What are the main challenges in interacting with organisations outside of the EURES network?

**1.3.Topic (c): Broadening the network**

*The EURES Regulation, and dedicated Implementing Decision, clarify the operationalization of opening the EURES network for new public/private Members and Partners. Descriptions of the national admission systems are available. In relation to the articles in the Regulation and this act, we would like to understand your progress in broadening the EURES network in general.*

1.3.1. How far have you progressed in the following aspects of broadening the network?

	Not started	Started	Half-way	Nearly complete	Complete
Setting up an admission system					
Identifying responsible actors in the system					
Setting up a system to monitor compliance of EURES Members / Partners					

1.3.2. Have you admitted new Members and Partner yet?

- a. Yes
- b. No

When 1.3.2 – “No”:

1.3.3. When do you expect to have the first new Members and Partners admitted?

**1.4.Topic (d): Data exchange mechanisms, visibility & access to tools and interoperability**

*With regard to actions undertaken by the NCOs to implement the data exchange mechanisms, improve the visibility of EURES, facilitate access to tools and ensure interoperability, a lot of information is gathered under the different projects and tasks with the interoperability contact points. The questions below are more general and should complement the data already available.*

1.4.1. Have you set up a system to transfer JV/CVs/apprenticeships and traineeship offers to the EURES portal via the single coordinated channel?

- a. Started
- b. Half-way
- c. Nearly completed
- d. Completed

If 1.4.1 – “Started”, “Half-way”, “Nearly completed”

1.4.2. What is the indicated timeframe for setting up the system?

1.4.3. What were / are the main facilitating and hindering factors in setting up the system?

1.4.4. What are the actions taken in the period since July 2018 to allow for automated matching, using interoperable classification systems or ESCO?

**1.5. Topic (e): Support services**

1.5.1. Please list any challenges regarding the access to the EURES portal for clients of PES and other EURES Members and Partners:

**1.6. Topic (f): Information exchange, programming and performance measurement**

1.6.1. What progress has been made in identifying and coordinating all the parties involved in the information exchange?

1.6.2. Are you currently collecting and sharing information on the following topics:

	Yes	No
Discrepancies between the number of JV at national level and the number transferred to EURES		
Labour shortages and surpluses on national and sectoral labour markets		
Labour market information, contributing to a joint analysis for EURES and the preparation of the programming		
Data related to functioning of EURES		

1.6.3. Have you experienced obstacles in providing, sharing or analysing data related to information exchange, programming or performance measurement?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If 1.6.3 – “Yes”:

1.6.4. Please elaborate these obstacles:

## 1. Interaction of the Regulation with the broader national context

*This section of the survey explains how the Regulation was applied at the national level and aims to collect information on the actions carried out to ensure alignment from a legal, administrative and political perspective. In addition, it looks at how you, as a National Coordination Office, have interacted with relevant organisations in communicating about the process and actual implementation of the Regulation.*

### 1.1. Application at national level

*Regulation 2016/589 was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 22 April 2016 and entered into force on 12 May 2016, 20 days after its publication. This entails the direct applicability of the Regulation in all Member States as of 12 May 2016. As a Regulation is directly binding for the Member States, it supersedes national laws incompatible with their substantive provisions.*

1.1.1. Have there been changes in national/regional legislation proposed/adopted to fulfil the obligations of the EURES Regulation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If 1.1.1 – “Yes”:

1.1.2. Please elaborate these changes:

1.1.3. Were administrative actions undertaken at national level to ensure strategic alignment with the EURES Regulation?

*For instance, changes in NCO’s organizational set-up, changes in staff allocation, additional budget assigned to the NCO.*

- a. Yes
- b. No

If 1.1.3 – “Yes”:

1.1.4. Please elaborate these changes:

1.1.5. Were there political initiatives at national level to ensure alignment with the EURES Regulation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If 1.1.5 – “Yes”:

1.1.6. Please elaborate the type of initiatives:

1.1.7. Have strategic meetings within the Public Employment Services and/or Ministries taken place since the introduction of the EURES Regulation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If 1.1.7 – “Yes”:

1.1.8. Have these meetings taken place after July 2018?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If 1.1.8 – “Yes”

1.1.9. Please elaborate the objective of these meetings:

If 1.1.8 – “No”

1.1.10. Please elaborate why no further meetings took place:

1.1.11. Have there been any changes to align national strategies/action plans on labour mobility with the EURES Regulation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If 1.1.11 – “Yes”:

1.1.12. Please elaborate these changes:

1.2. Further actions at national level in relation to the Regulation

*Relevant organisations include the Public Employment Services in your Member State, EURES Members and Partners, other governmental institutions related to labour mobility, social partners, European networks and services, private employment services, etc.*

1.2.1. How would you describe the communication activities towards other organisations since 2016?

- a. We have been organising communication activities since the adoption of the Regulation in 2016 and keep on doing so.
- b. We organised some communication activities before July 2018, but do not do so anymore.
- c. We have started organising communication activities only after July 2018.
- d. We have not yet done much in terms of communication activities.

If 1.2.1 – “We have organised some communication activities before July 2018, but do not do so anymore”:

1.2.2. Please elaborate why you have stopped organising communication activities:

If 1.2.1 – “We have started organising communication activities only after July 2018”:

1.2.3. Please elaborate the types of activities you have been organising:

1.2.4. Please mention any challenges you have encountered in communicating about the EURES Regulation that you consider relevant:

**2. Changes resulting from the Regulation implementation and their effects since July 2018**

The last question under section III, focusing on the implementation of the Regulation in your country, tries to capture your assessment of any new changes resulting from the implementation since July 2018.

2.1. What changes were brought in your country by the EURES Regulation since July 2018?

2.2. What was the effect of these changes?

*Activities by the European Commission to implement the Regulation*

**1. Which actions of the European Commission helped the most in the implementation of the EURES Regulation?**

**2. To what extent are you satisfied with...**

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied not dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
...the guidance given by the European Commission on how to apply the provisions of the Regulation?					
...the organisation of meetings and working groups supporting the application of the Regulation?					
...the interaction with the implementing acts?					

**3. Are any activities from the European Commission missing?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

When 3 – “Yes”

**4. Please elaborate which activities:**

*Recommendations for Member States for the future*

**1. Do you have any particular observations or recommendations regarding future EURES activities at national level?**

*Actions to be taken forward by the European Commission*

**1. Do you have any particular observations or suggestions for EURES actions to be taken forward by the European Commission?**

*6.1.3 Part 2: Evaluation of EURES*

This section aims to understand to what extent the objectives and actions implemented under the Regulation have been relevant, effective, efficient, and coherent. It also aims to gather information about the added value produced by EURES objectives and actions from a European perspective.

*Relevance*

**1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements concerning the appropriateness of EURES to respond to the needs of the labour market?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Comment
The objectives of the Regulation are in line with the needs and problems of intra-EU labour mobility					
EURES objectives and tools have been responsive to labour market changes					
EURES is keeping pace with the latest technology developments in the area of recruitment and job seeking activities					
EURES targets the right audiences to achieve its objectives					

**2. What are the barriers and challenges regarding intra-EURES labour mobility? Is EURES contributing to addressing these barriers and challenges?**

*(Maximum 2000 characters)**Effectiveness***3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements concerning the appropriateness of EURES to respond to the needs of the labour market?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Comment
EURES contributes to promoting and increasing the mobility of workers					
EURES contributes to labour market transparency by ensuring that job vacancies, applications, and any related information are available for potential applicants and employers					
EURES contributes to meeting the social and employment objectives of the EU					
EURES contributes to raising awareness on intra-EURES labour mobility matters					
EURES promotion and communication actions help make EURES widely known among jobseekers and employers					
The current EURES organisational set-up is appropriate to meet current labour market needs					
The EURES tools have been effective in matching labour supply and demand across Europe					
EURES mobility schemes have effectively contributed to the EURES objectives					
Labour market participants are aware of EURES services and tools					
EURES Portal contains relevant, complete and up-to-date information including on living and working conditions and inventories of classifications (ESCO)					
EURES facilitates information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses which contributes to better labour market integration across EURES countries					
EURES actions are sustainable in the long-term					

**4. Which of the following EURES services are most effective? Please arrange the following options from the most effective to the least one (1 = most effective, 7 = least effective)**

	Ranking
Matching of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal	
Information and guidance and other support services for workers and employers	
Access to information on living and working conditions in EURES countries, such as taxation, pensions, health insurance and social security	
Specific support services for frontier workers and employers in cross-border regions	
Support to specific groups in the context of EURES targeted job mobility schemes, such as Your first EURES job and Reactivate	
Support to dynamic recruitment events through the European (Online) Job Days platform	
Information on and access to post-recruitment assistance, such as language training and support with integration in the destination country	

**5. Are there any services that you think of that are missing from the currently offered EURES services?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. No opinion

Comments:

*Efficiency*

**6. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The costs of EURES services and tools are justified by their results				
The EURES tools allow systematic matching of vacancies with job seekers				
The administrative burden has diminished compared to the previous Regulation				

**7. Is there a scope for more efficient use for EURES resources?**

- a. Yes

- b. No
- c. I do not know

Comments:

*We are currently carrying out a Cost Effectiveness Analysis of the EURES activities, in which we compare the data from the years 2016 to 2019. To complete our analysis, we would kindly ask you to fill in the questions below as accurately as possible. Please note that the data will be used to calculate the efficiency of EURES activities and will not be published.*

**8. Please provide your country’s full EURES budget in EUR (including all activities conducted, salaries of NCO staff and advisors and all other expenses) for the following years:**

*Note: If you are unable to provide exact amounts, we would appreciate if you could provide us with estimations. If for a specific year, you are not able to provide the exact budget nor an estimation, please enter '0'.\**

<b>2016</b>	
<b>2017</b>	
<b>2018</b>	
<b>2019</b>	

Comments:

**9. What percentage of your annual budget is spent on the following activities? (Please estimate in % of the share of overall budget)\***

Matching and recruitment activities	
Information, guidance to workers and employers (including information on living and working conditions in EURES countries)	
Support to frontier workers and employers in cross-border regions	
Support to specific groups in the context of EURES Targeted Mobility Schemes such as Your first EURES job or Reactivate	
Post-recruitment assistance (such as language training and integration support):	
Staff costs (including salaries and training)	
IT development and maintenance	

Comments:

**10. Which of the following EURES services are most effective? Please arrange the following options from the most effective to the least one (1= most effective, 5 = least effective)**

Matching and recruitment activities:	
Information, guidance to workers and employers (including information on living and working conditions in EURES countries)	
Support to frontier workers and employers in cross-border regions	
Support to specific groups in the context of EURES Targeted Mobility Schemes such as Your first EURES job or Reactivate	

Support to specific groups in the context of EURES Targeted Mobility Schemes such as Your first EURES job or Reactivate	
Post-recruitment assistance (such as language training and integration support)	

*Coherence*

**11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Comment
EURES Regulation is complementary with other EU policy measures/initiatives (e.g. Europass, Digital single gateway, etc.)					
EURES Regulation is complementary with other policy initiatives at national level					
The EURES tools are complementary with each other					
The EURES tools are overlapping with other EU/national level policy measures/initiatives					

**12. Does your national EURES network participate in Targeted Mobility Schemes (e.g. Your first EURES job, Reactivate, Targeted Mobility Scheme)?\***

- a. Yes
- b. No

*[If "Yes"]* **Do the target groups of these schemes align with EURES target groups?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

*EU added value*

**13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Comment
The EURES services and tools have produced types of effects that would not have taken place without EU intervention					

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Comment
The EURES services and tools have produced more significant effects than those obtained through bilateral or multilateral cooperation between Member States in this field					
EURES tools reached groups which would not have been supported otherwise					

*EURES Portal, reporting and results*

**14. How would you assess the degree of availability of job vacancies on the EURES portal?**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Neither good nor bad
- d. Bad
- e. Very bad

**15. What percentage of all available job vacancies in your country you are able to transfer through the Single Coordinated Channel? Please provide an estimate.\***

**16. Are you able to report under the Performance Measurement System (PMS) every placement supported by your national EURES network?\***

- a. Yes
- b. No

Comments:

**[If "No"] What percentage of all placements you are able to account for? Please provide an estimate.\***

---

Comments:

**17. Are you able to report under the PMS every contact with workers and employers made by your national EURES network?\***

- a. Yes
- b. No

Comments:

*[If "No"]* **What percentage of all contacts are you able to account for? Please provide an estimate.\***

Comments:

**18. Is the time you spend on reporting on EURES activities proportional to the effects the activities achieved?**

- a. Yes, completely
- b. Partially
- c. No

Comments:

*Cooperation within EURES*

**19. How would you rate your relationship with ECO?**

- a. Very good
- b. Good but there is room for improvement
- c. Bad
- d. Very bad

Comments:

**20. Do you coordinate your actions with other national EURES networks?\***

- a. Yes
- b. No

Comments:

*[If "Yes"]* **What benefits/challenges/barriers have you observed within this cooperation?**

**21. What are the main challenges in further deepening cooperation within and outside your national EURES network?**

*Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic*

**22. To which extent do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021?**

- a. International labour mobility will remain the same as it was before the crisis
- b. International labour mobility will decrease
- c. International labour mobility will increase
- d. I do not know

Comments:

*Concluding questions*

**23. Is there anything about EURES that needs improvement?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. No opinion

Comments:

**24. Is there anything else you would like to mention in relation to EURES?**

*(Maximum 3000 characters)*

**25. Are there any documents you wish to be considered for the evaluation of EURES?**

*(Maximum 10 documents)*

Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us.

## 6.2 EURES evaluation survey for Jobseekers

*[Questions marked with '\*' are compulsory]*

### 6.2.1 Introduction

Dear participant,

Particularly in this difficult period, your opinion is essential to shape the EURES network and make it even more effective in helping those looking for a job. We invite you to participate in this study, since you are familiar with EURES services from the perspective of a jobseeker (for example, you have received information about working conditions in another country or you have found a job with the help of EURES). If this is not the case, you can go back to the [EURES evaluation webpage](#) where you can select the most appropriate survey for you, including the [public consultation on EURES](#).

Your answers will be treated in an aggregated form in line with the [EU data protection rules](#).

Thank you in advance for taking the time to respond to this survey. It should not take more than 15 minutes.

IMPORTANT: We are aware that the EURES activities, projects, products and results in your country have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for the purposes of our evaluation, we would kindly ask you to reflect only on the situation before the outbreak of the pandemic when answering the questions of this survey, unless the question specifies otherwise. Thank you for your cooperation.

If you wish to consult a pdf version of the survey, please click [here](#).

Before proceeding to the survey, please take time to read [our privacy statement](#).

Please indicate that you have read and agree to the privacy statement above.\*

I agree to the privacy statement

### 6.2.2 Identification questions

#### 1. Please indicate your current labour market status\*

- a. Self-employed
- b. Employed but looking for a new job
- c. Employed and not looking for a new job
- d. Unemployed
- e. Student
- f. Trainee
- g. Apprentice
- h. Inactive (i.e. not in employment and not looking for employment)

**2. What age group do you belong to\*:**

- a. Younger than 18
- b. 18-29
- c. 30-39
- d. 40-49
- e. 50-59
- f. 60 or older

**3. What is your gender?**

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Other

**4. What level of education do you have? \***

- a. Primary school
- b. Secondary school: a high school diploma or equivalent
- c. Vocational education and training
- d. Bachelor's degree or equivalent
- e. Master's degree or equivalent
- f. PhD degree or equivalent

**5. What is your country of residence?\***

- |                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Austria         | x. Poland                  |
| b. Belgium         | y. Portugal                |
| c. Bulgaria        | z. Romania                 |
| d. Croatia         | aa. Slovakia               |
| e. Cyprus          | bb. Slovenia               |
| f. Czech Republic  | cc. Spain                  |
| g. Denmark         | dd. Sweden                 |
| h. Estonia         | ee. Switzerland            |
| i. Finland         | ff. United Kingdom         |
| j. France          | gg. Other*, please specify |
| k. Germany         |                            |
| l. Greece          |                            |
| m. Hungary         |                            |
| n. Iceland         |                            |
| o. Ireland         |                            |
| p. Italy           |                            |
| q. Latvia          |                            |
| r. Liechtenstein   |                            |
| s. Lithuania       |                            |
| t. Luxembourg      |                            |
| u. Malta           |                            |
| v. The Netherlands |                            |
| w. Norway          |                            |

**6. What is your country of origin?**

- a. Same as country of residence
- b. Another European country
- c. Another country in the world

**7. Have you ever worked abroad?**

- a. Yes, for more than one year in total
- b. Yes, for less than one year in total
- c. No, I have never worked abroad

**8. Do you live in a border area? (An area that extends no more than 30 kilometres from the border)?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**9. How have you interacted with EURES?\* (Please select all that apply)**

- a. I obtained information and advisory services from EURES staff
- b. I received assistance to find a vacancy in another country
- c. I received recruitment support
- d. I visited the EURES portal to get information
- e. I am a registered user of the EURES portal
- f. I attended a job fair / other recruitment event organised by EURES
- g. I received support under the Targeted Mobility Schemes (e.g. Your first EURES job, Reactivate)
- h. I received support from the Cross-Border Partnerships

*6.2.3 Questions on EURES Services*

*[This section will only appear to those who selected options a, b, or c in Q9.]*

*In this part, we would like to ask for your opinion on the EURES services you have received. You can find more information about EURES services here. [ link to [https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/what-can-eures-do-for-you-?lang=en&app=0.16.1p3-build-0&pageCode=about\\_eures](https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/what-can-eures-do-for-you-?lang=en&app=0.16.1p3-build-0&pageCode=about_eures)]*

**10. Which EURES services have you used?\* (Please select all that apply)**

- a. Information and guidance on finding a job abroad
- b. Information and guidance on finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad
- c. A selection of work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers that were in line with your skills
- d. Training to prepare your move
- e. Post-recruitment assistance (e.g. relocation assistance, language courses in the destination country)
- f. Information on living and working conditions abroad (i.e. taxation, work contracts, pension entitlement, health insurance, social security and active labour market measures)

- g. Information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers
- h. Other\*, please specify

**11. For each type of services that you have used, could you please specify if the same outcome would have been achieved without EURES support?**

(Please select the most appropriate answer for each outcome) *[Only those options will appear that were selected in the previous question]*

	YES, I would have been able to	YES, I would have been able to but not as quickly/easily	NO, I would probably not be able to	NO, I definitely would not be able to	I do not know
Find a job abroad					
Find an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad					
Receive work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers in line with your skills					
Training to prepare your move					
Post-recruitment assistance (e.g. relocation assistance, language courses in the destination country)					
Obtain information on living and working conditions abroad					
Obtain information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers					
Other					

**12. Have you found a job, an apprenticeship or a traineeship abroad thanks to EURES?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**13. How satisfied were you with the EURES services you have received?** *[Only those options will appear that were selected in Q10]*

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Comment
Information and guidance in finding a job abroad					
Information and guidance in finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad					
Work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers					
Training to prepare your move					

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Comment
Post-recruitment assistance (e.g. relocation assistance, language courses in the destination country)					
Information on living and working conditions abroad					
Information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers					
Other					

**14. What were the main reasons you used EURES services? (You may choose multiple options)**

- a. Lack of job opportunities in the country of residence
- b. Better working and salary conditions in another country
- c. Enhancement of job-related skills and competences
- d. Interest in improving foreign language skills
- e. Better living conditions in another country
- f. Other\*, please specify

**15. How can the EURES services be improved?**

*(Maximum 500 characters)*

*6.2.4 Questions on the EURES Portal*

*[This section will appear to those who selected options d or e in Q9.]*

*In this part, we would like you to provide your opinion on the EURES Portal. [link to EURES portal]*

**16. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the EURES portal:\***

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Comment
EURES portal has increased employment opportunities of jobseekers across European countries						
EURES portal is useful						
The information provided is easy to understand						
The information provided is up-to-date						
The information provided is of good quality						
EURES portal is easy to navigate						

**17.[If Q9 e) registered user] How would you assess the EURES portal registration process?**

- a. Very easy
- b. Fairly easy
- c. Fairly difficult
- d. Very difficult
- e. I cannot assess

**18.[If Q9 e) registered user] Do you use the EURES portal’s matching function?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**19.[If yes in Q18] Do you agree with the following statements about the EURES portal’s matching function:**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Comment
The matching is useful					
The matching is easy to use					
The results of matching are of good quality					
The results match my skills					

**20. Is there anything that you think could be improved on the EURES portal?**

- a. Yes, please explain
- b. No
- c. I cannot assess

*6.2.5 Questions on EURES Initiatives*

*[This section will appear to those who selected options f, g or h in Q9.]*

*In this part, we would like to ask for your opinion on the EURES initiatives in which you have participated.*

**21. Which of the following you have participated in? (Please select all that apply)**

- a. Targeted Mobility Scheme
- b. Your first EURES job
- c. Reactivate
- d. Cross-Border Partnership
- e. European (Online) Job Day
- f. Other information event organised by EURES
- g. Other recruitment event organised by EURES
- h. Other\*, please specify

**22. How would you evaluate the initiative?** *[Only those options that were selected in the previous question would appear]*

	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not really useful	Not useful at all	Comment
Targeted Mobility Scheme					
Your first EURES job					
Reactivate					
Cross-Border Partnership					
European (Online) Job Days					
Other information event organised by EURES					
Other recruitment event organised by EURES					
Other					

**23. Do you think these initiatives are visible enough?** *[Only those options that were selected in Q21 would appear]*

	Yes	No	I cannot assess
Targeted Mobility Scheme			
Your first EURES job			
Reactivate			
Cross-Border Partnership			
European (Online) Job Days			
Other information event organised by EURES			
Other recruitment event organised by EURES			
Other			

**24. Is there any other initiative that you think EURES should develop/offer?**

- a. Yes, please specify
- b. No
- c. Cannot say

### 6.2.6 Questions on the Visibility of EURES

**25. Where did you first learn about EURES?\***

- a. Public Employment Office
- b. Private Employment Service
- c. European Union Website
- d. Online social media
- e. Internet search engine search
- f. Other media (e.g. TV, radio, press etc.)
- g. Recruitment event/job fair/workshop
- h. Academic institution
- i. Student association

- j. Trade Union
- k. Friends/acquaintances
- l. Other\*, please specify

**26. Do you follow EURES on social media?**

- a. Yes, I follow the national EURES accounts
- b. Yes, I follow the European EURES accounts
- c. Yes, I follow both national and European accounts
- d. No

**27.[If yes in Q26 c] Have you come across any discrepancies between the information provided in the national and European EURES accounts?**

- a. Yes, please specify
- b. No

**28. Do you think it is easy to find information about EURES and the services it provides?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

*6.2.7 Questions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemics*

**29. How do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021?**

- a. International labour mobility will remain the same as it was before the crisis
- b. International labour mobility will decrease
- c. International labour mobility will increase
- d. I do not know

*6.2.8 Concluding questions*

**30. How satisfied are you with EURES and its services?\***

- a. Very satisfied
- b. Satisfied
- c. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- d. Dissatisfied
- e. Very dissatisfied
- f. I cannot assess

**31. Would you recommend EURES to other jobseekers?\***

- a. Yes
- b. No, please specify
- c. I cannot assess

**32. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with the EURES network? (max 1000 characters)**

- a. Yes, please specify
- b. No

### **6.3 EURES evaluation survey for Employers**

*[Questions marked with '\*' are compulsory]*

#### *6.3.1 Introduction*

Dear employer,

Particularly in this difficult period, your opinion is essential to shape the EURES network and make it even more effective in helping those recruiting workers. You are being targeted by this survey since we would like to benefit from your experience and knowledge as an employer who, as a EURES user, is familiar with EURES services and/or has also benefitted from them (for example, EURES staff matched you with potential candidates). If this is not the case, you can go back to the [EURES evaluation webpage](#), where you can select the most appropriate survey for you, including the [public consultation on EURES and the effects of the EURES Regulation](#).

Your answers will be treated in an aggregate form in line with the [EU data protection rules](#).

Thank you in advance for taking the time to respond to this survey. It should not take more than 15 minutes.

**IMPORTANT:** We are aware that the EURES activities, projects, products and results in your country have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for the nature of our evaluation, we would kindly ask you to reflect only on the situation before the outbreak of the pandemic when answering the questions of this survey, unless the question specifies otherwise. Thank you for your cooperation.

If you wish to consult a pdf preview of the survey, please click [here](#).

#### *6.3.2 Introductory questions*

**1. What is the size of your organisation?\***

- a. Micro (1 to 9 number of employees)
- b. Small (10 to 49 number of employees)
- c. Medium (50 to 249 number of employees)
- d. Large (250 or more employees)

**2. Country** *Please choose the country, in which your organisation is located.*

*[List of EURES countries + Other option [if selected, respondent needs to specify country]*

**3. Please specify the sector your organisation is active in:\***

List of NACE codes

**4. Please specify the geographical scope of your operations:\***

- a. International
- b. National
- c. Regional
- d. Local

**5. Is your office located in a border area? (A border area is an area that extends no more than 30 kilometres from the border)**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**6. How have you interacted with EURES?\* (Please select all that apply)**

- a. I obtained information and advisory services from the EURES staff
- b. I received assistance to find an employee from another country
- c. EURES helped me with recruitment and/ or with vacancy matching
- d. I visited the EURES portal to get information
- e. I am a registered user of the EURES portal
- f. I attended a job fair / other recruitment event organised by EURES
- g. I received support under the Targeted Mobility Schemes (e.g. Your first EURES job, Reactivate)
- h. I received support from the Cross-Border Partnerships

*6.3.3 Questions on EURES Services*

*[This section will only appear to those who selected options a, b, or c in Q6.]*

In this part, we would like to ask for your opinion on the EURES services that you benefited from. You can find more information about the EURES services here. [ link to [https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/what-can-eures-do-for-you-?lang=en&app=0.16.1p3-build-0&pageCode=about\\_eures](https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/what-can-eures-do-for-you-?lang=en&app=0.16.1p3-build-0&pageCode=about_eures)]

**7. Which EURES services have you used?\* (Please select all that apply)**

- a. Information and guidance in finding employees from abroad
- b. Information and guidance in finding apprentices or trainees from abroad
- c. A selection of job applications to fill your job vacancies
- d. Support in developing integration programmes for employees from abroad
- e. Post-recruitment assistance (e.g. relocation assistance or language courses for new employees)
- f. Information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers
- g. Other, please specify\*

**8. Do you think you would have achieved the same outcome without EURES support?**  
 (select the most appropriate answer for each outcome) *[Only those options will appear that were selected in the previous question]*

	Yes	Yes, but not as quickly/easily	No, probably not	No, definitely not	I do not know
Finding employees from abroad					
Finding apprentices or trainees from abroad					
Having a wider selection of job applications to fill your job vacancies					
Developing integration programmes for new employees from abroad					
Post-recruitment assistance to the employees (e.g. relocation assistance, language courses in your country)					
Information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers					
Other					

**9. How satisfied were you with the services you have received?** *[Only those options will appear that were selected in Q7]*

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Comment
Information and guidance in finding employees from abroad					
Information and guidance in finding apprentices or trainees from abroad					
Selection of job applications to fill your job vacancies					
Integration support for new employees from abroad					
Post-recruitment assistance to the new employees (e.g. relocation assistance, language courses in your country)					
Information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers					
Other					

**10. How many employees have you recruited from another country with the help of EURES?**

**11. Do you feel that EURES services complement each other?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**12. How can the EURES services can be improved?**

*(Maximum 500 characters)*

*6.3.4 Questions on the EURES Portal*

*[This section will appear to those who selected options d or e in Q6.]*

In this part, we would like you to provide your opinion on the EURES Portal. [link to EURES portal]

**13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the EURES portal:\***

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Comment
EURES portal has increased employment opportunities of jobseekers across European countries						
EURES portal is useful						
The information provided is easy to understand						
The information provided is up-to-date						
The information provided is of good quality						
EURES portal is easy to navigate						

**14.[If Q6e registered user] How would you assess the EURES portal registration process?**

- a. Very easy
- b. Fairly easy
- c. Fairly difficult
- d. Very difficult
- e. I cannot assess

**15. Is there anything that you think that could be improved on the EURES portal?**

- a. Yes, please explain
- b. No
- c. I cannot assess

**16.[If Q6d] Are you considering registering on the EURES portal?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**6.3.5 Questions on EURES Initiatives**

*[This section will appear to those who selected options f, g or h in Q6.]*

*In this part, we would like to ask for your opinion on the EURES initiatives in which you have participated.*

**17. Which of the following you have participated in? (Please select all that apply)**

- a. Targeted Mobility Scheme
- b. Your first EURES job
- c. Reactivate
- d. Cross-Border Partnership
- e. European (Online) Job Day
- f. Other information event organised by EURES
- g. Other recruitment event organised by EURES
- h. Other, please specify\*

**18. How would you evaluate the initiative? [Only those options appear that were selected in the previous question]**

	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not really useful	Not useful at all	Not applicable
Targeted Mobility Scheme					
Your first EURES job					
Reactivate					
Cross-Border Partnership					
European (Online) Job Day					
Other information event organised by EURES					
Other recruitment event organised by EURES					
Other					

**19. Do you think these initiatives are visible/promoted enough? [Only those options appear that were selected Q17]**

	Yes	No	I cannot assess
Targeted Mobility Scheme			
Your first EURES job			
Reactivate			

Cross-Border Partnership			
European (Online) Job Day			
Other information event organised by EURES			
Other recruitment event organised by EURES			
Other			

**20. Are there any other initiative that you think EURES should develop/offer?**

- a. Yes, please specify
- b. No
- c. I cannot assess

*6.3.6 Questions on the Visibility of EURES*

**21. Where did you first learn about EURES?\***

- a. National Public Employment Office
- b. Private Employment Service
- c. European Union Website
- d. Online social media
- e. Other media (e.g. TV, radio, press etc.)
- f. Internet search engine search
- g. Recruitment event/job fair/workshop
- h. Academic institution
- i. Student association
- j. Trade Union
- k. Friends/acquaintances
- l. Other, please specify\*

**22. Do you follow EURES on social media?**

- a. Yes, I follow the national EURES accounts
- b. Yes, I follow the European EURES accounts
- c. Yes, I follow both national and European accounts
- d. No

**23.[If 22c] Have you come across any discrepancies between the information provided in the national and European EURES accounts?**

- a. Yes, please specify
- b. No

**24. Do you think it is easy to find information about EURES and the services it provides?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

### 6.3.7 Questions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

#### 25. To which extent do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021?

- a. International labour mobility will remain the same as it was before the crisis
- b. International labour mobility will decrease
- c. International labour mobility will increase
- d. I do not know

### 6.3.8 Concluding questions

#### 26. How satisfied are you with EURES?\*

- a. Very satisfied
- b. Satisfied
- c. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- d. Dissatisfied
- e. Very dissatisfied
- f. I cannot assess

#### 27. Would you recommend EURES to other employers?\*

- a. Yes
- b. No, please specify
- c. I cannot assess

#### 28. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with the EURES network?

*(max 2500 characters)*

## 6.4 EURES evaluation survey for Members and Partners

*[Questions marked with '\*' are compulsory]*

### 6.4.1 Introduction

Dear Member/Partner of the EURES network,

Particularly in this difficult period, your opinion is essential to shape our network and make it even more performant to help jobseekers and employers. An evaluation of our network is ongoing to assess what works fine and what needs to be improved.

You are being targeted by this survey because of your experience and knowledge as a Member or a Partner of the EURES Network to whom the EURES Regulation assigned specific responsibilities (Art. 12 of the EURES Regulation).

Each Member or Partner can submit only one reply. The responses will be treated in an aggregate form in line with the [EU data protection rules](#).

Thank you in advance for contributing to this survey. It should not take more than 20 minutes of your time.

IMPORTANT: We are aware that the EURES activities, projects, products and results in your country have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for the purposes of our evaluation, we would kindly ask you to reflect only on the situation before the outbreak of the pandemic when answering the questions of this survey, unless the question specifies otherwise. Thank you for your cooperation.

If you wish to consult a pdf version of the survey, please click [here](#).

Before proceeding to the survey, please take time to read [our privacy statement](#).

Please indicate that you have read and agree to the privacy statement above.

I agree to the privacy statement

### 6.4.2 Introductory questions

#### 1. Name of your organisation

#### 2. Country *(Please add the country in which your organisation is headquartered)*

List EURES countries

#### 3. Your organisation is a:\*

- a. EURES Member
- b. EURES Partner
- c. Other, please specify\*

#### 4. What type of an organisation are you\*

- a. Public Employment Service (PES)
- b. Private Employment Service
- c. Public authority other than PES
- d. Trade Union
- e. An employers' Association
- f. Academic institution
- g. Other, please specify\*

#### 5. Name and surname of the person responding the survey on behalf of the organization

**6. E-mail address**

**7. [If Q3b] In accordance with the EURES Regulation, which of the following tasks do you NOT fulfil?\***

- a. Contributing to the pool of job vacancies in accordance with Art 17(1)(a)
- b. Contributing to the pool of job applications and CVs in accordance with Art 17(1)(b)
- c. Providing support services to workers and employers in accordance with Art 23  
Support services for workers
- d. Providing support services to workers and employers in accordance with Art 24  
Support services for employers
- e. Providing support services to workers and employers in accordance with Art 25(1)  
Post-recruitment assistance
- f. Providing support services to workers and employers in accordance with Art 26  
Access to information on living and working conditions
- g. Providing support services to workers and employers in accordance with Art 27  
Support services in cross-border regions

**8. How much time your organisation dedicates to EURES and its services on average per week?**

*Please provide an estimate of the overall percentage working hours your organisation's staff devote to EURES activities. To estimate this, you can, for example, take a usual week and compare the time your staff spend on EURES activities against the total number of working hours of the whole organisation. Alternatively, you can consider the number of advisors devoted to EURES (or the full-time equivalents) against the total number of advisors.*

**9. Could you please specify from where you get funding for the EURES services you offer? Please select all that apply.**

- a. European Social Fund (ESF)
- b. Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme
- c. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- d. National funds
- e. Private funds
- f. Other, please specify\*

6.4.3 Views on EURES

**10. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the added value of EURES to jobseekers?\***

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Comment
The focus of EURES helps address current problems experienced by jobseekers						
EURES is effective in informing jobseekers about mobility						
EURES is effective in helping jobseekers find employment						
EURES offers relevant support and guidance to jobseekers in their search for jobs						
EURES is effective in matching jobseekers and employers across Europe						
EURES has increased employment opportunities of jobseekers across EURES countries						

**11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the added value of EURES for employers?\***

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Comment
The focus of EURES helps address current problems experienced by employers						
EURES is effective in informing employers about mobility						
EURES is effective in helping employers find job candidates						
EURES offers relevant support and guidance to employers in their search for candidates						
Through EURES, employers have a greater chance to find the right skills for vacant positions						

**12. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the EU added value and coherence of EURES?\***

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Comment
EURES complements other European initiatives on employment and mobility (e.g. European Structural and Investment Funds, Employment and Social Innovation programme)						
EURES complements national initiatives on employment and mobility						
More can be done to promote jobs and mobility through EURES than with national resources only						
EURES contributes to promoting the mobility of workers						
EURES helps countries find common employment strategies						
EURES contributes to improving the functioning and integration of the labour markets in EURES countries						
EURES promotes and supports fair and non-discriminatory working conditions						
EURES raises awareness about labour mobility matters across the EURES countries						
EURES contributes to a transparent labour market by providing information and guidance about vacancies						

**13. In your opinion, what are the barriers and challenges regarding intra-EU labour mobility?**

*6.4.4 Questions on EURES Services*

**14. Which target groups do you offer EURES services to:\***

- a. Jobseekers
- b. Employers

- c. Both
- d. Other, please specify\*

**15.[If Q14 a, c, d]** From the services you offer, which seem to be the most popular among jobseekers? Prioritise from most popular to least popular (1= most popular, 5 = least popular)

	1	2	3	4	5	We do not offer this service
Information and guidance on finding a job abroad						
Information and guidance on finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad						
Matching services						
Provision of training						
Post-recruitment assistance (e.g. language course, relocation assistance)						
Information on living and working conditions abroad						
Information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers						
Other, please specify						
Other, please specify						

**16.[If Q14 b, c, d]** From the services you offer, which seem to be the most popular among employers? Prioritise from most popular to least popular (1= most popular, 5 = least popular)

	1	2	3	4	5	We do not offer this service
Information and guidance on finding employees from abroad						
Information and guidance on finding apprentices or trainees from abroad						
Matching services						
Integration programmes for new employees from abroad						
Post-recruitment assistance (e.g. language course, relocation assistance for newly hired employees)						
Information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers						
Other, please specify						
Other, please specify						

**17. In your opinion, what are the factors that facilitate the effectiveness of the EURES services that you offer?**

**18. In your opinion, what are the factors that hinder the effectiveness of the EURES services that you offer?**

**19. How would you assess the degree of standardisation of EURES services provision across the EURES network?\***

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Neutral
- d. Bad
- e. Very bad
- f. No opinion

**20. How can the EURES services be improved?** For example, are there any needs that are not addressed, services currently missing etc.

*(Maximum 1000 characters)*

*6.4.5 Questions on the EURES Portal*

**21. Do you think the EURES portal is easy to find?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. No opinion

Comment:

**22. Do you use the EURES portal in your daily work?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

Comment:

**23. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:\***

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion	Comment
EURES portal has increased employment opportunities of jobseekers across EURES countries						
The portal is useful for jobseekers willing to relocate abroad						
The portal is useful for employers willing to hire from abroad						
The information provided is comprehensive						
The information provided is up-to-date						

The information provided is of good quality						
EURES portal is easy to navigate						

**24. Do you use the EURES portal to search for possible matches between your CVs/JVs and the offers on the portal?\***

- a. Yes
- b. No

Comment:

**25.[If yes in Q24] Do you think once the matching on the EURES portal is fully automated it will save you time in comparison with manual matching/searching? \***

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. No opinion

Comment:

**26. Do you think the EURES portal addresses the needs of jobseekers/employers?\***

- a. Completely
- b. Partially, please specify
- c. Not at all, please specify
- d. Other, please specify
- e. No opinion

**27. Do you read the Inside EURES newsletter?\***

- a. Yes
- b. No

**28.[If yes in Q27] Do you find the information of the newsletter useful?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

Comment:

**29.[If yes in Q27] Is there anything that is missing from the newsletter?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

Comment:

**30. In your opinion, what is the best/worst feature of the EURES portal?**

6.4.6 Questions on EURES Initiatives

**31. Which of the following do you organise/take part in? (Select all that apply)**

- a. Targeted Mobility Schemes
- b. Your first EURES job
- c. Reactivate
- d. Cross-Border Partnership
- e. European (Online) Job Days
- f. Other information event(s)
- g. Other recruitment event(s)
- h. Other, please specify\*

**32. Please choose the initiatives that you consider visible enough**

Targeted Mobility Schemes	
Your first EURES job	
Reactivate	
Cross-Border Partnership	
European (Online) Job Days	
Other information event organised by EURES	
Other recruitment event organised by EURES	
Other, please specify	

**33. How would you assess the consistency of activities and target groups of the EURES initiatives you participate in/organise?**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Not very good
- d. Poor

Comment:

**34. Is there any other initiative that you think the EURES network should develop/offer?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

Comment:

6.4.7 Questions on the Visibility of EURES

**35. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about EURES visibility:**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion	Comment
European jobseekers are aware of EURES services and initiatives						
European employers are aware of EURES services and initiatives						
It is easy to find information on EURES						

**36. Do you coordinate awareness raising activities with the other Members and Partners within your national EURES network?\***

- a. Yes
- b. No

Comment

*6.4.8 Cooperation within EURES*

**37. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the new EURES?\*( After 2016 reform)**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
It is more appropriate to meet current labour market needs					
It facilitates better cooperation within the EURES network					

**38. What do you see as the main challenges in further deepening cooperation within the EURES network?**

*(Maximum 1000 characters)*

**39. What are the main benefits of cooperating within the EURES network?**

*(Maximum 1000 characters)*

*6.4.9 Possible future improvements*

**40. What should be the key feature(s) of a future EURES? (Maximum 3000 characters)**

**41. Which of the following target groups do you think EURES should prioritise in the future?**

	To be given high priority	To be given medium priority	To be given low priority	No opinion
Unskilled jobseekers				
Medium or highly qualified jobseekers				
Long-term unemployed				
Cross-border workers				
Younger workers				
Older workers				
Other, please specify*				

*6.4.10 Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic*

**42. To which extent do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021?**

- International labour mobility will remain the same as it was before the crisis
- International labour mobility will decrease
- International labour mobility will increase
- I do not know

*6.4.11 Concluding questions*

**43. Overall, how satisfied are you with EURES?\***

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

**44. How did joining the EURES network influence your organisation?** (Maximum 1000 characters)

**45.[If 3b Partner] In longer-term, would you be interested in becoming a EURES Member?**

- Yes
- No

**46. Would you recommend to other organisations to join the EURES network?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

Comment

**47. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with the EURES network which could be useful for the purpose of this study?**

(Maximum 3000 characters)

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## Annex II.a – Stakeholders’ consultations synopsis report

### 1. CONSULTATION STRATEGY

#### 1.1. Objectives

This Synopsis Report outlines the consultation activities organised to evaluate the EURES Regulation for the period 2016 to 2020 and presents the main findings.

To ensure transparency and involve the stakeholders, the process followed the standards and methods set out in the Better Regulation guidelines. The various consultations have followed the roadmap and consultation strategy. The roadmap<sup>1</sup> of the evaluation itself was published on the Better Regulation website and open for public feedback between 16 July 2019 and 13 August 2019<sup>2</sup>. The seven contributions received were overall positive towards labour mobility and the need for EURES. They provided suggestions to improve the consultation process, such as topics to evaluate which were addressed in the consultation tools.

#### 1.2. Consultation stakeholders, methods and tools

The stakeholders targeted by the consultation activities were individuals or organisations that had:

- an interest in or received services provided by EURES;
- expertise in the subject; and
- run or been involved in running EURES actions.

The table shows the stakeholder groups targeted through the consultation activities.

Table 1 Types of stakeholders consulted

Type of stakeholder	Interest
Private citizens (including Jobseekers/workers); Companies/employers	They can provide feedback on the services received, whether they corresponded to their needs, and how they could be improved.
ECO officials; DG EMPL; Other Commission officials	ECO provides the background for specific decisions taken during the implementation. DG EMPL can assess whether EURES activities targeted the needs of the labour market. Other DGs and agencies may assess how EURES contributed to areas related to the labour market.
NCOs staff	NCOs oversee the implementation of EURES at national level.
EURES Members and Partners	EURES Members and Partners provide an insight into EURES activities and their coherence with other national and international policies.
Public and Private Employment Services, Public Authorities, Employers’ and trade associations, Academic institutions, Civil Society/NGOs	Other stakeholders provide insight of their experience with EURES. They can compare services provided by EURES with similar services from other Employment Services.

<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/11866-European-network-of-employment-services-EURES-evaluation-2016-2020>.

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The figure illustrates the type of consultation tools used per category of stakeholders.

Table 2 Overview of consultation tools per stakeholder group

	Consultation tools					
	Ad hoc Interviews	Fieldwork Interviews	Field workshops	Online survey	Open Public consultation	Validation and COVID-19 workshops
Private citizens (including Jobseekers/workers)		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Companies/employers		✓	✓	✓	✓	
ECO officials	✓				✓	✓
DG EMPL	✓				✓	✓
Other Commission officials					✓	✓
NCOs staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EURES Members and Partners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Employment Services		✓	✓		✓	
Private Employment Services		✓	✓		✓	
Public Authorities					✓	
Academic institutions					✓	
Employers' associations					✓	✓
Trade associations/unions					✓	✓
Civil Society/NGOs					✓	✓

### 1.3. Stakeholder participation

The total reach of the consultation activities is shown below.

Table 3 Stakeholder participation

Type of stakeholder consultation		Timeframe	Number of responses/ consultation activities carried out
Public consultation		March – June 2020	1 434
Online survey	Jobseekers	May – June 2020	2 055
	Employers		164
	Members and Partners		96
	NCOs	May – September 2020	26
Case studies	Interviews	April – September 2020	76
	Workshops		12
Ad-hoc interviews		March – September 2020	2
Validation workshop		September 2020	1
COVID-19 workshop		October 2020	1
<b>Total individual responses</b>			<b>3 853</b>
<b>Total workshops</b>			<b>14</b>

No ad-hoc contributions outside of the consultation context or campaigns trying to influence the responding participants in their feedback were detected. The public consultation and the online surveys were advertised through the EURES portal and the EURES newsletter. This had an impact on the responses to the online surveys for jobseekers and employers as many respondents indicated that they interacted with EURES online via the EURES portal so could provide feedback only on its functionalities and not on other services. To balance this, the case studies focused on gathering feedback from EURES staff, and jobseekers and employers who benefitted from individualised support.

## 2. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION

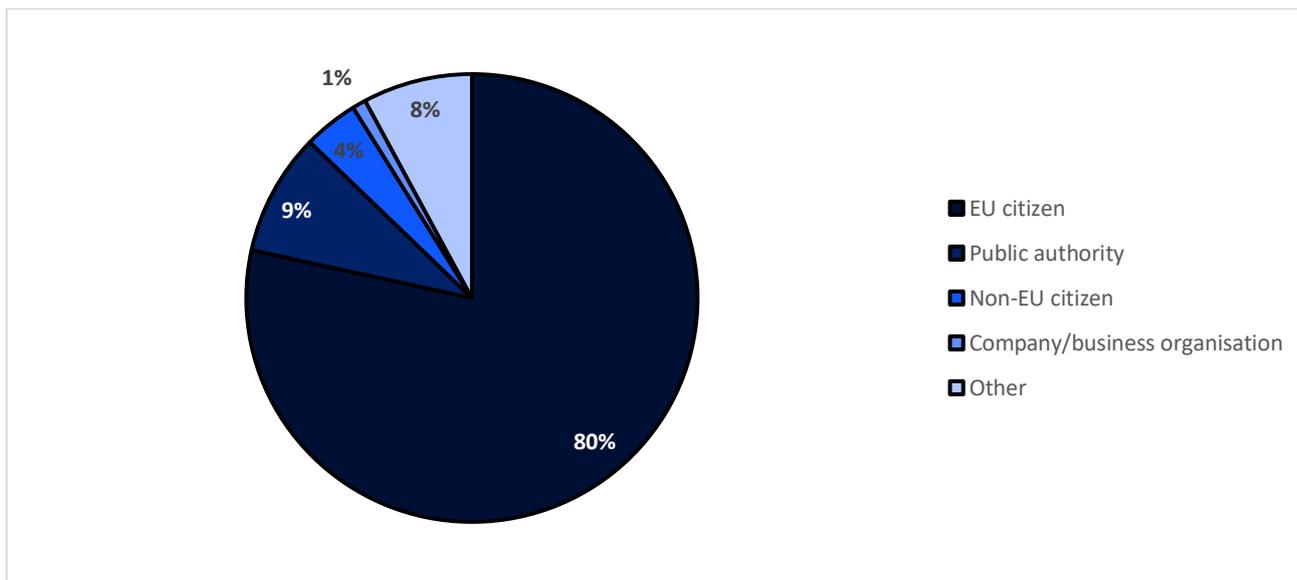
This part presents the results of the completed consultations per consultation activity.

### 2.1. Public consultation

The public consultation focused on audiences with no or minimal knowledge of EURES but there were also questions for those with knowledge of EURES. The questionnaire comprised closed and open questions. It provided information on EURES for those unfamiliar with it.

The graph shows the distribution of the 1 434 respondents into stakeholder categories. Majority of 'Other' respondents identified themselves as EURES Advisors, EURES Staff or an employee of their national Public Employment Service.

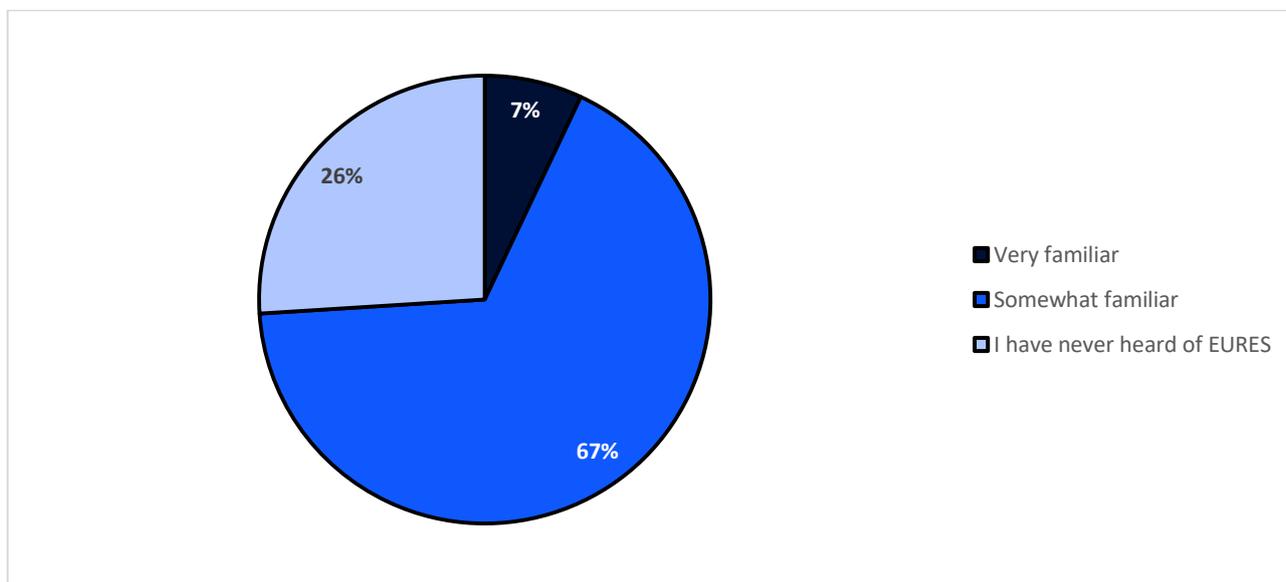
Figure 1 Category of respondents (n=1 434)



From the 1 326 respondents who indicated they originated from one of the 32 EURES countries; most responses came from Italy (29%, 380) and Spain (28%, 373). Given that more than half of the responses came from only two relatively similar countries in socio-economic terms, in the study the responses have been interpreted with prudence and triangulated with other findings to ensure representativity.

The extent of familiarity with EURES is provided in the graph below.

Figure 2 How familiar are you with EURES? (n=1 434)

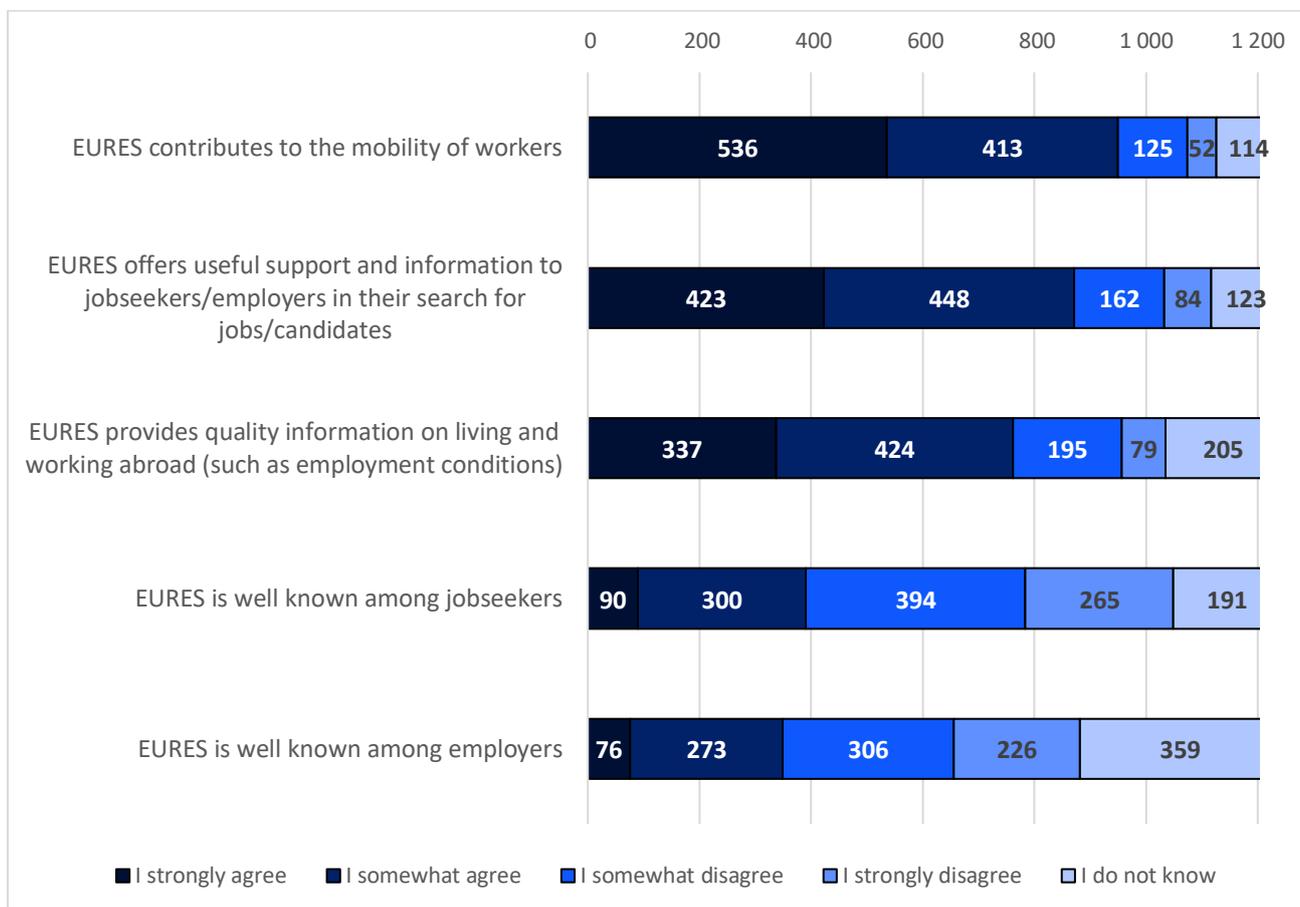


More than two thirds of respondents agreed (68%, 836) that EURES provides **relevant** and modern employment services in line with the needs of European workers and employers. Only 23% (277) disagreed with this statement and 10% (127) had no opinion.

The respondents tended to agree that EURES is **effective** in contributing to the mobility of workers (76% (949) either strongly agree or somewhat agree) and providing useful and quality information (70% (871) either agree or strongly agree). At the same time, a considerable number

feels that it is not well known among jobseekers (53%, 659) and employers (43%, 532), as it is not visible enough.

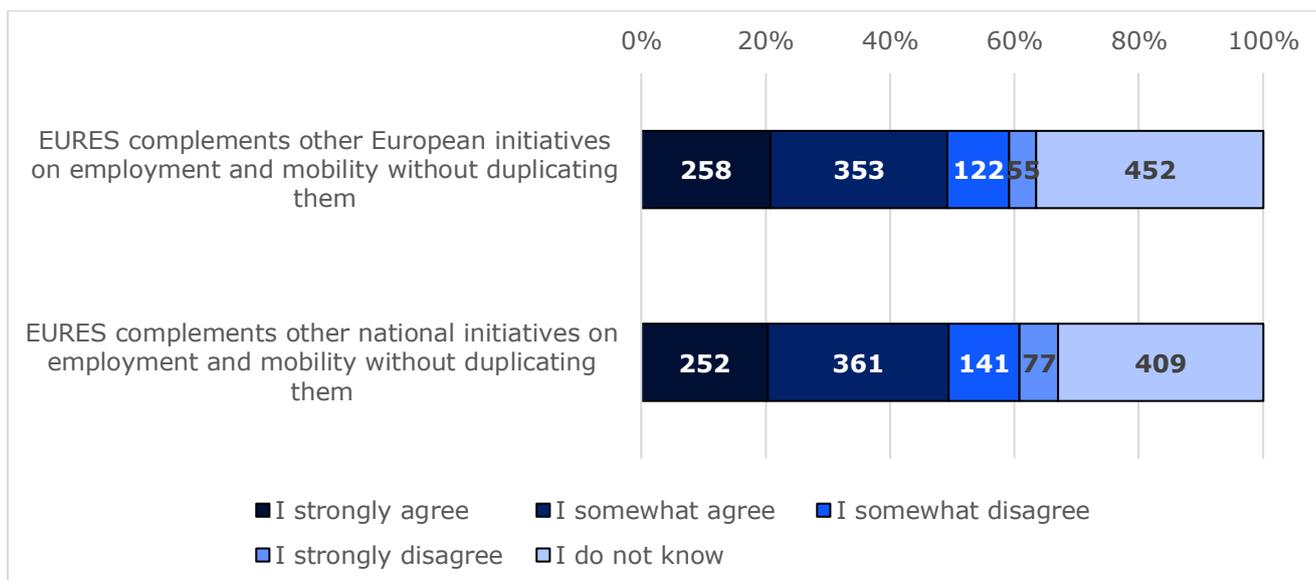
Figure 3 Agreement with statements on the effectiveness of EURES (n=1 240)



In terms of **efficiency**, 45% (601) of the respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that EURES achieves the best possible results given the resources invested; 18% (241) of respondents disagreed with this statement, 9% (118) strongly disagreed and 28% (378) did not have an opinion.

For **coherence**, about half of the respondents (49%) agreed that EURES complements other European (611) and national (613) initiatives, 14% (177) and 18% (218) of the respondents correspondingly (strongly) disagree that EURES complements other EU and national initiatives. About one third were unsure about EURES’s complementarity with other EU (36%, 452) and national (33%, 409) initiatives.

Figure 4 Agreement with statements on the coherence of EURES (n=1 240)



When asked about the **EU added value** of EURES, three quarters of respondents agreed (43% (536) strongly, 32% (391) somewhat) that more can be done with EU resources than just national ones to promote mobility and jobs.

72% (956) see the need to improve EURES, its tools and services, 4% (53) did not see such a need, while 24% (326) did not know. More than 1 200 respondents provided suggestions for improvements. The majority concerned: (1) the EURES website and mobility portal (modernising and improving their user-friendliness); (2) the EURES staff (more upskilling and training for EURES staff); (3) cooperation and visibility (increase the visibility of EURES and expansion of the network).

Overall, the respondents see free movement of workers positively. However, there were some respondents for whom the free movement of workers is not always a positive thing. They believe that free movement of workers leads to decreasing wages for certain jobs in their countries. Similarly, few respondents expressed a concern that the benefits of labour mobility are not straightforward and are not well known to the majority of Europeans. They believe that more should be done to familiarise the EU citizens with the advantages of moving abroad, as well as with employment opportunities in other countries. This is in line with responses of the online surveys and also the case studies where respondents felt that in this area EURES could step up its efforts to ensure that European citizens and businesses are informed about their rights connected to the free movement of workers.

While all contributions were taken into account from statistical point of view, about 1% (15) of contributions to the open questions were not usable as they contained inappropriate language through which the respondents expressed their frustration either with a specific employment or EURES service or individual national labour policies. Four of these inputs were marked as inappropriate for using hate language or specific insults to specific groups or EURES Members.

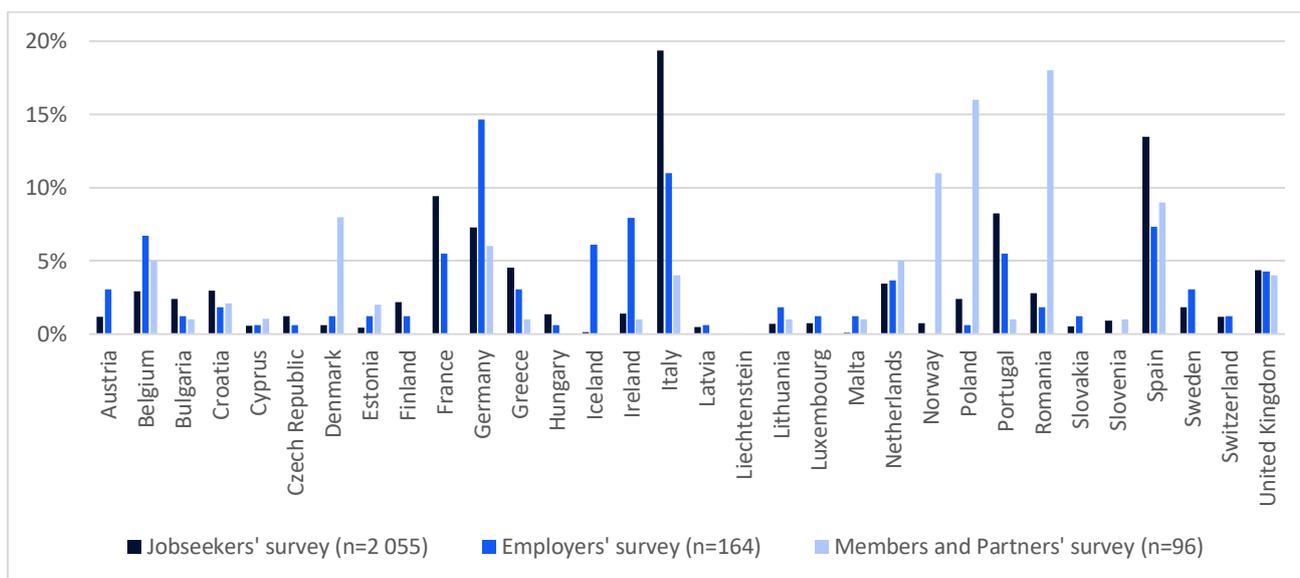
Twenty-eight (2%) respondents submitted additional suggestions, most often unusable for the purposes of the consultation: a proposal on how to turn waste into energy, company promotion material, registration certificate of an EU citizen in another EU Member State, 23 CV, a note discussing limitations of free movement between Italy and Switzerland, a screenshot from the EURES portal in German showing need to improve the portal’s search function.

## 2.2. Online surveys

Four online surveys were launched for stakeholders particularly involved with EURES, which addressed broad target groups: (1) National Coordination Offices; (2) employers/companies; (3) jobseekers/workers; (4) EURES Members and Partners. The surveys contained closed and open questions. The questionnaires were aligned with the public consultation to ensure coherence and avoid duplication.

The graph provides an overview of the responses to the online surveys per EURES country. The NCO survey is not included to maintain anonymity as one response per country was collected.

Figure 5 Overview of residence per survey



The overview of survey results is provided below.

### 2.2.1 Respondent profiles

Most **jobseekers** stated to be either unemployed (39%, 796) or employed but looking for a new job (35%, 712). The majority were male (64%, 1 305) between 30 to 49 years old (32%, 663). A large majority held a university level degree (72%, 1,601). Responses were mostly provided by jobseekers from Italy (19%, 398), Spain (13%, 277), and France (9%, 194). This is similar to the residency profile of the respondents in the public consultation, however, in this survey the respondents were spread a bit more equally among the responding countries, i.e. the top 2 countries make up only 32% as opposed to the 57% in the public consultation. Given that the survey was promoted through the EURES portal, the representativeness of the profiles is also aligned with those who are registered on the EURES portal.

In the **employers'** survey, micro companies formed about one third of the respondents (33%, 54), followed by small companies (24%, 40). The most mentioned NACE sector of activities was 'S. Other service activities' (14%, 23). The country with the most employers responding was Germany (14%, 24), followed by Italy (11%, 18) and Ireland (8%, 13). This is partially aligned with the profiles of those who are registered on the EURES portal as there the most employers come from Germany, Netherlands and France.

**Members and Partners** from 20 countries answered the survey. Most were from Romania (18%, 17), Poland (16%, 15) and Norway (11%, 11) which are some of the countries with the greatest number of Members and Partners in their network. Majority identified themselves as Members (78%, 75) of the national EURES networks, only 21% (20) were Partners.

Out of the 32 **NCOs**, 26 answered the survey.

### 2.2.2 Relevance

From 460 **jobseekers** who used EURES services, 57% (258) indicated the lack of job opportunities in the country of residence as the main reason to use EURES services; 55% (251) of jobseekers use EURES services due to better working and salary conditions in another country; and 43% (194) use EURES services as moving to work abroad would help them improve their foreign language skills.

Among the 128 **employers** who visited the EURES portal or are registered on it, 62% (78) agree it increased employment opportunities, while 18% (23) disagree with this statement. Some employers commented that EURES offered them good matches for their job vacancies and were able to find good new employees or trainees. Others mentioned that the search did not produce good matches due to poor filter options.

**Members and Partners** believe that EURES helps addressing the current needs of jobseekers (92%, 84) and employers (81%, 75), offers relevant support and guidance to jobseekers (94%, 87) and employers (85%, 78), and increased employment opportunities for jobseekers across Europe (93%, 85).

From the 26 **NCOs**, 23 agreed that the objectives of the EURES Regulation are aligned to the needs and problems of the intra-EU labour mobility; 21 agreed that EURES objectives and tools have been responsive to the changes on the labour market. With the exception of three respondents, all agreed that EURES targets the correct audience in order to achieve its objectives.

### 2.2.3 Effectiveness

Among the 1,868 **jobseekers** who use the EURES portal, 48% (905) (strongly) agree with the portal contributing to increased employment opportunities, 24% (447) (strongly) disagree and 28% (516) have no opinion. 69% (1 287) of the respondents (strongly) agree that information the portal provides is easy to understand, 25% (476) (strongly) disagree and 9% (105) have no opinion on the question. 55% (1,106) of the respondents think it is easy to find out about EURES and the different services while 45% (919) do not think so. 63% (1 288) of respondents would recommend EURES to other jobseekers but 21% (431) of respondents would not, of these majority assigned it largely to unsuccessful job search on the EURES Portal.

Slightly more than half (56%, 92) of **employers** think it is easy to find out about EURES and the different services it provides, while 44% (71) do not think so. The majority of respondents (60%, 99) would recommend EURES to other employers, while 17% (28) would not recommend EURES. Nearly one quarter (23%, 37) was undecided on this. The alignment on this question between the employers' and jobseekers' respondents is visible in the graph below as is the agreement of whether it is easy to find information about EURES.

Figure 6 Would you recommend EURES to other jobseekers/employers?

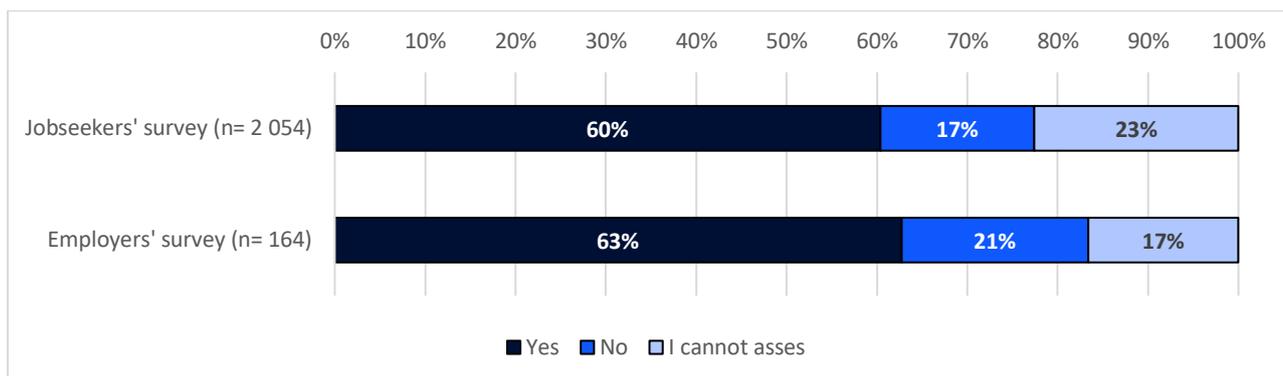
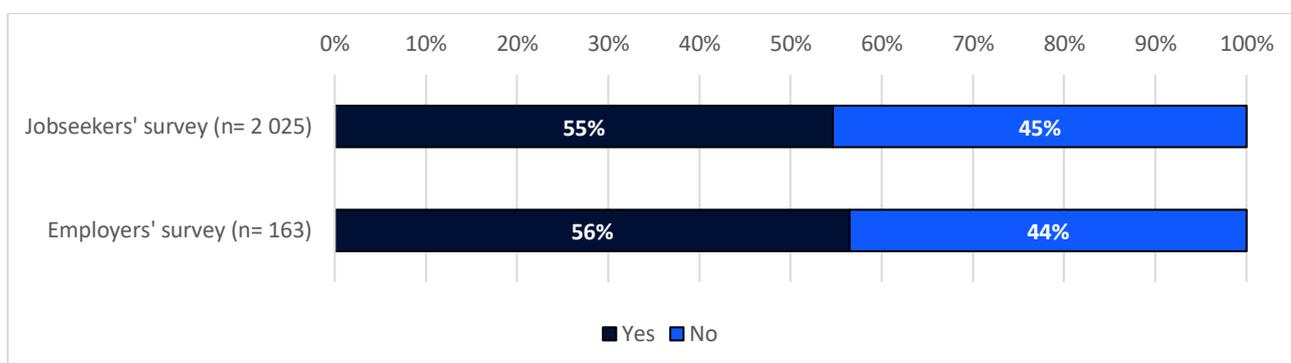


Figure 7 Do you think it is easy to find information about EURES and the services it provides?



Nearly all **Members and Partners** believe that EURES is effective in informing jobseekers (97%, 91) and employers (88%, 81) about mobility, helping jobseekers find employment (93%, 87) and employers find candidates (85%, 78), and is effective in matching employers with jobseekers (84%, 75).

All **NCOs** agreed that EURES contributes to labour market transparency by ensuring relevant information is available to potential applicants and employers. 18 respondents agreed that the promotion and communication activities of EURES help make it a widely known brand among jobseekers and employers. 15 respondents agreed that labour market participants are aware of EURES services and tools, while 8 respondents (strongly) disagreed with this statement. 19 respondents agreed with EURES tools being effective in matching labour supply with demand across Europe. 24 respondents agreed that EURES mobility schemes effectively contribute to its objectives.

### 2.2.4 Efficiency

From the 365 **jobseekers** who indicated receiving guidance on finding a job abroad, 32% (219) responded that they would have found a job without the help of EURES, with 29% (104) indicating that it would have taken more time; 18% (63) of the respondents believe that they would probably not and 7% (25) that they would definitely not find a job without EURES.

From the 62 **employers** who indicated having received guidance in finding employees abroad, 37% (23) responded that they would have been able to find the correct candidates but not as

quickly; while 24% (15) said that they would probably not have been able to find the right candidates without support from EURES. Yet, 19% (11) of employers said they would have been able to find employees even without the help of EURES. This is because they see the EURES database as containing very few good candidates with the necessary skills for their job vacancies and the filters on the EURES portal as showing too many irrelevant candidates.

From the 34 **Members and Partners** who indicated that they use the EURES portal for matching, 26 (76%) think that automated matching function will save them time in comparison with manual matching and searching once it is fully implemented, while 8 (24%) are not convinced of that.

22 **NCOs** agreed that costs of EURES services and tools are justified by their results. However, 23 found that the administrative burden has had increased compared to the previous Regulation. Nearly half of the respondents (12) think that there is a scope for more efficient use of the EURES resources, while 10 do not know.

### 2.2.5 Coherence

Similarly to the public consultation, some **jobseekers** (2%, 41) drew similarities with the Erasmus initiative and its brand, from which they feel EURES can learn.

The vast majority of **employers** (81%, 58) who received EURES services believe that EURES services are complementary, while 19% (14) disagree. This is also aligned with the feedback received through the public consultation and the case studies.

99% (90) of **Members and Partners** believe that the consistency of the activities and target groups of the initiatives they participate in is good or very good. Only one respondent said it was poor.

Most of the **NCOs** agree that EURES is complementary to other EU (17) and national (20) initiatives and that the EURES tools are complementary (25). However, 11 NCOs find that the EURES tools are overlapping with other EU/national level policy measures/initiatives, e.g. Single Digital Gateway, European Labour Authority or Europass.

### 2.2.6 EU added value

The view of **jobseekers** and **employers** is divided on the extent to which they would be able to achieve the same results without EURES as is seen in the efficiency section above.

The **Members and Partners** agreed that EURES complement other European (88%, 81) and national (95%, 87) initiatives on employment and mobility and that more can be done to promote jobs and mobility through EURES than with national resources only (95%, 88). This echoes, albeit slightly less strongly, the feelings of the public consultation respondents.

Among **NCOs**, there is agreement that EURES has produced effects that would have not taken place without EU intervention (22) and that they have more reached groups (23).

### 2.2.7 Summary

While overall, in the **jobseekers'** survey a considerable number of respondents (35%, 714) is neutral about their experience with EURES, about the same number of respondent are satisfied (9% (177) very satisfied and 27% (547) satisfied) or dissatisfied (9% (186) very dissatisfied and 15% (301) dissatisfied) with it. The dissatisfaction might stem from the respondents not being able to find relevant employment opportunities through EURES or being of an opinion that

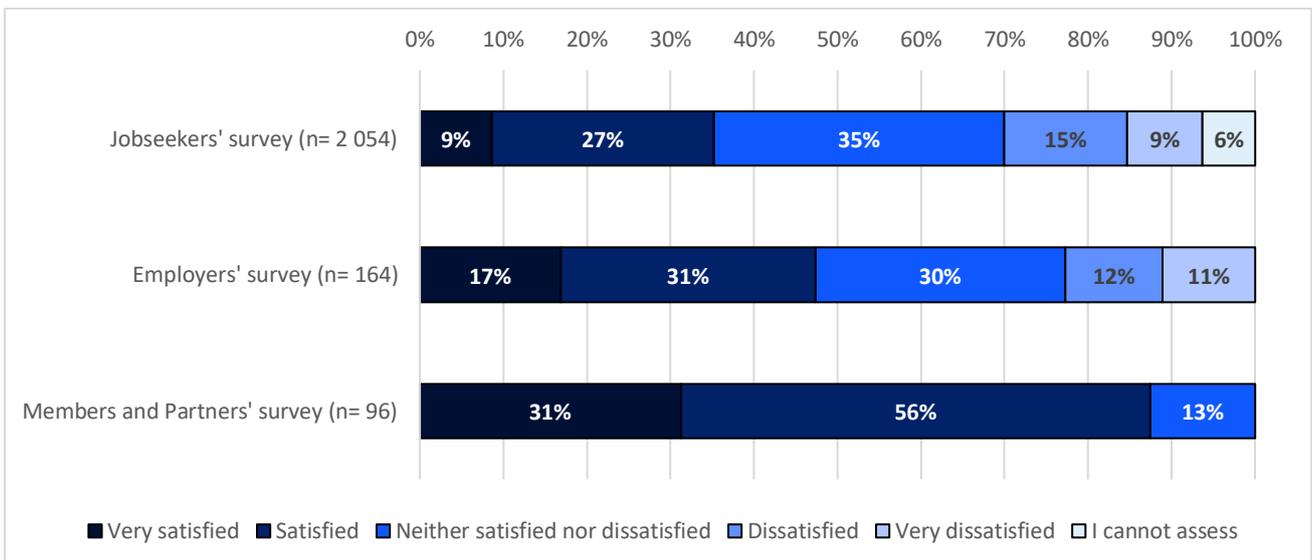
employers do not use EURES services on a regular basis which results in a poor job vacancy offer. The biggest criticism of the respondents was directed towards the EURES Portal. There the respondents highlighted that it needs further considerable development to be able to keep up with the technical developments offered by other private services.

In the **employers'** survey, also about one third (30%, 46) of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with EURES. However, nearly half (47%, 73) were satisfied (17% (26) very satisfied and 30% (47) satisfied). Here, similarly to the jobseekers' survey, dissatisfaction (23%, 36) with EURES stemmed from the inability to find relevant candidates for their job vacancies. This criticism was again mainly focused towards the EURES Portal as the respondents did not find little return for their efforts while sifting through the irrelevant results produced by the search function. This is aligned with the sentiments of jobseekers.

No **Member or Partner** were dissatisfied or even very dissatisfied with EURES. The majority of the (56%, 54) were satisfied. 5% (5) of the respondents would not recommend to other organisations to join the EURES network with only one respondent providing a reasoning for this which was that due to the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union, the future of EURES within their country is uncertain. Some respondents felt that EURES has undergone many changes in a short period of time which might hamper the objectives of these reforms. Particularly due to the introduction of the European Labour Authority and the establishment of the Single Digital Gateway. Another area where the respondents would welcome more efforts was the development of closer cooperation with ECO not only for the National Coordination Offices but also for, at least, all EURES Members. This could be done by involving ECO in local meetings of the network to bring in more overarching views and vice versa.

Overall, the direct EURES clients and its service providers seem to be satisfied with EURES or at least neutral about their satisfaction as can be seen in the graph below.

Figure 8 How satisfied are you with EURES and its services?



About one third (8) of responding **NCOs** while viewing their relationship with ECO as good said that they would welcome more interaction and improvement of the relationship. A barrier to a closer cooperation within the EURES network is the way the national EURES networks are set up as it is not always possible to apply the same principles across the network. The internal political pressures were also mentioned as a challenge because of it some countries are only able to offer

limited EURES services in some areas. The fact that there is no common consensus on the purpose of the EURES Regulation and its demands for action is also seen as a barrier to a better functioning cooperation. The fact that many EURES countries are experiencing same shortages and surpluses has been highlighted throughout the survey particularly with regard to a shortcoming of EURES being able to come up with a unified approach towards this issue.

### 2.3. Case studies

The seven case studies were used to gather more qualitative feedback on EURES. The majority of interviewees were selected among EURES staff as they have experience of the introduction and impact of the EURES Regulation. Overall, no major differences between countries were identified across the case studies.

In terms of **relevance**, the respondents agreed that in recent years the network has adopted digital tools that accompany one-on-one counselling sessions such as webinars and European Online Job Days which help in reaching a wider number of candidates and spreading awareness about EURES. The jobseekers and employers appreciate the extent of information EURES is able to provide about all topics on working in another country.

The stakeholders agreed that focusing on ensuring fair labour mobility across EURES countries led to the development of a broad network of EURES advisers who are experts in intra-EU labour mobility which contributes to **effective** delivery of EURES services. Post-recruitment services are seen as **less effective** since they are not sufficiently developed across the network.

The new monitoring and reporting requirements of the EURES Regulation are seen as necessary to provide a more comprehensive picture of EURES activities than in the past but they lead to more administrative burden. The fact that not all EURES staff work fully only on EURES activities decreases the **efficiency** of the service provision.

EURES countries are increasingly facing the same skills shortages and surpluses, which is seen as an obstacle needing resolving as this leads to conflicting priorities at national level regarding the promotion of labour mobility. This may affect the **coherence** of EURES service provision across the network. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on national labour markets is yet to be seen. Respondents widely recognised that it would affect national priorities which may lead to taking away resources from EURES to other areas. Similar sentiments were expressed also in the online surveys in this regard.

The main **added value** of EURES is in ensuring fair mobility and free provision of services.

In comparison with the online surveys and the public consultation, the stakeholders consulted as part of the case studies focused more on the services tailored to individuals' needs rather than the services offered through the EURES Portal. Nonetheless, respondents also highlighted the same shortcomings in terms of the search and matching functions and overall user-friendliness of the Portal as in the surveys and the public consultation.

### 2.4. Validation and COVID-19 workshops

The validation and COVID-19 workshops gathered key stakeholders and experts in labour mobility to verify the findings of the ex-post evaluation. The feedback gathered was used to finetune the final report. Overall, the participants confirmed the presented findings and further developed some of them.

The greatest insistence is on highlighting better that the different realities of each of the national EURES networks are taken into account when interpreting the findings as it is an **influential factor** when assessing the implementation of the EURES Regulation, particularly with regard to the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Going forward, it is important that the newer EU initiatives (e.g. Europass, Single Digital Gateway) ensure coherence with EURES.

In the COVID-19 workshop, the participants highlighted that EURES managed well the transition to online service provision. As remote working is likely to become more prominent, the European Labour Authority should look into harmonising the national regulations so that EURES can develop this aspect better in the information provision. Nonetheless, the workshop validated the overall results of the consultation showing that despite of the changing context, the results obtained are still relevant.

## Annex II.b - Case studies

In order to respond to some of the evaluation questions and to investigate specific topics that are relevant for EURES, the study included seven case studies, carried out in ten different EURES countries.

The following sections present the summary reports of the seven case studies. Each case study report is in four parts: a background section, a brief description of the methodological approach used, the main findings, and concluding remarks.

### 1 SINGLE COORDINATED CHANNEL

#### 1.1 Background

While the idea of transferring eligible<sup>1</sup> job vacancies from national databases to the EURES portal is not novel, the new EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589 has just introduced a more coherent manner of such transfer via a single coordinated channel<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, such transfer should not only include job vacancies but should apply to eligible CVs as well.

As early as 2011, there was already a system in place that would collect information from national job vacancy databases and relay this information onto the EURES portal. However, this system did not necessarily transfer the vacancies. The national job vacancies databases were connected to the EURES portal via web servers which, in a simplified manner, worked similarly to emails. When a jobseeker would do a search on the EURES portal, the portal would then connect to the national databases to see if they have job vacancies that fulfil the criteria selected by the jobseeker. In addition to this system not being very user-friendly from the coordination point of view, it also meant that there were no common standards applied across the EURES network in terms of the quality of information contained in each job vacancy.

To mitigate this, it was suggested that a common approach should be sought not only for coordinating the transfer of information but also the quality of information relayed. To this end, when the drafting of the new regulation commenced, the idea of creating a single coordinated channel for these purposes was included.

Preamble 16 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589 states that the National Coordination Offices (NCOs) need to ensure “a coordinated transfer of the data to the EURES portal through a single coordinated channel”<sup>3</sup>. Articles 9 and 18 set out the responsibilities of the NCOs and EURES Members and Partners in relation to the single coordinated channel. Furthermore, Article 17 outlines what the rules are for the transfer of job vacancies and CVs and when Member States may exclude job vacancies. For example, job vacancies which due to their nature or to national rules are open only to citizens of a specific country or are part of the Member State’s active labour market policies may be excluded from the transfer.

Article 19 establishes further that the job vacancies and CVs transmitted through the common channel should follow an agreed standard aligned to the European Skills/Competences,

<sup>1</sup> Those job vacancies where the employer indicates that they would be open to hiring a person from another EURES country.

<sup>2</sup> Hereby also referred to as “the Channel” throughout this case study.

<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) 2016/589 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, and amending Regulations (EU) No 492/2011 and (EU) No 1296/2013. Available online at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L\\_.2016.107.01.0001.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2016.107.01.0001.01.ENG).

Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification framework to facilitate automated matching of CVs and job vacancies in the future. To ensure that the common IT system and the national systems are set up correctly from the start, an Interoperability Working Group was established where each EURES country is represented by a dedicated interoperability contact person (IOC). The working group works on agreeing common processes and standards. Some of the outcomes of this working group included technical documentation such as the Interoperability Process Manual and the Functional Message Exchange Specifications.

To accompany these developments, two further Commission Implementing Decisions were adopted. Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1020<sup>4</sup> described the process of adoption and update of the list of skills, competences and occupations of ESCO while the Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1021<sup>5</sup> focused on the adoption of technical standards and formats. The adoption of these Implementing Decisions also marked the start of a three-year period during which the EURES countries were asked to put together an initial inventory of their national, regional and sectoral classifications and their correspondence to the ESCO classification. Furthermore, the Commission made available technical and financial support to accompany such mapping as well as the development of the national system to transfer job vacancies and CVs to the EURES portal. One of such supports was the establishment of the ESCO Mapping Platform<sup>6</sup>.

To facilitate the IT developments necessary on the side of the EURES countries, the Commission developed three Default Implementation Modules that the countries could use to set up their internal system and connect it to the single coordinated channel, as follows:

1. A module that transforms the information within the national database into .xml files;
2. A module that puts together the .xml files into a database;
3. An API module that establishes the connection between the national database and the EURES portal.

About 80 % of the EURES countries have made use of these modules when creating their national system. The Commission also set up a specific issue tracking system where the countries can request additional support and the Commission's development team can flag up any issues with the transferred job vacancies or CVs, for example, in connection to their standard.

## 1.2 Methodology

### 1.2.1 *Relevance of the topic*

The development of the single coordinated channel and the connected ESCO mapping is the single largest IT development that the ECO and the EURES countries performed in relation to EURES. While the Commission developed Default Implementation Modules that the EURES countries can make use of when setting up their systems, development and mapping is still needed in each country.

To this end, the objective of this case study is to provide a detailed description of the current status of the connection to the single coordinated channel in each country within the scope of this case study (Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden). The case study maps obstacles that prevent the countries from fully complying with the Regulation in this aspect. It also assesses whether the introduction of the common channel and the connected developments and mapping led to reduced or increased administrative burden for

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<sup>4</sup> Available online at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018D1020>.

<sup>5</sup> Available <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018D1021>.

<sup>6</sup> Information available [https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/escopeedia/ESCO\\_mapping\\_platform](https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/escopeedia/ESCO_mapping_platform).

the countries covered by the case study. Additionally, it looks into how the introduction of the Channel contributes to the fulfilment the EURES specific objective of achieving a nearly complete supply of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal.

The table below shows how the case study's research questions correlate with the broader Evaluation Questions of the study.

Table 1 Case study research questions

Case study research question	Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added
What changes took place with regard to the job vacancy and CV offer on the EURES portal in connection with the introduction of the Single Coordinated Channel? Did it contribute to a better offer and quality of job vacancies/CVs across the EURES network in comparison with the pre-2018 situation?	To what extent the EURES portal contributed to: 1. facilitating intra-EU placements thanks to job seekers all over Europe having instant access to nearly complete supply of job vacancies on the EURES portal and registered employers recruiting from an extensive pool of CVs available? 2. effective and smooth recruitment process due to highly automated, user-friendly and effective matching between job vacancies, job applications and CVs, translating in all EU languages and understanding skills, competences, occupations and qualifications acquired at national level?	X				
What is the current status of connection to the single coordinated channel in all countries? Are the CVs and job vacancies from national databases being sent to the EURES portal?	To what extent Member States complied with EURES regulation? How this level of Member States compliance affected the effectiveness of EURES regulation?	X				
Comparison of the single coordinated channel with the previous system in terms of effects and outputs	To what extent the outputs and effects of the EURES actions promote voluntary geographical and occupational mobility in the Union on a fair basis?	X				
What were the costs attributed to the single coordinated channel in terms of human resources, IT development, administrative burden in the selected countries? Were they one-off costs or recurring ones?	To what extent has administrative burden increased/decreased compared to the previous EURES Regulation?		X			

Source: Study team

## 1.2.2 Methodological approach

This section summarises the methodology applied for this case study. It follows the general approach to all case studies but is tailored to the specific topic of this case study.

### Scope

As all EURES countries are required to adapt their internal systems to be able to transfer job vacancies and CVs through the single coordinated channel, this case study topic was researched in all the 10 case study countries – Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

### Data collection

#### *Overview of literature sources*

The document review for this case study included an analysis of the relevant EU Regulation and the two Implementing Decisions adopted in relation to the single coordinated channel and ESCO – Commission Implementing Decisions (EU) 2018/1020 and (EU) 2018/1021. The documents and information contained in the IOC Working Group’s Workspace on the EURES portal was considered as well. For example, the interoperability process manual and minutes of the Interoperability Working Group’s meetings. Furthermore, documents and presentations made at the EURES Coordination Group’s meetings were taken into account. On top of these, some case study countries provided the study team with additional national documents connected to the topic.

#### *Overview of stakeholders consulted*

The case study included carrying out 20 telephone or online interviews with individuals, one group online interview and one online workshop.

Table 2 Stakeholders consulted

Stakeholder category	Country	Topics covered	Data collection tool	
			Interview	Workshops
<b>NCO</b>	BE, DE, ES, EE, HU, IT, NL, PO, PT, SE	Current situation of the single coordinated channel and ESCO, strategical decisions, related costs, added value	X	X (IT)
<b>IOC</b>	BE, DE, ES, EE, HU, IT, NL, PO, PT, SE	Current situation of the single coordinated channel and ESCO, technical developments, administrative burden, added value	X	X (IT)

Source: Study team

Whilst the focus of the case study is on the stakeholders directly involved in the implementation of the single coordinated channel (i.e. NCOs and PES staff in charge of IT developments), the areas connected to the impact of the implementation were touched upon also in interviews with EURES staff, jobseekers and employers. The questions directed towards these stakeholders focused on whether they have noticed any changes (improvement/decline) in the job vacancies and CVs offer on the EURES portal. These additional insights have been incorporated in the triangulation of the data, where relevant.

To understand the idea behind the single coordinated channel and how the development proceeded from the Commission's side, the study team undertook two additional interviews, one with the Policy Officer responsible for the channel and one with an external contractor who has been working on the job vacancy transfer to the EURES portal since 2012 and is the main person involved in the IT developments connected to the channel.

#### *Limitations of the data collection*

The data collection for this case study encountered some challenges. As a result of the federal structure in Belgium, there are four Public Employment Services<sup>7</sup>, one for each of the federal regions. Each of the four Public Employment Services are individual EURES Members that are connected to the Single Coordination Channel separately. Not all the Members were available to contribute to the case study. Therefore, the observations for Belgium represent only part of the Belgian system as described by Actiris, Le Forem and VDAB.

### **1.3 Main findings**

This section presents the main information and findings collected during the performance of the case study.

#### *1.3.1 State of play in the Member States in focus*

The single coordinated channel is fully operational. This means that all the countries are connected to the IT system through which the transfer of relevant job vacancies and CVs takes place. However, not all the countries are making use of this connection to transfer their relevant job vacancies and CVs to be included in the EURES portal databases. With regard to job vacancies, all EURES countries are connected to the system and their eligible vacancies are transferred to the EURES portal at the interval of their choosing. When it comes to the transfer of CVs, not all countries are transferring them to the EURES portal just yet. This can be attributed to a combination of factors, the first being that previously no transfer of CVs was taking place between national databases and the EURES portal, therefore, the countries had to develop the system and their processes for this. Another factor that caused delays is that CVs contain personal data, therefore, there was a need to clarify some privacy questions to ensure alignment with GDPR and adequate data protection.

In 2018, the first year that the channel was operational, 3 839 403 job vacancies were transferred from the national databases to the EURES portal one. For the transfer of job vacancies in 2019, there are two different sets of figures. One set is based on the Performance Measurement System's network indicator 4c<sup>8</sup> data provided by the EURES countries. The other set is based on data provided by ECO for the network indicator 5a<sup>9</sup>. Based on the data from EURES countries, a total of 6 138 649 job vacancies were transferred to the EURES portal in 2019. According to ECO data, this total comes to 20 303 028. For now, it is not clear why this significant discrepancy between data at the national and European level occurs. An assumption is a difference in

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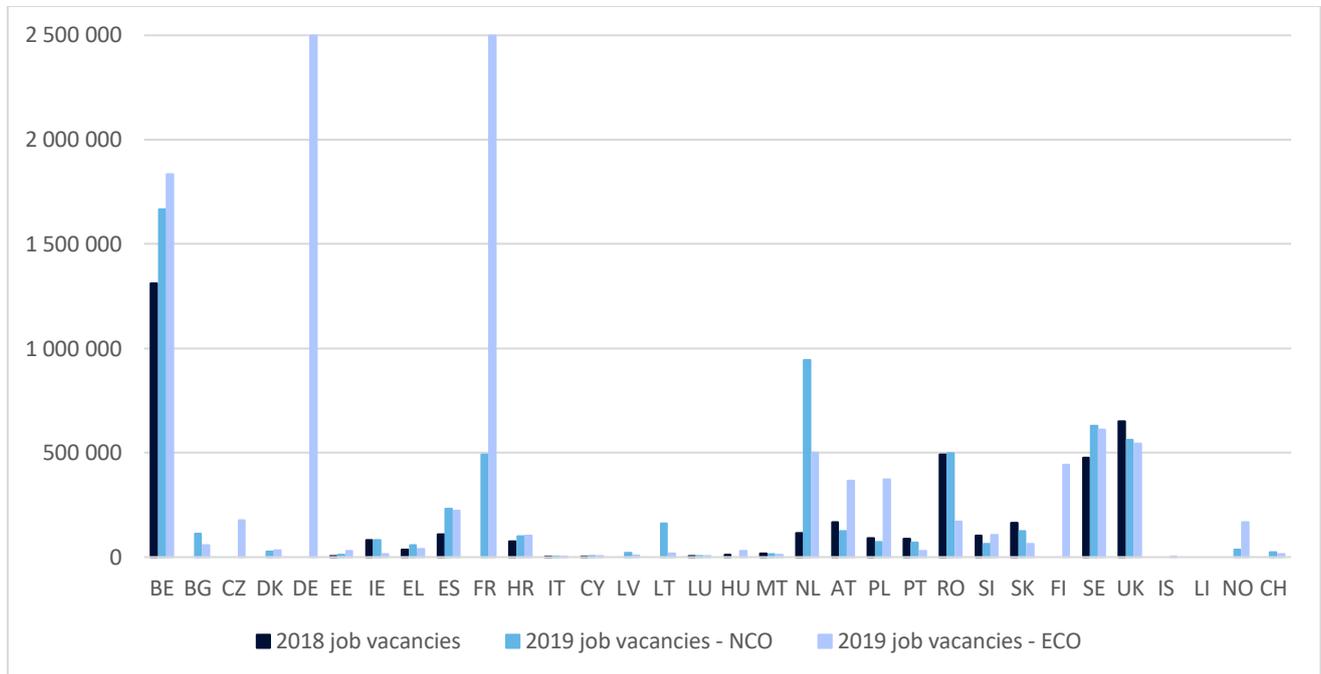
<sup>7</sup> The four Public Employment Services are: Actiris, ADG, Le Forem and VDAB.

<sup>8</sup> Network indicator 4c: Vacancies made publicly available and posted on the EURES portal by EURES Members and Partners - Number of job vacancies made available through the single coordinated channel to the EURES Portal

<sup>9</sup> Network indicator 5a: Market share of the EURES Members and, where relevant, EURES Partners on the job vacancy market at the national level - Number of job vacancies made available through the single coordinated channel to the EURES Portal

methodology used to monitor them.<sup>10</sup> The figure below presents an overview of data on the transfer of JVs to the EURES portal per EURES country.

Figure 1 Number of JVs transferred through the single coordinated channel in 2018 and 2019 per EURES country



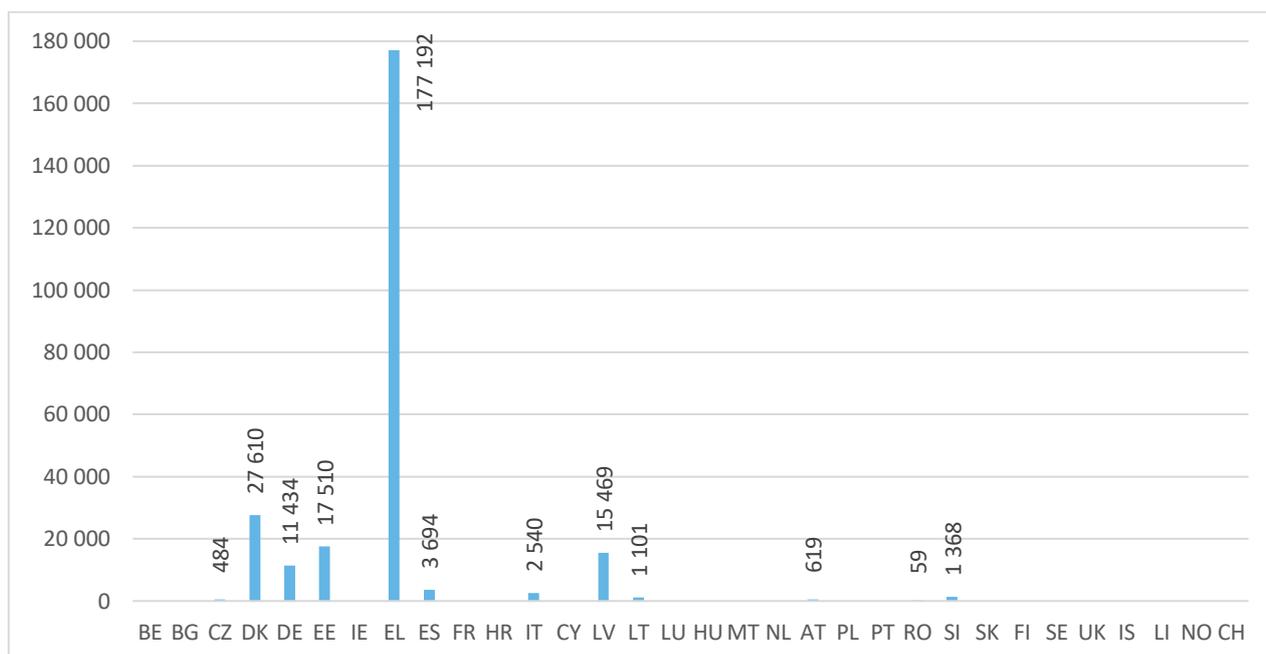
Source: 2018 NCO data for PMS, 2019 NCO data for PMS and ECO data for PMS.

Note: The 2019 ECO data for Germany and France has been scaled down to better showcase the differences between the two data sets. According to ECO data, the total number of job vacancies transferred in 2019 is 8 737 737 for Germany and 5 590 086 for France.

In 2018, 321 CVs were transferred through the single coordinated channel to the EURES portal as only three countries were able to transfer them. These were the Czech Republic, Denmark and Lithuania. In 2019, there were a total of 259 080 CVs transferred to the EURES portal. The graph below shows the number of CVs transferred per EURES country.

<sup>10</sup> This discrepancy is included as one of the findings of the 2019 PMS Joint Analysis Report and will need to be further discussed within the EURES network.

Figure 2 Number of CVs transferred through the single coordinated channel in 2019 per EURES country



Source: 2019 ECO data for PMS

Note: For the countries where there is no value, no CVs were transferred to the EURES portal in 2019.

With regard to the implementation of the single coordinated channel in each of the case study countries, the current status is as follows:

### Belgium

Actiris, Le Forem and VDAB are all connected through the single coordinated channel to transfer their eligible job vacancies to the EURES portal. Regarding the transfer of CVs, only Le Forem is transferring full information from their CVs database. While VDAB does transfer their CVs through the Channel, they do not contain personal information such as name and contact information due to privacy and data protection reasons. Actiris does not transfer their CVs at all due to privacy and data protection reasons. The issue is currently being discussed with the European Coordination Office.

For the ESCO mapping, a working group consisting of all four PES EURES Members and the Luxembourgish EURES has been created. While the mapping is currently on hold, it should be completed on time within the expected timeframe.

### Estonia

EURES Estonia is connected to the single coordinated channel and has been transferring eligible job vacancies to the EURES portal since the establishment of the connection. With regard to the CVs, the transfer of eligible ones commenced in the spring of 2019. Estonia makes use of the Default Implementation Modules and transfers an update to the EURES portal every 12 hours.

In relation to the ESCO mapping, it still needs to be implemented in the national system. This is foreseen to happen during 2020. However, at time of writing, no decision has been taken as to the manner in which the ESCO classification will be implemented. Currently, EURES Estonia is using ESCO when creating job vacancy and CV entries but other organisations in the country (for example, the Statistical Institute, Chamber of Occupations) use a different national classification system, therefore, an agreement needs to be reached.

## *Germany*

Germany transfers both their eligible job vacancies and CVs through the single coordinated channel to the EURES portal. However, during the setting up of the national connection, there were some questions regarding the security of the data transfer in relation to data protection and GDPR. From the technical point of view, there were no issues with the implementation. Now the focus is on connecting the new Members and Partners to the channel. This might take a while as these new organisations still need to adapt their internal systems. The updates are transferred every 24 hours; however, the IOC contact can also force a manual transfer, particularly in situations where a jobseeker changes their mind about giving consent for their CV to be published on the EURES portal.

The mapping of ESCO has started in March 2020 with the technical implementation foreseen to be in place by April 2021. The mapping has been completed for jobs and competences. At national level, the country opted for keeping their national classification which may adopt some of the competence classifications of ESCO.

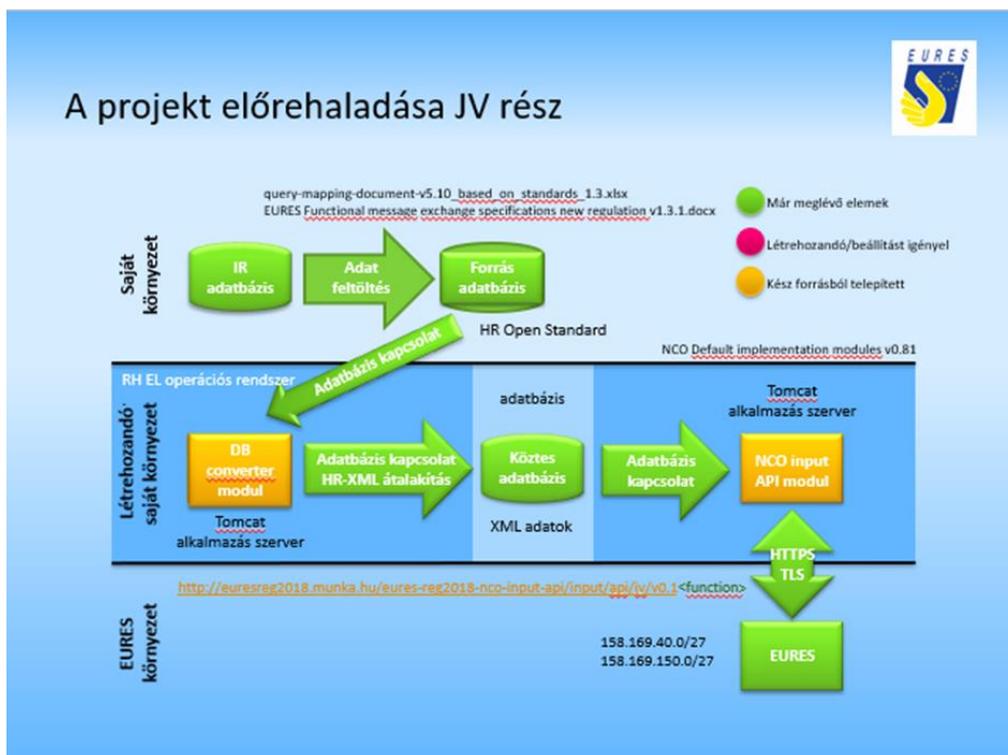
## *Hungary*

As of May 2018, EURES Hungary transfers their eligible job vacancies through the single coordinated channel to the EURES portal. Regarding the transfer of CVs, it is currently in the test phase in the EURES Conformance Environment where both the Commission and national sides monitor whether the transfer of the information is taking place as it should. Currently, the basic data of the applicant, the data of the data provider, the data on education and work experience are displayed. The ISCED<sup>11</sup> code for education, the 'Industry code' and the 'Job Category Code' for work experience are being incorporated into the transfer. Additionally, the developments connected to the cancellation of the CV and the cancellation of the CV's publication are in progress. The job vacancies are transferred once per day, while the CV information is updated every 30 minutes. The figure below provides an overview of how the national system for the job vacancy transfer works.

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<sup>11</sup> International Standard Classification of Education

Figure 3 Graphic representation of job vacancies transfer between Hungary and EURES portal



Source: EURES Hungary

The introduction of ESCO codes recommended for skills and occupations into the Hungarian labour market application is at an early stage. No formal decision has yet been made whether to fully incorporate the ESCO codes one by one or to match them to the national FEOR<sup>12</sup> occupation codes currently in use.

### Italy

To connect to the single coordinated channel, Italy had to re-design completely their IT system. Until August 2019, a limited number of job vacancies and CVs was sent but after that the sending was temporarily suspended. As of the beginning of 2020, the job vacancies and CVs are being transferred to the EURES portal again. There is an ongoing testing with a larger number of CVs and vacancies to see if the transfer occurs correctly also in terms of standards.

Regarding the mapping of ESCO, this was previously handled by a research unit within the Italian PES before EURES Italy took over the work. Italy uses their own classification system, but it is foreseen that the first pillar of ESCO – occupations – will be adopted to make it easier.

### Netherlands

Concerning job vacancies, the single coordination channel is fully operational and EURES Netherlands is sending information to the EURES portal. Since 2019, the volumes of job vacancies transfers grew significantly. While for CVs, although the testing has been concluded, some issues were identified that slowed down the process. Nonetheless, the system should be fully operational by early summer 2020. Members and Partners can deliver their vacancies to the NCO and these are then sent to the EURES portal. However, this process is not automated yet. To do so, they can register themselves as employers on the national portal or they can send the vacancies manually and then they are uploaded onto the national portal. However, the API system to directly

<sup>12</sup> Foglalkozások Egységes Osztályozási Rendszere

connect the Members and Partners to the national database will hopefully be released by the end of the summer 2020. Concerning CVs, this functionality is not in place yet.

The idea is to make use of the ESCO classification by the end of 2020/beginning of 2021. The relevant PES department is carrying out the ESCO mapping and is progressing well, however it has not been asked yet to start the implementation and the related activities. At the moment, there are some obstacles in reporting certain languages in the CVs because ESCO does not recognise them or they are not available but overall, there are not many other differences between ESCO and the national classification.

### *Poland*

In Poland, the national-level central database of job vacancies – Centralna Baza Ofert Pracy (CBOP) – is connected to the single coordinated channel. On a daily basis, the CBOP downloads job vacancies from the informatic systems of the county (powiat) labour offices which are the offices that provide services to employers and jobseekers<sup>13</sup>. On top of that, the CBOP downloads job vacancies from the Voluntary Labour Corps – Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy (OHP)- a EURES Partner that provides recruitment services and has a separate job vacancy database. This system of transfers exists since 2007, so it is not a novelty. The Regulation did not change the way it works but introduced some quality and technical standards for the transfer itself.

Regarding transfer of CVs, it was difficult to connect to the single coordinated channel because of personal data and privacy concerns which complicated the process of connecting the transfer of CVs to the portal. Poland did not have a central database of CVs but a central registry of unemployed people. By interpreting the Regulation provisions and in line with the data privacy concerns, it was decided that unemployed persons registered at the registry at county labour offices could decide whether they wanted their personal data to be transferred to the EURES portal. EURES Poland created a special system which sources necessary data from the registry of unemployed people, creates a CV and transfers it through the single coordinated channel to the EURES portal. This system was launched in January 2020 and the mechanisms have to be improved; nevertheless, the transfer works.

Regarding ESCO, the national Polish classification only uses one pillar – Occupations and specialties, therefore, it is necessary to map its correspondence with ESCO classification. This pillar is already transcribed into the IT systems of Polish labour offices and at the same time, it is more detailed, precise and up to date in comparison to ESCO. The Polish classification will continue to be used when registering CVs and job vacancies, but it will be automatically converted to ESCO when sent to the portal.

### *Portugal*

Portugal has been sending job vacancies to the EURES portal through the single coordinated channel since 2018 with updates on a daily basis. Regarding the transfer of CVs, the transfer is not taking place yet. It was foreseen to start in March 2020 but due to the COVID-19 emergency this start has been delayed.

The Portuguese PES opted for a full adoption of ESCO into its systems for occupations and skills/competences pillars. To this end, EURES Portugal submitted a proposal under the 2019 call for proposals VP/2019/010 and has been awarded a project to be funded through EaSI<sup>14</sup>. This should provide a definitive solution to enable further support to “fuzzy-matching” and complex matching processes, as well as to collect critical data to produce useful gap analyses on candidate

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<sup>13</sup> Voivodeship and powiat labour offices have separate informatic systems because the administration is decentralised: powiat and voivodeship labour offices are independent.

<sup>14</sup> Employment and Social Innovation Programme

skills and competences. However, the project is facing a delay because of the COVID-19 pandemic circumstances.

### *Spain*

To accommodate Spain's regionalised system, all the work to establish a connection with the single coordinated channel was carried out through a SISPE-EURES Working Group (Information System for Public Employment Services-EURES). This group was formed by representatives of the 17 regional PES coordinated by the NCO EURES Spain, with the support of the General Sub-directorates of Active Employment Policies, Information and Statistics, and ICT of SEPE (Spanish PES). The group's main aim was to reach a consensus and a unified implementation common to all the EURES Members. To achieve this, the job vacancies format for EURES had to be systematised for all regional portals in Spain. For the transfer of CVs, the EURES portal's user consent served as a reference. Now, eligible CVs and job vacancies from all regional employment portals are transferred as well as the ones from the national 'Empleate' portal of the Spanish PES (SEPE) which also has an agreement with private employment portals about publishing their job opportunities.

A working group was also constituted for the ESCO mapping, GT SISPE-EURES-ESCO, to establish the procedure and follow-up channels. The mapping of correspondence of occupations in Spain's national classification with ESCO occupations was carried out by experts from the working group according to their sectoral involvement and expertise. So far, no changes have been made yet as EURES Spain is studying the ESCO competency pillar as additional fields to register both job vacancies and CVs.

### *Sweden*

EURES Sweden is connected to the single coordinated channel and sends all job vacancies through to the EURES portal. At the moment, not all CVs and jobseekers' data are being transferred as the developments in this are still ongoing. For now, Members and Partners are only able to send their job vacancies to EURES through the national portal but then they appear within the single coordinated channel system as published by PES and not necessarily by the individual Members or Partners. Developments are ongoing to connect the IT systems of the Members and Partners to the national database.

The work on ESCO mapping is ongoing. The mapping for occupations has been completed. However, the mapping of competences is rather difficult. It requires more resources in terms of time as there is a need to find solutions for a number of questions. Tables matching the national classification to ESCO have been developed.

## *1.3.2 Responses to the research questions*

The following sections present the case study findings to each of the EQM questions as identified in the table [Table 1 Case study research questions](#) above.

### **Effectiveness**

*What changes took place with regard to the job vacancy and CV offer on the EURES portal in connection with the introduction of the Single Coordinated Channel?*

As shown in the graphs above, the Performance Measurements System's data show that the number of job vacancies and CVs transferred from the national databases to the EURES portal are on the rise. With regard to the transfer of CVs, while there are still only few countries that are able to already transfer them, the development of the single coordinated channel did in fact contribute to somewhat greater offer of candidates for the employers, as under the previous

system these CVs would not be available unless each of the jobseekers registered directly on the EURES portal and uploaded their CV.

For the job vacancies, the impact of the single coordinated channel might not be so straightforward. The transfer of job vacancies was already ongoing before the new Regulation but in a less coordinated manner. As one of the interviewees pointed out, it was harder to have a centralised overview of the actual job vacancy offer. In this area, the development of the Channel allowed to have a more up-to-date offer of job vacancies and also provided a better overview of the quality of the transferred information. However, a considerable number of respondents to the jobseekers' and Members' and Partners' surveys highlighted that the frequency with which the job vacancies database is updated should be improved as some job vacancy offers for six-month employment uploaded in 2018 still came up as a possible match in 2020.

While the PMS reports and EURES portal customer satisfaction surveys observe an increase in the number of effected placements, it is not possible to assign this improvement singularly to the development of the channel, especially as the new Regulation also introduced stricter monitoring requirements. The majority of interviewees attribute this to the fact that now there are more incentives for a follow up with EURES clients (both jobseekers and employers) about the outcome of the support provided.

*Did it contribute to a better offer and quality of job vacancies/CVs across the EURES network in comparison with the pre-2018 situation?*

The introduction of the single coordinated channel and the use of ESCO in the transferred job vacancies and CVs aimed to not only improve the quantity of job vacancies and CVs available on the EURES portal but also their quality through the harmonisation of what and how the information is provided. In all of the case study countries as well as in the remaining EURES countries, the ESCO mapping is still ongoing and will not be completed until 2021. Therefore, all interviewees agree that the full impact of introducing a harmonised classification of skills, competences and qualifications on the quality of job vacancy offers and well as the CV offers will not be observable in the short term. The interviewees also agree that it is important to continuously adapt the ESCO classification and its mapping to make sure it corresponds to the latest developments in the educational fields and the skills and competences of the workforce.

This also means that any new process developments connected to the implementation of automated matching will need to wait until the mapping is complete. In this area, the interviewees stress that for the automated matching to work, the system will need to be set up well and all the involved parties will need to adhere to the procedures and standards. Nevertheless, even if this is complied with, the interviewees still see the need for a personal (human) involvement in the matching process, mainly to confirm that the results are correct.

As mentioned under the previous question, the majority of EURES countries have been transferring their job vacancies through the single coordinated channel to the EURES portal for a while now. However, according to some of the EURES staff that consult the portal in order to perform matching, this transfer so far has not led to improved quality of job vacancies and consequently better matching/pre-selection of candidates. However, there are also a few interviewees that suggested that the offer did improve.

Nonetheless, the reform was important in that it defined the quality and technical standards of information sent to the portal (what should be included in CVs and job vacancies). At the same time, it should be noted that the quality of job vacancies and CVs on the portal depends solely on the quality of information clients (employers and jobseekers) provide on their side. There are only a few sections that are mandatory, others are voluntary and, therefore, CVs and job vacancies

can be very brief. If an employer or jobseeker decides to provide the mandatory data only, the quality on the portal will not improve. To this end, in some countries the EURES staff advise employers to include as much information as possible to facilitate better matching. In some countries, as a preventive measure for the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, new services were established, for example, counselling sessions on how to write a CV so that it contains all the necessary information in the correct format.

The EURES staff interviewed did agree that what did help in terms of facilitating matching was the addition of various filtering options for both the CVs and job vacancies databases on the EURES portal. Nevertheless, the area of matching functionalities and possibilities of the EURES portal has been highlighted as one of the areas with a need for continuous development and improvement.

*What is the current status of connection to the single coordinated channel in the selected countries? Are the CVs and job vacancies from national databases being sent to the EURES portal?* As described in section 1.State of play in the Member States in focus, in terms of the transfer of job vacancies to the EURES portal, all case study countries have a system in place and are sending their job vacancies. Therefore, in this area the countries are in compliance with the Regulation. However, based on the feedback from the EURES staff this compliance has so far not translated fully into a better offer of job vacancies on the EURES portal or improved matching.

Looking at the transfer of CVs, currently only five of the case study countries (DE, EE, ES, IT, PL) are able to transfer their eligible CVs to the EURES portal in the required format. There are a few case study countries (NL, PT) where the CVs were already supposed to be transferred but because of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact, the implementation has been delayed. In the remaining countries, the developments are still ongoing with a few of them being already in the testing phase. Therefore, in this aspect, not all case study countries are in compliance with the Regulation. The impact of this non-compliance being a lower offer of available candidates on the EURES portal for employers to consult. The lower offer of candidates may also impact the EURES staff's possibility of matching.

The main reason for the delay in transferring eligible CVs to the EURES portal from national databases was the data privacy issue, particularly with regard to the requirements of the GDPR. The interviewees mentioned that this was keenly debated at all the Interoperability Working Group and EURES Coordination Group's meetings which raised the topic. During the performed PMS data collection, it was even mentioned that some countries still refuse to transfer their CVs for this reason.

The EURES Regulation also requires the EURES countries to set up their national systems in a way that allows the newly admitted Members and Partners to transfer job vacancies and CVs to the EURES portal. From the case study countries that have already admitted new Members and Partners, two (DE, PL) have such a system in place. However, in the case of Germany while the technical process is set up, the new Members and Partners are not transferring their job vacancy and CV offers as they need to adjust their internal systems. For other two countries that have expanded their networks (NL, SE), while they are able to transfer at least the job vacancies from the network, these still appear in the single coordinated channel system as uploaded by the PES Member. Developments are ongoing though to rectify this. Therefore, in this aspect only one country is fully complying with the Regulation. Interestingly in the case of Spain, they not only transfer job vacancies and CVs from their 17 EURES PES Members but the national "Empleate" portal has an agreement with private employment services that allows them to transfer the eligible offers from their databases.

In terms of ESCO, each of the case study countries is in a different stage of the mapping of national and ESCO competences, laying the ground for future implementation. As in this area, the implementation timeline has been set for 2021, for now the case study countries are in compliance with the Regulation. However, some of the countries mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic might influence their possibilities to further progress with the exercise as resources are being shifted to other priority areas.

*Comparison of the single coordinated channel with the previous system in terms of effects and outputs.*

Previously, the transfer of job vacancies to the EURES portal was coordinated from the EURES portal side, therefore, it required very little intervention from the EURES countries. However, it also meant that there were no common standards on the type of information the job vacancies should contain. This also made it harder for the system to translate the offer into other EU languages if it was available only in the native one.

The introduction of the single coordinated channel gave some of the responsibility for the transfer to the EURES countries. This led to the majority of countries having to re-design their internal IT systems. Nonetheless, the interviewees agree that it also led to the system being much more transparent and easier to understand.

The main additional value of the single coordinated channel according to the interviewees is the fact that it introduced common standards to both job vacancies and CVs which, once completely implemented, should lead to a better quality of the available offers. As the EURES portal is one of the main tools of EURES, some form of standardisation with regard to the offer of CVs and job vacancies would have to take place sooner or later. The Regulation introduced the single coordinated channel and required the EURES countries to cooperate in setting such standards and correlating the ESCO classifications with the national ones via the consequent Implementing Decisions. This meant that this process came about more smoothly and also provided the countries with the opportunity to voice their concerns and agree on a common standard to be adhered to.

### **Summary of findings on effectiveness**

The compliance with the Regulation in this area is uneven. While all the EURES countries are transferring their job vacancies to the EURES portal, the transfer of CVs is lagging behind. One of the reasons for this concerns the questions connected to data protection and the new requirements introduced by the GDPR.

So far, the impact of the single coordinated channel on the greater offer of job opportunities, larger pool of candidates and facilitated placements cannot be fully assessed. Once the implementation of the ESCO mapping is finalised, the expectation is that the quality of the job vacancy and CVs offer will improve and this in turn will lead to better matching and more placements in the future.

The development of the single coordinated channel led the EURES countries to be much more involved in the transfer for the CVs and job vacancies and made the whole process much more transparent. This also led to the development of common standards on the EU level that each EURES country needs to adhere to.

## Efficiency

*What were the costs attributed to the single coordinated channel in terms of human resources, IT development, administrative burden in the selected countries? Were they one-off costs or recurring ones?*

According to the majority of interviewees, the previous system was a quasi-static solution, with major limitations as to its scalability. Once implemented, the system witnessed no significant evolution, so it required only minimal monitoring. It was also considered to be quite a black box where no one really knew what exactly was going on. However, one of the interviewees mentioned that they did in fact prefer the previous system as it required minimal input from them.

In comparison, the single coordinated channel is a much more complex system, systematised and structured in order to be scalable. Interviewees see it as being designed to reflect and respond to the requirements of a rapidly changing job market. The accompanying documentation is also much more transparent. One of the interviewees mentioned that one area where further improvement is needed is the area of statistics in connection with the Single Coordinated Channel.

In connection to the costs and administrative burden, the interviewees were divided into two groups. The first group mentioned that all the implemented improvements meant that the administrative burden, in terms of human resources but also financial ones, has clearly increased. This group also perceived the current return on investments as negative. This is due to the Channel requiring much greater implementation effort despite the available Default Implementation Modules, closer coordination between the teams and permanent monitoring and updating. Some of this burden could be eased by making use of funding under EaSI or ESF. In the longer-term, the administrative burden is expected to decrease and be much lower than under the previous system. The second group of respondents saw the impact on administrative burden as neutral. They said that the introduced changes had no effect on their work or that their impact had not resulted in a significant increase in their day-to-day work.

Nonetheless, for the investment made into the single coordinated channel and ESCO mapping by the EURES countries and the European Commission itself, the developments need to continue, particularly with regard to the functionalities of the EURES portal.

### Summary of findings on efficiency

Overall, the single coordinated channel brought more structure and more tools to assess the results, as well as more access to relevant information. It also brought more demand for standardisation and more attention on IT developments. These generally translated into increased recurring administrative burden, although in financial terms, the possibility to fund some one-off developments, particularly connected to ESCO mapping, through European funds (e.g. EaSI) has helped to ease the burden to some extent.

## 1.4 Conclusions

Before the introduction of the Single Coordinated Channel, the system for transferring job vacancy offers to the EURES portal was much less reliable. It was also much harder to have an overview as to whether all the correct job vacancies were displayed to jobseekers when searching for job opportunities.

The introduction of such a system meant that in many cases the EURES countries had to re-design their national databases of job offers and of CVs. It is a process that is still ongoing. While all the EURES countries are able to transfer their job vacancies, the transfer of CVs has progressed

more slowly. This is also related to the fact that the information contained in the CVs requires more careful handling to ensure that the jobseekers' private data are not mishandled or misused.

So far, the introduction of the Channel has had minimal impact on the quality of the transferred information. Although, this is related to the fact that the ESCO mapping is still ongoing in all EURES countries with the classification system expected to be implemented during 2021. In the long-term, once the correspondence between the common classification of occupations, skills, competences and qualifications and the national ones is established, it is expected that the quality of both the job vacancies and CVs transferred to the EURES portal will improve. This should also lead to an improved accuracy of matching services that in turn would lead to more effected placements, therefore, increasing the quantifiable results of the EURES services.

The single coordinated channel also meant that more attention was placed on IT developments. These generally translated into increased recurring administrative burden, although in financial terms, the possibility to fund some one-off developments, particularly connected to ESCO mapping, through European funds (e.g. EaSI) has helped to ease the burden to some extent.

## 2 IT PLATFORMS/AUTOMATED MATCHING AND MONITORING

### 2.1 Background

With a view to facilitating the exercise of the right of freedom of movement for workers and making the labour market fully accessible to workers and employers, as well as to allowing an effective and smooth recruitment process, Preamble 26 of the Regulation (EU) 2016/589 (the EURES Regulation) states that a common IT platform should be developed.<sup>15</sup> Preamble 28 further states that the IT platform should bring together job vacancies, for which jobseekers can apply, with job applications and CV data (hereinafter referred to also as 'jobseeker profile'), while enabling an automatic matching of data according to various criteria and levels, in order to further the integration of labour markets and thus increase employment in the European Union.

The EURES portal is such a platform, where employers advertise their vacancies to jobseekers in other countries, and jobseekers find information on labour markets in other Member States and access job vacancies from all the EU and EFTA countries through the EURES Job mobility portal. The EURES portal holds 3 million job offers daily and over 400 000 CVs ready for matching.<sup>16</sup> While it had already existed prior to the introduction of the Regulation (EU) 2016/589, the new legislation has put more focus on maximising the potential of the EURES portal for improving the standardised matching between labour supply and demand across Europe, with Preamble 29 the Regulation stating that "all job vacancies made publicly available through PES and other EURES Members [...], should be published on the EURES portal" and that the NCOs needed to ensure "a coordinated transfer of the data to the EURES portal through a single coordinated channel"<sup>17</sup>. For this purpose, the National Coordination Offices (NCOs) were to adapt their national IT platforms in such a way that would allow the transfer of job vacancies and CVs from the national databases to the EURES portal and also ensure that common standards were applied across the EURES network in terms of the intrinsic and technical quality of information exchanged, in line with the Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1020 and the Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1021.

In addition to the development of the IT platform for the purpose of recruitment and matching, the new Regulation established two data collection and measurement tools: the EURES Performance Measurement System (PMS), a procedural framework for collection and analysis of the data on the performance of the network, and the Programming Cycle (PC), a planning and reporting framework.

The PMS has replaced the previous voluntary reporting from EURES advisers with a view to improving the coordination and governance of the EURES network and a need for a more consistent and methodical approach to evaluating the progress made against the objectives set for the EURES network. The new Regulation described the following set of indicators for data collection by the NCOs:

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<sup>15</sup> REGULATION (EU) 2016/589 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 13 April 2016 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, and amending Regulations (EU) No 492/2011 and (EU) No 1296/2013. Available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L\\_.2016.107.01.0001.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2016.107.01.0001.01.ENG)

<sup>16</sup> 2016-2018 EURES activity report - COM (2019) 164 final.

<sup>17</sup> REGULATION (EU) 2016/589 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 13 April 2016 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, and amending Regulations (EU) No 492/2011 and (EU) No 1296/2013. Available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L\\_.2016.107.01.0001.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2016.107.01.0001.01.ENG).

- i. information and guidance by the EURES network, on the basis of the **number of contacts** that the EURES Members and Partners' staff have with workers and employers;
- ii. employment performance, including placement and recruitment resulting from EURES activity, on the basis of the **number of vacancies, job applications, CVs handled and processed by EURES Members and Partners' staff and the number of workers recruited in another Member State;**
- iii. **customer satisfaction with the EURES network.**

Furthermore, the Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/170<sup>18</sup> accompanies the Regulation and defines two further dimensions for data collection and monitoring. These are: the horizontal support provided, such as training, and communication and cooperation; and outreach activities, such as recruitment events and efforts to secure transparency of labour market information.

The implementation of the Regulation has put on the NCOs the responsibility of setting up a data collecting and reporting mechanism to enable the collection of data on above indicators from all national Member and Partners, and reporting in a way compatible with the reporting tool created by the European Coordination Office (ECO). The NCOs collect and report on the required data biannually and perform an annual data analysis of the results.

Beside the PMS, the PC was set up with a view to supporting the coordination of actions on mobility across EURES countries. The Regulation has put on the NCOs the responsibility to draft and share with the network the annual national 'work programmes' outlining the planned EURES activities in respective Member States, and the annual 'activity reports' which summarise the implementation against the set objectives. Specifically, the work programmes and activity reports specify national information and data in the following areas:

- i. the main activities to be carried out within the EURES network, at national level as a whole, and, where appropriate, at cross-border level;
- ii. the overall human and financial resources allocated for their implementation;
- iii. the arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of the activities planned, and, where necessary, for updating them.

Furthermore, the Implementing Decision (EU) 2017/1256<sup>19</sup> established the necessary templates and procedures to ensure a uniformed exchange of information on the EURES network national work programmes across the EURES network.

## 2.2 Methodology

### 2.2.1 Relevance of the topic

The goal of this case study is to provide in-depth information on the effect that the new EURES Regulation has had on the development of the IT platform, and the monitoring and reporting tools by the NCOs, and their effectiveness and efficiency in terms of achieving the objectives of the EURES network.

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<sup>18</sup> Available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018D0170&from=EN> .

<sup>19</sup> Available online [https://eures.praca.gov.pl/en/zal/podstawy\\_prawne/decyzja2017-1256en.pdf](https://eures.praca.gov.pl/en/zal/podstawy_prawne/decyzja2017-1256en.pdf) .

As part of the ex-post evaluation, the research questions addressed in this case study have a clear link to the broader Evaluation Questions as shown in Table 3 below. In particular, this case study looks at the extent to which the EURES portal facilitates the exchange of CVs and job vacancies and an effective and smooth recruitment process across the network. As such, it investigates the effectiveness of the EURES portal in matching labour supply with labour demand across Europe. Moreover, in view of efficiency, this case study looks at the effects that the introduction of the new monitoring and reporting tool has had on the functioning of the EURES network. The notion whether the introduction of the monitoring and performance tool has led to a reduced or increased administrative burden for the countries is considered as well.

Table 3 Case study research questions

Case study research question	Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added value
What national strategies are applied regarding matching and search in connection with the JV and CV offer on the EURES portal. What impact did the new EURES Regulation and the updated EURES portal have on this?	To what extent Member States complied with EURES Regulation? How this level of Member States compliance affected the effectiveness of EURES regulation?	X				
Has the new EURES legislation and the common IT platform (hence the automation of recruitment processes) improved the matching between labour demand (jobseekers) and supply (employers)?	How effective have the national and EU-level tools been, in particular the EURES portal, in matching between labour supply and demand across Europe? To what extent are the tools fit for the needs of businesses and job seekers in the digital age?	X				
What developments did the countries make with regard to the new requirements introduced by the new EURES Regulation regarding the monitoring and reporting of EURES activities (e.g. changes to the Programming Cycle and introduction of the Performance Measurement System)? Did these developments facilitated the process and made it more efficient?	How timely and cost-efficient were the procedures for reporting and monitoring? To what extent has administrative burden increased/decreased compared to the previous EURES regulation?		X			
Do the EURES portal and EURES tools address the needs of its users?	To what extent are the EURES tools fit for the needs of businesses and job seekers in the digital age?			X		
Has the implementation of a monitoring tool helped achieve the EURES objectives?	To what extent the EURES portal contributed to: 1. ..facilitating intra-EU placements thanks to job seekers all over Europe	X				

Case study research question	Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added value
	having instant access to nearly complete supply of job vacancies on the EURES portal and registered employers recruiting from an extensive pool of CVs available? 2. ...effective and smooth recruitment process due to highly automated, user-friendly and effective matching between job vacancies, job applications and CVs, translating in all EU languages and understanding skills, competences, occupations and qualifications acquired at national level?					

Source: Study team

### 2.2.2 Methodological approach

This section summarises the methodology deployed for this case study. It follows the general approach used for all case studies but is tailored keeping in mind the specific topics.

#### Scope

Five EURES countries were selected for the data collection: Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Spain. An overview of their main characteristics and relevance for the case study is provided below.

Table 4 Geographical scope and rationale

<b>EURES country</b>	<b>Sending / Receiving</b>	<b>Relevance of EURES country for case study</b>
<b>Estonia</b>	<i>Receiving</i>	EURES Estonia works closely with the national PES and has developed an automatic matching tool at national level.
<b>Hungary</b>	<i>Sending</i>	EURES Hungary continues to work on its monitoring to ensure harmonised approach across the network.
<b>Poland</b>	<i>Sending</i>	EURES Poland implemented a specific legislation to ensure an effective and efficient monitoring as mentioned in Article 17 of the EURES Regulation.
<b>Portugal</b>	<i>Sending</i>	EURES Portugal has developed an internal Excel set-up to monitor all activities going on, including line management info.
<b>Spain</b>	<i>Sending</i>	EURES Spain matches job vacancies and curricula through its national automated database. EURES Spain is also working on a tool able to match JVs and CVs by skills.

Source: Study team

Whilst the focus of the case study is on the above-mentioned countries, the topic of IT Platforms/ Matching and Monitoring tools was mentioned in interviews with representatives from other EURES countries. These additional insights have been incorporated in the triangulation of the data, where relevant.

#### Data collection

##### *Overview of literature sources*

The document review for this case study included the analysis of EU regulations of relevance to EURES, such as Regulation 2011/492 and Regulation 2016/589. In relation to the cooperation between Member States and the Commission regarding interoperability (exchange of CVs and job vacancies via the Single Coordinated Channel) and automated matching between CVs and job vacancies, the data collection benefited from the analysis of the following documentation:

- 1) Commission Implementing Decision 2017/1257 on the technical standards and formats required for a uniform system to enable matching of job vacancies with job applications and CVs in the EURES portal;
- 2) Commission Implementing Decision 2018/1020, which establishes the list of skills, competences and occupations of the European classification (ESCO) to be used for the operation of the EURES common IT platform, as provided for in Article 19 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589 which also lays down the procedures for updating and reviewing this list;
- 3) Commission Implementing Decision 2018/1021, which lays down the technical standards and formats necessary for the operation of the automated matching through the common IT platform using the European classification (ESCO) and the interoperability between national systems and the European classification.

The EURES portal and its Extranet provided useful information on labour markets across Member States by means of coordinated documents, such as the six-monthly and annual Performance Measurement System reports (PMS), and national analyses, such as Work Programmes and Activity Reports. On top of these, some case study countries provided the study team with additional national documentation connected to the topic.

### *Overview of stakeholders consulted*

For this case study, the study team carried out 22 face-to-face interviews and 1 workshop with stakeholders from multiple EURES networks.

Table 5 Stakeholders consulted

Stakeholder category	Country	Topics covered	Data collection tool	
			Interview	Workshop
<b>NCO</b>	EE, ES, HU, PL, PT	Matching and search functionalities; EURES regulation; national EURES portal; monitoring and reporting of activities; support by ECO	X (EE, ES, PL, PT)	X (EE, ES, HU)
<b>EURES staff</b>	EE, ES, PL, PT	National EURES portal; automated matching tool; EURES regulation; IT developments	X	X (EE, ES)

Source: Study team

### *Limitations of the data collection*

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, a single workshop with stakeholders coming from three different EURES countries (Estonia, Hungary and Spain) was carried out.

## **2.3 Main findings**

### *2.3.1 State of play in the Member States in focus*

The EURES portal offers a wide range of functionalities to its users (i.e. jobseekers, employers, EURES staff at national and European level). Among the most prominent are the following:

- 1) The portal allows jobseekers/employers to upload curricula/job vacancies and therefore to look for job opportunities/potential candidates. In 2019, the jobseekers' profiles (CVs) uploaded to the portal amounted to 672 116. In the same year, 6 138 649 job vacancies were transferred through the single coordinated channel to the EURES portal.
- 2) The EURES portal provides information on a broad range of topics related to labour mobility, such as information on living and working in the EURES countries.
- 3) It allows users to get in touch with EURES advisers and the participation in European (Online) Job Days.

One of the objectives of the EURES Regulation is to provide the EURES portal with a matching engine able to automatically match specific job vacancies with relevant curricula and vice versa. The steps undertaken by national EURES networks and the European Commission – such as the implementation of the single coordinated channel and the ESCO mapping – are leading towards this goal. However, due to delays faced by some countries in translating their inventory of national, regional and sectoral classifications into the ESCO classification, the matching functionality at European level cannot be yet launched.

The development of a common IT platform able to match labour demand and supply at European level is, therefore, still ongoing. It will enable workers and employers to match automatically according to various criteria and levels, thus contributing to increasing employment within the Union. In the meantime, the filtering function (through which the portal users can search the job vacancies and CV databases) has been expanded to include more filters than previously, allowing for a more tailored search of offers.

Estonia and Spain have an automated matching system in place at national level, which has been implemented since the application of EURES Regulation 2016/589 and two implementing decision of 2017 and 2018. The automated matching is embedded within their national IT platforms that collect JVs and CVs at country level.

Although potentially the automated matching system is a tool able to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the recruitment system promoted by EURES, interviewees have raised issues concerning the outcome of the matching service. A high-quality match between labour demand and supply relies on the quantity and quality of information (i.e. transparency) shared by both jobseekers and employers on the EURES portal, and given that very little information to be uploaded is mandatory, the automated matching does not often give adequate results.

Therefore, EURES advisers are still heavily involved in pairing job vacancies with relevant jobseekers' profiles, in order to provide workers with a job that fits their characteristics and to find the most appropriate workers to meet employers' needs. They expect to continue to do this even with automated matching in order to provide tailored services and ensure the correctness of the matching results. In this respect, jobseekers are also advised to be proactive and reach out to the employer(s) who are offering a job position of interest.

### 2.3.2 Responses to the research questions

The following sections present the case study findings to each of the EQM questions as identified in the Table 3 Case study research questions<sub>z</sub> above.

#### **Effectiveness**

*What national strategies are applied regarding matching and search in connection with the JV and CV offer on the EURES portal? What impact did the new EURES Regulation and the updated EURES portal have on this?*

Overall, the implementation of an automated matching system within the national IT platforms of the countries under analysis has had a positive impact on the matching strategy, as it allows EURES staff to dedicate their time to a range of other activities rather than to the manual uploading of job vacancies and curricula.

In Estonia and Spain, when a job vacancy is registered within the national IT platform, the relevant curricula are automatically shortlisted. Jobseekers are then contacted by EURES advisers to check whether there is a real interest in the open position. The automated matching function is however not yet available on the EURES portal, due to the ongoing alignment of EURES countries on a common classification of professional occupations, skills, and qualifications. The ESCO mapping is indeed still ongoing in many EURES countries, thus the relevant information for matching JVs and CVs at European level is not yet complete and ready to use.

On the other side, the development of the single coordinated channel was regarded as extremely useful by all of the interviewees, as it increased both the number of candidates and job opportunities. Indeed, the channel allows for the automated transfer of vacancies and profiles to

the EURES portal. This in turn makes the flow of job vacancies and CV information to the EURES portal not only very effective, but also transparent.

In spite of the automation, the matching service seems to still require the involvement of EURES staff, as they still carry out manual research in order to match job vacancies with relevant curricula. This happens not only in those countries where the automation is still not in place, but also when the automatic function fails to properly pair CVs and JVs. Furthermore, face-to-face meetings are widely used by EURES advisers to show jobseekers opportunities, among the provision of general counselling.

*Has the new EURES legislation and the common IT platform (hence the automation of recruitment processes) improved the matching between labour demand (jobseekers) and supply (employers)?* Due to the reasons mentioned above, it is not yet possible to assess the impact of the common IT platform and of the automated recruitment process on the quality of labour demand and supply matching. The EURES portal was nonetheless criticised by many interviewees as well as respondents to the jobseekers', employers' and Members and Partners' surveys as its search tool often fails to show relevant information to jobseekers and employers. For instance, when a jobseeker types a keyword in the search engine, the vacancies that show up are not necessarily in line with that keyword, neither in terms of skills needed, nor in terms of language requirements.

In those countries that have implemented an automated matching system at national level, the tool is widely considered as capable to broaden the opportunities for both jobseekers and employers. At the same time, while gathering data from stakeholders, some issues with regard to the matching system were raised. Within EURES Spain, for instance, the automated matching system does not always run smoothly. It is in fact likely that the initial automated matching gives no good results (i.e. the skills listed within a CV do not meet the requirements of a specific open position). In this case, Spain PES officers (which include EURES advisers) intervene in the matching process by providing employers with a more accurate list of potential candidates through manual selection. What seems to be missing is a matching function by skills, rather than just by titles of previous jobs. According to interviewees, this obstacle to the effectiveness of the automated matching tool might be overcome once the ESCO mapping is carried out by all EURES countries. Indeed, a shared opinion among interviewees is that the implementation of the ESCO mapping, as well as of the single coordinated channel, have been (and continue to be) important steps towards a properly functioning automated matching system.

Sharing a similar view, the Polish NCO has expressed scepticism regarding the prospects of automated matching. According to this NCO, the automated matching will only be a successful tool when job vacancies are matched with relevant curricula, whereas it does not bring an added value if it still requires the intervention of EURES staff to pair jobseekers and employers. The problem lies in the fact that very little mandatory information is required from jobseekers and employers when filling in their CVs and JVs. Therefore, the quality of automated matching might not be as good as in the case of manual matching by EURES staff. Manual verification is usually necessary to ensure that automated matching is of quality.

Echoing the opinion of EURES Estonia and EURES Poland, EURES staff from Portugal claimed that the automated recruitment process will only bring an added value to the services offered by EURES when a certain standard of quality of curricula and job vacancies will be required. Otherwise, getting in touch with employers will always be a more effective way of approaching the recruitment process by jobseekers.

The Spanish NCO claimed that achieving a fully working automatic matching is a great opportunity for the EURES portal. By failing, thus by missing the chance to improve its effectiveness, EURES could be easily replaced by any other job portal.

*Has the implementation of a monitoring tool helped achieve the EURES objectives?*

Before the Regulation introduced new monitoring and reporting requirements, EURES countries were using different systems and procedures to monitor the data of their national network, including incoming and outgoing jobseekers. The implementation of a uniform system was therefore crucial to assess the performance of the network as a whole. While some NCOs indicated having had no important developments in terms of IT solutions, some other countries introduced significant changes. For example, Spain developed a tool that facilitates the collection of PMS and PC data from all the (17) EURES Members in one place. The tool has been appreciated by other NCOs and ECO, and the suggestion to extend its use to other NCOs is being considered by ECO.

The new monitoring requirements support the achievement of the EURES objectives in that the minimum data on the performance of the EURES network collected by the EURES countries demonstrate in a transparent manner the extent and scale of the EURES activities implemented across the network. It was recognised by the respondents that the unification of the system for monitoring and reporting of EURES activities was needed and was fully justified, given that prior to this EURES countries used distinctive systems that were incompatible with each other and provided incomplete results across the network. The systematisation of the monitoring and reporting process resulted in an improved representativeness and accuracy of EURES results in comparison to the monthly reporting that EURES advisers filled out on a voluntary basis. Specifically, it was commented that monthly reports provided non-exhaustive and non-representative data that reflected the effectiveness of EURES only partially, giving a false impression on the effectiveness of EURES activities for employers and jobseekers, and on extending labour mobility in general. Furthermore, this issue was problematic in that the non-exhaustive data and information on EURES results were quoted in European Commission reports such as the Single Market Scoreboard, which could give rise to scepticism around the relevance of EURES to cross-border labour mobility in Europe. The new monitoring and reporting requirements resolved this issue and led to the provision of more factual data on the scale and effectiveness of EURES activities.

Nonetheless, another respondent underlined that despite the fact that current monitoring and reporting reflects much better what is happening in EURES, it still does not provide a full reflection of EURES results. The following three areas for improvement have been mentioned where a somehow distorted reflection of efforts is produced and not accounted for in the PMS results<sup>20</sup>:

- In countries with decentralised administration, different rules may apply with regard to the activities that Members and Partners can undertake. For example, it was commented that some Members in Poland (e.g. regional labour offices) are not legally allowed to undertake social media activities. The issue stemming from it is that this obstacle is not covered in the PMS reporting.
- Often employers and jobseekers do not provide feedback about the results of recruitment<sup>21</sup> to EURES advisers and therefore the scale of successful recruitment might be higher than reported.

<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that it was indicated by some respondents that the elements should serve as examples and that there were more such areas for improvement that the question did not ask for explicitly.

<sup>21</sup> Core indicator no. 3: Job placements effected as a result of recruitment and placement activity (PMS Section 9)

- Certain actions cannot be undertaken in countries without the necessary funding. For example, in some countries no large-scale events are organised due to lack of funding, whereas in some others there is focus put on that element.

Furthermore, the new monitoring tool was commented upon as relevant for the objective of supporting the functioning of the EURES network through information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses and the co-ordination of actions across Member States. The respondents indicated that the advantage of the PMS is that it provides the national EURES networks with a summary of results every six months and as such, helps to understand the yearly trends of the national labour markets. The importance of the monitoring tool is furthermore expressed in that it provides the NCOs with statistical data and information on EURES results, which can be interpreted in planning and adapting future actions accordingly, through the yearly programming.

### Summary of findings on effectiveness

Due to reasons connected to the ongoing classification of professional occupations, skills, and qualifications at European level (ESCO), it is not yet possible to assess the impact of the common IT platform and of the automated recruitment process on the quality of labour demand and supply matching. The implementation of an automated matching system within the national IT platforms, however, has had a positive impact on the matching strategy of the countries under analysis. When a job vacancy is inserted in the national database, the relevant profiles are automatically shortlisted. Jobseekers are then contacted by EURES advisers to check whether there is a real interest in the open position.

The development of the single coordinated channel was regarded as extremely useful by all of the stakeholders, as it increased not only the number of candidates and job opportunities, but also the overall transparency of the system.

The automated matching system, although having had a positive influence on the matching strategy, has also drawn some criticism among the interviewees. It is likely that the initial automated matching might not give good results (i.e. the skills listed within a CV do not meet the requirements of a specific open position). In this case, EURES staff are required to provide employers with a more accurate list of potential candidates – manually selected. This does not bring an added value if it still requires the intervention of EURES staff to pair jobseekers and employers. The problem lies in the fact that very little mandatory information is required by jobseekers and employers when filling in respectively their CVs and JVs. Therefore, the quality of automated matching will not be as good as in case of manual matching by EURES staff.

Nonetheless, the new monitoring tool supports the achievement of the objectives of the EURES network because it has systematised and unified the various methodologies existing across the EURES countries. As such, it provides a framework for collection, monitoring and reporting of data and information on several indicators that demonstrate comparable results of the diverse types of actions undertaken by national EURES networks. Establishing the new mandatory processes has led to the provision of more factual and exhaustive data on the scale of effectiveness of the EURES network in comparison to the voluntary reporting that existed before the Regulation. Nevertheless, some respondents provided examples of areas that should be improved in order for the monitoring tool to present the full scale of what EURES does in Europe. These shortcomings exist because of different national or regional obstacles, such as differences in legislation or lack of funding, which are not accounted for in the PMS and may appear as a lack of effort in supporting certain actions.

### Efficiency

*What developments did the countries make with regard to the new requirements introduced by the new EURES Regulation regarding the monitoring and reporting of EURES activities (e.g. changes to the Programming Cycle and introduction of the Performance Measurement System)? Did these developments facilitate the process and made it more efficient?*

As a result of the introduction of new monitoring and reporting requirements, different IT developments were implemented. These ranged from 'no change', through modifications to the existing internal databases designed to collect and monitor the delivery of services, to the development of new systems to facilitate collection of data for both the PMS and PC.

NCO Estonia indicated that no specific changes were needed to the IT systems given that EURES Estonia is linked to the national database which allows quick export of data and information. NCO Poland commented that a monitoring tool similar to the PMS had already been in place for 10

years taking into account the flaws in the monitoring requirements that existed before the Regulation. At that time, voluntary monthly reports were asked from EURES advisers only, whereas the national network consisted of hundreds of other staff whose activities were not accounted for. Having noticed this weakness, the NCO developed a national monitoring system to account for all EURES-related activities in the country. As a result, the NCO had to adapt the existing monitoring database so that it would generate PMS indicators in a process that took over half a year.

Similarly, Spain modified the internal results tracking system existing prior to the Regulation to design a whole new system for monitoring and reporting that automates all the tasks that were previously performed manually. This system gathers data from EURES advisers and shows them in a balanced scorecard. It is considered to have increased the efficiency of monitoring and reporting because it entails an administrative relief by simplifying the process of monitoring through interlinking data for the PMS and the PC from all the (17) EURES Members in one tool. In this regard, the development of such a system has had a significant positive impact on EURES monitoring processes.

Nevertheless, it was underlined that Spain's positive assessment of the monitoring requirements was due to the fact that the requirements for PMS and PC are linked in one system. If such a system is absent, new requirements add additional administrative burden. Indeed, a few other respondents commented that the overall process of collecting and monitoring data, and reporting has been expanded in terms of time and effort. This is due to the fact that more indicators are required to be collected for PMS and that, on top of that, they have to be collected from all Members and Partners which sometimes need to be further scrutinised and amended. This opinion is, however, not uniform across the network. One member of EURES staff from Estonia commented that the absence of monthly reports has already reduced the reporting burden and that, overall, the new monitoring and reporting has had a positive impact on their work in terms of time.

The system developed by NCO Spain has been appreciated by other NCOs and well received by ECO for its simplicity. NCO Spain considers that such a system could be extended and made available to other NCOs through ECO to avoid overlapping efforts and costs, given that it cost EURES Spain some EUR 100,000. This solution was also mentioned by NCO Portugal as potentially useful to those NCOs without the necessary funding to implement such developments.

In terms of benefits, the respondents commented on the advantages that the monitoring requirements brought about to their work and the EURES network in general. It was recognised that establishing uniform and detailed specifications for the collection and analysis of the data across the network provides EURES advisers and the NCOs with a more accurate and in-depth vision of the effects that the network activities have on labour mobility in Europe. Specifically, it was commented that the depth of PMS indicators, for instance, in terms of information on jobseekers and employers' characteristics (e.g. gender) gives the EURES staff a statistical perspective of who their clients are, and demonstrates the effects that EURES activities have on different target groups. The indicators are considered of importance to EURES staff in that they help to understand which EURES actions are the most and the least efficient and effective so that they can be adapted accordingly. This, as highlighted by most respondents, is the added value of monitoring and reporting requirements resulting from the Regulation.

### **Summary of findings on efficiency**

The data collection highlighted significant differences in the development of IT platforms to respond to new monitoring and reporting requirements. While in some cases no major developments had to take place, in some others, significant improvements were implemented.

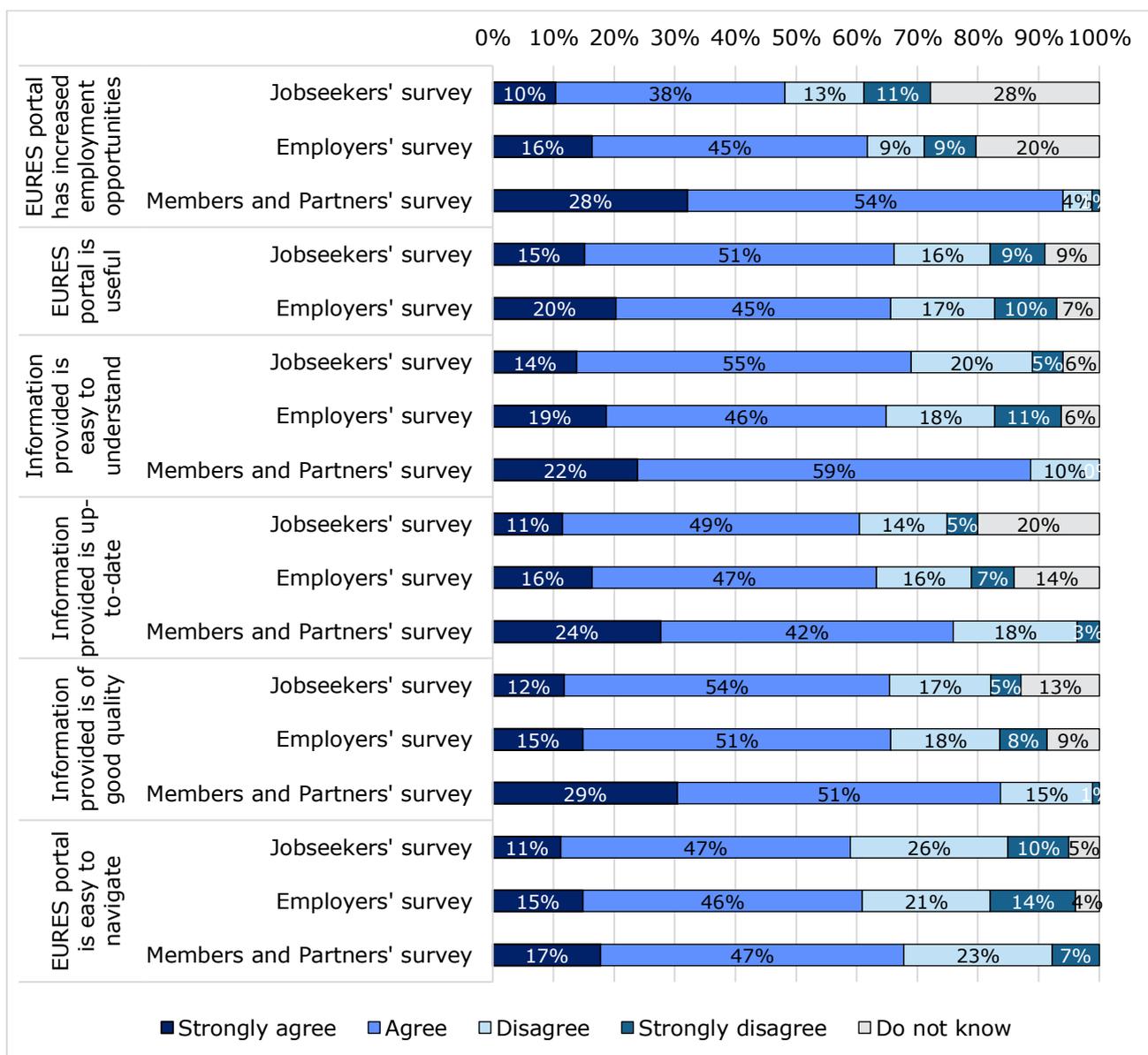
Most respondents commented that, although in many cases the additional PMS requirements increase the workload, the new monitoring and reporting requirements have improved their working processes and the reliability of the data. This is due to the new requirements resulting in a more representative and factual reflection of all EURES activities across the network, as well as providing an improved overview of activities for internal use.

### **Relevance**

*Do the EURES portal and EURES tools address the needs of its users?*

As mentioned above, the EURES portal existed even before the introduction of the new EURES Regulation. However, the Regulation gave it an additional framework for further development and improvement. Overall, all interviewed stakeholders agree that the EURES portal (and its Extranet for EURES staff) is useful and contains vast amounts of information, tips and knowledge. These sentiments were also echoed by respondents to the various surveys run as part of the ex-post evaluation as can be seen in the figure below.

Figure 4 Stakeholders' perceptions about the EURES portal



Source: study team elaboration of the responses to the online surveys

However, while generally the EURES portal is perceived by its users as addressing their needs, they also highlight areas where further improvement is needed for the portal to remain relevant. The most frequently mentioned shortcoming was the need to improve the filtering option. As mentioned above, the users highlight that while the filters have improved over time, they may still provide irrelevant results. As one survey respondent mentioned “Most of the search results are not compatible with my profession. E.g.: [when searching for] Marketing – it [the results] appears, engineering, gastronomy, etc.”. In this regard, the EURES staff are hopeful that once the ESCO mapping is complete and implemented, it will help the filtering function to become more accurate and provide a good base for the automated matching. Regarding additional filter options, both jobseekers and EURES staff would welcome the possibility to filter the search results not just by specific country but also by regions.

The stakeholders do appreciate the effort put in the amount of information provided on the EURES portal and highlight particularly the fact that it collects information from all the different areas of

interest to a jobseeker or an employer when searching for a job/employee abroad. The expanse of information is perceived as a major added value of the EURES portal as the stakeholders point out that there is no other online portal that offers such information on all the different areas. At the same time, they highlight that for jobseekers, and to a lesser extent also for employers, it is of utmost importance that the information displayed is as up-to-date as possible, as it can be a decisive factor in a jobseeker's decision on whether or not to seek or even accept employment opportunities in another country.

### **Summary of findings on relevance**

The EURES portal is seen as a particularly relevant tool in addressing the needs of its users and EURES clients in general. It is perceived as containing good quality information that encompasses a number of important areas that no other online portal covers. However, it is also important that the developments on the portal continue and improve so that the services and information it provides are even better. The area needing the most improvement was deemed to be the filter function. Stakeholders also highlight that in order for the portal to maintain its relevance, it needs to remain up-to-date in all of its aspects.

## **2.4 Conclusions**

EURES portal is seen as a very relevant tool in addressing the needs of its users and EURES clients in general, as well as the overall EURES objectives. The new EURES Regulation indicated areas in which further development should be directed. One of these areas was the provision of a matching engine able to automatically match specific job vacancies with relevant CVs and vice versa, and as such respond to the labour needs and demands. Steps have been taken by national EURES networks and the European Commission towards this goal.

The work on ensuring interoperability between national system and the European portal is progressing for all countries examined in this case study. Matching remains in turn a widely provided service across the EURES network. Overall, the automation of the recruitment process in some of the countries, brought along by the development of the national IT platforms, has had a positive impact on the matching strategy of the EURES networks in Estonia, Poland, Portugal, and Spain. The parallel development of a single coordinated channel to facilitate the exchange of job vacancies and curricula was regarded as extremely useful by all the interviewees, as it increased the number of available candidates and job opportunities. With a view to further developing an automated matching tool through the EURES portal, the European classification for skills, competences and occupations (ESCO) is being progressively implemented in the EURES network by all Member States.

The development of the ESCO mapping is particularly relevant as, according to stakeholders, once completed, it will help in overcoming a major obstacle to the functioning of the automated matching system. It would allow a more pertinent matching of labour demand and supply since it would bring together the job requirements with the jobseekers' skills. Currently, the problem lies largely in the fact that very little mandatory information is required by jobseekers and employers when filling in respectively their CVs and JVs. Therefore, the quality of automated matching might not be as good as in the case of manual matching by EURES staff. Nowadays, manual verification is usually necessary to ensure that automated matching is of quality. The automated recruitment process will bring an added value to the services offered by EURES only when it will be able to match curricula and job vacancies by reading and comparing the tasks descriptions provided below each job title and the resulting skills acquired by workers.

The new monitoring and reporting requirements are being implemented by the NCOs through different developments of their existing IT systems, which in some cases included the creation of new national data collection procedures and tools. Overall, the provisions of the Regulation require the NCOs to collect a larger number of detailed indicators on the performance of their national networks, which often lead to an increase in administrative burden for EURES staff, including among EURES Members and Partners. However, the added value of the monitoring and reporting requirements of the Regulation lies in that the introduction of new indicators allows a more complete, accurate and representative picture of EURES activities and results across the network and more reliable data. This adds further benefits to the work of EURES staff who are provided with statistics about their clients and the effects that EURES has on different target groups.

### 3 CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION/ SUPPORT SERVICES IN CROSS-BORDER REGIONS

#### 3.1 Background

*"The free movement of workers is one of the key elements in the development of a more integrated Union labour market, **including in cross-border regions**, which allows higher worker mobility, thereby increasing diversity and contributing to Union-wide social inclusion and integration of persons excluded from the labour market. It also contributes to finding the right skills for vacant positions and overcoming bottlenecks in the labour market."*

From the above, Preamble 2 of the EURES Regulation, it is possible to understand the importance attributed to cross-border mobility for the achievement of EURES specific and general objectives, especially for the effective promotion of voluntary, geographical and occupational mobility in the Union.

In 2018, 1.5 million workers were residing in one EU Member State and working in another, 1.9 million with the inclusion of European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries<sup>22</sup>. The EURES countries with the highest shares of commuters were Germany, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Austria.

However, different challenges still exist that specifically affect workers that work in one country and reside in another (i.e. frontier workers). For instance, due to different administrative and legal systems in the residence country and in the workplace country, employees have fewer chances to obtain a permanent job in neighbouring regions. Moreover, for commuters, the issues concerning taxation and pension portability between the country of work and the country of residence are particularly relevant. On top of these, frontier workers also face the challenges that are generally typical of labour mobility, such as language barriers and recognition of qualifications.

To contribute to the reduction of the challenges pertaining to labour mobility and to better exploit this phenomenon, the EURES axis of the European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) 2014-2020 has been adopted with the aim of "financing actions to promote voluntary mobility of individuals in the Union, on a fair basis, and to remove mobility obstacles"<sup>23</sup>. Looking at cross-border mobility, under this programme, every year a call for proposals is launched to support the EURES Cross-Border Partnerships (CBPs)<sup>24</sup> or the creation of new ones, with the purpose of assisting frontier workers through the provision of information and guidance and additional support services. In 2018, nine CBPs were supported through an EaSI grant from the previous year and 11 in 2019. Moreover, during 2019, eight CBPs were selected to receive the EaSI grant for 2020 and 2021.

<sup>22</sup> 2018 Annual Report on intra- EU Labour Mobility

<sup>23</sup> Call for proposals - VP/2019/006 - Cross-border partnerships and support to cooperation on intra-EU mobility for EEA countries and social partners.

<sup>24</sup> Art. 3 of EURES Regulation defines EURES CBPs as: "EURES cross-border partnership' means a grouping of EURES Members or Partners and, where relevant, other stakeholders outside of the EURES network, with the intention of long-term cooperation in regional structures, set up in cross-border regions between: the employment services on regional, local and, where appropriate, national level; the social partners; and, where relevant, other stakeholders of at least two Member States or a Member State and another country participating in the Union instruments aiming to support the EURES network."

Additionally, Article 16(4) of EURES Regulation recommends that EURES countries collaborate with the neighbouring countries to promote and facilitate cross-border mobility also outside the formal EURES Cross-Border Partnerships (CBPs). For the Programming Cycle, EURES members are asked to plan and report about any **support services in cross-border regions** they have in place as stated in Article 27 of EURES Regulation. Within the Programming Cycle, and in order to provide support in cross-border regions, EURES countries report **other cross-border cooperation arrangements** in their activity reports, mostly related to the provision of information and organisation of various recruitment events in cross-border areas<sup>25</sup>. For example, Finland and Sweden have a long-standing and well-established bilateral agreement to cooperate in Tornedalen and facilitate addressing the respective labour markets' needs. Similarly, Poland and the Netherlands have established cooperation with neighbouring countries that are not funded through EaSI and are not considered as formal CBPs, but still have the purpose of providing services in cross-border regions.

## 3.2 Methodology

### 3.2.1 *Relevance of the topic*

Cross-border partnerships and the provision of support services in cross-border regions are key EURES actions for the achievement of EURES specific objectives, in particular the promotion of voluntary, geographical and occupational mobility in the Union. However, the available information on the activities implemented and the results achieved for the support of cross-border mobility are diverse and are not centralised in a single document. Hence, it is important to deepen the knowledge on the existing practices concerning CBPs and other forms of cross-border cooperation in order to assess whether the needs of frontier workers are met and whether the activities implemented and the results achieved are consistent with EURES specific objectives and contribute to their achievement. Finally, it is essential to consult stakeholders to gain qualitative insights that will be relevant for the understanding of the topic.

The following table presents the way in which the key case study research questions feed into the final evaluation study.

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<sup>25</sup> EURES Programming Cycle, Assessment of Activity Reports 2018

Table 6 Case study research questions

Case study research question	Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added value
To what extent have cross-border workers' needs been addressed by EURES actions? What are the main challenges and needs of cross-border workers? Is EURES appropriate to tackle those needs?	To what extent were the most relevant groups (e.g. cross-border workers, young people searching for international experience, EU mobile workers) targeted and their most important needs addressed?			X		
To what extent have the EURES CBPs contributed to the achievement of EURES specific objectives? To which ones in particular?	To what extent the EURES mobility schemes and projects contributed to achieving the EURES specific objectives? - Cross-border partnerships - Targeted mobility schemes Your First EURES Job Reactivate European Solidarity Corps MobilizeSMEs	X				
Is the current EURES organisational set-up appropriate and sufficient to meet cross-border workers' needs? Are there organisational challenges or possible improvements? Is the collaboration across the border effective to achieve EURES objectives?	How appropriate is the current EURES organisational set-up to meet the current labour market needs, including in cross-border regions? How effective is the mainstreaming of the EURES service delivery within PES and other EURES members and partners, in order to contribute to the objectives?	X				
Within the provision of support services in cross-border regions, what were the most and least effective actions?	Which types of actions were the most and the least effective and most sustainable, for which groups and in which contexts (e.g. specific cross-border partnerships, specialized targeted mobility schemas)? What main factors had a bigger impact (either positive or negative) on the effectiveness of EURES actions?	X				

Case study research question	Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added value
To what extent EURES services in cross-border regions are complementary with other EURES actions? And, with actions at the EU level? Are there overlaps and duplications? Are there possible synergies?	How complementary were the EURES actions with each other?				X	
To what extent the effects deriving from the provision of services in cross-border regions would have happened without the EU intervention? Would cross-border collaboration have existed otherwise?	To what extent did the EURES operations produce effects (quantified to the possible extent) that would not have taken place without the EU intervention?					X

Source: Study team

### 3.2.2 Methodological approach

This section summarises the methodology applied for this case study. It follows the general approach to all case studies, but is tailored to the specific topics of this case study.

#### Scope

The following EURES countries have been selected for data collection – Belgium, Germany, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Sweden. Overview of their main characteristics and relevance for the case study can be found below:

Table 7 Geographical scope and rationale

<b>EURES country</b>	<b>Sending / Receiving</b>	<b>Relevance of EURES country for case study</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<i>Sending Receiving</i>	Belgium is involved in three different EURES CBPs, namely Grande Region (LU-FR-BE), Scheldemond (BE-NL) and BE-NL-DE. Hence, it would be interesting to understand in-depth how frontier workers' needs are addressed and what is the impact of EURES in cross-border regions.
<b>Germany</b>	<i>Receiving</i>	Germany is not only part of three different EURES CBPs, namely TriRegio (PL- CZ – DE), BE-NL-DE and Oberrhein, but EURES Germany also implements different collaboration activities with neighbouring countries outside the formal CBPs. Thus, it is beneficial to further understand how the collaboration mechanisms work and what are the impacts achieved.
<b>Hungary</b>	<i>Sending</i>	Hungary is not formally part of any EURES CBP, but since 2008 has cooperated with Romania on cross-border mobility issues, in order to address the specific needs of frontier workers. Moreover, it has collaboration schemes in place also with Austria and Slovakia. Hence, it would be interesting to further investigate the added value of cross-regional collaborations outside EURES CBPs, as well as the key strengths and weaknesses.
<b>Italy</b>	<i>Sending/ Receiving</i>	Italy is part of the EURES CBP Euradria together with Slovenia. This CBP is particularly characterised by the high level of undeclared work existing in the region. Hence, it is important to further investigate the role of EURES CBPs in this area.
<b>Netherlands</b>	<i>Receiving</i>	Concerning the Netherlands, not only the country is involved in two different CBPs, but the NCO has also six different cross-border teams that actively work to support frontier workers. It would be interesting to investigate the Dutch organisational set-up and its achievements in terms of support services in cross-border regions.
<b>Poland</b>	<i>Sending</i>	Poland is not only part of EURES CBP TriRegio, together with Germany and Czech Republic, but it has also developed cross-regional collaboration agreements with neighbouring countries, namely Germany, Czech Republic and Slovakia. It is deemed important to assess how these collaboration agreements work and what are the benefits they can provide in cross-border regions.

<b>EURES country</b>	<b>Sending / Receiving</b>	<b>Relevance of EURES country for case study</b>
<b>Portugal</b>	<i>Sending</i>	Portugal has a long-standing experience with cross-border mobility and has been involved in three different CBPs with Spain. It has been selected to investigate how frontier workers' needs are addressed and to identify best practices in supporting workers in cross-border regions.
<b>Sweden</b>	<i>Receiving</i>	Sweden is involved in a EURES CBP with Denmark, Oresund. Thanks to the bridge that physically connects the border regions, commuter flows in this area are high. Hence, the CBP, among others, has been selected to investigate the relevance, effectiveness and EU added value of EURES CBPs.

Source: Study team

## Data collection

### Overview of literature sources

The case study was developed on the basis of a thorough desk research aimed at gathering insights on the support services in cross-border regions provided, as well as on the implementation of EURES CBPs. The literature review included a variety of sources, such as the Programming Cycle Work Programs, the EaSI calls for proposals for CBPs, the CBP monitoring reports, the CBP beneficiaries meeting minutes and the intra-EU labour mobility reports 2018 and 2019.

### Overview of stakeholders consulted

The data collection for this case study included 28 online interviews and two online workshops, gathering EURES and CBP staff in the Netherlands and a variety of stakeholders in Portugal. The table below provides an overview of the stakeholders involved for this study.

Table 8 Stakeholders consulted

<b>Stakeholder category</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Topics covered</b>	<b>Data collection tool</b>	
			<b>Interview</b>	<b>Workshop</b>
<b>NCO</b>	NL (2), HU, DE, PL, PT, BE (3 - Le Forem, Actiris and VDAB)	Support services in cross-border regions: effectiveness, relevance, coherence and EU added value	X	X
<b>EURES staff</b>	NL, SE (3), PT, HU, BE (Le Forem), PL (3), PT	Support services in cross-border regions: effectiveness, relevance, coherence and EU added value	X	X
<b>EURES Members</b>	NL (2)	Support services in cross-border regions: effectiveness, relevance, coherence and EU added value	X	X
<b>CBP Coordinator</b>	NL, DE (2), PT	CBPs: effectiveness, relevance, coherence and EU added value	X	

Stakeholder category	Country	Topics covered	Data collection tool	
			Interview	Workshop
<b>EURES Partner</b>	IT	CBPs: effectiveness, relevance, coherence and EU added value	X	
<b>Jobseekers</b>	PL	Effectiveness of the action and added value	X	
<b>Employers</b>	PT	Relevance and effectiveness of the action and added value		X

Source: Study team

#### *Limitations of the data collection*

The data collection for this case study encountered some challenges.

Activities in cross-border regions are monitored through different instruments and reporting tools. For what concerns CBPs financed via the EURES axis of EaSI, since 2019, CBP coordinators are asked to fill a dedicated Performance Measurement System (PMS) tool that should be submitted twice per year, together with a final technical implementation report. Before 2019, CBPs were instead required to compile two templates, namely Annexes II and V to the grant agreement, once per year. At the national level, activities in cross-border regions are described in the Programming Cycles and some indicators are monitored in the Performance Measurement System. Overall, the existence of a multitude of reports, documents and tools complicate the exercise of collecting information, but also the comparability of the information obtained.

In addition, as reported in the CBP monitoring report 2019, the information submitted by the CBPs is often incomplete or does not meet high quality standards. The same can be applied to the data included in the Programming Cycle report. Given the completeness, comparability and quality data issues, the interviews and workshops played a relevant role, as they could contribute to the clarification of the main open points and knowledge gaps identified.

However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe, field visits were suspended and were replaced by online stakeholder consultations. Also, the foreseen online workshop in Poland had to be replaced by interviews with two jobseekers and one additional staff member from the cross-border scheme T-Beskydy, as many participants did not have access to Internet connection

Finally, it should be pointed out that, due to the strict data protection rules in place, certain countries, such as Belgium and Germany, experienced obstacles in gathering jobseekers and workers' contacts to organise the interviews and workshops. In particular, the workshop in Belgium was not organised due to the lack of positive replies from targeted participants.

### 3.3 Main findings

#### 3.3.1 State of play in the Member States in focus

For the purpose of this case study, it is important to distinguish between the activities delivered at the CBP level and the services provided by the national level in cross-border regions, as well to consider how these two categories are interrelated and contribute to the achievement of EURES objectives.

Considering the formal **CBP level**, all the countries selected for this case study, except Hungary, are part of at least one CBP funded through the EURES axis of EaSI, as follows:

- **EURES Grande Region (BE, DE, FR, LU)** is the CBP characterised by one of the highest number of commuters, mostly directed to Luxembourg, which is the most attractive country as it offers particularly high wages. In the **Grande Region**, commuting is very popular and it is almost a long-standing tradition. However, some labour market distortions are recently experienced, since the neighbouring countries (i.e. Belgium, France, Germany) find difficult to fill their labour shortages, with the jobseekers attracted to Luxembourg.
- **EURES Scheldemond (BE, NL)** operates in the border regions between Flanders (Belgium) and the Netherlands. As an innovative tool, in 2019, the CBP launched GrensMatch, an app to facilitate the sharing of job vacancies and CVs across the borders and support the matching.
- **EURES Grenzregionen (BE, DE, NL)** is active in the border regions between Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, where it developed one-stop shops where beneficiaries can easily access information and obtain guidance concerning on all the aspects of cross-border mobility;
- **EURES Oresund (DK, SE)** provides services in the border region between Sweden and Denmark. The CBP had been financed by the EURES axis of EaSI until 2019, but did not qualify for the 2020 grant. In this region, mobility flows are high (i.e. it is estimated that approximately 16 000 commuters cross the border every day<sup>26</sup>) and they are supported by the physical presence of the Oresund bridge, connecting the two regions. However, in recent years, the same labour shortages prevail on both sides of the border, making it difficult to recruit across the regions.
- **EURES TriRegio (CZ, DE, PL)** is active in the border region between Germany, Poland and Czech Republic. The CBP is expanding every year and the number of commuters in this area is growing. Although the flows are mostly directed to Germany, recently the number of people commuting between Poland and Czech Republic and vice-versa is increasing.
- **EURES Galicia – Norte (ES, PT)** is one of the three CBPs operating between Spain and Portugal. Since the minimum wages between the two countries are markedly different, it is not convenient for Spanish workers to commute to Portugal, although the country has lower unemployment rates. This explains why, in this region, commuter flows are marginal.
- **EURES Andalucía – Algarve (ES, PT)** has been one of the three CBPs operating between Spain and Portugal until 2019. However, the grant was not renewed in 2020. As in the case of the CBP Galicia – Norte, the number of commuters in this area has never been high, due to the different working conditions between the two countries.

<sup>26</sup> More information available online at <http://www.orestat.se/en/analys/commuting-across-oresund> .

- **EURES Alentejo – Extremadura (ES, PT)** as EURES Andalucía – Algarve, has been funded by EaSI until 2019 and faced the same challenges as the other Spanish/Portuguese CBPs.
- **EURES Euradria (IT, SI)** operates in the border region between Italy and Slovenia and is characterised by moderate commuter flows, mostly directed to Italy. A major challenge highlighted in this region is the high level of undeclared work that is especially popular among cross-border commuting workers, as it is harder to detect.

At the **national level**, several formal and informal activities are in place to provide support services in border regions, as stipulated by the EURES Regulation. Of these, the following have been further investigated for the purpose of this case study:

- EURES **Belgium** is not only involved in three EURES CBPs, but it has also several collaborations in place with its neighbouring countries. For example, VDAB has a collaboration agreement with France on cross-border mobility and Le Forem has dedicated EURES staff addressing cross-border mobility issues in Grande Region, in addition to the CBP activities.
- In the **Netherlands**, borders are deemed to be of strategic importance for the national export market, as they are a source of workforce. To reflect the importance attached to cross-border mobility by the EURES Netherlands, the NCO is structured in an international and a cross-border division. The latter is further divided into six regional teams that operate on the borders. In addition, several EURES Members and Partners carry out support services in cross-border regions.
- EURES **Hungary**, even if it does not formally participate in EURES CBPs financed through EaSI, has developed several cross-border collaboration agreements, especially with Romania, but also with Slovakia and Austria, in order to address the specific needs of frontier workers and jobseekers and develop EURES network. These needs have been assessed with a survey that was carried out in 2018, that allowed to develop an activity plan coherent with users' expectations. With Romania in particular, the first collaboration agreement was launched in 2008. The main areas of cooperation for 2020 and the future will concern the identification of preventive measures to work exploitation, alignment on returnees, data exchange, etc.
- EURES **Poland**, in addition to the EURES CBP TriRegio, carries out several activities and collaboration in border regions. For example, even without receiving the EaSI funding for CBP, the cross-border collaboration T-Beskydy (CZ, SK, PL) is operational and assists clients on cross-border labour mobility aspects.

### 3.3.2 Responses to the research questions

The following sections present the case study findings to each of the EQM questions as identified in the Table 6 Case study research questions above.

#### **Relevance**

*To what extent have cross-border workers' needs been addressed by EURES actions? What are the main challenges and needs of cross-border workers? Is EURES appropriate to tackle those needs?*

In order to assess the relevance of EURES CBPs and support services in cross-border regions, it is important to understand the main **challenges** related to cross-border mobility and the **needs** of cross-border workers and employers.

Looking at the implementation context, as it is possible to read in the latest CBP monitoring reports, the **obstacles limiting regional mobility** are mostly linked to the presence of different administrative rules and social security benefits between the neighbouring

countries. This information has been confirmed also during the interviews. For example, it emerged that frontier workers between Belgium and the Netherlands have different retirement schemes between the two countries and this may lead to income gaps, or Polish residents working in Germany are not entitled to social security allowances in Poland. In comparison with long-term labour mobility, language and cultural barriers are less relevant in some border regions, as neighbouring countries often share similar cultural traits and even linguistic dialects or languages (e.g. the Netherlands – Flanders (BE), France – Walloon Region (BE)). However, for certain countries, having a different language across the border still represents a challenge for labour mobility. This was for example reported by fieldwork participants from Sweden, Hungary and Poland. Other barriers to cross-border mobility include transportation and infrastructure (e.g. public transport between two different countries may not always be optimal) and recognition of qualifications. Moreover, the labour market conditions and political context also play a role in limiting cross-border mobility. In this context, many different countries noticed the presence of the same labour shortages across the borders, making it difficult to recruit abroad. Additionally, from the fieldwork in Portugal it emerged that the vast minimum wage difference between Spain and Portugal limits mobility. Hungarian participants to the fieldwork reported that, being a sending country, the national government is trying to promote working in Hungary, hence reducing opportunities for commuting and working abroad.

These challenges are persistent through the years and the situation did not evolve much. In the countries and regions where the flows of commuters are relevant, such as the Netherlands and Grande Region, national and regional authorities tried to facilitate the bureaucratic procedures but, on a general note, not much have been done to address cross-border mobility issues in the past years.

The presence of these obstacles translates in the **need**, for frontier workers and jobseekers, to access transparent and complete information about the living and working conditions across the borders, in order to be able to take conscious decisions about commuting. Indeed, jobseekers mostly seek to overcome the administrative and legal insecurity deriving from residing in one country and working in another. At the same time, employers in border regions also need guidance on the administrative and legal requirements necessary to hire frontier workers. Moreover, for both employers and frontier workers, it is important to have access to a network of contacts, in order to facilitate the meeting of labour demand and supply. In this context, the main role of EURES in border regions is to provide access to centralised information about the labour market conditions across the borders and to facilitate networking opportunities between employers and jobseekers through the organisation of events and job fairs.

As presented in the CBP monitoring reports 2018 and 2019 and in the Programming Cycle reports provided by the NCOs each year, EURES CBPs and the support services provided in cross-border regions mostly focus on the provision of transparent and high-quality information on regional labour mobility, rather than on recruitment and matching services. Moreover, in accordance with the information gathered through the interviews and workshops, not only the provision of information is the core service in cross-border region, but it is also a high-quality and appreciated service. EURES advisers and cross-border staff are specialised in labour mobility issues and are able to offer correct, detailed and credible information to both jobseekers and employers, fully responding to the users' needs.

Moreover, the information gathered show that activities in cross-border regions are developed on the basis of thorough assessments of the labour markets in the regions involved. For example, in EURES Hungary, several surveys have been carried out to better

understand the challenges linked to cross-regional mobility. This exercise facilitates the planning of activities that are coherent with the needs of jobseekers and employers.

Finally, as regards addressing the obstacles that hinder labour mobility in cross-border region, some CBPs coordinators and NCOs official, such as in Portugal and Belgium, are in close contact with the public authorities in order to provide inputs to working groups on labour mobility barriers, and striving to improve the implementation context.

### Summary of findings on relevance

From the data collected, it is possible to observe that the main need of jobseekers and employers in border regions is to access transparent information about living and working conditions in the neighbouring countries. In this vein, the activities organised by EURES network in border regions, including the ones offered within EURES CBPs, are particularly relevant to addressing those needs, as they entail the provision of accurate information and guidance, both via individual contacts and through the organisation of events and seminars.

Moreover, the organisation of networking and recruitment events facilitates the bridging of labour demand and supply.

### Effectiveness

*To what extent have the EURES CBPs and the provision of support services in cross-border regions contributed to the achievement of EURES specific objectives? To which one in particular?*

Looking at the specific objective of **increasing the pool of vacancies available on the EURES portal**, the EURES advisers and NCOs involved in the fieldwork tended to agree that EURES CBPs and support services in cross-border regions effectively contribute to this goal since in most of the selected countries job vacancies and CVs from the NCOs and EURES Members and Partners are automatically transferred to the Portal. Moreover, the stakeholders interviewed tend to agree that EURES portal and national databases are crucial in helping employers access a larger pool of CVs.

Instead, the goal of **enabling the EURES portal** to carry out almost automated matching of CV and job vacancies is not particularly relevant for EURES CBPs and support services in cross-border regions, as this possibility for the Portal is still under development.

From the data gathered through the fieldwork and desk research, it emerges that EURES CBPs and support services contribute to a large extent to the goal of **“making available basic information on the EURES network throughout the Union to any job seeker or employer seeking client services for recruitment, and to consistently offer any person interested access to the EURES network”**. Indeed, from the CBPs monitoring reports it is observed that the main activity provided to jobseekers and employers concerns the provision of information and guidance. Overall, in 2019, formal EURES CBPs reported 195 060 individual contacts with workers, while in 2018 18 182 individual contacts with clients on the topic of job searches, while only respectively 4 216 and 1 192 jobseekers were reported having found a job through the CBP action. As an additional proof, several participants to the interviews agreed that jobseekers and workers mostly refer to EURES CBPs to seek clarifications and good quality information on cross-border mobility and that the provision of information on labour market conditions is essential to support jobseekers’ decision on commuting to other countries. Indeed, access to

information about bureaucratic and administrative requirements to work regularly in another country is particularly difficult and this contributes to make commuting less appealing. Hence, the provision of information is essential to promote and support mobility in border regions. Moreover, several stakeholders stated that, since transparent information is difficult to find and the labour market is characterised by information asymmetries, jobseekers and frontier workers face a high risk of encountering unfair labour mobility conditions. Also concerning the support services in cross-border regions, the interviewed NCO coordinators and EURES staff members mostly saw the role of EURES in cross-border regions as an opportunity for frontier workers to access good quality information on living and working conditions and fair mobility conditions, leading to an increased visibility of intra-EU labour mobility opportunities.

Conversely, EURES CBPs and the support services in cross-border regions have a minor contribution in the achievement of the specific objective of supporting “**any interested person with matching, placement and recruitment through the EURES network**”. Both at national and at the CBPs level, it was pointed out that it is very difficult to follow-up on the precise number of positive recruitments supported by EURES. Nevertheless, it seems labour mobility in cross-border regions was experiencing an upward trend before COVID-19, but it is difficult to prove EURES contributed to more efficient matchings and placements.

Finally, considering the specific objective of exchanging information concerning labour market conditions and labour market and shortages, notwithstanding that the CBP coordinators are required to submit information on the labour shortages and surpluses in their respective regions, such information is often lacking or inaccurate in the implementation reports. Therefore, it is possible to assume that the contribution to the achievement of this specific objective is very marginal.

*Is the current EURES organisational set-up appropriate and sufficient to meet cross-border workers' needs? Are there organisational challenges or possible improvements? Is the collaboration across the border effective to achieve EURES objectives?*

The organisational set-up of CBPs and of national networks concerning the provision of support services in cross-border regions can be assessed from two different perspectives: the internal organisation and the collaboration with the neighbouring countries.

From an **internal standpoint**, the internal organisation should be able to respond to the rising demand for support services in cross-border regions, especially on the provision of guidance and advice. However, from the interviews held it emerged that it is challenging to ensure an effective organisation in such a dynamic context.

Looking at the provision of support services in cross-border regions from national EURES networks, over the past years, many changes contributed to the modification of the day-to-day work in the NCOs. EURES reform, culminated in 2016, entailed a re-organisation of the EURES networks at national level, increasing the attention on the planning of the activities and on the monitoring of performance through the use of targets and indicators. Those changes led to internal re-allocation of the staff, but also to an increase in the administrative burden concerning performance monitoring activities. As a consequence, more staff had to be devoted to reporting activities, being less available to deliver core services in cross-border regions. Moreover, from the interviews held in Germany, it

emerged that, since salaries in the public sector are relatively low, it is difficult to attract motivated and qualified staff.

Also, the internal organisation of CBPs is often challenging. CBPs are often co-coordinated by a multiple of partners, that can include NCOs, PES, EURES Members and Partners but also other organisations external to the national EURES networks. During the CBP beneficiaries' meetings it was often argued that it is not always easy for CBP coordinators to ensure the alignment of interests and priorities among all the participants to the partnerships, increasing the risk of failing to maintain a common focus across the partnership on the main goals of the action.

Finally, both at the national EURES network level and at the CBP one, it has been argued that the level of digitalisation and the existing ICT tools are not always enough to address the current needs of beneficiaries in cross-border regions. Moreover, despite the fact that both CBPs and national networks are committed to ensure a high presence of qualified staff in border regions, they often pointed out that a lack of resources persists, mostly due to insufficient funding.

Concerning the **collaboration with other EURES countries on the borders**, some challenges have been highlighted. At the level of national EURES networks, the presence of organisational differences between different EURES NCOs across the borders emerged as an obstacle, making the collaboration not always effective on the strategic priorities of the action.

Overall, it appears that the different actors involved in the provision of services in cross-border regions share the same goals in the support of cross-border labour mobility, and this is a first key step to ensure the organisational set-up is developed on users' needs and EURES main goals. However, from a more practical point of view, some challenges have still to be addressed and it is a continuous learning experience to understand how to work together, both internally and with other countries.

*Within the provision of support services in cross-border regions, what were the most and least effective actions?*

EURES activities in cross-border regions and CBPs activities mostly consist in the provision of information and guidance and in recruitment and matching services.

Concerning EURES CBPs, the table below shows their main achievements in the past three years.

Table 9 Overview of main achievements of EURES CBPs over time

Type of indicator/Implementation period	2017	2018	2019	Total, when available
Nr of individual contacts with jobseekers	N/A	N/A	95 060	
Nr of individual contacts with employers	N/A	N/A	20 029	
Events attended	N/A	N/A	1 559	
Nr of job applications handled and processed	N/A	N/A	52 284	
Nr of job vacancies handled and processed	N/A	N/A	29 629	
Nr of job finders	1 091	1 192	4 216	6 499

Type of indicator/Implementation period	2017	2018	2019	Total, when available
Nr of individual contacts on job search	13 874	18 182	N/A	
Nr of group contacts	585	677	N/A	

Source: EURES. CBP monitoring reports 2017, 2018, 2019.

Regarding EURES services in cross-border regions, from the analysis of the activity plans submitted with the Programming Cycle, the main activities provided concern the provision of information.

It appears that the focus of the CBP activities and national EURES network in cross-border regions has mostly been on the provision of multilingual information services, often delivered through physical one-stop-shop solutions. The majority of information provided pertains to guidance for posted workers and commuters, such as access to social security systems, recognition of qualifications abroad and taxation.

Looking at the activities undertaken in the past years in EURES CBPs and in cross-border activities, several stakeholders shared the perception that the most needed actions, namely the ones related to the provision of information and guidance, are also the most effective. EURES is indeed focusing on ensuring fair labour mobility in cross-border regions and this led to the development of a broad network of EURES advisers who can be considered experts in intra-EU labour mobility and who are crucial to support frontier workers in overcoming administrative barriers. Moreover, the organisation of networking opportunities between jobseekers/workers and employers is particularly effective to increase the visibility of opportunities deriving from cross-border mobility.

As an additional proof, the replies to the jobseekers' survey developed for the purpose of this study show that with regard to the provision of information for cross-border workers, 67% (20) of those who received this service were either very satisfied (11) or satisfied (9) with it.

Conversely, matching and placement appear not only to be less needed by frontier workers and employers, as often border regions present the same labour shortages and skill mismatches, but also, several stakeholders agreed that are the least effective actions, as it is possible to observe from the reported monitoring data. The recruitment processes are not only difficult because the labour markets have similar bottlenecks, but are also difficult to monitor in terms of the effectiveness of matching activities. Indeed, often the CBPs bring together vacancies and candidates but they do not have access to information concerning the outcome of the recruitment process. Finally, recruitment is also hindered by administrative and linguistic barriers.

### Summary of findings on effectiveness

From the preliminary findings, it is possible to observe that EURES CBPs and the services provided in cross-border regions contribute only to a limited extent to the achievement of EURES specific objectives. Indeed it can be argued that the high quality information provided to support job-seekers and employers is a key element to promote and increase awareness about intra-EU labour mobility opportunities, while it seems that the provision of services concerning recruitment and matching is not only less relevant, but also more difficult, considering that monitoring the impact of the services delivered on the number of placements is complicated.

This is also reflected in the effectiveness of the actions implemented in cross-border regions, where the provision of information and guidance has been identified as the most successful action, while it appears that the number of job finders, compared to the number of individuals contacted is relatively small.

Finally, a coherent organisational set-up is essential for the achievement of EURES objectives. However, different organisational challenges persist. From an internal point of view, it is difficult to ensure that the information needs of users are met with the limited amount of resources and staff available. From a broader perspective, although the different stakeholders involved in cross-border activities have the same goals, it is challenging to ensure alignment and coordination. Hence, on a general basis, it is important to address these emerging issues to ensure the organisational set-up well supports the achievement of EURES specific objectives.

### Coherence

*To what extent EURES services in cross-border regions are complementary with other EURES actions? And, with actions at the EU level? Are there overlaps and duplications? Are there possible synergies?*

Starting from the **internal coherence** of EURES actions concerning activities in cross-border regions, the presence of some challenges has emerged from the data collected through the fieldwork.

During the workshop, it was claimed that in national EURES networks composed by multiple EURES Members and Partners, such as the Netherlands, it is possible that multiple organisations independently provide support services in cross-border regions, without coordinating with other participants in the network. Hence, a risk of duplication of activities in the same region exists. Despite the many efforts to bring together all the EURES Members and Partners in order to develop synergies and collaborations, it is not always easy to ensure the consistency of EURES activities in border regions.

Looking at CBPs, these organisations are co-led and co-partnered by several actors, often including the NCOs, the PES, some EURES Members and Partners, but also other external organisations not part of the national EURES networks. For the internal coherence of the activities, the coexistence of different partners is challenging, as different actors may have different strategic focuses and different managerial styles, and this can generate some tensions. While the role of CBP coordinators is also bridging those differences together in a harmonised manner and ensure everyone shares the same objectives, the collaboration process is a continuous learning path that can be still improved.

Moreover, during the workshop in the Netherlands and other interviews it was pointed out that, for EURES Members and Partners and for EURES advisers involved both in CBPs and also as part of the national EURES network, it is particularly hard to avoid overlaps and duplications.

Shifting the attention on the external coherence of EURES activities in cross-border regions with other European initiatives, the only programme that was often mentioned as similar in scope and action has been Interreg. Indeed, Regulation (EU) 1299/2013 of 17 December 2013 provides an overview of the rules for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation (ETC) goal, also known as Interreg. More specifically, Article 2 defines the geographical components of Interreg action as cross-border cooperation, transnational cooperation and interregional cooperation. Although the main focus of Interreg projects is on regional development and integration and not strictly on labour mobility, funded activities in cross-border regions or transnational areas may overlap with the support services in cross-border regions defined in Article 27 of EURES Regulation.

Nevertheless, most of the participants to the fieldwork interviews had positive experience of collaboration with Interreg projects. Some of them mentioned that often Interreg staff refer jobseekers who seek information on cross-border mobility to the CBP info-point or to EURES staff and that there is a useful exchange of information on labour market conditions.

#### **Summary of findings on coherence**

Looking at internal coherence of EURES activities in cross-border regions, it appears that there are some coordination challenges with the co-existence of different organisations and actors brought together under the same goals, and that a risk of duplication exists. Regarding external coherence, although theoretically a risk of overlap between CBPs or EURES services in cross-border regions and Interreg exists, in reality synergies are well developed.

#### **EU added value**

*To what extent did the EURES operations produce effects (quantified to the possible extent) that would not have taken place without the EU intervention?*

Provided that cross-border mobility has experienced an upward trend in the past years and they are particularly relevant in certain regions, most of the participants to the fieldwork argued that the results supported by EURES would have been achieved also without EURES intervention.

Indeed, cross-border mobility is deemed as a relevant opportunity for many European countries to optimise skill matches and reduce labour shortages. For example, some kind of bilateral collaboration between Germany and the Netherlands was in place already before the entry into force of EURES. Moreover, certain EURES countries, such as Switzerland and Luxembourg, present particularly favourable working conditions and would have attracted many commuters also without the EU intervention.

This perception is further strengthened by the results of the survey circulated to jobseekers for the purpose of this study. Indeed, concerning the information obtained in relation to

the specific situation of cross-border workers, 70% of respondents (21) who received this information said that they could have achieved the same outcome without EURES support.

However, several stakeholders agreed that the added value of EURES in cross-border regions is not much on favouring collaborations between neighbouring countries or in promoting mobility, but rather lies in its role of ensuring the application of fair labour working conditions and of workers' rights. Most of the stakeholders involved tend to agree on the importance of EURES as a label for quality of employment opportunities and of transparent information and communication.

Moreover, several participants to fieldwork activities argued that, although some collaborations in cross-border regions would have been developed without the EU intervention, EURES stimulated the achievement of results that would have not been reached otherwise. Indeed, EURES provides an overarching strategy to the parties involved, to support cooperation at a larger scale and allows for a greater mobilisation of resources.

#### **Summary of findings on EU added value**

The findings suggest that, without EU intervention, regional mobility would have been supported through different schemes and agreements, as it became more and more important in several countries and there is a common need to address the issues hindering regional labour mobility. However, EURES has been deemed key for the protection of workers' rights and of fair mobility conditions, and essential to provide the collaboration framework and the strategic objectives, as well as to mobilise resources.

### **3.4 Conclusions**

Cross-border regions are an important target for EURES. Indeed, cross-border labour mobility is characterised by specific challenges, because the administrative requirements for living in one country and working in another are particularly complicated and often not easy to fulfil.

In this context, jobseekers, workers and employers need to access transparent information about living and working conditions across the border to overcome those challenges. EURES plays a relevant role in addressing these needs, as EURES advisers in border regions provide expertise in intra-EU labour mobility issues and support access to transparent information. The provision of advice and guidance can be considered the most relevant and effective action concerning cross-border services, while recruitment and matching activities appear to be less successful.

Thanks to the provision of information, EURES activities in cross-border region contribute to the achievement of some EURES specific objectives, especially linked to the promotion of intra-EU labour mobility and on raising awareness about EURES.

Finally, although it is likely that the EU intervention is not essential to ensure collaboration in cross-border regions, EURES plays a crucial role in providing the resources and the strategic framework to achieve tangible results in support cross-border labour mobility.

## **4 ADMISSION SYSTEM/ EXTENSION OF THE NETWORK**

### **4.1 Background**

The requirement to set up an admission system in each EURES country and work towards the extension of the network is one of the main elements introduced with Regulation (EU) 2016/589. The admission system contributes to the broadening the EURES network as it allows private employment services or third-sector organisations to become accredited EURES Members and Partners. The objective of this network broadening, as defined in the EURES Regulation, is to improve the efficiency and quality of service delivery. In addition, it is a way to enhance the degree of complementarity among labour market actors and to increase the EURES market share of available job vacancies, job applications, curricula vitae (CVs) and support services offered (Preamble 12).

In order to broaden the EURES network, Article 11 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589 requires from the EURES countries to put in place admission systems for EURES Members and Partners, and to establish admission requirements and criteria (in compliance with the minimum common criteria laid down in Annex I of the Regulation). In 2017, the European Commission approved an Implementing Decision laying down a template for the description of national systems, and procedures for the admission of organisations to the EURES network (EU 2017/1255)<sup>27</sup>.

Article 12 of the EURES Regulation provides the definitions and roles of EURES Members and Partners, summarised in the figure below. The main difference between the status of Members and Partners is in the number of EURES tasks to which they have to contribute.

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<sup>27</sup> Available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017D1255&from=DE> .

Figure 5 Difference between EURES Members and Partners

		EURES Members	EURES Partners
<b>Tasks</b>	1) Contribute to the pool of <b>job vacancies</b> in accordance with Art. 17(1)(a); 2) Contribute to the pool of <b>job applications</b> and CVs in accordance Art.17(1)(b); 3) <b>Provide support services</b> to workers and employers in accordance with Art. 23, 24, 25(1), 26 and, where relevant, 27.	✓	At least one of the 3 tasks
<b>Requirements</b>	Provide, for the purposes of the EURES portal, <b>all job vacancies made publicly available</b> with them, as well as <b>all job applications and CVs</b> where the worker has consented to making the information available in the EURES portal	✓	Where applicable
	<b>Designate one or more contact points</b> , such as placement and recruitment offices, call centers and self-service tools, in accordance with national criteria, where workers and employers can get support	✓	✓
	Ensure that the <b>contact points</b> designated <b>clearly indicate the scope of the support services</b> provided to workers and employers	✓	When relevant
	Contribute to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the <b>collection of information</b> and <b>guidance</b> to be published on the EURES portal referred to in Art.9(4);</li> <li>• the <b>exchange of information</b> as referred to in Art. 30;</li> <li>• the <b>programming cycle</b> as referred to in Art. 31;</li> <li>• the <b>collection of data</b> as referred to in Art. 32.</li> </ul>	When requested by the NCO	When requested by the NCO

Source: Study team based on Regulation (EU) 2016/589

The National Coordination Offices (NCOs) had until May 2018 to establish their national admission systems, including a system for the monitoring of compliance of new EURES Members and Partners. Until then, Regulation (EU) 2016/589 provided for a transition period, allowing EURES countries to continue existing cooperation with partner organisations.

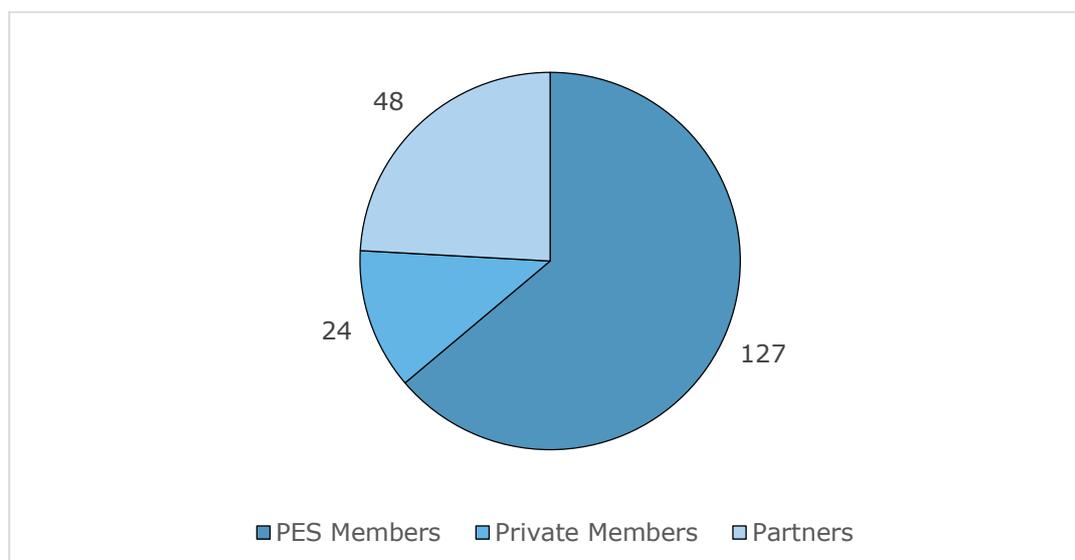
The first EURES Activity Report provided an overview of the implementation status of the EURES Regulation to June 2018.<sup>28</sup> With regard to the broadening of the EURES network, the report identified delays in the setting up of the national admission systems. It also concluded that the broadening of the network will be a key challenge in the future. This refers to the setting up of an effective and transparent admission system as well as to challenges of working within an enlarged network (e.g. coordination efforts, interoperability across stakeholders).

Almost, almost half of the EURES countries have not admitted new EURES Members and Partners yet.<sup>29</sup> As of January 2020, there were only 24 Private Members in the EURES network, which corresponds to a share of 12% of the total Members and Partners, and only 48 Partners. As shown in Figure 6 below, the EURES network is still mainly composed of Public Employment Services (PESs).

<sup>28</sup> COM (2019) 164 final, "First EURES Biennial Activity Report".

<sup>29</sup> ECG Meeting documents – 31/01/2020.

Figure 6 EURES network in January 2020



Source: Study team based on ECG Meeting documents – 31/01/2020

## 4.2 Methodology

### 4.2.1 Relevance of the topic

The goal of this case study is to provide in-depth information on the changes to the EURES network brought about by the introduction of national admission systems and its ensuing enlargement. This topic is relevant for the Ex-post Evaluation because it represents one of the main changes in the organisational structure of EURES, introduced by the EURES Regulation. This change in the composition of the network could have long-term impacts on its work. In addition, as mentioned in the previous section, the enlargement of the network has been happening at a slow pace, which calls for a more detailed analysis of the main challenges in this process.

Being part of the Ex-post Evaluation, the research questions addressed in this case study have a clear link to the broader Evaluation Questions as shown in the table on the following page. In particular, this case study analyses the contributions of the broadening of the EURES network to the achievement of the specific EURES objectives, including the appropriateness of the current EURES organisational set-up with Members and Partners. In terms of efficiency, it elaborates on changes in administrative burden due to changes in the network composition as a result of the EURES Regulation. It also provides insights on the coherence between services offered by EURES Members and Partners and the overarching EU added value of having an enlarged EURES network.

Table 10 Case study research questions

Case study research question	Evaluation Questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added value
Did NCOs comply with the requirement to set up admission systems and broaden their networks?	To what extent Member States complied with EURES Regulation?	X				
To which specific EURES objectives does the broadening of the EURES network contribute? In what way?	To what extent the provision of services to employers and jobseekers / the EURES portal contributed to:  - increasing awareness of intra-EU labour possibilities by providing relevant information of good quality on job vacancies and living and working conditions throughout the Union to any job seeker or employer seeking client services for recruitment, and by granting any person interested access to the EURES network?  - improving the accessibility of intra-EU job opportunities by assisting interested people with matching, placement and recruitment?	X				
To what extent the level of compliance affected the effectiveness of the EURES Regulation?	How this level of Member States compliance affected the effectiveness of EURES Regulation?	X				

Case study research question	Evaluation Questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added value
To what extent the organisational set-up with EURES Members and Partners corresponds to developments in the labour market?	How appropriate is the current EURES organisational set-up to meet the current labour market needs, including in cross-border regions?	X				
How has the administrative burden changed compared to the previous EURES Regulation due to the changes in the network composition?	To what extent has administrative burden increased/decreased compared to the previous EURES Regulation?		X			
To what extent are the services offered by EURES Members and Partners complementary?	How complementary were the EURES tools and services with each other?				X	
Are there positive effects of the broadening of the EURES network that would not be possible otherwise?	To what extent did the EURES operations produce effects that would not have taken place without the EU intervention?					X

Source: Study team

#### 4.2.2 Methodological approach

This section summarises the methodology deployed by this case study. It follows the general approach to all case studies, but is tailored keeping in mind the specific topics.

##### Scope

Two EURES countries have been selected for data collection – the Netherlands and Italy. An overview of their main characteristics and relevance for the case study can be found in the table below.

Table 11 Geographical scope and rationale

<b>EURES country</b>	<b>Sending / Receiving</b>	<b>Relevance of EURES country for case study</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	<i>Receiving</i>	The Netherlands has admitted a number of new EURES Members and Partners from different stakeholder types (private employment services, municipality, labour union).
<b>Italy</b>	<i>Sending Receiving</i>	The EURES network in Italy consists primarily of the local administrative regions as 19 Italian Regions and 2 Autonomous Provinces are EURES Members.

Source: Study team

While the focus of the case study is on the Netherlands and Italy, the topic of admission systems and working with EURES Members and Partners was mentioned in interviews with representatives from other EURES countries. These additional insights have been incorporated in the triangulation of the data, where relevant.

##### Data collection

###### *Overview of literature sources*

The document review for this case study covered an analysis of the relevant EU Regulations and corresponding Implementing Decisions, information on the status of the admission systems and working with Members and Partners from the dedicated section on the EURES Extranet, documentation of Mutual Learning Events and European Coordination Group (ECG) meetings and information from the Activity Plans and Reports of the countries in focus.

In addition, the European Coordination Office (ECO) established in January 2020 a working group 'Working with new Members and Partners' with the objective to consolidate good practices and develop generic guidelines on the different phases of the process of enlarging the network.<sup>30</sup> While the outcomes of the working group are not available yet (expected in November 2020), preliminary findings relevant for the research questions of this case study were incorporated in the analysis. They are based on the results of an online survey and interviews targeting EURES countries, as well as documentation from the first meeting of the working group.

<sup>30</sup> Draft Mandate of the working group 'Working with new Members and Partners', presented in the ECG meeting on 31/01/2020.

*Overview of stakeholders consulted*

The case study included carrying out eight phone interviews with stakeholders representing the stakeholder groups listed below. In addition, two workshops bringing together EURES Members were carried out.

Table 12 Stakeholders consulted

Stakeholder category	Country	Topics covered	Data collection tool	
			Interview	Workshop
<b>NCO / EURES staff</b>	IT, NL	Advantages and disadvantages of enlarged network; Impact of enlarged network on the services offered; Administrative burden connected to an enlarged network; Added value.	X	X
<b>EURES staff</b>	IT	Advantages and disadvantages of enlarged network; Impact of enlarged network on the services offered; Administrative burden connected to an enlarged network; Added value.	X	
<b>EURES Member</b>	NL (2)	Advantages and disadvantages of participating; Effects observed; Administrative burden and experience with the process; Added value.	X	X
<b>EURES Partner</b>	IT	Advantages and disadvantages of participating; Effects observed; Administrative burden and experience with the process; Added value.	X	

Source: Study team

*Limitations of the data collection*

All data collection activities could be carried out and there were no operational limitations. Due to COVID-19, the workshops had to be organised online.

## 4.3 Main findings

### 4.3.1 State of play in the Member States in focus

The national EURES network in the **Netherlands** has been expanding and diversifying over the evaluation period. The national admission system was put in place on 12 May 2018, with the expectation that this will lead to the broadening of the network.<sup>31</sup> Before 2018 the only EURES Member was Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen (UWV Employer Insurance Agency), whilst EURES Scheldemond<sup>32</sup> was the only EURES Partner with transitional rights.<sup>33</sup>

As described in Netherlands' Activity Report for 2019, the network currently consists of seven EURES Members and two EURES Partners. These EURES Members and Partners were incorporated in the Programming Cycle and Performance Measurement in 2019.<sup>34</sup>

In terms of composition, the national EURES network in the Netherlands is broad. The organisations are different in type, focus of services and size. Specifically, the network consists of:

- Governmental organisations: UWV, Municipality Enschede, Stichting De Examenkamer.
- Private employment services: Start People International, Den Doelder Recruitment, Hobij Techniek, Ibercompas, De Pooter.
- Labour union: Netherlands' Trade Union Confederation, Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV).

The services that they provide range from support services to workers and employers, accreditation of learning certifications, support in cross-border regions, development of mobility tools and innovative solutions. Interviewees from the Netherlands elaborated that the NCO coordinates and oversees the network, but the EURES Members and Partners set their activities independently. Regular bilateral and multi-lateral conversations and meetings are organised to bring the different stakeholders closer together.

The national EURES network in **Italy** has a different composition. The national admission system was developed during 2017 and put in place in May 2018. The Activity Report for 2018 specifies that only two organisations applied, but could not meet the admission requirements.<sup>35</sup> In 2019, the national EURES network consisted of the PES as a Member and a number of EURES Partners from social partners' organisations. According to the latest information available, the network consists of 28 EURES Members and Partners:

- Governmental organisations: The Italian Public Employment Services (PES) from all 19 Italian Regions and 2 Autonomous Provinces.
- Labour and business unions: CGIL Friuli Venezia Giulia, CISL Friuli Venezia Giulia, Unione Sindacale Territoriale CISL Imperia e Savona, UIL – Unione regionale Friuli Venezia Giulia, UIL di Genova e della Liguria, Confartigianato Imprese - Friuli Venezia Giulia.

<sup>31</sup> Programming Cycle: Netherlands Activity Report 2018, Executive Summary.

<sup>32</sup> Consortium of partners in the cross-border region treated as a whole.

<sup>33</sup> Programming Cycle: Netherlands Activity Report 2017, Section B. Administrative details.

<sup>34</sup> Programming Cycle: Netherlands Activity Report 2019, Executive Summary.

<sup>35</sup> Programming Cycle: Italy Activity Report 2018, Executive Summary.

In addition to the official EURES Partners, the Italian EURES network has a number of partnerships or other forms of collaboration with private and public stakeholders, which aim at enhancing mobility and access to the network, as described in the Activity Report 2019.<sup>36</sup> The Italian NCO also highlighted in the interview that the national EURES network in Italy has strong relationships with relevant stakeholders such as Chambers of Commerce, universities, Non-Profit Organisations and city administrations. As a result of these existing ties, the formal broadening of the network through the admission system was not perceived as fundamental to the work of EURES.

#### 4.3.2 Responses to the research questions

The following sections present the case study findings to each of the case study research questions as identified in the Table 10 Case study research questions above.

##### **Effectiveness**

*Did NCOs comply with the requirement to set up admission systems and broaden their networks?*  
As described in the previous section, both the Netherlands and Italy have implemented the EURES Regulation in setting up admission systems and admitting new EURES Members and Partners.

The number of new EURES Members and Partners admitted differs across the national EURES networks. For example, according to information on the EURES Extranet, no new Members and Partners were admitted in 13 EURES countries, pointing to issues with the network enlargement.<sup>37</sup> In this regard, some challenges were identified in interviews with NCOs in the framework of the working group:

- lack of interest on behalf of potential applicants due to not recognising the added value of membership / partnership;
- lack of financial or human resources to meet the administrative burden of the application process and subsequent participation in the network.

A number of NCOs interviewed for the case studies (EE, DE) mentioned that there was already strong cooperation with the organisations that were officially admitted once the system was in place. In this case, the admission system provided a regulatory framework for already existing cooperation. However, some EURES countries such as the Netherlands used the process of setting up an admission system to also engage in new collaborations.

*To which specific EURES objectives does the broadening of the EURES network contribute? In what way?*

The EURES Regulation stresses the importance of an extended EURES network in connection with the better functioning of EURES. In particular, a broader network can improve the quantity and quality of services delivered and enhance the exchange of information on labour market developments. From the five specific EURES objectives, defined in the EURES intervention logic, the following four are relevant for the analysis of this case study:

- Achieve a nearly complete supply of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal (specific objective (SO) 1).
- Provide information, guidance and assistance to any job seeker or employer interested in intra-EU labour mobility (SO3), including support in the recruitment process (SO4).

<sup>36</sup> Programming Cycle: Italy Activity Report 2019. Section "Governance", Activity 1.

<sup>37</sup> EURES Extranet, Section "Admission systems for Members and Partners", "Members and Partners admitted", country overviews. Countries: AT, BG, CZ, FR, EL, IE, IS, LV, LI, MT, SI, SK, CH.

- Support the functioning of the network through exchange of information (SO5).

In order to become EURES Member, an organisation has to be contributing to the pool of vacancies and CVs and providing services to employers and job seekers. In order to become EURES Partner, an organisation has to be carrying out at least one of these three tasks (see Figure 5). Therefore, by definition, broadening the EURES network with organisations that carry out these tasks contributes to the achievement of specific objectives 1, 3 and 4.

Based on the definition of their tasks, EURES Members and Partners cannot directly contribute to the second EURES specific objective – enable the EURES portal to carry out an automated matching. Therefore, specific objective 2 is not further analysed here.

In the following, we look into the contribution in practice of the broadening of the EURES network to each of the other four specific objectives.

#### *Specific objective 1: Achieve a nearly complete supply of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal*

With regard to SO1, EURES advisers consulted in Italy pointed out the increase in CVs and job vacancies transferred to the system as a main benefit of the enlarged national network. In comparison, stakeholders consulted from the Netherlands mentioned that contribution to the pool of job vacancies is not the main benefit of admitting new EURES Members and Partners because PES in the Netherlands already has an almost complete database of job vacancies available at national level. This suggests that the extent to which the broadening of the network contributes to the pool of job vacancies and CVs depends on the national context and organisation of labour market stakeholders.

In order to quantify the contribution of EURES Members and Partners in this regard, the EURES Performance Measurement System includes indicators to estimate the market share of EURES Members and Partners on the job vacancies market at national level (Network indicator 5). Data from 2018 is unreliable since a large number of EURES countries did not report and it was the first year of the admission process.<sup>38</sup> Data from 2019 shows that EURES Members and Partners made available some 14 million job vacancies. However, it is not possible to calculate the share of these 14 million job vacancies in the total number of job vacancies at national level because of methodological inconsistencies in reporting.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, it should be noted that the transfer of job vacancies and CVs from EURES Members and Partners to the EURES NCOs and then to the EURES portal requires additional interoperability solutions, which are not in place in all countries. Therefore, the impact of admitting new EURES Members and Partners on the pool of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal cannot manifest itself to a full extent yet.

Whilst the broadening of the network clearly has the potential to contribute to the achievement of SO1, it is not possible to estimate the extent of this contribution at present.

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<sup>38</sup> See Joint Analysis Report 2018, Performance Measurement System.

<sup>39</sup> See Joint Analysis Report 2019, Performance Measurement System (internal draft).

*Specific objectives 3 and 4: Provide information, guidance and assistance to any job seeker or employer interested in intra-EU labour mobility, including support in the recruitment process*

With regard to specific objectives 3 and 4, two main types of contributions can be identified based on the feedback from different interview partners and workshop participants.

Firstly, the broadening of the EURES network leads to an increase in the size of the human network and the number of people providing EURES services. Therefore, more job seekers and employers can receive support. This is also linked to the increased density of the network, which has a positive effect on the accessibility to the EURES services. For example, it was highlighted in the workshop in Italy that the network enlargement allows for better coverage of specific geographical areas which were previously not specifically targeted by EURES services (e.g. a EURES Partner in Italy is located in Friuli-Venezia-Giulia and helps implementing the Cross-Border Partnership with Slovenia). In addition, working together under the EURES label increases the visibility and awareness of services provided.

This point is supported by the quantitative data. For instance, 2019 was the first year in which the Netherlands included numbers from new EURES Members and Partners in its reporting. There were 375 individual contacts with workers reported in 2018, compared to 16 876 in 2019 (total numbers referring to the entire EURES network in the Netherlands). There were 575 individual contacts with employers reported in 2018, compared to 3 438 in 2019.<sup>40</sup>

Secondly, new EURES Members and Partners bring different types of services and knowledge to the network, which can have a positive impact on the quality of the services delivered. For example, the NCO in the Netherlands highlighted that EURES Members and Partners are equipped to bring together demand and supply in the labour market in the most efficient way, thus contributing to better matching services. Another example from Italy refers to the potential of new EURES Partners to bring new ideas and perceptions through the exchange of best practices. For example, an Italian EURES Partner (labour union) contributed to the quality of EURES services by providing a better safeguard of workers' rights. The Partner could perform quality-control on job vacancies posted and ensure the transparency of information from employers to jobseekers.

*Specific objective 5: Support the functioning of the network through exchange of information*

With regard to specific objective 5, it is important to distinguish between different organisations. The type of information shared and the benefits deriving from it depend on the main focus of activity of the particular EURES Member or Partner:

- Interview partners from the Netherlands and Italy pointed out that including organisations knowledgeable on social aspects of the labour market contributes to a balanced discussion within the network.
- EURES private Members highlighted that being part of the EURES network allows them to reach out to organisations across Europe. A specific example mentioned in the workshop in the Netherlands is a cooperation between private EURES Members in the Netherlands and Finland.
- In addition, contacting organisations under the brand of 'EURES' appears to make it easier for private Members to win the trust of public employment services and municipalities.

Therefore, it is confirmed that the exchange of information and views across the network takes place. However, it appears that this exchange does not take place in a structured manner. This

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<sup>40</sup> Performance Measurement System of the Netherlands for 2018 and 2019.

might be linked to the recent enlargement of the network. Developing the broader EURES network was described as a 'learning process' by NCOs interviewed. Keeping in mind that the first official admissions were in May 2018, it is likely that effects relating to SO5 are still not evident since the information exchange structures are not sufficiently developed yet.

*To what extent their level of compliance in this regard affected the effectiveness of the EURES Regulation?*

In order to answer this question, we have to analyse whether EURES countries that have not set up an admission system or have not admitted new EURES Members and Partners missed out on the benefits from working within a broader EURES network.

Achieving some of the EURES specific objectives can also be enhanced by using other forms of collaboration at national level such as cooperating in Targeted Mobility Schemes, agreements and informal exchanges. For example, an interview partner from Italy mentioned that there was no real need for an official admission process since a close collaboration was already existing with relevant stakeholders. At the same time, the analysis of the effects of a broadened EURES network mentioned above include benefits possible only through the official broadening of the network, such as: enhancing visibility and awareness of EURES through the use of the EURES brand; and transferring job vacancies and CVs to the EURES portal.

Therefore, the level of compliance with the EURES Regulation, influences the achievement of specific EURES objectives. However, the extent of this influence differs across EURES countries depending on their national structures and pre-existing cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

*To what extent the organisational set-up with EURES Members and Partners corresponds to developments in the labour market?*

The majority of stakeholders interviewed for this case study see a positive economic development over the last years resulting in high demand for labour. This is also reflected in the declining unemployment rates in the EU - 8.9% in January 2016 compared to 6.1% in January 2020.<sup>41</sup> Another common development is the increase of labour shortages in specific sectors across all EURES countries, sometimes leading to a competition for skilled labour, which was also pointed out in the Assessment Activity Report 2018.<sup>42</sup> Lastly, interviewees mentioned that the labour market is becoming more dynamic with new forms of employment and changing skill-sets.

In terms of organisational set-up, the broadening of the EURES network not only enhances the services offered by EURES, but also brings different stakeholders together. Given the dynamic developments of the labour market, interviewees mentioned a number of specific reasons that make it necessary to have a wide set of stakeholders together in order to respond to shifts in the labour market:

- Information exchange within the EURES network with organisations such as educational institutions or unions brings EURES closer to the actual needs of workers and employers. Given the increasing labour market shortages and skills gaps, such a dialogue becomes important for the sustainable development of the labour market.
- The increasing labour shortages lead to increased demand for private employment services, which sometimes take advantage of their position (for example through charging excessive fees). However, being part of the EURES network requires them to meet minimum standards, also in connection to working conditions and types of employment promoted. Therefore, the

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<sup>41</sup> Eurostat, Unemployment by age and sex. EU 28. Available online at <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>.

<sup>42</sup> EURES Assessment Activity Report 2018. Support services to employers.

broadening of the network contributes to the promotion of fair working conditions and reduces the potential for abuse.

### Summary of findings on effectiveness

Whilst all but five EURES countries have set up an admission system, not all EURES countries have admitted new EURES Members and Partners. The enlargement of the EURES network at national level contributes to the growing numbers of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES Portal, and the availability and accessibility of support services to job seekers and employers. However, the contribution to a better exchange of information on labour market developments does not appear to be sufficiently explored yet.

The level of compliance with the EURES Regulation in setting up an admission system and broadening the network has an effect on the achievement of the EURES objectives, especially if no other forms of collaboration with relevant stakeholders are established. Incorporating a wider range of organisations within the EURES network corresponds to developments in the labour market. The closer collaboration of actors can respond better to the dynamic developments in the labour market.

### Efficiency

*How has the administrative burden changed compared to the previous EURES Regulation due to the changes in the network composition?*

The analysis of the administrative burden connected to the broadening of the EURES network includes two different perspectives – NCOs and new EURES Members and Partners. New tasks introduced include setting up of the admission system and the process of admitting new Members and Partners and existing tasks were expanded such as coordination of a larger network, adjusting the communication structure, and monitoring. New skills needed by NCOs as a result of the network enlargement include:

- management skills, linked to operating in a broader network;
- communication, negotiation and networking skills, linked to bringing players with different perspectives together;
- IT and marketing skills linked to the need to update existing web sites and develop new digital modules.

The following new tasks of NCOs due to the broadening of the network were identified:

- **Setting up the admission system** (one-off burden): review and develop admission criteria, prepare training and information material for new EURES Members and Partners;
- **Reviewing applications and on-boarding new EURES Members and Partners** (burden in the case of new applications): review process; conduct pre-training;
- **Coordinating an enlarged EURES network** (continuous additional burden): organisation of yearly discussions and evaluation sessions; coordination of a programming cycle and monitoring for a larger number of organisations, and thus a higher number of activities.

The following new tasks of EURES Members and Partners were identified:

- **Application process** (one-off burden): preparation and submission of documents; if needed, issuing of new certifications;
- **On-boarding process** (one-off burden): participation in pre-training; adjustment of IT systems to connect databases, if needed; adjustment of monitoring and reporting processes to comply with new reporting obligations, if needed;

- **Working as part of the EURES network** (continuous burden): hiring new staff to provide EURES services, participating in coordination events; monitoring and reporting obligations.

#### **Summary of findings on efficiency**

The introduction of an admission system with the EURES Regulation resulted in an increased administrative burden for NCOs and EURES Members and Partners. Some of the new tasks were one-off, whilst others are continuous.

### **Coherence**

*To what extent are the services offered by EURES Members and Partners complementary?*

The level of complementarity between the different services offered by EURES Members and Partners can be analysed from a strategic and an operational point of view.

Starting with the former, a number of interview partners mentioned differences between the focus and objectives of EURES Members and Partners. Particularly, private employment services have to take account of their profitability, which is not the case for public employment services. Whilst this does not directly lead to inconsistencies in the types of services offered, it can have an impact on the collaboration and strategic alignment between EURES Members and Partners. However, this strategic alignment is described by stakeholders consulted as a long-term process, linked to building of trust and stronger ties within the network.

From an operational point of view, some EURES advisers consulted in interviews for this and other case studies, mentioned differences in the fees charged for certain EURES services between EURES Members and Partners. This could lead to competition between EURES Members and Partners and confusion among EURES clients. In particular, EURES Members might charge employers for an additional service that they provide, which is not provided by PES as a EURES Member. Additionally, whilst EURES Members cannot charge job seekers, it was mentioned that private employment service providers might be more hesitant to assist job seekers with less promising profiles and are in general more selective.

However, the network has not been existing long enough in an enlarged form to show whether these different approaches could have a negative effect, especially on the image of EURES as a service provider.

#### **Summary of findings on coherence**

The level of complementarity between services offered by EURES Members and Partners is linked to the composition of the network and the extent of strategic alignment between the organisations. Inconsistencies in the implementation were identified linked to fees charged for the provision of services. However, since the establishment of the national EURES networks is still an ongoing process, the level of complementarity cannot be sufficiently assessed due to lack of reference points.

### **EU added value**

*Are there positive effects of the broadening of the EURES network that would not be possible otherwise?*

Regarding the EURES network as a whole, there is a clear perception that such a network is possible only through an EU intervention. Stakeholders consulted believe that the EURES network

would not exist without coordination at EU level, which provides common vision, principles and an overarching strategy.

Considering the national EURES networks, one of the EURES Partners consulted in the interviews mentioned that such a network would not have been possible at national level without EURES. It is likely that the setting up of an admission system was used as an impulse in some countries to expand their national networks, which would not have happened otherwise.

Another EURES Member consulted sees the participation within the national EURES network as the only opportunity to have an outreach beyond one's own country. However, it was also mentioned in interviews with NCOs that the focus in the last years was on building a national network, rather than a European one.

#### **Summary of findings on EU added value**

There is an EU added value deriving from the coordination of the EURES network at EU level. EU added value of broadening the EURES networks at national level can be found in prompting NCOs to reach out to other organisations at national level and making it possible for national organisations to enhance their outreach EU-wide.

## **4.4 Conclusions**

The broadening of the EURES network is an ongoing process, accorded different degrees of priority across the EURES countries. There is a number of benefits deriving from working in a broader network such as a larger pool of job vacancies and CVs and an enhanced quantity and quality of service provision. However, the broadening of the network is also connected to a number of challenges such as additional administrative burden and a need to align different strategic priorities.

These are initial benefits and challenges identified in the first years of the network enlargement. Since the composition of the network is still developing, it is likely that further benefits and challenges will be identified in the upcoming years. However, we can conclude that a broader EURES network clearly contributes to the achievement of the EURES objectives and is necessary in order to address changes in a dynamic labour market. Providing guidance and support in the coordination of an enlarged EURES network from a strategic and operational point of view could facilitate the process of enlargement and help in realising even further benefits.

## 5 APPRENTICESHIP/ TRAINEESHIP SCHEMES

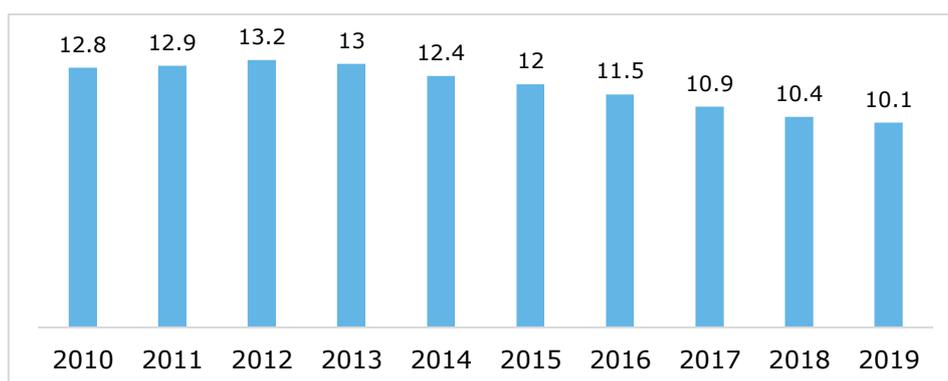
### 5.1 Background

An important change for the EURES network introduced by the adoption and coming into effect of the new Regulation (EU) 2016/589, suggested also by the Compact for Growth and Jobs from the European Council<sup>43</sup>, is the extension of the network activities to apprenticeships and traineeships, if they are subject to an employment relationship<sup>44</sup>.

Specifically, among the responsibilities of ECO, Article 8 of EURES Regulation makes provision for the development of an appropriate cooperation and clearance structure for apprenticeships and traineeships, also taking into account the Council recommendation of 10 March 2014 on a quality framework for traineeships (Preamble 8). In addition, Article 9 requires NCOs to collect and make available on the EURES portal national information and guidance on apprenticeships and traineeships. Moreover, in the same article, NCOs are asked to enhance collaboration with other stakeholders, including organisations engaged in apprenticeships and traineeships.

The importance of extending EURES activities to apprenticeships and traineeships is reflected in one of the network's general goals, namely, facilitating the transition into work from education, unemployment and inactivity. This should be read also keeping in mind the high rates of youth unemployment and inactivity in Europe, but also the presence of skill mismatches within the Member States and the widening digital gap. In 2019, the youth unemployment rate (age group 20 – 29) was 10.6%. Moreover, the level of NEETS in Europe, meaning the category of young people neither working nor studying, has remained high, at 10.1% in 2019, despite showing a downward trend, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 7 Percentage of young people aged 15-24 neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) – EU 28



Source: Eurostat database

Recent reports show that young people face specific challenges that hinder the transition from studying to working. Indeed, it is more likely for them to obtain only temporary or non-standard work contracts, or face skill mismatches.

<sup>43</sup> Available online at <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-76-2012-INIT/en/pdf> .

<sup>44</sup> Preamble 8 of EURES Regulation (EU 2016/589)

However, not only the young people are in need of traineeships and apprenticeships. Recent statistics show that almost half the population of the EU is considered as lacking basic digital skills and one third of the European citizens reported a very low level or total lack of digital literacy. In addition, approximately 40% of employers are struggling to fill their job vacancies due largely to a lack of necessary skills<sup>45</sup>.

Given the above described trends, skills have gained importance on the European political agenda and in the recent years, the European Union undertook several actions and initiatives to boost youth employment and the development of skills for all, such as the adoption of the European Skills Agenda and the Youth Guarantee.

Notwithstanding that skills are high on the political agendas and the inclusion of a specific reference to traineeships and apprenticeships in the EURES Regulation, it appears that activities linked to apprenticeships and traineeships in the network were always limited and implemented unevenly across the EURES countries<sup>46</sup>.

Indeed, the Regulation does not provide a clear indication of the scope of action for the provision of support services to apprenticeships and traineeships. Moreover, at the European level there is a lack of commonly agreed definitions of traineeships, apprenticeships and internships and of related standards is identified. Hence, most of the EURES countries tend to only provide information to the users that seek learning opportunities abroad, especially through the existing mobility schemes, and in particular the Your First EURES Job (YFEJ), Reactivate and European Solidarity Corps schemes, but also on living and working conditions in other countries.

In addition to services through EURES staff, apprenticeships and traineeships are exchanged on the EURES portal, and companies and organisations can directly upload the youth opportunities they have on offer through a self-service facility in the Drop'pin@EURES section of the EURES portal.

Finally, some EURES mobility schemes financed through the EURES axis of EaSI exist that could facilitate the transition of jobseekers from education or inactivity to the labour market (i.e. Your First EURES Job, Reactivate).

## 5.2 Methodology

### 5.2.1 *Relevance of the topic*

Support services to apprenticeships and traineeships have been introduced in the EURES network activities only by the EURES Regulation and are a relatively new field for the PES and EURES Members and Partners. Nevertheless, given the higher attention of the European policies and initiatives accorded to youth, skills and continuous learning, as well as the relatively high rates of youth unemployment and inactivity as well as the growing digital and skills gaps, it is important to investigate whether youth and learning are a relevant target for EURES, how the needs of this category are addressed and whether the activities provided contribute to the achievement of

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<sup>45</sup> Deloitte Insights, 2019. "Emerging skills needs for the future of work". Available online at [https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/22923\\_expected-skills-needs-for-the-future-of-work/DI\\_Expected-skills-needs-for-the-future-of-work.pdf](https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/22923_expected-skills-needs-for-the-future-of-work/DI_Expected-skills-needs-for-the-future-of-work.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> EURES Programming Cycle: Assessment of Activity Reports 2019

EURES goals, especially concerning a smooth transition from education or inactivity to the labour market.

The following table presents the way in which the key case study research questions feed into the final evaluation study.

Table 13 Case study research questions

Case study research question	Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added value
Is youth a good target for EURES activities? And are traineeships and apprenticeships replying to young people needs? What are other possible targets of these services and how are their needs addressed?	To what extent were the most relevant groups (e.g. cross-border workers, young people searching for international experience, EU mobile workers) targeted and their most important needs addressed?			X		
In your view, is the provision of support services for apprenticeships and traineeships contributing to easier transitions into the labour market? Are there and other effects that you observed deriving from the provision of support to apprenticeships and traineeships?	To what extent the EURES mobility schemes and projects contributed to achieving the EURES specific objectives? Cross-border partnerships; Your First EURES Job; Reactivate; Targeted mobility schemes	X				
Are EURES support services to apprenticeships and traineeships visible to the targeted audience?	How visible were EURES actions and the EURES initiative to labour market participants?					
Is the provision of traineeship services coherent with other EU and EURES actions for young people and VET? Are there overlaps with other programs and policies (e.g. ERASMUS +)? Are there possible synergies?	How coherent is the EURES Regulation with other EU policy measures and initiatives targeting employment and mobility at EU level?				X	
What is the role of EURES in promoting and facilitating traineeships abroad? And the role of the EU? Do you think young people's mobility have been encouraged and facilitated by the support of EURES or if it would exist anyway without EURES?	To what extent did the EURES operations produce effects (quantified to the possible extent) that would not have taken place without the EU intervention?					X

Source: Study team

### 5.2.2 Methodological approach

This section summarises the methodology deployed in this case study. It follows the general approach to all case studies, but is tailored to the specific topics of this case study.

#### Scope

The following EURES countries have been selected for data collection – Belgium, Hungary, Italy and the Netherlands. An overview of their main characteristics and relevance for the case study can be found below.

Table 14 Geographical scope and rationale

<b>EURES country</b>	<b>Sending / Receiving</b>	<b>Relevance of EURES country for case study</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<i>Sending Receiving</i>	VDAB and Actiris (Belgian NCOs respectively for Flanders and Brussels region) developed many activities linked to youth and professional growth.
<b>Hungary</b>	<i>Sending</i>	EURES Hungary targets youth through specific information events and tailored assistance.
<b>Italy</b>	<i>Sending/ Receiving</i>	EURES Italy is involved in several mobility schemes both for youth and older jobseekers and has several informative activities in place to support young people.
<b>Netherlands</b>	<i>Receiving</i>	EURES Netherlands is trying to develop schemes for the provision of apprenticeships and traineeships concerning seasonal jobs and in cross-border regions.

Source: Study team

#### Data collection

##### *Overview of literature sources*

The case study was developed on the basis of a thorough desk research aimed at gathering insights on the support services provided for apprenticeships and traineeships. The list of consulted documents included the Programming Cycle reports, the ECG meeting minutes, the mobility schemes monitoring reports and calls for proposals, different studies on skills mismatches and out labour market conditions in Europe, such as:

- Deloitte Insights, 2019. "Emerging skills needs for the future of work",
- ILO, 2017. "Rising to the youth employment challenge: New evidence on key policy issues",
- European Social and Economic Committee, 2018. "Skills Mismatches – An Impediment to the competitiveness of EU Businesses,
- Cedefop, 2018. "Insights into skill shortages and skill mismatch",

and legal texts and official communications from the European Union. Moreover, official statistics from Eurostat were consulted.

##### *Overview of stakeholders consulted*

At this stage, part of the data collection for this case study was carried out through 13 online interviews and one online workshop, gathering young jobseekers and recent graduates located in Belgium. The table below provides an overview of the stakeholders involved in this case study.

Table 15 Stakeholders consulted

Stakeholder category	Country	Topics covered	Data collection tool	
			Interview	Workshop
<b>Young jobseeker</b>	BE	Relevance of the action, effectiveness, EU added value		X
<b>NCO</b>	IT, HU, BE (2 - Actiris, VDAB), NL	Relevance of the action and target group, effectiveness, coherence, EU added value	X	
<b>EURES staff</b>	IT, NL (3), BE (2 - Actiris)	Relevance of the action and target group, effectiveness, coherence, EU added value	X	
<b>EURES Partners</b>	NL	Relevance of the action and target group, coherence, EU added value	X	

Source: Study team

#### *Limitations of the data collection*

The data collection for this case study encountered some challenges.

Support services to apprenticeships and traineeships are not, even broadly, defined in the Regulation, hence it is difficult for EURES countries to understand what the scope of their corresponding activities should be. The services provided are described in the Work Programmes and Activity Reports submitted each year by the EURES countries within the Programming Cycle. Nevertheless, these descriptions are rather qualitative and show a different degree of precision and detail among the different NCOs. Moreover, the absence of standard indicators and the lack of definitions and a legal basis complicate the exercise of collecting relevant information.

In addition, the offering of traineeships and apprenticeships is not very developed across the EURES network. Hence, the identification of best practices faced some constraints. For example, although Hungary and the Netherlands were selected after an assessment of their activity reports and work programmes, during the interviews it appeared that these services are still mostly linked to the provision of information and that specific programmes tailored to youth are still under development.

Overall, given the lack of information and data quality issues, the interviews and workshops played a useful role, as they could contribute to the clarification of the main open points and knowledge gaps. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe, field visits have been suspended and have been replaced by online interviews and workshop. Notably, due to the obstacles encountered with the Netherlands and Hungary concerning the lack of information, only one workshop has been organised.

## 5.3 Main findings

### 5.3.1 State of play in the Member States in focus

All the selected EURES countries for this case study included in their Work Programmes and Activity Plans (i.e. as part of the Programming Cycle) some activities linked to youth and general services on apprenticeships and traineeships.

As regards **Belgium**, two of the NCOs, Actiris and VDAB, have youth as a strategic focus for their activities and services. Within Actiris, young jobseekers and recent graduates have the possibility to apply to obtain a grant for the participation in apprenticeships or traineeships abroad. In this case, the financial resources for the grants are provided by the European Social Fund. Notably, from the internal monitoring activities of the NCO, it emerged that 80% of jobseekers were offered employment contracts upon positive conclusion of the traineeship. In addition, recently, the NCO developed the programme Boost30+, where older workers or jobseekers with a need to upskill or reskill in specific fields, especially digitalisation, can be supported through a grant to participate in a learning opportunity within an enterprise. On the other hand, VDAB, given the relatively high rate of youth unemployment in the Flanders, provides assistance and guidance to recent graduates and young jobseekers in the transition into the labour market, mostly in the sectors of agriculture and tourism. Nevertheless, the NCO did not develop specific activities or services regarding apprenticeships and traineeships.

In **Hungary**, young people are one of the main targets of activity. Their needs are addressed through the provision of information and assistance to ease the transition from education to the labour market. In 2019, the network organised two workshops, in collaboration with Europass, addressed to young people to provide practical advice on searching for jobs and entering the labour market. In addition, EURES Hungary took part in the Navigator workshop on 'Mobility in EU', organised in collaboration with Eurodesk, Euroguidance, Europass, ENIC-NARIC and EQF.

EURES **Italy** not only leads two Your First EURES Job and one Reactivate projects and is co-applicant of a European Solidarity Corps one, but also cooperates with Erasmus+ and Eurodesk for targeting young jobseekers. In this multitude of projects, the Italian network organises several information events to promote the participation in mobility schemes, as well as in other vocational traineeships and professional apprenticeships.

Finally, in the **Netherlands**, a pilot programme was launched in 2018 to send students in Austria or Northern Italy for a traineeship in the tourism sector during the winter season. All the participants were satisfied, but the pilot project was rather small and does not entirely fall within the scope of EURES, being part of the education path. Moreover, the EURES Member Municipality Enschede is working to develop a collaboration agreement with the border region in Germany in order to facilitate students and recent graduates in applied sciences and technology to access traineeship opportunities within local employers.

### 5.3.2 Responses to the research questions

The following sections present the case study findings to each of the EQM questions as identified in the Table 13 Case study research questions above.

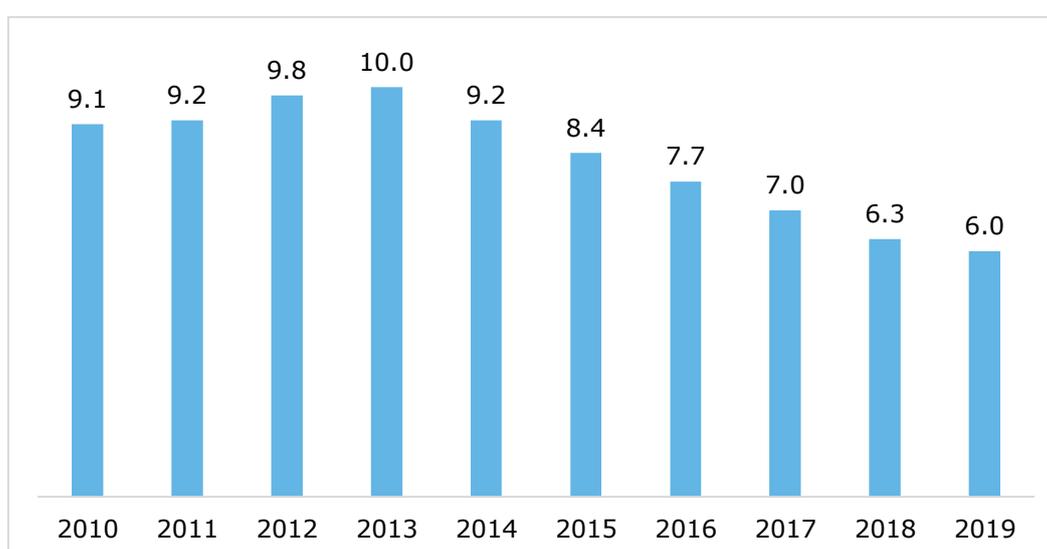
## Relevance

*Should EURES target young people and why? And are traineeships and apprenticeships replying to young people needs? What are other possible targets of these services and how are their needs addressed?*

With the inclusion of support services to traineeships and apprenticeships in the Regulation, it appears that EURES is targeting not only young people upon completion of their studies and when they are trying to enter in the job market (age group approximately 20 – 29), but also every person in need of upskilling and reskilling, in order to facilitate the transition to the labour market from education, unemployment or inactivity.

Looking at youth, as presented in the Background section above, youth labour markets face specific challenges. Above all, although decreasing in the past years, fairly high youth unemployment rates (age 15 – 24) persist all over Europe, as presented in the figure below.

Figure 8 Youth unemployment rate (age 15 - 24) - EU28



Source: Eurostat database

Moreover, not only the labour market for young jobseekers is characterised by a widespread lack of job possibilities, but also the quality of employment opportunities is low, being more and more difficult for young workers and recent graduates to access standard or unlimited duration work contracts<sup>47</sup>.

On top of the structural factors in the labour market, it is important to consider the challenges deriving from the digital revolution and its impact on demand for skills. Recent studies show that the key competences required for work are changing quickly. Looking at hard skills, the demand for digital skills and STEM specialisation is increasing, while soft skills, flexibility, punctuality and communication appear to be more and more important<sup>48</sup>. In this framework, the low adaptability of education systems can result into skills mismatches and contribute to a difficult access to the labour market for young people<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> ILO, 2017. "Rising to the youth employment challenge: New evidence on key policy issues". Available online at [https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS\\_556949/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_556949/lang--en/index.htm) .

<sup>48</sup> Adecco Group, 2017. "The challenge of youth employment". Available online at <https://www.adeccogroup.com/wp-content/themes/ado-group/downloads/the-challenge-of-youth-unemployment.pdf> .

<sup>49</sup> Available online at [https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/skills\\_mismatches.pdf](https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/skills_mismatches.pdf) .

Recent statistics show that 30 per cent of graduates in the European Union work in a job where the competences they acquired at university are not required and suggest that it is important for young jobseekers to participate in additional training and education opportunities that would facilitate their access to the labour market.

The difficult access to the labour market and the presence of skills mismatches have also been confirmed by the workshop with young jobseekers carried out for Belgium. The participants confirmed that the lack of experience and expertise is often a barrier when searching a job, as companies are looking for specific skills, often beyond the ones received through education, and recent graduates would need traineeships or apprenticeships to build the required competences and develop appealing CVs.

In this context, as stated by the participants in the workshop, taking part in EURES traineeships and apprenticeships in a different country from the one of origin would also contribute to the development of language and flexibility and adaptability skills, and it is seen as an “entry door to the job market”.

Considering the latter information, jointly with the low diffusion of apprenticeship and education offers (not always related to certifications) across a number of Member States<sup>50</sup> and the labour market conditions, it appears that the inclusion of support services to apprenticeships and traineeships among EURES activities is particularly relevant.

Shifting the focus to **older jobseekers or workers with a need of reskilling or upskilling**, recent statistics show that, the majority of European citizens can be considered digitally illiterate or having only a basic knowledge of the topic, notwithstanding that over 50% of EU employees reported in a survey run by Cedefop of needing moderate ICT skills to carry out their tasks. On the other hand, it appears that about 39% of adult EU employees are over skilled and working in low-quality jobs<sup>51</sup>.

From these figures, there seems to be a need for EURES activities concerning apprenticeships and traineeships also for older jobseekers or workers, that could benefit from experiences abroad not only to develop relevant technical skills, but also enhance their soft skills.

The relevance of EURES activities for youth and for learning in general also emerged during the fieldwork interviews, where participants clearly point out the importance for EURES to develop such services.

Looking at **young people needs**, recent graduates and young jobseekers reported in the fieldwork workshop that, although they accept the value of professional experience abroad, they would need, before committing, a source of reliable and transparent information on the working conditions as well as on the quality of the learning opportunity and the reliability of the employers. Moreover, they face the challenge of the recognition of their qualification abroad, but also of the experience and competences gained upon completion of the experience. Indeed, all the participants explained that they did not receive any formal documents stating the participation in a traineeship abroad, nor summarising the achievements and progresses made in the job sector. Additionally, traineeships, internships and apprenticeships do not have a commonly agreed definition at the European level and each Member State has different rules and legal framework,

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<sup>50</sup> Available online at [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:73591c12-8afc-11e6-b955-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC\\_2&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:73591c12-8afc-11e6-b955-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_2&format=PDF) .

<sup>51</sup> Cedefop, 2018. “Insights into skill shortages and skill mismatch”, available online <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3075> .

making it difficult not only to access them from abroad, but also to obtain a valid proof of their significance for the CV of the participant in another country. The presence of administrative burden and bureaucratic problems was also reported. For example, many participants struggled to activate a traineeship contract because they were not affiliated to an education institution (e.g. university), while others found the application forms particularly complicated. Finally, all the participants to the workshop stated the importance of receiving financial support for undertaking a professional experience abroad. This point also emerged from a survey conducted in the Brussels Region in Belgium by the NCO Actiris on the needs of jobseekers concerning traineeship opportunities. From the replies gathered, it is observed that financial considerations play a key role when deciding on destination of the traineeship opportunities and that the perception of high costs of the experience is a hindering factor.

The survey conducted by Actiris (BE) showed that, in terms of learning opportunities and professional development, the need of financial security emerged even stronger for **older jobseekers** than for younger ones. Indeed, while the majority of participants recognised traineeships and apprenticeships as an opportunity to develop or strengthen competences and have more chances to increase the quality of their job, they also indicated as hindering factors the fear of losing unemployment benefits or that these experiences abroad could be too expensive.

More specifically, according to the analysis of work programmes and activity plans submitted by the NCOs within the Programming Cycle, young jobseekers are mostly supported through the promotion of participation in mobility schemes funded via EaSI, (i.e. Your first EURES job and European Solidarity Corps) and in other European programmes (e.g. Erasmus+, Youth Guarantee), while older workers through the participation in Reactivate. Only a few EURES countries have also developed bi/multilateral collaboration initiatives between different EURES countries to offer traineeships schemes, such as the Netherlands with Germany and Austria, and Belgium with France. In this context, the majority of activities organised concern the provision of information and guidance on traineeships and apprenticeships opportunities, such as organising information events for students and graduates or publishing vacancies on the national websites or on the EURES portal.

However, as already mentioned, a clear and commonly agreed definition of traineeships, apprenticeships and internships at European level does not exist. Moreover, every country has its own national legal framework concerning these kinds of professional opportunities, and several EURES countries struggled to develop an offer for apprenticeships and traineeships because, according to their national rules, these are possible only within the education strand and only if the participants are affiliated to an education institution. Hence, for the EURES advisers it becomes difficult to provide detailed and adequate information to the users on possibilities and on the existing rules to undertake a traineeship abroad.

Moreover, for EURES advisers it is also challenging to ensure the quality of the traineeships and the reliability on the employers. On this topic, in 2014, the European Council adopted its Recommendations on a Quality Framework for Traineeships, but this document is only meant to provide general guidelines rather than binding standards. This ambiguity was reflected in the interviews, with some participants claiming that EURES is playing a major role in providing assistance on traineeships abroad also concerning the quality of the experience, while others stressed the importance of more standardisation at the European level.

Looking at the mobility schemes, these can represent a useful instrument to gain new competences and facilitate the transition into the job market. Nevertheless, participants to the workshop claimed that the application process for Your First EURES Job and for European Solidarity Corps is not clear and burdensome, hence not corresponding to the users' needs in terms of clarity and transparency.

Finally, many participants to the workshop pointed out the importance of issuing a certificate or a formal document confirming their participation in the traineeship and that could be used as a proof in future recruitment processes, especially in certain fields where traineeships or apprenticeships are a requirement to access permanent jobs.

To sum-up, it appears that EURES is only partially responding to the users' needs, as the information provided is useful but limited by the heterogeneity of national legal frameworks concerning traineeships and apprenticeships.

### **Summary of findings on relevance**

From the information gathered through desk research and fieldwork interviews and workshops, it appears that young jobseekers and older workers with a need for upskilling and reskilling are a relevant target for EURES, especially in light of the specific labour market challenges for these categories.

However, EURES activities concerning traineeships and apprenticeships only partially respond to these two categories of users' needs, as the guidance provided by EURES advisers is limited by the availability of information on national legal frameworks on apprenticeships and traineeships and by difficulties encountered by applicants in the application process for the mobility schemes. In addition, the heterogeneity of definitions and national rules significantly limits the room for EURES actions in this field.

### **Effectiveness**

*Is the provision of support services for apprenticeships and traineeships contributing to easier transitions into the labour market? Are there and other effects that were observed deriving from the provision of support to apprenticeships and traineeships?*

Upon completion of data collection, it emerged that EURES support services to apprenticeships and traineeships could contribute to easier transitions into the labour market from education or inactivity, but in practice, not many results are achieved in this context.

Overall, most of the stakeholders interviewed during the fieldwork argued that EURES plays a major role in guiding young or older jobseekers with a need of upskilling and reskilling in undertaking a traineeships or apprenticeships abroad or participating in a mobility scheme, and that these activities often lead to placements. Indeed, from the monitoring activities of Actiris NCO, Brussels Region (BE), it emerged that 80% of their users who participated in a traineeship opportunity through their services was subsequently hired.

Nevertheless, the monitoring data of the mobility schemes do not show similar success rates. As shown in the table below, it is possible to observe that the number of placements achieved via the mobility schemes is not particularly high compared to the registered jobseekers and vacancies.

Table 16 Overview of monitoring data of mobility schemes targeting particular age groups

Mobility scheme	Duration	Performance indicators
Your First Eures Job	February 2015 – ongoing	<i>July 2018 – Dec 2019</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered jobseekers: <b>10 213</b></li> <li>Registered employers: <b>2 373</b></li> <li>Registered vacancies: <b>2 777</b></li> <li>Placements: <b>3 207</b></li> </ul>
Reactivate	November 2016 – ongoing	<i>Oct 2018 – Dec 2019</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered jobseekers: <b>248</b></li> <li>Registered employers: <b>634</b></li> <li>Registered vacancies: <b>3 353</b></li> <li>Placements: <b>753</b></li> </ul>
European Solidarity Corps	May 2017 – December 2019	<i>May 2017 – Dec 2019</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered jobseekers:<sup>52</sup> <b>19 608</b></li> <li>Registered employers: <b>153</b></li> <li>Registered vacancies: <b>444</b></li> <li>Placements: <b>255</b></li> </ul>

Source: EURES, 2020. 'EURES activity report 2018 – 2020' (internal draft)

Moreover, it should be noted that the provision of support services to apprenticeships and traineeships is not widespread through the EURES network and could be developed more. From the analysis of the activity reports submitted by the NCOs it emerged that, in 2019, nine EURES countries did not conduct any activity in this field, and the majority of the remaining ones mostly provided information through the existing mobility schemes or other European programmes.

Therefore, it appears that the support services to apprenticeships and traineeships could lead to easier transition into the labour market, but the offering of such services should be further developed by the EURES network as a whole. To support this goal, at the European level, several stakeholders involved in the fieldwork argued that additional steps should be undertaken in order to provide a common definition of traineeships and apprenticeships, as well as to enhance the current quality standards.

*Are EURES support services to apprenticeships and traineeships visible to the targeted audience?* Looking at the visibility of EURES, especially concerning the provision of support services to apprenticeships and traineeships, from both the fieldwork interviews and workshops, it emerges that that EURES could be more visible and better communicated to the target audience.

The participants to the workshops, although they took part in traineeships and apprenticeships abroad with the support of EURES staff both for the compilation of documentation and for the financial grant, were not aware of EURES as a European programme but thought they were only advised by the PES staff. During the workshop, it emerged also that some participants knew the mobility schemes Your First EURES Job and European Solidarity Corps, but they were not aware of the existence of the EURES network, nor that these projects were part of it. Interestingly, when asked whether they knew about other European initiatives linked to mobility in Europe, they all replied to know Erasmus+. Thus, many participants pointed out that EURES would benefit from more branding and marketing activities.

<sup>52</sup> This number reflects the registrations on the Placement Administration and Support System (PASS) Portal and the registrations by the projects.

The perception that EURES is not visible enough at the national level was stressed also during the interviews. When describing the provision of support services to apprenticeships and traineeships, some EURES advisers and PES staff argued that, as part of their role as employment advisers, EURES and its mobility schemes offering professional learning (i.e. Your First EURES Job, Reactivate, European Solidarity Corps) are just one of the tools they propose when jobseekers are interested in mobility. Overall, the general feeling is that it is difficult to promote and advertise EURES and its added value within the multitude of employment services provided and considering the lack of financial resources related to communication. In addition, it was claimed that on the EURES portal, and despite that 11 447 apprenticeship and 1 483 traineeship offers are currently available (July 2020), there is not enough attention given to the practicalities of taking up this kind of opportunities in other countries. Participants to interviews noticed that the Living and Working Conditions section on the Portal should include some paragraphs on national frameworks on apprenticeships and traineeships, but also be made more attractive for younger users, with the inclusion of advice on affordable housing and on experiences abroad.

The lack of visibility of EURES also emerges from the replies to the survey circulated among jobseekers in the framework of the ex-post evaluation study of EURES, where a large majority of respondents only knew about it by searches on the internet and does not follow EURES on social media.

#### **Summary of findings on effectiveness**

From the fieldwork replies and desk research, it can be concluded that the support services to apprenticeships and traineeships could theoretically lead to an easier transition into the labour market, and that in practice the participation in EURES traineeships and apprenticeships often contributes to additional placements. Nevertheless, the EURES network as a whole should further develop the offering of such support services, since they are not particularly widespread across the EURES countries and do not seem to reach a wide audience.

This is further stressed by the fact that EURES services for apprenticeships and traineeships are not sufficiently visible to the targeted audience, both because it is difficult to promote EURES activities at the national level and because the EURES portal is considered not attractive enough for younger users.

#### **Coherence**

*Is the provision of traineeship services coherent with other EU and EURES actions for young people and VET? Are there overlaps with other programs and policies (e.g. ERASMUS +)? Are there possible synergies?*

At the European level, several programmes and initiatives exist that target youth mobility, youth employment and skills and vocational training for all.

Looking at youth mobility and employment, Article 1 of Regulation (EU) 1288/2013 establishing **Erasmus+** defines as field of operations of the programme, among others, “*education and training at all levels, in a lifelong learning perspective, including school education (Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), international higher education (Erasmus Mundus), vocational education and training (Leonardo da Vinci) and adult learning (Grundtvig)*”. Erasmus+’ focuses on the provision of training opportunities abroad and could be a possible duplication with the provision of support services to apprenticeships and traineeships within EURES, but can be also promoted by EURES advisers as an instrument for mobility, creating synergies between different European initiatives. Indeed, several participants to the fieldwork activities argued that Erasmus+

is not felt as an overlap to EURES activities, since its core focus is on people who are still in education, while EURES is focusing more on recent graduates and jobseekers. However, notably, some participants to the interviews and the workshop noted that Erasmus+ is much more visible as a European programme than EURES.

Other stakeholders involved in the data collection activities mentioned to work in synergy with the **Youth Guarantee**, a European scheme developed with the purpose of securing a smooth transition from school to work and support the labour market integration of young European citizens.

Despite its potential for synergies in the ICT sector, none of the stakeholder that participated in the fieldwork mentioned synergies with the **Digital Opportunity traineeship initiative**, a European programme that allows 6 000 students and recent graduates to participate in cross-border traineeships on ICT specific skills between 2018 and 2020<sup>53</sup>.

Looking at skills, vocational training and traineeship opportunities for older workers, only the Belgian stakeholders mentioned the use of financial support from the **European Social Fund** in order to be able to offer their Boost20+ scheme<sup>54</sup>, but no other synergies with other European programmes and initiatives, such as the European Vocational Skills week have been identified.

Outside the initiatives and programmes launched by the European bodies, from the interviews and from the analysis of the work programmes and activities report it emerged that several EURES countries identified synergies with **Eurodysey**, a scheme developed by the Assembly of European Regions for the participation of young European jobseekers in traineeships abroad for a limited period.

Finally, it is important to note that, although from EURES advisers' and NCOs' perspective the presence of synergies between EURES and other European initiatives and policies seems clear, the young jobseekers that participated in the workshop perceived these as separated programmes with no relation to each other. The participants also claimed that it is difficult to orient within the multitude of existing opportunities.

### Summary of findings on coherence

EURES activities related to the provision of apprenticeships and traineeships services appear to be coherent with the objectives of other related initiatives and programmes at the European level and often develop synergies, especially, with Erasmus+ and the Youth Guarantee.

Nevertheless, the EURES network could benefit from developing further collaborations with the Digital Opportunity traineeship initiative and other European initiatives on vocational training and on upskilling and reskilling.

<sup>53</sup> More information can be found online at <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-opportunity-traineeships-boosting-digital-skills-job>.

<sup>54</sup> i.e. Scheme developed by Actiris, Belgian NCO, to allow older jobseeker to apply for a financial grant for participating in a traineeship opportunity

## EU added value

*What is the role of EURES in promoting and facilitating traineeships abroad? And the role of the EU? Have young people's mobility been encouraged and facilitated by the support of EURES or if it would exist anyway without EURES?*

Concerning support services to apprenticeships and traineeships, a number of interviewees believe that the role of EURES in this field is marginal and that this type of support would have been provided even without EURES.

Indeed, at the European level, not only several similar other initiatives and programmes exist (i.e. Erasmus+, Youth Guarantee), but there are also widely known private platforms and national desk offices that offer guidance and advise on traineeship opportunities for young jobseekers.

The fact that the contribution of EURES support to apprenticeships and traineeships in promoting these professional experiences abroad is limited, is also observed in the replies to the survey circulated among jobseekers for the purpose of this study. Among those who received support in finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad, 43% (26) indicated that they could have achieved the same result without the support of EURES.

Nevertheless, the information collected through the interviews indicate that EURES could have a significant impact in ensuring the traineeships meet fair quality standards and respect decent working conditions. In addition, jobseekers that participated in interviews and workshops argued that EURES is key to provide guidance and support throughout the entire process.

Looking at the role of the EU, all the stakeholders that participated in the fieldwork agreed on the importance of a European intervention in the field of apprenticeships and traineeships, in order to ensure the reliability of the employers and the quality of the opportunity. However, several EURES advisers and NCOs claimed that the European Union should further work on the coherence of definition and national rules concerning traineeships and apprenticeships to achieve more results in terms of youth employment and skills development.

### Summary of findings on EU added value

From the collected information, it appears that, while some results on apprenticeships and traineeships could be achieved without EURES, the added value of EURES is found in the provision of information and guidance and in its role of guarantor of fair labour working conditions.

Looking at the role of the European Union regarding apprenticeships and traineeships, the stakeholders involved agreed on the importance of a European intervention, mostly to ensure the reliability of the employers and the quality of the opportunity. However, the European Union could do more to further enhance the homogeneity of national rules and standards on apprenticeships and traineeships.

## 5.4 Conclusions

EURES support services to apprenticeships and traineeships have been introduced by the EURES Regulation in 2016.

The importance of the inclusion of these services for EURES and the relevance of targeting young jobseekers and older individuals with a need of upskilling or reskilling can be assessed by observing the challenging youth labour market environment and the widening skills gap for all.

In this context, EURES activities concerning traineeships and apprenticeships are able to only partially address users' needs, since the lack of commonly agreed definitions and the heterogeneity of national rules strongly limits the room for EURES actions in this field.

These challenges are also reflected in the limited effectiveness of these services in the achievement of EURES goals. Indeed, despite some EURES apprenticeship schemes contributing to additional placements, the overall offering of this kind of services is quite limited throughout the EURES network and does not seem to reach a wide audience.

This is further highlighted by the fact that EURES services for apprenticeships and traineeships are not sufficiently visible to the targeted audience.

Overall, although the European Union could play a crucial role towards ensuring the reliability of the employers and the quality of the opportunity regarding apprenticeships and traineeship, a need of stronger European action to reduce the heterogeneity of national rules and to develop quality standards on apprenticeships and traineeships is identified.

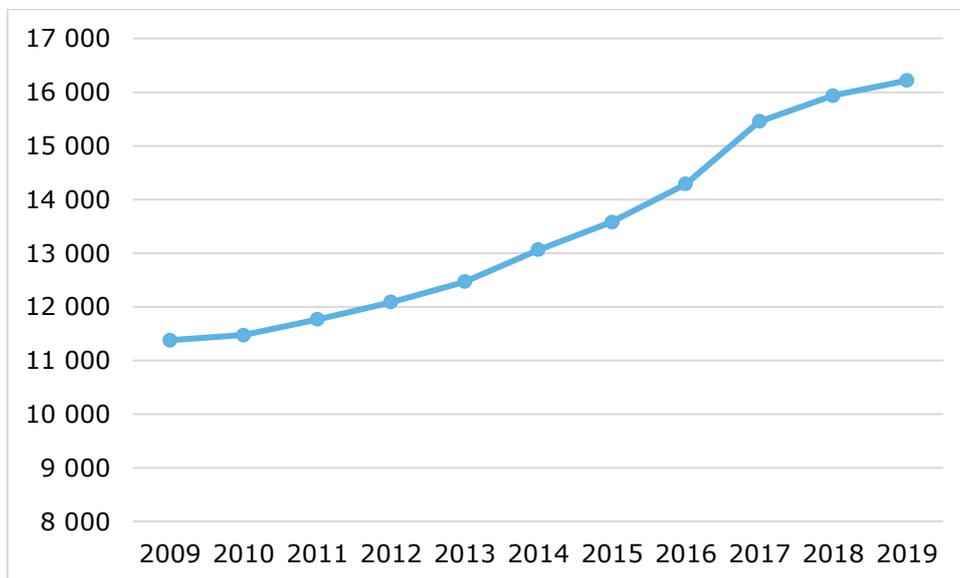
## 6 SUPPORT TO MOBILE WORKERS

### 6.1 Background

Freedom of movement of workers (hereinafter referred to also as 'jobseekers') is considered one of the most important rights of EU citizens – as stated in Article 45(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union<sup>55</sup>. Essentially, it allows the movement of labour across every EU Member State, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland<sup>56</sup>.

As shown in Figure 9, the number of working age individuals born in an EU/EFTA country and residing in another has constantly risen in the past decade.

Figure 9 Number of EU/EFTA born population of working age (15-64) who resides in another EU/EFTA country (thousand persons)



Source: Eurostat database

According to the literature, two factors have driven the growth of labour mobility. Firstly, the two waves of EU enlargement of 2004<sup>57</sup> and 2007<sup>58</sup> resulted in large flows<sup>59</sup> from the new Member States in Central and Eastern Europe to the then EU-15. Secondly, more recently, mobility flows have increased from Mediterranean countries towards northern countries. This flow seems to be motivated mainly by differences in job opportunities, reflecting socio-economic conditions in the south that worsened during the financial crisis of 2008<sup>59</sup>.

Labour mobility is not only a fundamental pillar of the European Union, but it is also of strategic importance to support competitiveness and growth in the Union. Indeed, if properly supported,

<sup>55</sup> Available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/tfeu/2012/oj> .

<sup>56</sup> Hereby also referred to as EU/EFTA countries in this case study.

<sup>57</sup> Eight countries of Central and Eastern Europe and two Mediterranean countries joined the EU in 2004: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

<sup>58</sup> Two more countries of Central and Eastern Europe joined the EU in 2007: Bulgaria and Romania.

<sup>59</sup> Alcidi C., Gros D. (2019). EU Mobile Workers: A challenge to public finances? Available online at [http://aei.pitt.edu/97084/1/EU\\_Mobile\\_Workers.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/97084/1/EU_Mobile_Workers.pdf) .

intra-EU labour mobility can contribute to more efficient labour markets by ensuring an effective matching between labour supply and demand across Europe, hence supporting job creation where labour markets are confronted with unfilled demand on the one hand and high unemployment rates on the other hand.

Support services to jobseekers are well defined by Article 23 of the new EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589 – which include the provision of information and guidance, the matching of CVs and job vacancies (hereinafter referred to as JVs) and provision of assistance for placement and recruitment. Additionally, according to Articles 25 and 27, workers are the beneficiaries of post-recruitment assistance schemes and of support services in cross-border regions – as they both fall within the scope of facilitating intra-EU labour mobility.

**General support services** to jobseekers are provided by individual EURES countries and include matching and placement activities and the provision of information and guidance. The range and nature of activities implemented differs across the EURES countries, as they reflect national practices/structures as well as labour market needs. In particular, the format (e.g. one-to-one counselling, events), way of delivery (e.g. online, on-site) or focus (e.g. sectoral approach, general labour market approach) can differ greatly. **Specific support services** are instead provided by a smaller number of countries. Specific support services include:

- The provision of support services in cross-border regions and the establishment of Cross-Border Partnerships (CBPs) to provide support tailored to frontier workers in cross-border regions.
- Post-recruitment assistance aiming at facilitating the integration of mobile workers within a new environment.
- Support to youth (apprenticeships and traineeships), which includes placement opportunities within Targeted Mobility Schemes, provision of information and guidance, availability of apprenticeship and traineeship offers on the EURES portal.
- Implementation of Targeted Mobility Schemes, focusing on specific groups of jobseekers and/or sectors. In particular, Your first EURES job (YFEJ) targets jobseekers between 18 and 35-years-old and offers different direct support for jobseekers (i.e. reimbursements of interview trips, language training, and mentoring support) and employers from EU, Iceland or Norway. Reactivate, instead, is a scheme focused on jobseekers older than 35 and employers based in the EU<sup>60</sup>.

## 6.2 Methodology

### 6.2.1 *Relevance of the topic*

Regardless of the number of reforms the EURES network has undergone since its establishment, jobseekers are still one of the main target groups of EURES. Indeed, the majority of countries focuses their services predominantly on this target group. The latest EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589 does not directly change the nature of support foreseen for jobseekers but envisages the strengthening and expansion of the network of public and private European employment services, in order to deliver a more efficient exchange of labour market information to support job placements across the EU's single market. For instance, along with the 2016 reform, the Commission stated that "in order to promote freedom of movement for workers, all job vacancies

<sup>60</sup> In 2018, a single Targeted Mobility Scheme was introduced that by end of 2020 will replace both YFEJ and Reactivate and will not differentiate between the target groups.

made publicly available through PES and other EURES Members [...], should be published on the EURES portal<sup>61</sup>. Similarly, since 2016, EURES countries are expected to transfer CVs gathered at national level by means of a Single Coordinated Channel.

Statistics on mobile jobseekers corroborate the importance of such support services within the wide range of EURES actions and highlight this topic as one of the most relevant across EURES countries. The table below shows the trend along two indicators relating to general support services provided to workers.

Table 17 Indicators relating to general support services to workers

Indicators	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total number of individual contacts with workers	791 101	696 514	2 305 490	3 344 368
Job finders	28 934	26 129	62 496	76 918

Source: Data for 2016 and 2017 is based on monthly reports filled in by the EURES advisers. It should be considered that the response rate was around 60% and a number of EURES countries did not respond at all. As a result, the numbers of 2016 and 2017 are substantially lower than the numbers reported in 2018 and 2019, when the new reporting system was introduced. Data for 2018 and 2019 is based on the PMS reporting.

Due to changes in the structure of EURES, as well as to the enlargement of the network, the numbers of individual contacts with workers as well as the number of job finders has grown exponentially from 2018. Beneficiaries of one-to-one contacts have increased by 231%, whereas job placements by 139%.

The following table presents the way in which the key case study research questions feed into the final evaluation study.

<sup>61</sup> Preamble 29 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, and amending Regulations (EU) No 492/2011 and (EU) No 1296/2013. Available online at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L\\_.2016.107.01.0001.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2016.107.01.0001.01.ENG).

Table 18 Case study research questions

Case study research question	Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added value
What types of services to jobseekers does EURES provide? Have there been any changes in the types of services over the last five years?	To what extent were the most relevant groups (e.g. cross-border workers, young people searching for international experience, EU mobile workers) targeted and their most important needs addressed?			X		
What are the main challenges that jobseekers face? In what way can free movement across the EU help overcome these challenges?	To what extent the needs and problems in the labour market and intra-EU labour mobility (e.g. language and cultural issues, matching supply and demand) and the objectives of the EURES Regulation fit?			X		
To what extent do EURES services for jobseekers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase awareness of intra-EU labour mobility?</li> <li>- improve jobseekers' access to a larger pool of vacancies?</li> <li>- help jobseekers find a job?</li> </ul>	To what extent the provision of services to employers and jobseekers contributed to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) increasing awareness of intra-EU labour possibilities by providing relevant information of good quality on job vacancies and living and working conditions throughout the Union to any job seeker or employer seeking client services for recruitment, And by granting any person interested access to the EURES network?</li> <li>2) improving the accessibility of intra-EU job opportunities by assisting interested people with matching, placement and recruitment?</li> </ol>	X				

Case study research question	Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added value
To what extent is the time spent to provide these services to mobile workers justified by the benefits generated for jobseekers? Is there a need to improve the way in which these services are offered?	To what extent were the costs of final services to stakeholders (e.g. counselling to individual job seekers and business) proportionate to the benefits generated?		X			
Are there any other organisation that provides services similar to EURES? How do they differ? Are they better/worse than EURES?	How coherent is the EURES Regulation with other EU policy measures and initiatives targeting employment and mobility at EU level?				X	
Would it be possible to achieve the same results without the support provided by EURES?	To what extent did the EURES operations produce effects (quantified to the possible extent) that would not have taken place without the EU intervention?					X

Source: Study team

### 6.2.2 Methodological approach

This section summarises the methodology applied for this case study. It follows the general approach to all case studies but is tailored keeping in mind the specific topics.

#### Scope

The following EURES countries have been selected for the data collection – Estonia, Germany, Portugal, Sweden. Overview of their main characteristics and relevance for the case study can be found below:

Table 19 Geographical scope and rationale

<b>EURES country</b>	<b>Sending / Receiving</b>	<b>Relevance of EURES country for case study</b>
<b>Estonia</b>	<i>Receiving</i>	EURES Estonia has prioritised recruiting activities as well as retaining and supporting foreign workers in the country.
<b>Germany</b>	<i>Receiving</i>	Due to its competitive labour market and to the high number of employers registered on its portal, EURES Germany is among the main destinations for workers.
<b>Portugal</b>	<i>Sending</i>	Although being a sending country, EURES Portugal has developed actions to become an attractive destination for foreign workers.
<b>Sweden</b>	<i>Receiving</i>	EURES Sweden has been promoting job opportunities outside of the country for young jobseekers.

Source: Study team

Whilst the focus of the case study is on the above-mentioned countries, the topic of support to mobile workers was mentioned in interviews with representatives from other EURES countries. These additional insights have been incorporated in the triangulation of the data, where relevant.

#### Data collection

##### *Overview of literature sources*

The document review for this case study included the analysis of EU regulation of relevance to EURES, such as Regulation 2011/492 and Regulation 2016/589. In relation to labour mobility and employment policies, the data collection also benefited from the analysis of the following legislation:

- 1) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) with a focus on the coordinated strategy for employment;
- 2) Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States;
- 3) Directive 2014/54/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers;
- 4) Directive 2014/50/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on minimum requirements for enhancing worker mobility between Member States by improving the acquisition and preservation of supplementary pension rights.

The EURES portal provided useful information on labour markets across Member States by means of coordinated documents, such as the six-monthly and annual Performance Measurement System reports (PMS), and national analysis, such as Work Programmes and Activity Reports. On

top of these, some case study countries provided the study team with additional national documents connected to the topic.

#### *Overview of stakeholders consulted*

The case study included carrying out 31 interviews and two workshops.

Table 20 Stakeholders consulted

Stakeholder category	Country	Topics covered	Data collection tool	
			Interview	Workshop
<b>Jobseeker</b>	N/A	Experience with EURES services; level of satisfaction.	X	X (EE, PT)
<b>NCO</b>	EE, DE, PT, SE	Types of EURES services provided to jobseekers; effectiveness of services provided; EU-added value of services.	X	X (EE, PT)
<b>EURES staff</b>	EE, DE, PT, SE	Types of EURES services provided to jobseekers; effectiveness of services provided; EU-added value of services.	X	X (EE, PT)

Source: Study team

#### *Limitations of the data collection*

Due to the COVID-19 emergency situation, the workshops in Germany and Sweden could not be carried out and were replaced by phone interviews. The workshops in Estonia and Portugal took place online instead of on site. The mitigation actions ensured that all necessary evidence could be gathered during the data collection.

## 6.3 Main findings

### 6.3.1 *State of play in the Member States in focus*

All Member States included in the case study are, to different extents, focused on the provision of support services to mobile workers. **Information sharing**, i.e. sharing of information with workers regarding the opportunities brought about the EURES network for jobseekers, is widely common among Estonia, Germany, Portugal and Sweden and addresses both incoming and outgoing workers. For those countries where the EURES network is broad and includes different kinds of actors (i.e. Members and Partners) such as in Sweden and Germany, the provision of information is carried out by Public Employment Services as well as by other Partners (i.e. municipalities, universities, chambers of commerce, trade unions, etc.). Partners are indeed likely to have a pre-established networks even outside the country in which they are based. Therefore, they are able to help candidates by sharing with them information on employment opportunities abroad. In some cases, such as Estonia, where in spite of the focus of the EURES network on incoming workers, including information campaigns by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the country lacks a general financial appeal due to uncompetitive salaries.

The provision of information usually takes place through tailored one-to-one counselling, as well as through workshops and webinars. According to the interviewees, the former seems to be better suited for the provision of **matching services** and **post-recruitment assistance**, as it allows

jobseekers to benefit from 'advice sessions' tailored to their needs. Workshops and webinars have instead gained importance in the last few years, as the development of digital tools promoted by national and European level policies has increasingly allowed EURES countries to exploit the potentialities of social media chats and online events to reach a wider audience. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the provision of services through online tools might become the main channel of service provision. In this area, as mentioned by some of the interviewees, EURES can serve as a pilot to try out different new approaches in online service provision that then may be mainstreamed into PES services.

Within the framework of support provision, the **European Online Job Days (EOJDs)** and their online platform play a major role, as they provide both information and matching services, while focusing each time on specific economic sectors and skills (e.g. IT, tourism, construction).

Finally, the nature of services provided to jobseekers has not changed significantly since before the adoption of the 2016 EURES Regulation. However, thanks to the provision of help to mobile workers especially in countries where working experiences abroad are deemed necessary, the popularity of the EURES network has been growing. This is also reflected in the higher number of jobseekers who approach EURES advisers and EURES helpdesks. Moreover, the implementation of **Targeted Mobility Schemes** (including YFEJ and Reactivate) has had a positive feedback among young and older labour market outliers. Most importantly for jobseekers, these services have remained free of charges, while they provide workers with financial, language and skills support.

### 6.3.2 Responses to the research questions

The following sections present the case study findings on each of the EQM questions as identified in the Table 18 Case study research questions above.

#### **Effectiveness**

*To what extent do EURES services for jobseekers: a) increase awareness of intra-EU labour mobility? b) improve jobseekers' access to a larger pool of vacancies? c) help jobseekers find a job?*

The assessment on the effectiveness of EURES services in support of mobile workers is divided. Interviews have highlighted both their strengths and weaknesses. For what concerns the increase of awareness of intra-EU labour mobility among jobseekers, information sharing through job fairs, dedicated workshops at the premises of the local PES, the establishment of helpdesks within universities is evaluated by all interviewees (NCOs, EURES staff, jobseekers) as having a significant and positive impact. The organisation of such events – often taking place within larger career fairs – is indeed extremely useful as they allow EURES and labour mobility to be presented as important tools for boosting career opportunities of the young and the older jobseekers too. Counselling services such as the ones mentioned above have been described as effective by jobseekers also under an economic perspective, as they are provided for free while they are of high quality.

The EURES portal is deemed to be a comprehensive tool for raising awareness among European workers of information on intra-EU labour mobility, for the access to a wider pool of vacancies as well as for the placement of candidates. The portal functions as a large database where not only employers can insert a job opportunity (i.e. more than 20 million job vacancies were transferred to the portal through the single coordinated channel in 2019), but also where EURES staff can provide more clarity about national labour market institutions by uploading information extremely

relevant for jobseekers. By providing better quality information, the portal has in turn contributed to greater transparency of information on job mobility.

Particularly effective for placements are then specific support measures such as Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS - including YFEJ and Reactivate), which look straight at specific groups' needs. According to NCOs and the EURES staff interviewed, the financial support provided by TMS constitutes an effective action and an advantage for jobseekers looking for jobs abroad. Jobseekers who are eligible for such financial support, can request it to attend an interview abroad, as well as to cover costs such as language training, recognition of qualifications or relocation to the destination country. This in turn helps addressing some of the issues that jobseekers could face when moving to another country.

Conversely, the interviewees of the Swedish EURES network also highlighted that in spite of the growth of the network in terms of popularity and size, EURES remains a 'hidden' tool to most of jobseekers, as they are unaware of its existence and often get to know about it through informal networks. In addition, the EURES portal is considered to be not too user-friendly, as jobseekers might find it difficult to handle all the information and navigate the available job vacancies. This in turn constitutes an obstacle for jobseekers willing to look for jobs abroad, as they might perceive the portal as overwhelming. A jobseeker who found employment in Germany asserted that EURES is mostly known among those people who are directly in touch with career advisers. In both cases, either when people get to know about EURES through an informal network or through a formal one, there seem to be an agreement that the job matching tool is still quite hidden. As highlighted by another jobseeker, the lack of integration between public employment services and EURES staff might be the reason why many jobseekers do not hear about EURES.

In a similar manner, the respondents to the public consultation and the jobseekers' survey also mentioned that there is an area for improvement with regard to the visibility of EURES services. To go even further, some of the respondents criticised EURES as they never received any response to their enquiries. This occurrence was also echoed by one of the interviewed jobseekers. Given the currently collected data it is not possible to discern the extent of this unresponsiveness, however, it may have an impact on the accessibility of the support services to jobseekers.

Many of the interviewed parties agreed that EURES's effectiveness on placements is negatively affected by very similar labour and skill shortages across countries, for example, in the health care sector. This leads to the EURES countries being in direct competition with each other which might have a negative impact particularly on the labour market of countries that do not have such competitive labour conditions or quality of life. It also means that the recruitment process is then hindered by labour market imbalances that need an overreaching response at European level.

In terms of negative effects on placements, during the workshop held with Portuguese stakeholders, it was discussed how differing perceptions of professions across countries affect the likelihood of a person to find the right job position (or even look for it) in a specific country. In Portugal, for instance, healthcare related occupations (e.g. psychologists, nurses) do not seem to be attractive to jobseekers, as they are not as well regarded as in other countries (e.g. Norway)<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> Portuguese jobseeker.

### Summary of findings on effectiveness

Interviews have highlighted both strengths and weaknesses of EURES services. Counselling sessions as well as information sharing events have a significant and positive impact on raising awareness of intra-EU labour mobility among jobseekers. The EURES portal is deemed to be a comprehensive tool for raising awareness among European workers of information on intra-EU labour mobility, regarding access to a wider pool of vacancies and placement of candidates. It provides jobseekers with a large number of job opportunities as well as with information on national labour markets. Moreover, it leads to greater transparency in information sharing.

Particularly effective for placements are specific support measures such as Targeted Mobility Schemes (including YFEJ and Reactivate), which look straight at specific groups' needs. The financial support provided by TMS constitutes a concrete and effective action, and an advantage for jobseekers looking for jobs abroad. TMS help directly address specific issues related to living and working abroad.

EURES is, however, still not widely known among jobseekers. Although on the rise, there is still the need to boost its popularity across the EU labour markets and continue its mainstreaming into the PES services. Eventually, the effectiveness of EURES actions is negatively affected by common patterns of labour shortages across EURES countries. The majority of employers are looking for the same skills, therefore, there is inadequate labour supply within certain economic sectors, such as health care.

### Efficiency

*To what extent is the time spent to provide these services to mobile workers justified by the benefits generated for jobseekers? Is there a need to improve the way in which these services are offered?*

The data collection highlighted the lack of correlation between time spent to provide support services to jobseekers and benefits generated. Instead, a number of interviews pointed to the fact the quality – rather than the quantity – of the time spent on the provision of services is what benefit jobseekers the most. Furthermore, according to the Portuguese NCO, given the one-to-one relationship that EURES staff are likely to develop with jobseekers, it is comparatively easier to receive a feedback on the outcome of counselling sessions by them rather than employers (employers are not obliged to communicate the result of candidate search to EURES staff). This, in turn, helps EURES staff to understand how efficient the services provided have been.

Efficiency is however a key aspect in the eyes of most NCOs interviewed for enhancing the provision of services to jobseekers. Due to their distinctiveness (when compared to PES services), the provision of EURES services requires internal human resources to deal with a diversified set of actions which include counselling, information, matching, (post)recruitment, and specific support (i.e. TMS) services. This, in turn, led the Portuguese NCO to the conclusion that improvements under the realm of efficiency are possible and desirable. According to the German NCO, the efficiency of EURES services could eventually be improved by using more effectively social media, as a way of exchanging information.

### Summary of findings on efficiency

The data collection highlighted the lack of correlation between time spent to provide support services to jobseekers and benefits generated. The quality – rather than the quantity – of the time spent on the provision of services is what benefits jobseekers the most.

Efficiency is however a key aspect in the eyes of most NCOs interviewed for enhancing the provision of services to jobseekers. Due to the number of human resources EURES networks make use of in the provision of services, improvements under the realm of efficiency are considered possible and desirable.

### Relevance

*What types of services to jobseekers does EURES provide? Have there been any changes in the types of services over the last five years?*

Overall, the provision of information related to intra-EU labour mobility as well as orientation and matching services are widely common among the EURES countries analysed. These types of services are provided to both incoming and outgoing jobseekers, however, services provided are always tailored to the needs of the specific jobseeker.

Sending countries such as Portugal aim to provide support to outgoing jobseekers not only during the job search and the job applications, but also after the candidate has been selected and relocated to another country, sometimes even many years after the move. Similarly, according to the NCO in Sweden, post-recruitment support is a relevant type of support as it provides workers residing in a new country with information on prominent matters related to taxation, health insurance, housing and residence permits. Often, these issues relate to one another, i.e. if you are not granted a residence permit you are likely to not be eligible to certain welfare benefits.

According to most of the NCOs interviewed, the main change that occurred to the provision of services since 2016 concerned their format. The provision of information, advice, recruitment and post-recruitment services has developed along with the introduction of digital tools which allowed EURES to reach a wider number of candidates (even remotely) while providing general services such as information, guidance, and advice. Therefore, EURES services have started being provided both on-site and online, which in turn allowed foreign jobseekers interested in a job fair abroad or outgoing workers in need of post-recruitment assistance to be able to still benefit from such services. This has also been supported by the EU with the implementation of European Online Job Days (EOJD) and the online platform connected to it. In some countries, this has also led to the national EURES network being used as a pilot to try out innovative approaches in service provision which are then mainstreamed into PES.

In Estonia, format changes have been accompanied by the launch of job fairs specifically targeting incoming job finders, i.e. immigrant workers. The NCOs' need to raise awareness of the EURES network among potential incoming workers has been facilitated by the cooperation with private companies, which helped 'branding' the events. Cooperation with other private as well as public entities has helped several national EURES networks moving past a one-sided view of intra-EU mobile workers' needs (often driven by PES views) by embracing labour market insights coming from, for example, universities, chambers of commerce, municipalities or trade unions. These types of job fairs have addressed the needs of jobseekers to improve the recruitment process.

*What are the main challenges that jobseekers face? In what way can free movement across the EU help overcome these challenges?*

According to the NCO and EURES staff in Estonia, Germany and Portugal, the main issues that remain largely unaddressed are those concerning the recognition of qualifications and the lack of knowledge of the language of the hosting country. There are in fact few economic sectors that do not require the candidate to speak the language of the destination country. The language barrier was also highlighted as an important challenge by a Bulgarian jobseeker who looked for employment in Germany. The EURES network has however little space to enhance the EU system of skills recognition. Additionally, the resources available for language training cannot provide every candidate with native-speaker level language skills. Even if some employers do not require knowledge of the country's language for the performance of the work, they acknowledge that nonetheless, the new employee should have at least an intermediate knowledge of the language to be able to integrate better within the company and the country's society.

The general feeling across interviewees is that Targeted Mobility Schemes as well as Cross-Border Partnerships best target those types of challenges faced by jobseekers nowadays, as they approach the labour market. Indeed, TMS provide (among others) support with the enhancement of language skills of candidates as well as support for the recognition of qualifications. Cross-Border Partnerships instead have proven useful in so far as they provide workers residing in a country and working in another with information and counselling on prominent matters related to their own wellbeing. While pushing for the convergence of welfare systems across regions, EURES Members and Partners help mobile workers overcome challenges connected to taxation, health insurance, housing, and residence permits. Enlarged EURES networks have also proven to be extremely fruitful to jobseekers, as they help workers getting in touch with and gather information from stakeholders and employers established in a desired destination country.

### **Summary of findings on relevance**

The main challenges faced by jobseekers nowadays are related to language skills and the recognition of qualification. The most relevant actions put in place by EURES to address these types of problems seem to be the Targeted Mobility Schemes due to the fact that they fund specific training and Cross-Border Partnerships as the cooperation established among relevant entities often helps jobseekers overcome challenges on prominent matters related to their own wellbeing.

### **Coherence**

*Are there any other organisation that provides services similar to EURES? How do they differ? Are they better/worse than EURES?*

Synergies rather than overlaps are widely acknowledged for EU initiatives that promote education and practical learning such as Youth Guarantee and Interreg programmes, and EURES actions focused on the (re)integration within the labour market such as YFEJ and Reactivate. Furthermore, EURES does not focus on curricular activities aimed at students, which is where Erasmus+ focuses its activities. Therefore, EU initiatives can – at least theoretically – accompany hand-in-hand jobseekers along their path from education to the integration into the labour market.

EURES TMS actions are deemed to be coherent also among themselves, as they focus on different cohorts of mobile workers (those between 18 and 35 years old, and those above than 35 years old) as well as on different moments of jobseekers' careers development (as they promote both apprenticeships/traineeships and full-time occupations).

### Summary of findings on coherence

EURES and other EU policy initiatives in the field of employment are perceived as complementary. Synergies are for instance seen among EU initiatives such as Youth Guarantee on side, and EURES actions such as YFEJ and Reactivate on the other. Overall, EU initiatives within the realm of education and employment (including EURES) can escort the candidate throughout their formative path towards labour market integration.

EURES TMS actions are also deemed coherent among themselves – as they focus on different types of cohorts and on different moments of jobseekers' career development.

### EU added value

*Would it be possible to achieve the same results without the support provided by EURES?*

There is a common understanding among all interviewees that no similar results could have been achieved without the European network established by EURES. Although labour mobility would not disappear without EURES, bilateral agreements would have not reached the same level of effectiveness. Furthermore, what makes EURES a unique service is the level of personal approach and dedication given to jobseekers and their needs.

EURES offers to workers a permanent channel to mobility, both as a right and as a chance. The provision of some types of services such as training and post-recruitment assistance is then considered as a unique characteristic of EURES, which cannot be found anywhere else and, at the same time, provides jobseekers with fundamental support in their process of careers' building. Remarking this point, the Portuguese NCO argued the challenges faced by mobile workers would be greater without the implementation of specific support measures such as TMS. Furthermore, the provision of information is seen by interviewees as a key element to enlarge and improve EU labour mobility; workers do not usually move to another country without any knowledge of what they are going into.

What really sets EURES apart from other types of employment services across Europe is the security it provides to jobseekers and workers. That feeling, to be understood as the opposite of precariousness, arises from the trustful relationship (built over time) between jobseekers and EURES advisers, as well as from the continuous support provided to jobseekers. According to jobseekers<sup>63</sup>, this is something that other employment services lack.

EU governance is also deemed extremely important in order to coordinate a fair and free mobility of workers. By providing a complete and transparent overview of labour market surpluses and shortages, the European Commission supplies NCOs and EURES staff with an always-up-to-date instrument to better advise and inform jobseekers willing to move abroad or undergo training. Furthermore, the focus on fairness and security of job offers has been underlined by several interviewees as one of the strengths of EURES. From this perspective, when looking ahead, incorporating EURES within the European Labour Authority will only benefit the network.

<sup>63</sup> Jobseekers who participated in the workshop held for Portugal.

### Summary of findings on EU added value

According to stakeholders, similar results could have been hardly achieved without the implementation of EURES. EURES offers to workers a permanent channel to mobility, both as a right and as an opportunity. The provision of support such as training and post-recruitment assistance is also widely considered as a unique characteristic of the services provided by the EURES network. Furthermore, the provision of information is a key element to enlarge and improve EU labour mobility; workers do not usually move to another country without any knowledge of what to expect.

EU governance is also deemed extremely important in order to coordinate a fair and free mobility of workers.

## 6.4 Conclusions

Support to mobile workers (jobseekers) remains a priority among national EURES networks. The focus on general support provision continues to be strong. Matching and placement activities as well as the provision of information and guidance are widely offered across EURES countries. The range and nature of activities implemented differs across the countries, as they reflect national practices/structures as well as labour market needs. For instance, sending countries such as Portugal aim to provide support to outgoing jobseekers not only during the job search and job application stages, but also after the candidate has been selected and relocated to another country, sometimes even several years after the move. On the other side, the EURES network in Estonia focuses on incoming workers by providing them with information on working conditions in the country as well as guidance during their relocation. Furthermore, the EOJD are more targeted on supporting jobseekers willing to move to Estonia.

However, these types of services are nowadays being provided not only through one-to-one counselling sessions, but also through webinars, (online) workshops/job fairs, as well as in connection with the platform of European Online Job Days. The adoption of digital tools has therefore become a *trait d'union* across EURES countries and has allowed EURES to reach a wider number of candidates and gain popularity too. Format changes are particularly effective when accompanied by the inclusion of different Partners in the provision of general services, such as universities, chambers of commerce, municipalities, trade unions, etc. This in turn increases the attractiveness of EURES actions. As Europe is moving towards a period of economic recession due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the provision of online services might become the main channel of provision of support services.

Although provided by a smaller number of EURES countries, specific support services (e.g. TMS) are judged to be the most effective in pursuing not only the general EURES objectives, but also the most pressing needs of jobseekers, such as language training and recognition of qualifications.

Overall, EURES actions are complementary among each other as well as when compare to other EU employment and educational initiatives (e.g. Youth Guarantee, Interreg Programmes) as they, all-in-all, can ideally escort the candidate throughout their formative path towards labour market integration.

EURES is, however, still not widely known among jobseekers. Although on the rise, there is still the need to boost its popularity across the EU labour markets. Eventually the effectiveness of EURES actions is negatively affected by common patterns of labour shortages across EURES countries. The majority of employers are looking for similar skills. Therefore, there is a lack of labour supply within certain economic sectors.

To sum up, EURES is deemed by the majority of the interviewees as a unique tool for jobseekers. This is mainly thanks to a highly personal approach adopted by the network and a result of the dedication to jobseekers and their needs, as well as to cross-border workers. More specifically, EURES is different from other types of employment services offered across Europe due to the confidence it inspires in jobseekers and workers. This confidence arises, above all, from two factors: the accompaniment to jobseekers before and after the job application, and the quality of job offers provided.

## 7 ADVICE AND GUIDANCE TO EMPLOYERS RECRUITING ABROAD

### 7.1 Background

The provision of support services to employers has been a central element of the EURES activities since the establishment of the network in 1994. Employers are one of the most relevant target groups of EURES, alongside workers. In revising the EURES regulatory framework with the objective to further strengthen the network, Regulation (EU) 2016/589 lies down principles and rules on “*mobility support services [...] to be provided to workers and employers, thereby also promoting mobility on a fair basis*”.<sup>64</sup>

In particular, the EURES Regulation defines that support services have to be available to all employers, without undue delay, online or offline. While the support services to workers are free of charge, services provided to employers may be subject to a fee.

In addition to providing employers with information on the EURES portal and about the EURES network, Article 24 of the EURES Regulation defines in more detail the type of services:

- **Provision of information and guidance** on recruitment opportunities and in particular, on the specific recruitment rules in other Member States. This also includes basic assistance with drafting of job vacancies, where appropriate;
- **Provision of further assistance and additional services** corresponding to the specific needs of employers, when there is a reasonable likelihood of recruitment. Further assistance takes place in accordance with national practices, but could include support in preselection of candidates, facilitating direct contact between employers and candidates and administrative support during the recruitment process.

All EURES countries provide support services to employers, as mentioned in the description of the EURES activities in the EURES Activity Report 2018 (January 2016 – June 2018).<sup>65</sup> The implementation of the new EURES performance measurement indicators in 2018 and 2019 allows more detailed analysis of the focus of these services.

EURES advisers had some 195 000 individual contacts with employers in 2018 and 2019. The absolute number has remained stable across both years. The majority of these contacts (ca. 75%) were between EURES advisers and employers from the country of their national EURES network, showing a focus of support services on national rather than foreign employers. However, this might also be linked to the status of the country in terms of labour mobility flows (sending or receiving). EURES countries with a receiving status might be working closely with their national employers to address national labour market shortages while EURES countries with a sending status might concentrate on foreign employers in order to address national labour market surpluses. For example, whilst 65% of all individual contacts with employers in Germany (receiving status) were with national

<sup>64</sup> Regulation (EU) 2016/589, Article 1, (e).

<sup>65</sup> COM (2019) 164 final, First EURES Biannual Activity Report.

employers, this was the case for only 25% of the contacts in Greece (sending status) whilst 75% of the contacts in Greece were with employers from other EURES countries.<sup>66</sup>

With regard to the topics discussed with the individual employers in 2018 and 2019, ca. 40% were on general information about EURES and another 40% on placements. Information on living and working conditions or cross-border activities represent only around 10% each of all individual contacts.

The Assessment Activity Reports, part of the Programming Cycle of EURES, indicate some additional tendencies in the types of services offered by EURES countries. In general, the Assessment Reports from 2016 to 2019 conclude that the EURES countries followed practices established in previous implementation periods without any significant changes in the type of support services offered to employers. The following categories of services to employers were implemented across the EURES network in 2019<sup>67</sup>:

- Organisation of and participation in recruitment events. Among others, this includes regional job fairs and European (Online) Job Days (E(O)JD);
- Provision of information and guidance to employers, either online or offline. Examples of the topics addressed include labour market developments, Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS), procedures of hiring workers from abroad and information on EURES services;
- Support in matching and placement, including drafting, dissemination and publishing of vacancies and referring of profiles.

## 7.2 Methodology

### 7.2.1 *Relevance of the topic*

The aim of this case study is to provide information on the implementation of support services to employers by analysing the topic from the perspective of different national contexts and stakeholders. This topic has been selected for the following three main reasons:

First, the relevance of this topic is linked to the importance of support services to employers within the EURES network. As described above, support services to employers represent one of the main services offered by EURES. Employers are the second largest target group of the EURES network, and the implementation of these services has considerable implications for the overall Ex post Evaluation of EURES.

Second, the portfolio of services offered to employers is broad. This variety of services would make it difficult to distinguish their specific effects at an aggregate level, looking at the support services to employers as one category. The methodology applied in the case study allows to explore the different aspects in more detail and to incorporate the national context in the analysis. Thus, it contributes to a sound and evidence-based assessment.

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<sup>66</sup> Performance Measurement System, National Reporting for Germany and Greece in 2018.

<sup>67</sup> Programming Cycle. Assessment Activity Report 2018 and 2019 (draft).

Third, the Assessment Activity Reports over the reference period of the evaluation indicate that “support services for employers could be developed more widely across the network”.<sup>68</sup> The case study can contribute to better understand challenges and success factors in this regard.

Being part of the Ex-post Evaluation, the research questions addressed in this case study have a clear link to the broader Evaluation Questions as shown in Table 21 on the following page. In particular, they focus on the effectiveness of the support services to employers, including facilitating and hindering factors; their relevance in view of changing employers’ needs and implementation context; differences in efficiency across types of services and their EU added value.

While coherence is not explicitly addressed with a research question, the findings of this case study will be triangulated with the main conclusions of the other case studies in order to analyse the internal coherence of the EURES services.

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<sup>68</sup> Programming Cycle: Assessment Report 2018, p. 13

Table 21 Case study research questions

Case study research question	Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added value
Are the services offered to employers: - raising their awareness of intra-EU labour mobility? - improving their access to a larger pool of candidates? - helping them in the recruitment process?	To what extent the provision of services to employers and jobseekers contributed to: - raising awareness of intra-EU labour possibilities by providing relevant information of good quality on job vacancies and living and working conditions throughout the Union to any job seeker or employer seeking client services for recruitment, and by granting any person interested access to the EURES network? - improving the accessibility of intra-EU job opportunities by assisting interested people with matching, placement and recruitment?	X				
How do the types of support services offered differ in terms of effectiveness and sustainability?	Which types of actions were the most and the least effective and most sustainable, for which groups and in which contexts?	X				
What are the facilitating and hindering factors in the implementation of the support services to employers?	What main factors had a bigger impact on the effectiveness of EURES actions?	X				
Are some of the support services more efficiently implemented than others? With the help of what mechanisms?	To what extent were EURES actions cost-effective (compared over time)? What types of actions were more and less cost-effective? To what extent were the costs of final services to stakeholders (e.g. counselling to		X			

Case study research question	Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria				
		Effectiveness	Efficiency	Relevance	Coherence	EU added value
	individual job seekers and business) proportionate to the benefits generated?					
What were the main employers' needs? Are the support services offered responding to these needs?	To what extent are the EURES tools fit for the needs of businesses and job seekers in the digital age?			X		
Are the support services offered responding to changes in the implementation context?	To what extent was EURES flexible and able to adapt to changes in the implementation context, notably the evolution of mobility patterns, technological changes, new types of recruitment channels in the labour market, and new regulatory requirements?			X		
Are there any particular employer groups that should be targeted, but are not?	To what extent were the most relevant groups targeted and their most important needs addressed?			X		
Are there any effects that could not be achieved without EURES? Which effects are these?	To what extent did the EURES operations produce effects (quantified to the possible extent) that would not have taken place without the EU intervention?					X

Source: Study team

### 7.2.2 Methodological approach

This section summarises the methodology deployed in this case study. It follows the general approach to all case studies, but is tailored to the specific topic of this case study.

#### Scope

Four EURES countries have been selected for data collection in this case study – Poland, Spain, Germany, and Sweden. They have been selected in view of their different status (sending and receiving) and geographical location to ensure a balanced representation.

Overview of their main characteristics and relevance for the case study of each of the four countries can be found below:

Table 22 Geographical scope and rationale

<b>EURES country</b>	<b>Sending / Receiving</b>	<b>Relevance of EURES country for case study</b>
<b>Poland</b>	<i>Sending</i>	Country with a sending status. Experience with the implementation of E(O)JD. Location in central Europe.
<b>Spain</b>	<i>Sending / Receiving</i>	Experience with national and foreign employers due to shift towards circular mobility. Location in southern Europe.
<b>Germany</b>	<i>Receiving</i>	Importance of services to employers due to labour market shortages. Main receiving country from the EURES network. Location in central / western part of Europe.
<b>Sweden</b>	<i>Receiving</i>	Recent shift towards more employer focused EURES services. Location in northern Europe.

Source: Study team

#### Data collection

##### *Overview of literature sources*

The documentation reviewed for this case study included an analysis of the relevant EU legislation, Activity Plans and Reports of the countries in focus over the period 2016 to 2019 and performance measurement indicators.

##### *Overview of stakeholders consulted*

The case study included 14 interviews with different stakeholders. Additionally, three virtual workshop sessions with employers and EURES staff were carried out for Germany, Poland and Spain. A total of three interviews (two with EURES staff and one with an employer) were carried out in Sweden instead of the workshop, which could not take place.

Table 23 Stakeholders consulted

Stakeholder category	Country	Topics covered	Data collection tool	
			Interview	Workshop
<b>NCO</b>	PL, SE, DE, ES	Development and reasons for changes in services offered; Strategic importance of these services; Observed effects.	X	
<b>EURES staff</b>	PL, SE, DE, ES	Experience with the implementation of services; Facilitating and hindering factors; Observed effects.	X	X
<b>Employers</b>	PL, SE, DE, ES	Needs; Experience with services; Main benefits.	X	X

Source: Study team

#### *Limitations of the data collection*

Due to the COVID-19 emergency situation, the workshop in Sweden could not be carried out and was replaced by three phone interviews. The workshops in Poland, Spain and Germany took place online instead of on site. The mitigation actions ensured that all necessary evidence could be gathered during the data collection.

## **7.3 Main findings**

### *7.3.1 State of play in the Member States in focus*

Despite the differing status with regard to labour mobility flows, the comparative analysis of the Activity Reports from 2016 to 2019 for Poland, Spain, Germany, and Sweden reveals a number of similarities.

All four countries offered support services to national and foreign employers. The focus of Sweden and Germany has been on national employers during the entire period, whilst Poland and Spain adjusted their targets from foreign to national employers in the last two years. This shift is explained with the better economic performance and increasing labour shortages in specific sectors.

All four countries implemented communication activities to raise awareness of EURES services amongst employers, provided general information, and supported the recruitment process. Based on the feedback collected from the interviews, the services offered to employers can be grouped as follows:

- Information about labour markets and recruitment processes abroad;
- Indirect support in the recruitment process by helping with drafting and dissemination of job vacancies;

- Direct support in the recruitment process by handling of job seekers profiles and organisation of recruitment events;
- Support (also financial) through Targeted Mobility Schemes;
- Advice in the post-recruitment stage.

### 7.3.2 Responses to the research questions

The following sections present the case study findings against each of the EQM questions as identified in the Table 21 Case study research questions above.

#### Effectiveness

*Are the services offered to employers raising their awareness of intra-EU labour mobility, improving their access to a larger pool of candidates and helping them in the recruitment process?* In general, stakeholders agree that EURES support services to employers have been developing and improving. This is reflected in increasing numbers of individual contacts with employers, which indicates that more employers are aware of the potential of intra-EU labour mobility.

Whilst some interview partners mention that there has been an increase in awareness among employers regarding the provision of EURES services and, therefore, the option to recruit from abroad, the majority of stakeholders consulted (NCOs and employers) recognise the lack of awareness of EURES among employers as a main challenge.

In general, two main communication channels are used by the EURES countries to raise awareness of employers:

- Provision of information regarding EURES services and establishment of contacts with EURES advisers through **national and regional PES offices** - the feedback received on the effectiveness of this communication channel differs. The majority of employers consulted were immediately informed about the possibilities of EURES by regional PES advisers, but some found out about EURES by themselves despite being in contact with PES staff. This suggests that the mainstreaming of EURES services is still not implemented to a full extent across the network. A specific challenge mentioned in this context is the fact that in some EURES countries, due to the organisational structure of PES, public employment offices at regional level are distant from the work of EURES and might not be able to fully understand and communicate its services.
- Targeted **communication activities** carried out by EURES, such as information sessions, workshops, social media activities - overall, the effectiveness of these activities is assessed differently by stakeholders. Although performance measurement indicators indicate an increase in contacts with employers, activities are perceived as not satisfactory by some workshop participants. A particular challenge mentioned in this context is the lack of a straightforward promotion approach, but also limited human resources for more targeted and proactive outreach to individual companies.

Furthermore, one of the NCOs consulted pointed out that increasing numbers of contacts with employers might not be directly linked to a higher awareness of intra-EU labour mobility due to the services of EURES. Other factors, such as developments in the labour market, might also be responsible for the growing interest of employers in recruiting from abroad due to a shortage of suitable candidates at national level.

Therefore, the performance indicators and stakeholders' opinions suggest that more employers are aware of intra-EU labour mobility, but this cannot be attributed solely to the EURES support

services since external factors also impact this trend. In addition, there seems to be room for further improving the outreach activities of EURES to employers and of mainstreaming EURES services within PES.

The impact of EURES activities on the access of employers to pools of candidates can be analysed from two angles. Access to profiles of candidates can be improved either through the human network (support by EURES advisers) or through the IT network (search on the EURES portal).

Starting with the **IT network**, the number of unique visitors to the EURES portal has increased by 33% from 2018 to 2019.<sup>69</sup> One of the EURES staff interviewed mentioned that the option to post vacancies on the EURES portal improves substantially the visibility of employers. This was also confirmed by employers consulted in workshops, who often name the possibility to post vacancies on the Portal as a main benefit of EURES. However, the effect of this activity might differ across industry sectors, depending on the profiles needed. For example, an employer from the transport sector in Germany shared that they were able to contact some 100 job seekers on the EURES portal, with ca. 90% of them replying. Employers consider this response rate as very high compared to similar national platforms. However, this high response rate was also explained with the few requirements that the employer had in this particular situation. It is expected that the more specific the profiles, the more difficult it is to find suitable profiles on the EURES portal.

In addition, the feedback received regarding the user-friendliness of the portal and its functionalities was mixed. It was mentioned in interviews and workshops that the information is dispersed on different places and difficult to find. In addition, some job seekers' profiles are outdated or not corresponding to search criteria applied. Also, the description or presentation of the job vacancies does not always correspond to the expectations of the employers (e.g. compulsory skills for the job not listed as such on the Portal).

Therefore, the EURES portal enhances the access of employers to more candidates' profiles, especially for employers searching for profiles with general skills. However, problems with usability of the EURES portal might be reducing the chance to find a matching profile.

In addition to the IT network, the contact of employers with **EURES advisers** was described by interview partners as essential in increasing employers' access to CVs. The support provided by EURES staff takes two main forms:

- **Search for suitable jobseekers' profiles** on the EURES portal or through contacts with advisers from other EURES countries, for which they know that there is a surplus of profiles with the necessary requirements. In this case, a direct connection to candidates with relevant profiles can be established.
- Organisation or support for the participation in recruitment events, and the **pre-screening of job seekers** to participate in these events. This can include both, the organisation of recruitment events at the country of origin of the employer (e.g. recruitment days for healthcare personnel with speed dating and visits of employers' premises) or support for the participation in recruitment events in sending countries.

The support received by employers was assessed very positively, in particular due to the personal guidance by EURES advisers ensuring the relevance of the profiles selected.

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<sup>69</sup> Performance Measurement Reporting by ECO. Unique visitors in 2018: 4 970 770. Unique visitors in 2019: 6 623 426

According to data from the Performance Measurement System, a total of 618 436 job vacancies were handled and processed in the EURES network in 2018. Their number for 2019 was 577 401.<sup>70</sup> In addition, the number of placements achieved due to the EURES support services increased by 19% from 2018 to 2019.

This increase suggests that EURES support services contribute to successful recruitment in quantitative terms. However, a number of interview participants highlighted the unreliability of these data. Employers (and job seekers) are not obliged to inform EURES advisers about the outcome of the recruitment process. As a result, not all recruitments achieved are recorded. The number of successful recruitments is likely to be significantly higher according to NCOs interviewed.

In addition to better results achieved in quantitative terms, a number of interview partners highlighted that the support provided by EURES improves the quality of the recruitment process and outcome:

- With regard to the process, job seekers receive information about their destination country and region in advance, which makes the process easier from an administrative point of view. In addition, employers can receive financial support through the different Targeted Mobility Schemes (e.g. travel costs for candidates).
- With regard to the outcome, employers highlighted that the careful screening process that takes into consideration the needs of employers and job seekers usually results in more sustainable matching. This means that newly recruited employees with the help of EURES are likely to remain within the company longer.

*How do the types of support services offered differ in terms of effectiveness and sustainability?*

One distinction between types of support services offered refers to their outreach. On the one hand, recruitment events normally have higher participation rates than individual counselling, according to EURES advisers interviewed. At the same time, the two types of service follow different objectives. Recruitment events and information fairs aim at providing broader information, whilst one-to-one counselling gives an opportunity to address more specific questions.

From the employers' perspective, the effectiveness of events and individual counselling can also depend on the context and specific needs at the time. In particular, employers with a large number of open vacancies might benefit more from a recruitment event during which they can meet a larger pool of candidates in a short time. Individual support could be more relevant and time-efficient for employers with single vacancies.

Further distinction can be made between organising events online or/and on-site. The main difference in this case refers to the necessary resources since online events do not include travel costs. Therefore, a larger number of individuals (job seekers or employers) are able to attend, which means that these types of events are more accessible. At the same time, EURES staff interviewed mentioned that recruitment processes are still very much connected to a physical meeting between the employer and the candidate. As such, it is possible that online recruitment events result in a smaller number of placements compared to on-site events. The Performance Measurement System does not distinguish between the two, which is why this hypothesis cannot be confirmed with data.

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<sup>70</sup> EURES Performance Measurement System, 2018 and 2019.

In terms of sustainability, it was mentioned in a number of interviews with EURES staff that the effects of counselling tend to be longer term compared to participation in events. A personalised counselling allows for the EURES advisers to better understand the needs and problems of the employers / jobseekers. This allows for more tailored support.

Overall, stakeholders consulted in interviews and workshops see a balanced mix of activities as the most effective approach because it allows to cater for different information needs, whilst using resources in an efficient manner.

*What are the facilitating and hindering factors in the implementation of the support services to employers?*

Facilitating and hindering factors can be grouped as external and internal to the EURES network.

The main **external factor** refers to developments in labour market shortages and surpluses at national level. Lately, EURES countries experience shortages in similar sectors and there is a tendency to avoid recruitment in deficit professions within the EURES network". Pls check if this is what you meant. According the stakeholders interviewed, this is due to the domestic policy orientation of countries experiencing labour shortages that seek to curb the outflow of workforce from these sectors. In addition, EURES advisers mentioned that recruiting from deficit sectors in other EURES countries is not partner-like and fair.

As a result, employers from certain sectors cannot be fully supported by EURES. For example, EURES staff from Germany interviewed mentioned that due to shifts in national labour markets, large recruitment events for some sectors are not organised anymore. Stakeholder from Spain also confirmed that due to a similar pattern of occupational shortages across Europe, some EURES countries do not participate in outgoing mobility projects and focus on national measures to retain workers or promote return mobility. In this regard, an interview partner from Poland also observed that support services for employers function best when there is a lack of balance in the labour markets across EURES countries.

Another external factor identified in certain EURES countries is linked to the lack of demand from employers. For example, due to differences in economic performance and wage standards, employers from countries such as Poland and Estonia are focusing on recruitment from countries outside the EURES network. In such cases, third country nationals are more interested than EU nationals in the job opportunities available.

In addition, the level of involvement of employers interested in recruiting from abroad is essential for the end results. A German employer consulted via an interview mentioned the importance of having sufficient time to prepare as an employer for a recruitment from abroad, and of perceiving the collaboration with EURES as an investment. A EURES Member from Sweden also confirmed the importance of employers being actively engaged in the process and understanding the long-term benefits that a cooperation with EURES can have, if some time is invested at the beginning.

The results of the interviews also point at a number of **internal factors** that play a role in the successful implementation of EURES services to employers. In particular:

- Human resources and time that EURES advisers can dedicate to supporting employers;
- Quantity and quality of information provided on the EURES portal;
- Availability of financial support through EU or national mobility schemes in order to directly support employers;

- Understanding of employers' needs and direct contact with national employers in order to adapt focus and services accordingly. Continuous communication with employers is perceived as enabling EURES staff to anticipate and respond to their (changing) needs;
- Collaboration with EURES countries in order to identify surpluses and shortages and better target recruitment projects, enabling EURES staff to guide employers towards recruitment from regions, most promising for their specific needs;
- Knowledge and expertise of EURES advisers in specific sectors in order to better assess requirements connected to specific vacancies;
- Clarity on data protection questions in the process of recruitment.

### **Summary of findings on effectiveness**

EURES support services to employers increase the awareness of intra-EU labour mobility, but are not the only driving factor behind this as labour market developments also play a crucial role. Employers have wider access to job profiles with the help of the EURES portal, but the relevance of the profiles is somewhat limited due to information being outdated and results of search functions not always corresponding to criteria applied. At the same time, support provided by EURES advisers to employers helps them identify suitable candidates and improves the number and quality of successful recruitments.

Recruitment and information events have a broader outreach than individual counselling but can provide only generic information, while one-to-one counselling addresses specific questions. Online events do not involve travel costs and are more accessible, but on-site events allow for physical contact perceived as vital in the recruitment process. Different types of support services complement each other by addressing different information needs.

Main external factors that hinder the effects of support services to employers are similar patterns of labour market shortages across EURES countries and preferences of employers to recruit from third countries due to wage differences or their general level of involvement. Main internal facilitating and hindering factors include availability of human and financial resources and quality information, coordination across the EURES network in view of labour market developments, and knowledge and expertise of the EURES advisers.

### **Efficiency**

*Are some of the support services more efficiently implemented than others? With the help of what mechanisms?*

The data collection did not identify differences in the efficiency of the support services to employers. As previously discussed, types of support services can have different outreach or organisation costs, which are linked to their different objectives.

Nevertheless, one mechanism supporting efficient implementation of services emerged from the stakeholders' feedback. It was mentioned in a number of interviews that having EURES teams of advisers working on dedicated sectors increases the efficiency of service delivery. Another example of an organisational set-up that increases efficiency refers to the grouping of EURES advisers in teams responsible for other EURES countries. For example, representatives from Germany mentioned that they have working groups for specific countries. The contact points in each country know each other, which facilitates the cooperation and exchange of information.

Thus, structuring the EURES staff in teams with geographical or sectoral focus contributes to more efficient knowledge transfer and short communication channels. However, human resources

available to EURES countries differ considerably and such an organisational set-up is not possible in all cases.

### Summary of findings on efficiency

The case study did not identify differences in the efficiency of support services provided to employers as the different services have their justification within the broader portfolio of EURES. However, an organisational set-up along sectors or geographical areas enhances the efficiency of implementation since it allows for shorter communication channels and knowledge transfer.

### Relevance

*What were the main employers' needs? Are the types of services offered responding to the needs of the employers?*

Stakeholders' responses to questions on employers' needs converge to a very large extent, showing clear tendencies in this regard.

According to interview and workshop participants, the biggest challenge for employers who approach EURES is to **find profiles with the necessary skill set**. In most cases, employers struggle to find candidates with relevant profiles because there is a shortage on the national or regional labour market in this particular sector (e.g. healthcare in Germany). Employers mention that this trend is particularly intensified due to the aging workforce and competition with local firms for similar profiles. In other cases, employers seek to fill vacancies that require international profiles, mostly linked to fluency in a foreign language (e.g. tourism in Spain, call centres in Sweden).

In both cases, EURES support services increasing the pool of candidates clearly respond to the employers' needs. However, it was mentioned in some of the interviews that it is not always possible to find a relevant candidate, especially in competitive sectors. EURES support services cannot remedy general labour market shortages across all EURES countries.

Another challenge for employers interested in recruiting from abroad is linked to the **accreditation of qualifications**. The feedback from the interviews and workshops shows that this question has two dimensions. To begin with, in some cases employers need support to better understand how qualifications and educational attainment from other countries translate in their national context. This is during the selection process. In this case EURES advisers, providing information, respond to this challenge in guiding the employers. It was mentioned in a number of interviews with representatives from Germany that raising awareness amongst employers regarding the value of foreign qualifications takes a substantial part of their working time.

In other cases, employers are not able to hire job seekers from abroad because their qualifications are not recognised. This is especially the case for regulated occupations such as teachers or healthcare professionals. Accreditation processes are taking place at national level and according to employers consulted in the interviews and workshops take too long. For example, employers from Spain shared in interviews that recruitments in health care sector could not take place because the European Professional Card is not recognised in Spain. In addition, in some cases professions are regulated only nationally with no equivalent in other EURES countries (e.g. construction professional cards, food handling certificates). This leads to insecurity for employers and delays in the recruitment process. In this case, EURES support services can help in providing guidance through the process, but cannot change the regulatory framework of accreditation

processes at national level, which might also be working better in some EURES countries. For example, this issue was not mentioned in all countries analysed for this case study.

Another group of needs often mentioned by employers consulted, refers to the following aspects:

- Insufficient **language skills** of candidates mean that employers might need to provide financial support for language courses to their new employees. This represents an additional cost compared to hiring workers from the own country and might also not be financially viable, especially for small companies. Whilst the main focus of EURES services is not on reducing language barriers, financial support for language courses is available within the framework of Targeted Mobility Schemes. This allows to address the challenge to a certain extent.
- Further logistical problems mentioned by a number of employers are linked to problems with **housing and providing financial support during the first weeks of relocation** of newly recruited workers from abroad, who often lack the financial means to support themselves. Employers consulted in the interviews mention that they in some cases workers can receive relocation support but, overall, this is not a focus of EURES activities.
- Employers recruiting from abroad are faced with an additional **administrative burden deriving from the different legal systems across the EURES countries**. According to stakeholders consulted, administrative aspects are often linked to the residential status of workers. Therefore, certain documents and identification numbers (e.g. social security or tax numbers) can be issued only once in the country. This distracts the employee during the first weeks of employment. It also means that the employer has to provide support and is faced with additional paperwork. Seeking assistance from EURES can ease this process. However, post-recruitment assistance does not appear to be in the focus of the EURES activities. It was mentioned in some interviews that such assistance is provided mostly on demand and not proactively. The 2018 Assessment Report also concludes that few EURES countries have developed functional post-recruitment assistance.<sup>71</sup> However, employers consulted in the workshops and interviews recognise the challenge for EURES to offer post-recruitment assistance due to administrative differences at regional level and insufficient information on cultural and organisational problems linked to labour mobility.

*Are the support services offered to employers responding to changes in the implementation context?*

As mentioned, the biggest change in the implementation context is linked to the better economic and employment situation across EU member countries. In addition, EU countries are experiencing common patterns of occupational shortages and thus, employers face enhanced competition for some profiles. Furthermore, due to demographical challenges, circular and return mobility becomes more important for traditionally sending EURES countries.

Based on the feedback from the interviews, workshops and analysis of the Activity Reports, only two changes in the support services to employers could be identified.

Firstly, the number of activities planned for the support to employers is increasing. A major addition is found in traditionally sending countries which are lately engaging more with national rather than foreign employers as illustrated by the shifts in Poland and Spain. This corresponds to the increasing labour demand across the EURES network. According to stakeholders consulted, EURES activities also focus on sectors with the highest demand, thus reflecting developments of the labour market.

Secondly, NCOs and EURES staff mentioned that they are making use of more digital formats in the implementation of their support services to employers. Examples include the provision of

<sup>71</sup> Programming Cycle: EURES Assessment Report 2018, p. 16.

counselling online via Skype and chat or the organisation of Online Job Days. However, interview partners see this shift as being linked to the availability of new opportunities rather than being the result of a strategic decision due to changes in the implementation context.

Some stakeholders also mentioned potential changes in the implementation context, likely to have an impact on the future services of EURES, linked to emerging new types of employment. In particular, the growing number of temporary job offers or services that can be delivered remotely without a dedicated workplace challenge the established concepts of working conditions. In this regard, the focus of EURES on 'fair labour mobility' can be pivotal in the future and might call for an update of existing information offers and support services.

*Are there any particular employer groups that should be targeted, but are not?*

The support services in the four EURES countries of this case study are available to all employers. There is no overarching definition of a target group for these services in the planning of the activities, except for recruitment events that normally focus on sectors with shortages. Nevertheless, there are common characteristics of the employers who tend to use the EURES services.

Firstly, it was mentioned in some interviews that it is mostly small and medium employers who seek support from EURES. These organisations require more support because they usually lack experience with recruiting from abroad. In comparison, larger companies have Human Resources departments with more knowledge on the topic. In addition, in one of the interviews with a stakeholder from Germany it was mentioned that larger companies are internationally well-known, which is why candidates proactively contact them. They are more attractive for job seekers and do not face the same challenge of finding suitable candidates compared to smaller employers.

Secondly, stakeholders agree that most employers contacting EURES are active in sectors with labour market shortages. This is also aligned with the sectoral approach in the organisation of recruitment events that many EURES countries adopt. Whilst it is important to focus EURES activities on sectors experiencing shortages in order to respond to developments in the labour market, two EURES advisers highlighted that it is important to also support other sectors. For example, intra-EU mobility of academics has a different kind of value, but is as important as balancing labour market shortages and surpluses through mobility. However, some EURES advisers interviewed mentioned that providing support in sectors without demand is more resources-intensive and therefore, numbers of placements achieved are lower. As a result, measuring the performance of EURES based on numbers of placements might be discouraging some EURES countries from targeting sectors without demand.

### Summary of findings on relevance

EURES support services to employers address the main employers' needs such as access to a pool of candidates and support in the process of accreditation of qualifications. However, EURES cannot mitigate underlying labour market shortages and change regulatory frameworks at national level. EURES support services partially address employers' needs connected to language barriers and administrative challenges in the post-recruitment process, but these are not the main focus of EURES activities.

A shift in the support services to employers towards national employers corresponds to changes in the implementation context due to labour market developments.

EURES support services to employers are available to employers from all sectors and sizes. However, they tend to be used mostly by small and medium employers and employers in sectors with labour market shortages.

### EU added value

*Are there any effects that could not be achieved without EURES? Which effects are these?*

With regard to support services to employers, a number of interviewees believe that support would have been provided even without an EU intervention. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the **EURES network leads to better results, both in terms of quantity and quality**. Interview participants did not specify who would have provided this type of support, but it could be assumed that national employment agencies and / or private service providers could have expanded their portfolios:

- For example, the German Employment Agency has teams dedicated to supporting employers outside of EURES, but they do not focus on intra-EU mobility. However, it is questionable whether the quality of service provision would have been the same. For example, German employers consulted in the workshop highlighted that profiles found through EURES are usually more suitable to their needs in comparison to profiles suggested by local PES, who have access to a smaller pool of job seekers, who also tend to have general difficulties in entering the labour market.
- A number of private employment service providers across EURES countries focus on international labour mobility. Whilst they are in a position to offer the same services as EURES, employers consulted in the workshops and interviews clearly highlighted that the support provision cannot be compared in terms of process and results. Experiences with EURES are assessed as better because they are free of charge and not driven by profit interests. As a result, employers perceive EURES staff as more dedicated and interested in the long-term effects and finding suitable and good positions for job seekers.

Other interviewees believe that labour mobility would have taken place independently (e.g. companies investing additional resources to attract and recruit from abroad), but not to the same extent. In addition, the support provided through EURES is perceived by stakeholders to lead to better results because of the focus on fair labour mobility. Being a trusted institution, EURES supports mobility based on institutional procedures, ensuring that job vacancies are safe, and a network of actors can be triggered to provide assistance if needed.

All stakeholders interviewed agree that the support services to employers provided through EURES are of better quality than any other alternative. The reasons behind this assessment can be summarised as the following features and attributes of the support services provided to employers:

- free of charge, which makes it more accessible;
- individual approach and high-quality of the service delivery due to the high level of dedication of the EURES staff;
- provides a framework for a holistic approach, which enables the exchange of information and knowledge;
- promotes standards of fair working conditions, that might have not been respected to such an extent from entirely private employment agencies;
- opens new opportunities and potential for growth, also reflected in the demand for the EURES services.

Another aspect highlighted by all stakeholders consulted as the real added value of EURES refers to its **network dimension**. EURES enables cooperation across public and private employment services across all EURES countries that would not have been possible otherwise, illustrated by the following examples:

- A Swedish employer mentioned that he was able to meet a number of EURES advisers from other countries during a recruitment event. By establishing contact to EURES advisers in Spain, the employer gained access to a large number of profiles, which would not have been possible otherwise.
- An employer from Germany mentioned that a EURES adviser guided him to identify the most relevant countries from which he could recruit and established a contact with the EURES adviser in the targeted country, who in turn enabled the participation in a recruitment event with a number of relevant pre-selected job seekers. The employer confirmed that he would not have looked by himself to recruit from this particular country without the support of the EURES adviser.

In this context, the EURES network enables cooperation between EURES countries and eases the recruitment process for employers. Employers are consulted by EURES staff in other countries with a lot of knowledge on the country-specific labour market and speaking the local language, which means that they can identify the most relevant profiles.

#### **Summary of findings on EU added value**

EURES support services to employers allow for a holistic approach towards the labour market which would not have been possible otherwise. Even if support services to employers could be provided without EURES, the quality and extent of labour mobility as a result of these services is unlikely to have been the same. The network dimension of EURES brings added value as it enables cooperation that would not have been possible otherwise and allows for targeted support to employers, based on country-specific knowledge in all EURES countries.

## **7.4 Conclusions**

EURES support services help employers find suitable candidates by granting them access to a larger pool of candidates, raising awareness of opportunities to hire from abroad, and facilitating the recruitment.

The types of services differ in outreach, cost and effects, but their mix is needed so that EURES can respond to particular needs in an efficient manner. Whilst the effectiveness of the services provided can be influenced by the knowledge capacities and organisational structure of the EURES network, external factors such as similar shortages across EURES countries, differences in legislative frameworks causing administrative burden and national accreditation processes cannot

be directly addressed through EURES. Nevertheless, employers benefit from guidance in these processes.

EURES support services are open to all employers, but it is primarily employers from small and medium-sized enterprises and from sectors experiencing shortages that seek assistance. There is no evidence suggesting the need to target other groups of employers.

The added value from the EURES network derives from the promotion of labour mobility of higher quality, in addition to the extensive knowledge within the network. The main challenge for the EURES network will be its ability to adjust its services to changes in the labour markets that are converging in terms of shortages and surpluses. This shift might influence priorities at national level regarding the promotion of labour mobility.

## Annex II.c – Results of the stakeholders’ consultations

This annex includes the results of the following stakeholders’ consultations:

- Public consultation
- Online surveys to:
  - NCOs
  - EURES Members and Partners
  - Jobseekers
  - Employers
- Documentation of the validation workshop
- Documentation of the COVID-19 workshop

### 1 EURES EVALUATION: PUBLIC CONSULTATION ANALYSIS

The public consultation was launched in mid-March 2020 and was open for contributions for 12 weeks. It was concluded on 23 June 2020. In total, 1,434 persons responded to the questions of the public consultation.

The public consultation questionnaire was divided into four sections with some questions marked as compulsory (i.e. a respondent was not able to proceed with the survey unless the compulsory question was answered). Here the compulsory questions are marked with a ‘\*’.

#### 1.1 Introduction

The public consultation questionnaire started with a short introduction to EURES, its geographical coverage and its goals. The brief introduction was shown to all respondents.

*Would you like to know more about EURES?\**

Two thirds of the respondents (69%) indicated that they would like to learn more about EURES. These respondents were shown a more detailed overview of the purpose of EURES, the links to the EURES Regulation and the mobility portal, and a brief description and links to EURES services.

Respondents who answered “No” to the above question were immediately redirected to the Public consultation identification questions.

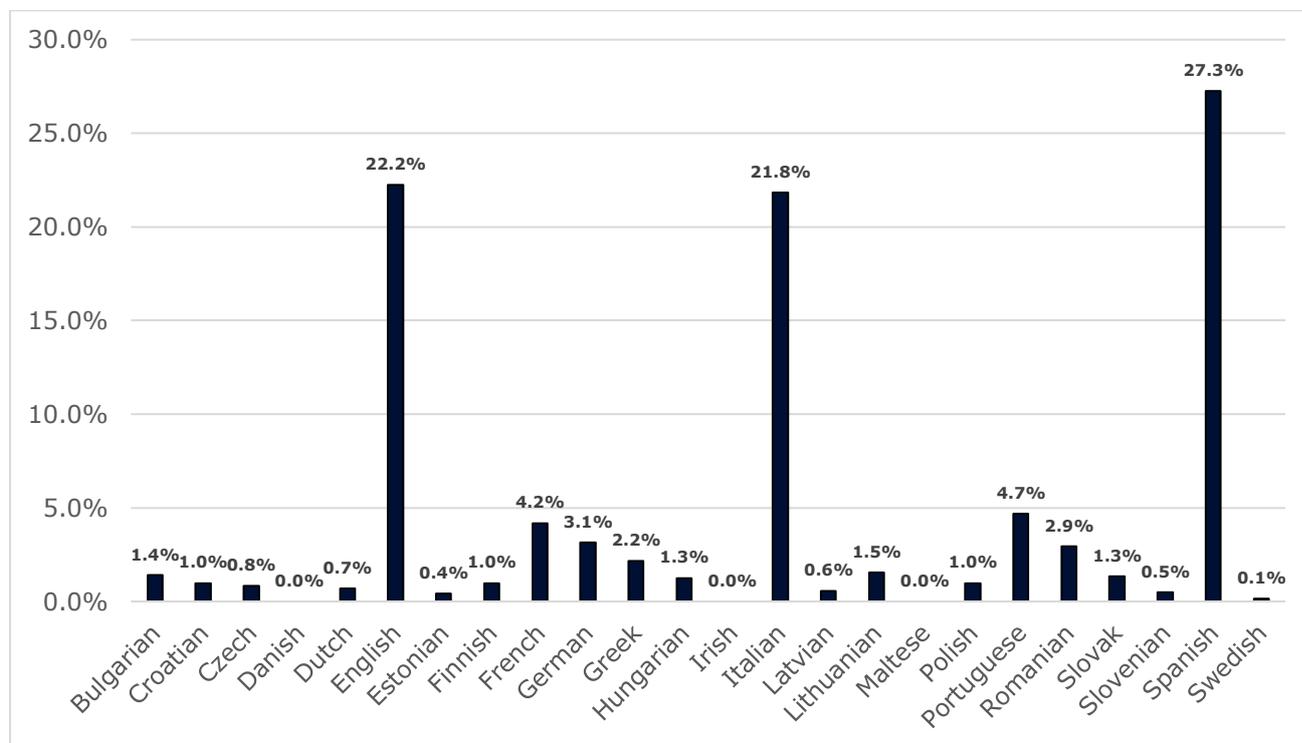
##### 1.1.1 Public consultation identification questions

*Language of my contribution\**

The questions of the public consultation were available in 24 languages of the European Union. 27% of the respondents chose to answer the questionnaire in Spanish, 22% in English, and 22% in Italian. 5% of the respondents viewed the questions and provided

their replies in Portuguese, and 4% did so in French. No respondent chose to view the questionnaire in Danish, Irish and Maltese.

Figure 1 Language of my contribution (n=1,434)



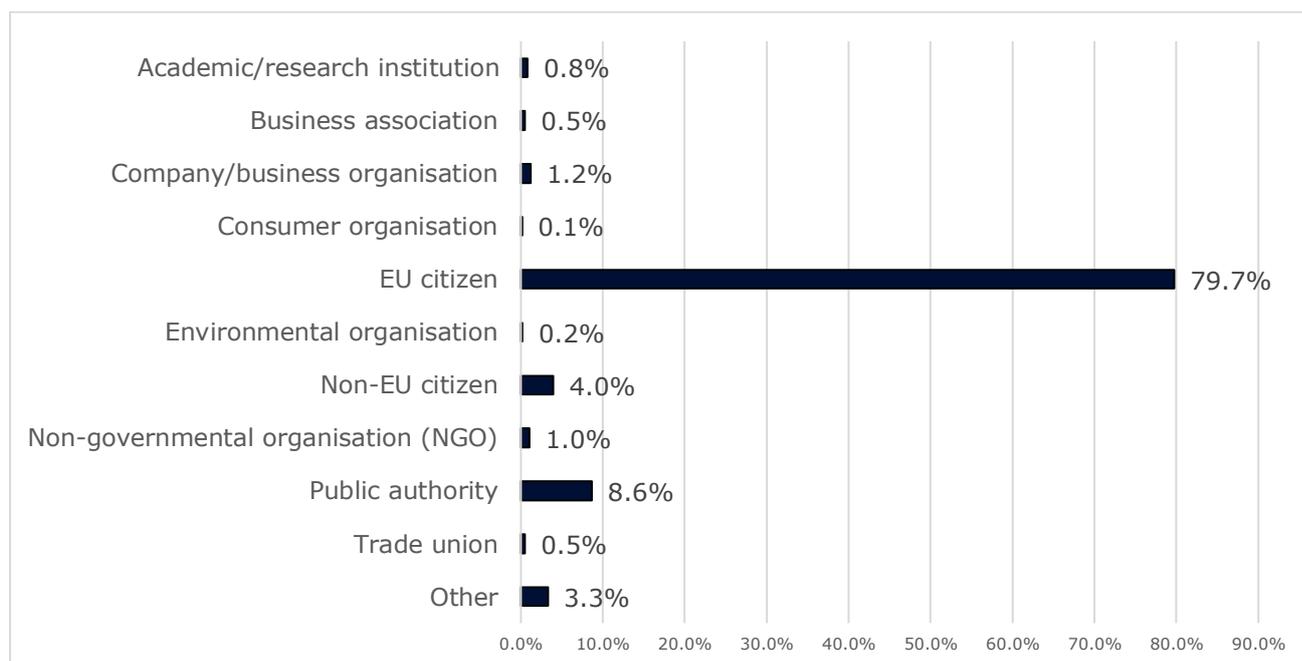
*I am giving my contribution as\**

In this question, the respondents were asked to indicate in what capacity they gave their contribution to the public consultation questionnaire. The respondents could choose from the following options:

- Academic/research institution
- Business association
- Company/business organisation
- Consumer organisation
- EU citizen
- Environmental organisation
- Non-EU citizen
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Public authority
- Trade union
- Other.

Most of the respondents (80%) answering as 'EU citizens'. 9% of the respondents answered the questionnaire on behalf of a public authority, while 4% responded as 'Non-EU citizens'.

Figure 2 I am giving my contribution as (n=1,434)



47 respondents (3%) chose the answer “Other”. Out of the respondents that chose the “Other” category, the majority of survey participants stated that they were EURES Advisors; several respondents provided their answers as EURES Staff and/ or as an employee of their national Public Employment Service.

*For the purposes of assessing EURES, please indicate if you are responding to this consultation as a representative of\**

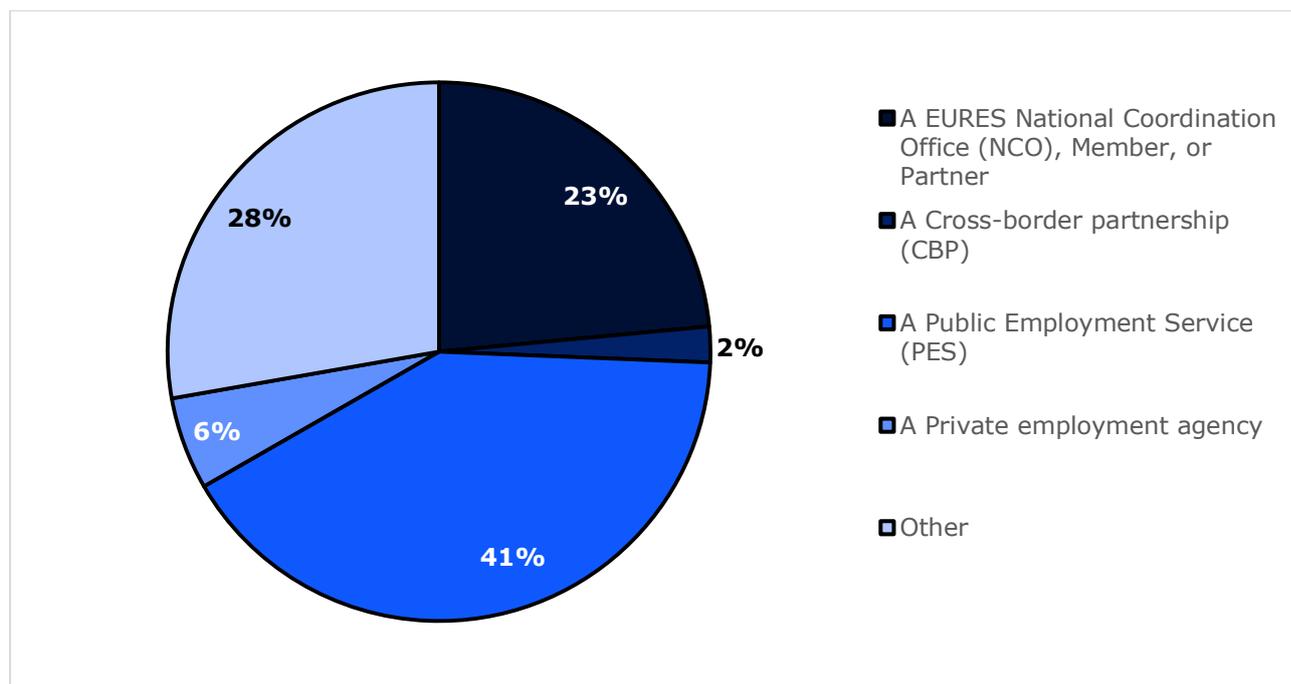
This question was only shown to the respondents who indicated that they were giving their contribution on behalf of (a) Academic/research institution, (b) Business association, (c) Company/business organisation, (d) Consumer organisation, (f) Environmental organisation, (h) Non-governmental organisation (NGO), (i) Public authority, (j) Trade union, (k) Other. The question was shown to a total of 236 respondents.

The respondents were asked to indicate, whether they gave their contribution to the questionnaire as representatives of:

- EURES National Coordination Office (NCO), Member, or Partner
- A Cross-border partnership (CBP)
- A Public Employment Service (PES)
- A Private employment agency
- Other.

41% of the respondents that answered this question reported to represent a Public Employment Service, while 23% said to be part of a EURES National Coordination Office (NCO), Member, or Partner. 13 respondents (6% of the total) stated to be employed with a Private employment agency, while 5 respondents said to come from a Cross-border partnership.

Figure 3 For the purposes of assessing EURES, please indicate if you are responding to this consultation as a representative of (n=236)



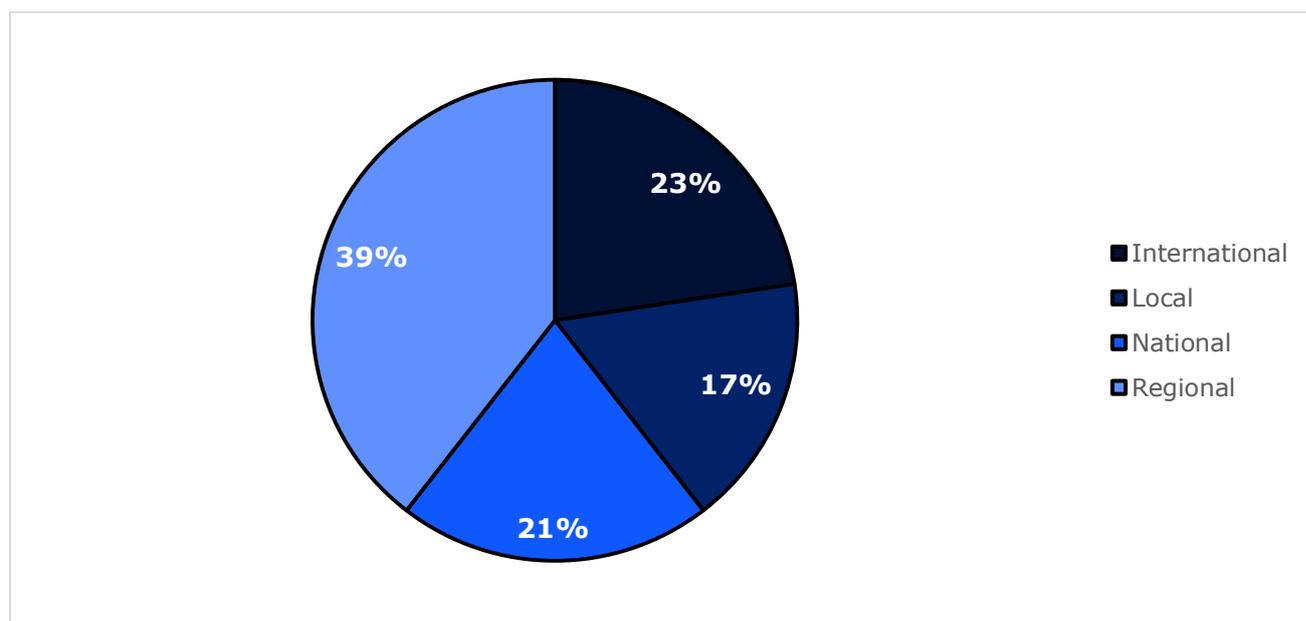
Out of the respondents that chose the “Other” category, several stated that they represent an NGO; one respondent is a member of EaSI Committee, and one represents an ESF Managing Authority; one respondent is a member of an Employers Association, and several respondents respond on behalf of their municipality.

### Scope\*

This question appeared only to respondents who stated that they are employed with a Public Authority. In this question, the respondents were asked about the scope of activity of their organisation. This question appeared to a total of 124 respondents.

40% of the respondents indicated that their organisation is active at the regional level, 23% at the international level, 21% at the national level, and 17% at the local level.

Figure 4 Scope (n=124)

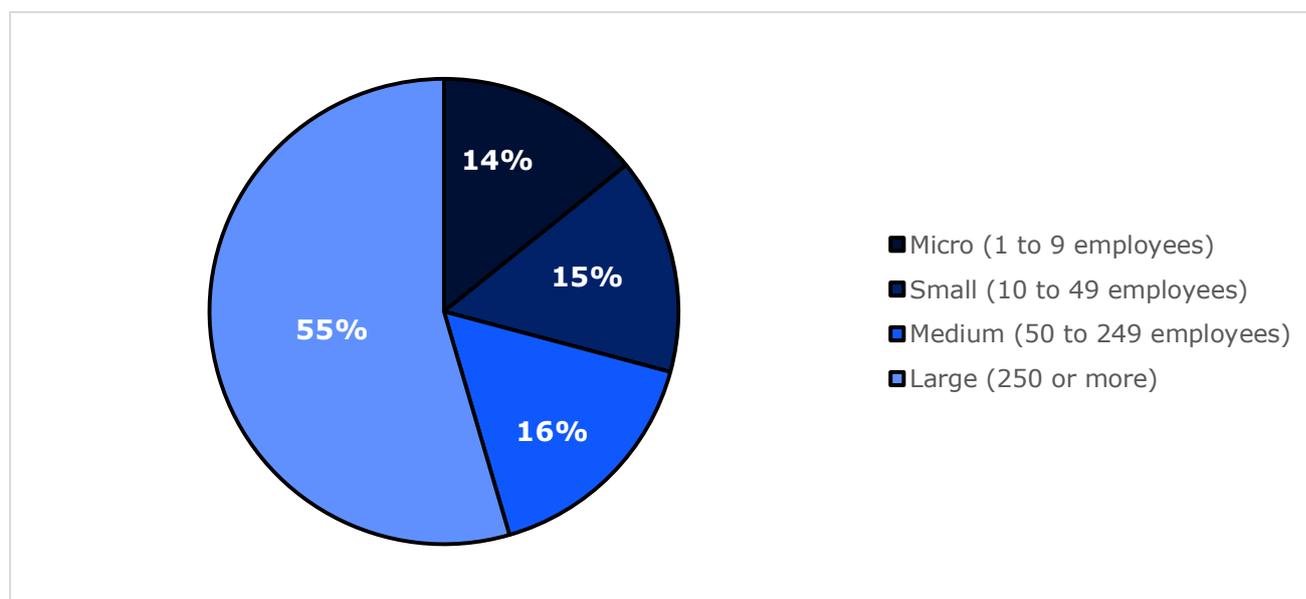


*Organisation size\**

This question was only shown to the respondents who indicated that they were giving their contribution on behalf of (a) Academic/research institution, (b) Business association, (c) Company/business organisation, (d) Consumer organisation, (f) Environmental organisation, (h) Non-governmental organisation (NGO), (i) Public authority, (j) Trade union, (k) Other.

This question was answered by 233 respondents. Out of the respondents who provided their answer, 55% reported to be employed with a large organisation. The remaining respondents are spread nearly equally across the medium, small and micro organisation categories.

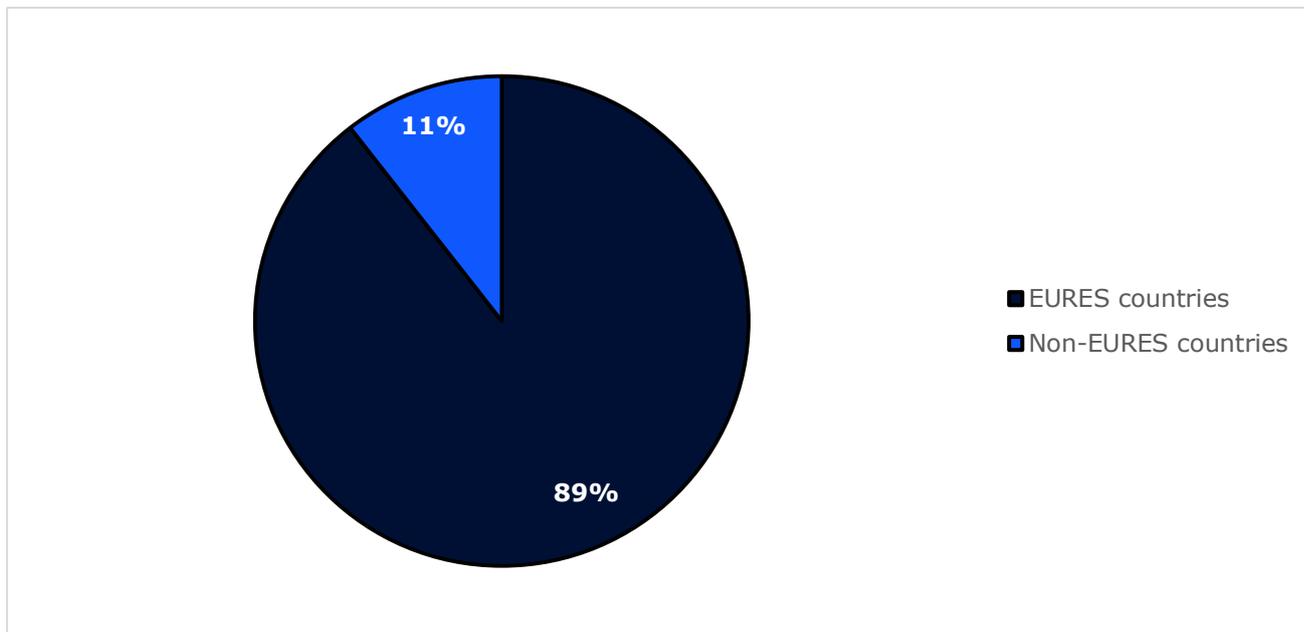
Figure 5 Organisation size (n=233)



*Country of origin\**

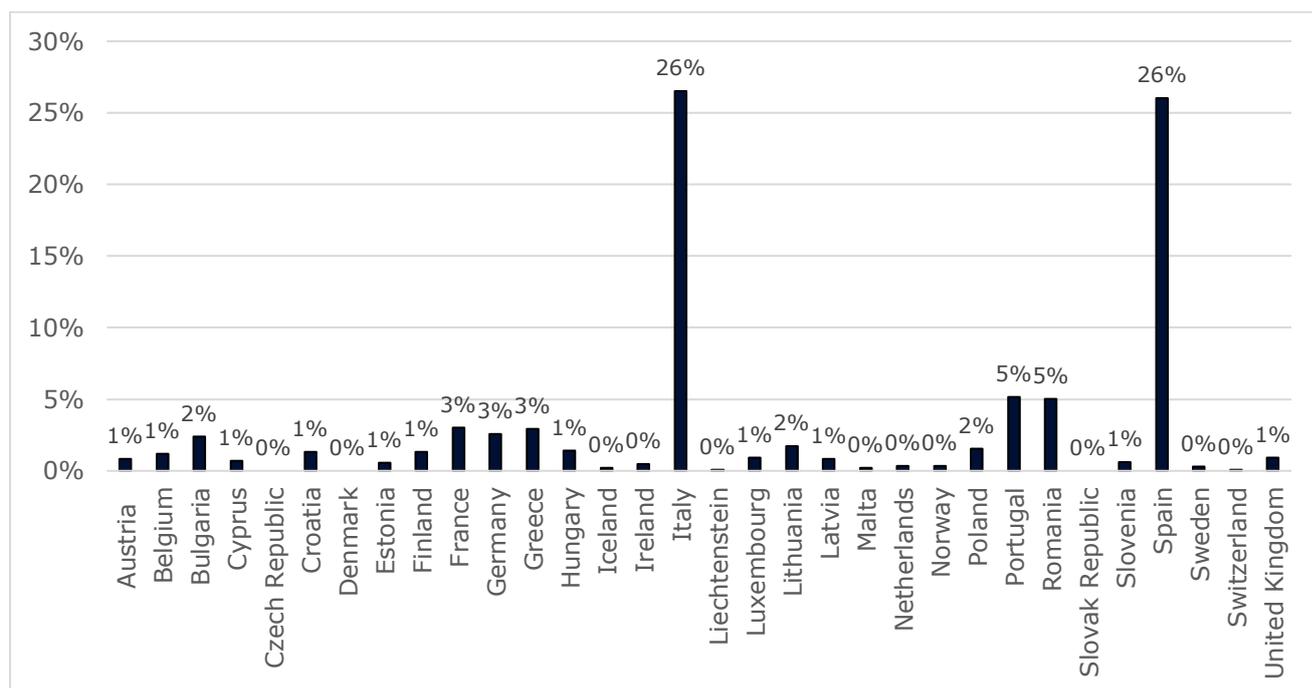
In this question, the respondents were asked to choose from 195 countries of the world. 89% of the respondents indicates 'EURES countries', while 11% 'Non-EURES countries'.

Figure 6 Organisation size (n=233)



From the 32 EURES countries, no respondents came from the Czech Republic and Denmark, and only 1 response came from a respondent originating from Liechtenstein. EURES countries with the most persons responding were Italy (380 responses) and Spain (373 responses).

Figure 7 Country of origin: EURES countries (n=1,283)

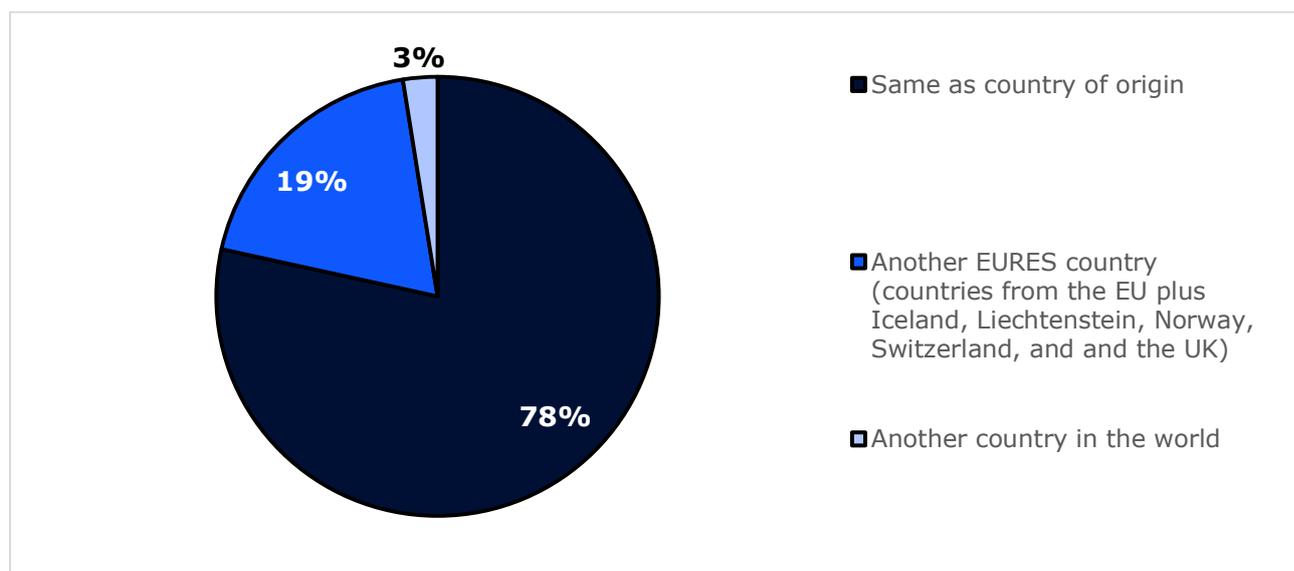


Out of non-EURES countries, respondents coming from the following countries provided the most replies: Algeria, Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Ecuador, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Morocco, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey, Venezuela and Ukraine.

### Country of residence\*

78% of the survey respondents (1,125 responses) indicated that their country of residence is the same as their country of origin. 19% of the respondents (273 responses) stated that they live in another EURES country, while 3% of the respondents (36 responses) reside in another country in the world.

Figure 8 Country of residence (n=1,434)

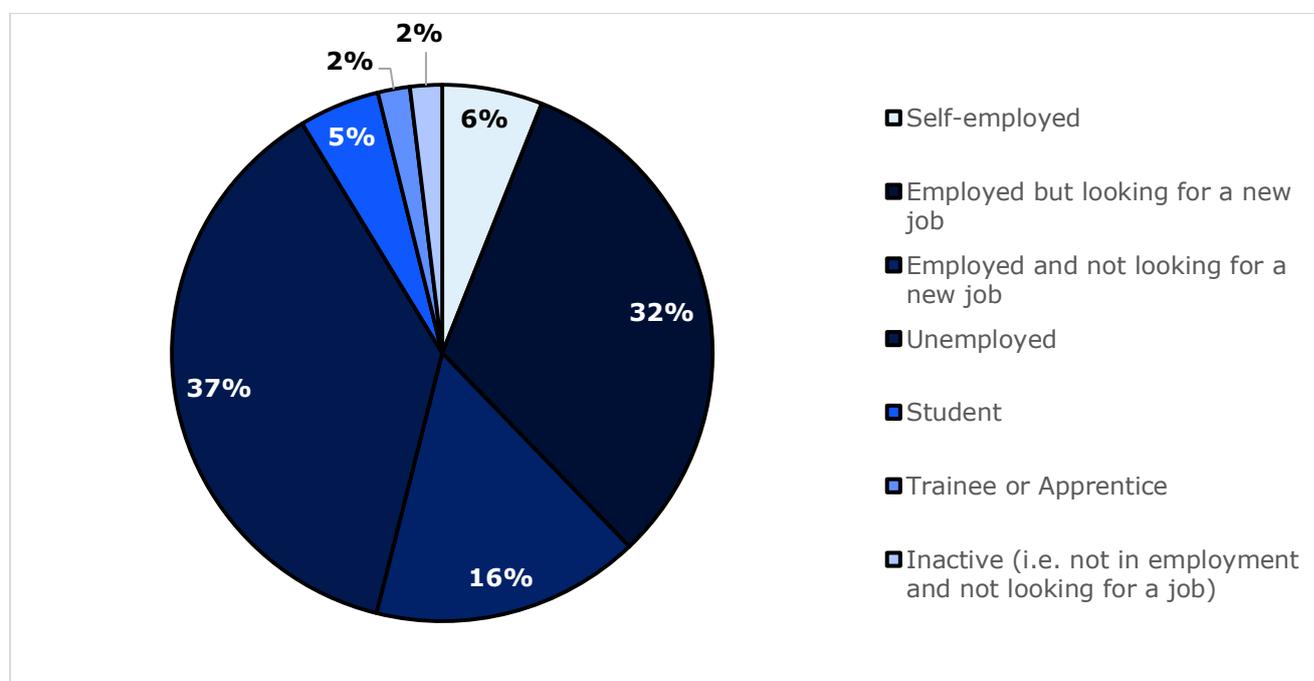


*Please indicate your labour market status\**

This question only appeared to the respondents who indicated that they replied as EU citizens or as non-EU citizens. The question was shown to 1,200 respondents.

Out of the persons who replied to this question, 37% are unemployed, 32% are employed but looking for a new job, 16% are employed and not looking for a new job.

Figure 9 Labour market status (n=1,200)

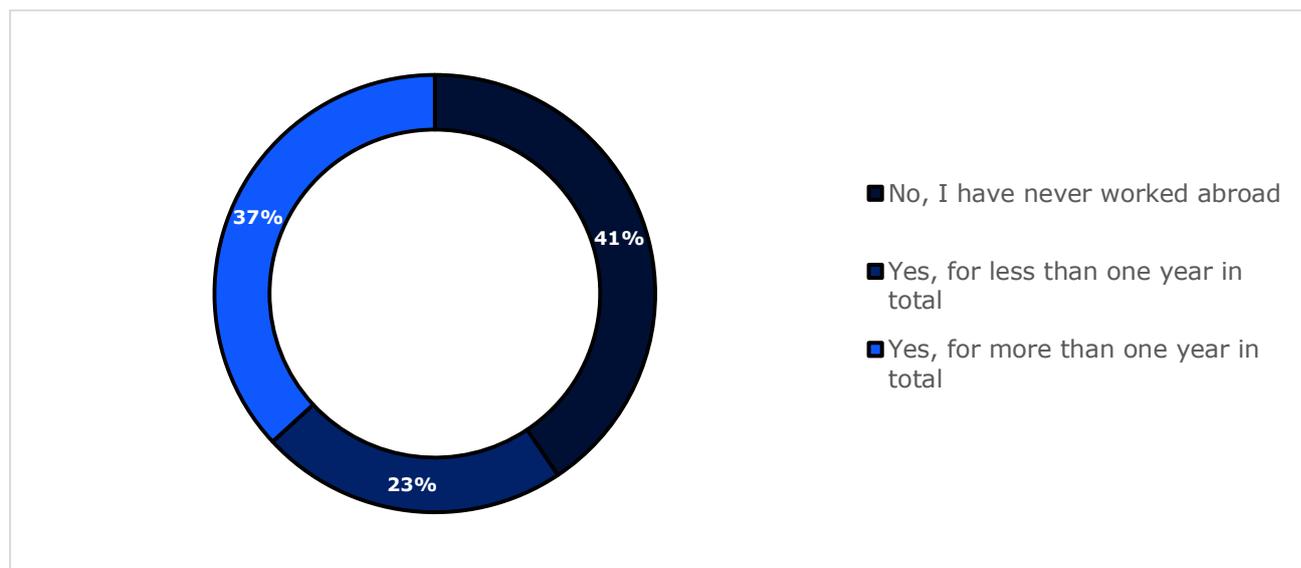


*Have you ever worked abroad?\**

This question only appeared to the respondents who indicated that they replied as EU citizens or as non-EU citizens. The question was shown to 1,200 respondents.

Out of the persons who replied to this question, 41% have never worked abroad, 37% have worked abroad for more than one year, and 23% have worked abroad for a total of less than one year.

Figure 10 Have you ever worked abroad? (n=1,200)



*Please specify the sector(s) in which you are active*

This question was only shown to the respondents who indicated that they were giving their contribution on behalf of (a) Academic/research institution, (b) Business association, (c) Company/business organisation, (d) Consumer organisation, (f) Environmental organisation, (h) Non-governmental organisation (NGO), (i) Public authority, (j) Trade union, (k) Other. The question was replied by 201 respondents. Out of them, 29 respondents chose two response options, and 30 respondents chose 3 response options; the rest of the respondents chose one response option (one sector of activity of their organisation).

Table 1 Please specify the sector(s) in which you are active (n=201)

Sector of activity	Number of respondents active in this sector	Percentage of the total number of responses (%)
<b>A - Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing</b>	1	0.5
<b>B - Mining and Quarrying</b>	0	0
<b>C - Manufacturing</b>	1	0.5

<b>Sector of activity</b>	<b>Number of respondents active in this sector</b>	<b>Percentage of the total number of responses (%)</b>
<b>D - Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply</b>	1	0.5
<b>E - Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities</b>	1	0.5
<b>F - Construction</b>	3	1.5
<b>G - Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles</b>	1	0.5
<b>H - Transportation and Storage</b>	2	1
<b>I - Accommodation and Food Service Activities</b>	0	0
<b>J - Information and Communication</b>	3	1.5
<b>K - Financial and Insurance Activities</b>	0	0
<b>L - Real Estate Activities</b>	0	0
<b>M - Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities</b>	6	3
<b>N - Administrative and Support Service Activities</b>	19	9.5
<b>O - Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security</b>	99	49.3
<b>P - Education</b>	17	8.5
<b>Q - Human Health and Social Work Activities</b>	11	5.5
<b>R - Arts, Entertainment and Recreation</b>	5	2.5
<b>S - Other Service Activities</b>	27	13.4
<b>T - Activities of Households as Employers; Undifferentiated Goods and Services Producing Activities of Households for Own Use</b>	1	0.5
<b>U - Activities of Extraterritorial Organisations and Bodies</b>	3	1.5

Out of the persons who replied to the questionnaire, 49% (99 respondents) reported to work in Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security. 13% of the respondents (27 responses) are employed in Other Service Activities, while 9% (19 respondents) are employed in Administrative and Support Service Activities; 8% (17 respondents) are employed in Education; 5% (11 respondents) are employed in Human Health and Social Work Activities.

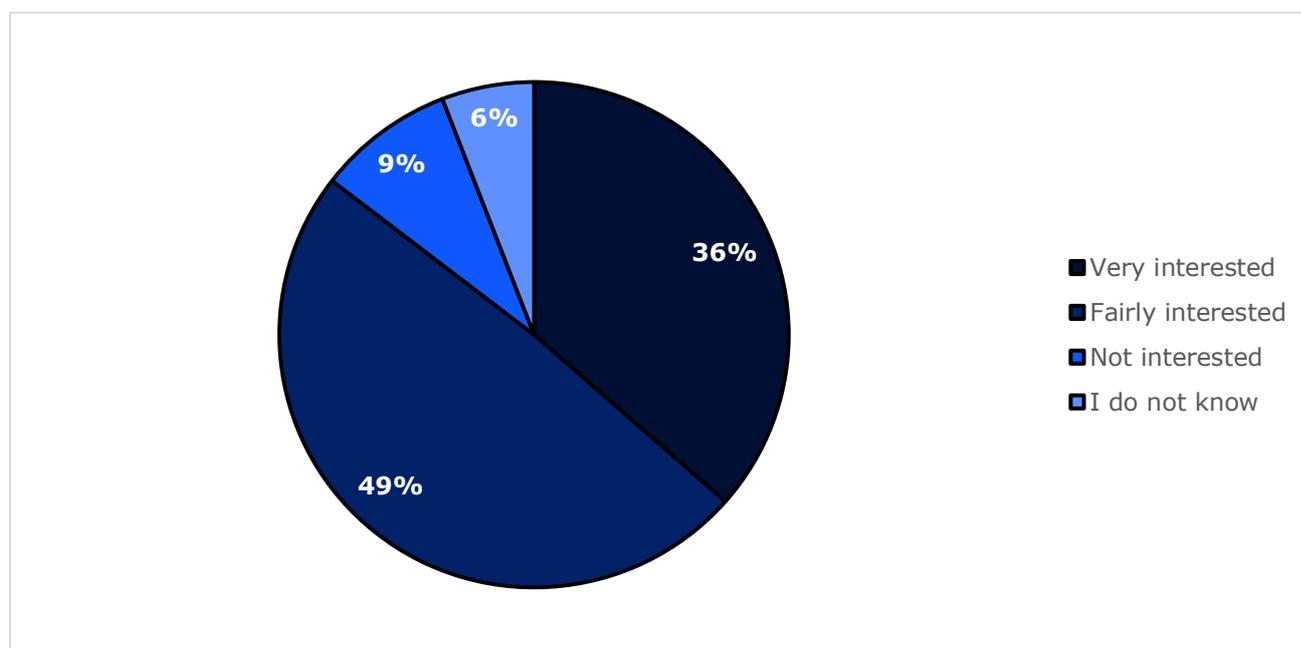
### 1.1.2 Views on labour mobility

The questions in this section asked the respondents about their views on labour mobility between countries in Europe.

*In your opinion, are people in your country of origin interested in finding a job in another country?\**

Nearly half of the respondents (702 respondents; 49%) consider that people in their country of origin are fairly interested in finding a job in another country. 36% of the respondents (523 responses) stated that people in their country of origin are very interested in finding a job in another country; 9% consider that their countrymen are not interested in finding a job abroad, while 6% (84 responses) indicated that they did not know the answer to this question.

Figure 11 In your opinion, are people in your country of origin interested in finding a job in another country?\* (n=1,434)



The answers to the above question differ significantly depending on whether the respondents come from a EURES or non-EURES country. In particular, 35% of respondents originating from EURES countries consider that people in their country of origin are very interested in finding a job in another country, as opposed to 58% of respondents originating from non-EURES countries. 51% of respondents originating from EURES countries believe that people in their country are fairly interested in finding a job in another country, while 29% of respondents from non-EURES countries are of the same opinion. 9% of respondents from EURES countries vs. 2% of respondents from non-EURES countries consider that their countrymen are not interested in finding a job abroad.

Figure 12 In your opinion, are people in your country of origin interested in finding a job in another country? (respondents from EURES countries, n=1,322)

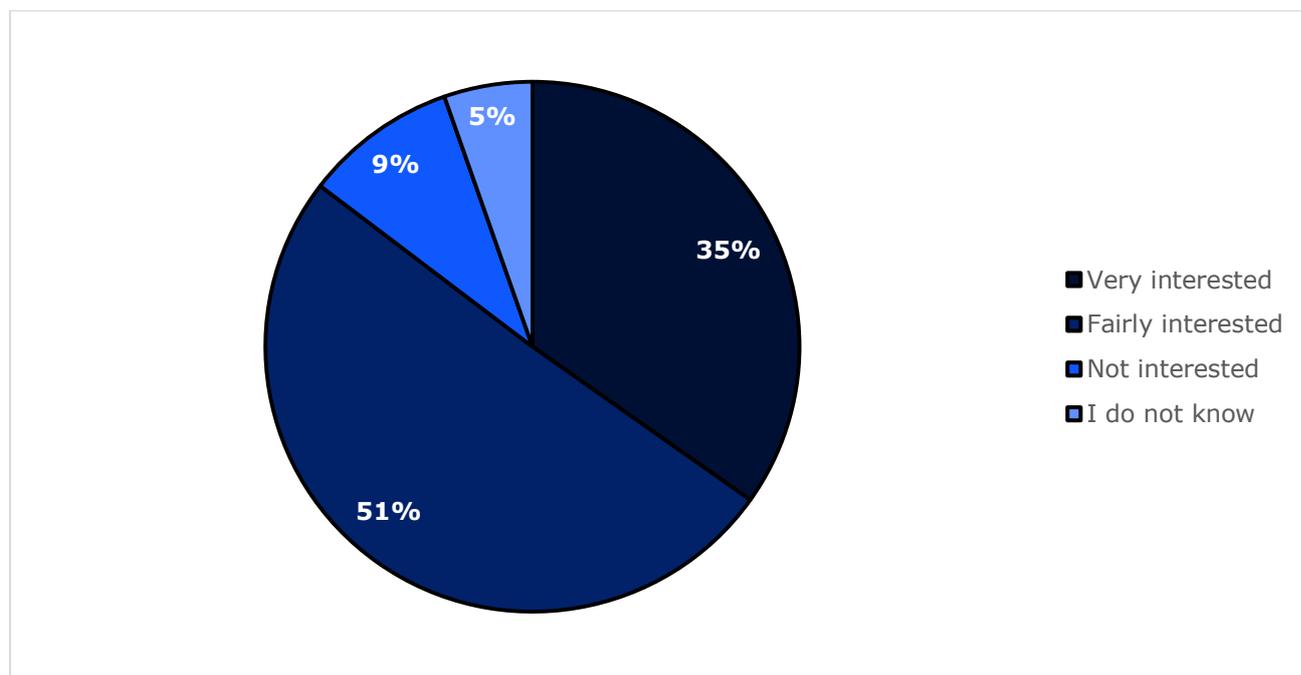
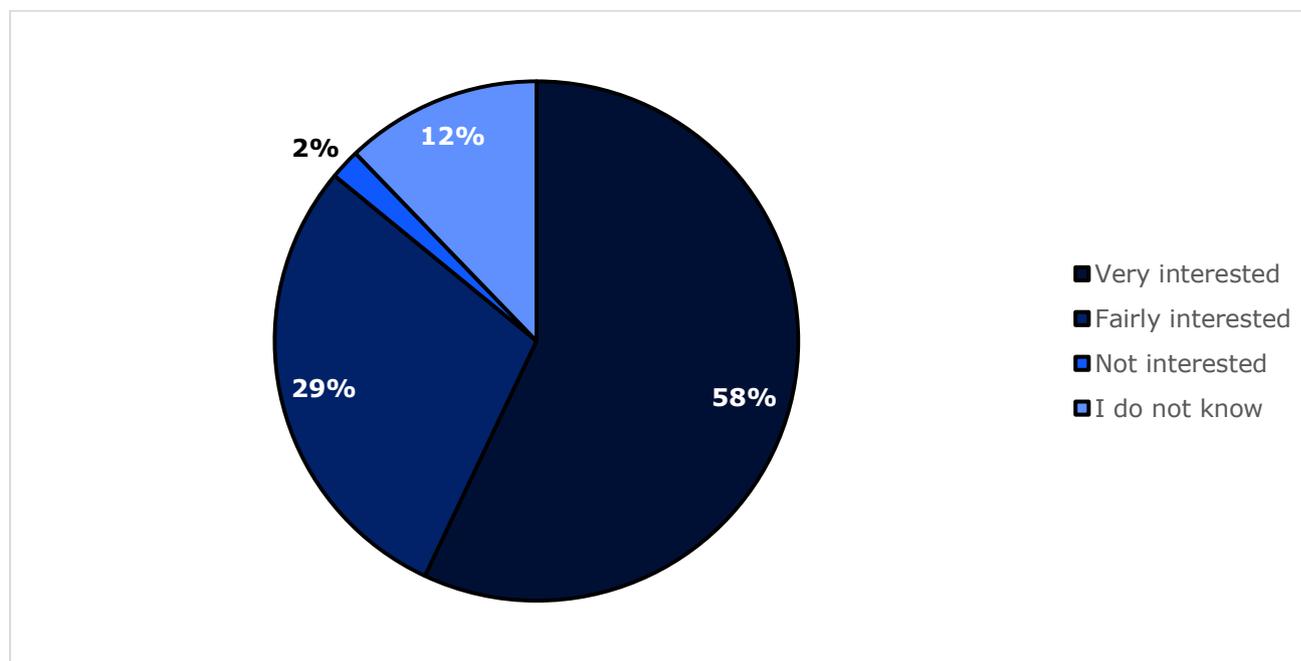


Figure 13 In your opinion, are people in your country of origin interested in finding a job in another country? (respondents from non-EURES countries, n=106)

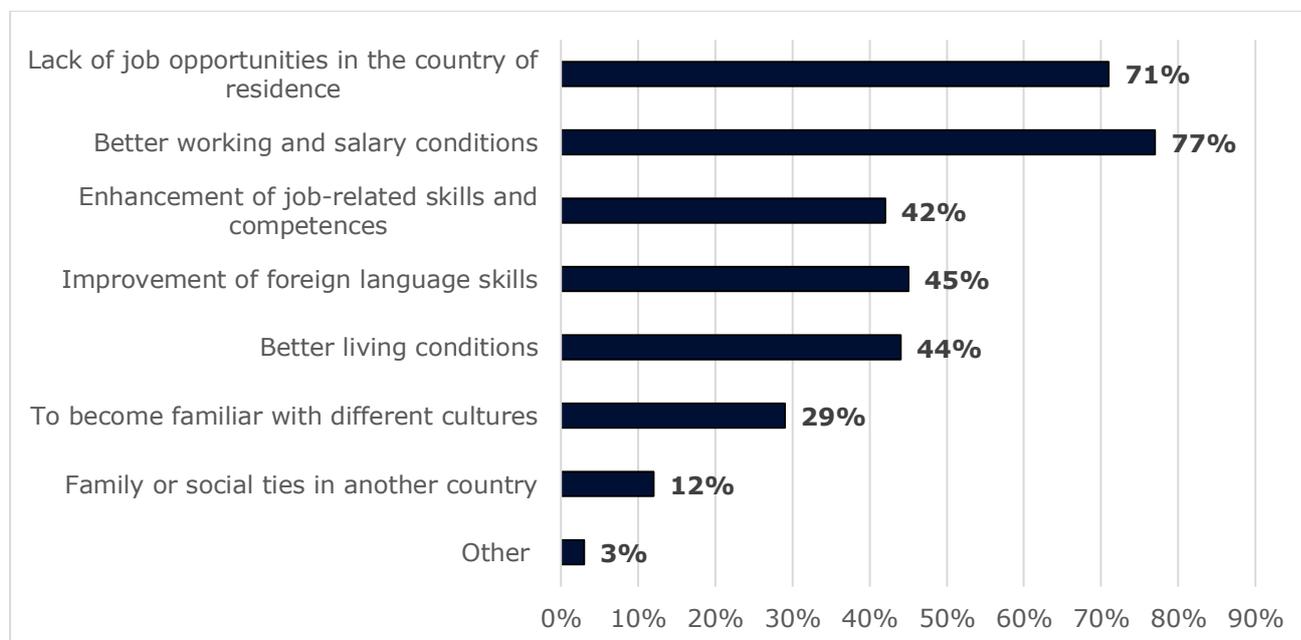


*In your opinion, what are the main reasons for looking for a job in another country?*

When answering this question, the respondents could choose more than one answer option. Most respondents (1,210; 84% of the total) chose at least two answer options to this question. 20% of the respondents (280) chose five answer options; 8% of the respondents (110) chose six answer options; 3% (36) chose seven answer options.

77% of the respondents (1,108) named better working and salary conditions among the main reasons for looking for a job in another country; 71% of the respondents (1,016) chose lack of job opportunities in the country of residence; 45% (639) chose improvement of foreign language skills among potential reasons; 44% (630) chose better living conditions; 42% (596) chose enhancement of job-related skills and competences.

Figure 14 In your opinion, what are the main reasons for looking for a job in another country (n=1,434)?



As can be seen in the figures below, persons originating from non-EURES and from EURES countries do not differ much in their reasons for looking for a job in another country. Respondents originating both from non-EURES and from EURES countries believe that major reason for people to look for a job in another country are better working and salary conditions, followed by lack of job opportunities in the country of residence. The least selected response option is "family or social ties in another country". This response option was chosen by 12% of respondents from EURES countries and by 7% of respondents from non-EURES countries.

Figure 15 In your opinion, what are the main reasons for looking for a job in another country? (respondents from EURES countries)

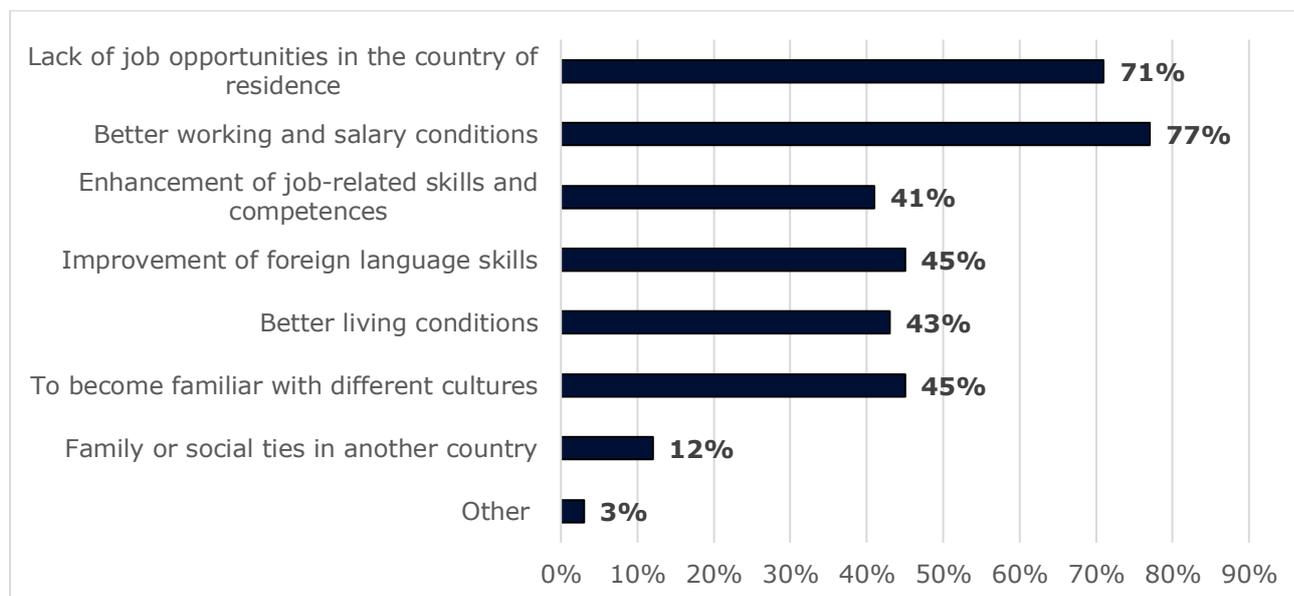
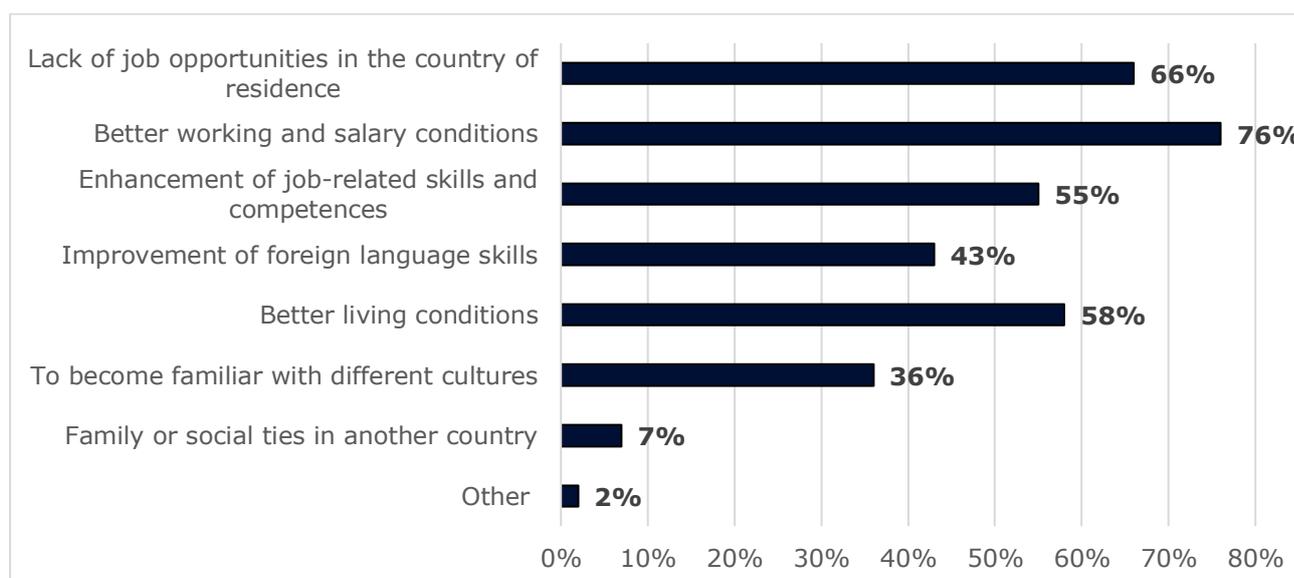


Figure 16 In your opinion, what are the main reasons for looking for a job in another country? (respondents from non-EURES countries, n=108)



Respondents who chose the “Other” answer option were asked to specify, which other reasons for looking for a job in another country they deem important. 39 respondents provided their opinions on this issue. Respondents particularly underlined political and security reasons as other important reasons for which people could look for jobs in another country. Statements about political and security reasons were made by respondents originating both from EURES and from non-EURES countries.

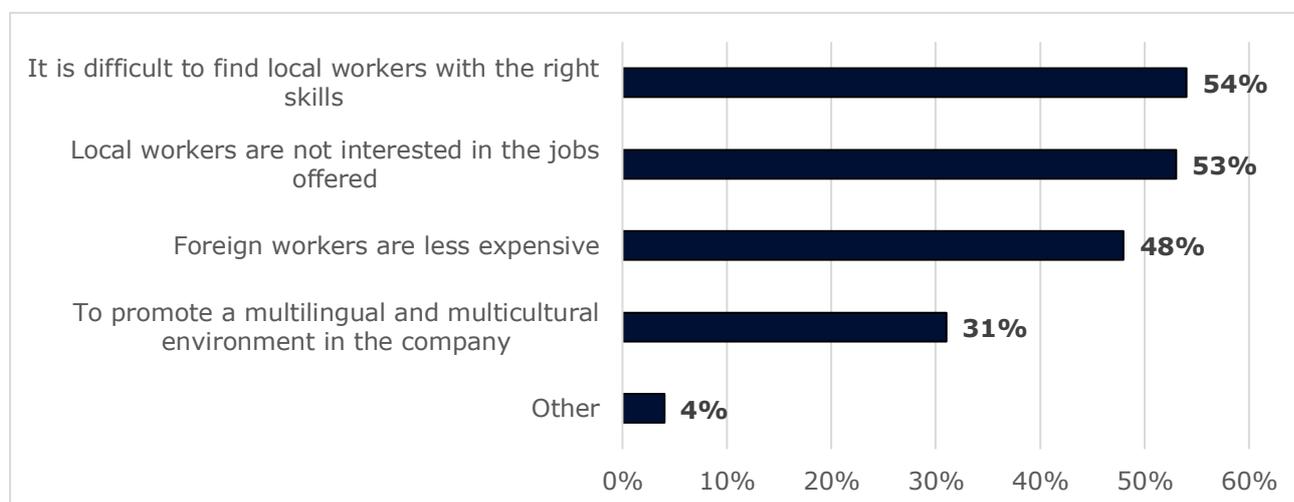
Among other reasons, respondents named better job opportunities for jobseekers of advanced age, racism and discrimination the jobseeker faces in their home country, and mobility as the only way to build an academic career.

*In your opinion, why do employers recruit from another country?*

As well as in the previous question, respondents could choose more than one answer option when answering this question. The majority of respondents chose either one or two answer options to this question; 22% of the respondents chose three answer options, while 3% of the respondents selected all four answers.

54% of the respondents (777) consider that employers recruit from other countries, as it is difficult for them to find local workers with the right skills. 53% of the respondents (751) consider that local workers are not interested in the jobs offered. 48% of the respondents (686) agree that local workers are less expensive. 31% of the respondents (448) consider that employers might recruit from another country to promote a multilingual and multicultural environment in the company. 4% of the respondents (58) chose the answer option "Other".

Figure 17 In your opinion, why do employers recruit from another country? (n=1,434)



As can be seen in the figures below, there are some small differences in responses given by respondents originating from non-EURES and from EURES. In particular, 55% of respondents from EURES countries have chosen the response option "It is difficult to find local workers with the right skills", and only 49% of respondents from non-EURES countries selected this statement. 56% of respondents from non-EURES countries and 52% of respondents from EURES countries believe that local workers are not interested in the jobs offered.

Figure 18 In your opinion, why do employers recruit from another country? (respondents from EURES countries, n=1,326)

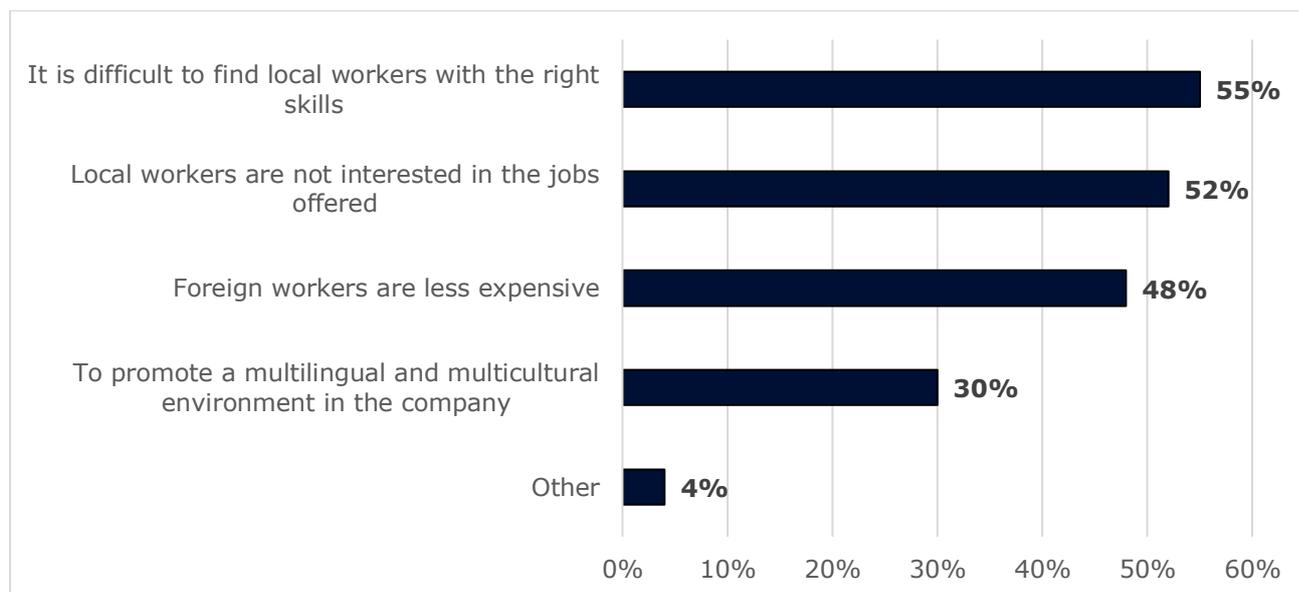
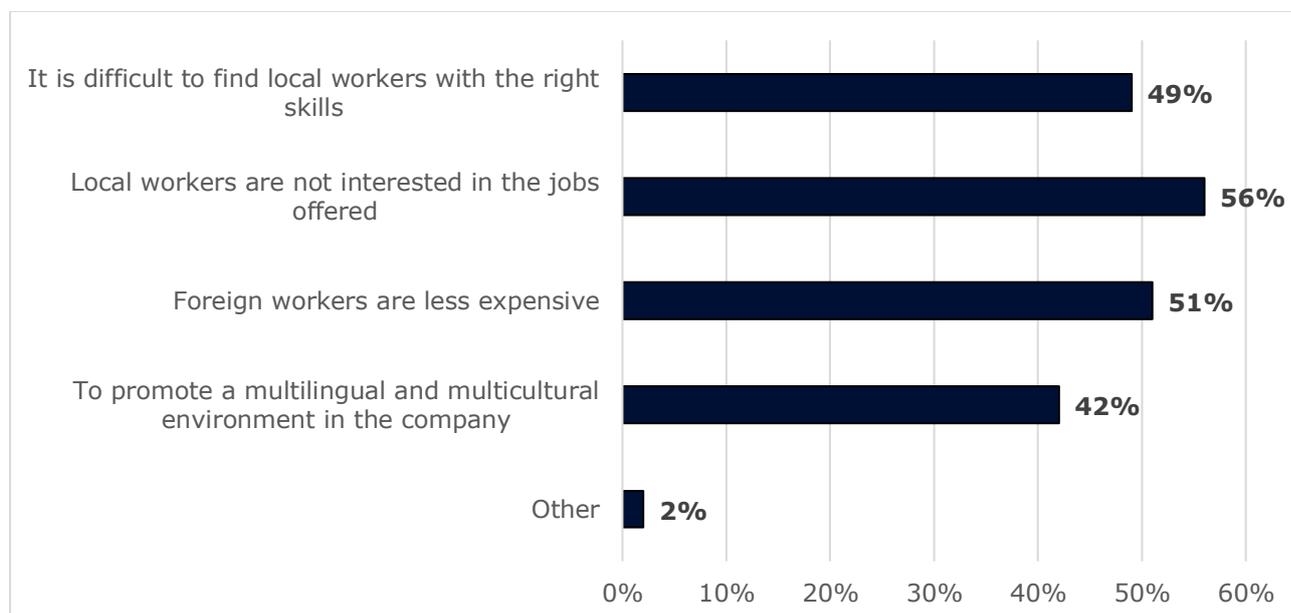


Figure 19 In your opinion, why do employers recruit from another country? (respondents from non-EURES countries, n=108)



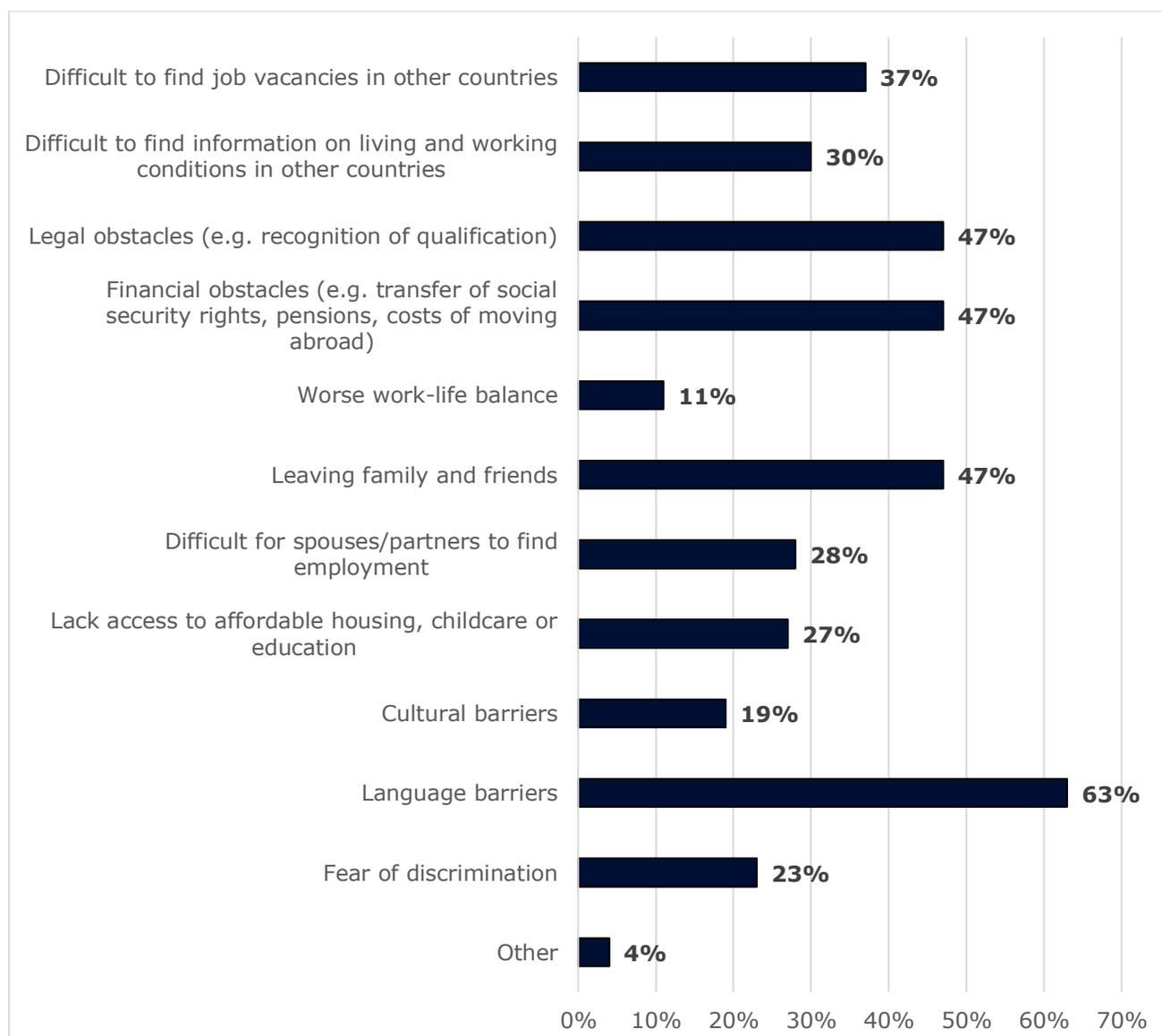
Respondents who chose the “Other” answer option were asked to specify, which other reasons, in their opinion, lead employers to recruit employees from another country. 55 respondents provided their opinions on this issue. In particular, respondents mentioned that in some sectors foreign employees are desirable, as they help establish international links and find clients abroad. They also stated that specific language knowledge is necessary in some sectors; and this leads to employers searching for employees from particular countries. Respondents also brought up the issue of labour mobility as an almost obligatory component of an academic career.

*In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for people to find a job in another country?*

When answering this question, respondents were invited to choose more than one answer option. The majority of respondents chose two to five answer options.

63% of the respondents (907) consider language barriers to be an obstacle to find a job abroad; 47% of the respondents selected financial obstacles (680), legal obstacles (678) and unwillingness to leave family and friends (675) among the main reasons. 4% of the respondents (63) indicated that there could be other obstacles to find a job in another country, which were not indicated in the questionnaire.

Figure 20 In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for people to find a job in another country? (n=1,434)



As can be seen in the figures below, respondents originating from non-EURES and from EURES countries do not differ much in their perception of the reasons for which employers recruit from another country.

Figure 21 In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for people to find a job in another country? (respondents from EURES countries, n=1,326)

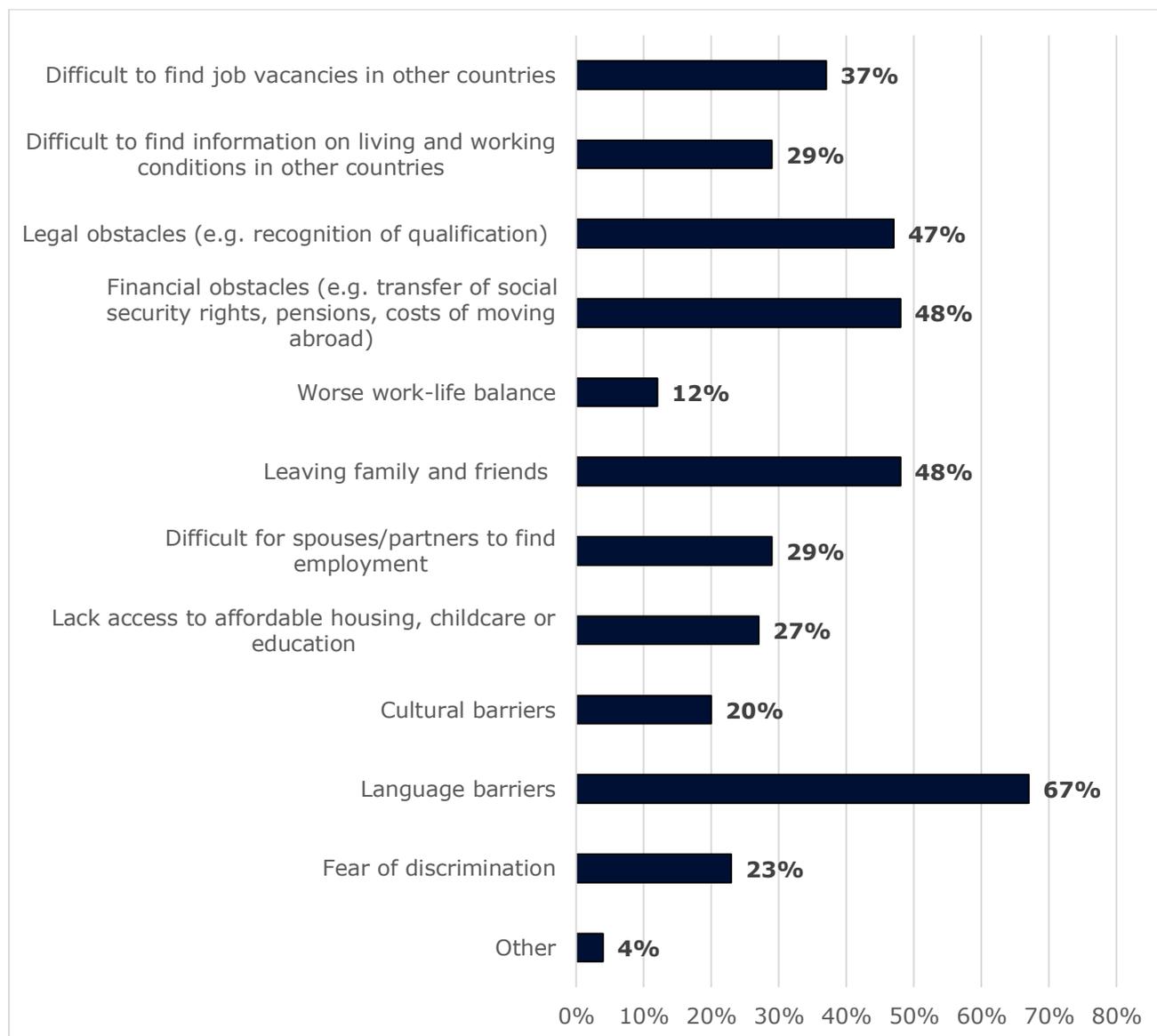
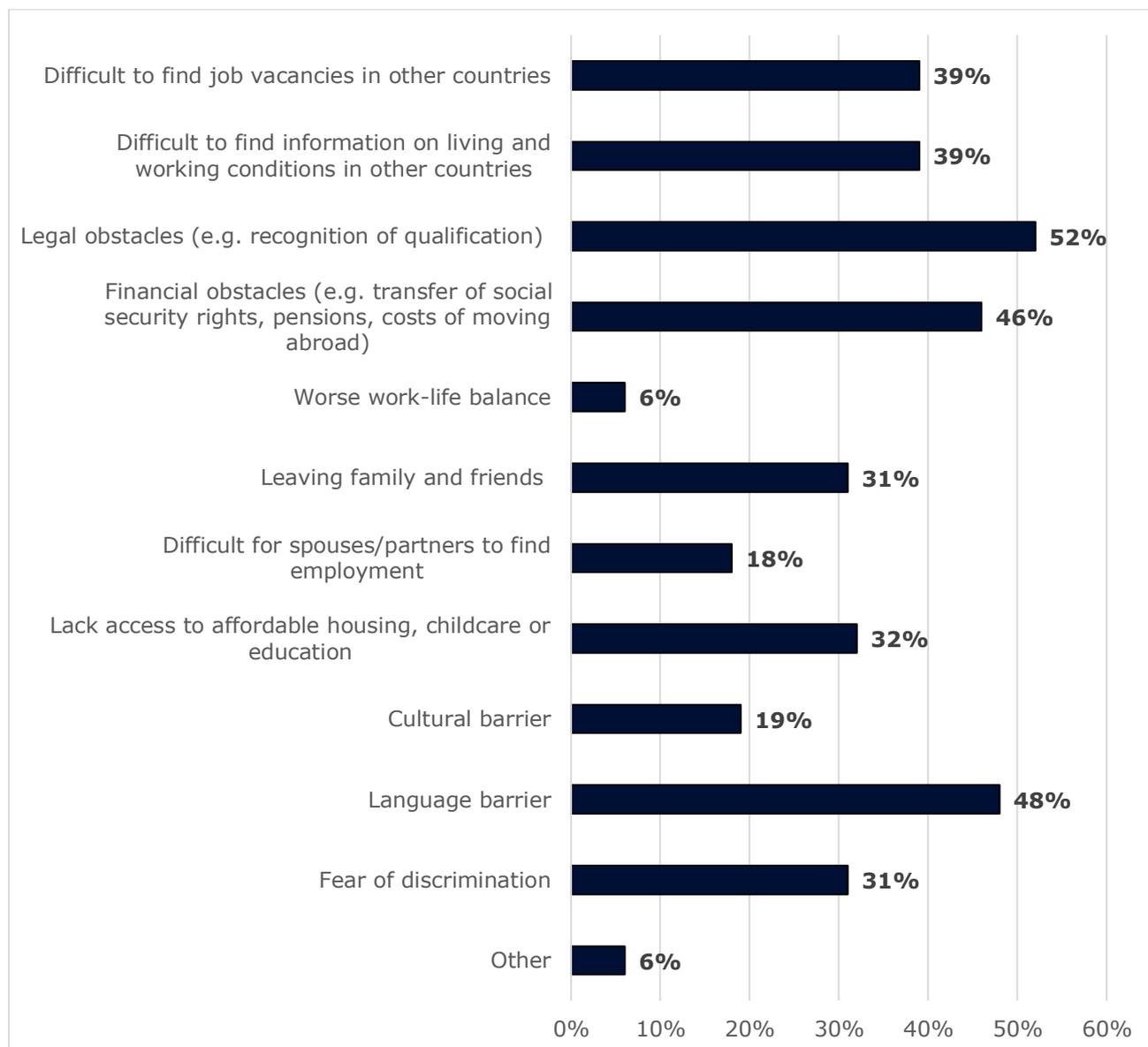


Figure 22 In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for people to find a job in another country? (respondents from EURES countries, n=108)



Respondents who selected the “Other” option to the question above were asked to specify, which other obstacles, in their opinion, are faced by people when looking for a job in another country. In their answers, several respondents mentioned that many job vacancies are “hidden” from potential candidates and are only made available to a limited number of potential applicants, who are usually located in the country of potential employment.

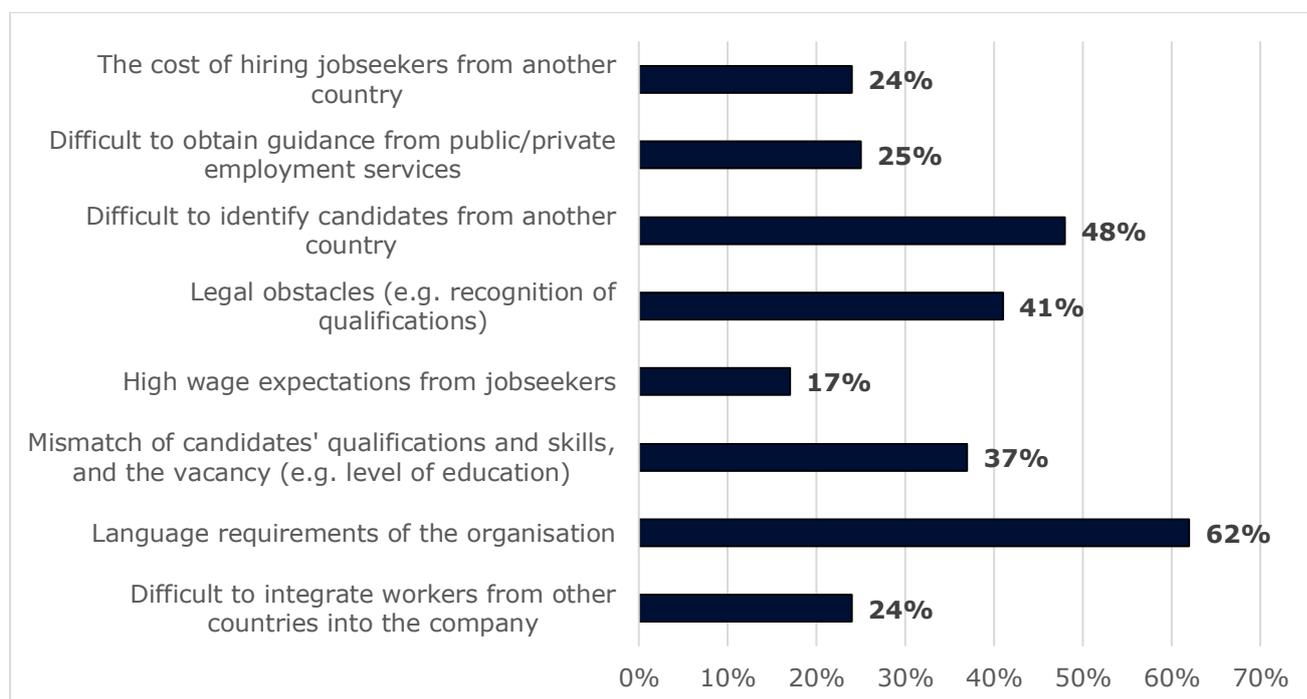
Respondents also mentioned that the procedure of application for a job abroad is complicated. One respondent noted that the EURES Job Mobility Portal is not updated regularly, as some of the vacancies advertised in the platform date back to 2017.

*In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for employers to recruit jobseekers from another country?*

In this question, the respondents were invited to choose from nine possible answer options. The majority of respondents selected between three and six answers.

When looking at the aggregate responses, one can see that 48% of respondents believe that language requirements of the organisation (62%) along with difficulties to identify candidates from another country (48%) are the main obstacles for employers to recruit jobseekers from another country.

Figure 23 In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for employers to recruit jobseekers from another country? (n=1,434)



In order to check, whether there are differences in perceptions of the obstacles for employers who recruit jobseekers from another country, we have singled out two respondent groups from the total of responses: the EU citizens, who are the main receivers of the survey, and employees of PES, EURES and representatives of other related public authorities, who are the service providers.

Both group of respondents singled out language requirements as the main obstacle to recruitment abroad. As well as in the aggregate result, the second most selected reply option was the "difficulty to identify candidates from another country". For further details, refer to the graphs below.

Figure 24 In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for employers to recruit jobseekers from another country? (representatives of EURES, PES and other public authorities, n=237)

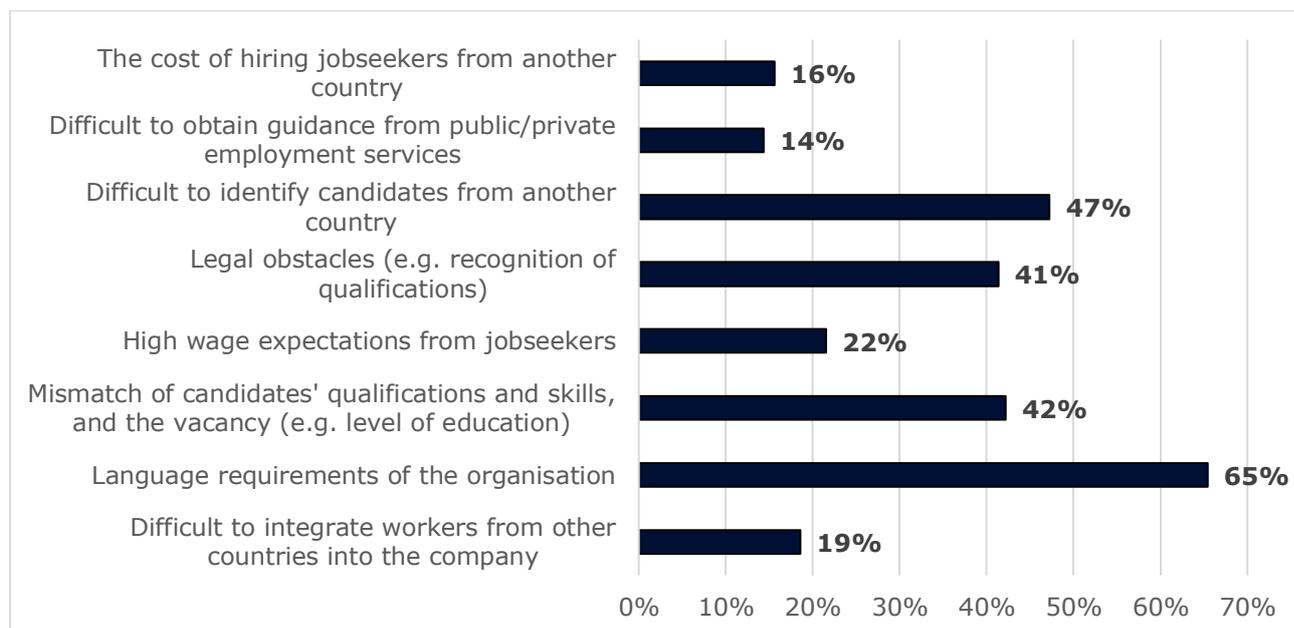
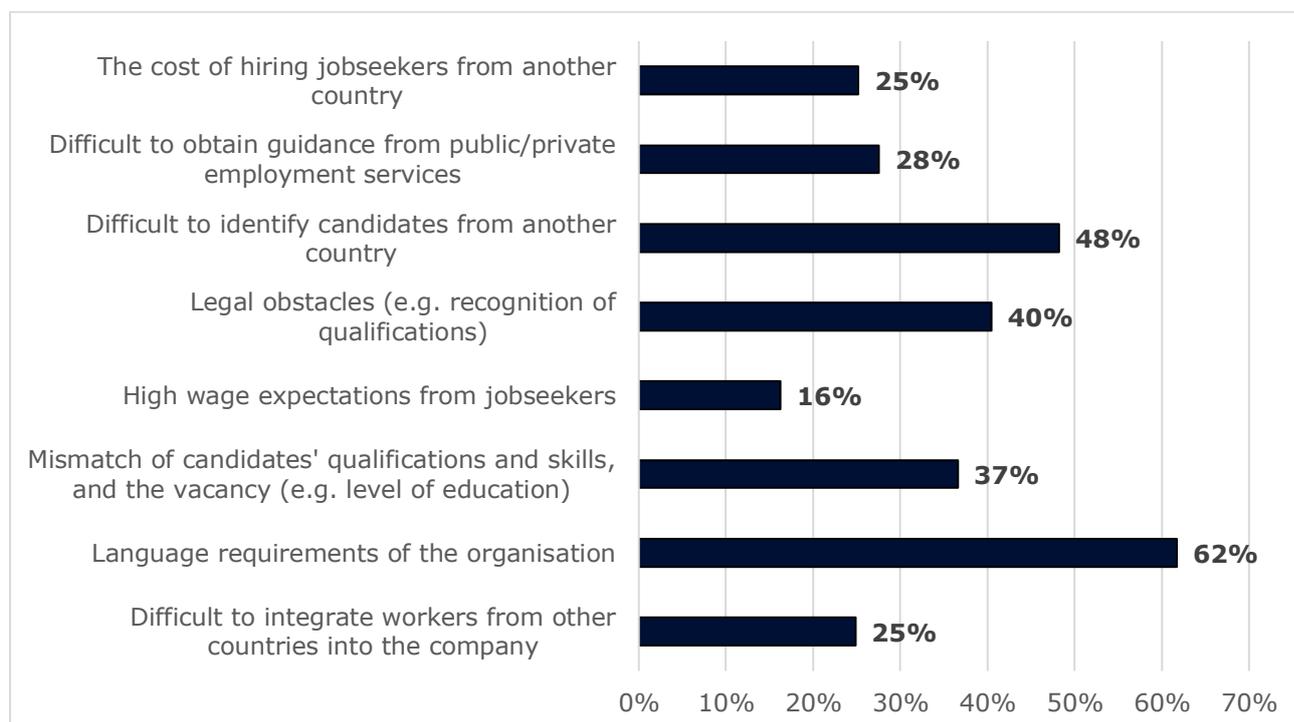


Figure 25 In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for employers to recruit jobseekers from another country? (EU citizens, n=1107)



*In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for employment services who offer job opportunities across borders?*

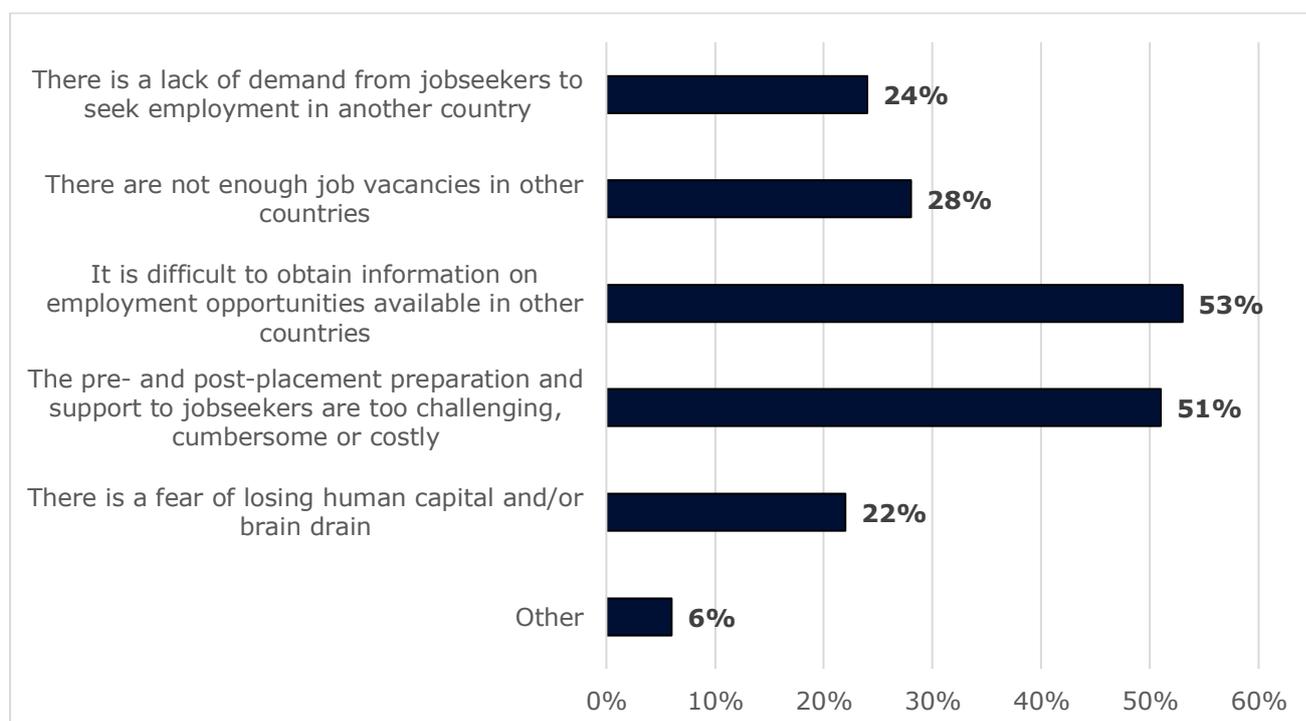
In this question, the respondents were invited to choose from six possible answer options. The majority of respondents selected between one and two answer options; five was the maximum number of answers selected.

More than half of the respondents (53%, 735) believe that the work of cross-border employment services is complicated by the fact that it is difficult to obtain information on employment opportunities available in other countries. 51% of the respondents (735) agree that the pre- and post-placement preparation and support to jobseekers are too challenging, cumbersome or costly.

Respondents who selected the "Other" option to the question above were asked to specify, which other obstacles, in their opinion, are faced by employment services that offer job opportunities across borders. Several respondents mentioned that employment services often follow bureaucratic, cumbersome and time-consuming procedures, which reduce their efficiency and effectiveness. One respondent complained about the lack of efficiency and proactivity of employment services.

Several respondents noted that highly skilled jobseekers rarely turn to public employment services. At the same time, cross-border job placement is typically more successful for highly skilled jobseekers, and it typically requires a certain level of foreign language knowledge. These factors complicate the work of cross-border employment services.

Figure 26 In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for employment services who offer job opportunities across borders? (n=1,434)



As well as in the previous question, we have singled out two respondent groups from the total of responses: the EU citizens, who are the main receivers of the survey, and employees of PES, EURES and representatives of other related public authorities, who are the service providers.

The opinions of the two groups on the main obstacles for employment services who offer job opportunities across borders were slightly different. In particular, the majority of EU citizens consider the difficulty to obtain information on employment opportunities available

in other countries to be the main obstacle (59% of respondents); while only 31% of respondents employed with EURES or PES selected this response option.

Both EU citizens (53%) and employees of EURES, PES or another type of public service (48%) agree that the pre- and post-placement preparation and support to jobseekers are too challenging, cumbersome or costly. For further details, refer to the graphs below.

Figure 27 In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for employment services who offer job opportunities across borders? (EU citizens, n=1,095)

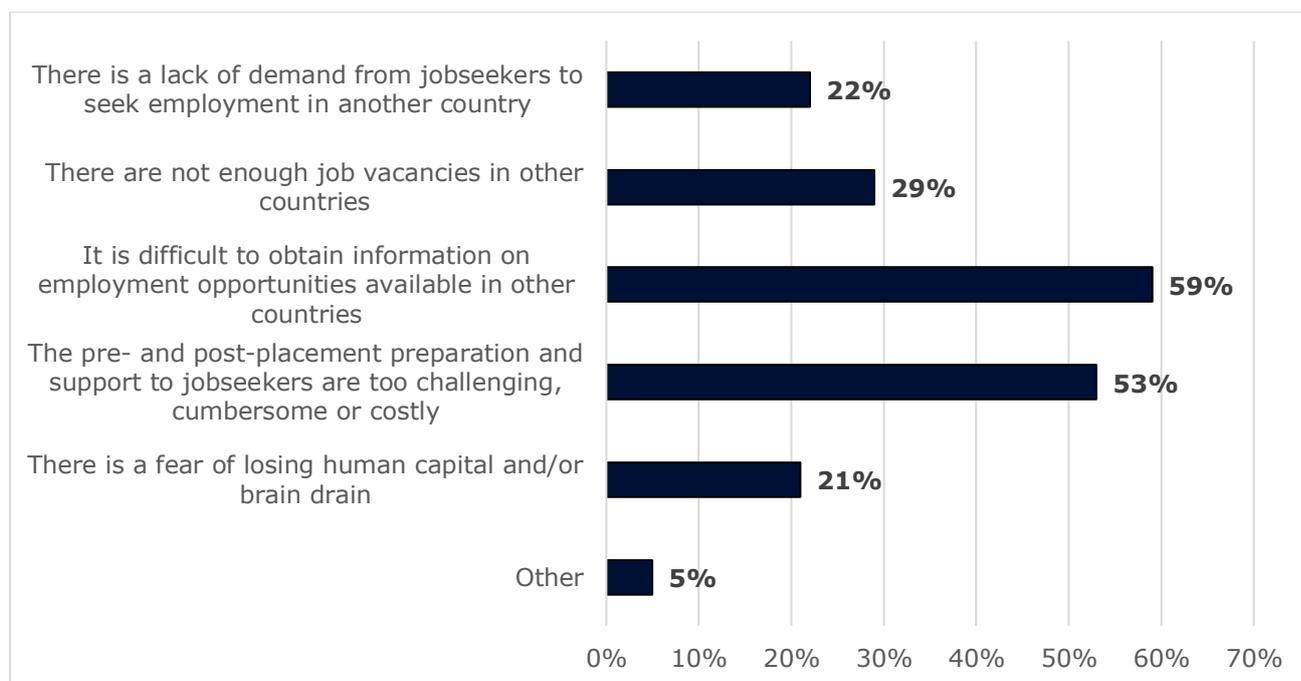
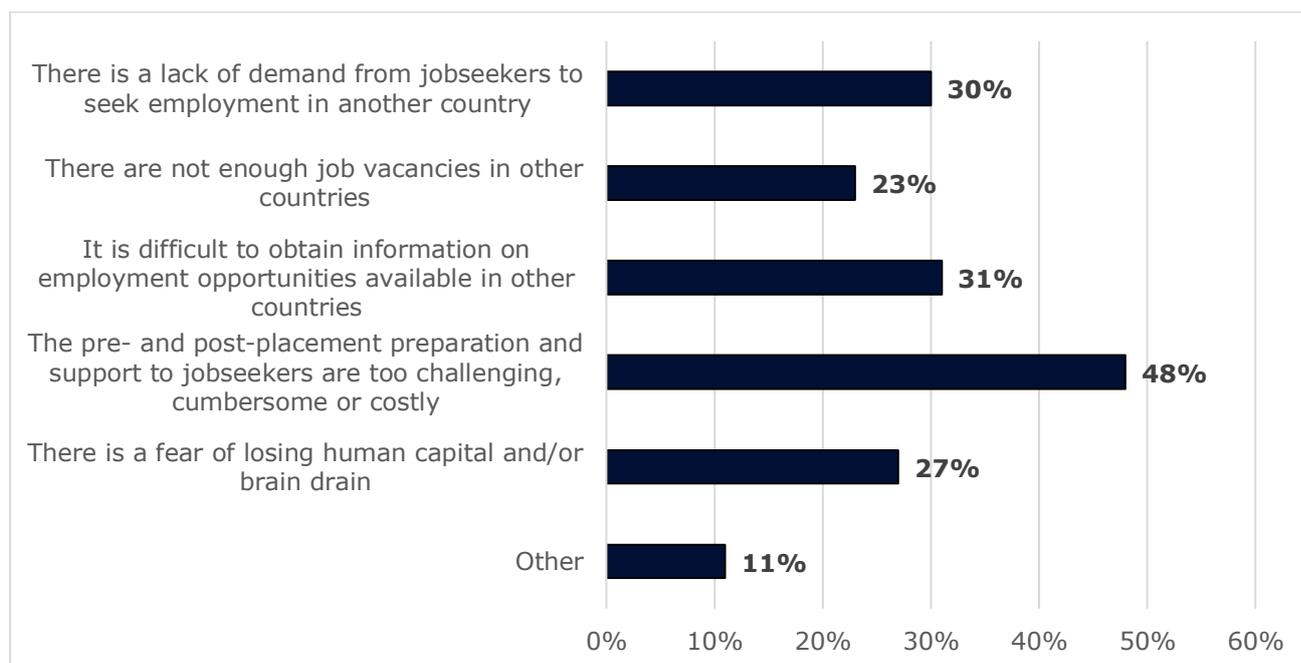


Figure 28 In your opinion, what are the main obstacles for employment services who offer job opportunities across borders? (representatives of EURES, PES and other public authorities, n=232)



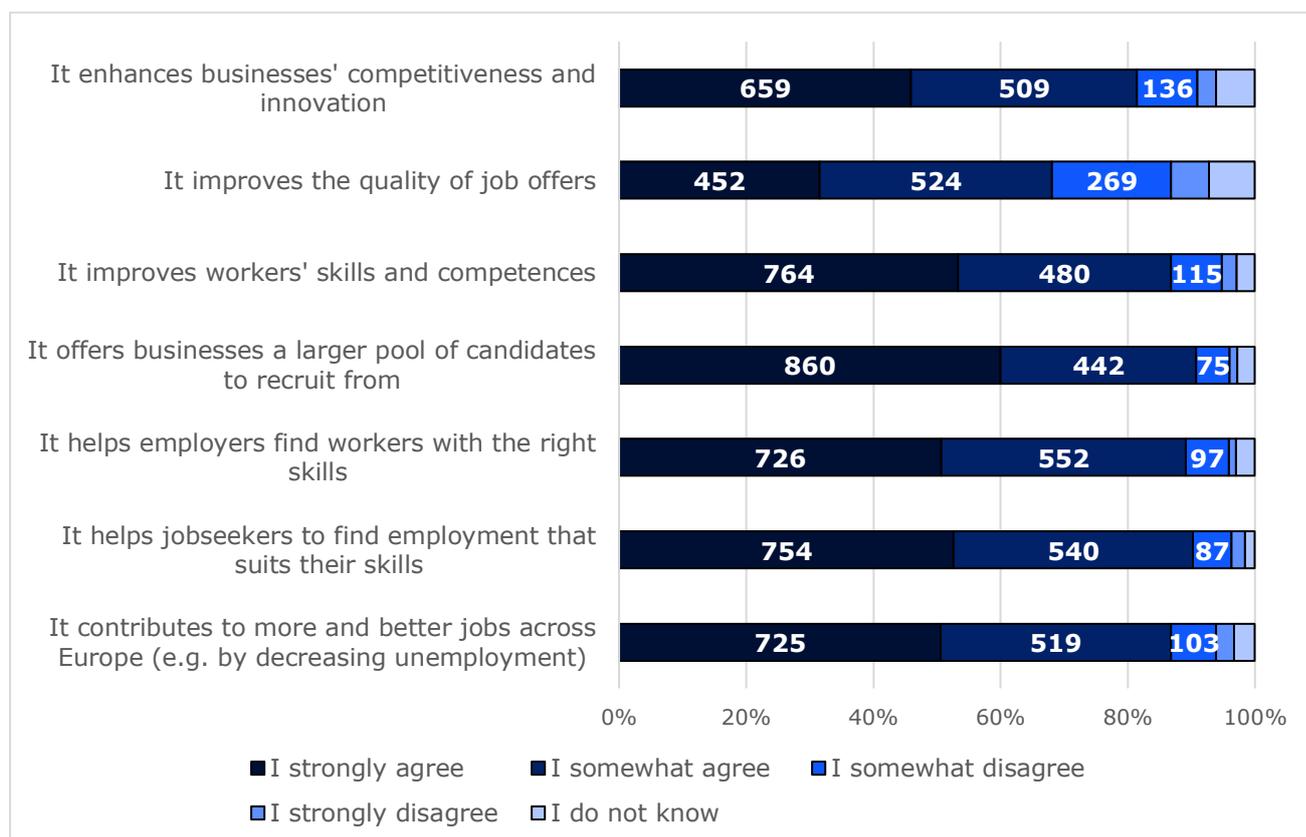
*To what extent do you agree that the free movement of workers has the following effects?\**

In this question, the respondents were shown a series of statements about the effects of the free movement of workers in Europe and were asked to indicate to which extent they agree with each of the statements.

As is visible in the graph below, the majority of respondents either agree or strongly agree with all of the statements about the effects of the free movement of workers. The respondents demonstrated the highest levels of agreement with the statements that free movement of workers offers businesses a larger pool of candidates to recruit from (860 strongly agree; 442 somewhat agree) and that it helps jobseekers to find employment that suits their skills (754 strongly agree; 540 somewhat agree).

The highest rate of (strong) disagreement is with the second statement that free movement of workers improves the quality of job offers (269 somewhat disagree; 86 strongly disagree).

Figure 29 To what extent do you agree that the free movement of workers has the following effects? (n=1,434)



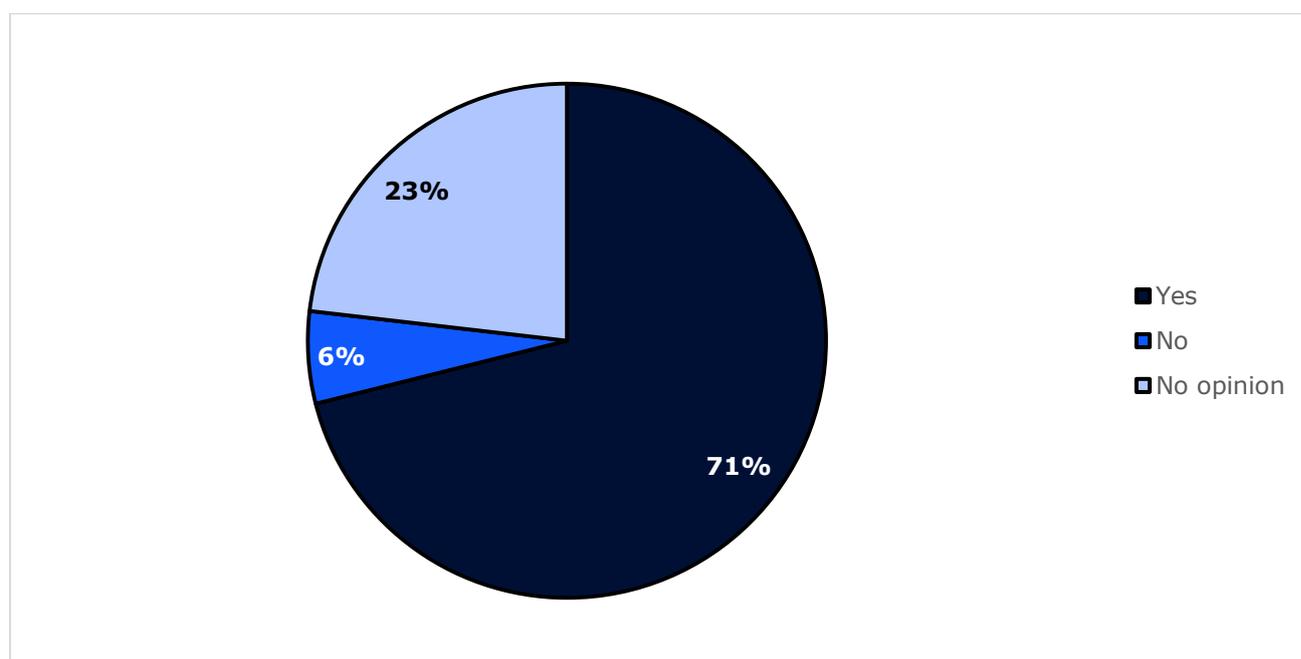
In their comments, some respondents mentioned that (for them) the free movement of workers is not always a positive thing. They believe that free movement of workers leads to decreasing wages for certain jobs in their countries. On the other hand, other respondents mentioned that free movement of workers helps equalise wages within the EU.

Several respondents believe that free movement increases the intercultural understanding in Europe, reduces racism and hostilities among European countries and helps people feel more “European”. One respondent stated that free movement leads to an increase in the quality of life.

*Do you think that there is a further need to boost labour mobility across European countries?\**

1,019 respondents (71%) consider that there is a further need to boost labour mobility across European countries; 83 respondents (6%) do not think there is such a need, while 332 respondents (23%) do not have an opinion on this matter.

Figure 30 Do you think that there is a further need to boost labour mobility across European countries? (n=1,434)



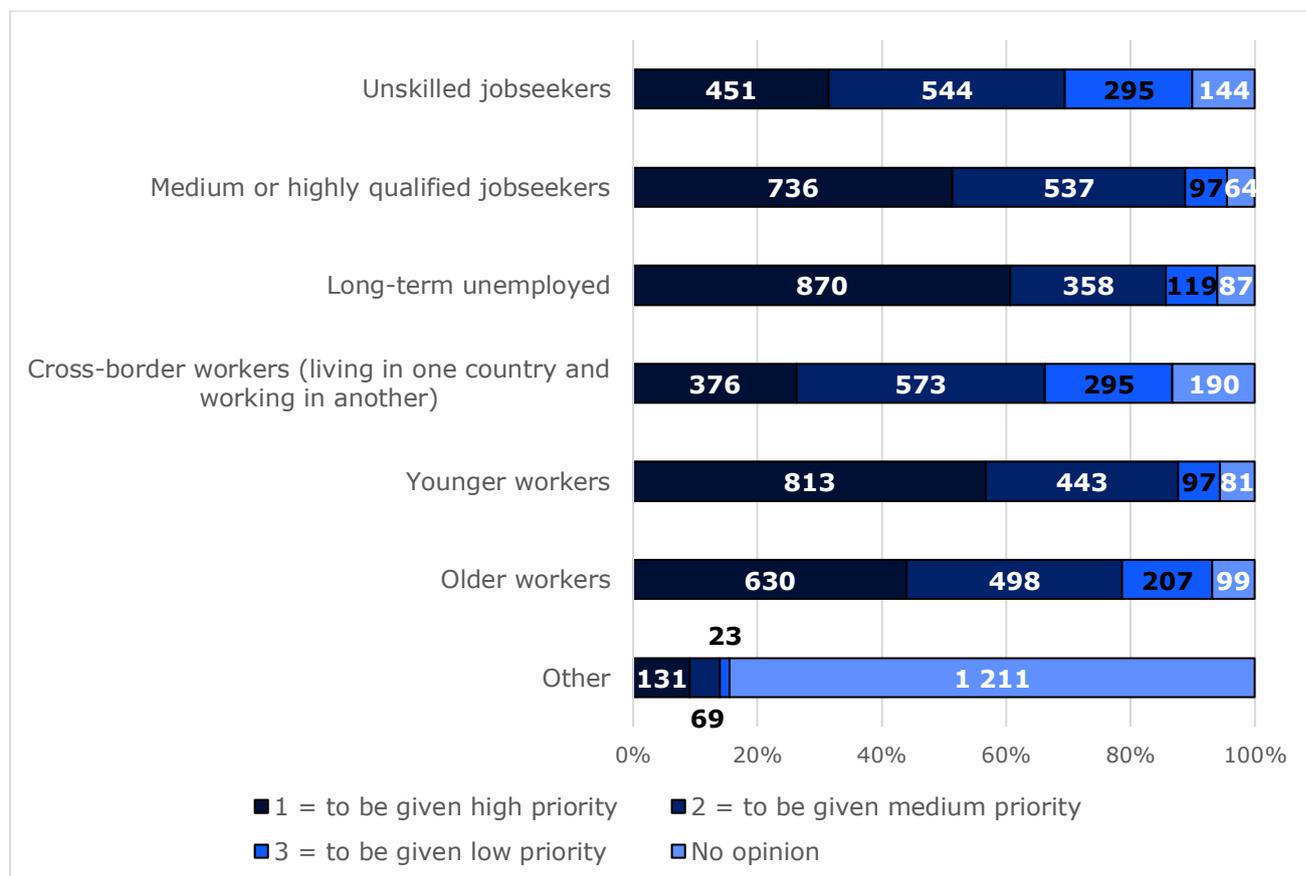
The respondents were asked to argue their opinion on labour mobility in Europe. Many respondents believe that labour mobility strengthens the European idea and the notion of the European citizenship; it helps eliminate physical and cultural borders among the European nations. Some respondents expressed a belief that free movement enhances cultural diversity in Europe and boosts the economic and social development of the continent. Some respondents expressed an opinion that free movement of workers benefits both workers who struggle with finding a job in their home country, and employers who have difficulties filling their open positions. Personal and professional development of the persons exercising the right to free movement was also mentioned.

Some of the respondents expressed a concern that the benefits of labour mobility are not straightforward and not well known to the majority of Europeans. They believe that more should be done to familiarise the EU citizens with the advantages of moving abroad, as well as with employment opportunities in other countries. It was mentioned that labour mobility is still relatively uncommon in the EU. Some respondents mentioned that where they come from, mobility is perceived as an unfortunate necessity rather than a benefit.

*Which of the following target groups do you think should be ideally prioritised in employment initiatives?\**

Majority of respondents believe that long-term unemployed (870) and young workers (813) should be given high priority when developing employment initiatives. Significant number of respondents believe that high priority should be given to medium or highly qualified jobseekers (736) and to older workers (630).

Figure 31 Which of the following target groups do you think should be ideally prioritised in employment initiatives? (n=1,434)



200 respondents believe that high to medium priority should be given to target groups not listed in the questionnaire. Numerous respondents suggested prioritising persons with disabilities, women, non-EU citizens (both labour migrants and refugees), minorities and persons without work experience.

The respondents were invited to comment on and explain further their choice of priority target groups. In their comments, many respondents mentioned that they do not see a need to set any priority group in employment initiatives: they believe that open job vacancies should be filled with candidates best fit for the job. Respondents underlined the need to eliminate any type of discrimination from the recruitment process, so that subjective factors of age, gender, ethnicity and nationality would have no impact on employment decision.

*Linked to the previous question, which of the following target groups do you think that EURES should prioritise?\**

In line with the previous question, most respondents believe that young workers (850), long-term unemployed (826) and medium level or highly qualified jobseekers (805) should be prioritised by EURES. As well as in the previous question, cross-border workers are the group that least of the respondents considered high-priority (392).

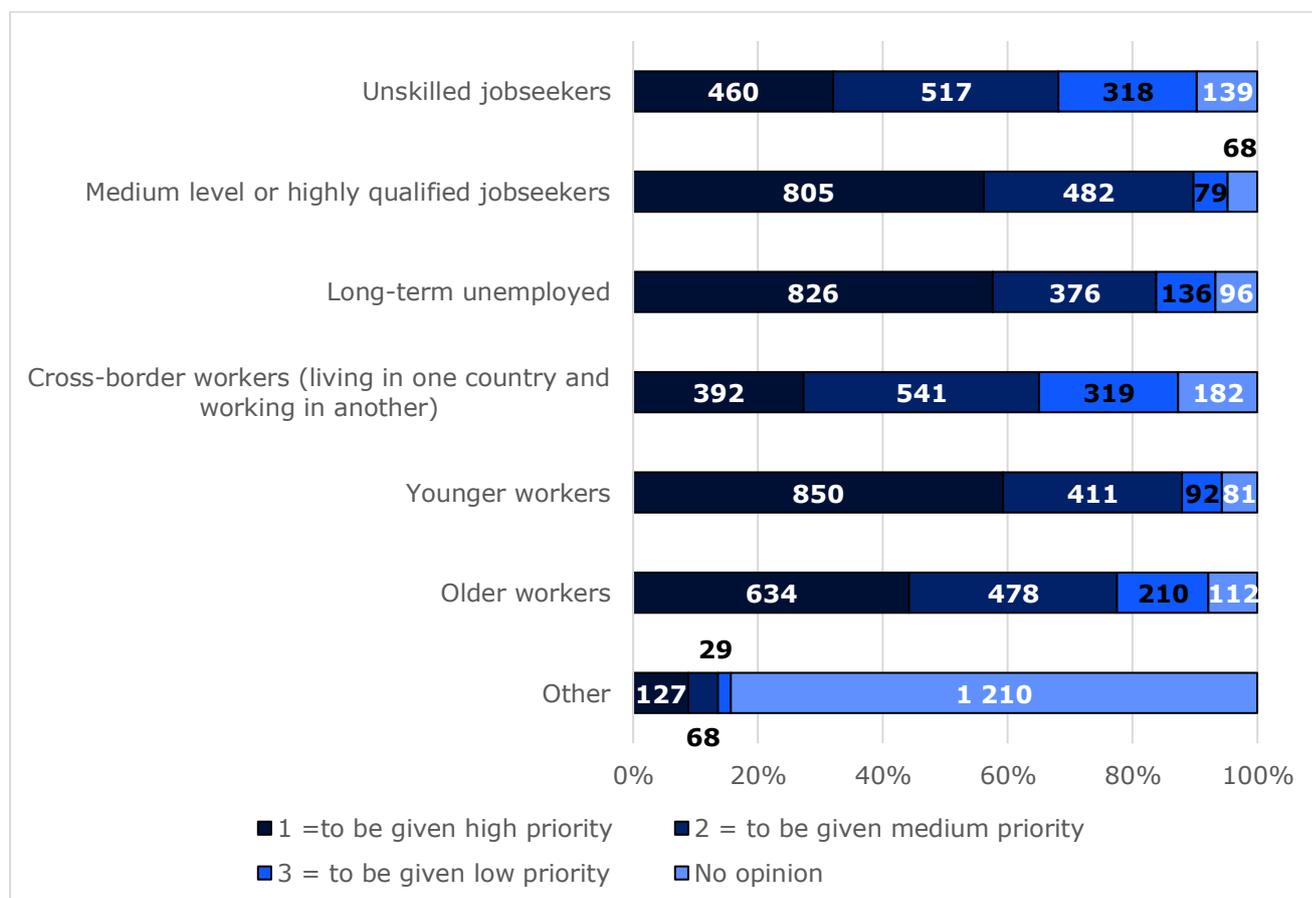
When asked for suggestions for other priority target groups, respondents mentioned persons with disabilities, women, recent graduates and persons without work experience, highly skilled non-EU citizens and minorities.

When commenting on the target groups suggested in the questionnaire, respondents mentioned that the groups identified in the questionnaire are too broad and not homogenous enough to be targeted by one employment initiative. For example, young workers could be both highly skilled and unskilled.

Numerous respondents stated that priority should be given to all groups facing discrimination based on any grounds.

When talking about long-term unemployed, respondents underlined the need for re-skilling, up-skilling and further education and training for this group of job seekers.

Figure 32 Which of the following target groups do you think that EURES should prioritise? (n=1,434)

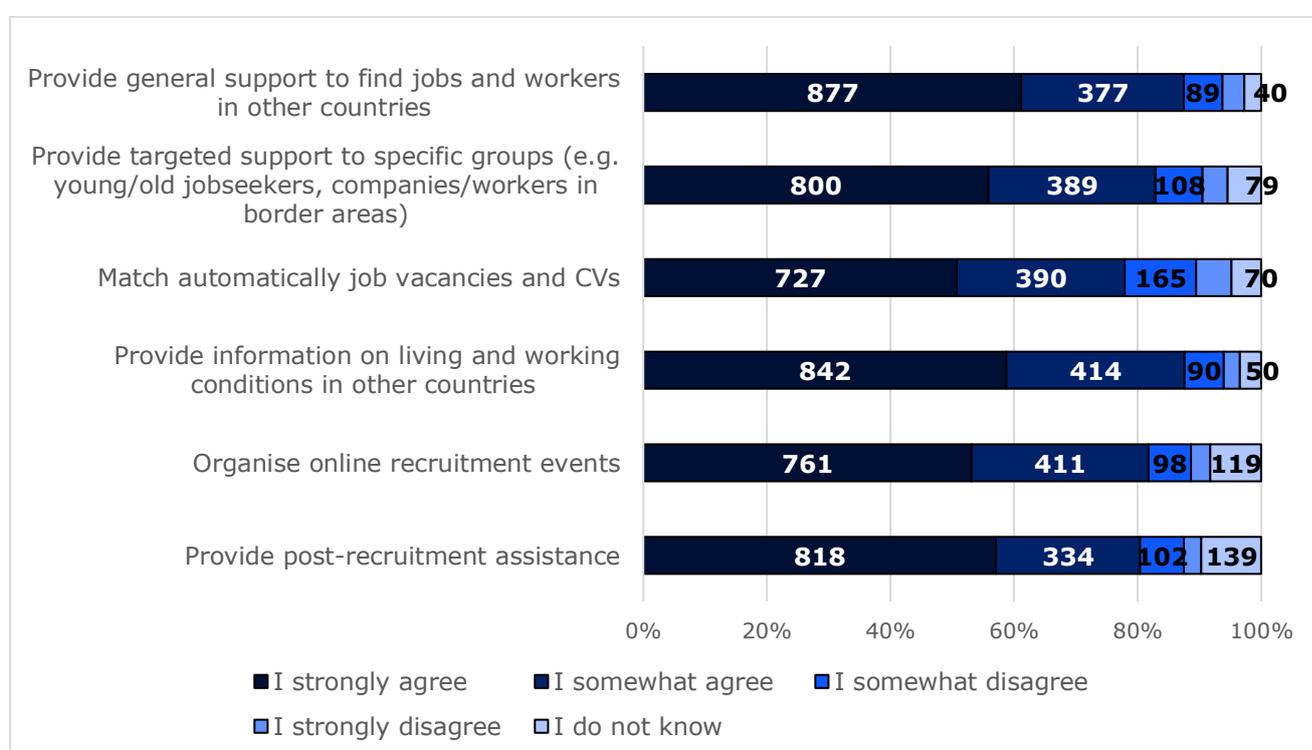


*To what extent do you agree that the following services cover the needs of jobseekers and employers working abroad?*

In this question, the respondents were provided with six statements concerning the services that cover the needs of jobseekers and employers working abroad. The respondents could choose to strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the provided statements. If they were not sure about a statement, they could select the option "I do not know".

The majority of respondents either strongly agree or somewhat agree with all of the statements listed under this question. This indicates that all of the services listed in the question are deemed important for jobseekers and employers working abroad.

Figure 33 To what extent do you agree that the following services cover the needs of jobseekers and employers working abroad? (n=1,434)



To complement the findings of the question above, the respondents were provided with an opportunity to add further comment(s) about the needs of jobseekers and employers in an international context. Many respondents added comments based on their experiences as jobseekers and/ or as citizens exercising their right to free movement. In total, nearly 200 comments were provided.

Several respondents stated that they would like EURES to provide more detailed information on their rights and obligations when working abroad. They would like the EURES website to contain details on taxation in each EURES country, as well as information related to cost of living in each EURES country. The respondents said they would also benefit from a detailed description of the bureaucratic procedures they have to undergo to move to work to another EURES country.

One respondent stated that citizens looking for a job abroad would benefit from free language courses. In their opinion, language courses could become part of the services offered by EURES. Another respondent suggested that the “sending” and “receiving” EURES offices could coordinate among themselves and assist mobile citizens in their move between countries. Potential employees moving to work abroad would benefit from help with accommodation search and from bureaucratic and logistical support in the first months of their stay abroad.

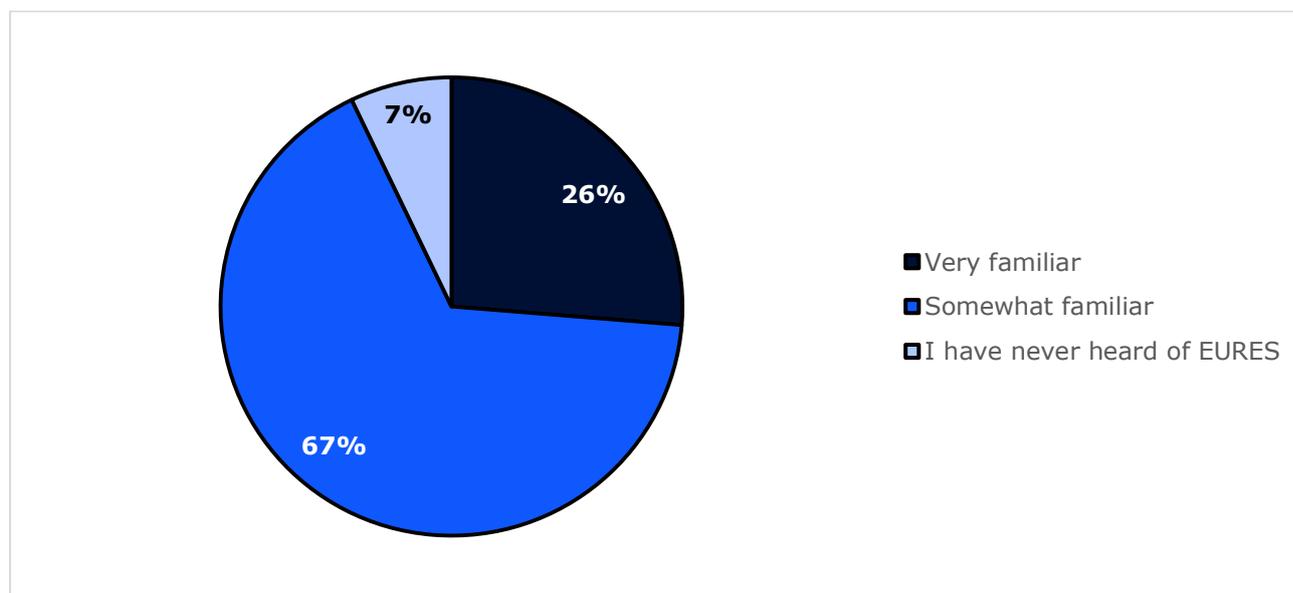
### 1.1.3 Views on the European Employment Services (EURES)

The questions asked in this section focused on the respondents’ familiarity with EURES.

#### How familiar are you with EURES?\*

26% of respondents (377) stated that they are very familiar with EURES; 67% of respondents (955) are somewhat familiar, and 7% (102) have never heard of EURES.

Figure 34 How familiar are you with EURES? (n=1,434)



This question contained a skip logic: respondents who stated that they have never heard of EURES were immediately redirected to the concluding questions of the questionnaire; the rest of the respondents proceeded to the net question.

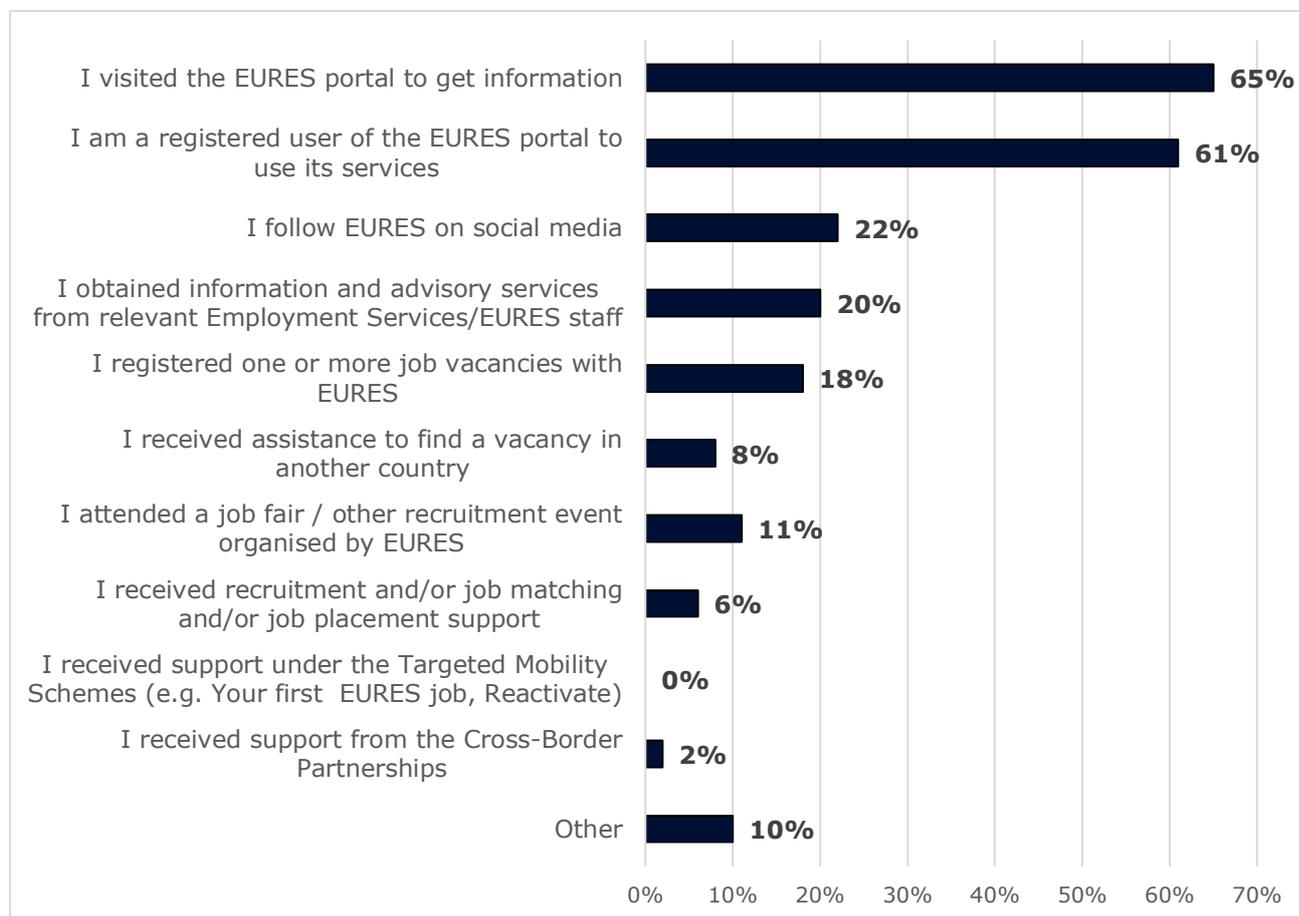
#### What is your level of interaction with EURES?\*

In this question, the respondents were asked to choose at least one response out of eleven response options provided. The respondents could also describe their interaction experience with EURES in the field “Other”. Most of respondents chose between one and three answer options.

65% of the respondents (929) confirmed that they visited the EURES portal to get information, while 61% (871) are registered users of the EURES portal to use its services. A significantly smaller number of respondents (22%, 310) reported that they follow EURES

on social media, obtained information and advisory services from relevant Employment Services/EURES staff (20%, 289), or registered one or more job vacancies with EURES (18%, 262). None of the respondents received support under any of the Targeted Mobility Schemes.

Figure 35 What is your level of interaction with EURES? (n=1,332)



10% of the respondents (143) reported to have had other types of interaction with EURES, which were not mentioned in the consultation questionnaire. When asked to specify the nature of their interaction with EURES, many respondents acknowledged to be employed as EURES Advisors, EURES Assistants, Coordinators, or to be employed with EURES in another capacity/provide services under the EURES framework. Some of the respondents work for other public or private employment services, or for NGOs that follow EURES activities for the nature of their work.

*To what extent do you agree with the following statements concerning EURES?\**

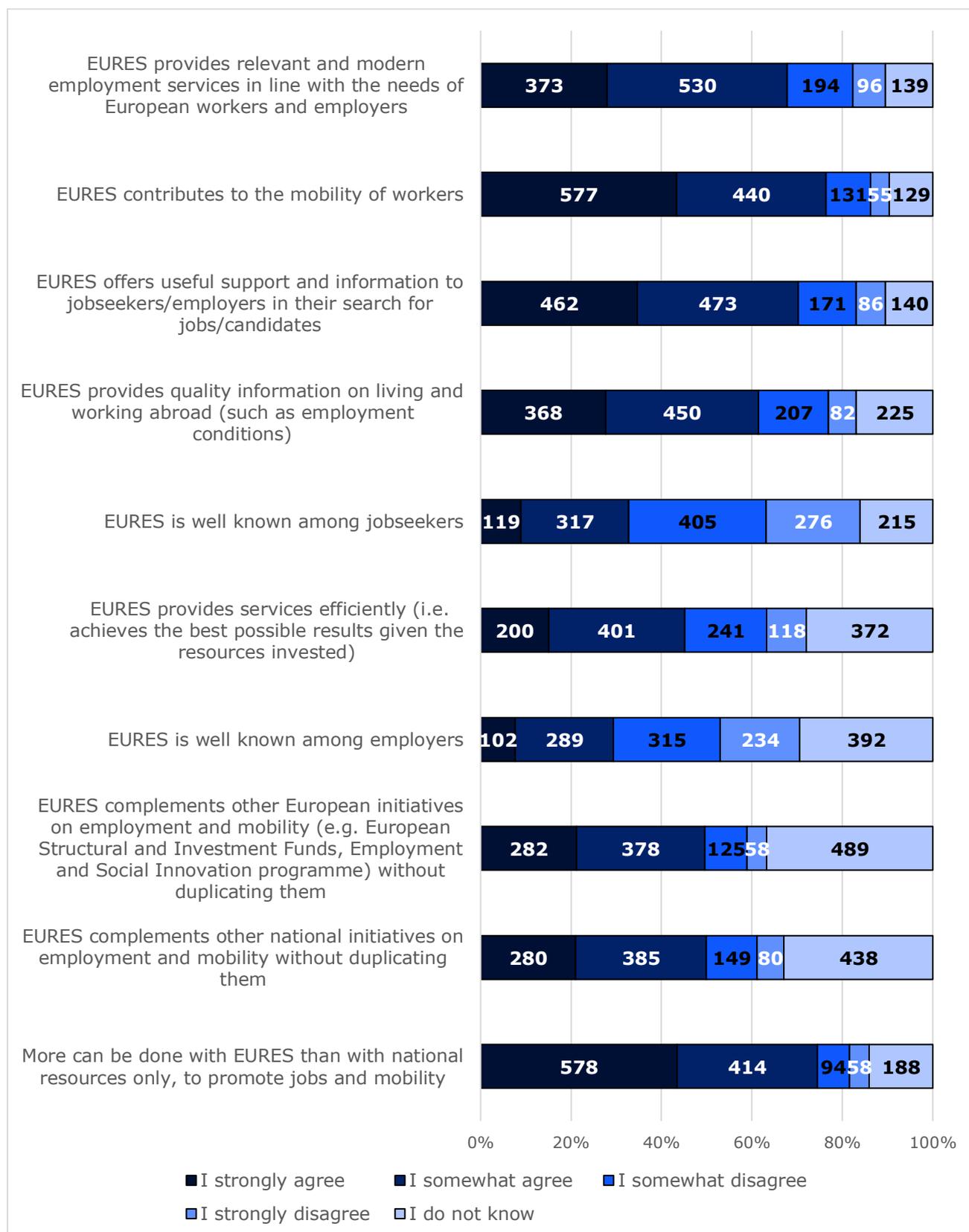
In this question, the respondents were provided with ten statements concerning EURES, and were asked, to what extent they agree with each of the statements. The respondents could choose to strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree. If they were not sure about a statement, they could select the option "I do not know".

A vast majority of the respondents either strongly agree or somewhat agree with the statements that more can be done with EURES than with national resources only to

promote jobs and mobility (578 strongly agree and 414 somewhat agree); and that EURES contributes to the mobility of workers (577 strongly agree and 440 somewhat agree).

On the other hand, the vast majority of the respondents believe that EURES is not well-known neither among employers, nor among jobseekers.

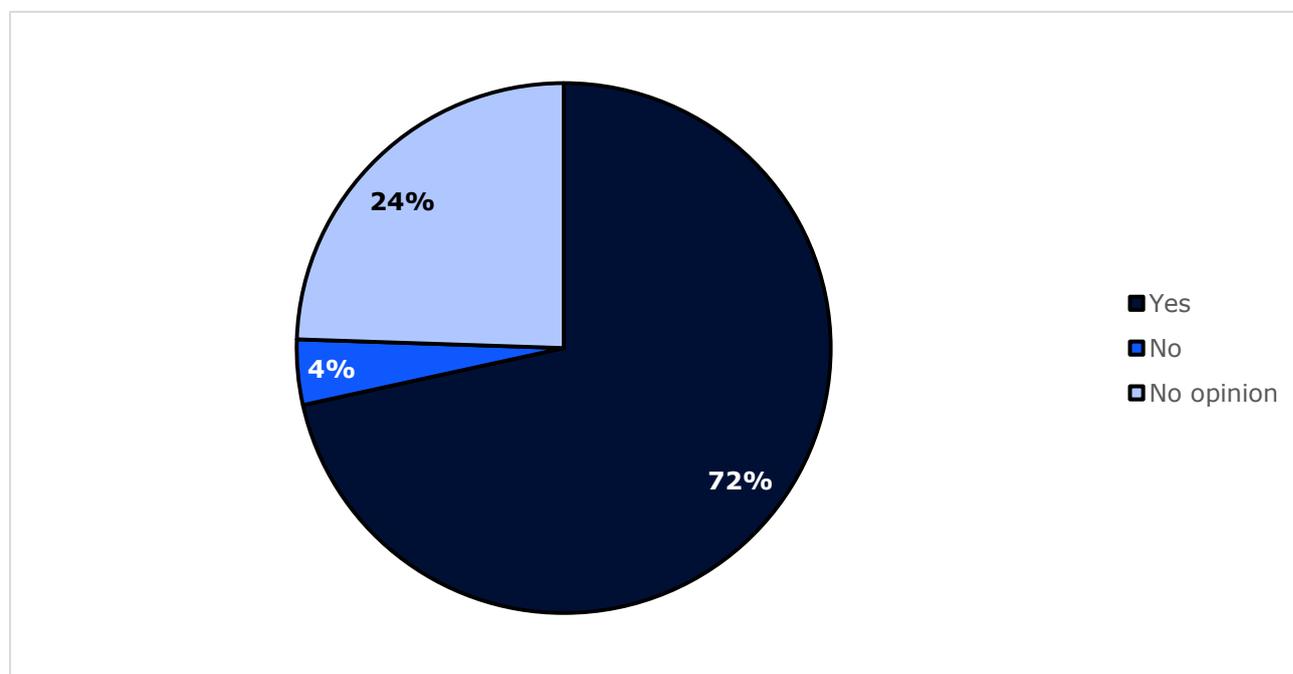
Figure 36 To what extent do you agree with the following statements concerning EURES? (n=1,332)



*In your opinion, is there a need to improve EURES and its tools and services in the future?\**

72% of the respondents (953) see the need to improve EURES and its tools and services in the future. 4% (53 respondents) do not see such a need, while 24% of the respondents (326) do not have an opinion on this matter.

Figure 37 Is there a need to improve EURES and its tools and services in the future? (n=1,332)



To follow up on this question, the respondents were invited to share their opinions on what could be improved in EURES, its tools and services. Most of the improvement suggestions could be grouped around the following lines:

**EURES website and mobility portal:**

- EURES web-site should be reviewed, modernized and simplified;
- EURES portal should be made more user-friendly;
- The search function of the EURES portal should be improved;
- The automatic matching between the job offers and CVs should be further improved;
- Jobs posted on the EURES portal should be continuously updated; old and filled positions should be immediately removed from the portal.

**EURES staff:**

- The minimum acceptable level of skills and education of EURES Advisors should be reviewed, as currently many of them are not fluent in foreign languages and thus experience difficulties in advising on cross-border mobility;
- More training opportunities should be offered to EURES personnel.

**Cooperation and visibility:**

- More cooperation between EURES and universities/ academia is desired;
- The visibility of EURES should be increased, and EURES network should be further expanded;

- EURES should become more present in social media and in local and regional employment-related events.

*Please feel free to add anything else about your experience with EURES*

In this question, public consultation respondents were invited to share any further experiences they might have had with EURES. Approximately 300 respondents shared their thoughts and experiences with EURES under this question.

In their comments, many respondents underlined that in their opinion, EURES is not well-known enough neither among employers, nor among jobseekers. This results in a relatively low number of vacancies advertised, and in difficulties with filling the vacancies advertised through the EURES portal. Several respondents admit having been registered in the EURES portal for many years but have never been contacted by a potential employer as a result of their registration.

Several respondents noted that the offers available in the EURES portal are less appealing than what they could find through other job search portals. The respondents have an impression that EURES mainly targets jobseekers with medium to low skill level, while little is available in the portal for highly skilled jobseekers.

When talking about the EURES mobility portal, the respondents complain about the portal's outdated and not user-friendly interface. They also mention that there is a need to improve the search filter of the portal, as the results of the search filter are often inaccurate and irrelevant to the user.

#### *1.1.4 Concluding questions*

In the set of concluding questions, respondents were invited to share their additional remarks related to the topic of the public consultation; they were also invited to upload position papers or other documents related to the discussed topic. Finally, respondents were asked whether they would be interested in being contacted through email to participate in a more detailed online survey about EURES.

*You may share any additional remarks or statement(s) regarding the topic of this public consultation here.*

Most of responses to this question go in line with the comments that the respondents left in reply to the previous questions of the public consultation.

Several respondents suggested that in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of EURES, EURES countries should harmonise their labour- and education-related legislation.

Many respondents express their concerns regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of work of EURES, and on labour mobility in general. Some other respondents believe that finding a job might become easier for them due to the pandemic, as many employers started opening remote positions with work that can be carried out fully online.

Several respondents complained about the fact that the job vacancies in the EURES portal are often posted in the national language of the corresponding EURES country, which, in their opinion, contradicts the mission of EURES. One respondent mentioned that she feels that jobseekers aged 35+ are not given enough attention by the EURES Advisors, and she believes this issue should be addressed.

*You may upload any position paper(s) or other document(s) regarding the topic of this public consultation here.*

28 respondents attached documents to complement their survey responses. The following documents were in attachment:

- A proposal on how to turn waste into energy;
- Company promotion material;
- Registration certificate of an EU citizen in another EU Member State;
- 23 Curriculum Vitae;
- A note discussing limitations of free movement between Italy and Switzerland;
- A screenshot from the EURES portal in German, demonstrating the need for improvement of the portal's Search function.

*Would you like that we contact you through the email you provided in the introduction to participate in a more detailed online survey about EURES?\**

64% of the respondents (922) gave their consent to be contacted through the e-mail they provided in the introductory section of the questionnaire to participate in a more detailed online survey about EURES. 36% of the respondents (512) do not wish to be contacted.

## **2 ONLINE SURVEYS**

This section provides an overview of responses to the following four online surveys:

- National Coordination Offices' survey
- Members and Partners' survey
- Jobseekers' survey
- Employers' survey

### *2.1.1 EURES evaluation National Coordination Offices' survey*

#### *analysis*

This survey was distributed among the 32 National Coordination Offices (NCOs) of the EURES network. It consisted of two parts, the first part was focused on the information for the bi-annual EURES Activity Report and the second part focused on the ex post evaluation of EURES.

The survey was answered by 26 NCOs. It was launched on 28 May and closed on 30 September.

The analysis of the second part of the survey, the part focused on the evaluation of EURES, is presented here.

The ex post evaluation part of the survey was divided into nine sections with some questions marked as compulsory (i.e. a respondent was not able to proceed with the survey unless the compulsory question was answered). Here the compulsory questions are marked with a '\*'. The survey also contained a display logic where some questions appeared only if a specific answer was selected in the previous questions. This logic was introduced to ensure that the respondent was shown questions as relevant to their experience with EURES as possible.

*Please tell us the country in which your NCO is based\**

To commence the survey, the respondents were asked to indicate for which EURES country they were providing their responses for. The following countries responded to the survey:

Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Croatia
Cyprus	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia
France	Greece	Hungary	Italy
Latvia	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta
Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Portugal
Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain
Sweden	United Kingdom		

## Relevance

In this section, the NCOs were asked about the relevance of EURES and its services.

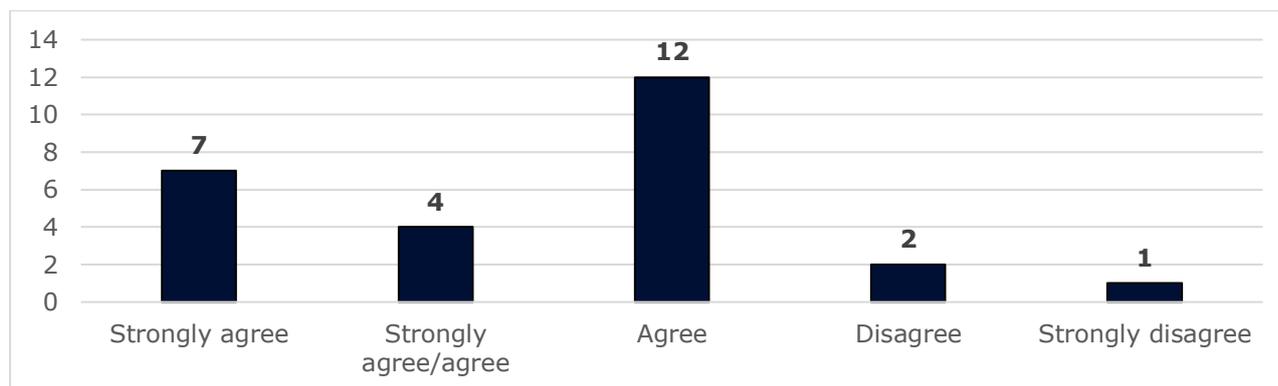
*To what extent do you agree with the following statements concerning the appropriateness of EURES to respond to the needs of the labour market?*

In this question, the NCOs were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with selected statements about EURES and its relevance.

*The objectives of the Regulation are in line with the needs and problems of intra-EU labour mobility*

Nearly all of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives of the EURES Regulation are aligned to the needs and problems of the intra-EU labour mobility. Three respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 38 The objectives of the Regulation are in line with the needs and problems of intra-EU labour mobility (n=26)

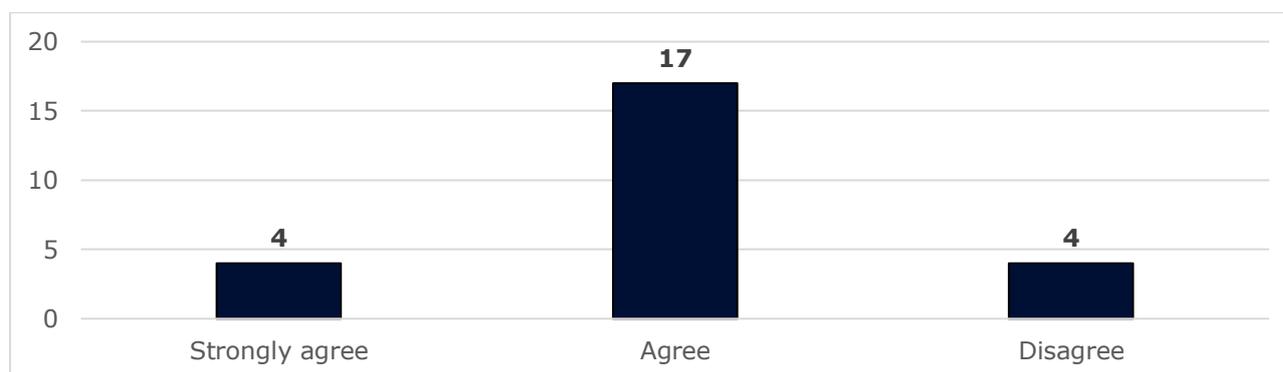


Three respondents included comments to further detail their answer. These included that now there are more jobs available on the EURES portal and that, in turn, to increase mobility there is a need to have more organisations providing EURES services. However, one of the respondents mentioned that the Regulation does not really reflect the real situation and difficulties of the main EURES target groups (i.e. jobseekers and employers) as it assumes what the difficulties are. They also mentioned that while the operation of the network has been slightly modernised, it has also been more bureaucratised which in turn slowed it down.

#### EURES objectives and tools have been responsive to labour market changes

Most of the respondents agreed that EURES objectives and tools have been responsive to the changes on the labour market. The number of those who strongly agreed with this statement is the same as those who disagreed with it. No one selected that they strongly disagree with this statement. One respondent selected that they strongly agree, agree and disagree with this statement at the same time. For the graphical representation, this response was not included in the graph.

Figure 39 EURES objectives and tools have been responsive to labour market changes (n=25)



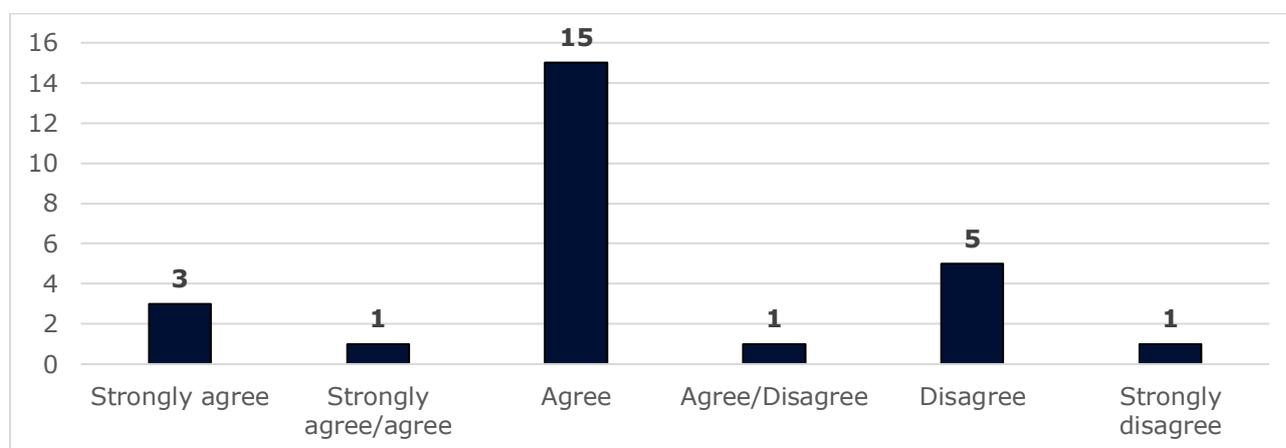
The two comments left for this statement were mixed. The respondents highlighted that the EURES objectives and tools can be considered as partially responding to the changes on the labour marker or at least to a limit. However, it is also pointed out that it is hard to predict what the labour market would look like if the EURES reform did not take place and the network remained the same as it was. It is not possible to tell the extent to which the incentives at Member State level (even without EURES) or even economic measures

to slow down mobility have had an impact on labour market processes. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that EURES is in competition with other organisations that recruit between countries and that their tools are often better than the EURES ones.

**EURES is keeping pace with the latest technology developments in the area of recruitment and job seeking activities**

From the four statements on relevance, this has been the most polarising one. While still majority of the respondents (strongly) agree that EURES is keeping pace with the latest technological developments in the area of recruitment and job seeking activities, more than one quarter of respondents disagree with this statement.

Figure 40 EURES is keeping pace with the latest technology developments in the area of recruitment and job seeking activities (n=26)



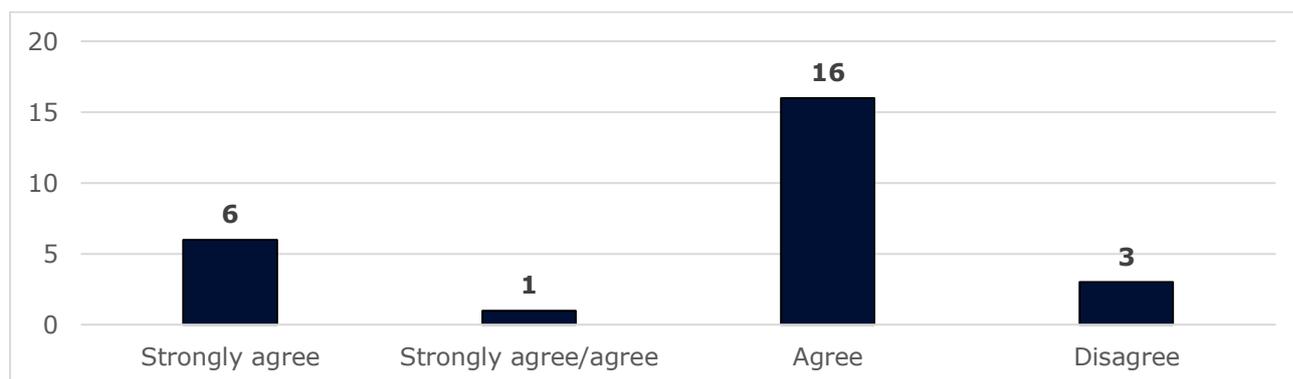
The four comments left for this statement highlight that there is a need to recognise that each organisation in the network works in a different manner. While some are more focused on using screening apps and other digital tools, others focus more on the social aspect of recruitment.

It was also mentioned that usually there is a very long road between an idea and its implementation which is even more prolonged when changes or problems occur. This can be seen as a setback as readiness in launching tools quickly is crucial since recruitment and information are an indivisible part of a well-functioning labour market.

**EURES targets the right audiences to achieve its objectives**

With the exception of three respondents, all of them (strongly) agreed that EURES targets the correct audience in order to achieve its objectives.

Figure 41 EURES targets the right audience to achieve its objectives (n=26)



Within the provided four comments, the main ideas follow a similar pattern to the ones made in previous statements. The need to reinforce a greater differentiation within the network and have better tools and methods to reach greater audience are essential. One of the respondents who disagreed with the statement mentioned that the process took place without more thorough segmentation, in-depth knowledge and analysis of the target audience.

*What are the barriers and challenges regarding intra-EURES labour mobility? Is EURES contributing to addressing these barriers and challenges?*

Twenty-four respondents answered this question. As an open question, the respondents provided a vast number of differing views. These are presented below grouped around common topics.

#### Language barrier

The language barrier is one of the most mentioned barriers to labour mobility. It is seen as slightly less of a barrier in cross-border areas where the neighbouring languages are similar. The financial support provided under the different targeted Mobility Schemes contributes to reducing this barrier. However, besides the financial support, EURES is doing very little to address it.

With regard to the language and the EURES portal, one respondent mentioned that there is a need to have an automated translation tool for posted job vacancies to at least two languages (a suggestion was made for English and German) to promote all available job postings in an equal way.

#### Recognition of professional qualification

One of the most important barriers to access employment in another EU/EFTA Member State is related to non-recognition of professional qualifications. The recognition process itself varies across the EURES countries and even across sectors. The processes are not standardised in terms of required documents, forms or even fees.

#### Socio-economic and legal aspects

Brain drain, cultural and economic differences, labour exploitation and difficult integration of returning migrants are also frequently mentioned challenges. EURES is contributing to

the reduction of these barriers by providing comprehensive and up-to-date information about labour mobility, possible financial support measures, ensuring the successful integration of returnees, and informing about preventive measures against trafficking in human beings.

Services and assistance provided by EURES advisors help to support users in overcoming the barriers to mobility very effectively. Recently problems arose under the COVID-19 emergency highlighting a series of difficulties. The mobility schemes are providing the possibility to overcome some of them through financial benefits.

Another important obstacle is legal and administrative barriers. The main administrative difficulties faced in the destination country are the length of administrative procedures and the lack of clarity in administrative requirements because of language differences.

There is a lot of financial support for mobility of students, but there is no EU centralised mobility scheme which would offer a whole mobility package for example for vulnerable clients.

Housing and accommodation in a new country also pose problems, particularly for jobseekers with lower income background. To this end, the financial support for job mobility should be higher, more flexible and accessible to all age groups, and should include financial support to cover the initial costs of moving to another country. If such support is provided continuously and flexibly by each EURES national network, this could contribute to increasing mobility as well as the overall visibility of the network.

### Labour market

One of the biggest challenges is related to the demand and supply of labour in the labour market. The Member States often experience similar labour market developments, but economic development and wage levels differ. All Member States appear to have the same skills shortages which means that opportunities to collaborate are reduced. The EURES network is essentially competing for the same pool of candidates. This in turn may require Member States to work with countries outside of the EU to fill their shortages. The mobility schemes are helpful in this aspect but, for employers from many MS, not enough to attract workers. On the other hand, skills shortages are evening out throughout the EU, so free movement within the EU is not enough to fill the gaps.

Since 2016, there has also been a trend towards an alignment in the major shortages in almost every country in the EU/EEA: healthcare, IT, elderly care, chefs, truck & lorry drivers, customer service. With the recovery of most Member-States' economies, almost every country (even the traditionally outgoing ones) became more incoming-focused. This has led to some sort of bottleneck in the European labour market, and more competition (instead of cooperation) for these profiles.

On top of this, the new situation raised by COVID-19 has led to increased fears regarding mobility and transnational recruitment - and recovery may be slow. EURES can contribute to address these barriers and challenges as well, via clear Quality Standards (which have to be discussed), information transparency regarding travelling rules (the Re-open website may be of assistance as well) and the readdressing of Targeted Mobility Schemes to cover

some additional expenses in mobility (e.g. Quarantine periods, required tests) due to increased security measures.

### EU/national regulation and national labour policies

With the various European and national legal frameworks, the additional administrative procedures can be quite burdensome, e.g. when requesting GDPR consent. There are also different interpretations of workers' rights and labour laws.

At times, national labour policies are not always aligned with the European vision which can create unnecessary barriers for labour mobility. A recent example of uncoordinated national approaches to free and fair mobility is the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are also different national legislations on traineeships for which it would be helpful if a general mapping across the EURES countries was performed. This would give EURES the possibility to act as a promoter and multiplier of these opportunities.

Furthermore, not all EURES countries have extended their networks just yet because of internal resistance and various national policies which limits the opportunities for the countries that did so.

To reduce the legal and administrative barriers, EURES services deliver information regarding rights, obligations and rules arising from European and national laws. EURES delivers free counselling on topics such as taxation in another Member State, terms and conditions of employment (including information on working hours, paid leave, holiday entitlements, rights and obligations regarding overtime work, health checks, termination of contracts, dismissal and redundancies), social security rights and other obligations within the EU.

### Role and visibility of EURES

The awareness of jobseekers about EURES is also highlighted as a challenge regarding intra-EURES labour mobility as overall the service is not that well-known among the general population. If those willing to move abroad for employment would be aware of EURES and its services, they would be able to make a much more informed decision.

The role of EURES can only be to facilitate this mobility to show and identify mobility opportunities in other EU/EEA countries, i.e. ensure recruitment and placement in the European labour markets. The EURES Portal is in this respect imperative.

In order for EURES to not only be a simple tool for matching supply and demand on the labour market, but also to be able to offer added value corresponding to modern times, it should set up support mechanisms (financial and non-financial) to initiate innovative solutions at every EURES contact point.

### Tools and equipment

Another challenge that the EURES network faces is that there are varying levels of technical equipment available to the staff. The IT aspect may also be a barrier to some of the jobseekers as they may not have means to access them. Some Member States appear to have more advanced digital services than others to support jobseekers and employers

with job matching. Therefore, developing more common European level EURES tools, such as the EOJD platform, is a good manner to address this for all Member States.

The EURES staff can only make a marginal difference on the ground, especially as most of the staff do not work full time, sometimes not even part-time (FTE). Therefore, the development of automated matching tools, self-information possibilities on the Portal and user-friendly tools for matching must be given a priority to improve the EURES services for the benefit of both companies and job seekers. Other digital tools, which could be available on the EURES Portal for registered users could be, for example, self-assessment tools for skills and competences, tools for guiding the customer's mobility journey, e-language tools for mobile workers. There are a lot of good practices in Erasmus+ that EURES could adopt.

At the same time, the power of a personal contact, particularly with employers, should not be forgotten and should be equally supported so that EURES staff can provide clients with the most detailed information about the job offer, place of work and conditions for accommodation.

### Jobseekers and employers

A general challenge is the willingness and risk disposition of jobseekers working abroad. The situation of employers, what benefits can they provide to EU/EFTA jobseekers, e.g. can they provide accommodation. The power of the EURES network is limited concerning the individual behaviours of jobseekers or the prospects of employers.

An obstacle to working abroad relates to the person's ties to their country, i.e. family and friends, no previous experience in living/working abroad, losing the sense of "home" and the need to take care of minor children or family members/close ones who are not mobile.

## Effectiveness

In this section, the NCOs were asked about the effectiveness of EURES and its services.

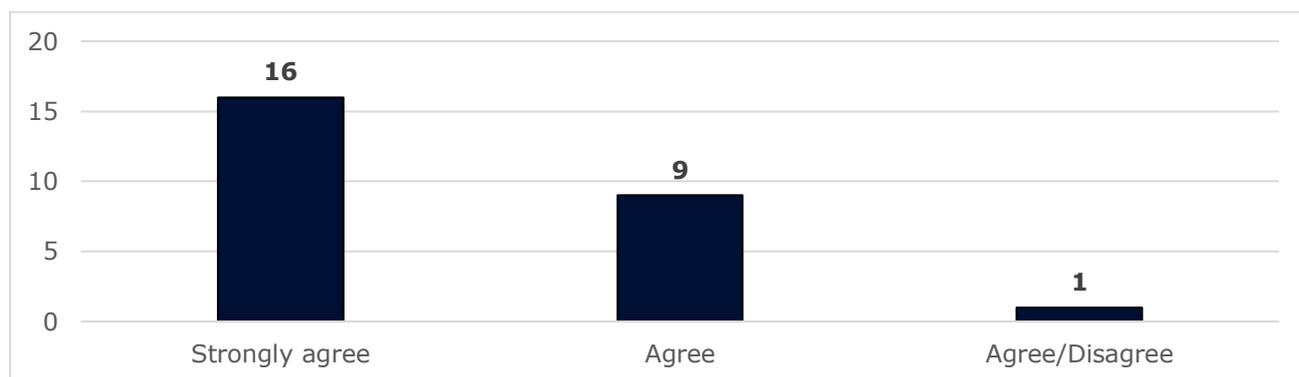
*To what extent do you agree with the following statements concerning the appropriateness of EURES to respond to the needs of the labour market?*

In this question, the NCOs were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with selected statements about the effectiveness of EURES.

### EURES contributes to promoting and increasing the mobility of workers

Only one respondent did not fully agree with EURES contributing to promoting and increasing the mobility of workers. The remaining majority of the respondents strongly agreed and about one third agreed with the statement.

Figure 42 EURES contributes to promoting and increasing the mobility of workers (n=26)



Only one comment was provided for this statement which further shows an overall agreement about EURES’s role in promoting and increasing mobility of workers. The comment mentioned that they are unsure about the increasing mobility part of the statement as the decision to move abroad is a personal and voluntary decision. EURES helps those who have made this decision.

[EURES contributes to labour market transparency by ensuring that job vacancies, applications, and any related information are available for potential applicants and employers](#)

With this statement, there was a complete agreement that EURES does contribute to the transparency of the labour market by making sure that job vacancies, job applications and any related information are available for potential applicants and employers. No additional comments were provided for this statement.

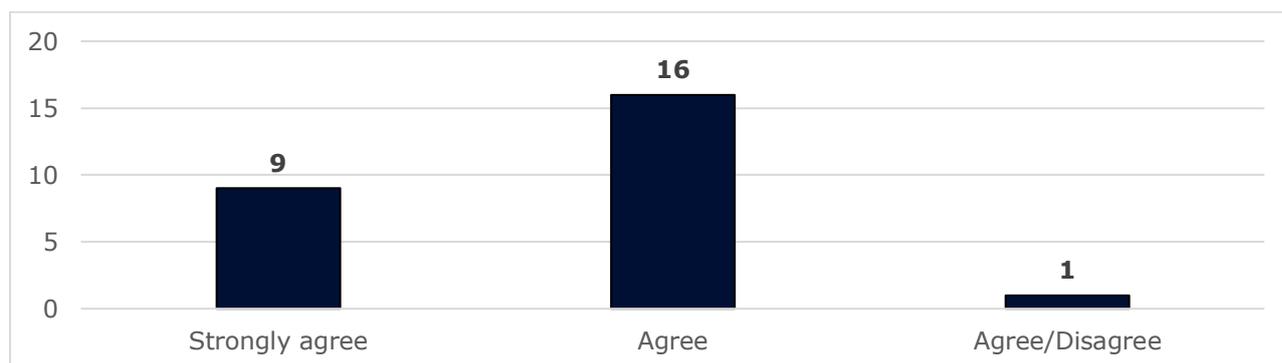
Figure 43 EURES contributes to labour market transparency by ensuring job vacancies, applications, and any related information are available for potential applicants and employers (n=26)



[EURES contributes to meeting the social and employment objectives of the EU](#)

Only one respondent did not fully agree that EURES is contributing to meeting EU’s social and employment objectives. No further comments were left for this statement.

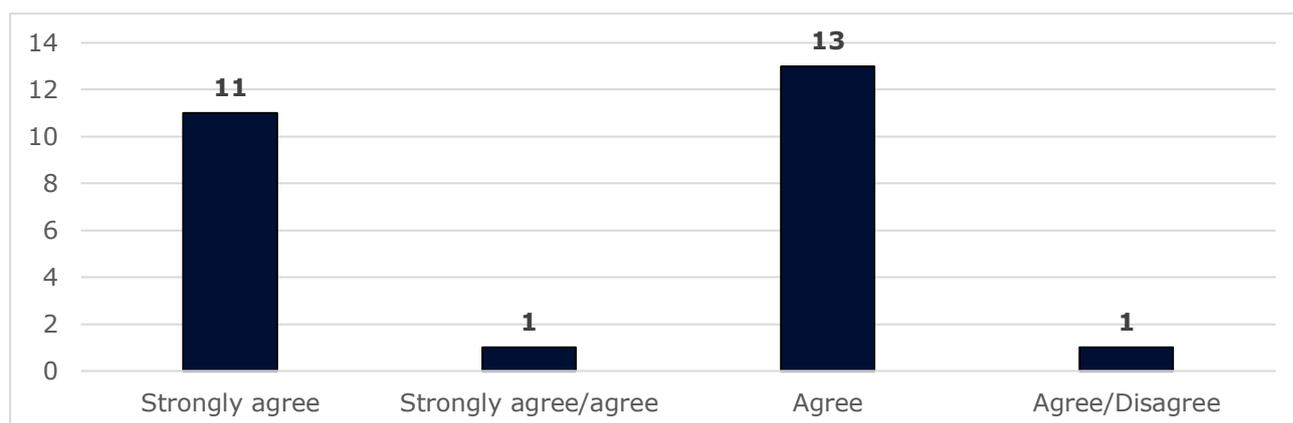
Figure 44 EURES contributes to meeting the social and employment objectives of the EU (n=26)



**EURES contributes to raising awareness on intra-EURES labour mobility matters**

Only one respondent did not fully agree with EURES contributing to awareness raising on intra-EURES labour mobility matters. The remaining respondents were split nearly equally on whether they strongly agree or just agree with the statement. No additional comments were provided for this statement.

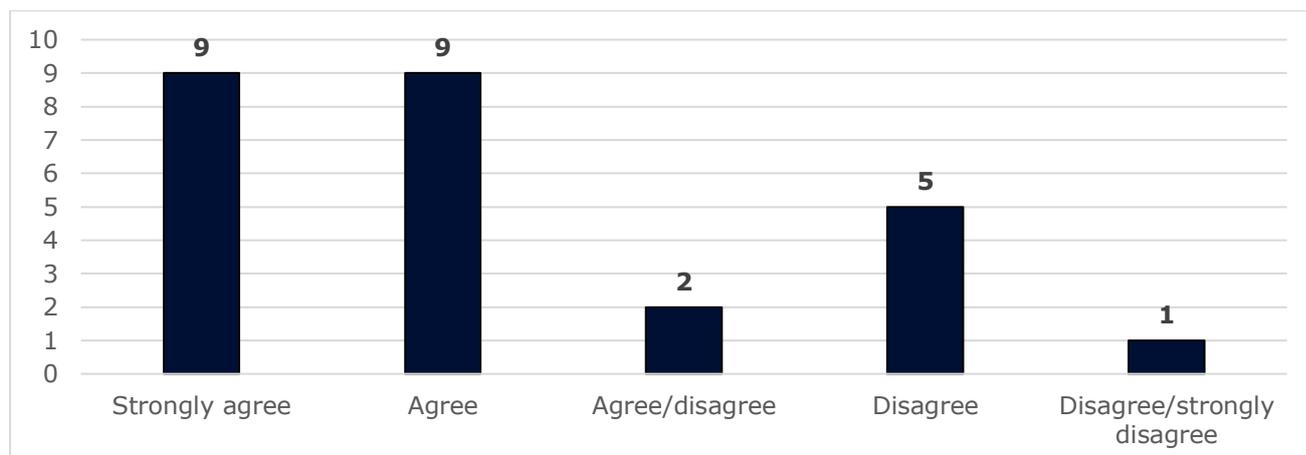
Figure 45 EURES contributes to raising awareness on intra-EURES labour mobility matters (n=26)



**EURES promotion and communication actions help make EURES widely known among jobseekers and employers**

About two thirds of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the promotion and communication activities of EURES help it make it a widely known brand among job seekers and employers. However, the remaining one third of respondents disagreed with the statement.

Figure 46 EURES promotion and communication actions help make EURES widely known among jobseekers and employers (n=26)

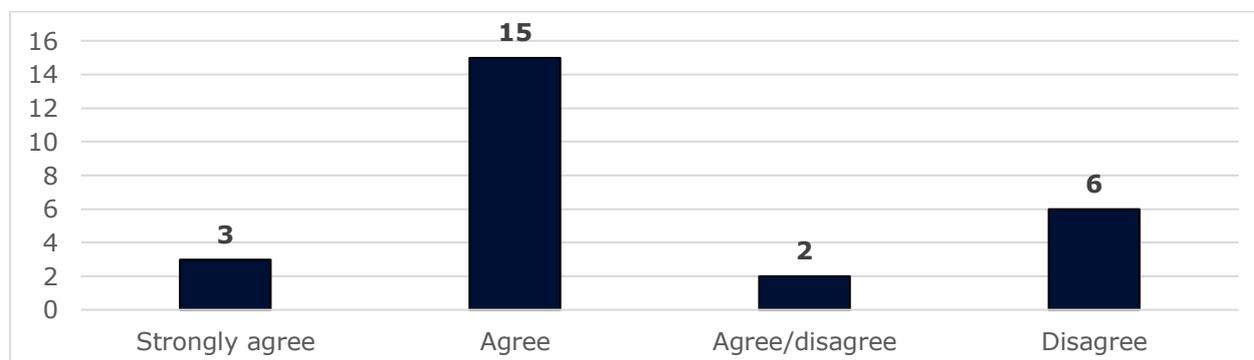


Seven respondents provided comments for this statement. The comments highlighted that there are still considerable gaps in the promotion of EURES and its services among potential clients. Some comments insisted on the need for a more/better funding of communication and promotion efforts. For now, the word of mouth of satisfied customers is considered the best channel of promotion. Therefore, efforts need to be made to reach out to much wider audiences. This can be achieved by cooperating with other organisations that have networks to find audiences that are not used to the benefits EURES offers. One respondent mentioned that, at times, the EURES message can be too diffused as European, national, regional and local levels all promote EURES in a different manner.

[The current EURES organisational set-up is appropriate to meet current labour market needs](#)

Slightly more than one quarter of the respondents did not agree or did not fully agree that the current EURES organisational set-up could be described as appropriate to meet the current labour market needs.

Figure 47 The current EURES organisational set-up is appropriate to meet current labour market needs (n=26)



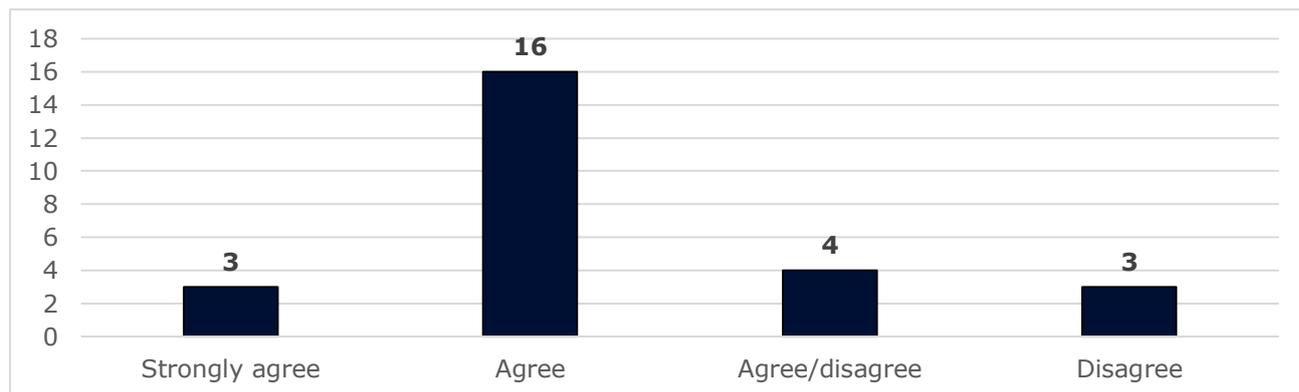
Four respondents provided comments for this statement, with a couple of them raising concerns about the prospective move of the European Coordination Office under the competences of the newly formed European Labour Authority. The establishment of the Single Digital Gateway was also raising concerns about the organisational set up of EURES.

The need to broaden the national EURES networks has also been highlighted in order to meet its full potential.

**The EURES tools have been effective in matching labour supply and demand across Europe**

More than half of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with EURES tools being effective in matching labour supply with demand across Europe. While about one third would disagree or at least not completely agree with this assessment.

Figure 48 EURES tools have been effective in matching labour supply and demand across Europe (n=26)

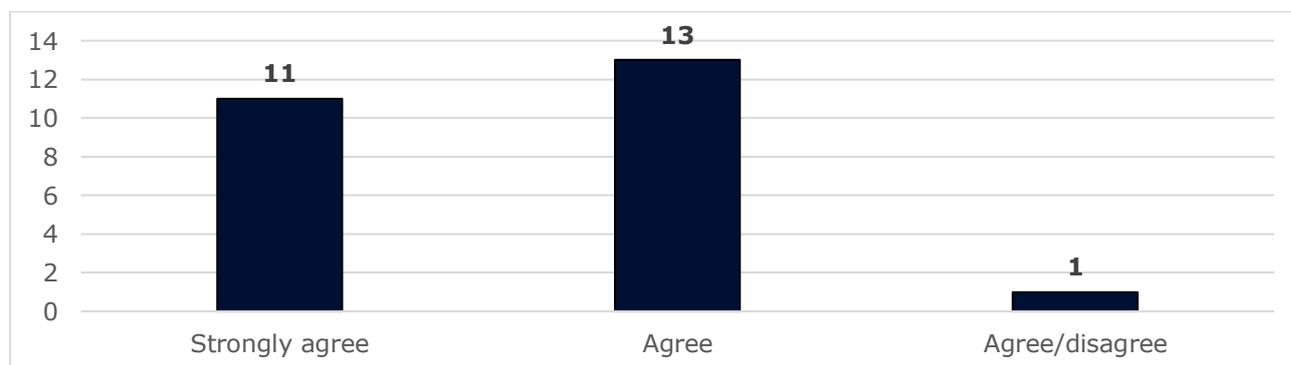


One respondent mentioned that when the tools are being used, they are effective. Another would like to see the European Commission provide some figures regarding this issue to be able to fully assess it.

**EURES mobility schemes have effectively contributed to the EURES objectives**

Only two respondents did not either agree or strongly agree with EURES mobility schemes effectively contributing to EURES objectives. One of them neither agreed nor disagreed while the other one preferred not to answer.

Figure 49 EURES mobility schemes have effectively contributed to the EURES objectives (n=25)

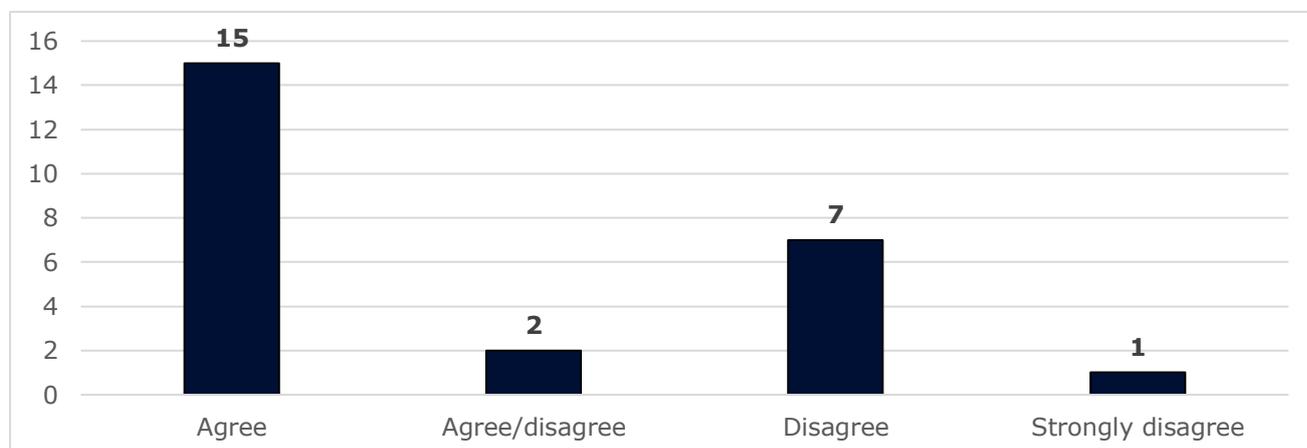


One respondent mentioned that the mobility schemes are an effective tool but that more countries need to explore their potential.

### Labour market participants are aware of EURES services and tools

More than half of the respondents agreed that labour market participants are aware of EURES services and tools. None of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement. One respondent preferred not to provide an answer.

Figure 50 Labour market participants are aware of EURES services and tools (n=25)

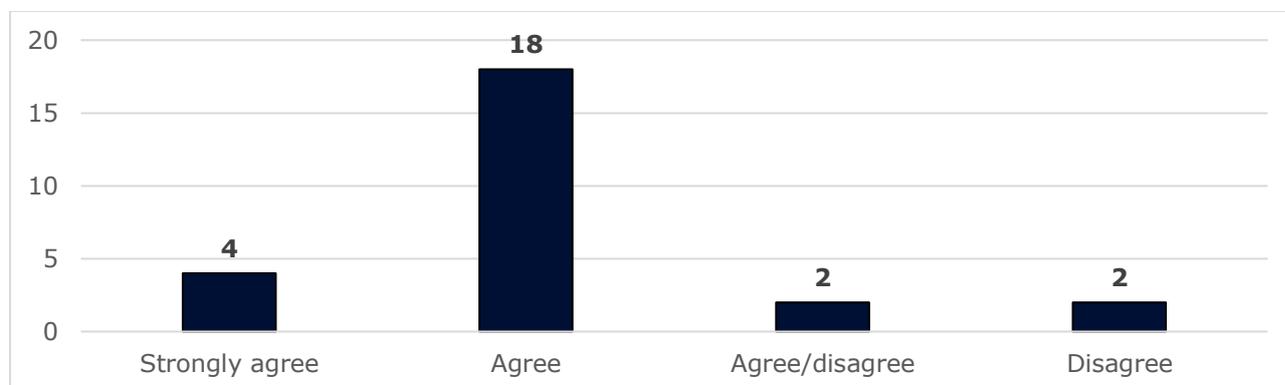


The six comments left mentioned that, however, this applies to only a small part of all labour market participants and that it is still not a considerable part and more needs to be done for further promotion.

### EURES Portal contains relevant, complete and up-to-date information including on living and working conditions and inventories of classifications (ESCO)

The vast majority of respondents would agree that the EURES Portal contains relevant, complete and up-to-date information, such as living and working conditions and inventories of classification (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations – ESCO). Only two respondents would disagree with this statement and two would neither agree nor disagree.

Figure 51 EURES Portal contains relevant, complete and up-to-date information including on living and working conditions and inventories of classifications (ESCO) (n=26)



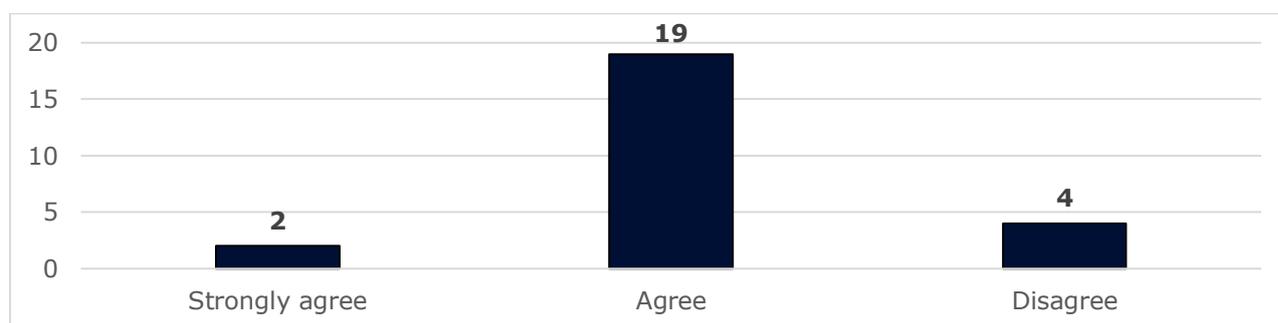
One respondent highlighted that the latest update of the EURES Portal has given it a more modern and attractive look. However, the section on living and working conditions needs

to be given the same makeover with current links and even embedded videos and other interactive features to make it more interesting and attractive for readers.

**EURES facilitates information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses which contributes to better labour market integration across EURES countries**

The vast majority of respondents agree that EURES facilitates information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses that in turn contributes to better labour market integration across EURES countries. One respondent selected that they agree, disagree and strongly disagree with this statement at the same time. For the graphical representation, this response was not included in the graph.

Figure 52 EURES facilitates information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses which contributes to better labour market integration across EURES countries (n=25)

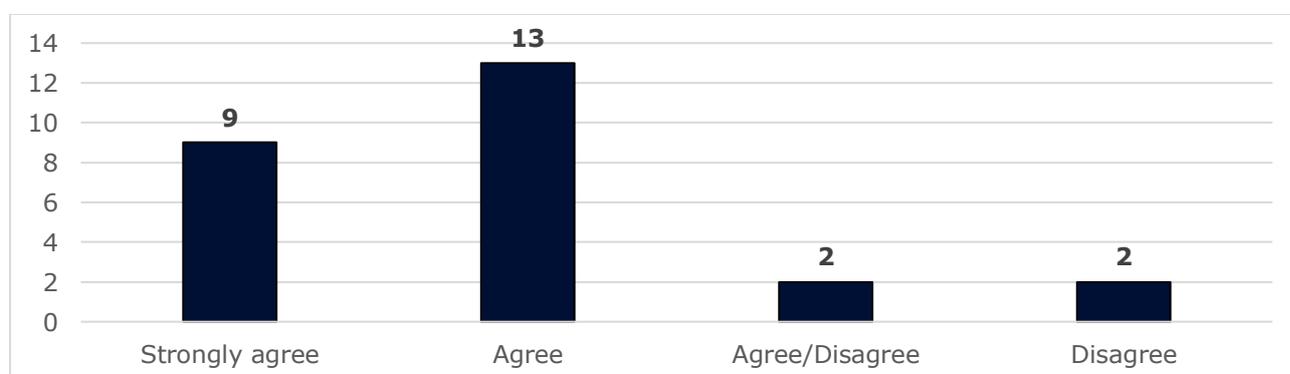


With regard to labour shortages and surpluses, the respondents commented that this information needs to be updated as often as possible as it is constantly changing due to them being dynamic figures. The European Labour Authority was singled out as having great potential to contributing to solving this matter.

**EURES actions are sustainable in the long-term**

The majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with EURES actions being sustainable in the long-term. Two respondents disagreed with this assessment while two more neither agreed nor disagreed with it.

Figure 53 EURES actions are sustainable in the long-term (n=26)

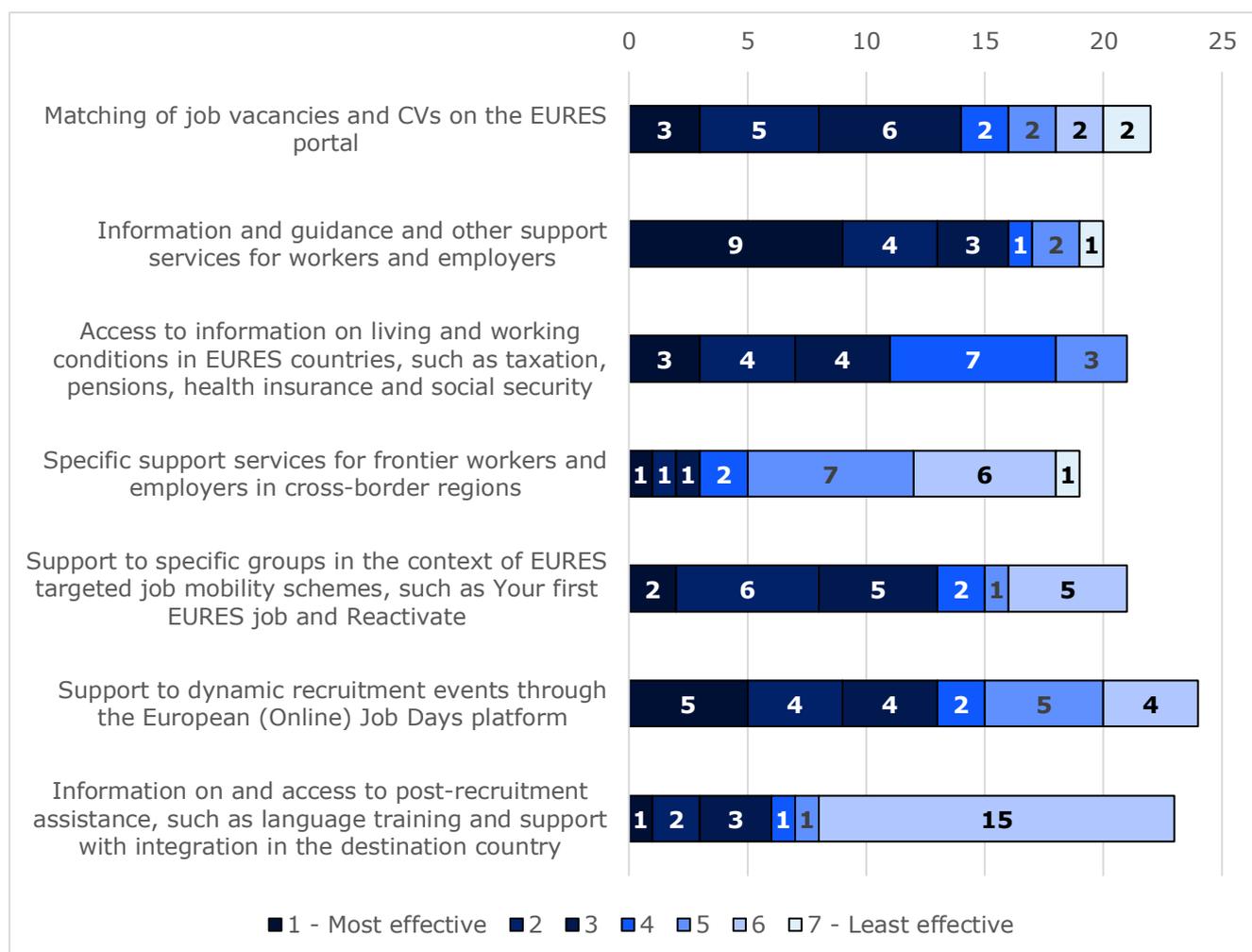


The comments included the need for a greater awareness of fair mobility at national level. Another highlighted that EURES does have tools to make recruitment sustainable, including information and post-recruitment services.

*Which of the following EURES services are most effective? Please arrange the following options from the most effective to the least one (1 = most effective, 7 = least effective)*

Regarding effectiveness of specific EURES services, the service that was rated as the most effective by a largest number of respondents is 'Information and guidance and other support services for workers and employers'. This was followed by 'Support to dynamic recruitment events through the European (online) Job Days platform'. The least effective service was considered to be 'Matching of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal'. However, while the respondents did not assign it the least effective ranking, more than half of them considered the 'Information on and access to post-recruitment assistance' service as one of the least effective ones.

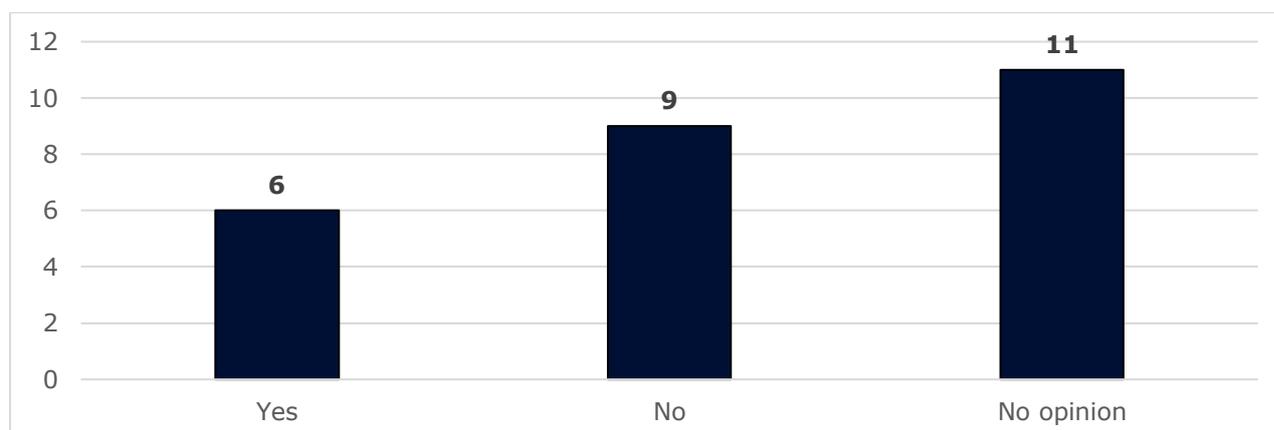
Figure 54 Which of the following EURES services are most effective? (n=19-24)



*Are there any services that you think of that are missing from the currently offered EURES services?*

Most of the respondents had no opinion on whether there are any services that are missing from EURES. These were followed by those who thought that there is no need for additional services. A slightly more than one quarter thought that there could be new services added.

Figure 55 Are there any services that you think of that are missing from the currently offered EURES services? (n=26)



Nine respondents provided suggestions for new services. These included:

- Making mobility schemes a permanent part of the EURES services in all EURES countries;
- Lifelong career counselling;
- More focus on trans-national mobility as there are other programmes for cross-border mobility (e.g. Interreg);
- Increased post-recruitment services and assistance (for example, with finding accommodation);
- Guidance on future labour market trends;
- A tool to assess the personal suitability of a client to a specific job which would also allow for a more precise matching in a more efficient manner.

## Efficiency

In this section, the NCOs were asked about the efficiency of EURES and its services.

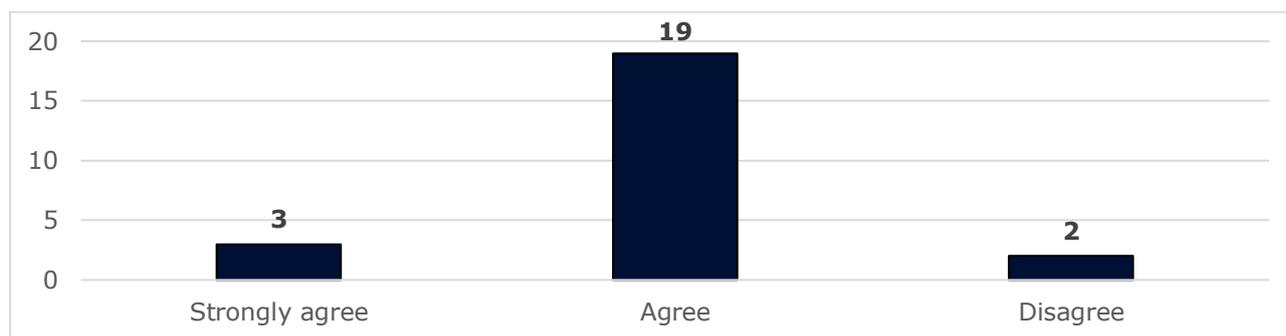
*To what extent do you agree with the following statements?*

In this question, the NCOs were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with selected statements about the efficiency of EURES. The respondents did not to provide any additional comments about these statements.

**The costs of EURES services and tools are justified by their results**

With the exception of four, the respondents (strongly) agreed that the cost of EURES services and tools are justified by their results. Out of the four, two respondents disagreed with the assessment while the other two opted not to answer.

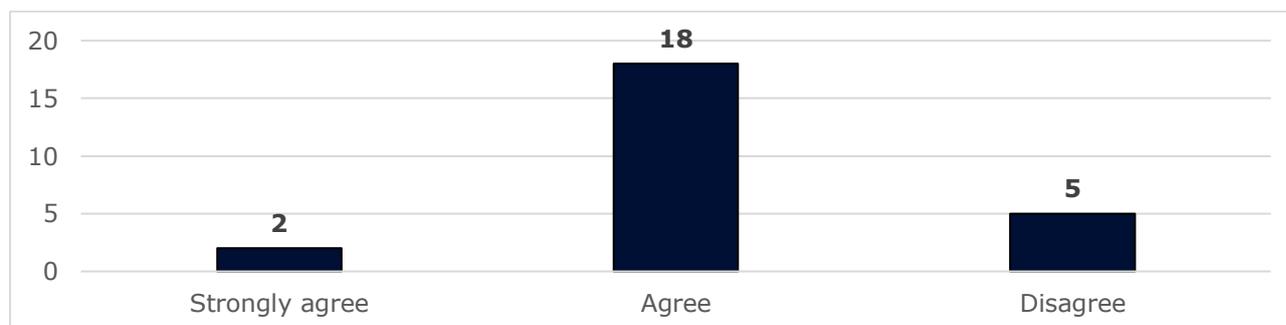
Figure 56 The costs of EURES services and tools are justified by their results (n=24)



[The EURES tools allow systematic matching of vacancies with job seekers](#)

The vast majority of respondents (strongly) agreed with EURES tools allowing a systematic matching between job vacancies and job applicants. Five respondents did not agree with this assessment while one preferred not to provide an opinion.

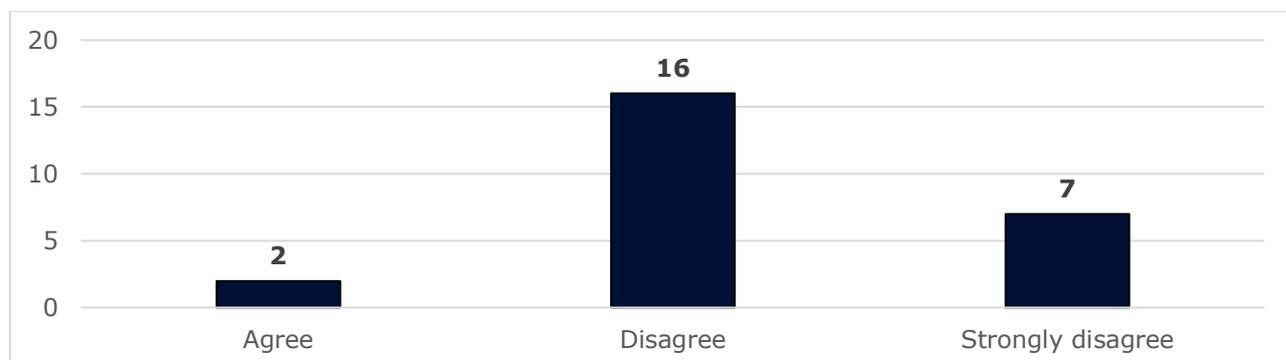
Figure 57 EURES tools allow systematic matching of vacancies with job seekers (n=25)



[The administrative burden has diminished compared to the previous Regulation](#)

With the exception of three, the respondents do not agree that the administrative burden would diminish in comparison with the previous EURES Regulation. While out of the three, two would agree with the assessment and one respondent chose not to answer.

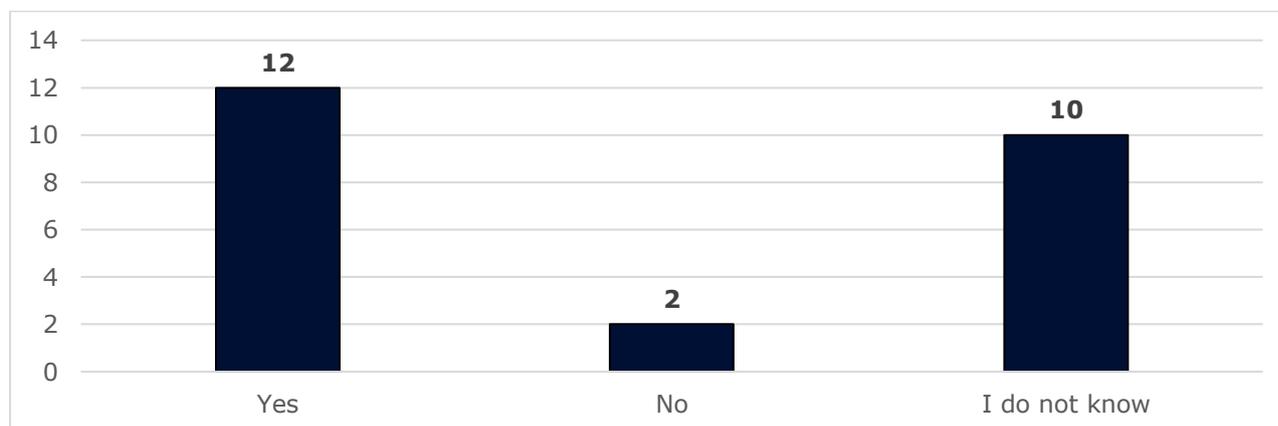
Figure 58 The administrative burden has diminished compared to the previous Regulation (n=25)



*Is there a scope for more efficient use for EURES resources?*

Nearly half of the respondents think that there is a scope for more efficient use of the EURES resources. While nearly the same number of respondents do not know. Two respondents are of the opinion that EURES resources are used efficiently. Two respondents preferred not to answer this question.

Figure 59 Is there a scope for more efficient use for EURES resources? (n=24)



Ten respondents provided suggestions for improvement. The following suggestions were made as to how to improve the efficiency:

- Reducing administration while focusing more and better on measurable placements;
- Better collaboration and synergies with PES;
- Use of social networks and media to increase visibility of EURES;
- Better exchange of good practice, for example, via study trips of staff to other EURES countries;
- More practical staff training;
- Better equipment for staff;
- Clear definition of services and more synergies in reporting tools;
- More staff, i.e. ensuring EURES staff are working on EURES full-time or at least the FTE assigned to them;
- Effective matching through the EURES portal;
- Improvement of tools on the EURES portal;
- Same financial framework across EURES countries;
- Enhance mobility schemes.

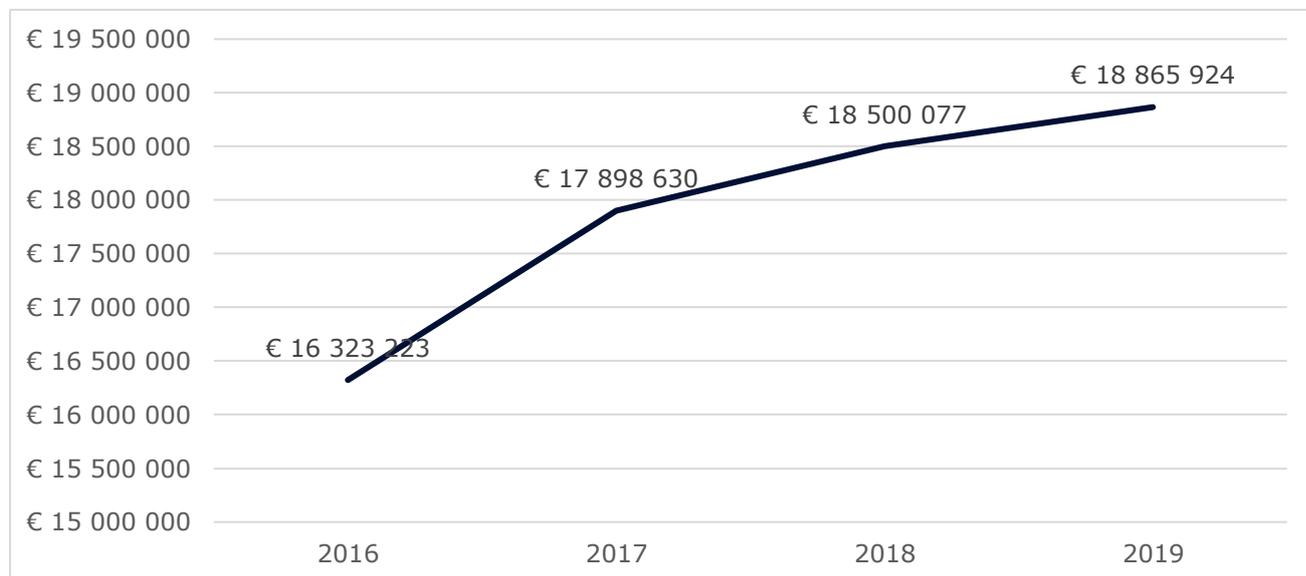
*Please provide your country's full EURES budget in EUR (including all activities conducted, salaries of NCO staff and advisors and all other expenses) for the following years:\**

This question was included in the survey in order for the project team to obtain input for the cost-effectiveness analysis of EURES services and tools. In order to keep this information confidential, the graph below shows the development of the aggregate overall budget across EURES countries. Five out of the 26 respondents did not provide any figures. Many of the NCOs highlighted that it is hard to provide exact annual figures with regard to financial resources spent on EURES. This is partially because many of them are financed through the ESF where more receive multi-annual financing. Another reason is also

because many of the EURES services are streamlined into PES services and are therefore covered by the PES budget.

Overall, the financial resources spent on EURES have increased year on year between 2016 and 2019.

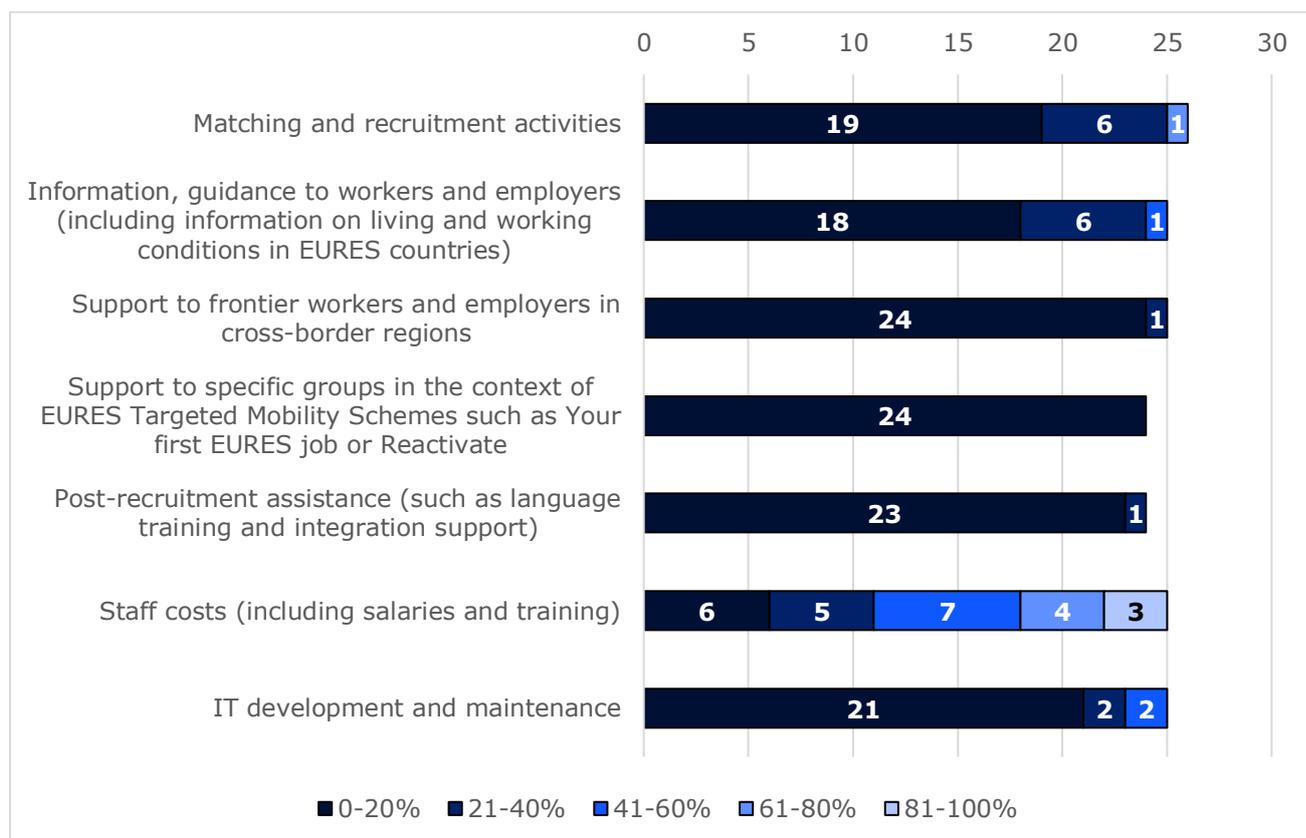
Figure 60 Overview of estimated total budget spent on EURES and its services, 2016-2020



*What percentage of your annual budget is spent on the following activities? (Please estimate in % of the share of overall budget)\**

This question was also included in the survey to feed the cost-effectiveness analysis of EURES. With the exception of the staff costs, the majority of respondents indicated that they spend between 0 and 20% of their budget on a specific EURES service. The respondents also indicated that these are very rough estimates as usually they do not divide their budget line along these lines.

Figure 61 What percentage of your annual budget is spent on the following activities? (n=26)



*Which of the following EURES services are most efficient? Please arrange the following options from the most effective to the least one (1= most efficient, 5 = least efficient)*

The 'Information, guidance to workers and employers' service was rated as the most efficient by the most respondents. The 'Post-recruitment assistance' was rated as the least efficient.

Figure 62 Which of the following EURES services are most efficient? (n=23-26)



### Coherence

In this section, the NCOs were asked about the coherence of EURES and its services with each other and with other national and European initiatives.

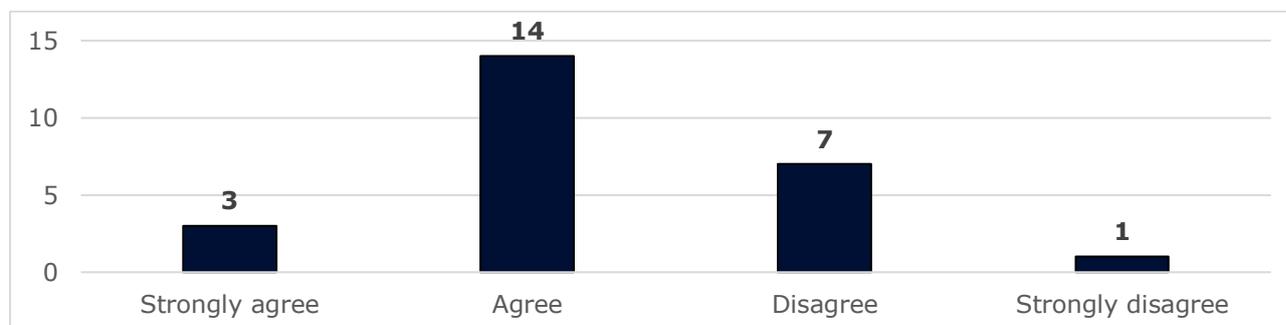
*To what extent do you agree with the following statements?*

In this question, the NCOs were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with selected statements about the coherence of EURES.

[EURES Regulation is complementary with other EU policy measures/initiatives \(e.g. Europass, Digital single gateway, etc.\)](#)

Two thirds of respondents strongly agree or agree that EURES Regulation is complementary with other EU policies, measures and initiatives. One third of the respondents disagree or even strongly disagree with it. One respondent preferred not to provide an answer as they had no opinion.

Figure 63 EURES Regulation is complementary with other EU policy/measures/initiatives (n=25)

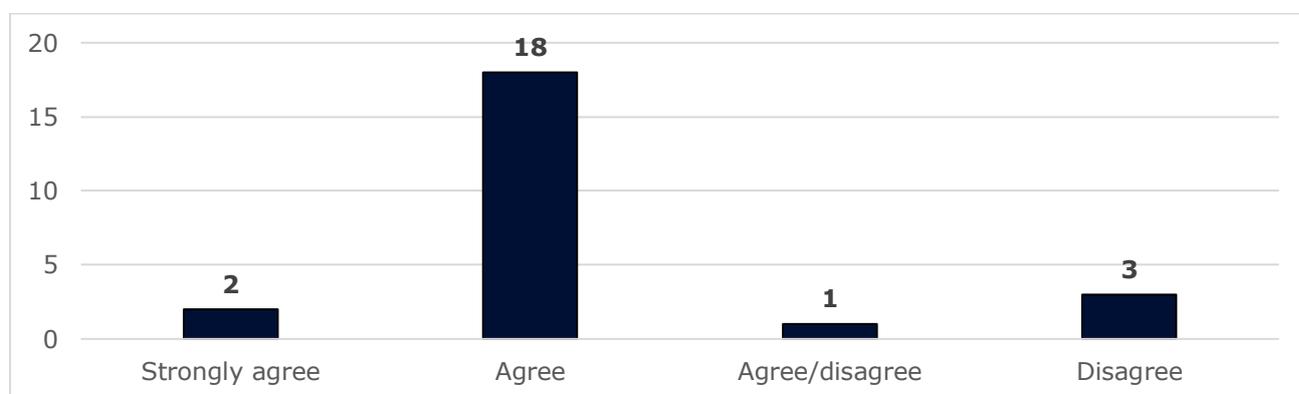


Six respondents provided comments to this statement. Those respondents who disagreed with the statement mentioned that there are issues with the complementarity of the EURES Regulation with the one on the Single Digital Gateway as there is no cohesion between the reporting of performance. It was mentioned that there can be full coherence only if the various Regulations undergo a joint review for harmonisation to avoid duplication of work for the Member States.

**EURES Regulation is complementary with other policy initiatives at national level**

Three quarters of respondents (strongly) agree that EURES is complementary with other policy initiatives at national level. One respondent neither agrees nor disagrees with the statement while nearly one quarter disagrees with it. Two respondents have no opinion on it.

Figure 64 EURES Regulation is complementary with other policy initiatives at national level (n=24)



One respondent mentioned that when it comes to European labour and fair mobility, issues can arise as the national rules and regulations are more liberal than the European ones.

**The EURES tools are complementary with each other**

Nearly all respondents agree that the EURES tools are complementary with each other. Four of the respondents even tend to strongly agree with this statement. One respondent preferred not to provide an opinion.

Figure 65 EURES tools are complementary with each other (n=25)

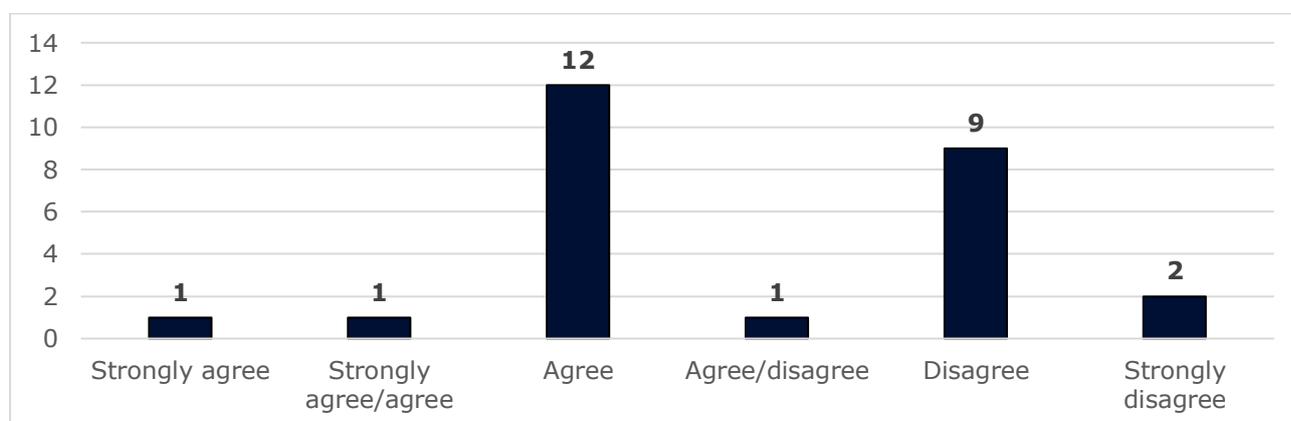


One respondent mentioned that the different channels where EURES services are offered must refer to each other as the strength is in using all available channels in order to increase EURES services.

**The EURES tools are overlapping with other EU/national level policy measures/initiatives**

The statement on EURES tools overlapping with other EU/national level policies or measures received the most diversified response. Nearly half of the respondents agreed with the statement with one respondent even strongly agreeing and one selecting both the strongly agree and agree option. Nonetheless, there is still a considerable number of respondents who disagree with it and even two respondents strongly disagree with it. One respondent selected both the agree and disagree option.

Figure 66 EURES tools are overlapping with other EU/national level policy measures/initiatives (n=26)

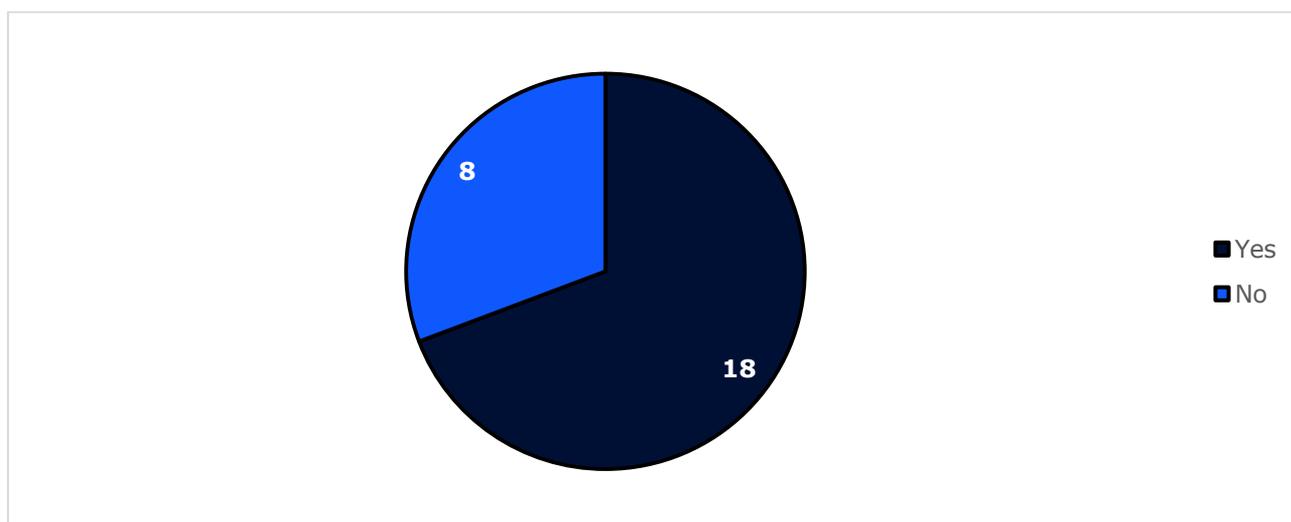


Four respondents provided additional comments to this statement. Within the comments, it was highlighted that the more there are European portals the more overlap there is between them. Some of the policies and measures that the respondents feel EURES tools are overlapping with include the European Solidarity Corps, Single Digital Gateway, European Labour Authority or Europass. With regard to the Europass, it has been highlighted that its newly launched platform has started to include information about national labour markets and living and working conditions that are similar to the information that has been accessible on the EURES portal for a considerable number of years now. While this creates double work for the Member States it also means that the end-user (European citizen or business) might receive contradictory information and will not be in a position to decide which source is more reliable.

**Does your national EURES network participate in Targeted Mobility Schemes (e.g. Your first EURES job, Reactivate, Targeted Mobility Scheme)?\***

About one third of the respondents indicated that their national EURES network does not take part in a Targeted Mobility Scheme, such as Your first EURES job, Reactivate or the newly created Targeted Mobility Scheme, while the remaining two thirds of the countries indicated that they are participating to one.

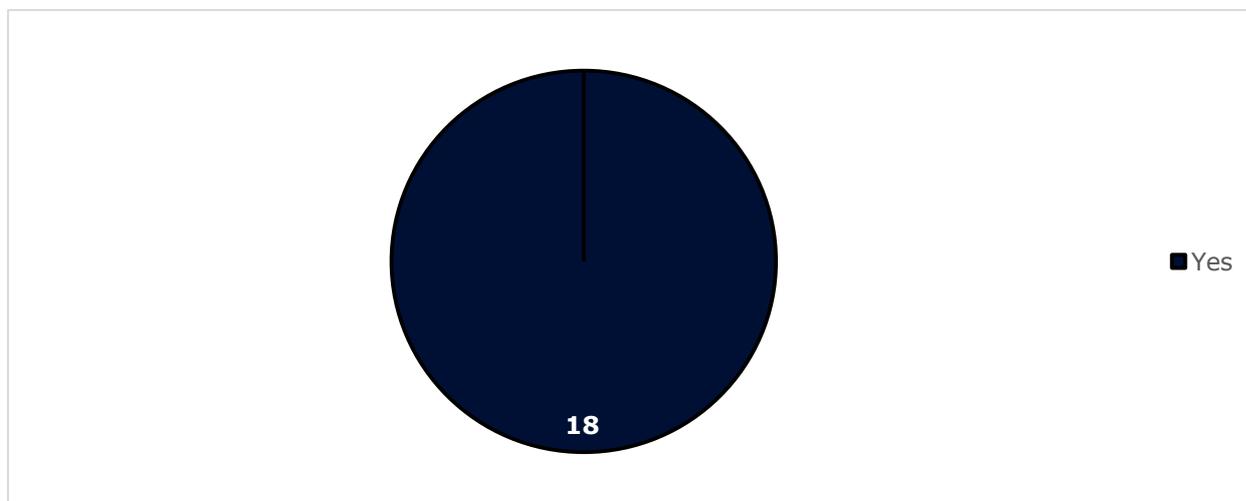
Figure 67 Does your national EURES network participate in Targeted Mobility Schemes? (n=26)



*Do the target groups of these schemes align with EURES target groups?*

This question was shown to those respondents who indicated that they participate in Targeted Mobility Schemes. All 18 respondents are of the opinion that the target groups of these schemes align with the target groups of EURES.

Figure 68 Do the target groups of these schemes align with EURES target groups? (n=18)



**EU added value**

In this section, the NCOs were asked about the EU added value of EURES and its services, i.e. whether the same results would have been achieved even without the establishment of EURES.

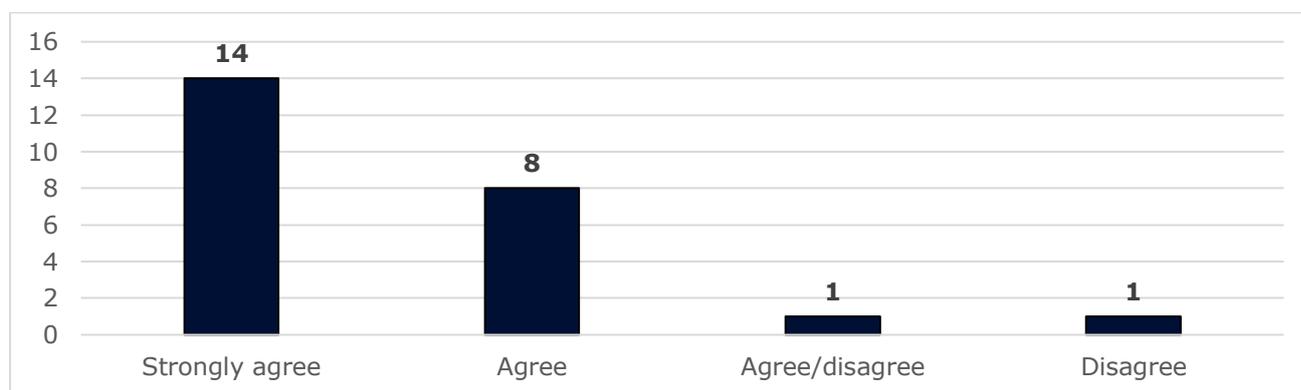
*To what extent do you agree with the following statements?*

In this question, the NCOs were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with selected statements about EURES and its EU added value.

The EURES services and tools have produced types of effects that would not have taken place without EU intervention

More than half of the respondents strongly agree that the effects produced by EURES services and tools would not happen without EU intervention. Furthermore, about one third also agree with the statement while one respondent selected that they agree and disagree at the same time and one indicated that they disagree. One respondent preferred not to provide an answer. One respondent selected that they strongly agree, agree and disagree with the statement. For the graphical representation, this response was not included in the graph. No additional comments were left for this statement.

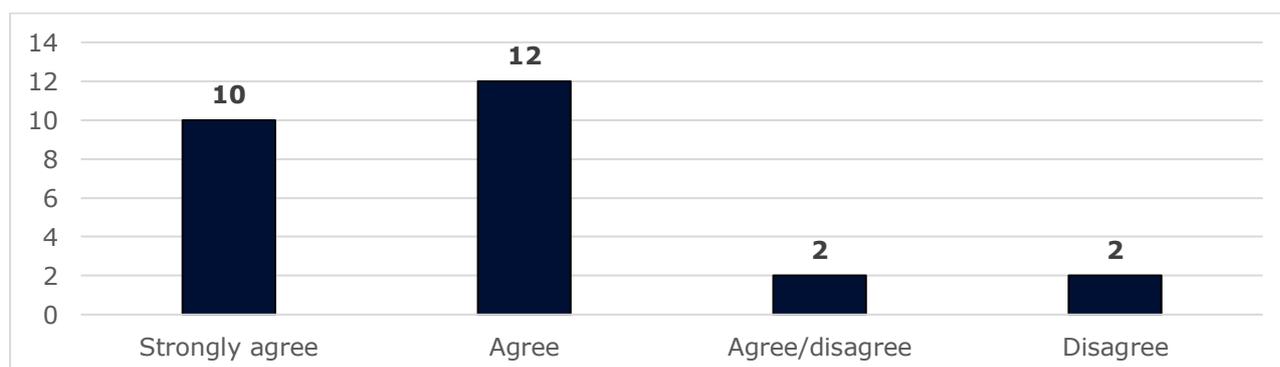
Figure 69 EURES services and tools have produced types of effects that would not have taken place without EU intervention (n=24)



The EURES services and tools have produced more significant effects than those obtained through bilateral or multilateral cooperation between Member States in this field

Only two respondents indicated that they disagree with the statement on EURES services and tools having produced more significant effects than those obtained through bi/multilateral cooperation between Member States in the field of intra-EU labour mobility. Two more respondents indicated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The rest of respondents were nearly equally split between those who strongly agree with the statement (10) and those who “only” agree (12) with it. One respondent, even though they agreed with the statement, left a comment mentioning that not all EURES countries fully participate in all EURES services or make use of the EURES tools.

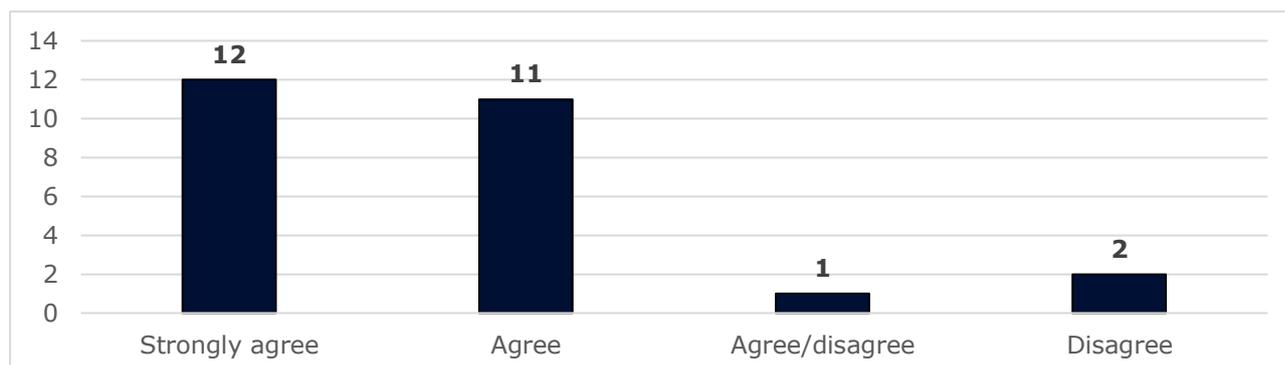
Figure 70 EURES services and tools have produced more significant effects than those obtained through bilateral or multilateral cooperation between Member States in this field (n=26)



### EURES tools reached groups which would not have been supported otherwise

With the exception of two respondents who disagree with the EURES tools having reached groups which would not have been supported otherwise and one respondents who neither agrees nor disagrees with it, the rest of the respondents is nearly equally split between those who strongly agree (12) and those who agree (11) with it. One respondent highlighted the importance of Reactivate and the continuous support for older workers through the new Targeted Mobility Scheme as a very decisive factor.

Figure 71 EURES tools reached groups which would not have been supported otherwise (n=26)



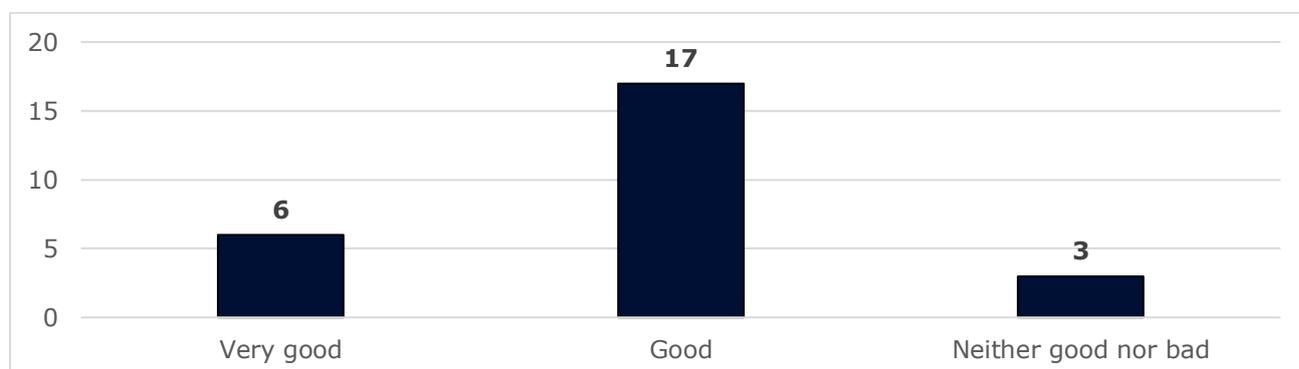
### EURES portal, reporting and results

In this section of the survey, the NCOs were asked to provide their opinion on the EURES portal and the reporting introduced by the EURES Regulation and its results.

#### How would you assess the degree of availability of job vacancies on the EURES portal?

More than two thirds of the respondents would assess the degree of job vacancies’ availability on the EURES Portal as good. With about one quarter considering it very good. Three respondents perceive it as neither good nor bad. None of the respondents were of the opinion that the availability would be bad or very bad.

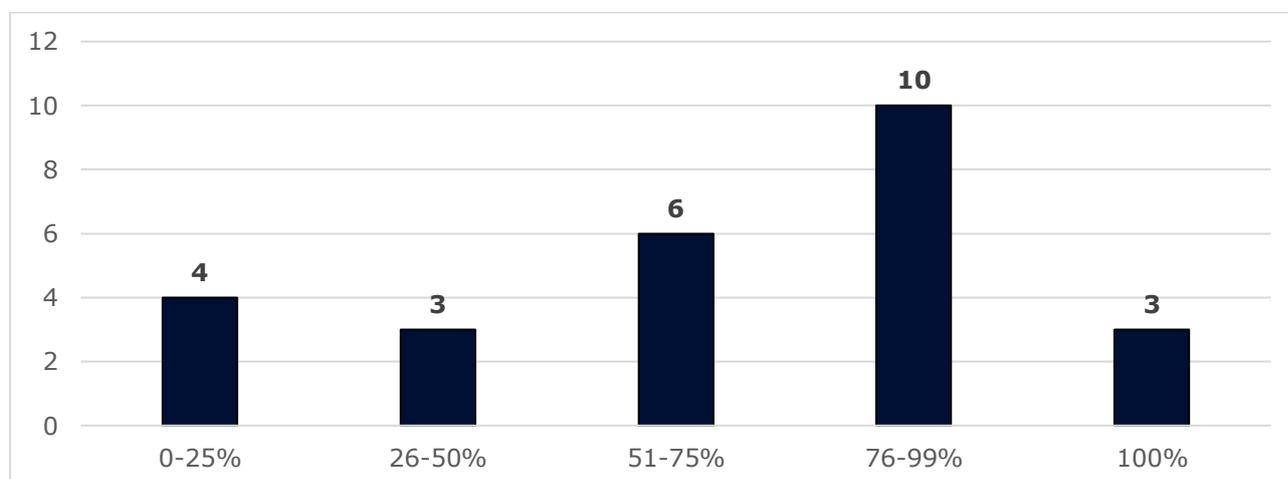
Figure 72 How would you assess the degree of availability of job vacancies on the EURES portal? (n=26)



*What percentage of all available job vacancies in your country you are able to transfer through the Single Coordinated Channel? Please provide an estimate.\**

To further support transparency, the EURES Regulation prescribes the EURES countries to transfer all the job vacancies available in their countries<sup>1</sup> to the EURES Portal through the Single Coordinated Channel. As not all available job vacancies have to be advertised through EURES Members and Partners, the NCOs were asked to estimate the percentage of all job vacancies available in their countries they estimate they are able to transfer. Three of the respondents indicated that their countries are able to transfer all of the job vacancies available in their respective countries. Further 10 countries indicated that they are able to transfer between 76 to 99% of job vacancies which makes it the most numerous of the groups. Four of the respondents indicated that at maximum, they are able to transfer one quarter of all job vacancies that are available in their countries.

Figure 73 Estimated percentage of all available job vacancies in your country you are able to transfer through the Single Coordinated Channel (n=26)

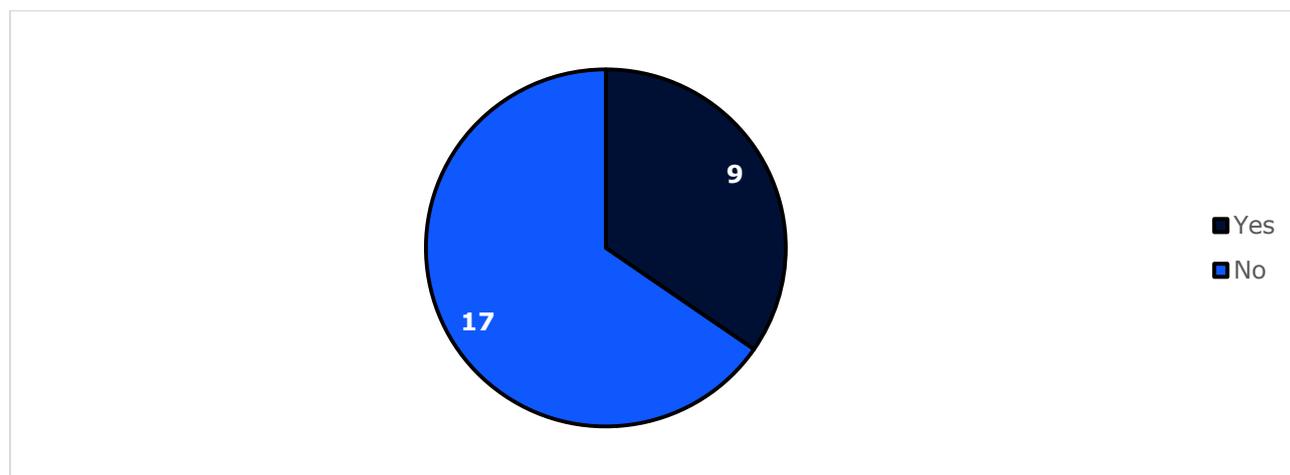


*Are you able to report under the Performance Measurement System (PMS) every placement supported by your national EURES network?\**

When asked whether they are able to report in their PMS reports every placement achieved with the support of EURES, about two thirds of the respondents indicated that they are not able to do so.

<sup>1</sup> With some exception applying, such as when the profession is considered of high importance to the country.

Figure 74 Are you able to report under PMS every placement supported by your national EURES network? (n=26)



Sixteen respondents left comments to further develop their response.

The comments from those respondents who indicated that they are able to account for every placement made with the support of EURES highlighted that the countries are able to do so because of a development of an IT data collection system that allows them to monitor this aspect closely. Others mentioned that for them only the placements they receive information on and are followed by EURES staff are considered as real EURES placements and therefore reported on accordingly.

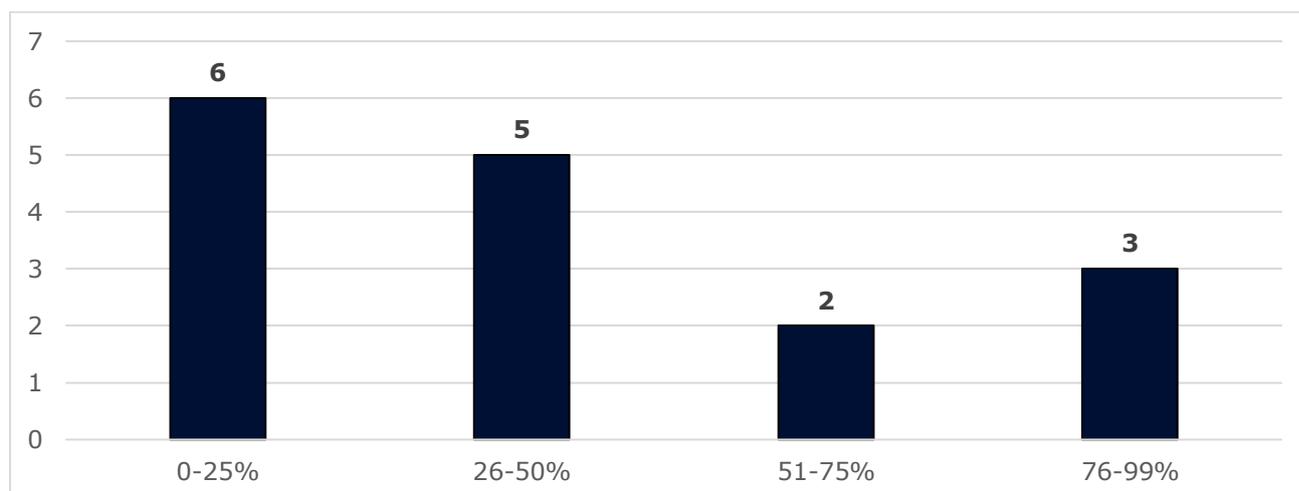
From those respondents who indicated that they are unable to report on every placement, oftentimes they mentioned that they experience difficulties in obtaining feedback from their clients regarding the outcomes of the recruitment procedures. One of the reasons for this is that the clients only tend to come back to the EURES staff if they experience any issues. Furthermore, jobseekers are not always aware or make the connection that finding a job could be a result of all the information, guidance and EURES tools provided. It is somewhat easier to follow up on the outcomes of recruitment projects, it is harder when a jobseeker finds a job themselves via online tools, especially via the national and EU EURES website.

*What percentage of all placements are you able to account for? Please provide an estimate.\**

If the NCO indicated that they are not able to report all the placements that took place with the support of EURES, they were asked to provide an estimate as to what percentage they are able to report. This estimate was then used by the project team in the cost-effectiveness analysis to estimate the total number of placements that could have been achieved with the help of EURES.

From the 17 respondents who were asked this question, over one third indicated that they are only able to report on between 0 to 25% of placements that are done within their national network with the help of EURES. About another one third indicated that they manage to report on 26 to 50% of all the placements. Two respondents indicated that they could report on 51 to 75% of placements and three said they are able to report between 76 to 99% of placement made with the support of EURES.

Figure 75 What percentage of all placements are you able to account for? (n=17)

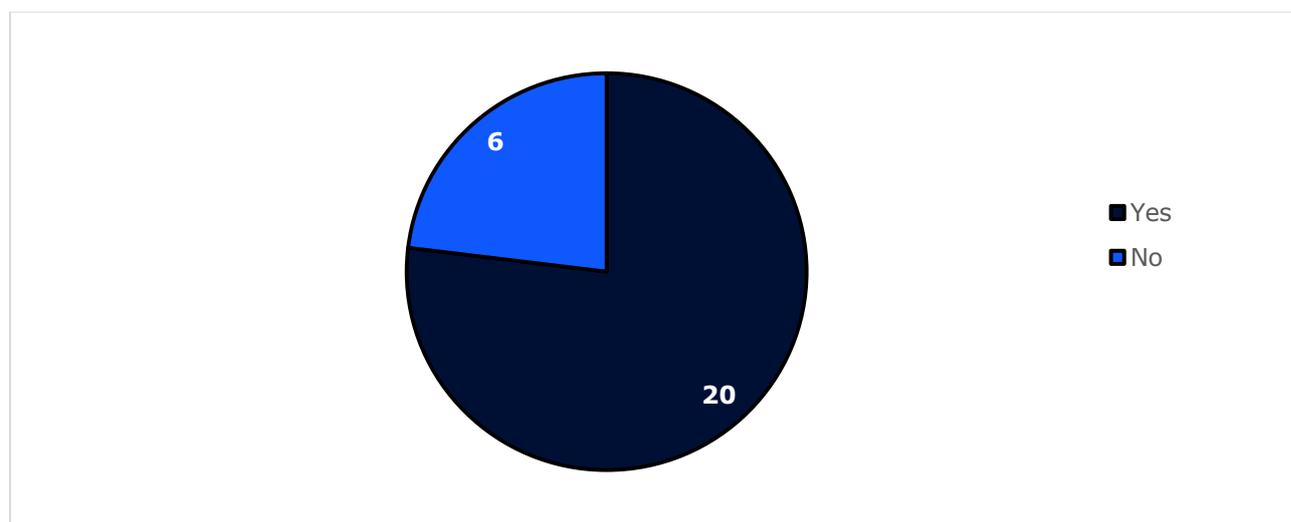


Eleven respondents provided additional comments to their response. They once again highlighted the difficulty in obtaining feedback on recruitment from their clients (i.e. jobseekers and employers).

*Are you able to report under the PMS every contact with workers and employers made by your national EURES network?\**

About three quarters of all respondents indicated that they are able to report every contact made with workers and employers within their national EURES network. The remaining quarter mentioned that they are not able to do so.

Figure 76 Are you able to report under PMS every contact with workers and employers made by your national network? (n=26)



Eight respondents provided additional comments to their response.

Those respondents who are not able to report all the contacts mentioned that it is because of not all Members and Partners of their network being able to do so. Another reason mentioned was also the workload of EURES staff or the environment (e.g. information event) as it at times prevents them to register the contacts straightaway.

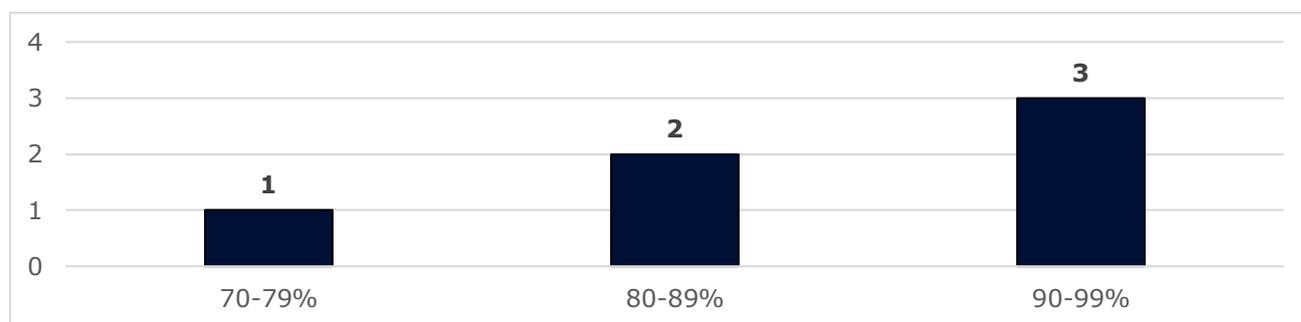
Those who are able to account for all contacts highlighted the help of IT data collection systems which have made the process more accurate. The respondents, however, still highlight that there is room for improvement, particularly with the data that is collected manually or those obtained through phone calls.

*What percentage of all contacts are you able to account for? Please provide an estimate.\**

The respondents who indicated that they were not able to record all of the contacts done within their national EURES networks were asked to provide an estimate of what percentage they are able to account for.

From the six respondents who answered this question, half of them indicate they can report on 90 to 99% of their contacts. Two respondents said they can report between 80 and 89% and one respondent indicated that their PMS numbers represent 70 to 79% of all contacts made within their network.

Figure 77 What percentage of all contacts are you able to account for? (n=6)

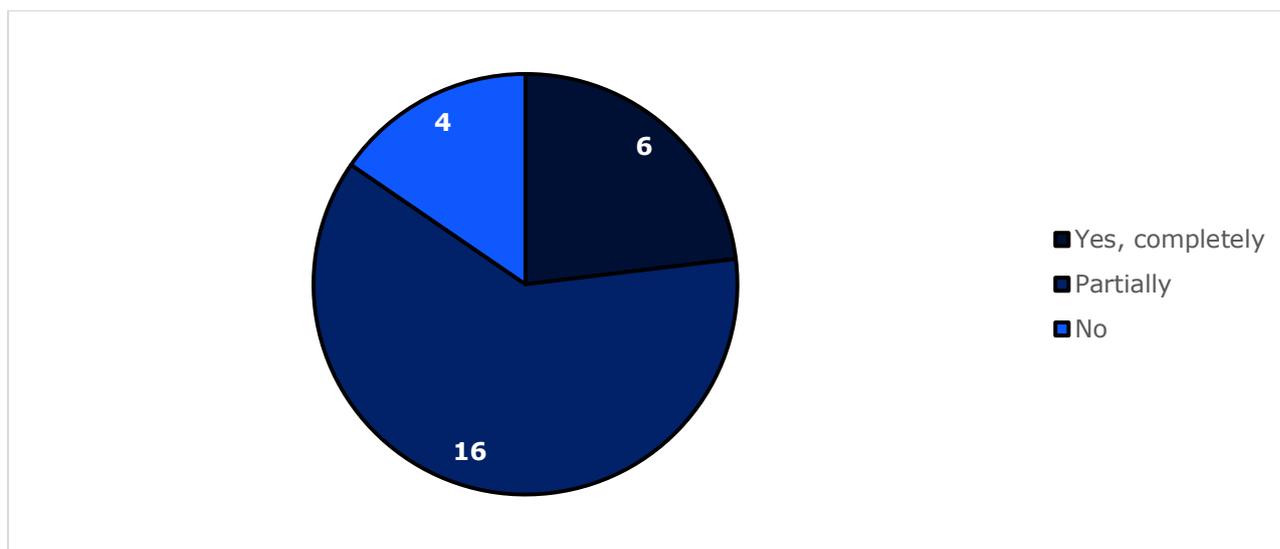


In the comments, one respondent indicated that they are mainly missing the contact made via telephone.

*Is the time you spend on reporting on EURES activities proportional to the effects the activities achieved?*

When asked if the respondents think the time spent on reporting on EURES activities is proportionate to the effects the activities achieved, more than half of them selected the 'Partially' option. About one quarter are of the opinion that the reporting on EURES activities is completely proportional to the effects they achieved. Only four respondents do not think the effects are proportional.

Figure 78 Is the time you spend on reporting on EURES activities proportional to the effects the activities achieved? (n=26)



Eight respondents provided additional comments to their response.

In the comments, the respondents highlight that it is difficult to compare reporting with service delivery. The reporting is perceived by many as quite resource/time demanding and that as it is still being finetuned by all it is not always accurate and used to its full potential. At the same time, it is acknowledged that the reporting results provide a better insight on target groups supported, and services and activities delivered. More interoperability and automated options for the reporting would be very much welcomed. The need for more synergies between the various reporting requirements has also been mentioned as a potential action for the future to further promote peer learning.

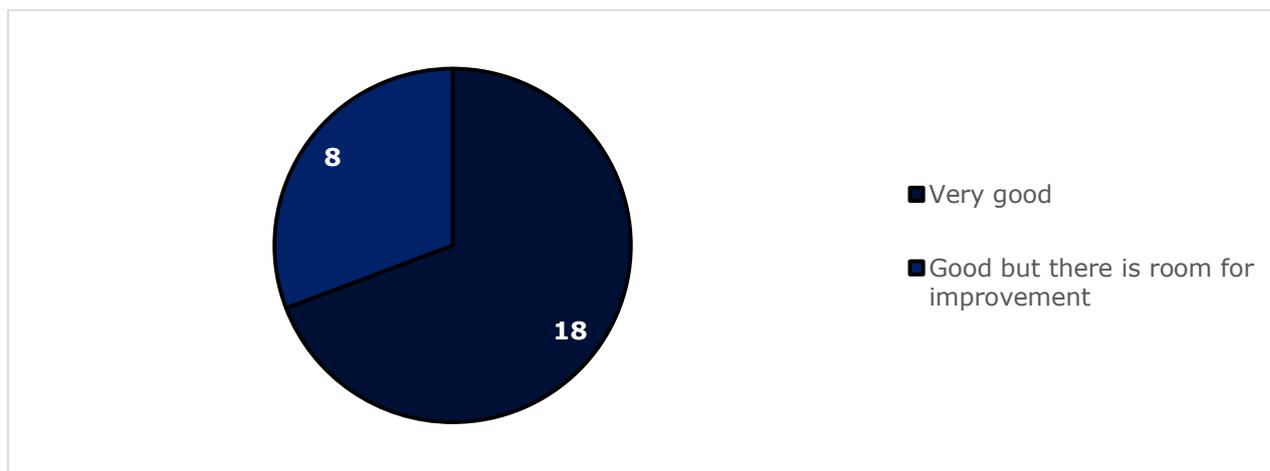
### Cooperation within EURES

In this section, the NCOs were asked to assess their cooperation with the EURES network as well as their national ones.

#### *How would you rate your relationship with ECO?*

More than two thirds of respondents (18) perceive their relationship with ECO as very good with about one third (8) indicating that while they have a good relationship, it could still be improved.

Figure 79 How would you rate your relationship with ECO? (n=26)

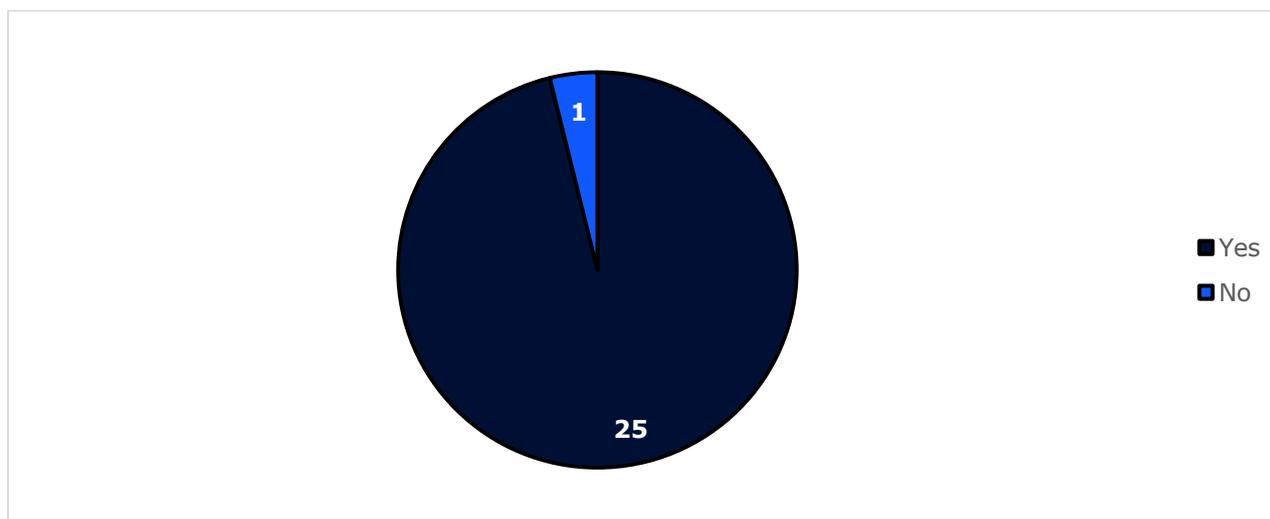


Three respondents left comments where they highlighted that ECO is always available for support when needed.

*Do you coordinate your actions with other national EURES networks?\**

Only one respondent indicated that they do not coordinate their actions with other national networks. All the other respondents indicated that they do in fact coordinate their actions with other national EURES networks.

Figure 80 Do you coordinate your actions with other national EURES networks? (n=26)



Thirteen respondents further supported their answer in the comments. The comments highlighted that bilateral recruitment projects need to be coordinated very closely between the involved NCOs in order for them to be successful. The information exchange and cooperation on other projects, such as the TMS, have been highlighted as well.

*What benefits/challenges/barriers have you observed within this cooperation?*

The respondents who indicated that they coordinate their actions with other national EURES networks were asked to provide some insights on what the benefits are, challenges

and/or barriers that they have observed in relation to this cooperation. In total, 21 respondents provided feedback to this question.

The benefits highlighted include sharing of good practices (for example, on the implementation of the EURES Regulation), exchange of information on topics such as labour market situation, deepening of cross-border and bilateral cooperation. A larger number of job vacancies available for citizens and more possibility to transfer information on employers in order to guarantee all placements is also seen as a positive.

Regarding the challenges and barriers, the respondents most often mentioned that as there are differences in the EURES countries and the way their national EURES networks are set up, it is not always possible to apply the same principles across the network. Different targets, priorities and financial resources can also hamper the results of cooperation. The internal political pressures were also mentioned as a challenge because of it some countries are only able to offer limited EURES services in some areas. The lack of interest from the side of clients (i.e. jobseekers) is also considered a barrier to some bilateral projects.

The fact that there is no common consensus on the purpose of the EURES Regulation and its demands for action is also seen as a barrier to a better functioning cooperation. Another barrier is the fact that employers are looking for the same professions in many of the EURES countries which makes it more difficult to deal with foreign recruitment. Another barrier is the fact that there are limited human resources available across the network.

#### *What are the main challenges in further deepening cooperation within and outside your national EURES network?*

As a last question within this section of the survey, the respondents were asked to describe the main challenges to further deepen the cooperation within EURES. Twenty-two respondents provided input for this question.

The differences between the legal systems and internal policies were highlighted as one of the main challenges that EURES faces as the coordination of all these different aspects is quite complex and time consuming. Another challenge mentioned on a number of occasions is the visibility of EURES as still jobseekers and employers do not always think of EURES as the first stop on the way to new employment/employees. To achieve this EURES needs to promote itself even better within the national PES.

A few years ago, there was a shift in EURES financing with many of the national networks moving to be financed under the European Social Fund (ESF). As ESF projects have often their own targets and internal requirements about illegitimate cost spending, at times it is difficult to be reactive to the labour market as some of the activities might not have been foreseen in the multiannual plan and therefore the Member or Partner has no money for it. Financing of activities from a single budget (for example, like EURES in the past and Euroguidance at present) gives NCOs more flexibility to react to the labour market changes and take measures.

The 2016 EURES Regulation has as one of its goals the widening of the network, however, this in itself brings its own challenges as the bigger the network gets the more administrative requirements there are to ensure everything is running as it should. This

also applies to approaches as the more different organisations there are in the network the more different priorities and internal rules there are to follow. Therefore, there might be bigger differences in how the EURES services are provided. However, a greater network also provides more opportunities to prove that EURES can make a difference when it comes to sustainable recruitment and is reliable to partner with for networking and for the best of mobility within Europe.

Another challenge the network is facing is its human resources as many of the EURES staff do not work 100% on EURES and due to their other tasks might not be able to dedicate enough of their time/attention to the EURES needs. This also has an impact on their motivation as it is hard to keep ones' focus when sitting on too many chairs at the same time.

Looking at the future, EURES will also need to figure out how to adapt to the new realities, such as digitalisation, interoperability with the Single Digital Gateway, use of big data or more frequent possible scenarios as the COVID-19 pandemic, and emergence of more atypical jobs and working scenarios.

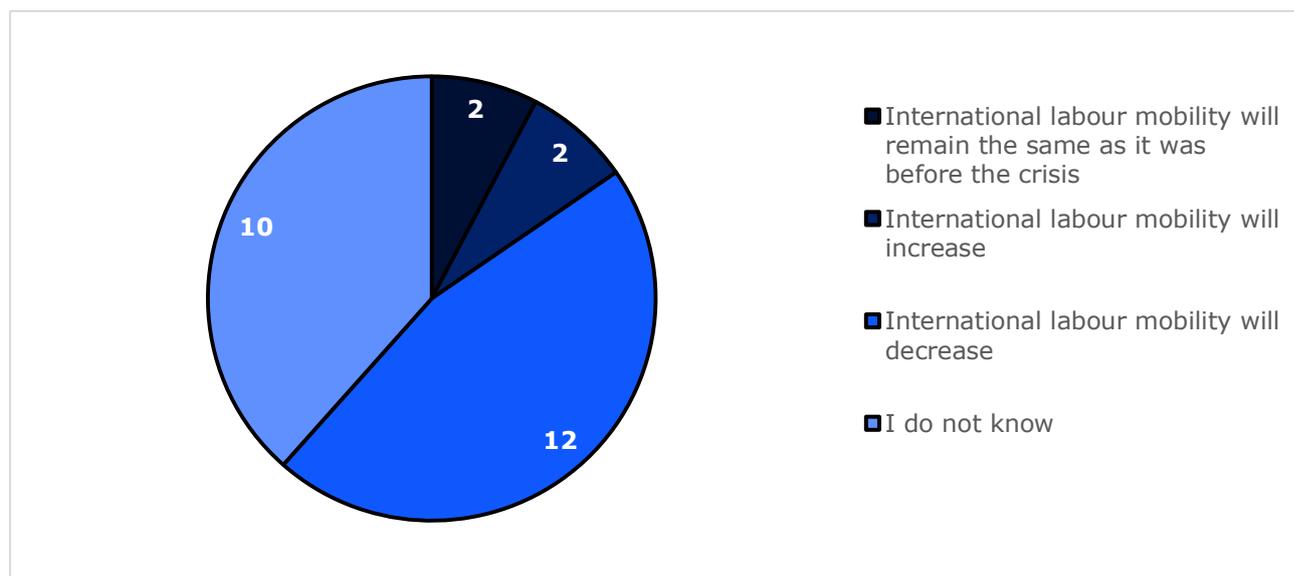
### Questions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

This section aimed to grasp how the respondents think the COVID-19 crisis will impact labour mobility in the future.

*To which extent do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021?*

When asked about their opinion of the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on the future labour mobility, about half of the respondents are of the opinion that labour mobility will decrease. However, nearly the same number of respondents are not sure what the impact will be. The option on the mobility remaining the same as before the crisis and the mobility increasing were selected by two respondents each.

Figure 81 To which extent do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021? (n=26)



Thirteen respondents provided additional comments to their response. The comments provided for this question can be divided into three groups.

One group is of the opinion that the free movement of people will not stop because of the COVID-19 crisis but that mobile workers will be more selective about taking up employment in another country. Some respondents even mentioned that labour market experts are predicting a full economic recovery during 2021, nonetheless, the overall recovery will probably be a prolonged one.

The second group of respondents believe that, at first, labour mobility will decrease but that gradually it will return to the pre-COVID-19 levels, especially in some selected sectors where there are always major labour shortages (such as healthcare or ICT). Those Member States that will face a more severe economic crisis will probably experience another wave of outgoing mobility as the competition between countries for the same professions will turn even fiercer. This group also points out that the labour markets will completely change from shortage markets to markets with many surpluses. EURES and the PES will be important tools to solve issues as many private parties will probably have difficulties surviving.

The last group predicts that the recovery will be very hard, especially since there will be high levels of unemployment with less job offers across the countries which will have a negative impact on mobility as well. Workers will be more likely to stay in the country where they feel secure and safe with an easier access to care and benefits.

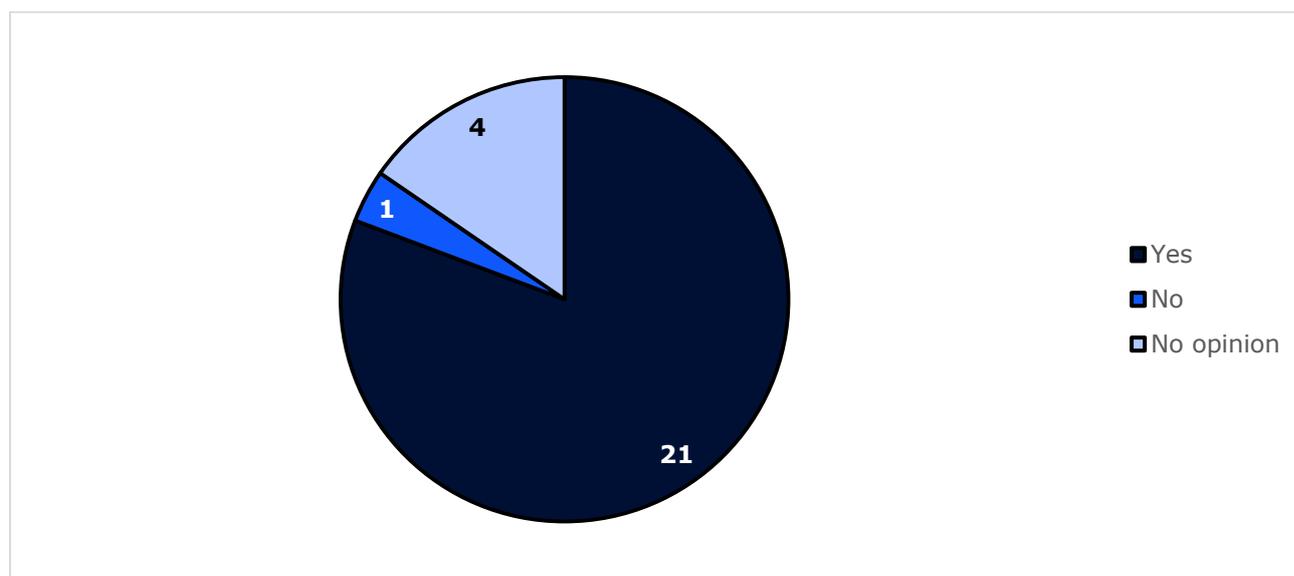
### **Concluding questions**

To conclude the survey, the NCOs were asked a few closing questions.

*In your opinion, is there anything about EURES that needs improvement?*

More than three quarters of the respondents believe that there are aspects for EURES to improve further. Four respondents have no opinion on this matter while one of the respondents says that there is no need for EURES to change anything.

Figure 82 In your opinion, is there anything about EURES that needs improvement? (n=26)



In the comments, 19 respondents provided suggestions for improvement. These included:

- Reducing administrative burden and simplifying the reporting system.
- Develop a video conferencing software that everyone in the network could use.
- To simplify the use of the EOJD platform and develop a promotional campaign for it (but not only for social media).
- Develop a promotional campaign for the search and matching engine of the EURES Portal, again the campaign should target other means than just social media.
- Better involvement of PES Management and the relevant Ministries.
- Better support of recruitment projects offering language courses or courses combining language and vocational training to prospective candidates.
- Include start-up costs (the costs of ones establishing themselves in a new country) into the financial support of mobility schemes and slowly mainstream it into EURES services.
- The financing of EURES should be re-thought, regular activities should be financed through grants (as was done before 2015) while ESF could fund new and innovative approaches.
- Increase synergies, comparability and transparency across the network.
- More focus on support services as a factor in bringing together demand and supply (in a qualitative way).
- Develop joint activities regarding fair mobility and set common standards.
- Improvement the information flow and establish a common standard for IT tools to keep up with the developments.
- Keep the EURES Portal up-to-date and provide better access to portal statistics.
- Include new modules to the EURES training portfolio to ensure the EURES staff are updated in the latest developments in various areas.
- Develop automated job matching.
- More frequent contact between NCO and ECO (ECG meetings, working groups, etc.) and include a specific induction period for new NCOs.

### *Is there anything else you would like to mention in relation to EURES?*

In the penultimate question, the NCOs were asked to provide any other feedback or thoughts on EURES they may have. Fourteen respondents made use of this opportunity. The respondents took this opportunity to highlight the usefulness of EURES and its contribution to fair mobility and the freedom of movement of workers.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to further strengthen the network, deepen cooperation between its Members and Partners and also focus on highlighting its added value to PES and other national authorities. With the increase of new Members and Partners, it is essential that the different organisations are not only introduced to the network but that also job seekers and employers are aware who they can turn to for support.

With the changes to the labour market due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EURES network should expand their services to cover information and guidance regarding teleworking, particularly with regard to legal, tax and social protection issues.

Some respondents highlighted that there are differences between national approaches to social media and to EURES promotion through this channel. In some countries, EURES is not allowed to use these channel as it goes against internal policies of the PES. To ensure the same levels of visibility across the countries, a common approach should be developed. ECO should liaise with those countries where internal PES regulations prevent them from using social media to agree on an exception to make sure some countries do not get left behind.

Hand in hand with the development of automated matching on the EURES portal, the EURES staff should continue to work with both jobseekers and employers to prepare them for the realities of intra-EURES labour mobility.

With the further move towards digitalisation and use of new technologies, the human aspect of the network should not be disregarded and should continue to be strengthened as the dedication of each individual staff is important for a well-functioning network and service provision.

### *Are there any documents you wish to be considered for the evaluation of EURES?*

Two of the respondents uploaded documents for the project team to be considered. These documents consisted of drafts of transnational cooperation, accompanying documents to specific events or other EURES presentation documents.

#### *2.1.2 EURES evaluation Members and Partners survey analysis*

The survey was sent by the European Coordination Office (ECO) to the National Coordination Offices (NCOs) who were asked to disseminate it among all their national EURES Members and Partners. The aim was to obtain one response per Member/Partner of the EURES network.

The survey was launched on 19 May and closed on 1 July 2020.

In total, 96 Members and Partners responded to the survey. Based on the latest information available, the EURES network consists of 204 Members and Partners (168 Members and 36 Partners).<sup>2</sup> This means that the survey response rate is about 47%.

The survey was divided into 10 sections with some questions marked as compulsory (i.e. a respondent was not able to proceed with the survey unless the compulsory question was answered). Here the compulsory questions are marked with '\*'. The survey contained a display logic where some questions appeared only if a specific answer was selected in the previous questions. This logic was introduced to ensure that the respondent was shown questions as relevant to their experience with EURES as possible.

Partial responses where the respondent opened the survey link, entered some answers but did not complete the survey are not taken into account in the analysis.

### **Introductory questions**

In this section of the survey, the respondents were asked to provide some background information about their organisation and their relation to EURES. This section was shown to all respondents.

#### *Name of your organisation*

As a first question of the survey, the respondents were asked to provide the name of their organisation. This was to ensure only one response per EURES Member or Partner would be collected. The names of the organisations that answered the survey are kept confidential to ensure anonymity of answers.

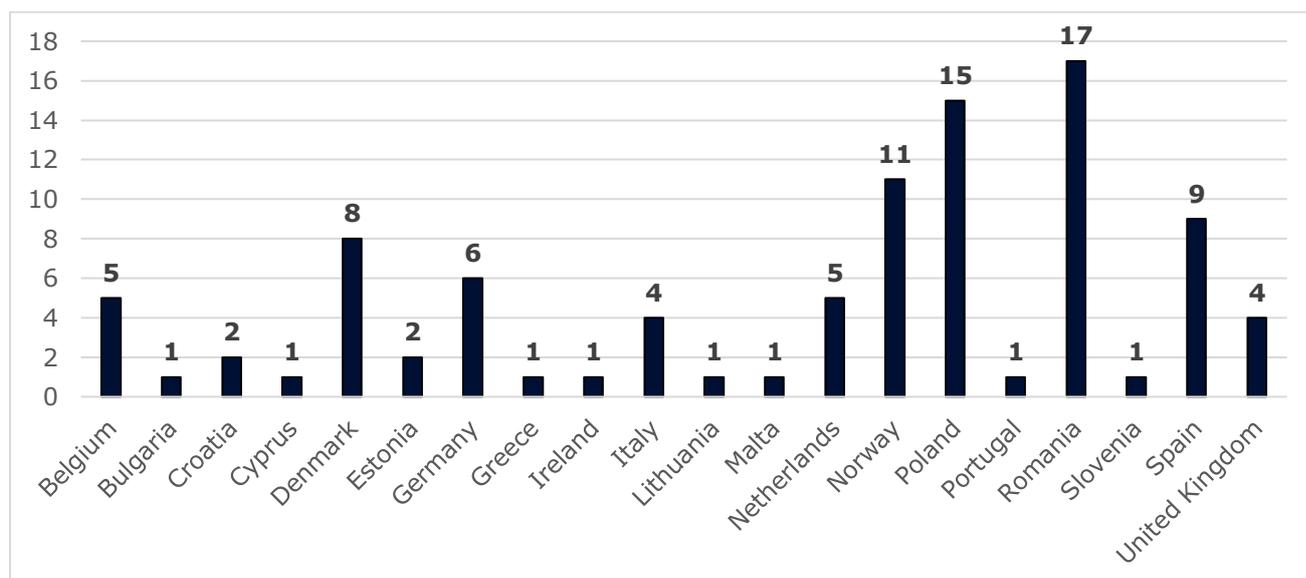
#### *Country (Please add the country in which your organisation is headquartered)*

From the 32 EURES countries, EURES Members and Partners from 20 countries answered the survey. The most respondents were from Romania, Poland and Norway. These countries are also some of the countries with the largest number of Members and Partners in their network.

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<sup>2</sup> These numbers represent the latest information that the European Coordination Office had in July 2020 regarding the composition of the EURES network.

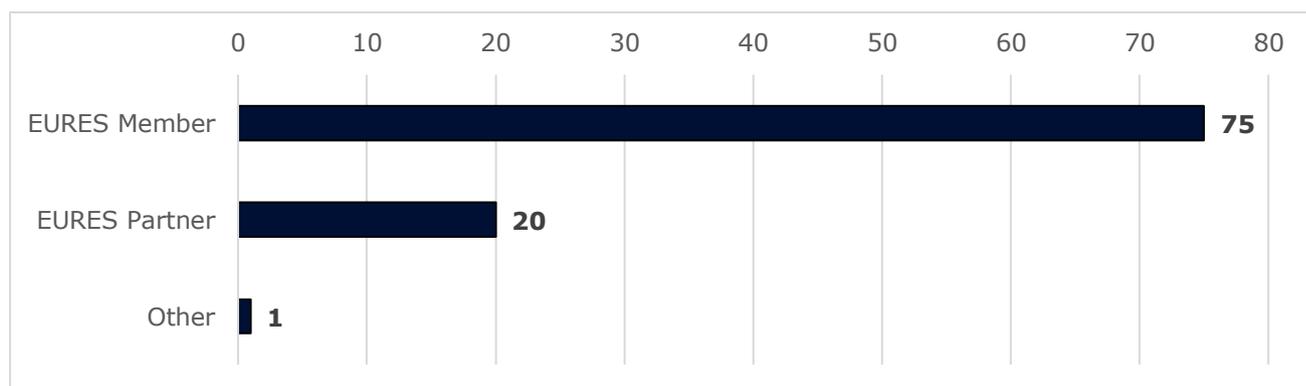
Figure 83 Country (n=96)



*Your organisation is a:\**

The respondents were asked to specify whether the organisation they represent is a EURES Member or Partner. Of the 96 respondents, the vast majority (75) indicated that they are Members of the national EURES networks. From the total number of 168 EURES Members, these represent about 45%. Twenty respondents indicated they are a EURES Partner. From the total number of 36 EURES Partners in the network, these represent 56%. One respondent selected that they are another organisation. When asked to specify they answered that they are a Public Employment Service (PES). In all EURES countries, PES are designated as EURES Members, therefore, this respondent is also considered as EURES Member in the consequent answers.

Figure 84 Your organisation is a (n=96)



The table below provides an overview per country of number of Members and Partners who responded to the survey with the Members and Partners in the national network.

Figure 85 Comparison of the EURES network Members and Partners

Country	EURES network			Responded to survey		
	Members	Partners	Total	Members	Partners	Total
Austria	1	0	1	0	0	0
Belgium	4	4	8	1	4	5
Bulgaria	1	0	1	1	0	1
Croatia	2	1	3	2	0	2
Cyprus	1	2	3	1	0	1
Czech Republic	1	0	1	0	0	0
Denmark	7	5	12	7	1	8
Estonia	1	3	4	1	1	2
Finland	5	3	8	0	0	0
France	1	0	1	0	0	0
Germany	2	5	7	1	5	6
Greece	1	0	1	1	0	1
Hungary	2	0	2	0	0	0
Iceland	1	0	1	0	0	0
Ireland	1	0	1	1	0	1
Italy	22	0	22	4	0	4
Latvia	1	0	1	0	0	0
Liechtenstein	1	0	1	0	0	0
Lithuania	1	1	2	1	0	1
Luxembourg	1	0	1	0	0	0
Malta	1	0	1	1	0	1
Netherlands	7	2	9	2	3	5
Norway	16	0	16	11	0	11
Poland	16	1	17	12	3	15
Portugal	3	5	8	0	1	1
Romania	42	0	42	17	0	17
Slovakia	1	0	1	0	0	0
Slovenia	1	0	1	1	0	1
Spain	17	3	20	8	1	9
Sweden	4	0	4	0	0	0
Switzerland	1	0	1	0	0	0
United Kingdom	2	1	3	3	1	4

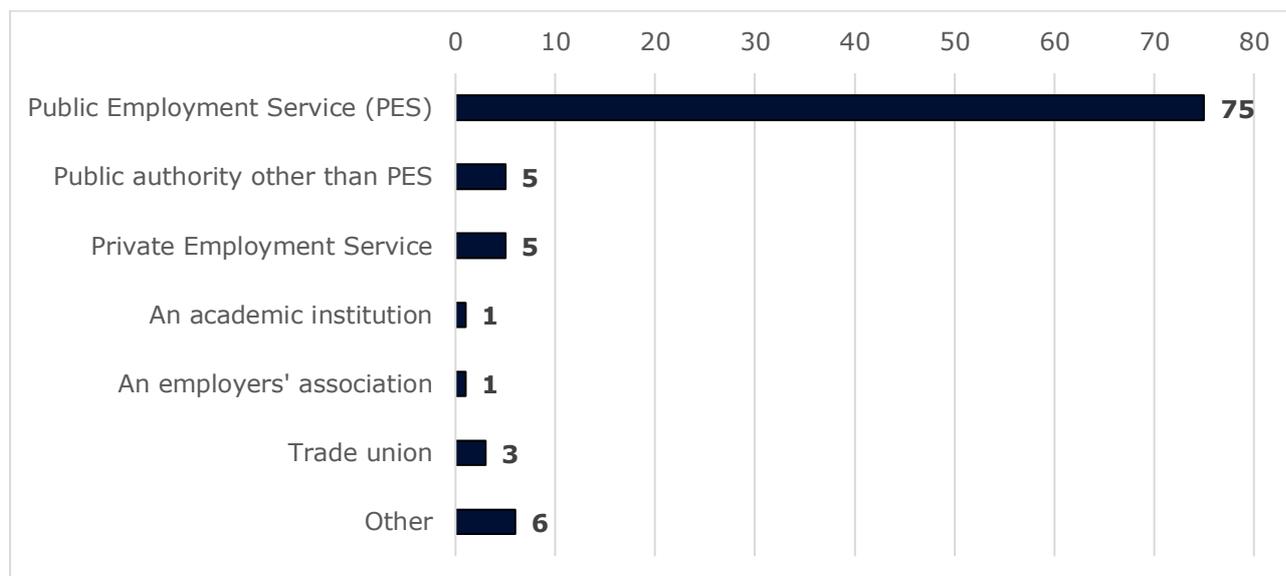
#### *What type of an organisation are you\**

The vast majority (78%) of respondents indicated that they represent a public employment service. This was followed by respondents (6%) who indicated that they are from another organisation than the list provided. These respondents then specified that they are

representatives of employers' and business' associations, cross-border partnerships, vocational training centres, examination chambers and information points.

The finding that most respondents are PES organisations is not entirely surprising as the majority of EURES Members come from PES. However, it is interesting from the point of view that one of the objectives of the new EURES Regulation was to expand the network to include also other types of stakeholders, particularly from the private sector. The survey did collect a few responses from the non-PES Members and Partners of the EURES network, however, further evidence is needed to draw conclusions on the success of this objective.

Figure 86 What type of an organisation are you (n=96)



*Name and surname of the person responding the survey on behalf of the organization and E-mail*

The respondents were asked to provide their name and e-mail address in case of a need for further clarifications. The names and e-mails of the respondents are kept confidential to ensure anonymity of answers.

*In accordance with the EURES Regulation, which of the following tasks do you NOT fulfil?\**

Before joining the EURES network, the EURES Regulation assigns the specific tasks Members and Partners have to provide. These tasks are:

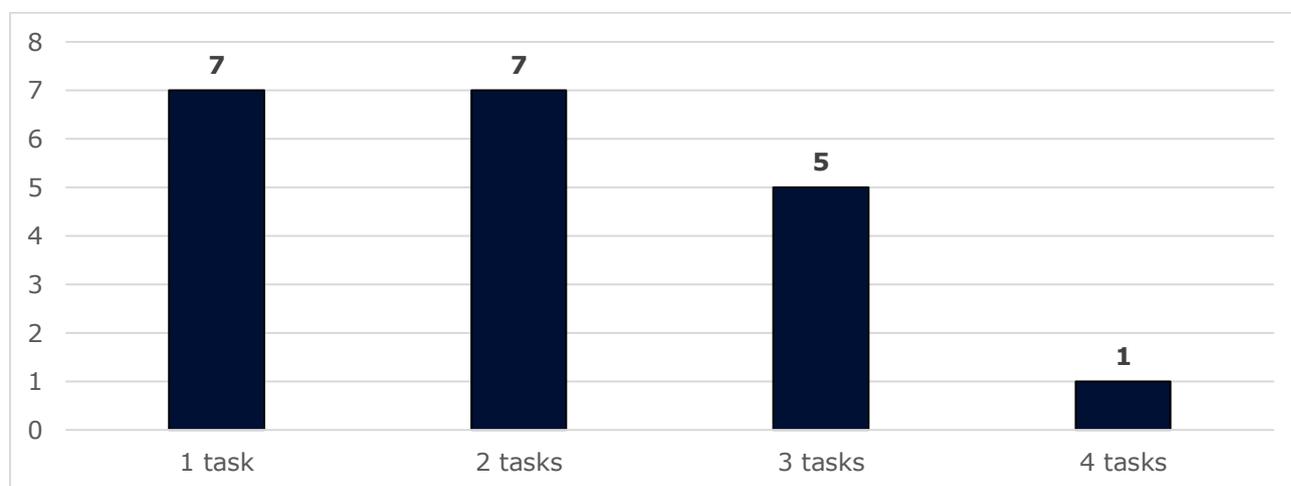
- Contributing to the pool of job vacancies in accordance with Art 17(1)(a)
- Contributing to the pool of job applications and CVs in accordance with Art 17(1)(b)
- Providing support services to workers and employers in accordance with Art 23 Support services for workers
- Providing support services to workers and employers in accordance with Art 24 Support services for employers
- Providing support services to workers and employers in accordance with Art 25(1) Post-recruitment assistance
- Providing support services to workers and employers in accordance with Art 26 Access to information on living and working conditions

- Providing support services to workers and employers in accordance with Art 27 Support services in cross-border regions

While the EURES Members have to provide all of these tasks, EURES Partners need to perform only some of them. If an organisation performs all of the tasks, they have to become a Member should they wish to join the network, i.e. no EURES Partner can perform all of these tasks.

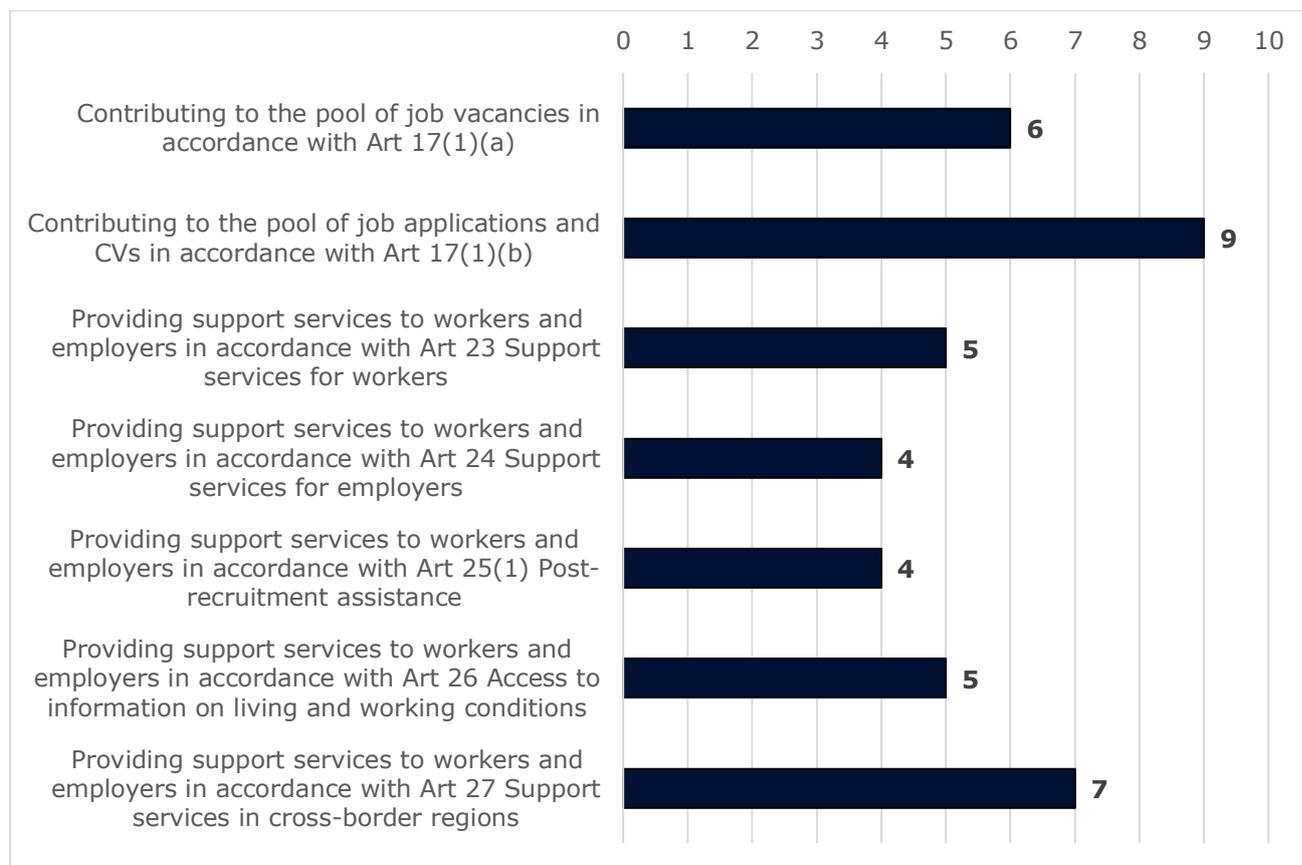
The 20 respondents that indicated that they are EURES Partners were asked which of the tasks they are not able to provide to jobseekers and employers. Each respondent could select more than one task. Most of the respondents selected one or two tasks. Five of them selected that they do not provide three tasks, while one of them indicated they do not provide four tasks out of the seven.

Figure 87 In accordance with the EURES Regulation, which of the following tasks do you NOT fulfil? Number of tasks selected (n=20)



The most selected task that the EURES Partners are not able to provide was 'Contributing to the pool of job applications and CVs in accordance with Art. 17(1)(b)'. This task was selected by nearly half of the responding EURES Partners. This was followed by 'Providing support services to workers and employers in accordance with Art. 27 Support services in cross-border regions' that was selected by one third of respondents.

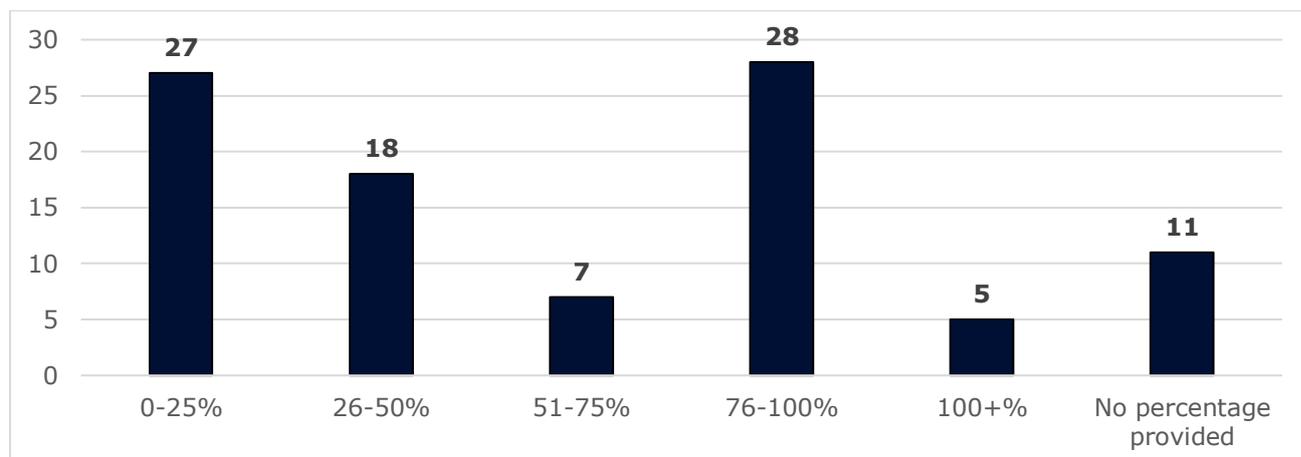
Figure 88 In accordance with the EURES Regulation, which of the following tasks do you NOT fulfil? (n=20)



*How much time your organisation dedicates to EURES and its services on average per week?*

The respondents were asked to provide an estimate of the overall percentage working hours their organisation’s staff devote to EURES activities. The largest group of respondents (29%) indicated that their organisation dedicates between 76 to 100% of their time to EURES and its services. This was very closely followed by those respondents (28%) indicating their organisation spends between 0 to 25% on EURES and its services. Five respondents (5%) indicated that their organisation spends more than 100% of its time on EURES while 11 respondents (12%) were unable to provide an estimate.

Figure 89 How much time your organisation dedicates to EURES and its services on average per week? (n=96)



The respondents were able to provide comments to further clarify their answer. Forty-one of them made use of this opportunity. The majority used it to provide more detail on how they calculated the estimate. Some of them also provided the number of staff they have delivering EURES services and what percentage (or FTE) of their time they spend on these services. Some indicated that the time their staff spend on EURES services depends on the requests they receive from workers and employers.

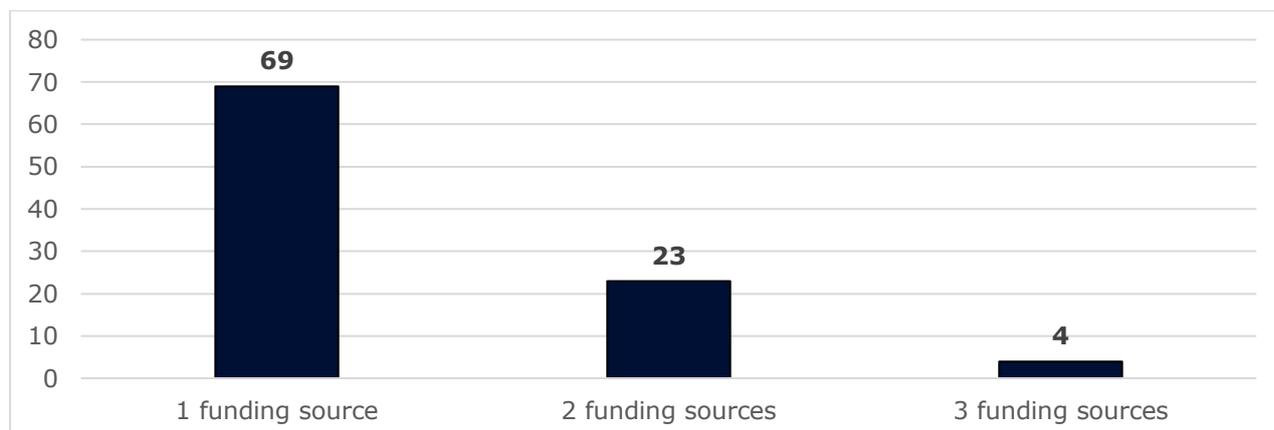
*Could you please specify from where you get funding for the EURES services you offer? Please select all that apply.*

The respondents were also asked about the sources that fund their EURES activities. They were asked to select each option that applies from the following funding sources:

- European Social Fund (ESF)
- Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- National funds
- Private funds
- Other

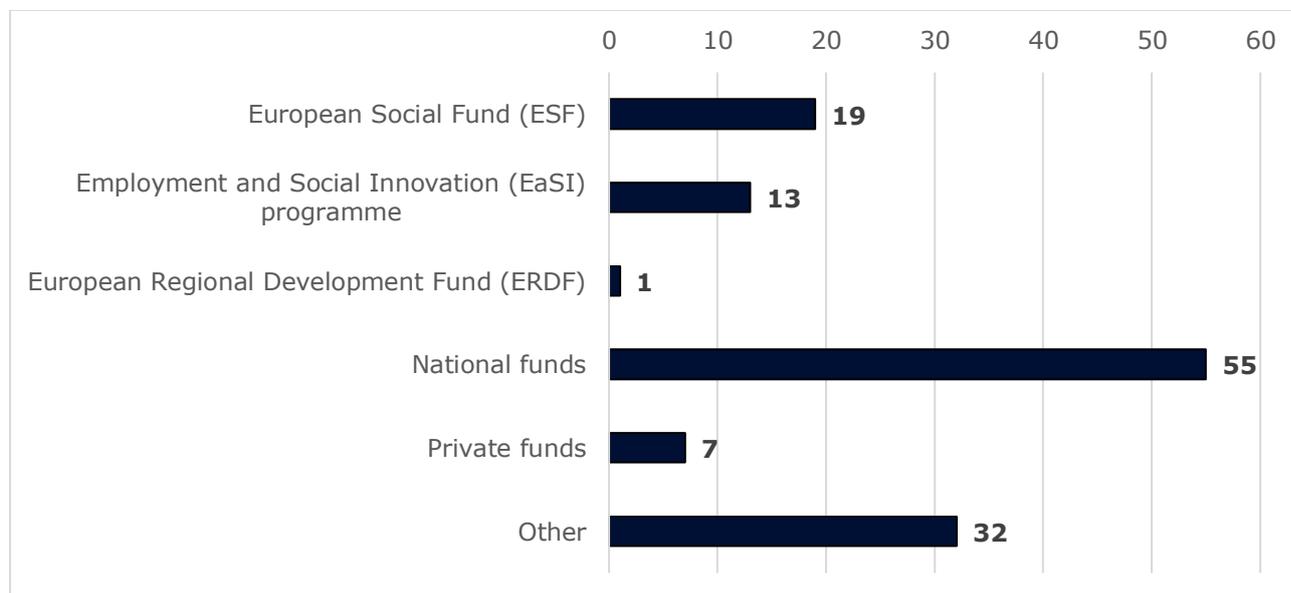
More than two thirds (72%) of the respondents selected only one funding source, while nearly one quarter (24%) selected two funding sources. Four respondents (4%) selected 3 funding sources.

Figure 90 Could you please specify from where you get funding for the EURES services you offer?  
Number of funding sources selected (n=96)



Most of the respondents (57%) selected that they receive their funding from national sources. One third (33%) of respondents indicated that their organisation receives funds from other sources. When asked to specify, many mentioned funding from regional and municipal authorities or the regional/local branches of the employment services, their own sources (without specifying) or Interreg programmes. Some of the respondents indicated that they receive no funding for EURES services or that they are not sure where their funding comes from.

Figure 91 Could you please specify from where you get funding for the EURES services you offer?  
(n=96)



### Views on EURES

This section aimed to gather the respondents’ overall views on EURES and its objectives.

*To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the added value of EURES to jobseekers?\**

The respondents were shown six statements about EURES and its added value to jobseekers and asked to which extent they agree or disagree with them. The statements were the following:

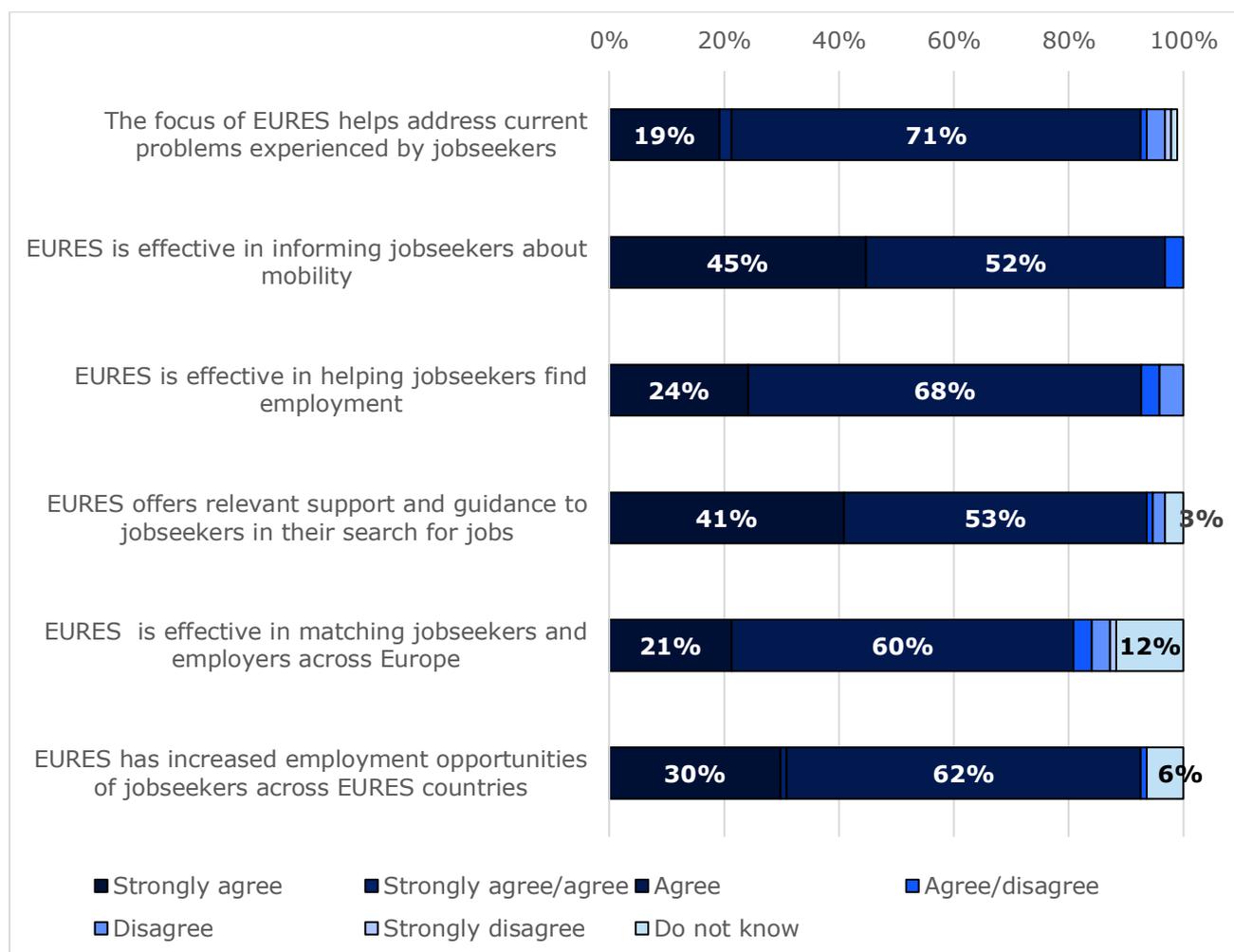
- The focus of EURES helps address current problems experienced by jobseekers
- EURES is effective in informing jobseekers about mobility
- EURES is effective in helping jobseekers find employment
- EURES offers relevant support and guidance to jobseekers in their search for jobs
- EURES is effective in matching jobseekers and employers across Europe
- EURES has increased employment opportunities of jobseekers across EURES countries

Overall, all six statements received positive or very positive feedback. This ranged from 81% of respondents who (strongly) agreed with EURES being effective in matching jobseekers and employers across Europe (21% strongly agreed, 60% agreed) to 97% who (strongly) agreed to EURES being effective in informing jobseekers about mobility (45% strongly agreed, 52% agreed). For each of the statements, a few respondents selected more than one answer options, while others preferred not to answer.

The respondents were able to leave comments regarding their answers. Very few (5) took advantage of this option. When they did, the respondents chose to justify their response. For example, by mentioning that the EURES approach offers a close, flexible and integrated system to promote labour mobility for jobseekers.

A few of the respondents also chose to highlight areas that still need to be improved. One of these include that EURES services are not always user-friendly, that there is a need to develop a training programme to increase mobility, or that the visibility and recognition of EURES by the public needs to be increased. The offer of job vacancies and CVs needs to continue to improve as, oftentimes, there are multiple postings for the same vacancy (as the vacancy is included in multiple national job vacancy databases through which each of them gets transferred through the Single Coordinated Channel to the EURES portal) or that the portal still advertises 2018 job vacancies with a 6-month contract in 2020. The lack of detailed information in both job vacancies and CVs was also highlighted.

Figure 92 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the added value of EURES to jobseekers? (n=93-95)



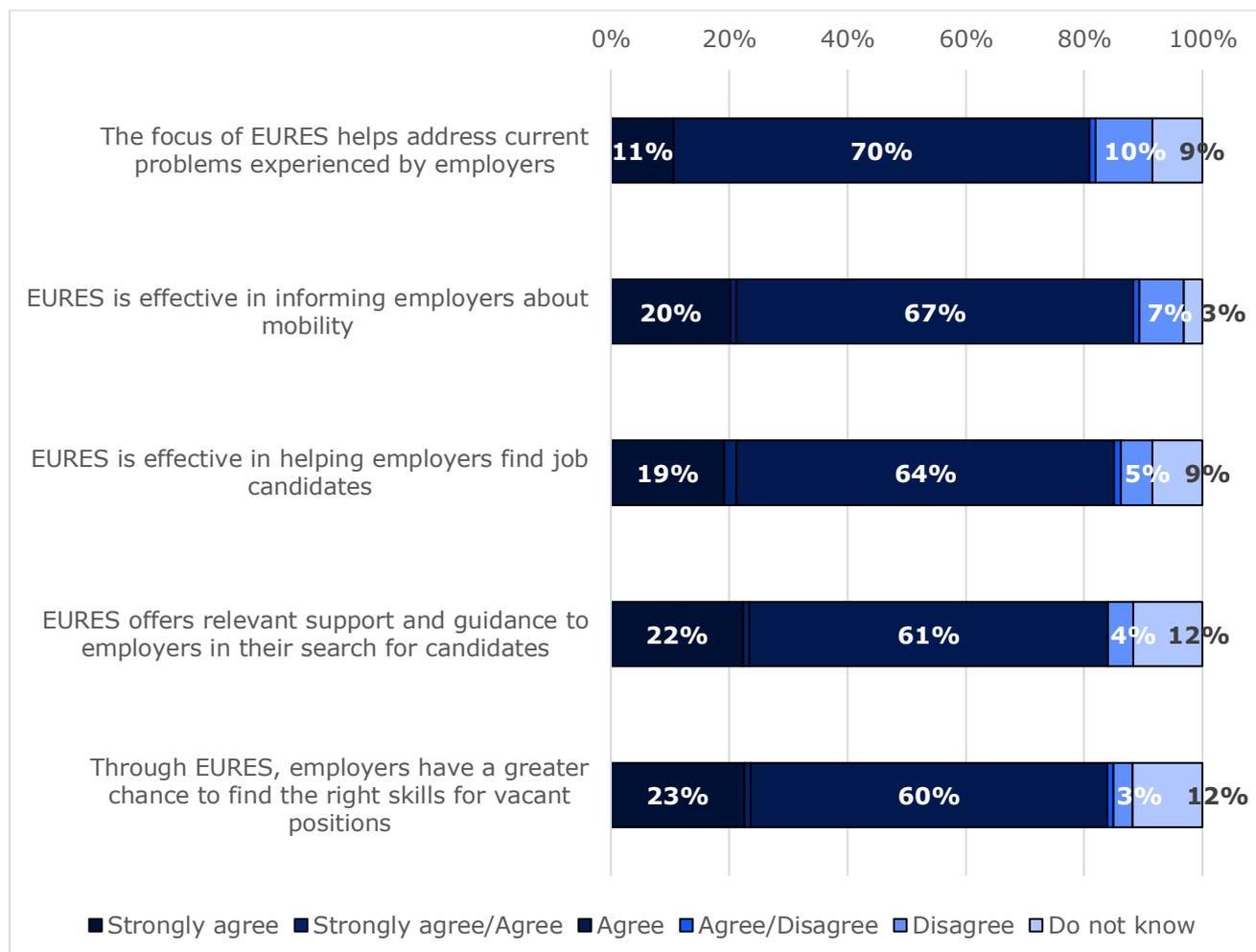
*To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the added value of EURES for employers?\**

The respondents were shown five statements about EURES and its added value to employers and asked to which extent they agree or disagree with them. The statements were the following:

- The focus of EURES helps address current problems experienced by employers
- EURES is effective in informing employers about mobility
- EURES is effective in helping employers find job candidates
- EURES offers relevant support and guidance to employers in their search for candidates
- Through EURES, employers have a greater chance to find the right skills for vacant positions

Overall, all five statements received positive feedback. No respondent indicated that they strongly disagree with any of the statements. The disagreement range was between 3-10%. The statement with which the respondents agreed the most (88%) was about EURES being effective in informing employers about mobility. Sixty-seven percent of respondents agreed with this statement and 20% even strongly agreed with it.

Figure 93 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the added value of EURES for employers? (n=93-94)



The respondents were able to add comments to further develop their response. A few of them (9) took advantage of this. The respondents mainly highlighted that many of the EURES countries face similar occupational shortages and surpluses and, therefore, are in competition with each other to attract the same workers. The countries that have a better economic standing and better working conditions (e.g. higher salaries) have an advantage. Employers in “less attractive” countries prefer to look for employees from third countries.

Once again, the lack of visibility and recognition of EURES by employers were pointed out as needing improvement, as in comparison with jobseekers, the respondents feel that EURES and its services are even less known among employers. Therefore, the focus should be on increasing awareness and also developing further the service offering towards employers.

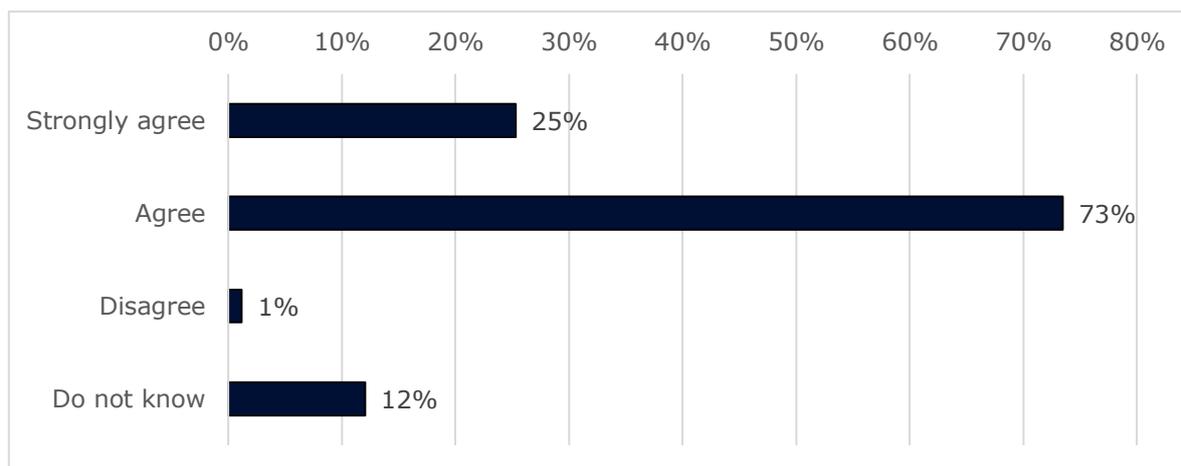
*To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the EU added value and coherence of EURES?\**

The respondents were shown eight statements on the EU added value and coherence of EURES and asked to assess the extent to which they agree with it. The results per statement are provided below.

[EURES complements other European initiatives on employment and mobility \(e.g. European Structural and Investment Funds, Employment and Social Innovation programme\)](#)

Ninety-eight percent of respondents expressed their positive opinion about EURES being complementary with other European initiatives on employment and mobility. Of these, 73% agreed with the statement, while 25% strongly agreed with it. Only 1% disagreed with it. The remaining respondents did not know.

Figure 94 EURES complements other European initiatives on employment and mobility (n=93)

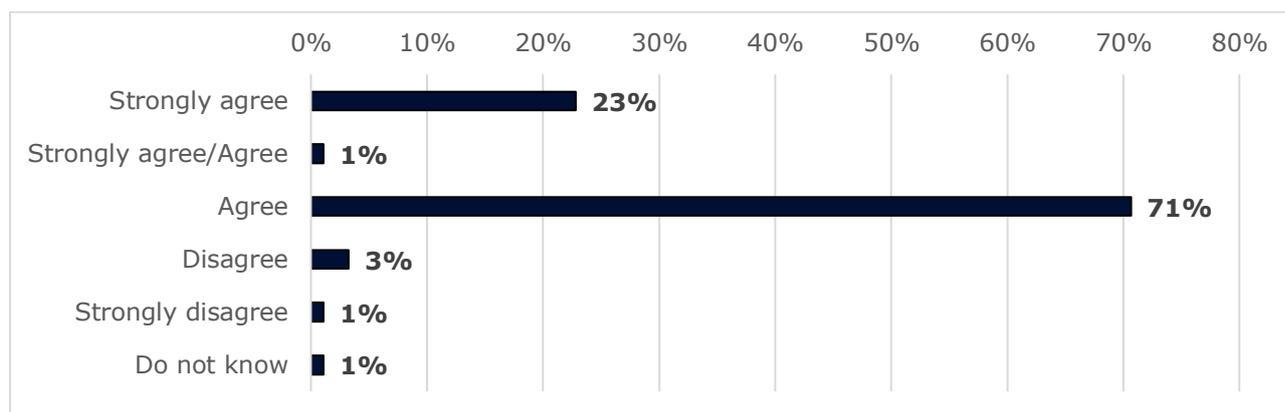


Only two respondents left comments to further clarify their answer. While they feel that they might not have a sufficient knowledge of the other programmes, they highlight the need to improve the coordination and cooperation among these initiatives, including funding, to better concentrate the efforts of all to address social exclusion.

[EURES complements national initiatives on employment and mobility](#)

Ninety-five percent of respondents expressed their positive opinion about EURES being complementary with national initiatives on employment and mobility. Of these, 71% agreed with the statement, while 23% strongly agreed with it. Number-wise, this is the same number of respondents as those who agreed or strongly agreed with EURES being complementary to other European initiatives, however, the same respondents did not select the same answer for both questions (i.e. while with one statement they might have strongly agreed, they only agreed with the other one etc.). Similarly, to the previous statement, the remainder of respondents were nearly equally split between the other answer options. No one provided any additional comments on this statement.

Figure 95 EURES complements national initiatives on employment and mobility (n=92)

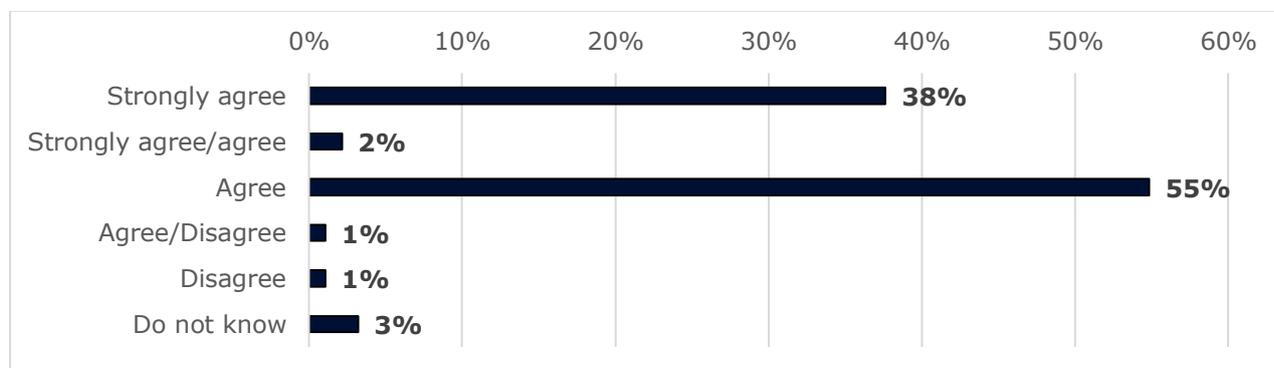


**More can be done to promote jobs and mobility through EURES than with national resources only**

Similarly to the previous statements, this statement was positively received by 95% of all respondents. Thirty-eight percent strongly agreed with the statement and 55% agreed with it. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with it.

In the couple of comments provided by the respondents, they indicated the European (Online) Job days as a good example for this statement. The need to continue efforts to promote employment and mobility was also highlighted.

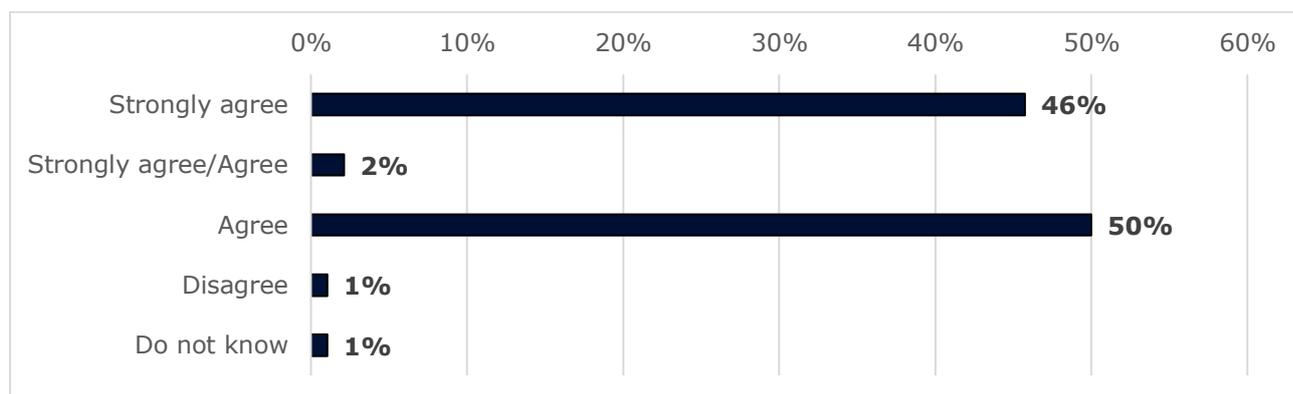
Figure 96 More can be done to promote jobs and mobility through EURES than with national resources only (n=93)



**EURES contributes to promoting the mobility of workers**

The statement that EURES contributes to promoting mobility of workers received the most positive feedback with 98% of respondents strongly agreeing (46%) or agreeing (50%) with it. Yet again, none of the respondents strongly disagreed with it. No comments were left to accompany the respondents' answers.

Figure 97 EURES contributes to promoting the mobility of workers (n=94)

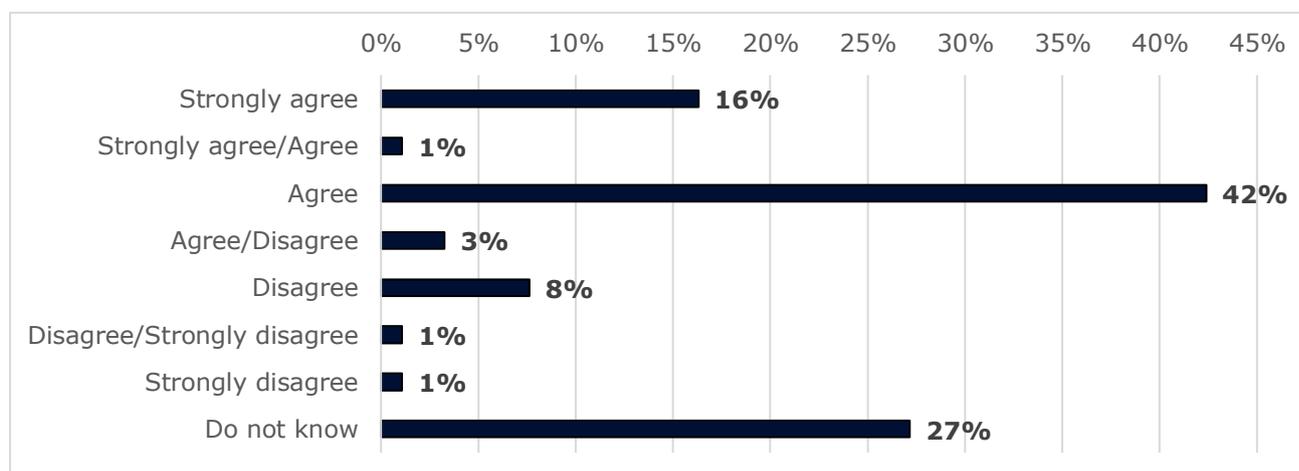


### EURES helps countries find common employment strategies

The level of agreement with this statement was the lowest within this question. While 42% of respondents did agree with EURES helping countries to find common employment strategies, this was followed by 27% who were unsure about the statement and only 16% strongly agreed with it. Still, only 1% of respondents strongly disagreed with it.

The 6 comments left by the respondents urged for this point to be strengthened particularly once the COVID-19 pandemic has been overcome. A need for stronger cooperation with the Public Employment Services (PES) Network was highlighted. It was also mentioned that while EURES helps countries share common objectives, it is each individual PES that develop their own strategies, tools and programmes.

Figure 98 EURES helps countries find common employment strategies (n=92)

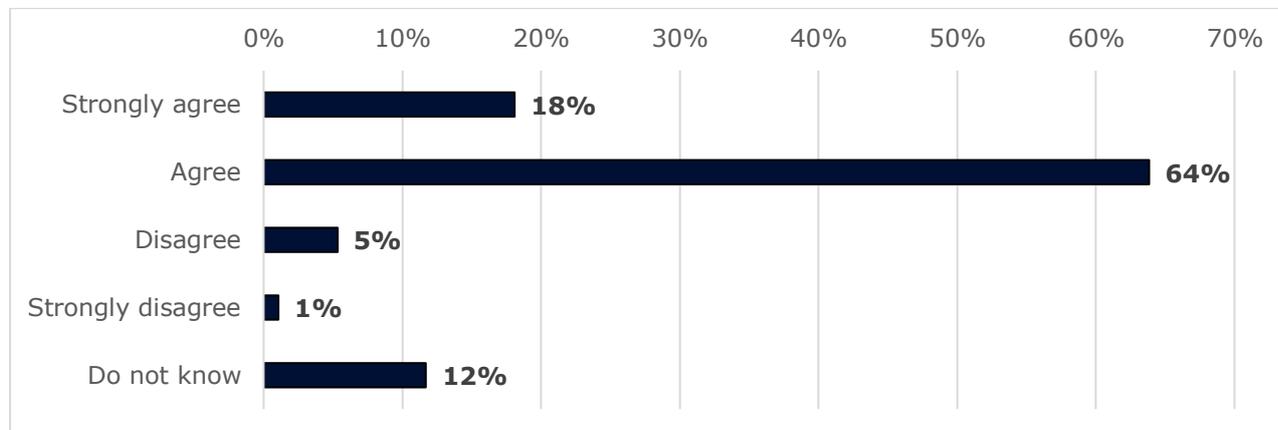


### EURES contributes to improving the functioning and integration of the labour markets in EURES countries

Sixty-four percent of respondents agreed to the statement that EURES contributes to the improvement of the functioning and integration of the labour markets in EURES countries. Furthermore, 18% strongly agree with the statement and 12% were unsure about their opinion. Only 1% of respondents strongly disagree with it.

In the couple of comments the respondents provided, they highlight that the statement is true to a certain point as each country tries to protect their labour market as best as they can.

Figure 99 EURES contributes to improving the functioning and integration of the labour markets in EURES countries (n=94)

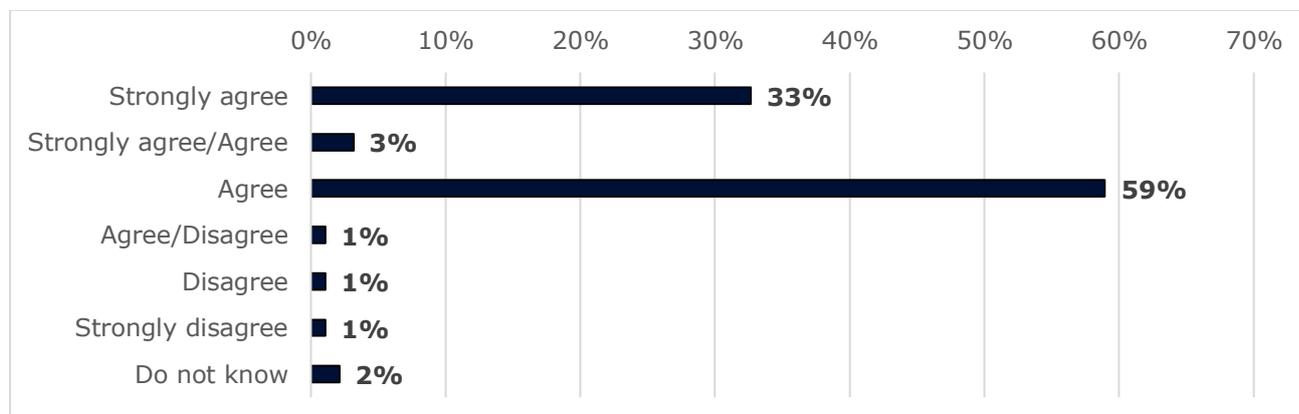


### EURES promotes and supports fair and non-discriminatory working conditions

Ninety-five percent of respondents viewed the statement that EURES promotes and supports fair and non-discriminatory working conditions as positive. Fifty-nine percent agreed with the statement and 33% even strongly agreed with it.

In the four comments provided, respondents highlighted that it is imperative to raise even greater awareness of discrimination, social fraud, non-compliance with fair working conditions and overall safety. In this regard, the role of EURES staff is very important. This responsibility should further be strengthened and closely monitored by the newly founded European Labour Agency so that all European citizens can exercise their right to free movement equally. A unified system of social security identification of workers and those with social security insurance should be established to further strengthen this aspect.

Figure 100 EURES promotes and supports fair and non-discriminatory working conditions (n=95)



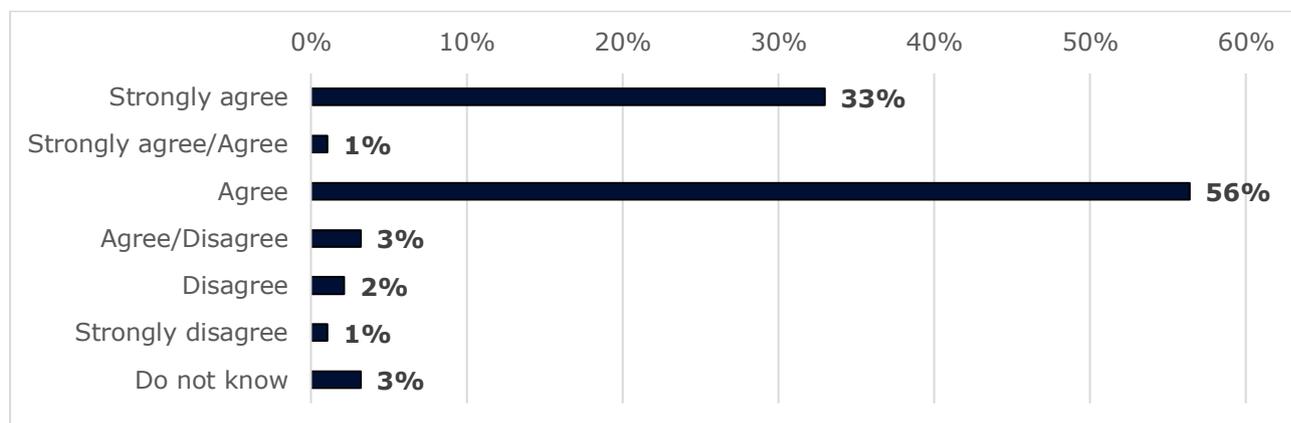
### EURES raises awareness about labour mobility matters across the EURES countries

Ninety percent of respondents reacted positively to the statement that EURES raises awareness about labour mobility matters across the EURES countries. Of these, 56%

agreed with the statement and 33% strongly agreed with it. Only one respondent strongly disagreed with this statement.

In the couple comments provided for this statement, the respondents highlighted that this area still needs to be developed further as EURES is not a well-known brand among the general public.

Figure 101 EURES raises awareness about labour mobility matters across the EURES countries (n=94)

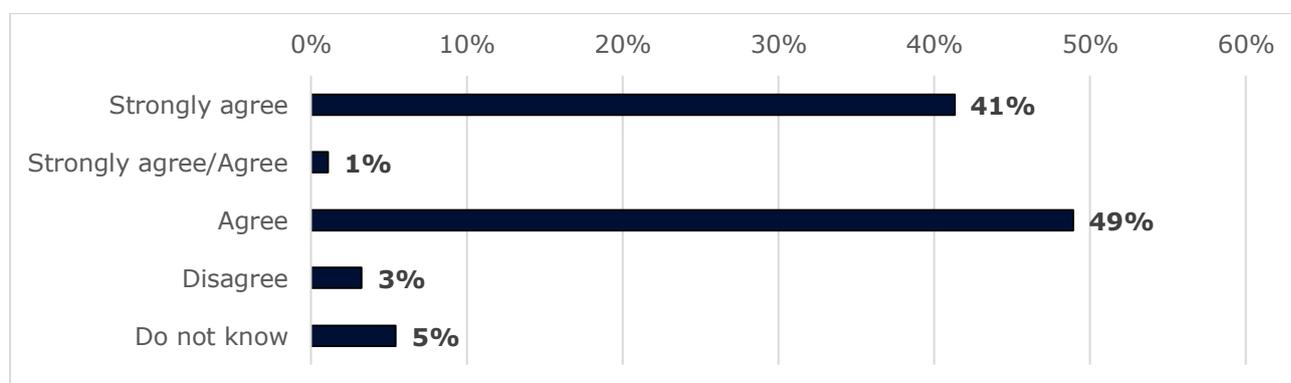


[EURES contributes to a transparent labour market by providing information and guidance about vacancies](#)

Also in the last statement within this question, the largest group of respondents agreed (49%) with the statement that EURES contributes to a transparent labour market by providing information and guidance about vacancies. This was followed by 41% of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with it.

In the couple comments provided for this statement, it was highlighted that the effort to increase transparency across the EURES network should continue and be developed even further.

Figure 102 EURES contributes to a transparent labour market by providing information and guidance about vacancies (n=92)



*In your opinion, what are the barriers and challenges regarding intra-EU labour mobility?*

In this open question, the respondents were asked to describe the challenges and barriers to intra-EU labour mobility. Seventy-seven of them provided their feedback.

The language barrier was the most mentioned issue. This was followed by cultural and educational barriers and the difficulty with the recognition of diplomas, particularly in certain professions as there is no common approach agreed and each country may have different requirements. Familial and other ties to one's country were often highlighted as both barriers and challenges to labour mobility.

The difference of legal regulations, administrative procedures and the (lack of) knowledge of the various requirements were also mentioned on numerous occasions, particularly with connection to cross-border workers. The COVID-19 pandemic was mentioned on a few occasions as it put a stop to intra-EU labour mobility due to many Member States closing down their borders. The political unwillingness to promote intra-EU mobility and the national strategies to prevent brain drain, particularly of sought-after professions, were also highlighted.

As a continuous challenge, the respondents mentioned the fact that many countries experience shortages of the same occupations and that there is an unequal playing field in terms of socio-economic conditions among countries. The lack of housing and accommodation support in the first months of one's move to foreign country was also mentioned as a challenge by number of respondents as this affects particularly workers coming from lower income backgrounds. The overall lack of financial support to those who decide to move was mentioned on more than few occasions as well.

The low visibility of EURES, particularly on local level was also pinpointed as a challenge that the whole network should be working on together to overcome it. Smaller initiatives targeting specific regions with specific problems should also be strengthened.

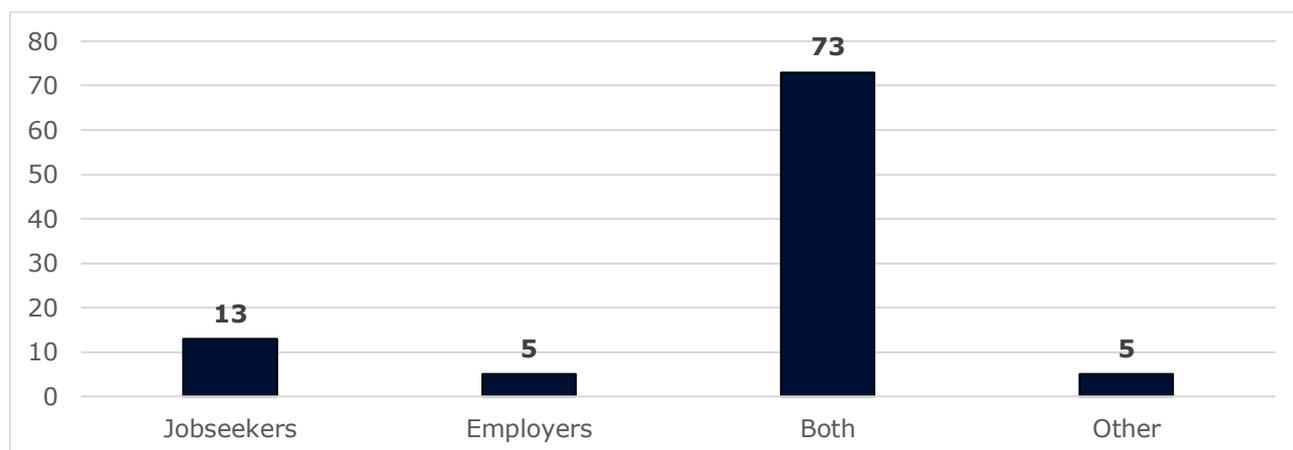
### **Questions on EURES services**

This section focused on collecting feedback from respondents on the various services EURES offers.

*Which target groups do you offer EURES services to:\**

More than two thirds (76%) of respondents indicated that they target both jobseekers and employers with their EURES services. Fourteen percent indicated that they target only jobseekers, and 5% only target employers. The five respondents who selected the 'Other' option, specified their target groups as possible future jobseekers (i.e. those who are still in education/training) or pensioners.

Figure 103 Which target groups do you offer EURES services to (n=96)

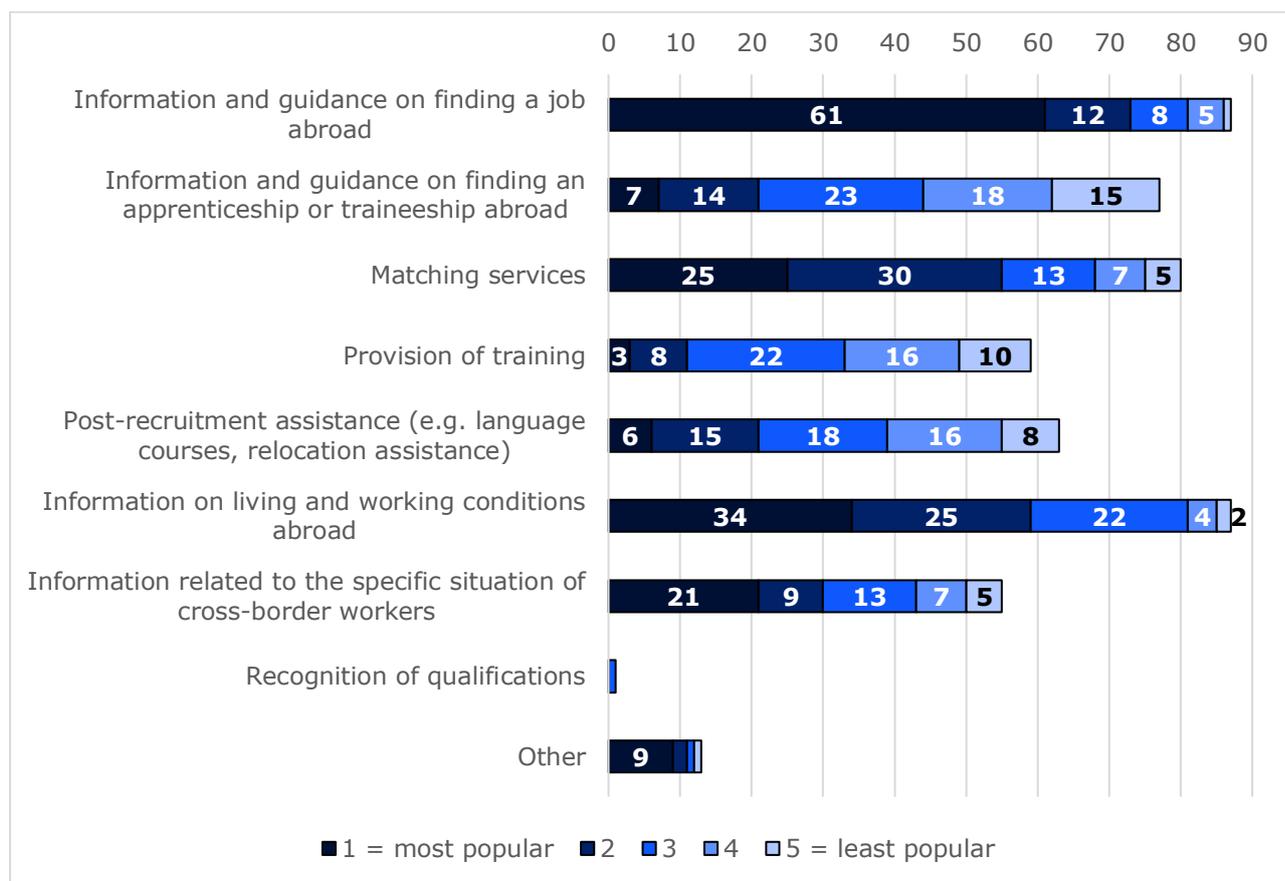


*From the services you offer, which seem to be the most popular among jobseekers? Prioritise from most popular to least popular (1= most popular, 5 = least popular)*

The respondents who indicated that they provide services to jobseekers and those who indicated that they provide services to other or both main EURES target groups were asked to assess the popularity of the different EURES services among the jobseekers. In total, 91 respondents were asked to provide their opinion.

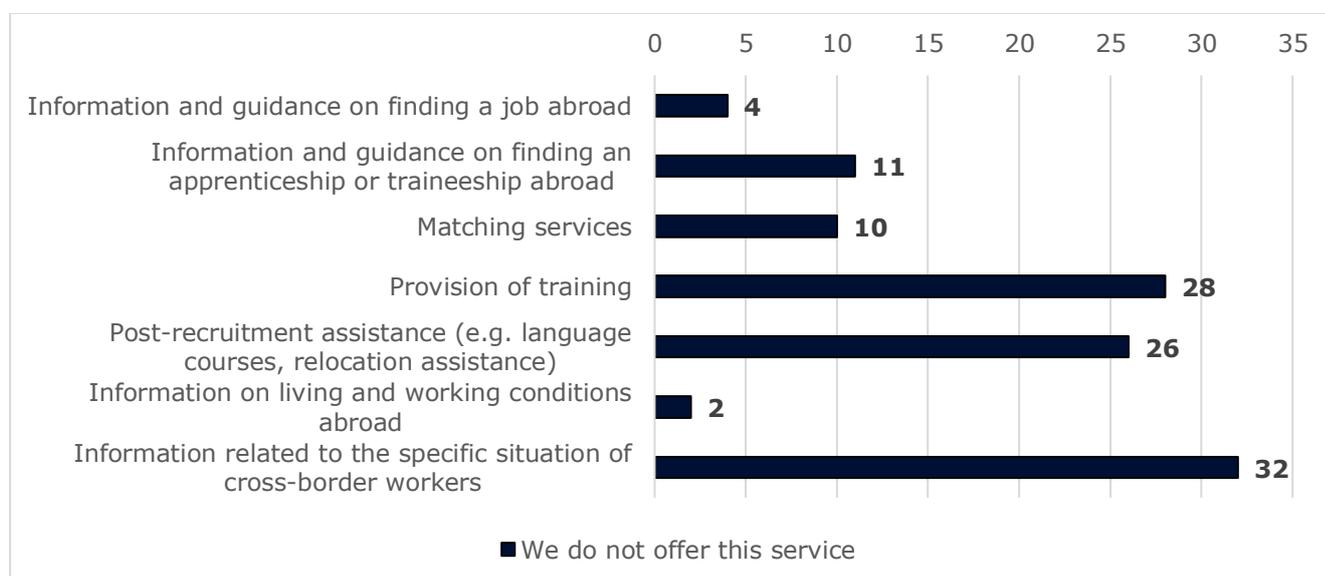
Among the EURES services provided to jobseekers, 'Information and guidance on finding a job abroad' was selected as most popular by 67% (61) of respondents. This was followed by the 'Information on living and working conditions abroad' service, which was selected as the most popular service by 37% (34) of respondents. The service on 'Recognition of qualifications' seems to be the least popular service as only one respondent rated it '3' while the other respondents did not assign any rating to it nor did they specify that they did not provide this service. Among the 'Other' services, the respondents mainly named their specific services, such as information on industry, qualifications and vocational education; information about mobility assistance programmes; return migration; sector specific language training; targeted mobility schemes; pre-recruitment services; or social security issues.

Figure 104 From the services you offer, which seem to be the most popular among jobseekers? (n=91)



The respondents could also indicate which services they do not offer to avoid distorted rating. About 35% (32) of the respondents indicated that they do not offer information related to the specific cross-border situation of cross-border workers. It is interesting that while only one respondent chose to rate the 'Recognition of qualifications' service, none of the other respondents indicated that they would not offer this offer.

Figure 105 From the services you offer, which seem to be the most popular among jobseekers? We do not offer this service (n=91)

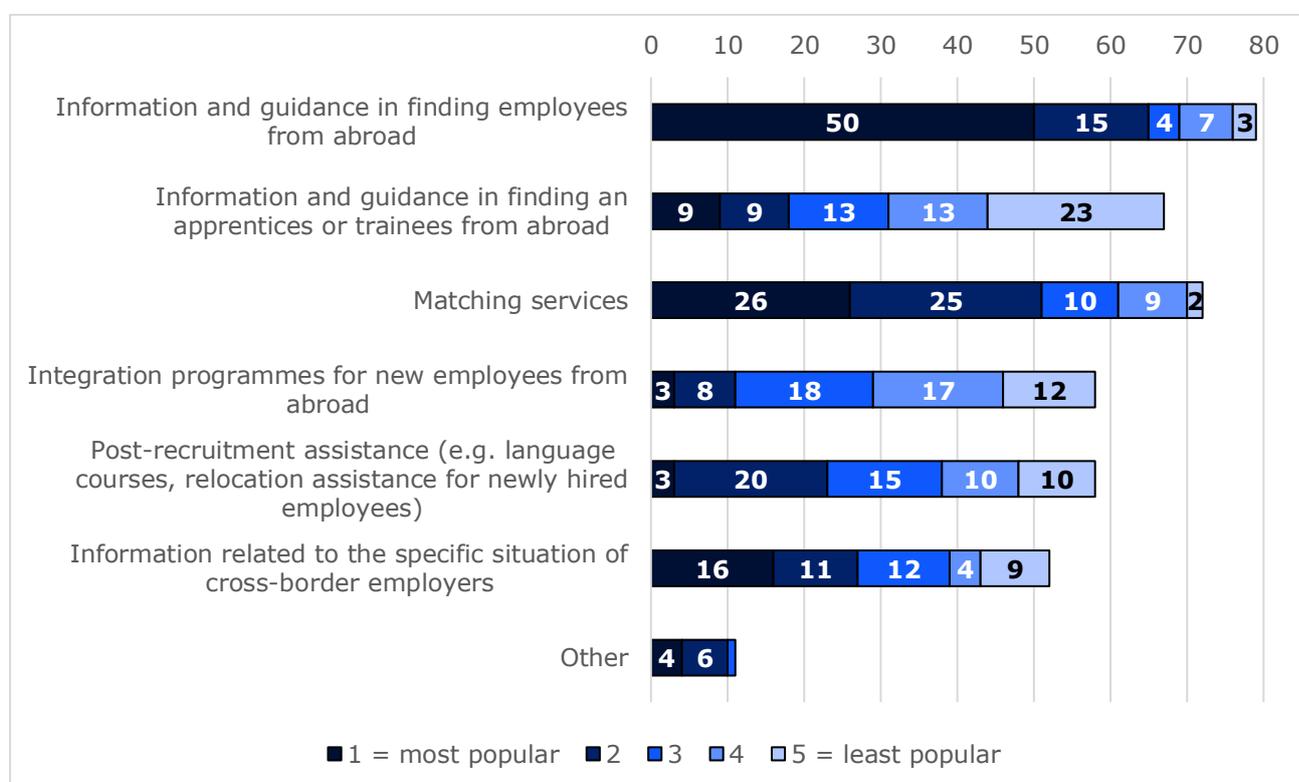


*From the services you offer, which seem to be the most popular among employers? Prioritise from most popular to least popular (1= most popular, 5 = least popular)*

This section was shown to 83 respondents (those who selected that they provide services to 'Employers', 'Both' or 'Other'), however, one respondent preferred not to rate the popularity of services.

The EURES service for employers that was rated as the most popular by the respondents (61%, 50) was 'Information and guidance in finding employees from abroad'. This was followed by 'Matching services' that was selected as the most popular by 32% (26). For the 'Other' services provided to employers, respondents mentioned services on how to write vacancies for better matching; targeted mobility schemes; social security and taxation issues; information about foreign qualifications; or about employing workers from third countries (which does not fall within EURES's scope).

Figure 106 From the services you offer, which seem to be the most popular among employers? (n=82)



Similarly to the services offer to jobseekers, the service that the largest group of respondents (34%, 28) do not provide was 'Information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers'.

Figure 107 From the services you offer, which seem to be the most popular among employers? We do not offer this service (n=82)



*In your opinion, what are the factors that facilitate the effectiveness of the EURES services that you offer?*

When asked what the respondents considered as factors facilitating the effectiveness of EURES services, 74 of them provided a response. The suggestions included the following:

- Mainstreaming of EURES services into PES
- Well-trained, specialised and committed staff
- Access to the human network
- Cooperation within the EURES network
- Work with various social partners and organisations
- Strong presence on social media
- Specialised recruitment and information events
- Individual and tailor-made approach to each jobseeker and employer
- Cross-border network
- EURES tools
- High degree of transparency
- National policies towards EURES
- Targeted Mobility Schemes
- Accessibility of services (free of charge)
- Good knowledge of the target groups
- Exchange of knowledge and experience within the network
- Empathy

*In your opinion, what are the factors that hinder the effectiveness of the EURES services that you offer?*

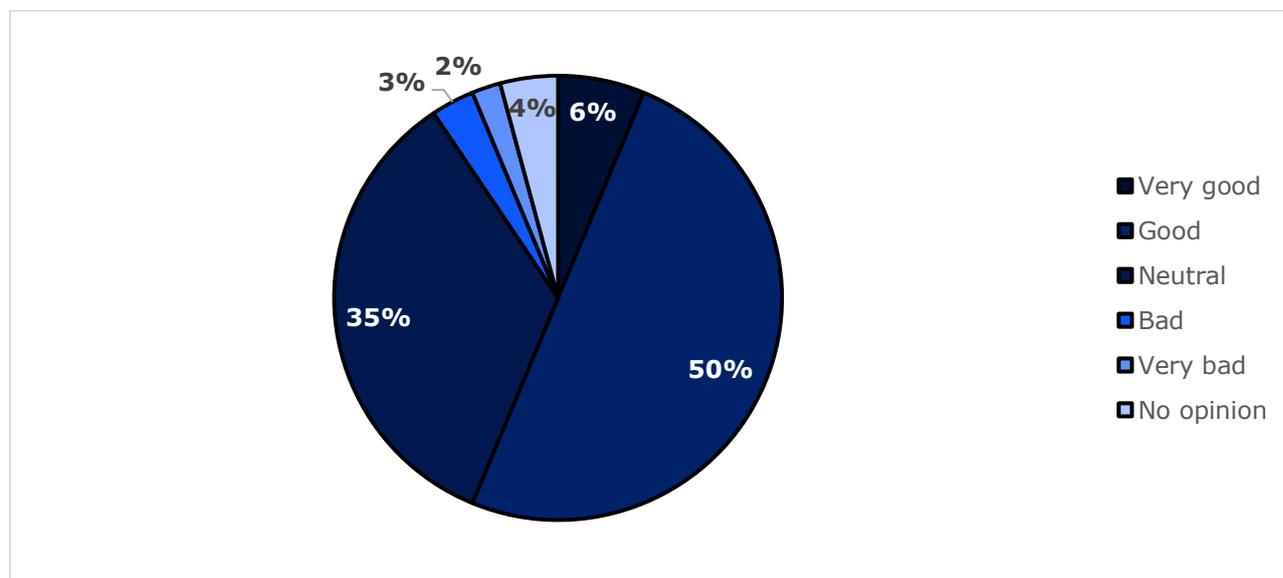
When asked about the hindering factors towards the effectiveness of the EURES services, 72 respondents mentioned the following:

- Not all EURES staff dedicate 100% of their time to EURES as they have other responsibilities as well
- Lack of functioning automated matching
- COVID-19
- The withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union
- Changes in the labour market and national labour policies
- Low knowledge of EURES services among general public
- Skills mismatch
- Lack of access to (social) media for promotion
- No provision of language training
- Lack of access to EURES services in scarcely populated regions or of population without access to the Internet
- Low user-friendliness of the EURES portal
- Lack of modern ICT systems
- Lack of funding of services and activities
- Different structures of national EURES networks
- Low visibility of EURES and its services.

*How would you assess the degree of standardisation of EURES services provision across the EURES network?\**

When asked about the degree of standardisation of EURES services provision across the EURES network, half of the respondents (50%, 48) rated it as good, followed by those who rated it neutral (35%, 33). Four respondents had no opinion regarding the matter.

Figure 108 How would you assess the degree of standardisation of EURES services provision across the EURES network (n=96)



*How can the EURES services be improved?*

To conclude this section of the survey, the respondents were asked for suggestions on how to improve the EURES services. Sixty-six of them responded to this question. The suggestions included:

- A swift development of an automated matching tool

- Developing new ways to interact online with target groups to continue offering high-quality services
- A single gateway point for all Targeted Mobility Schemes to provide consistent services
- Head-hunting services
- More human resources, particularly regarding their time dedicated to EURES services and activities
- Better funding
- Better IT tools and equipment
- Better promotion of services
- Increase visibility of EURES
- Strengthen the EURES brand
- More focus on cross-border activities
- More user-friendly EURES portal
- More interactive E(O)JD platform
- Better training on the functionalities of the EURES portal's Extranet
- Better cooperation within national EURES networks
- More exchange of knowledge and experience within the EURES network
- More coordinated approach
- Funding for language courses
- Common European digital ID
- Better cooperation with other EU initiatives, such as Erasmus
- Exchange of EURES staff
- Better understanding of jobseekers' and employers' needs
- Develop a tool to compare living and working conditions across the EURES countries
- More training for EURES staff

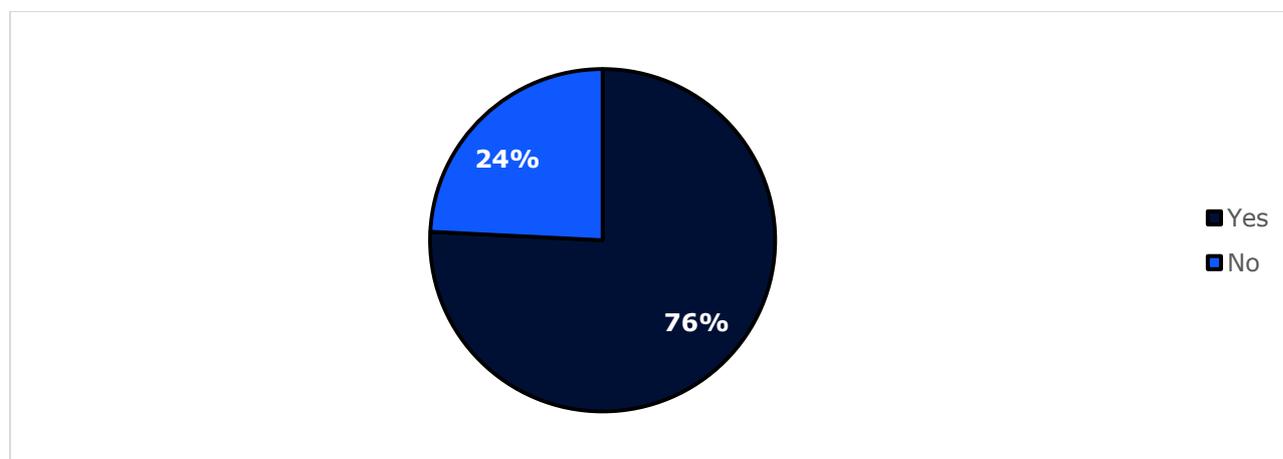
### Questions on the EURES portal

In this section, the respondents were asked to provide their feedback on the EURES portal.

*Do you think the EURES portal is easy to find?*

Three quarters of respondents (75%, 72) said that EURES portal is easy to find. Twenty-four percent (23) of respondents disagreed. One respondent preferred not to answer.

Figure 109 Do you think the EURES portal is easy to find? (n=95)



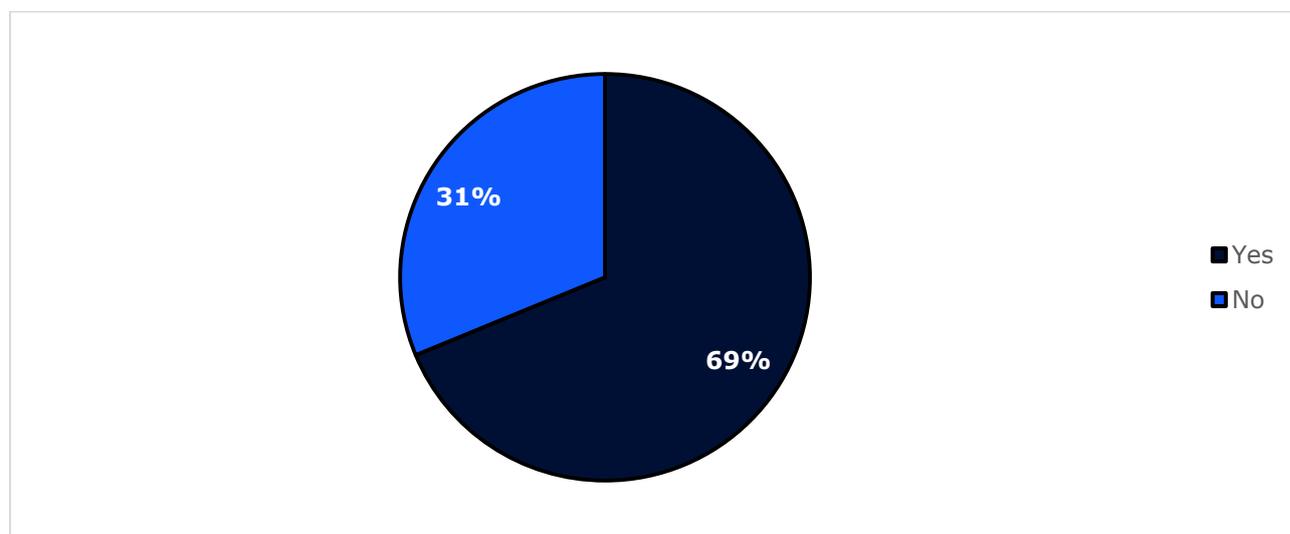
In the 21 comments provided for this question, the respondents specified that it is easy to find for EURES staff and if one knows what they are looking for. It is not so easy for

jobseekers or employers as the search engines do not always include it among the first results, even when searching how to find employment in the EU. As many people do not know about EURES, they also do not know how to look for it. There is also a problem with those jobseekers who do not have access to the Internet or do not possess sufficient IT skills to use the EURES portal.

*Do you use the EURES portal in your daily work?*

Slightly more than two thirds (69%, 66) of the respondents indicated that they use the EURES portal in their daily work. In the 15 comments provided, some of the respondents clarified that they use the national EURES portal daily or that while they do not use the EURES portal in their daily work they use it regularly. Some mentioned that they use the EURES portal’s Extranet more often.

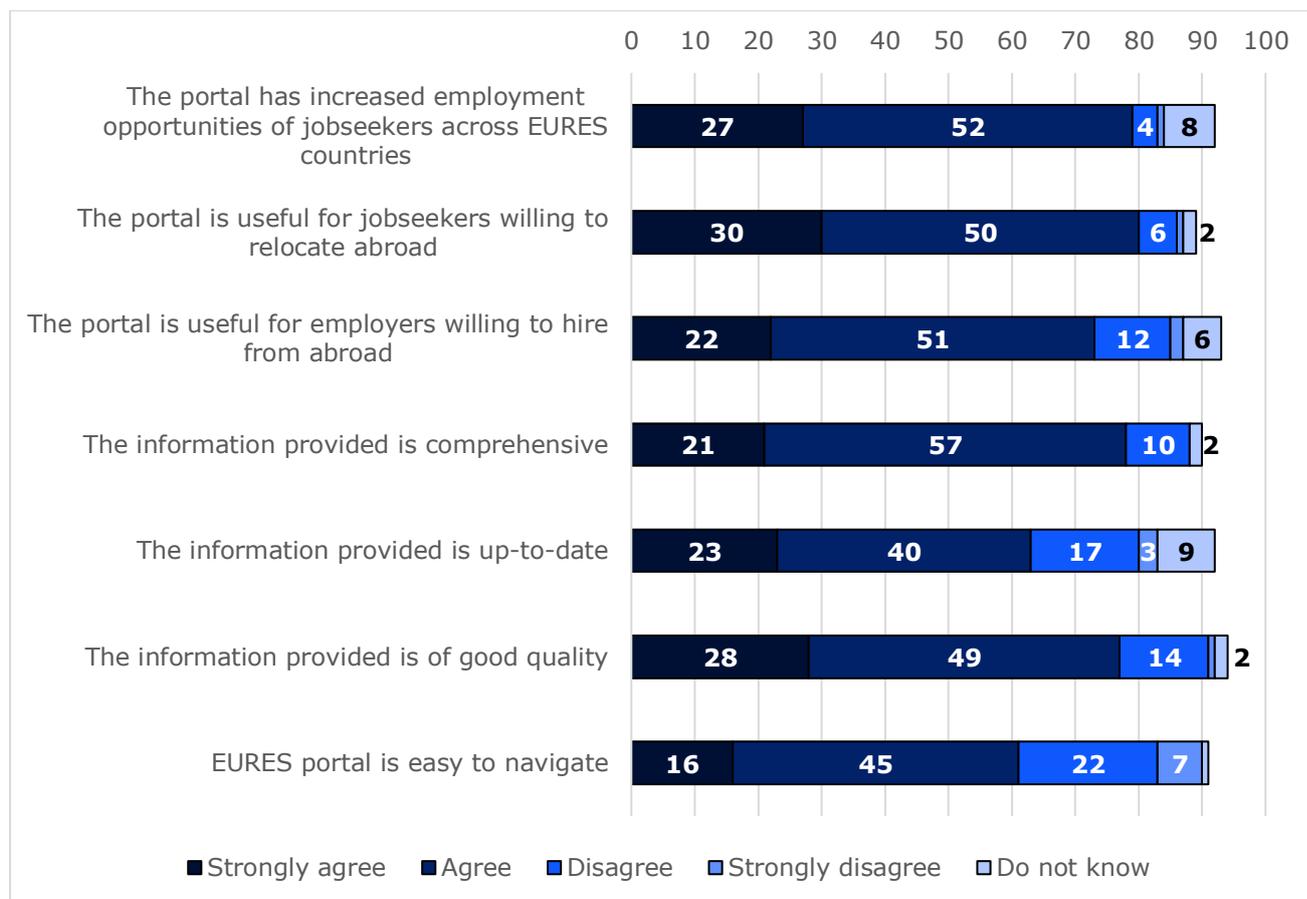
Figure 110 Do you use the EURES portal in your daily work? (n=96)



*To what extent do you agree with the following statements:\**

The respondents were asked to assess the extent to which they agree with a selected number of statements about the EURES portal. From the answer options provided, the majority of respondents selected that they agree with each of the statements, the level of agreement ranged between 42 to 60%. Most respondents reacted positively (83%, 80) to the statement that the portal is useful for jobseekers willing to relocate abroad. Thirty-one percent (30) strongly agreed with this sentence and 52% (50) agreed with it. On the contrary, the most negative feedback (30%, 29) was provided to the statement that EURES portal is easy to navigate. Here, 23% (22) respondents disagreed with the statement and 7% (7) even strongly disagreed with it.

Figure 111 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the EURES portal (n=89-94)

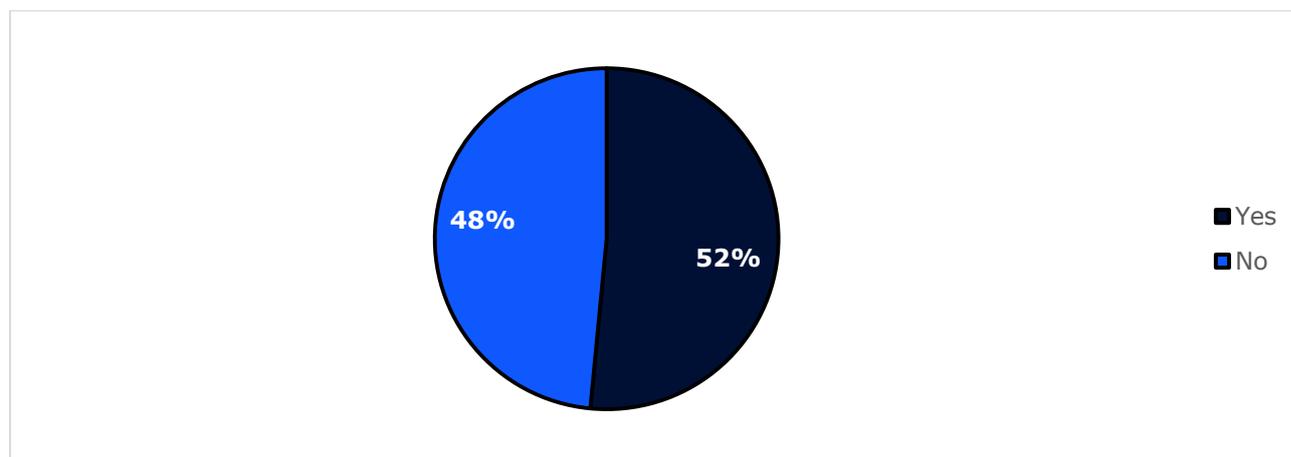


In the comments, respondents highlighted that while the content of the portal is certainly useful, its layout and navigation could be more user-friendly as often jobseekers and employers are not able to explore it to its full potential without the guidance of EURES staff. With the portal’s latest updates this has improved but there is still room for improvement. It was also pointed out that the section on living and working conditions is not updated regularly and often contains outdated information. The job vacancies offer should also be updated more regularly as currently some vacancies have been listed on the portal for more than a year.

*Do you use the EURES portal to search for possible matches between your CVs/JVs and the offers on the portal?*

Slightly more than half of respondents (52%, 34) indicated that they use the EURES portal for possible matches between their clients’ CVs/job vacancies and the offer in the portal’s database. Nearly the same percentage of respondents (48%, 32) indicated that they do not use it. Thirty respondents preferred not to provide an answer.

Figure 112 Do you use the EURES portal to search for possible matches between your CVs/JVs and the offers on the portal? (n=66)



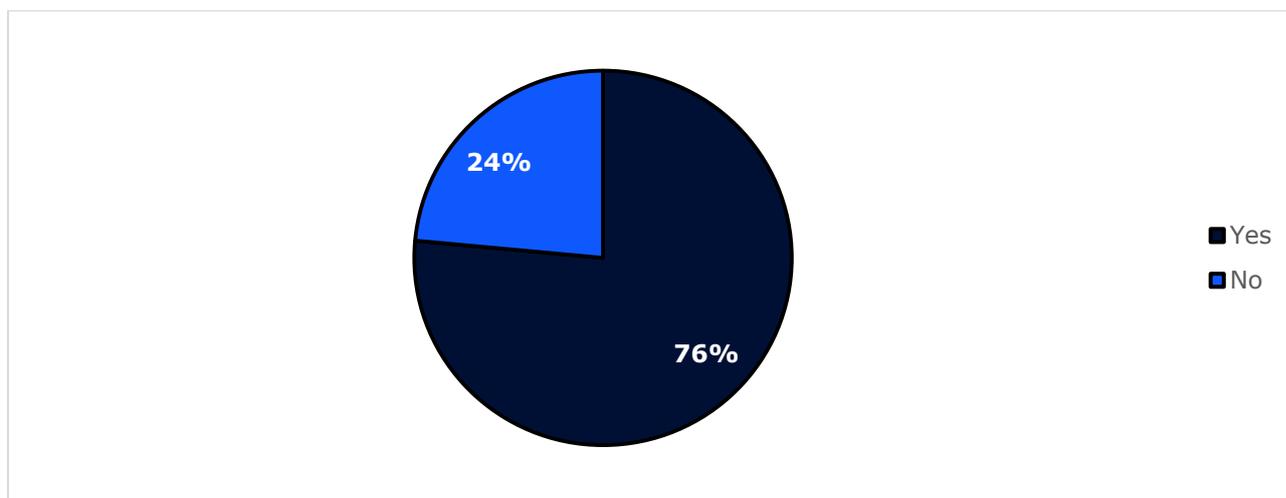
In the 19 comments provided, the respondents developed their answers. They indicated that either they are personally not involved in matching, or that when they used the function the matches were not accurate due to the filter options not being refined enough. Some of the mismatches might also be assigned to the CVs and job vacancies not containing all the necessary information. Others highlighted that the function should be improved and automatised. One respondent mentioned that their organisation has their own matching system addressing their needs.

*Do you think once the matching on the EURES portal is fully automated it will save you time in comparison with manual matching/searching? \**

The 34 respondents who indicated that they use the EURES portal for matching, were asked about the automated matching function to be included on the EURES portal in the future. Twenty-six of the respondents are of the opinion that once the matching is fully automated, it will save them time in comparison with manual matching and searching. Eight respondents disagreed with this assessment.

In the eight comments provided, the respondents expressed their hopes for the automated matching function, particularly that they would appreciate its swift introduction. They also stressed the importance of setting it up correctly so that the matches are accurate. However, the respondents also admitted that the function's success will also depend on the quality of the CVs and job vacancies and the completeness of information provided.

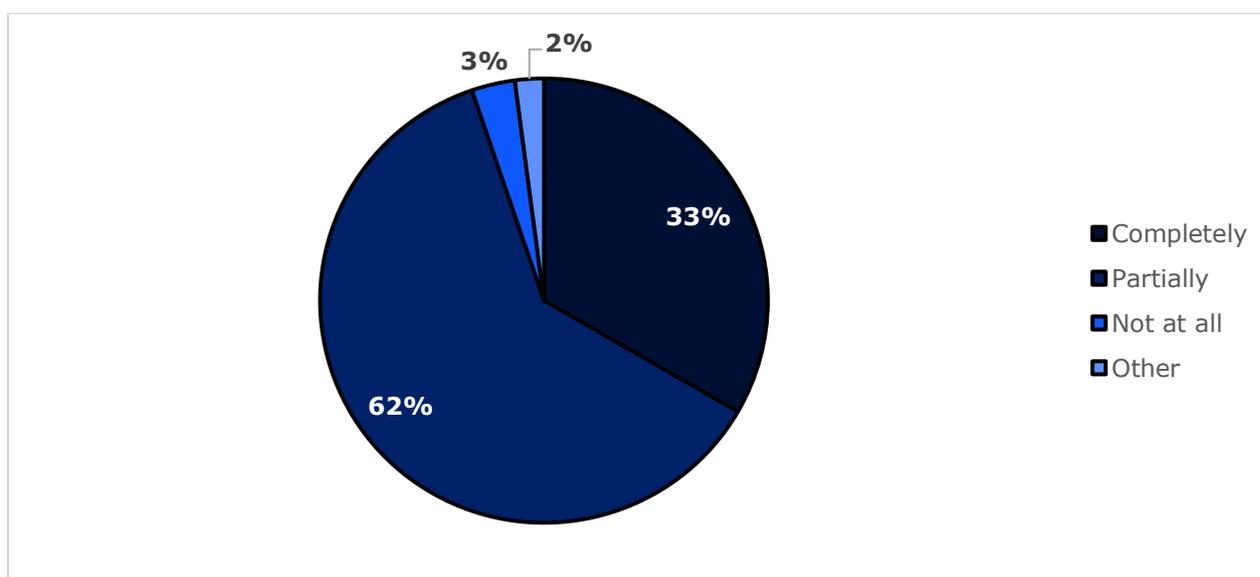
Figure 113 Do you think once the matching on the EURES portal is fully automated it will save you time in comparison with manual matching/searching? (n=34)



*Do you think the EURES portal addresses the needs of jobseekers/employers?\**

Sixty-two percent (59) of respondents said that the EURES portal partially addresses the needs of jobseekers and employers. Thirty-three percent (32) said that it addressed them completely, and 3% (3) selected that the portal does not address the needs at all. Two respondents selected the 'Other' option. Here they mentioned that they do not use it or that the question should be answered by looking at the number of visits to the EURES portal.

Figure 114 Do you think the EURES portal addresses the needs of jobseekers/employers? (n=96)

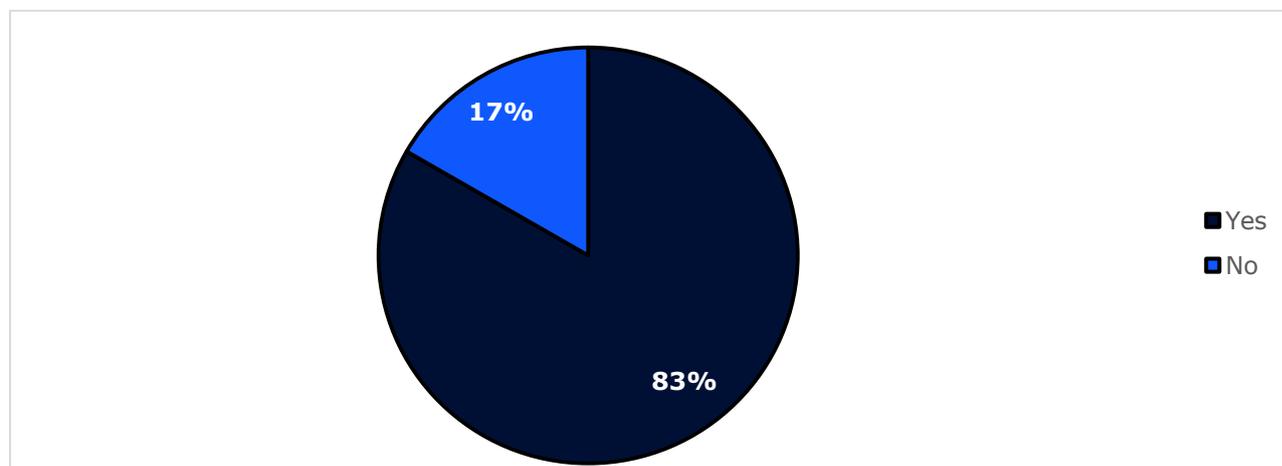


Eighteen comments were provided for this question. The respondents mentioned that to further improve this, the automated matching tool needs to be functional as soon as possible. Others suggested to have an interactive map where the available vacancies would be shown, so that search by specific geographical area would be possible. Respondents also mentioned that the EURES portal needs to be better promoted among its target groups.

*Do you read the Inside EURES newsletter?\**

Eighty-three percent (80) of respondents said that they read the EURES newsletter, while only 17% (16) indicated that they do not read it.

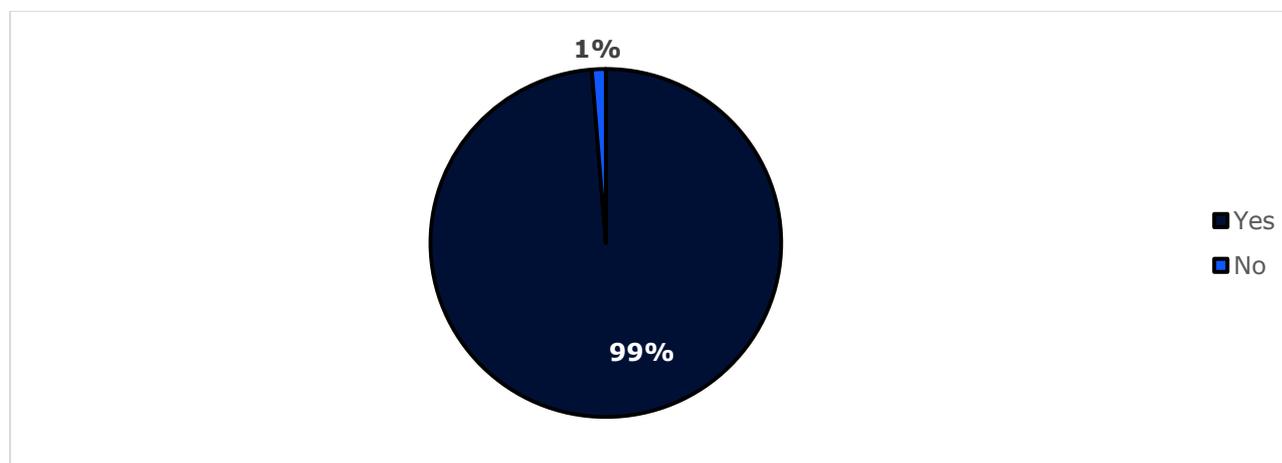
Figure 115 Do you read the Inside EURES newsletter? (n=96)



*Do you find the information of the newsletter useful?*

From the 80 respondents who do read the newsletter, 99% (77) indicated that they found the information it contains useful. Only one respondent did not think so. Two respondents preferred not to answer.

Figure 116 Do you find the information of the newsletter useful? (n=78)

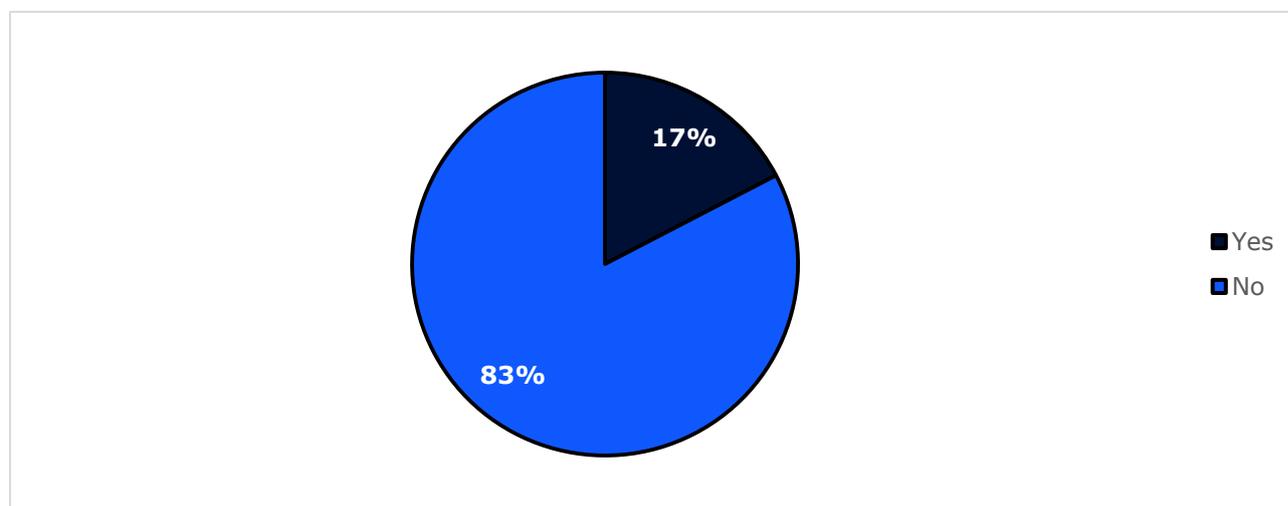


In the 12 comments provided, the respondents further developed their answers. They highlighted that most of the times the information is useful and helps them keep being connected to and informed about EURES activities across the network, their initiatives and achievements. Some of the respondents also use the newsletter to prepare specific information packages to disseminate among their clients or copy the content to their national portal.

*Is there anything that is missing from the newsletter?*

The majority (83%, 62) from the 80 respondents, who indicated that they do read the newsletter, do not think that there is anything missing from it. Thirteen respondents (17%) thought that other aspects could be added. Six respondents preferred not to answer.

Figure 117 Is there anything that is missing from the newsletter? (n=74)



In the 17 comments provided, respondents could provide suggestions for improvement. Some of them used it to mention that they think it contains all the correct information and that these efforts should continue. Some of them would like to see even more sharing of experiences and good practices. Others would welcome more administrative information, such as minutes of European Coordination Group's meetings and other meetings between the European Coordination Office and the rest of the EURES network. Information about the different national EURES set-ups would also be welcome. More focus could be dedicated to EU legislation and its changes. It could include more information about the various PES to better connect the two networks. It should also provide more information about local EURES events.

*In your opinion, what is the best/worst feature of the EURES portal?*

To conclude this section of the survey, the respondents were asked to highlight the best and worst features of the EURES portal. In total, 74 respondents provided their opinion about this question.

The suggestions for best features included:

- Linking employers with jobseekers
- Job vacancies database
- Access to living and working conditions across the EURES countries
- Available in all EU languages
- Contains a lot of information
- Transparency of labour market and job offers across the EURES countries
- Large pool of job vacancies
- Online chat function
- A hub of specialised information for the countries that are part of the network
- Wide range of services offered by EURES

- Availability of EURES advisors' contact details

The suggestions for worst features included:

- Low user-friendliness of the section on living and working conditions
- No automated matching tool
- Job vacancies database
- Navigation of the portal
- Low interoperability
- No interactive multilingual virtual assistant (similar to Cortana or Siri)
- Lengthy response time
- Not easy to find vacancies
- Job vacancies not updated frequently enough
- Translation could be improved
- Lengthy approval of employers' accounts
- Long links
- Drop'pin
- Low functional search criteria
- Interface with European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO)
- Often outdated information about living and working conditions
- Quantity is favoured over quality
- Lack of clarification on the regulation of trainees.

## Questions on EURES initiatives

This section collected feedback on the various EURES initiatives.

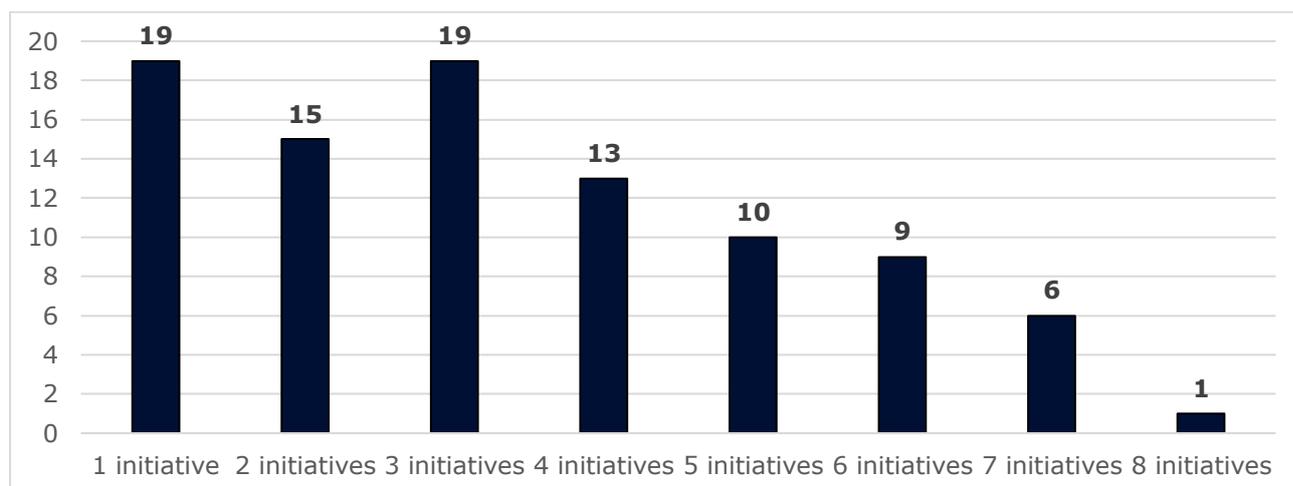
*Which of the following do you organise/take part in? (Select all that apply)*

The respondents were asked to select in which of the following eight EURES activities they participate:

- Targeted Mobility Schemes
- Your first EURES job
- Reactivate
- Cross-Border Partnership
- European (Online) Job Days
- Other information event(s)
- Other recruitment event(s)
- Other

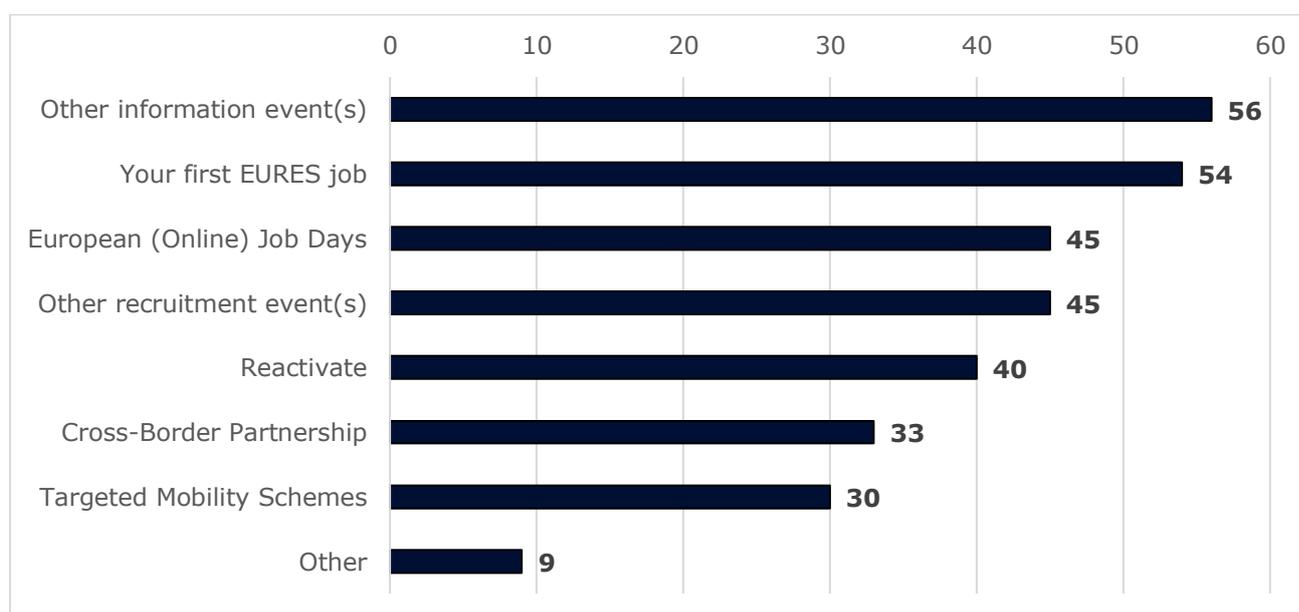
Most of the respondents indicated that they participate either in one or three initiatives (each 21%, 19). This was followed by those who indicated that they participate in two initiatives (16%, 15). Only one respondent indicated that they participate in all eight of the initiatives. Four respondents preferred not to answer this question.

Figure 118 Which of the following do you organise/take part in? Number of initiatives selected (n=92)



Most of the respondents indicated that they participate in other information events (61%, 56). This was followed by those who indicated that they take part in Your first EURES job (59%, 54) and European (Online) Job Days (49%, 45). Only about 10% of respondents indicated that they participate in other initiatives than the ones listed. These included supporting PES in large events of redundancies; promotion of EURES among industry; or information sessions in high schools.

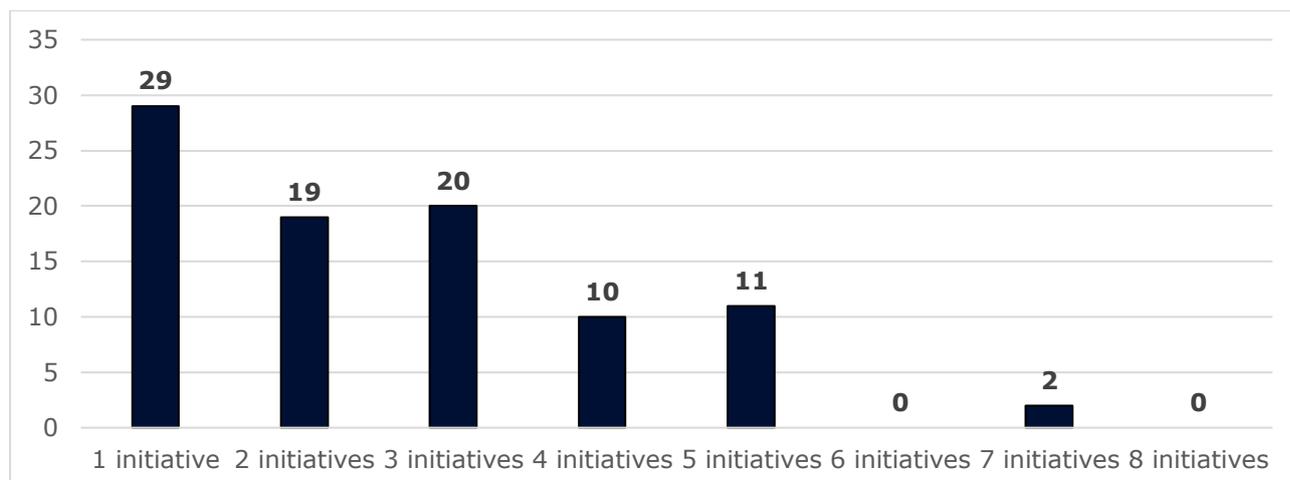
Figure 119 Which of the following do you organise/take part in? (n=92)



*Please choose the initiatives that you consider visible enough?*

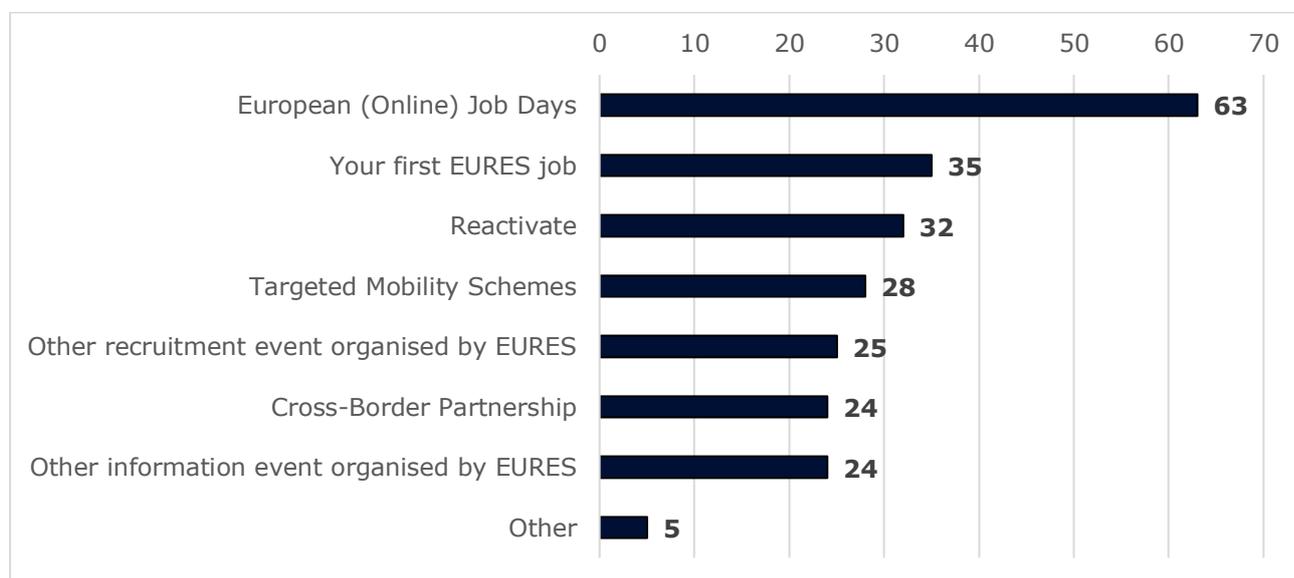
The respondents were also asked to assess whether the initiatives mentioned above were visible enough. About one third of respondents (32%, 29) rated only one initiative, followed by those who rated three (22%, 20) and two (21%, 19). Two respondents rated seven of the initiatives while none of them rated six or eight. Five respondents preferred not to answer this question.

Figure 120 Please choose the initiatives that you consider visible enough. Number of initiatives selected (n=91)



European (Online) Job Days were the initiative that the respondents selected the most as visible enough (69%, 63). This was followed by Your first EURES job (39%, 35) and Reactivate (35%, 32). Other initiatives were the ones with lowest visibility (6%, 5). This was because the respondents could indicate any additional initiatives. From the five comments provided for this question, some of the respondent highlighted that the visibility of all these initiatives needs to be improved. While these initiatives are visible on the EURES portal, they are not very visible on the national ones.

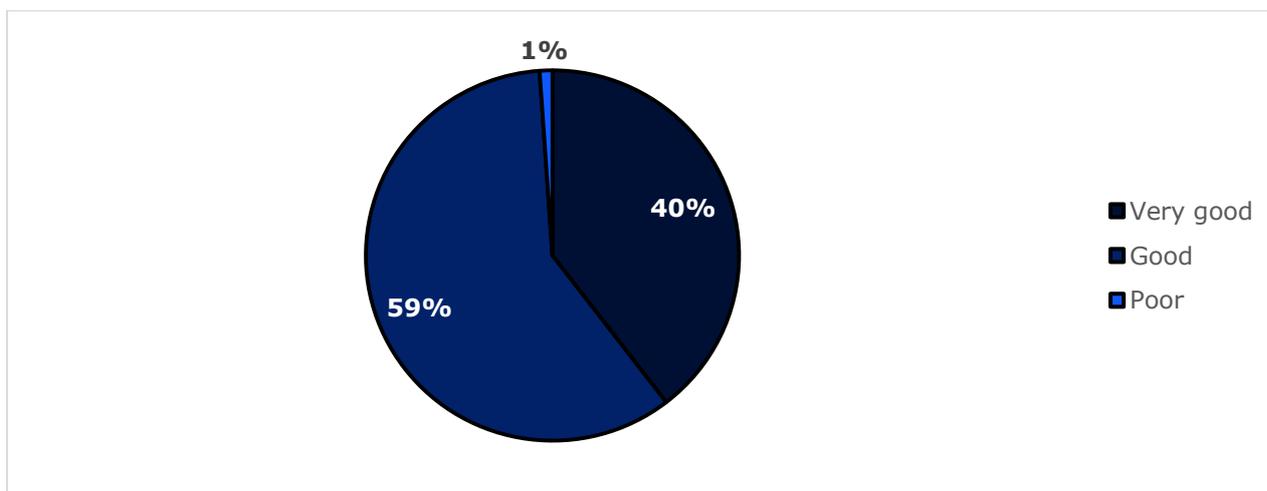
Figure 121 Please choose the initiatives that you consider visible enough. (n=91)



*How would you assess the consistency of activities and target groups of the EURES initiatives you participate in/organise?*

When asked about the consistency of the activities and target groups of the initiatives that they participate in, most of respondents indicated that they find the consistency to be good (59%, 54) or even very good (40%, 36). Only one respondent said it was poor, five preferred not to answer.

Figure 122 How would you assess the consistency of activities and target groups of the EURES initiatives you participate in/organise? (n=91)

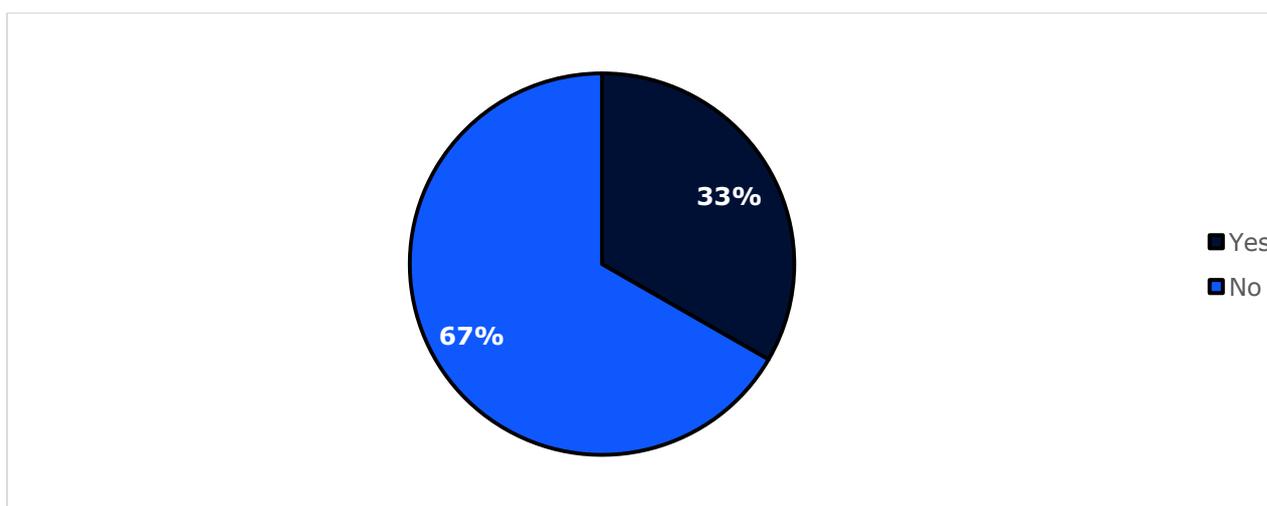


In the 16 comments provided, the respondents mentioned that it is not easy to compare the activities and initiatives as all of them are measured in a different way. Others mentioned that they have received positive feedback from jobseekers and employers about their activities and initiatives. Overall, the activities of EURES are considered as useful and attractive.

*Is there any other initiative that you think the EURES network should develop/offer?*

When asked whether EURES should develop any additional initiatives, the majority of respondents said 'no' (67%, 56), while one third (33%, 28) indicated that there could be more initiatives. Twelve respondents preferred not to answer.

Figure 123 Is there any other initiative that you think the EURES network should develop/offer? (n=84)



The respondents who thought more initiatives could be added were asked to provide suggestions. Thirty-one respondents provided at least one, the suggestions included:

- A scheme similar to Erasmus placements (i.e. funded practical training schemes)

- Support cooperation between language schools across the EURES network so that it is easier for a jobseeker to continue their language course when moving from one country to another
- More initiatives for returning workers and those working remotely
- Exchange of EURES staff
- Support idea development and transnational projects between EURES countries
- Offer language courses through the EURES portal
- More in-depth training
- Develop support for third country nationals who are residents in EURES countries
- Stronger participation of EURES in vocational exchanges and traineeships organised by Erasmus+
- More coordinated post-recruitment services
- Extend the financial support offered through Targeted Mobility Schemes.

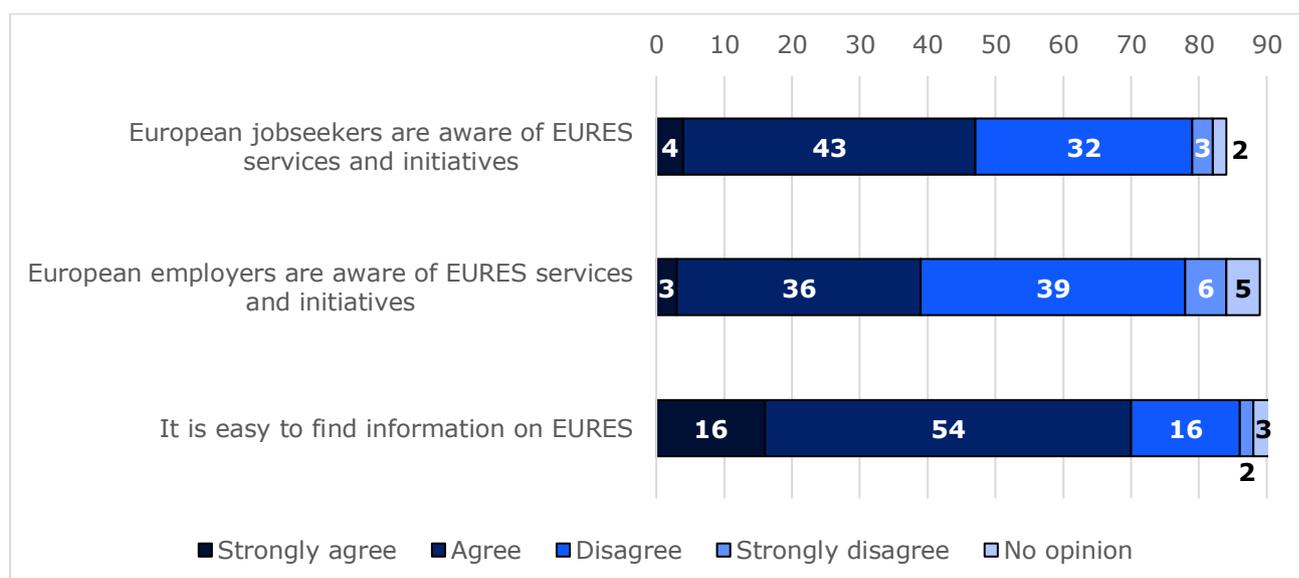
### Questions on the visibility of EURES

In this section, the respondents were asked to provide feedback on the visibility of EURES.

*To what extent do you agree with the following statements about EURES visibility*

The respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with three statements about the visibility of EURES. The first statement about the easiness of finding information about EURES received the most positive assessment, with 59% (54) of respondents indicating they agree with the statement and 18% (16) even strongly agreeing with it. The statement that received the most negative feedback was on the European employers being aware of EURES services and initiatives. Here, 44% (39) of respondents disagreed with this statement and 7% (6) even strongly disagreed. The statement about European jobseekers being aware of EURES services and initiatives also received considerably high negative feedback, with 38% (32) disagreeing with the statement and further 4% (3) strongly disagreeing with it.

Figure 124 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about EURES visibility. (n=84-91)

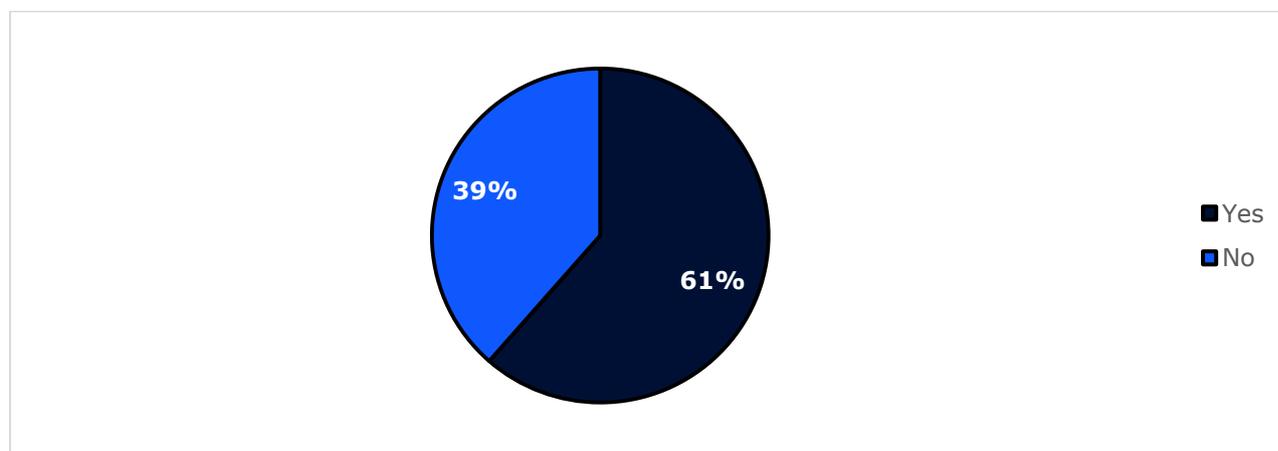


Twenty respondents provided comments for these statements. In them, the respondents mentioned that EURES is still 'the best kept secret'. The various Members and Partners are working hard on increasing the visibility of EURES but still a lot remains to be done to improve the awareness of it among general public. Furthermore, the dissemination and collaboration with regional employment services and social partners and enterprises needs to be further strengthened.

*Do you coordinate awareness raising activities with the other Members and Partners within your national EURES network?\**

When asked whether they coordinate awareness raising activities with the other Members and Partners of their national EURES network, the majority of respondents (61%, 59) answered that they do. More than one third on them (39%, 37) responded that they do not.

Figure 125 Do you coordinate awareness raising activities with the other Members and Partners within your national EURES network? (n=96)



Eighteen respondents provided comments to further develop their answer. Some of them clarified that at the moment they are the only Member of the national network or that a closer cooperation between the Members and Partners is already planned. Others mentioned that they organise seminars and training for the national network and even PES staff. A few of the respondents mentioned that they also coordinate their activities with their social partners and networks.

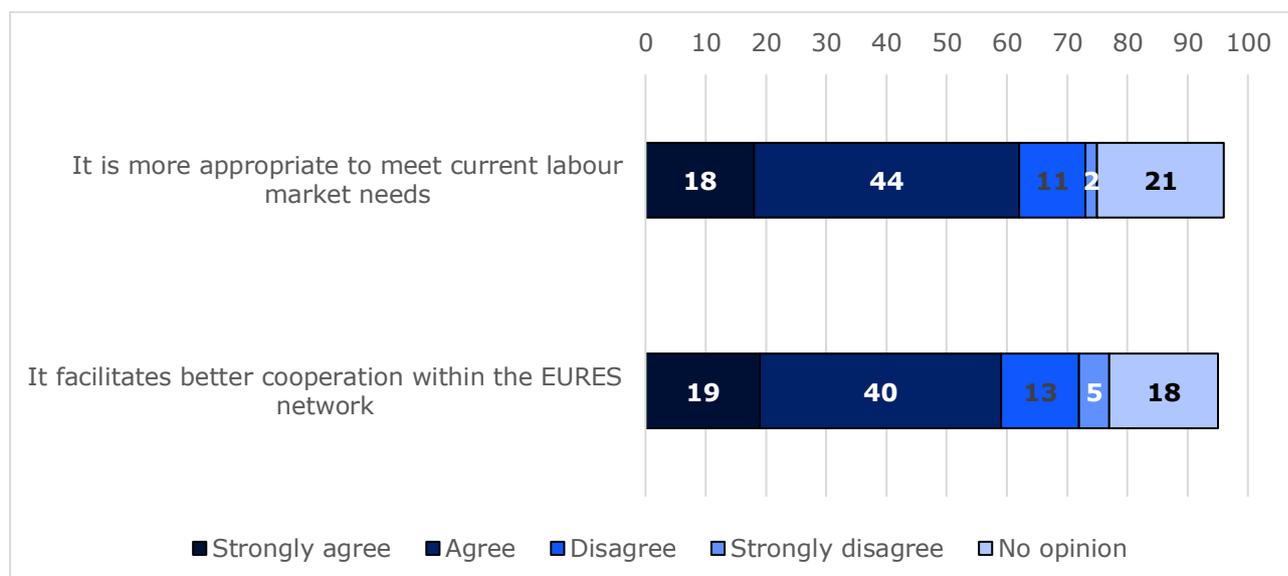
**Cooperation within EURES**

This section focused on gathering feedback on cooperation within the EURES network.

*To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the new EURES?\** (After 2016 reform)

When asked about the impact of the 2016 EURES reform on cooperation within EURES, most of the respondents agreed that the reform has made it more appropriate to meet the current labour market needs (46%, 44) and that it facilitated better cooperation with the EURES network (42%, 40). A considerable part of the respondents did not have an opinion with regard to these statements, 22% (21) and 18% (18) respectively.

Figure 126 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the new EURES? (n=96)



*What do you see as the main challenges in further deepening cooperation within the EURES network?*

When asked about the main challenges to further deepen cooperation within the EURES network, 66 respondents provided their opinion mentioning the following:

- Working with new Members and Partners from other countries who are not PES and their integration into the EURES network
- Expanding the EURES network in all EURES countries
- COVID-19
- The withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union
- National employment policies
- Similar skills shortages across the EURES countries leading to fewer cooperation opportunities
- Changes on the labour markets across EURES countries
- Lack of support for EURES from national authorities
- Digitalisation and new technologies in recruitment
- Increasing job vacancy offers promoted by EURES
- Keeping interest in job mobility among jobseekers within the EU
- Providing jobseekers with new skills and competences related to European labour market needs
- Mainstreaming of EURES services into PES
- Availability of human resources
- EURES portal
- Language skills
- Different financial resources

*What are the main benefits of cooperating within the EURES network?*

To conclude this section, the respondents were asked to provide the benefits of cooperating with the EURES network. Seventy-one respondents provided their opinion mentioning the following benefits:

- Better information and support provision

- Wider pool of candidates and job vacancies
- Recruitment projects with other EURES countries
- Exchange of knowledge and good practices
- Strong network
- Obtaining accurate, fast and up-to-date information
- Employment growth
- Fair mobility
- Good quality of EURES services
- More effective use of resources to increase mobility
- Establishing cooperation
- Human network
- Openness of the network to new Members and Partners
- Facilitation of access to labour markets across EURES countries
- Spill over effects to PES services
- Better efficiency
- Free movement of workers

### **Possible future improvements**

In this section of the survey, the respondents asked about possible future improvement to the EURES network.

*What should be the key feature(s) of a future EURES? (Maximum 3000 characters)*

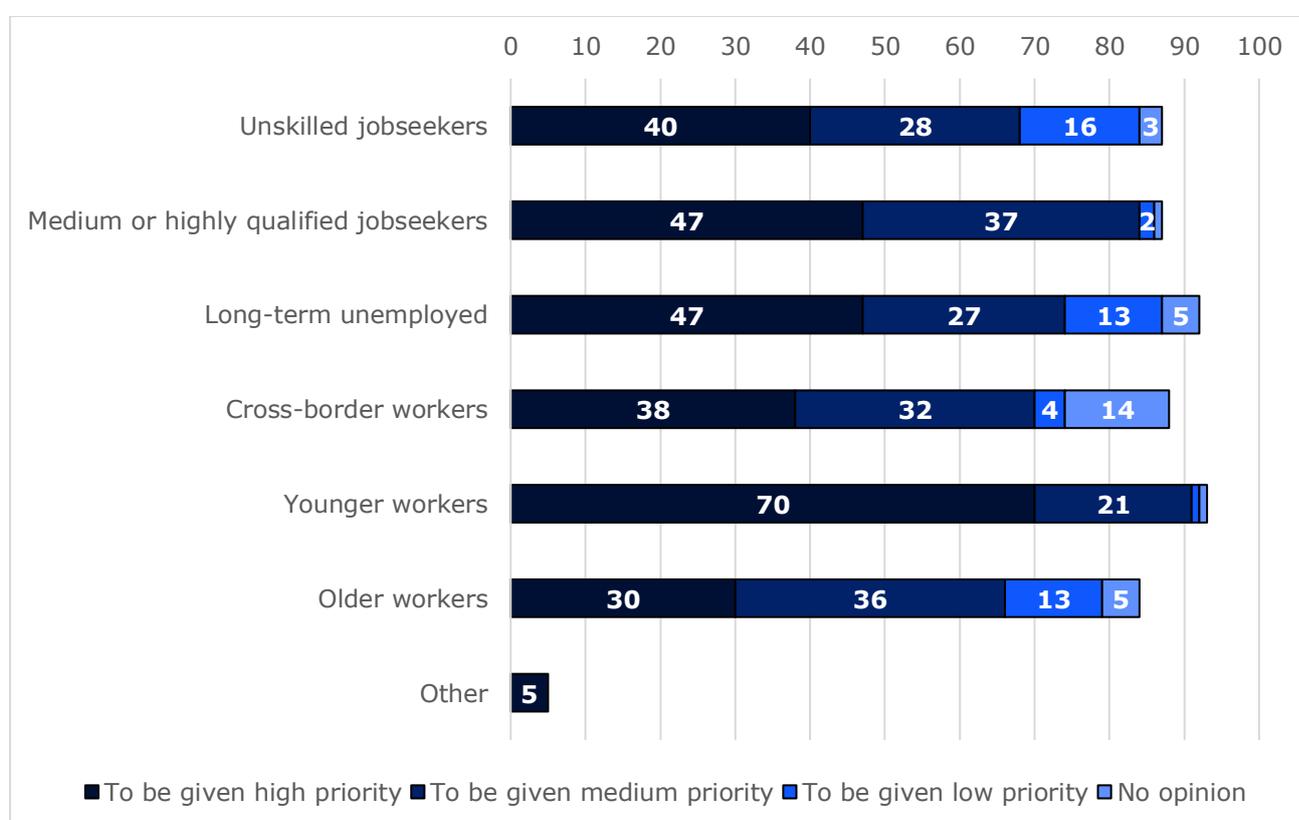
Sixty-eight respondents provided their opinion on this question. The respondents provided the following suggestions to be the key features of EURES in the future:

- A well-functioning automated matching tool
- Increased visibility of EURES and its services and initiatives both towards general public and national authorities
- Better use of new IT tools
- Strong network with a strong identity
- Continuous support of fair mobility
- Continuous training of EURES staff
- Continuous development of service offer
- Close cooperation
- Flexibility to adapt to the developments on the labour markets across the EURES network
- User-friendly services and design
- Better EURES portal
- Commitment of the Members and Partners to the EURES values
- Increase in the number of EURES staff
- Equal funding for all
- Support for circular mobility
- Continuous support through Targeted Mobility Schemes
- Consolidate EURES as Europe's leading employment search tool
- Consolidate cross-border cooperation
- Secured long-term financing

*Which of the following target groups do you think EURES should prioritise in the future?*

The respondents were asked to indicate what priority should be given to specific target groups. With the exception of older workers, the majority of respondents indicated that each target group should be given high priority, this ranged between 40% for cross-border workers to 70% for young people. Regarding the older workers, 38% of respondents agreed that they should be given medium priority while 31% suggested for the target group to be given high priority. Regarding the 'Other' option, the respondents suggested returning workers; seasonal agriculture workers; apprentices, students and trainees; and people with disabilities as possible target groups to be given high priority in the future. It was also highlighted that all jobseekers should receive equal opportunities, including the most vulnerable ones.

Figure 127 Which of the following target groups do you think EURES should prioritise in the future? (n=96)



**Questions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**

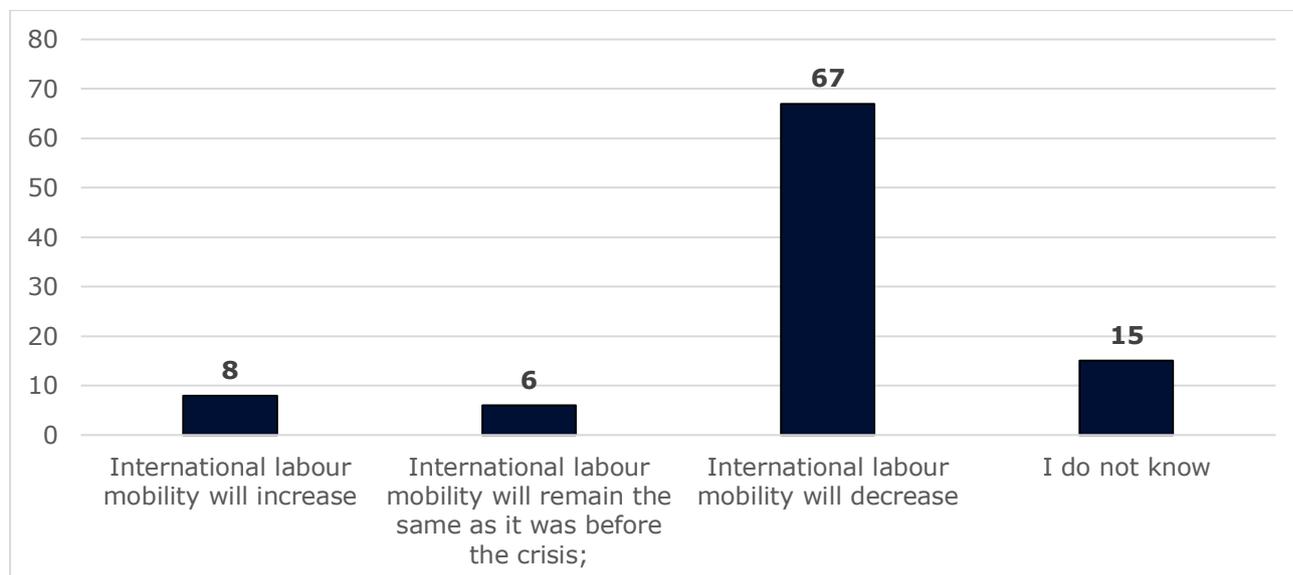
This section aimed to grasp how the respondents think the COVID-19 crisis will impact labour mobility in the future.

*To which extent do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021?*

More than two thirds of respondents (70%, 67) were of the opinion that international labour mobility will decrease as of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sixteen percent

of respondents (15) were not sure of the pandemic’s impact on the labour market, while 8% (8) thought the labour mobility will increase and 6% (6) were of the opinion that it will remain the same as before the pandemic.

Figure 128 To which extent do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021? (n=96)



Twenty respondents made use of the possibility to leave a comment to their response. The respondents highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic and the expected economic crisis differ from the crisis in 2008 as the COVID-19 one affects all of the European labour markets. In the economic predictions, it is expected that all countries will experience increased levels of unemployment. Once the crisis has been overcome, the respondents hope that labour mobility will return to the same levels or even higher as previously. One aspect in which labour mobility is definitely likely to change is that jobseekers will be more likely to pay greater attention to labour safety rules.

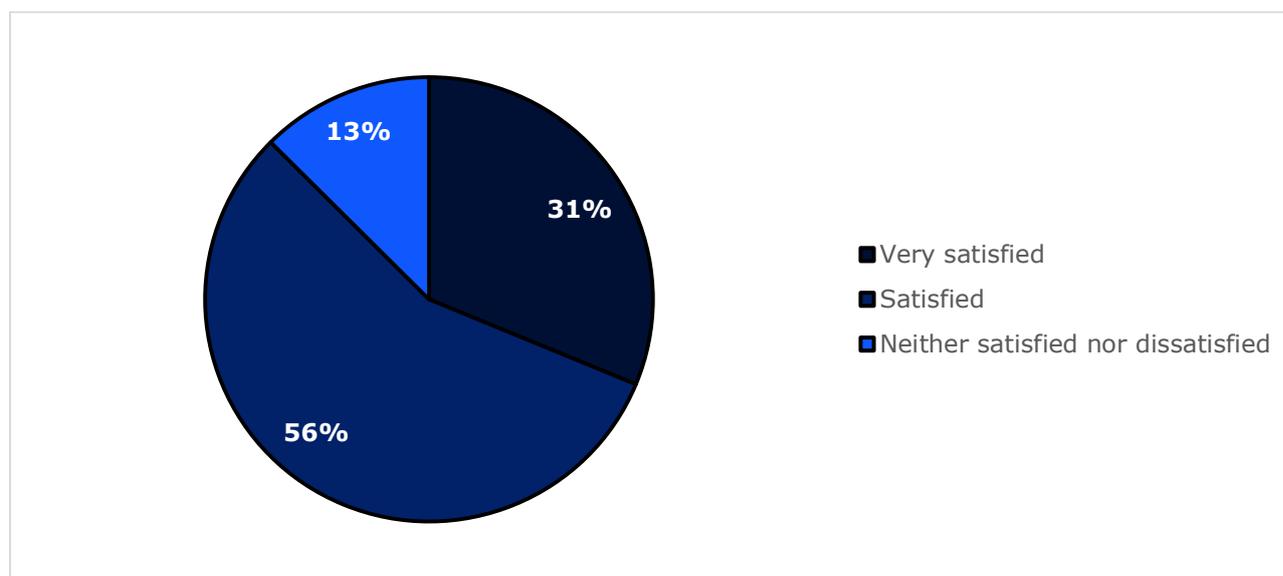
### Concluding questions

To close the survey, the respondents were asked some additional questions about their experience with EURES.

#### *Overall, how satisfied are you with EURES?\**

When asked about their overall satisfaction with EURES, none of the respondents indicated that they would be dissatisfied or even very dissatisfied with it. Majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with EURES (56%, 54). This was followed by those who said that they were very satisfied with EURES (31%, 30) and those who were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with it (13%, 12). None of the respondents indicated that they would be (very) dissatisfied with EURES.

Figure 129 Overall, how satisfied are you with EURES? (n=96)



#### *How did joining the EURES network influence your organisation?*

Those respondents who indicated at the beginning of the survey that they are EURES Members, were asked to provide feedback on how joining the EURES network influenced their organisation. Sixty-eight respondents provided feedback. The responses can be summed up as follows:

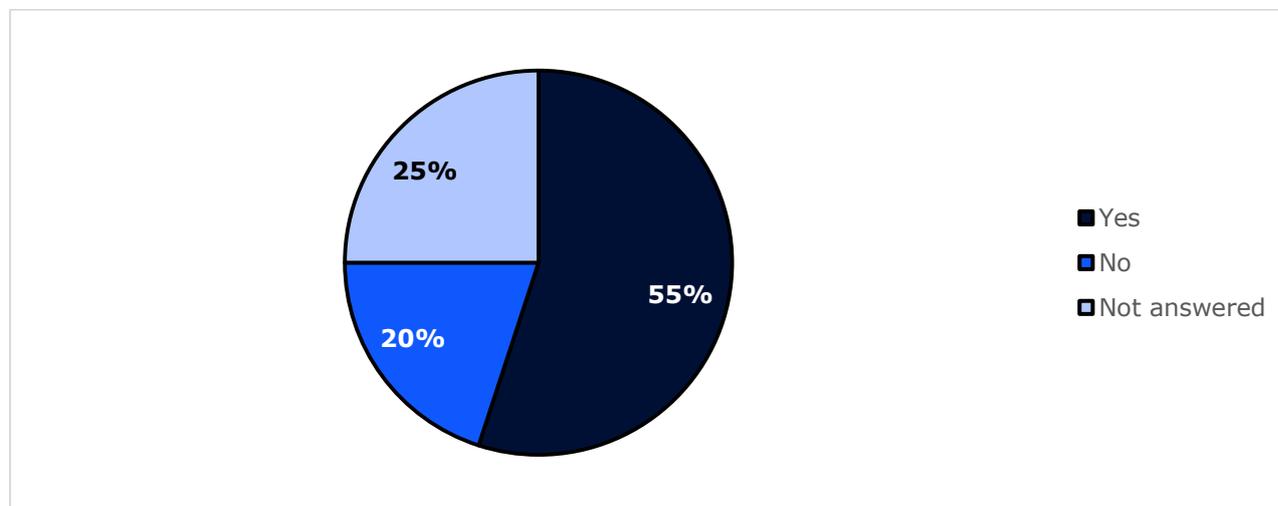
- Became part of a network and gained the ability to address labour mobility issues on a pan-European platform
- Expansion of services offered
- Services matching the European identity of their clients
- Introduction to a new network of support, information and contacts to develop further the organisations' projects
- Improved global thinking
- Wider offer to employers and jobseekers
- More cooperation opportunities with EURES countries
- Better relationship with stakeholders
- Giving a new value to the organisation
- Opportunity to interact and exchange experiences in order to better support jobseekers and employers
- Another vision of the labour market
- Increased prestige of the organisation
- Better trained staff
- Gained expertise, know-how, awareness, and recognition
- Developed new forms of cooperation
- Further professionalisation of activities

#### *In longer-term, would you be interested in becoming a EURES Member?*

The twenty respondents who at the beginning of the survey indicated that they are EURES Partners, were asked whether they would be interested in joining the EURES network as full-fledged EURES Members in the future.

Majority of the respondents (11) indicated that they would be interested in joining the network as EURES Members. Four respondents indicated that their organisation would prefer not to become a EURES Member and five respondents preferred not to answer.

Figure 130 In longer-term, would you be interested in becoming a EURES Member? (n=20)



Five respondents provided additional information in the comments. Some of the respondents who preferred not to answer indicated in their comments that they might consider becoming a Member in the future, but they are not sure or not in the position to be able to make that decision. Some of the respondents who indicated that they would not join the network as a Member mentioned that at the moment, they are not able to fulfil all the tasks assigned by the EURES Regulation to EURES Members, therefore, they are ineligible to become Members yet.

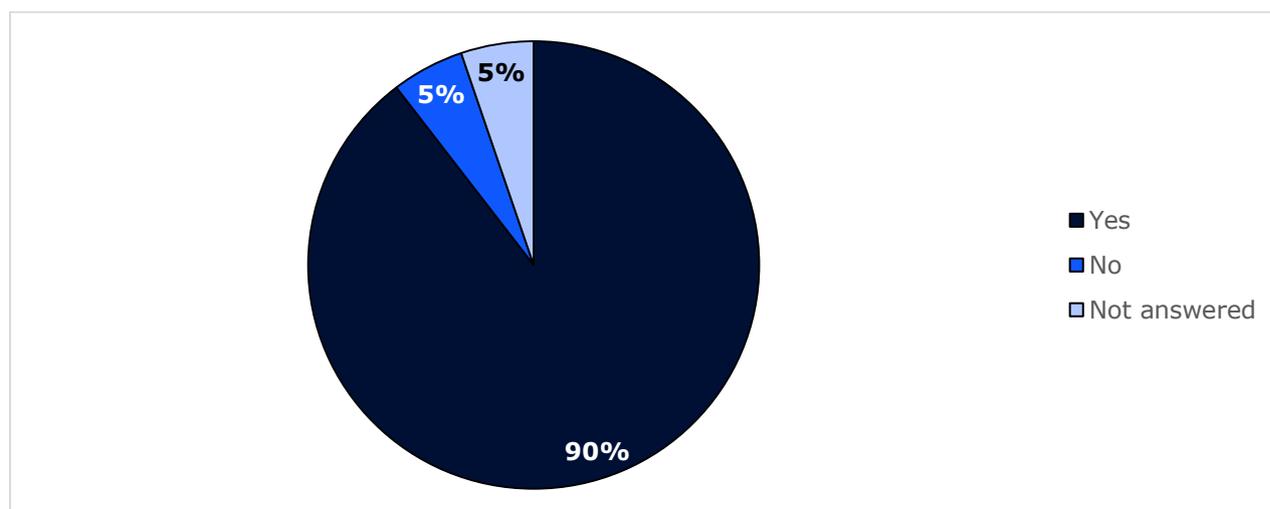
*Would you recommend to other organisations to join the EURES network?*

In the penultimate question, the respondents were asked if they would recommend to other organisations to join the EURES network. A considerable majority (90%, 86) of respondents would recommend other organisations to join the network, while five respondents (5%) would not recommend it and five (5%) preferred not to answer the question.

Seven respondents provided additional information detailing their response. Among the comments, some respondents highlighted that they would definitely recommend joining the EURES network to other organisations, particularly non-governmental organisations and employment agencies, depending of course on their objectives and visions as these need to align with the ones of EURES.

From the respondents who would not recommend joining the network, one of the reasons was that due to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, the future of EURES within the country is uncertain. Therefore, at the moment they cannot recommend other organisations from the UK to join the network.

Figure 131 Would you recommend to other organisations to join the EURES network? (n=96)



*Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with the EURES network which could be useful for the purpose of this study?*

In the final question, the respondents were able to provide any further feedback on EURES. Twenty-two respondents made use of this opportunity. The respondents chose to describe their particular positive experience with EURES in more detail. The contribution of experiences gained through the EURES network to the daily activities of PES was also highlighted. The respondents also look forward to new and challenging opportunities that the network will face.

A few of the respondents took this opportunity to reiterate some of their previous suggestions for improvement. More specifically:

- Need for more financial resources to implement activities, particularly among regional Members
- Need for more and user-friendly online tools
- More focus on cross-border mobility
- Need to closely monitor the enlarged network
- Continue to develop the potential of EURES staff

Some respondents focused on describing further areas for improvement, such as the desire of closer cooperation with ECO not only for the National Coordination Offices but also for, at least, all EURES Members, or involving ECO in local meetings of the network to bring in more overarching views and vice versa. The need for less bureaucracy and less reporting was also mentioned.

Some of the respondents also expressed their desire for their National Coordination Office to be more involved in activities of the different Members of the network and to also consult the Members more in decision-making.

Some respondents felt that EURES has undergone many changes in a short period of time which might hamper the objectives of these reforms. Particularly due to the introduction of the European Labour Authority and the establishment of the Single Digital Gateway.

### 2.1.3 EURES evaluation Jobseekers survey analysis

The survey was advertised on the EURES portal and its page about the EURES evaluation. It was also disseminated among the jobseekers registered on the EURES Portal via the regular EURES newsletter. National EURES networks were asked to disseminate it among their clients as well. The survey did not track through which means the respondents found out about it, therefore, it is not possible to say which mean of dissemination was the most successful.

The survey was launched on 19 May and closed on 1 July 2020.

In total, 2,859 jobseekers responded to the survey, with 2,174 complete and 685 partial answers equal to the completeness rate of 76%. This analysis does not take partial answers into account. **From the total of complete answers, 2,055 responses were submitted by nationals of a EURES participating countries and were the focus of analysis;** the remaining answers were not considered for the analysis as they are outside of EURES's scope. These answers were nevertheless analysed separately and, where relevant, are mentioned in the sections below.

The survey was divided into seven sections with some questions marked as compulsory (i.e. a respondent was not able to proceed with the survey unless the compulsory question was answered). Here the compulsory questions are marked with '\*'. The survey contained a display logic where some questions appeared only if a specific answer was selected in the previous questions. This logic was introduced to ensure that the respondent was shown questions as relevant to their experience with EURES as possible.

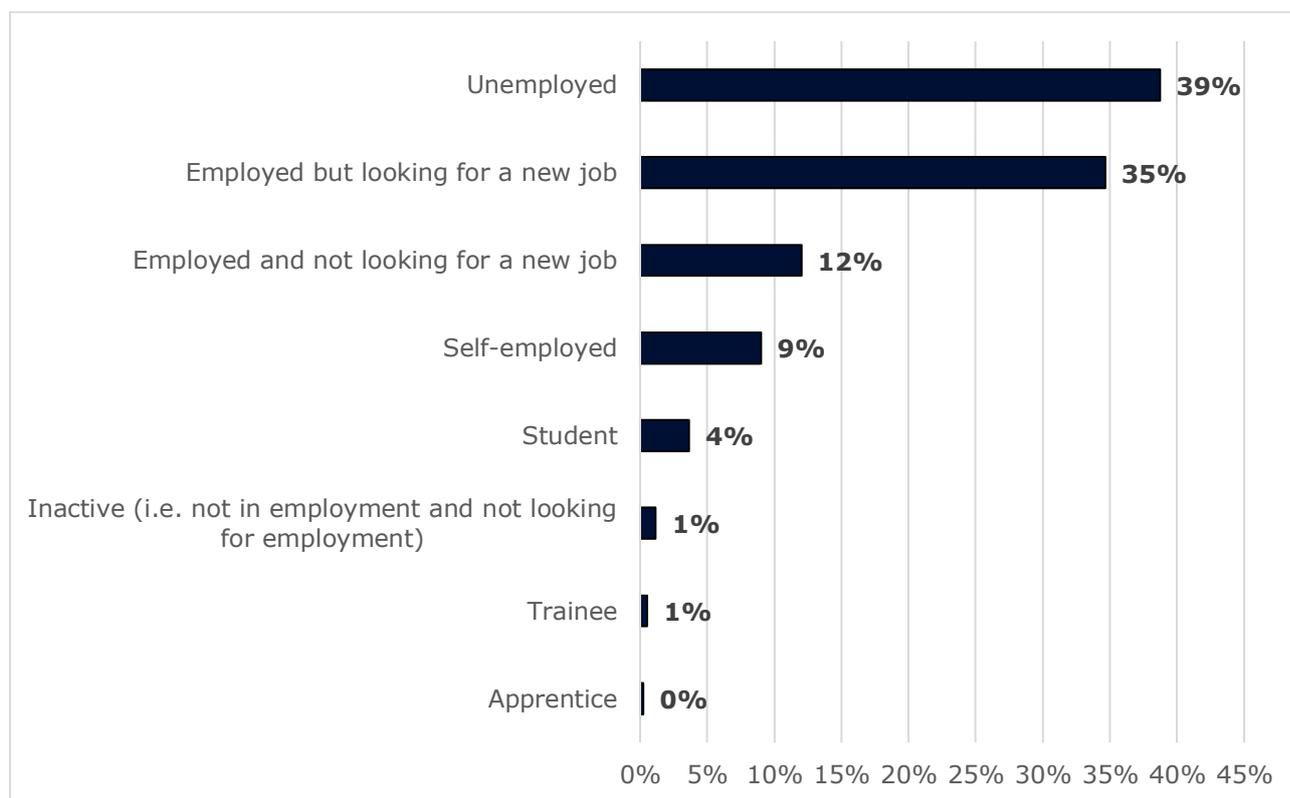
#### Introductory questions

In this section of the survey, the respondents were asked to provide some background information about themselves and their interaction with EURES. This section was shown to all 2,055 respondents.

*Please indicate your current labour market status\**

Regarding the current labour market status of jobseekers, most respondent stated that they were looking for a job (74%, 1,508), either because they were unemployed (39%, 796) or were employed but in search of a new job (35%, 712).

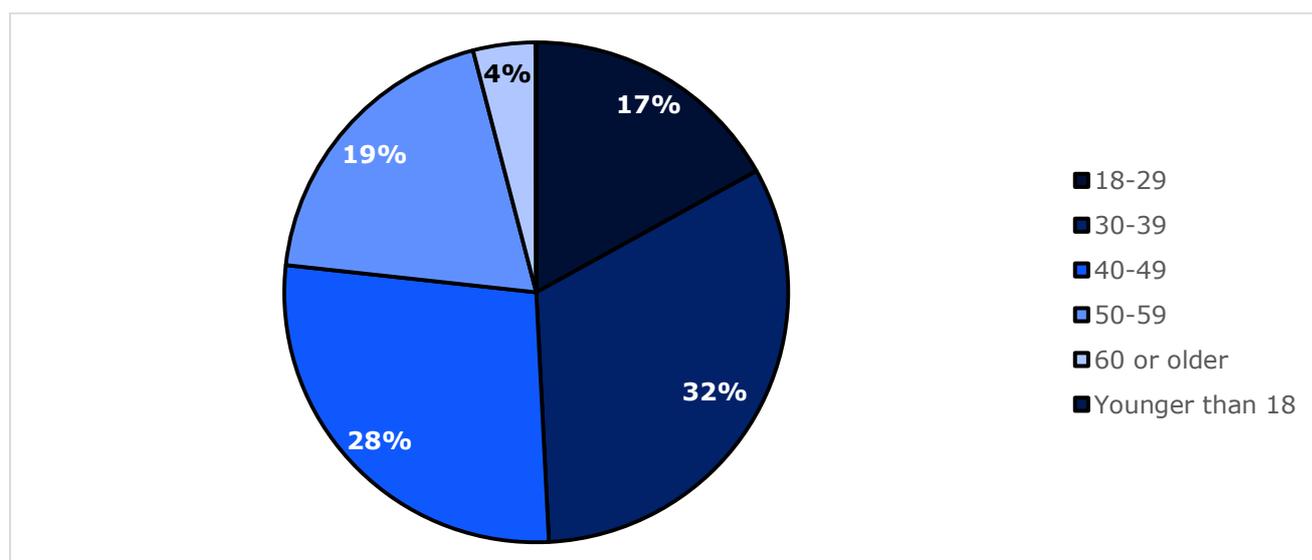
Figure 132 Please indicate your current labour market status (n=2,055)



*What age group do you belong to\*:*

Age-wise, the majority of respondents (60%, 1,229) were between 30 to 49 years old, with 32% (663) in the 30-39 age group and 28% (566) in the 40-49 age group.

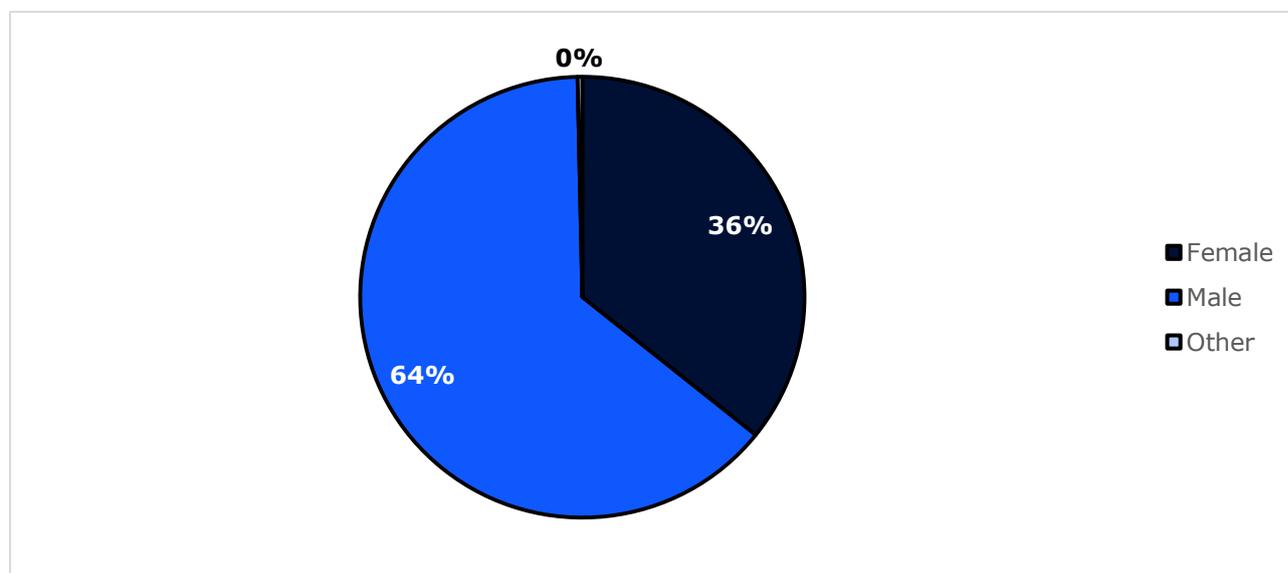
Figure 133 What age group do you belong to (n=2,055)



*What is your gender?*

Regarding gender, almost two-thirds of respondents were male (64%) and 36% were female, 7 respondents chose "other". Thirteen respondents preferred not to answer this question.

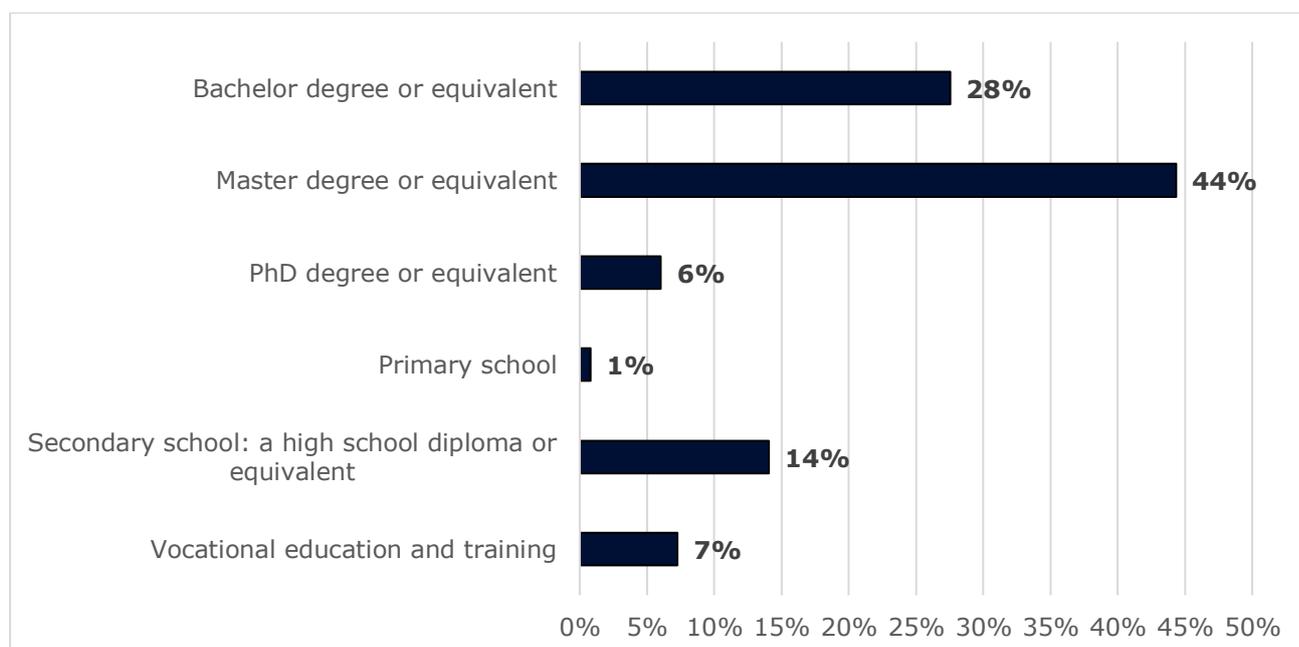
Figure 134 What is your gender? (n=2,042)



*What level of education do you have?\**

In terms of level of education, a large majority of respondents had acquired a university level degree (78%, 1,601), with the highest share (44%, 911) at Master's degree (or equivalent) level.

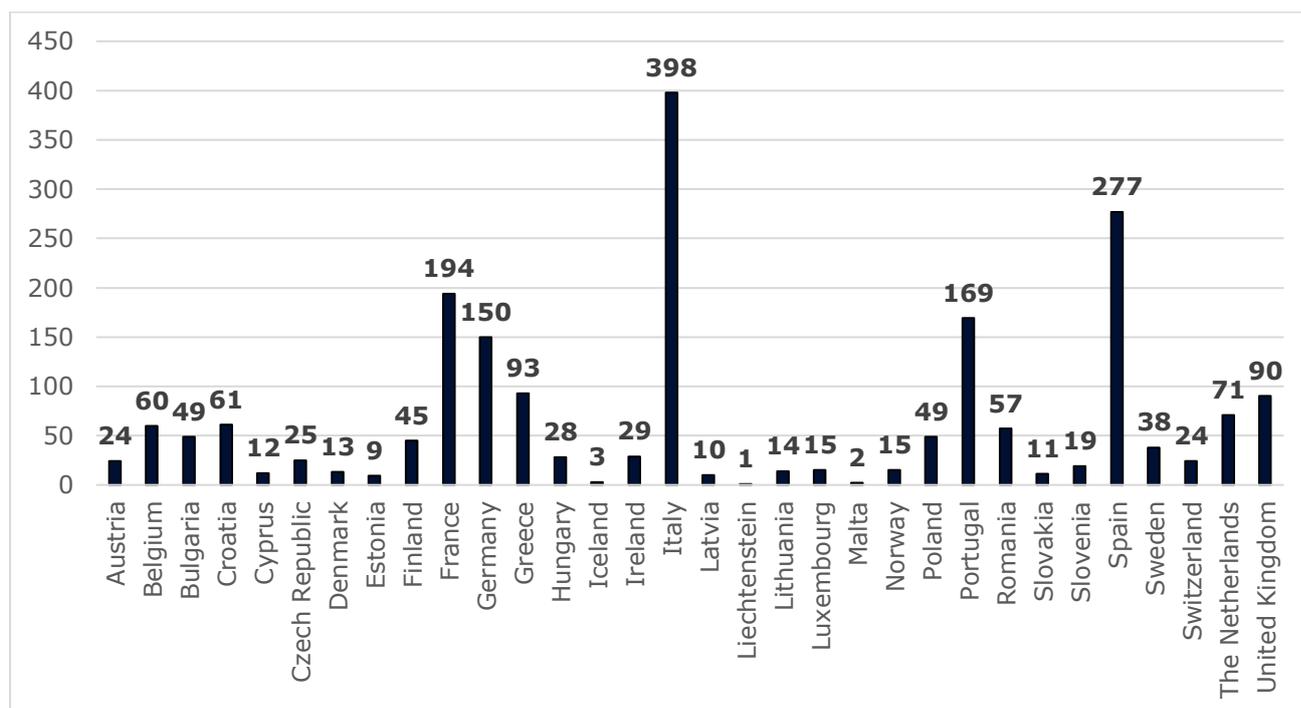
Figure 135 What level of education do you have? (n=2,055)



*What is your country of residence?\**

Responses were provided by jobseekers from all 32 EURES countries. The country of residence with the highest number of respondents was Italy (19%, 398), followed by Spain (13%, 277) and France (9%, 194).

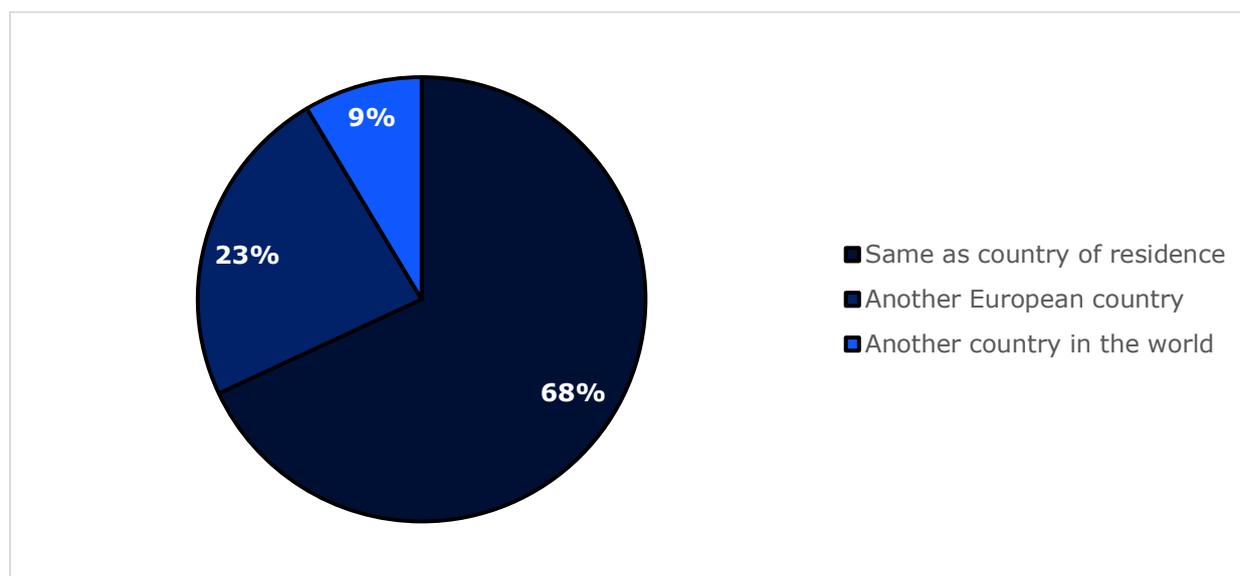
Figure 136 What is your country of residence? (n=2,055)



*What is your country of origin?*

Besides indicating their country of residence, the respondents were also asked about their country of origin. Two thirds of respondents (68%, 1,390) indicated that they have the same country of origin as their country of residence. Nearly one quarter (23%, 478) indicated that they are from another European country with the smallest proportion (9%, 175) indicating their origin country as a non-European one. Twelve respondents chose not to answer this question.

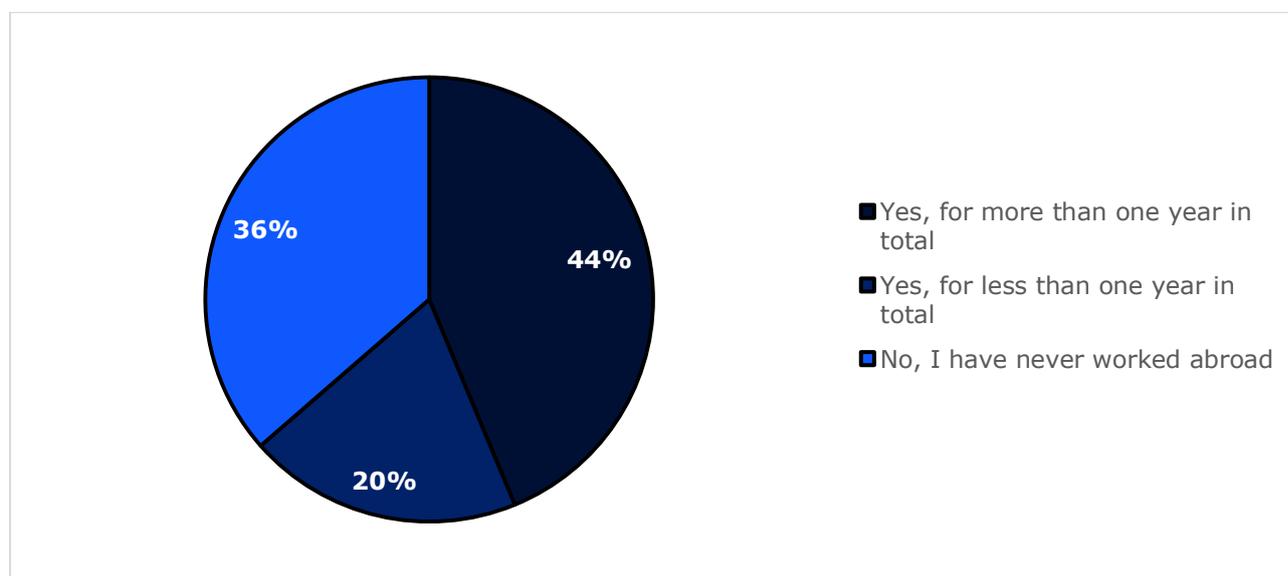
Figure 137 What is your country of origin? (n=2,043)



*Have you ever worked abroad?*

When asked whether they have ever worked abroad, almost two thirds (64%, 1,303) indicated that they did so, with 44% (897) having worked abroad for more than a year and 20% (406) for less than a year. Further 36% (747) of respondents indicated having never worked abroad. Five respondents preferred not to answer this question.

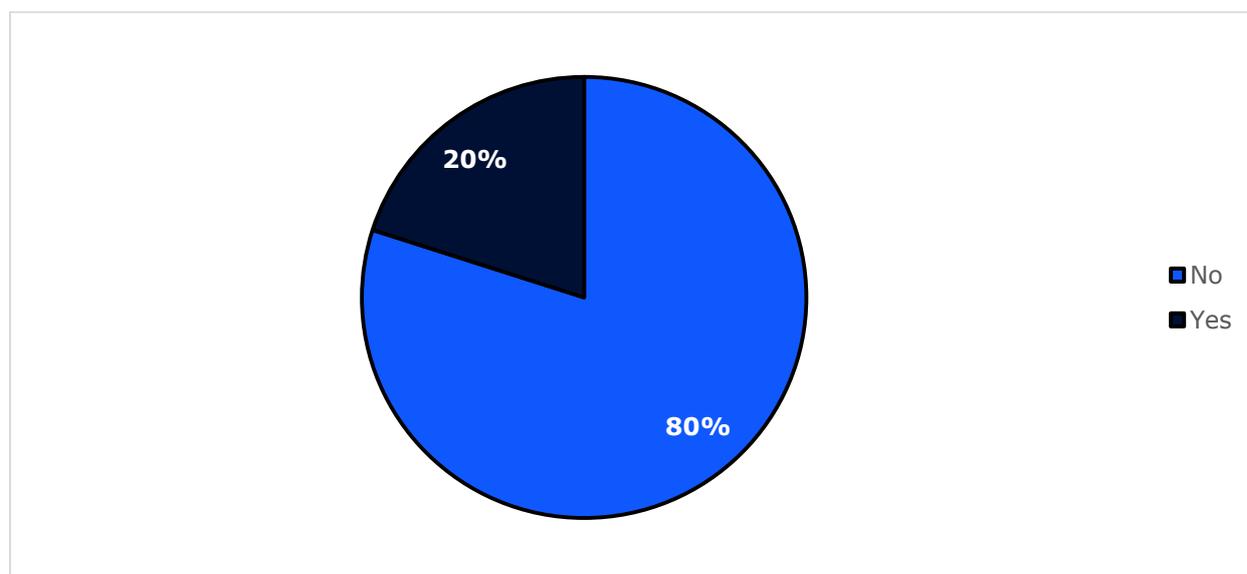
Figure 138 Have you ever worked abroad? (n=2,050)



*Do you live in a border area?*

The majority of jobseekers (80%, 1,635) responding to the survey were not located in a border area, i.e. an area within 30 kilometres of the country’s borders. Ten respondents preferred not to answer this question.

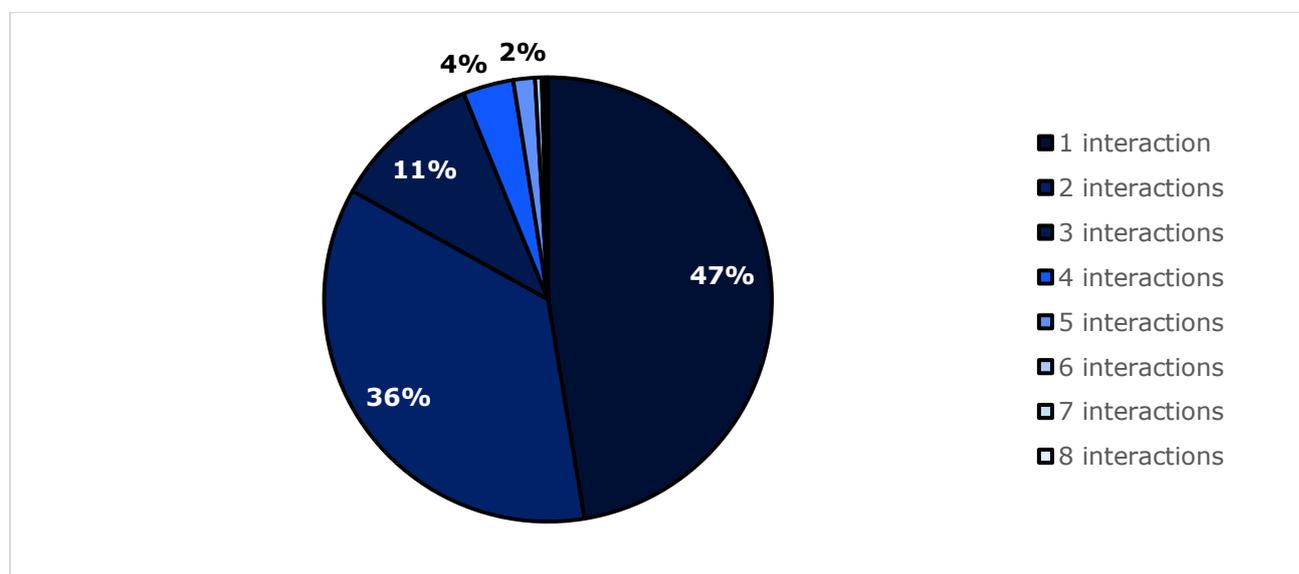
Figure 139 Do you live in a border area? (n=2,045)



*How have you interacted with EURES?\**

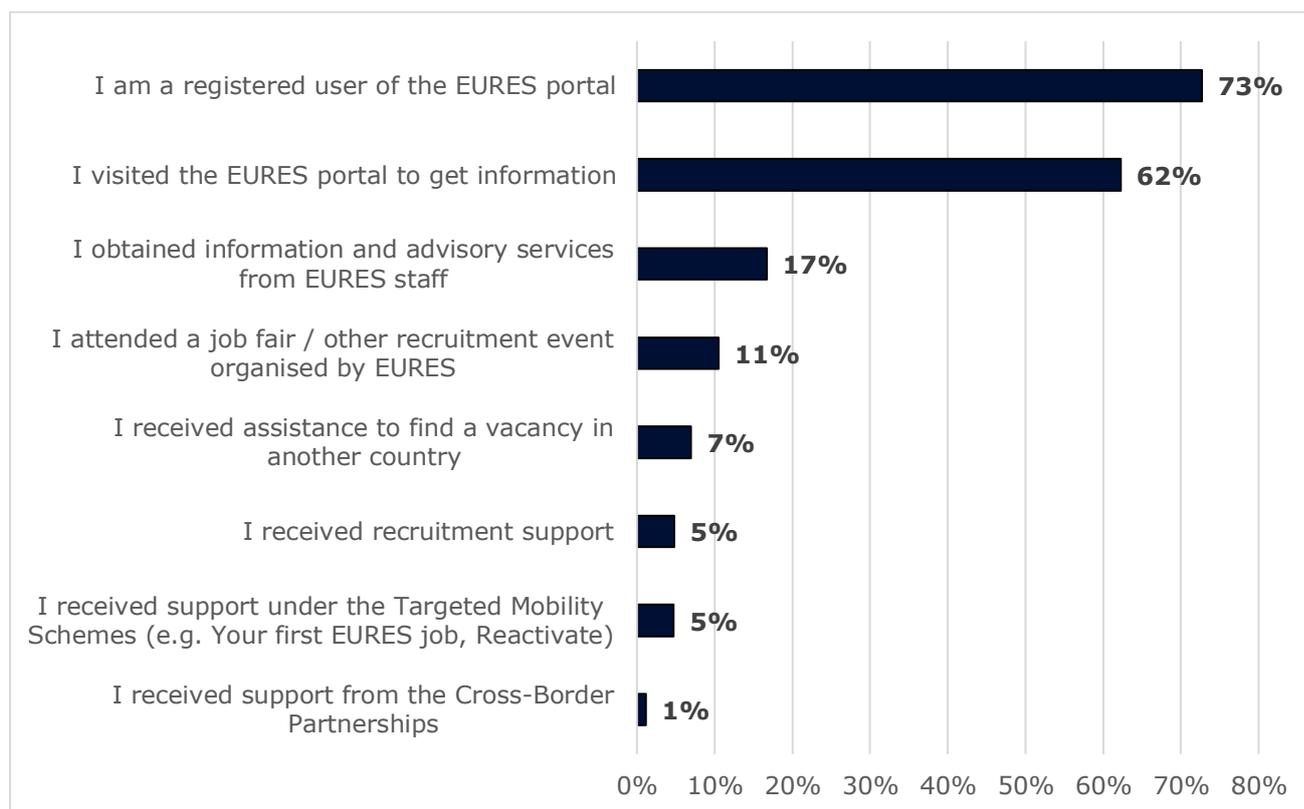
When asked about their type of interaction with EURES, the respondents could choose multiple answers from eight options. Almost half of the respondents (47%, 974) selected only one type of interaction, followed by two (36%, 734) and three interactions (11%, 221). Only four respondents selected all eight interactions.

Figure 140 How have you interacted with EURES? Number of interactions (n=2,055)



The most selected interaction was 'I am a registered user of the EURES portal' (73%, 1,494) followed by 'I visited the EURES portal to get information' (62%, 1,279). These results might be justified by the fact that the EURES Portal was one of the main channels for the survey dissemination.

Figure 141 How have you interacted with EURES? (n=2,055)



### Questions on EURES services

This section only appeared to the respondents who selected at least one of the following options in the previous question:

- I obtained information and advisory services from EURES staff
- I received assistance to find a vacancy in another country
- I received recruitment support

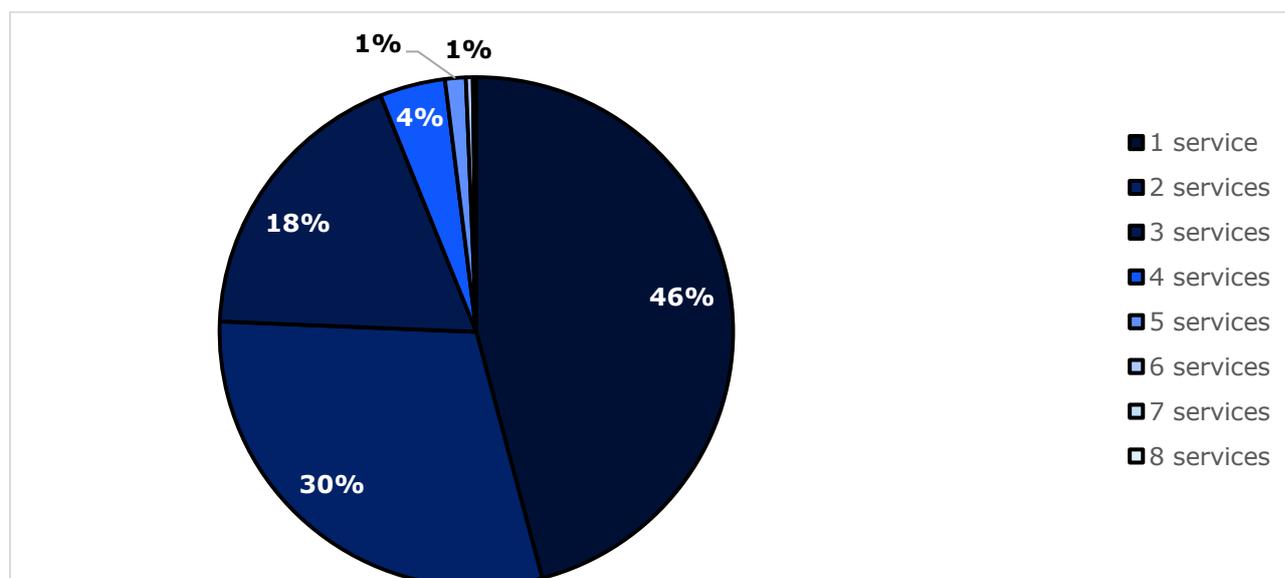
In total, 460 respondents were shown this section.

#### *Which EURES services have you used?\**

A majority of the 460 respondents indicated that they have received one service (46%, 211), while one respondent indicated to have received all of the eight services listed, which were:

- Information and guidance on finding a job abroad
- Information and guidance on finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad
- A selection of work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers that were in line with your skills
- Training to prepare your move
- Post-recruitment assistance (e.g. relocation assistance, language courses in the destination country)
- Information on living and working conditions abroad (i.e. taxation, work contracts, pension entitlement, health insurance, social security and active labour market measures)
- Information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers
- Other

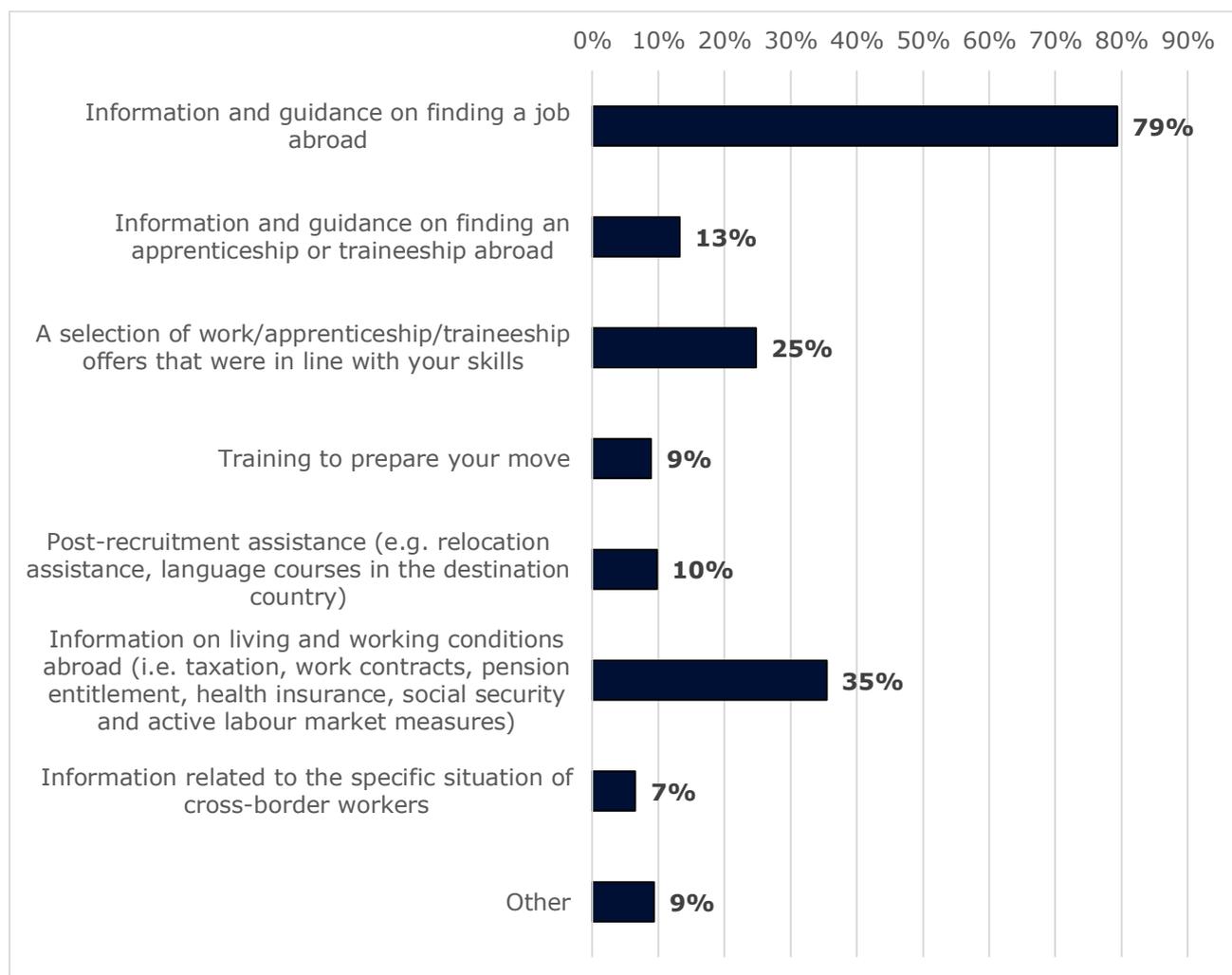
Figure 142 Which EURES services have you used? Number of services selected (n=460)



Among all EURES services, “Information and guidance on finding a job abroad” was used most often, with it being selected by 79% (365) respondents. This was followed by “Information on living and working conditions abroad (i.e. taxation, work contracts, pension entitlement, health insurance, social security and active labour market measures)” (35%, 163) and “A selection of work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers that were in line with your skills” (25%, 114).

The respondents who selected the “Other” option, commented that they used EURES for information and support in the following topics: finding a job in a specific country (e.g. support to Portuguese jobseekers in Luxembourg); return migration; economic support for relocation; Your First EURES Job.

Figure 143 Which EURES services have you used? (n=460)



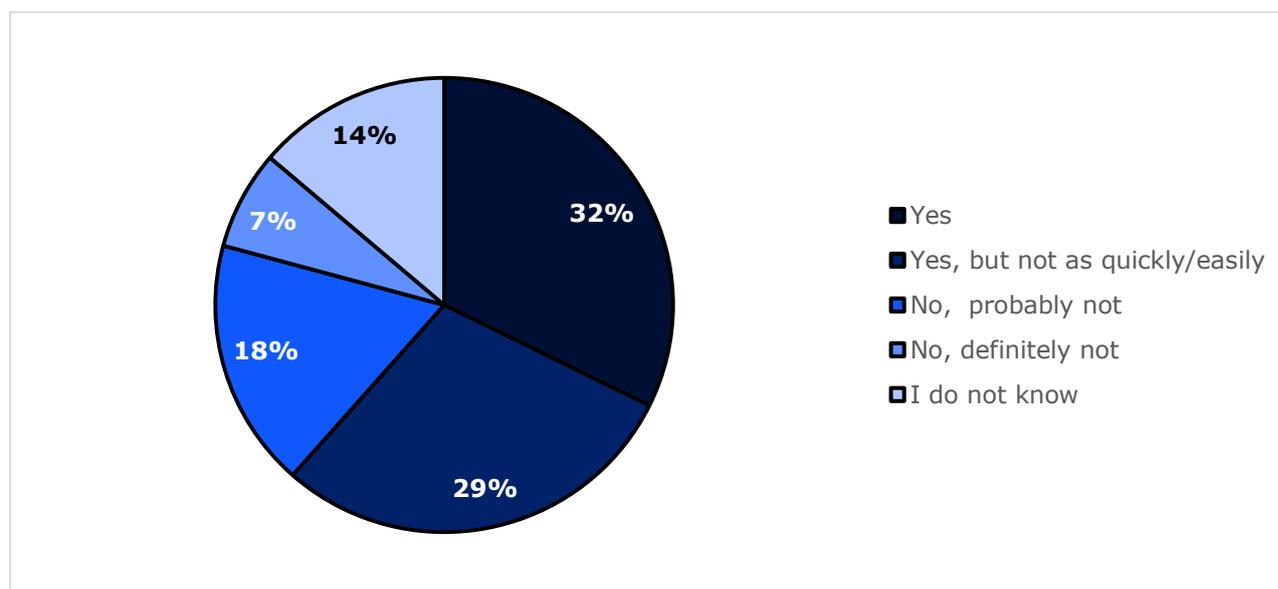
*Do you think you would have achieved the same outcome without EURES support?*

For each of the selected services they have received, the respondents were asked to evaluate if the same outcome would have been achieved without the support from EURES. The results were as follows:

**Finding a job abroad**

From the 365 respondents who indicated to have received information and guidance on finding a job abroad, most of them (32%, 219) responded that they would have found a job without the help of EURES, with 29% (104) indicating that it would take more time. On the contrary, 25% (88) commented that they would probably (18%, 63) and definitely (7%, 25) not have been able to achieve the same result without EURES. Nine respondents preferred not to answer.

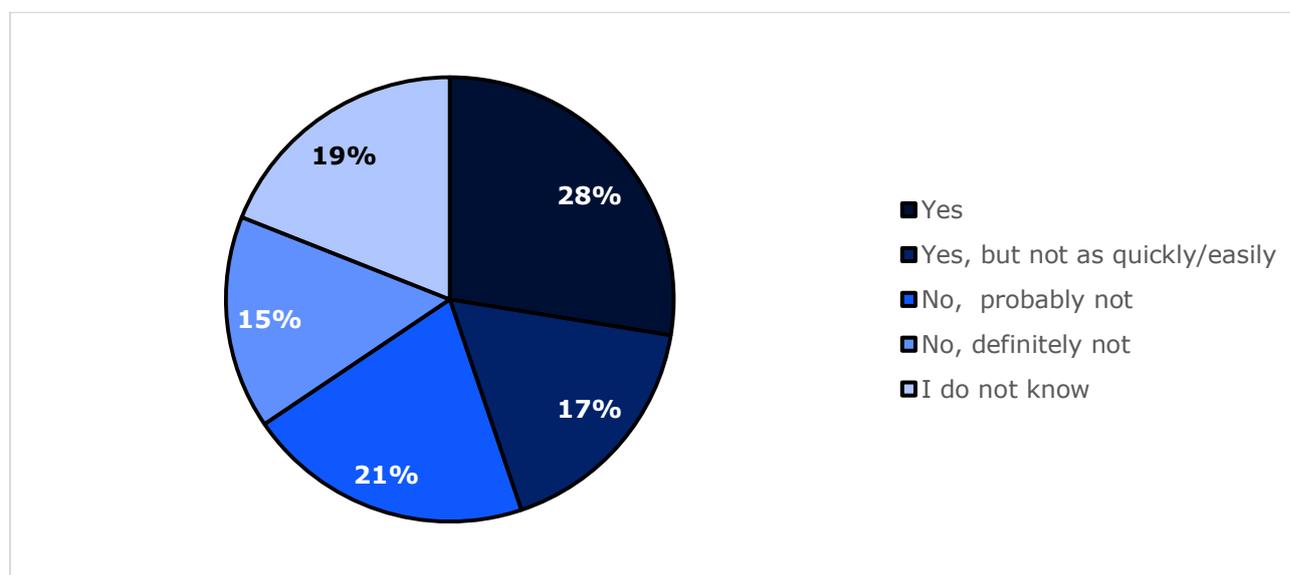
Figure 144 Finding a job abroad (n=356)



### Finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad

From among those who received support in finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad, 28% (26) indicated that they could have achieved the same result without the support of EURES. In comparison, 36% (21) answered either “No, probably not” (21%) or “No, definitely not” (15%).

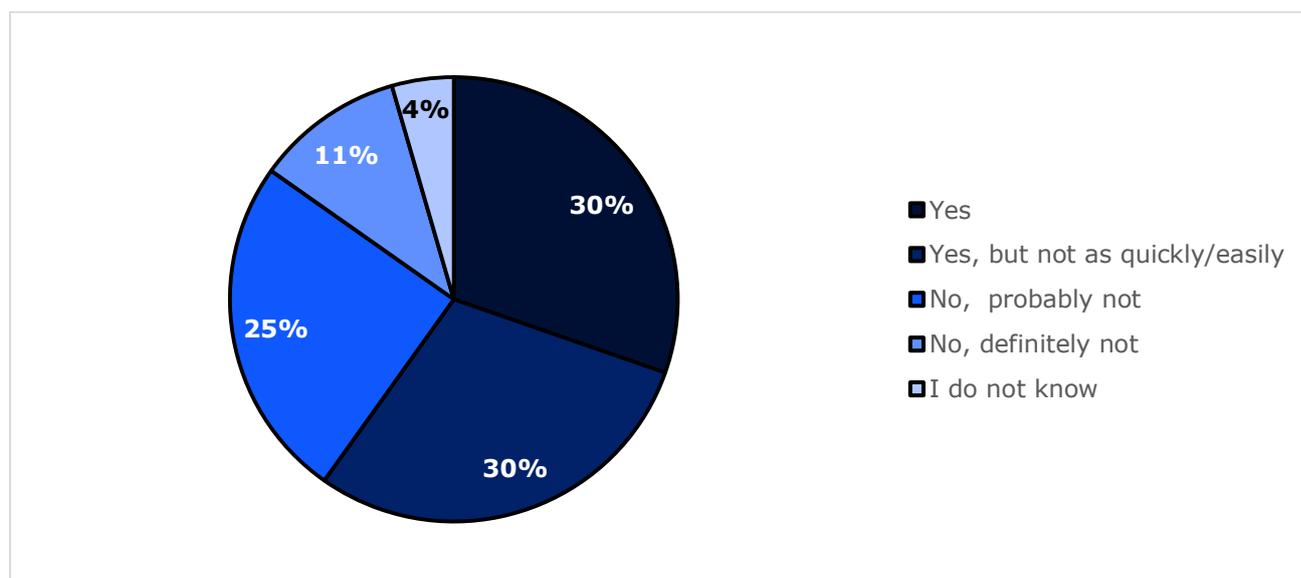
Figure 145 Finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad (n=58)



### Receiving work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers in line with your skills

With regard to receiving work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers in line with one’s skills, the majority of respondents indicated that this could have been achieved without EURES (60%, 67), as compared with those who thought it would probably (25%, 28) or definitely (11%, 9) not have been possible. Two respondents preferred not to answer.

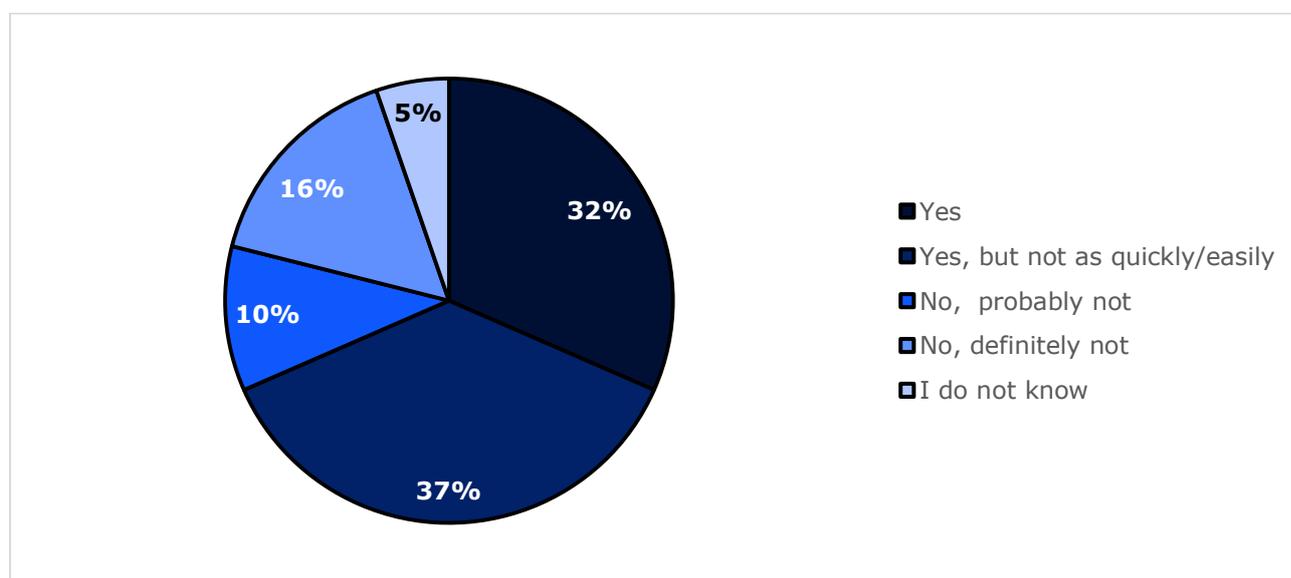
Figure 146 Receiving work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers in line with your skills (n=112)



### Training to prepare for your move

Regarding the ability to receive training in preparation for a move abroad, 69% (26) of respondents indicated that it could have been achieved without the support of EURES. On the contrary, 26% (10) commented that they would not have been able to achieve the same result without EURES, either “definitely” (16%, 6) or “probably” (10%, 4). Three respondents preferred not to answer.

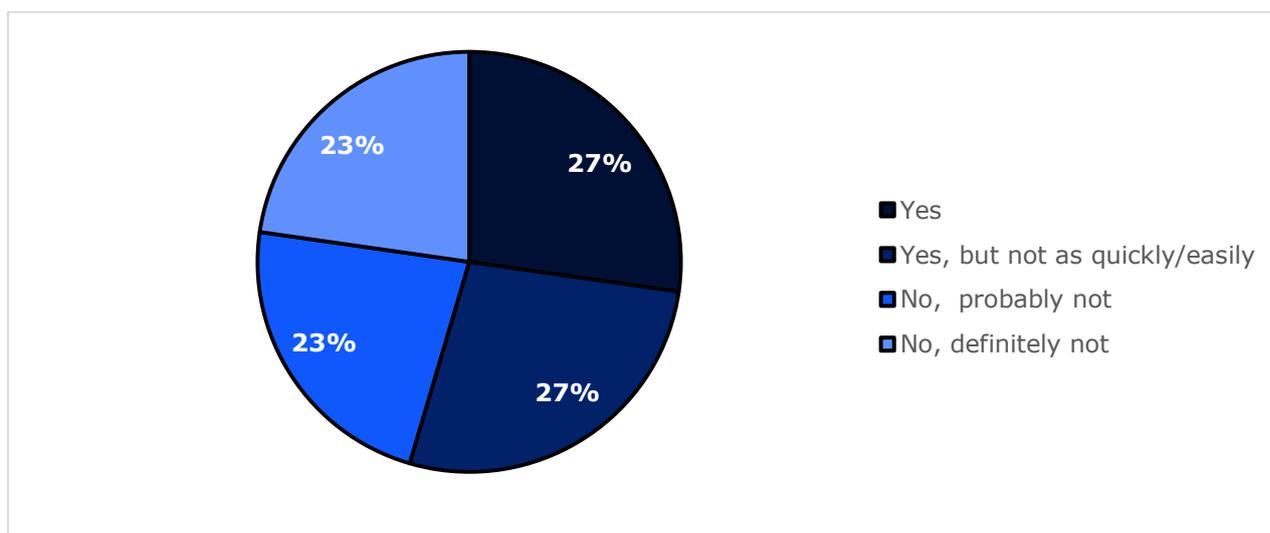
Figure 147 Training to prepare your move (n=38)



### Post-recruitment assistance

The responses of those who received post-recruitment assistance are spread nearly equally between the options with slightly more answers indicating that it could have been possible without the support of EURES.

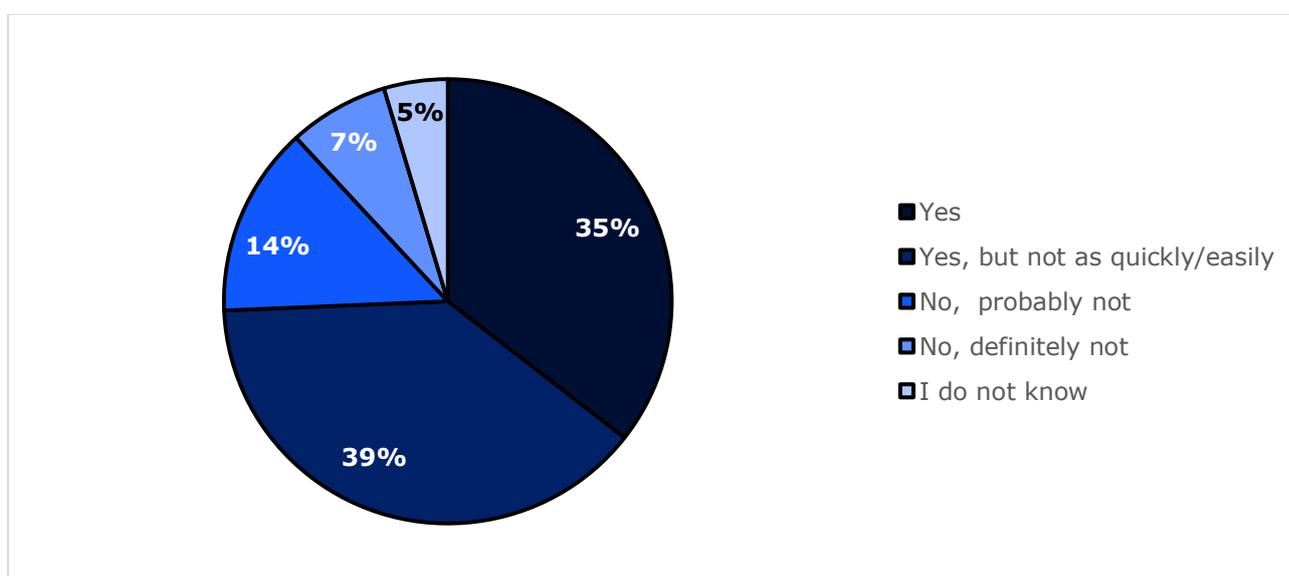
Figure 148 Post-recruitment assistance (n=44)



### Obtaining information on living and working conditions abroad

More than two-thirds (74%, 113) of respondents who obtained information on living and working conditions abroad said that they would have been able to find the same information without the support from EURES. Eleven respondents preferred not to answer.

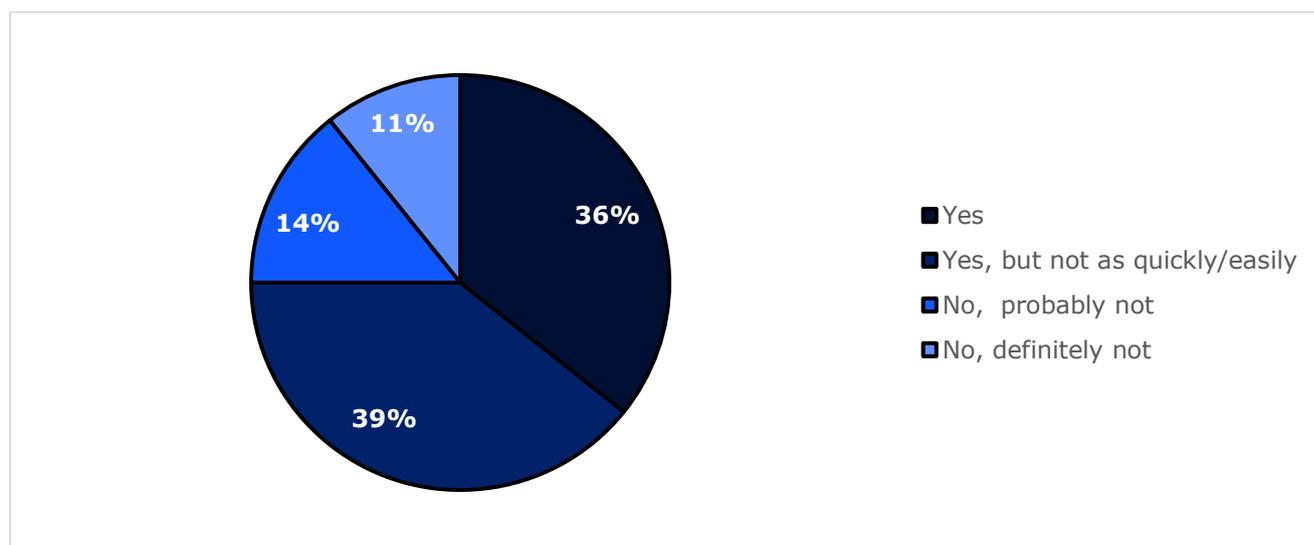
Figure 149 Obtaining information on living and working conditions abroad (n=152)



### Obtaining information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers

With regard to obtaining information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers, 74% of respondents (21) who received this information said that they could have achieved the same outcome without EURES support.

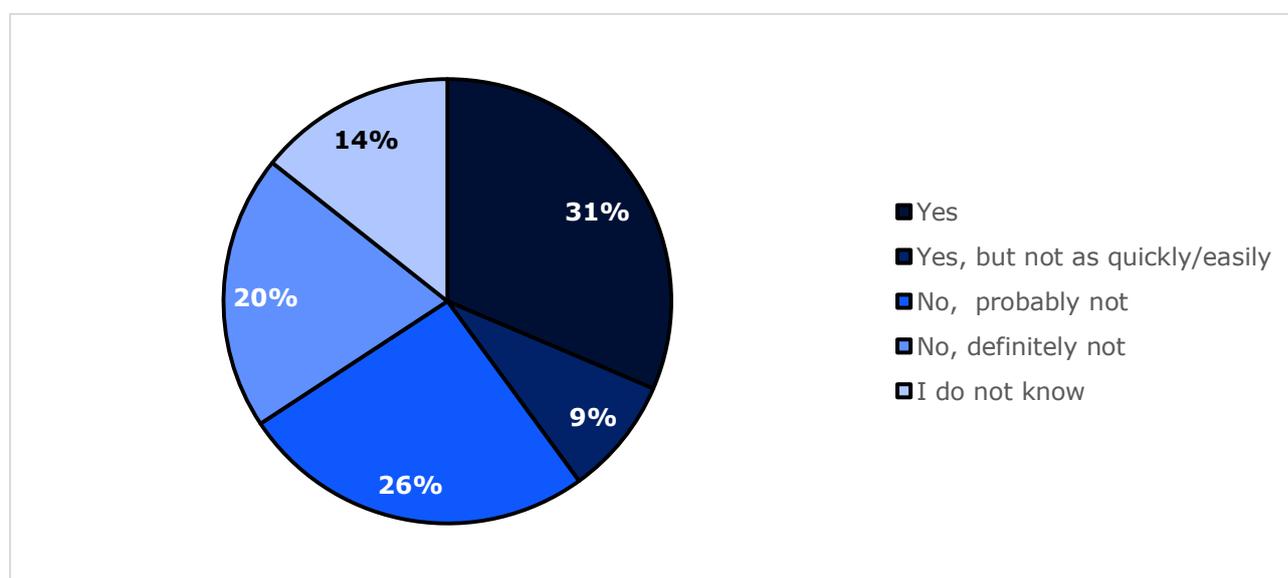
Figure 150 Obtaining information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers (n=28)



### Other

From those respondents who indicated that they received other services, one-third (34%, 16) said that they would not have obtained the same information and support without EURES. Eight preferred not to answer.

Figure 151 Other (n=35)



### Comments

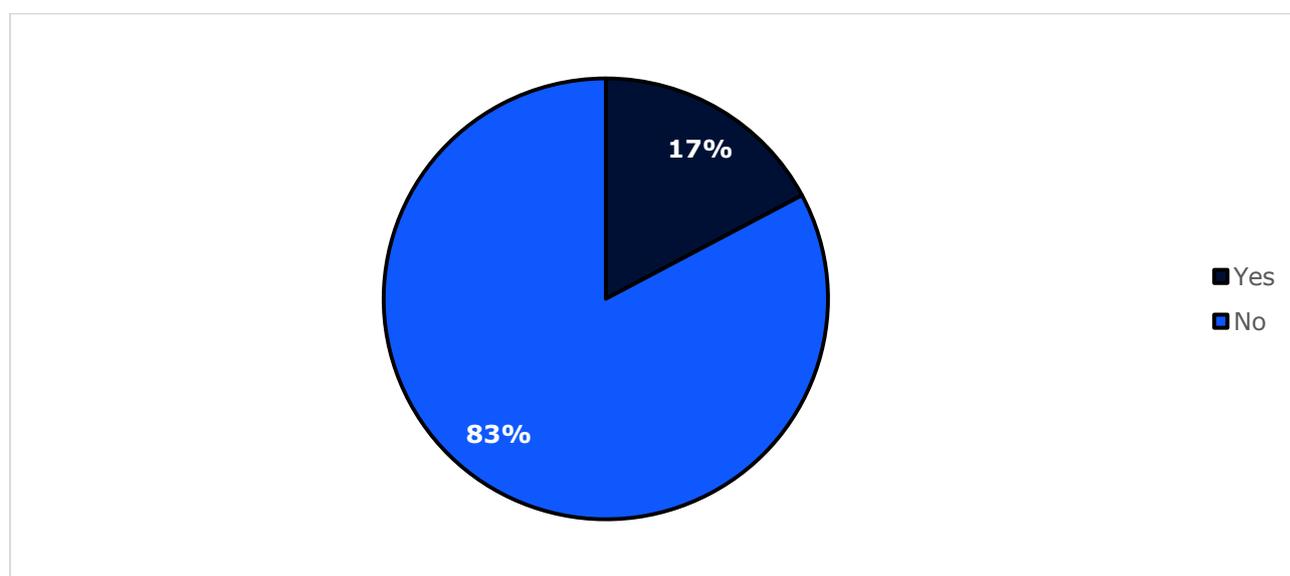
The respondents could also leave further comments in support of their answers to this question. Seventy-three made use of this opportunity. Overall, the comments combined positive and negative feedback on EURES services. Most of the positive comments highlighted the help received from EURES advisers, specifically the provision of information about working and living abroad, as well as support with the relocation process.

The negative comments focused on the low effectiveness of using the EURES Portal for finding employment abroad due to two most commonly mentioned factors: the lack of relevant job vacancies that would match the specific skills and qualifications of jobseekers, and the search filters not working well enough to provide the expected results. Moreover, some comments remarked on the difficulty of receiving personalised support from EURES advisers.

#### *Have you found a job, an apprenticeship or a traineeship abroad thanks to EURES?*

When asked whether the jobseekers have found a job, an apprenticeship or a traineeships as a result of using EURES services, 83% (375) responded negatively, compared to 17% (78) who said that they have found employment thanks to EURES. Seven respondents did not provide any answer to this question.

Figure 152 Have you found a job, an apprenticeship or a traineeship abroad thanks to EURES? (n=453)



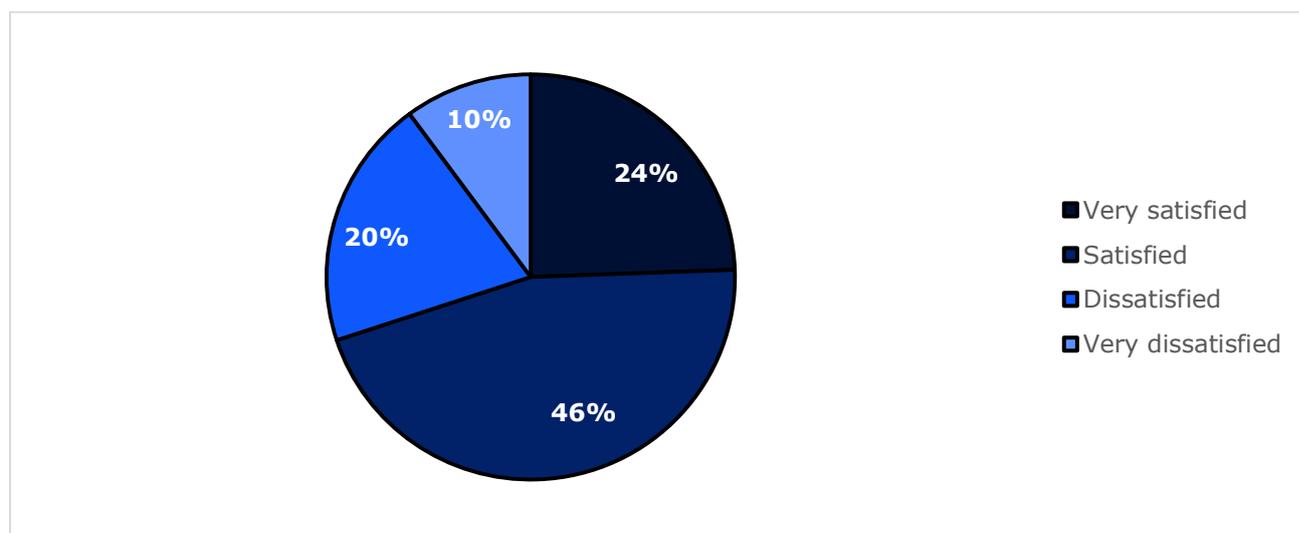
#### *How satisfied were you with the services you have received?*

For each of the selected EURES service received, the respondents were asked to evaluate their level of satisfaction. The results were as follows:

##### *Information and guidance in finding a job abroad*

Over two-thirds (70%, 249) of those who received information and guidance in finding a job abroad were satisfied with the service they received, where 24% (87) were satisfied and 46% (162) very satisfied.

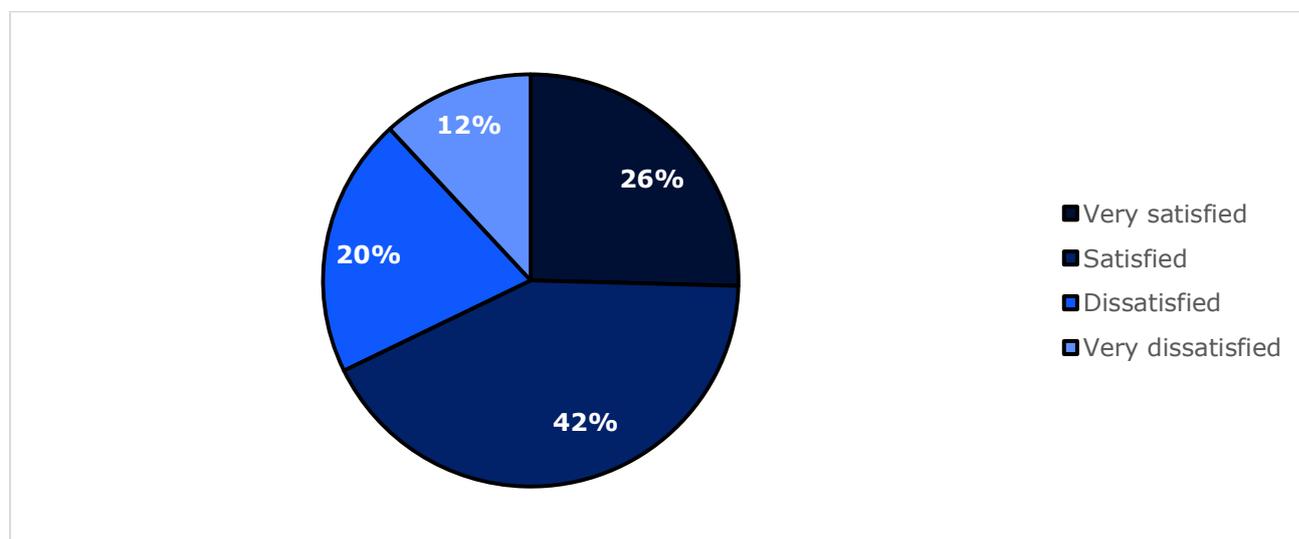
Figure 153 Satisfaction with Information and guidance in finding a job abroad (n=356)



### Information and guidance in finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad

Regarding the provision of information and guidance in finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad, two-thirds (68%, 40) of the respondents who received this service were satisfied with it, including 42% (25) being satisfied and 26% (15) very satisfied.

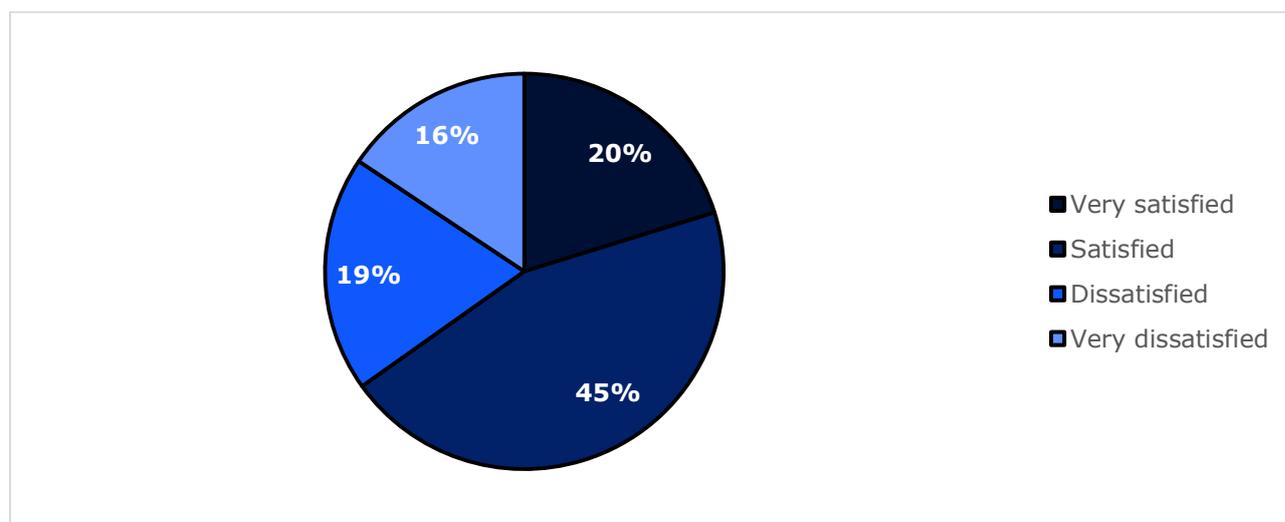
Figure 154 Satisfaction with Information and guidance in finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad (n=59)



### Work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers

Almost two-thirds (65%, 71) of jobseekers who received a work or apprenticeship/traineeship offer with EURES support were either satisfied (45%, 49) or very satisfied (20%, 19) with the service provided.

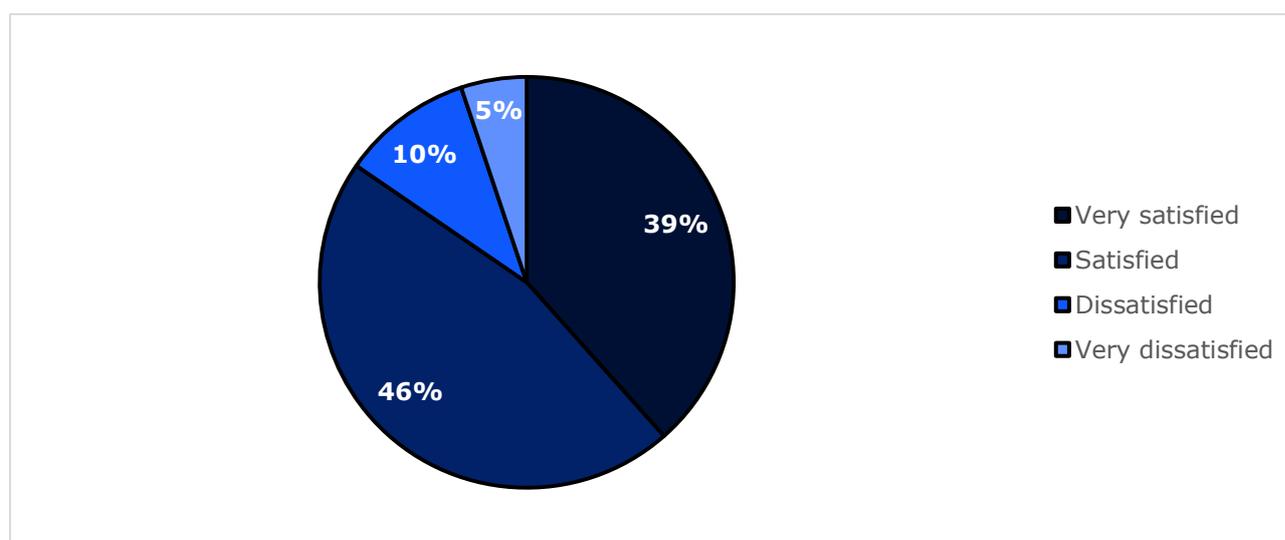
Figure 155 Satisfaction with work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers (n=109)



### Training to prepare your move abroad

A large majority of respondents (81%, 33) who received training in preparation of their move abroad were (very) satisfied with the service.

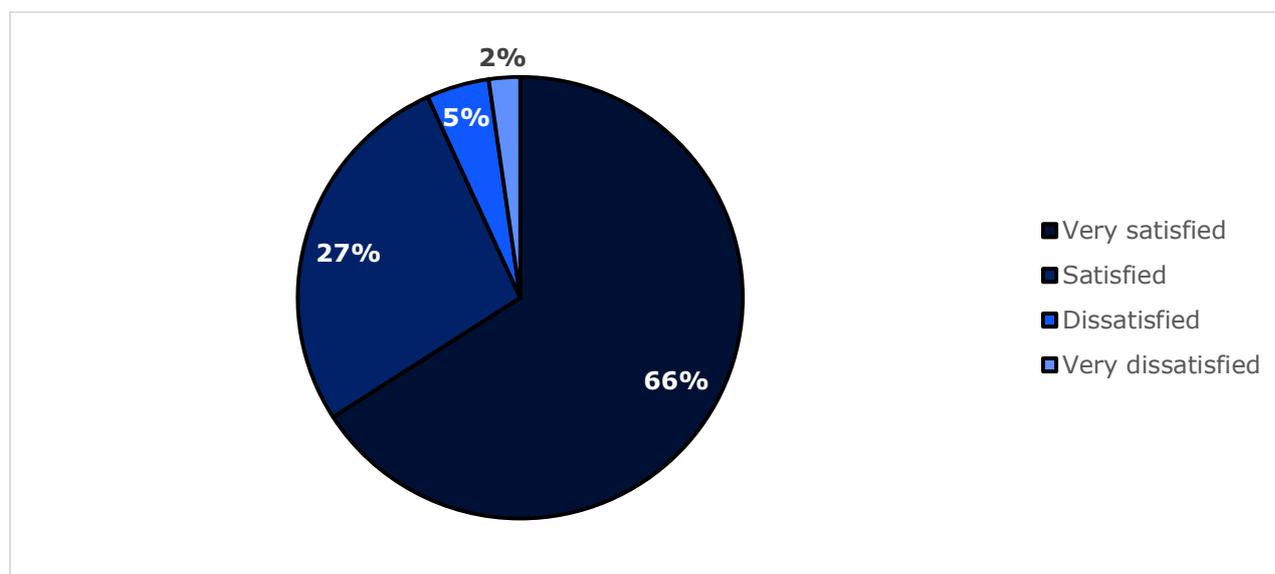
Figure 156 Satisfaction with training to prepare the move abroad (n=39)



### Post-recruitment assistance

Regarding EURES support with post-recruitment assistance, a significant majority (93%, 41) of the respondents who received this service were satisfied with it, with 66% (29) being very satisfied.

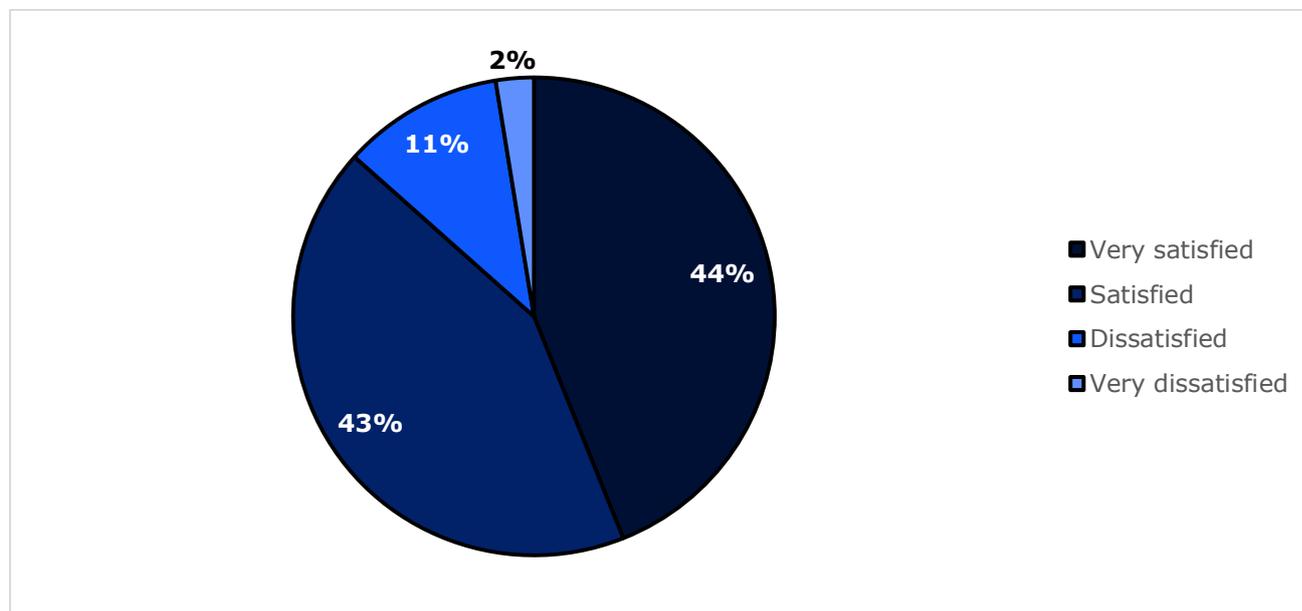
Figure 157 Satisfaction with post-recruitment assistance (n=44)



### Information on living and working conditions abroad

Over three quarters (87%, 136) of jobseekers who received information on living and working conditions abroad were either very satisfied (44%, 69) or satisfied (43%, 67) with the service.

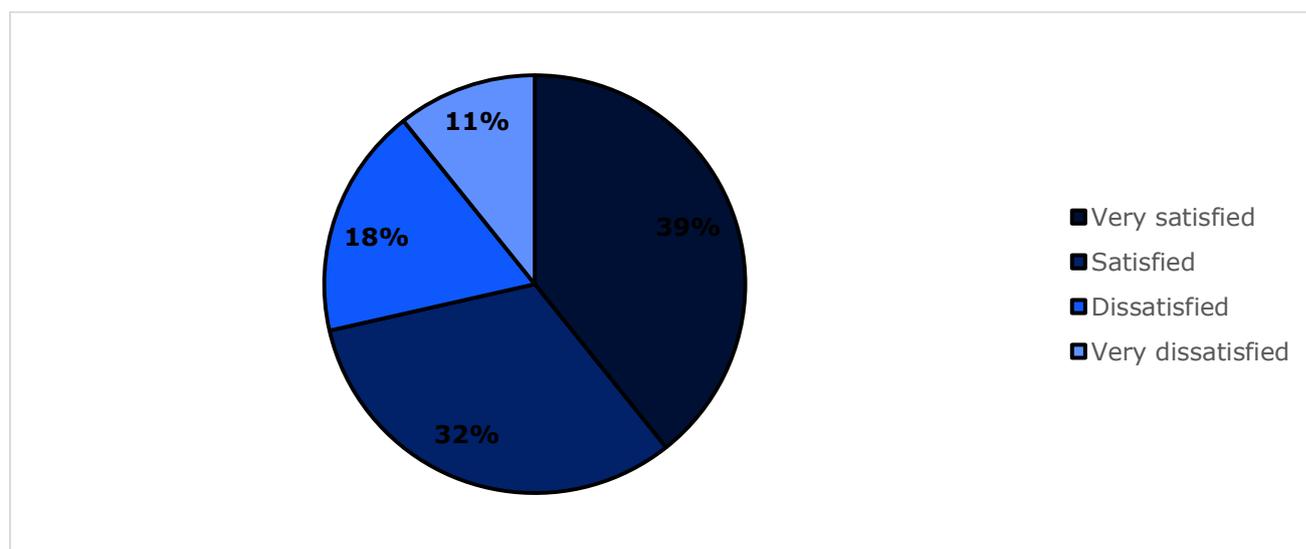
Figure 158 Satisfaction with information on living and working conditions abroad (n=157)



### Information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers

With regards to the provision of information for cross-border workers, 69% (20) of those who received this service were either very satisfied (39%, 11) or satisfied (32%, 9) with it.

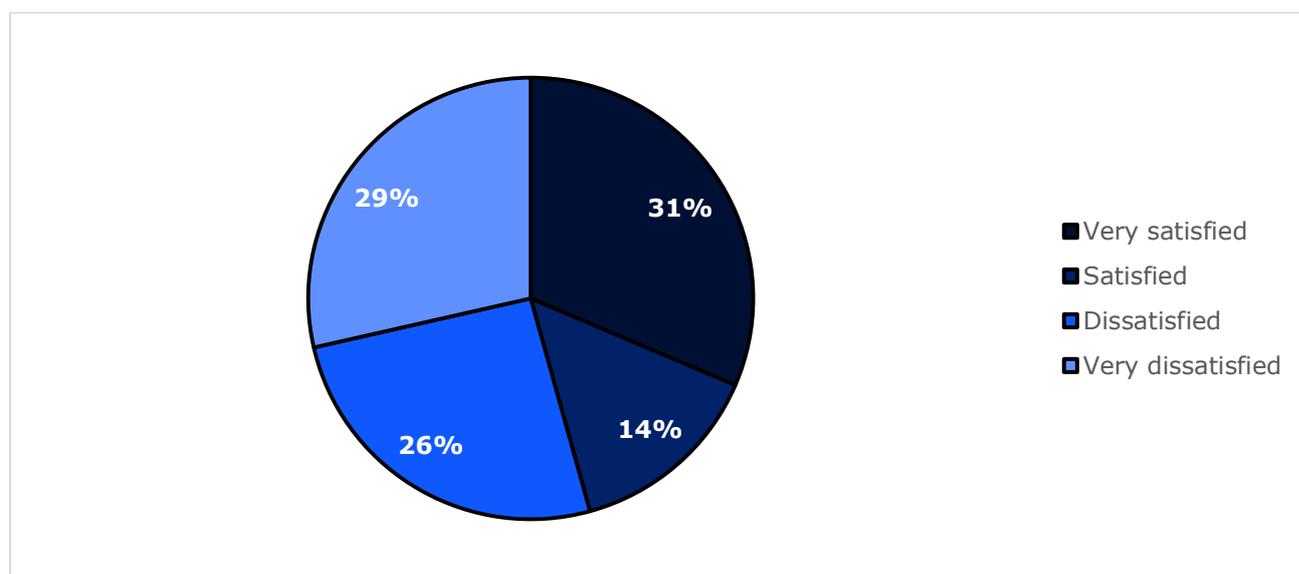
Figure 159 Satisfaction with information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers (n=28)



### Other

The responses of those who received “other” EURES services are spread nearly equally between those who were satisfied and dissatisfied.

Figure 160 Satisfaction with “other” services (n=35)



### Comments

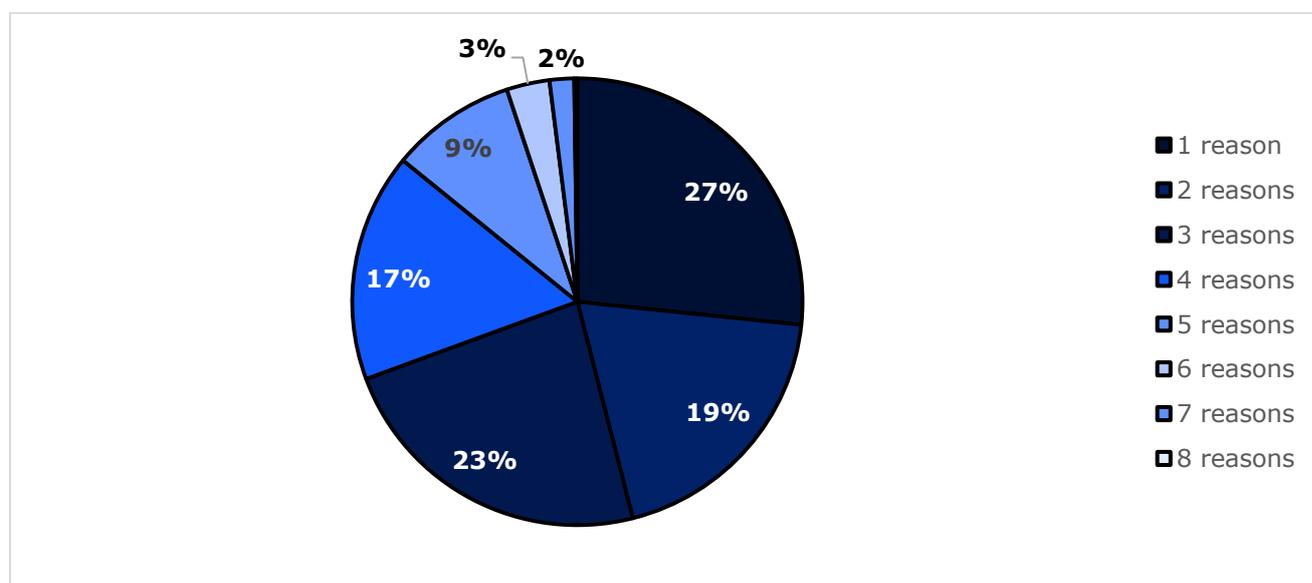
The respondents were able to provide further comments regarding their satisfaction. Ninety respondents made use of this opportunity. Positive comments underlined the satisfaction with specific services, such as information and guidance, and the help received from EURES staff. Nevertheless, some dissatisfied respondents indicated that they did not find advice received from EURES staff useful, or that they did not obtain any such service at all. Moreover, the dissatisfaction stems also from the inability to find employment through EURES; specifically, the respondents commented that the overall experience of using the EURES Portal was disappointing due to difficult and time-consuming registration

and job search, irrelevant search results, and general lack of vacancies in line with specific skills and qualifications. It was mentioned here once again that search filters are vague and imprecise, and that some professions are incorrectly labelled.

*What were the main reasons you used EURES services?*

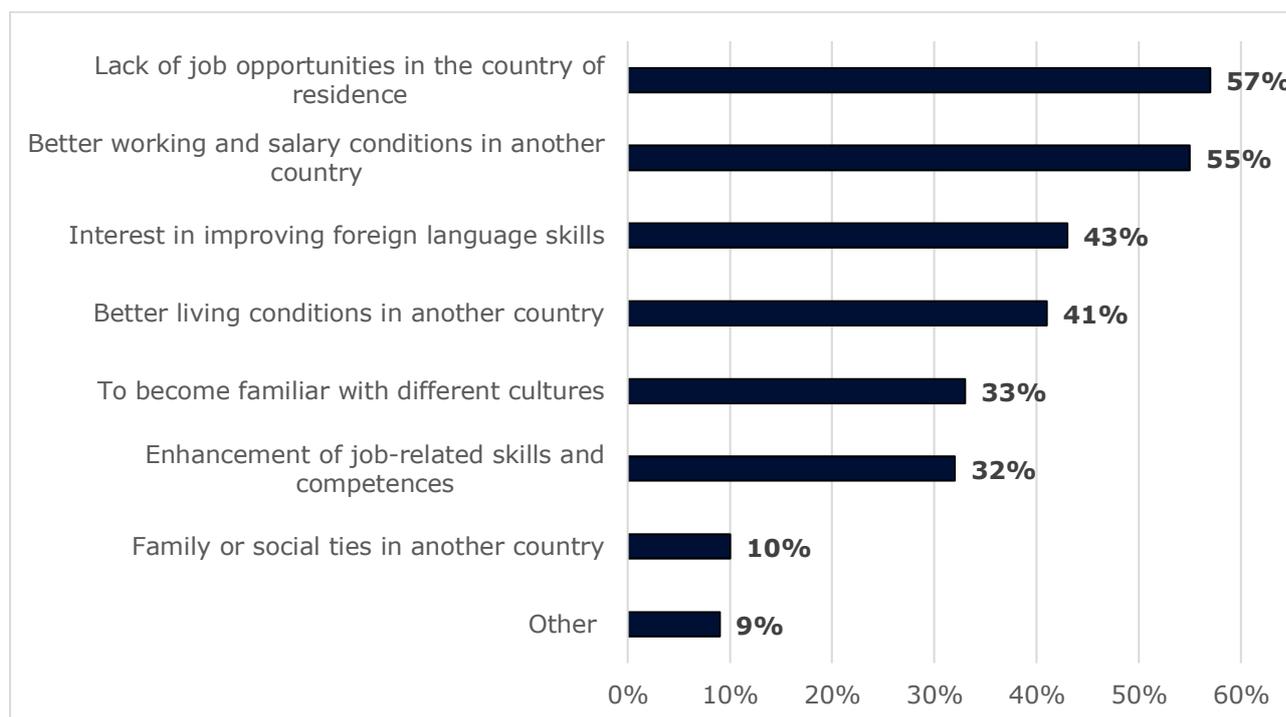
Furthermore, respondents were asked about the main motivations for using EURES services with eight different reasons available for multiple choice. From among 454 jobseekers who answered this question, the majority selected 1 reason (27%, 121), followed by 23% (106) choosing 3 reasons, and 19% (88) selecting 2 reasons. Only 1 respondent selected all 8 reasons and 6 respondents did not provide any answer.

Figure 161 What were the main reasons you used EURES services? Number of reasons selected (n=454)



Regarding the reasons, "lack of job opportunities in the country of residence" was the main motivation for using EURES services selected by 57% (258) of respondents, followed closely by 55% (251) of jobseekers who selected "better working and salary conditions in another country" as the reason, and 43% (194) for whom the motivation was "interest in improving foreign language skills".

Figure 162 What were the main reasons you used EURES services? (n=460)



In terms of “other” reasons, some of the respondents wished to develop more on one of the seven specific reasons and provide more information to their specific situation. Some of the respondents highlighted that they wanted to experience a sense of adventure and seeking new experiences. Others highlighted a larger pool of work opportunities. A few of the respondents also indicated that their reason to use EURES services was that they found out about mobility schemes (such as Your first EURES job) and the (financial) support they offer. One respondent mentioned that they were interested in increasing the language skills of their children. Another respondent mentioned that they wanted to make use of their right to free movement.

*How can the EURES services be improved?*

This question was answered by 499 respondents.

A considerable number of respondents mentioned that they are happy with the services as they are and thanked specific EURES offices for the support they have received. Another group did not have any suggestions for improvement at the moment.

The majority of comments were connected to the improvement of the EURES portal. Here the users mentioned that the portal should be updated more frequently, particularly the job vacancy offers as the positions advertised are oftentimes a few months old. Another often mentioned suggestion was to improve the offer of job vacancies and provide a more varied selection in terms of sectors. Respondents would also welcome having an opportunity to interact with employers directly via the portal or at least being able to apply for a position directly through the job vacancy advertisement. The overall user-friendliness of the portal should be bettered.

Some suggestions were also provided in connection with the creation of CVs on the EURES portal. It was suggested that more guidance on how to put together a CV on the portal should be provided. The possibility to have a link to a user's LinkedIn account rather than a CV was suggested.

The filter and search options of the EURES portal were another area highlighted for improvement. The suggestions in this area focused specifically on improving the results of the search as oftentimes, the job vacancies shown have nothing to do with the profile of the job seeker. Having the possibility to set up alerts for specific job profiles or to be able to check who has seen their CV would also be welcomed.

The visibility or rather its lack of visibility was also mentioned by a considerable number of respondents. They feel that EURES is still quite a niche service available only to a selected few. EURES should increase its presence in media, radio, Internet, etc. A better mobile application allowing access to different services would also be helpful in this area.

The respondents also highlighted that not all EURES offices and staff work in the same manner and that the quality of services varies considerably across the network. They mentioned that they had never received a response from the staff even after contacting them multiple times.

A suggestion was made to also follow up more often with the applicants who have accepted a job offer from abroad to make sure that the preparations are going smoothly and also once the applicant relocates. This is particularly important during the first months in a new country as the job seeker might need additional support to integrate themselves better into the new employment and society.

Improving financial support, training opportunities (such as language and skills courses) and even opportunities to test one's skills via standardised testing was also another area highlighted for improvement.

### **Questions on the EURES portal**

This section only appeared to the respondents who selected at least one of the following options:

- I visited the EURES portal to get information
- I am a registered user of the EURES portal

In total, this section was shown to 1,868 respondents.

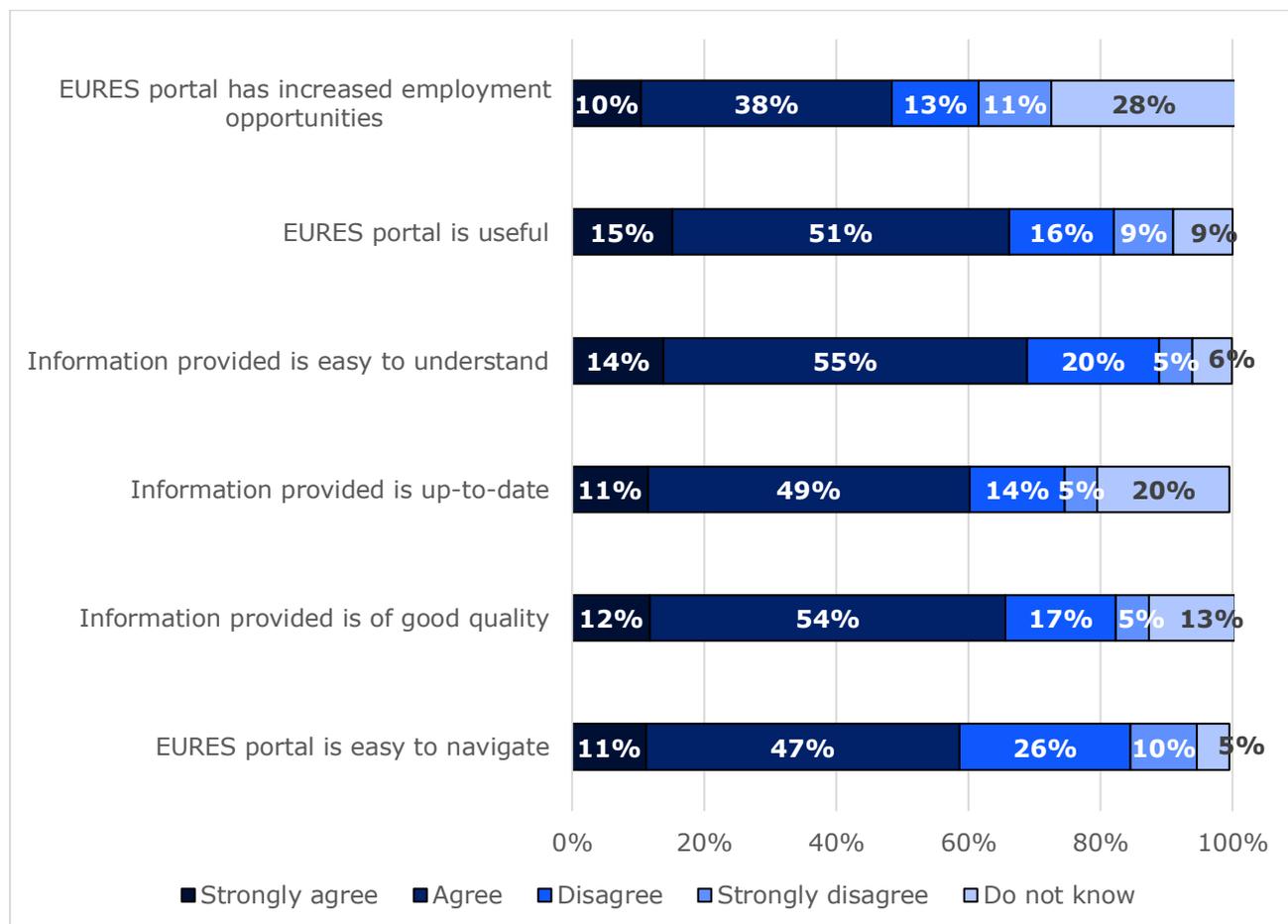
#### *To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the EURES portal\**

In this question, the respondents were shown a series of statements about the EURES portal and were asked to indicate to which extent they agree with each of them.

As demonstrated in the graph below, the majority of respondents agrees with all of the statements about the EURES portal. This ranges from 38% (710) agreeing with EURES portal increasing employment opportunities to 55% (1,028) of respondents thinking that the EURES portal provides easy to understand information.

The highest rate of disagreement (26%, 484) is with the last statement on whether the EURES portal is easy to navigate, followed by 20% (374) who disagreed with that the information on the EURES portal is easy to understand. This result is in line with comments mentioned even in the previous section where a number of respondents highlighted that the EURES portal is not intuitive and user-friendly.

Figure 163 Agreement with statements about the EURES portal (n=1,868)



These sentiments are further supported by the 266 comments that the respondents attached to their responses. The most mentioned criticisms include:

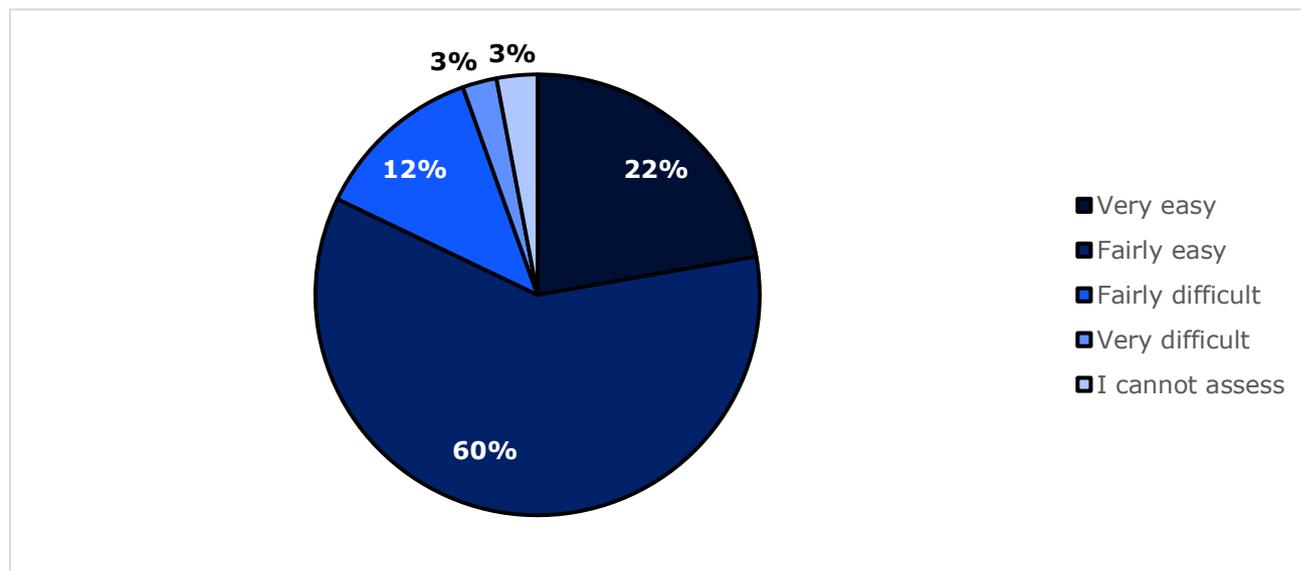
- Not having enough relevant job vacancies
- Not receiving response to the applications sent
- Not having enough filter options (for example adding region and education filters)
- The translating function not functioning properly
- Job search function is not sufficient
- Not enough job offers for people with more experience
- Better guidance on the recruitment process
- Not enough visibility
- Incomplete information on some of the job vacancies offered
- Non-responsive staff
- Not very user-friendly
- Possibility to flag problematic employers

*How would you assess the EURES portal registration process?*

This question was shown only to those respondents who indicated that they are registered users of the EURES portal. In total, 1,494 respondents were asked their opinion.

Eighty-two percent (1,220) of the respondents indicated that the registration process is either very (22%, 330) or fairly (60%, 890) easy. Three percent of respondents (44) could not assess the difficulty of the registration process. Nine respondents did not provide an answer to this question.

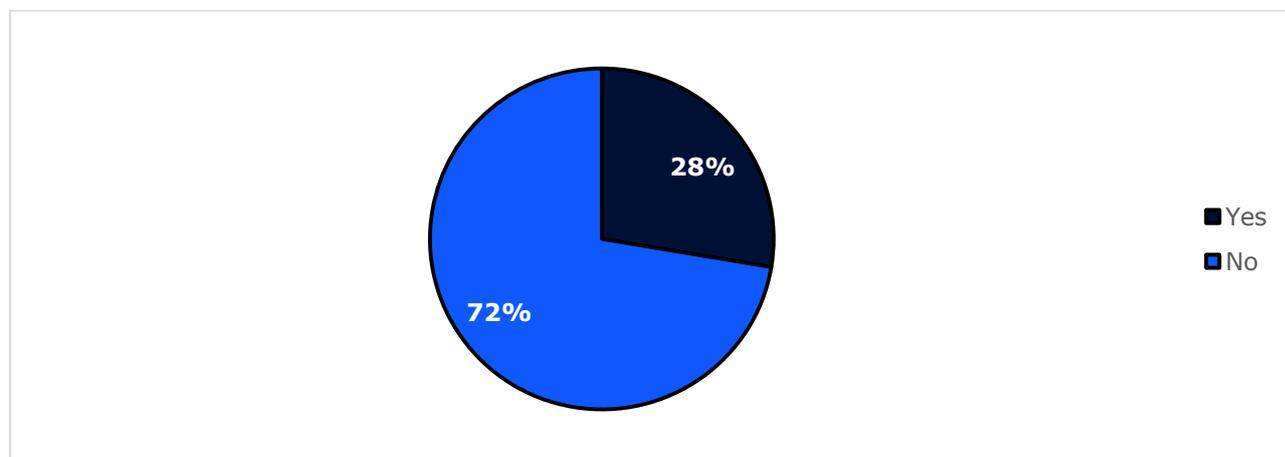
Figure 164 How would you assess the EURES portal registration process (n=1,485)



*Do you use the EURES portal's matching function?*

Furthermore, the respondents who were registered users of the EURES portal were asked whether they used the matching function. A large majority (72%, 1,068) answered that they did not use this function as compared with 28% (408) who indicated having used it. Eighteen respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 165 Do you use the EURES portal's matching function (n=1,476)



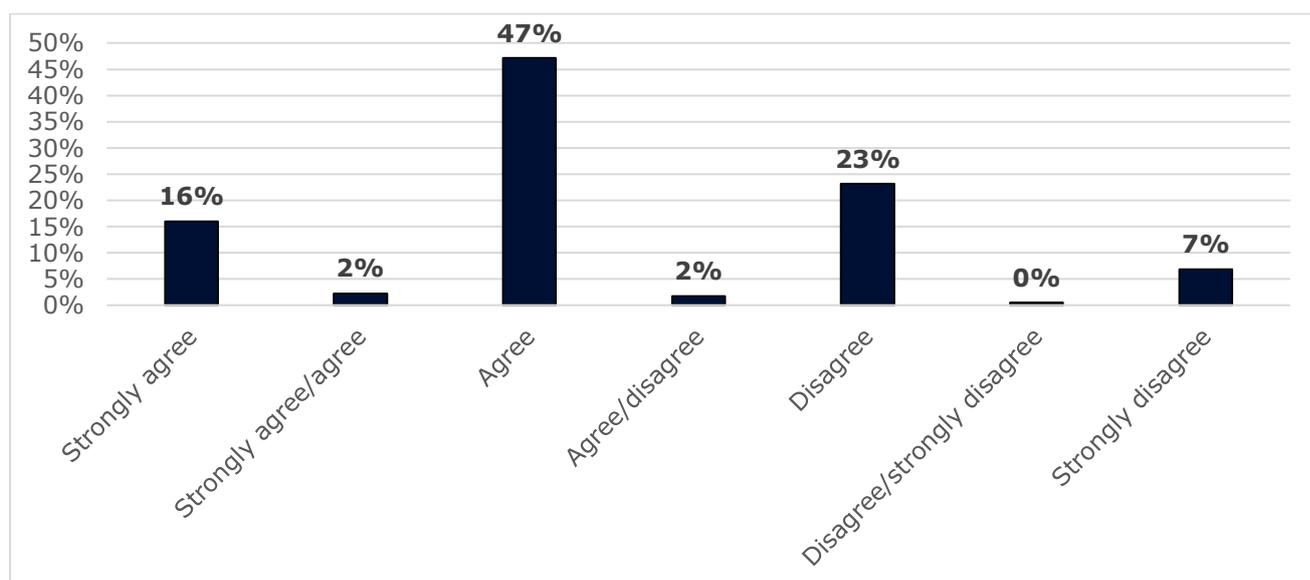
*Do you agree with the following statements about the EURES portal's matching function?*

The 408 respondents who selected that they do use the EURES portal’s matching function were asked whether they agreed with a set of statements about the EURES portal’s matching function.

### The matching is useful

Nearly half of the respondents (47%, 192) would agree that the matching function is useful. This is followed by about one quarter of respondents (23%, 94) who disagree with it, followed by those who strongly agree (16%, 65) with the statement. One respondent preferred not to answer while 10 selected more than two options.

Figure 166 The matching is useful (n=407)

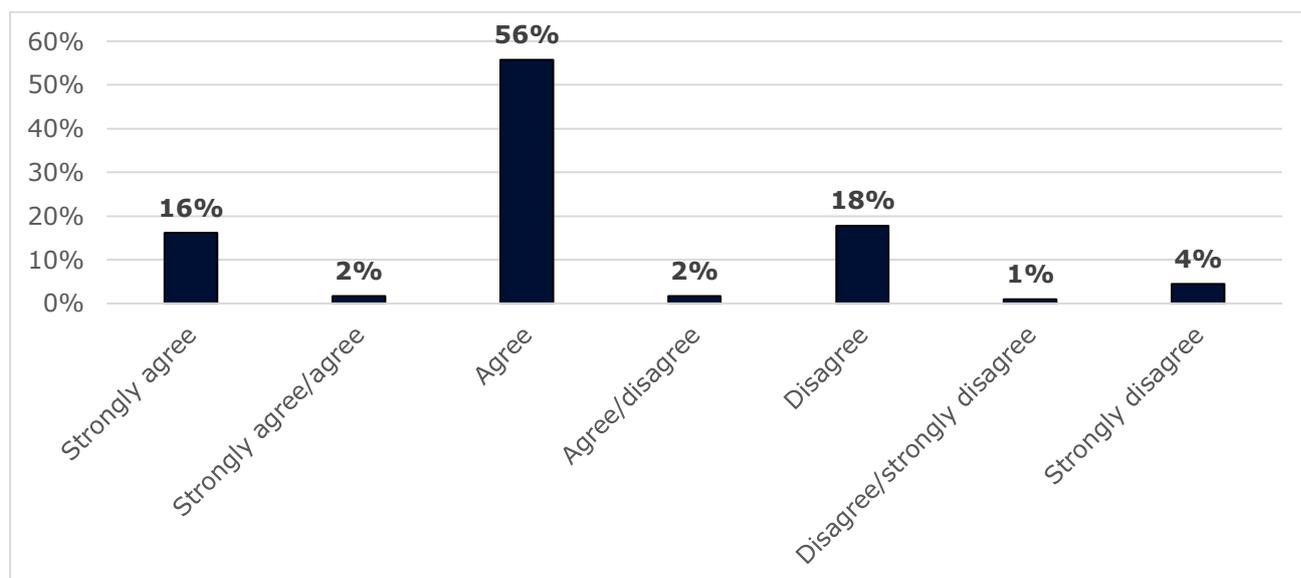


The respondents were able to leave a comment to further elaborate their opinion. Seventeen respondents made use of this opportunity. The feedback ranged from those who said that the matching worked for them but could be improved, to those who said that they were never able to set up the filtering option in a manner to receive relevant job vacancies.

### The matching is easy to use

More than half of the respondents (56%, 225) agree that the matching is easy to use. Yet again, this is followed by those who disagree (18%, 72) and slightly more behind are those who would strongly agree (16%, 65) with the use of matching being easy. Four respondents preferred not to provide their opinion while six selected more than two options.

Figure 167 The matching is easy to use (n=404)

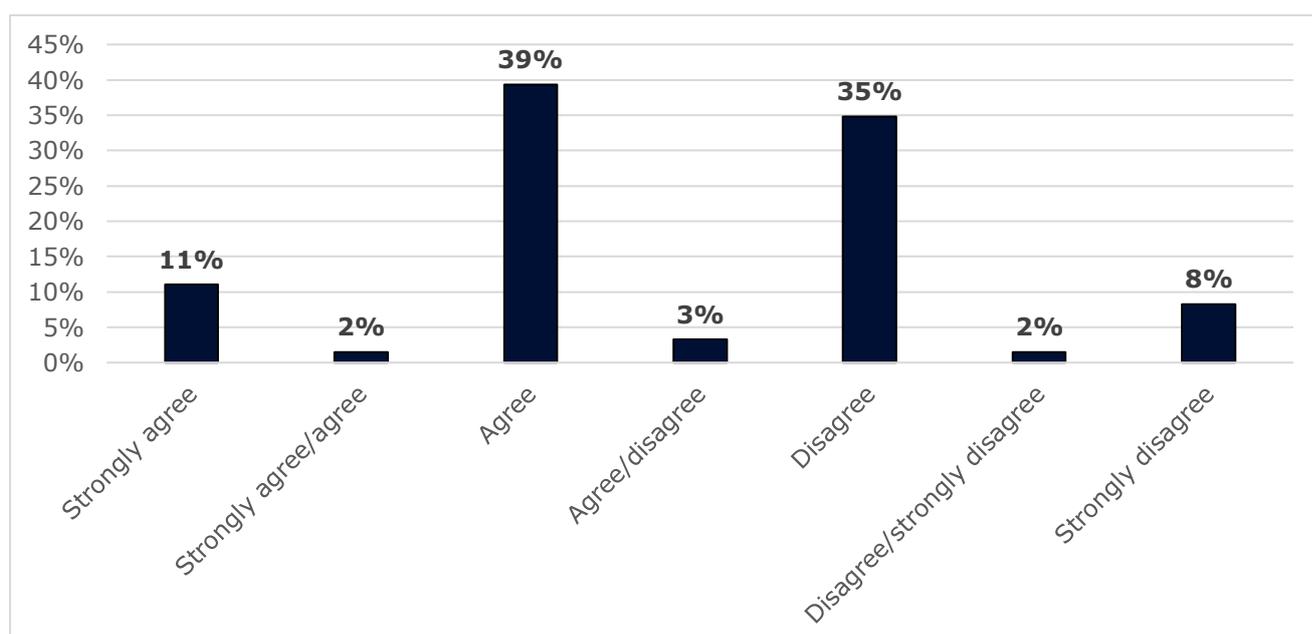


The eight comments that were provided for this statement focused on the incompatibility of some of the filter options (i.e. some filter options cannot be used together) and also highlighted that at times there are translation issues.

[The results of matching are of good quality](#)

As is visible from previous questions, the respondents were quite vocal about the search and filter options not providing relevant results. Nonetheless, the largest group of respondents (39%, 157) would agree with the statement that 'the results of matching are of good quality'. This is followed by about one third of respondents who disagree with this statement (35%, 139). Nine respondents chose not to provide their opinion while only one respondent selected more than two options.

Figure 168 The results of matching are of good quality (n=399)

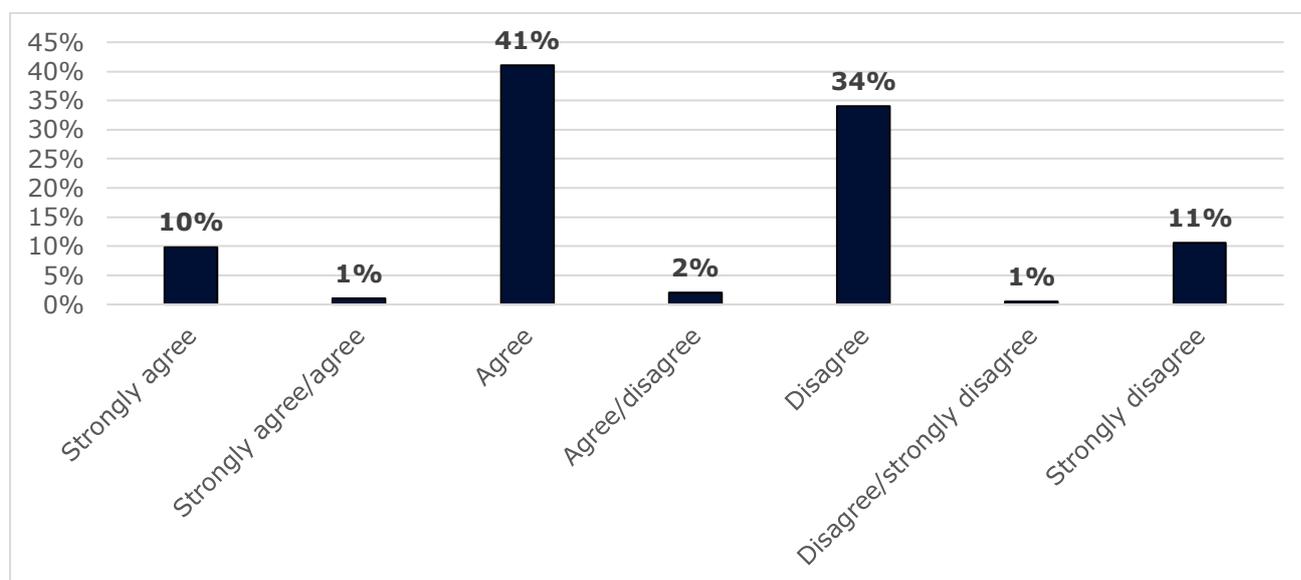


The 13 comments highlighted that some of the users were not able to find relevant matches while using the function. Others mentioned that they did not get any matches as there are no job vacancy offers in their area of expertise, such as biology, ecology or marketing.

### The results match my skills

As with previous statements, the largest group of respondents (41%, 163) agrees that the results of matching on the EURES portal matched their skills. One third of respondents (34%, 135) would, however, disagree with this assessment. Four respondents selected more than two options while 11 of them preferred not to answer.

Figure 169 he results match my skills (n=397)

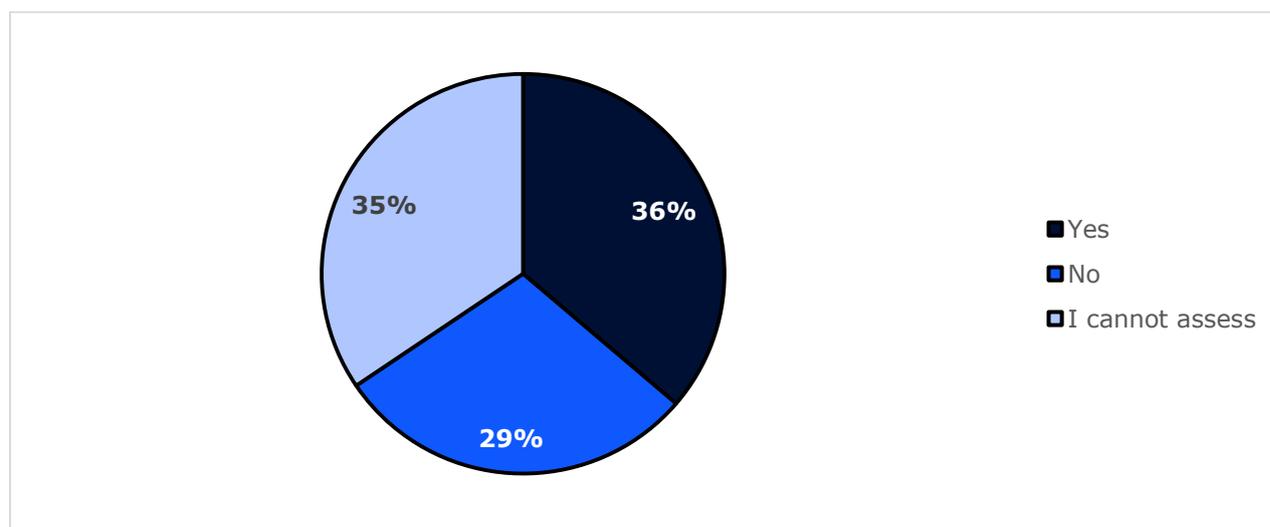


The 19 comments highlighted that the matching does not always provide accurate results that would match one’s skills. It was also highlighted that employers do not always tag their vacancies correctly which may diminish matching possibilities and that at times the same job description does not mean the same across various countries.

### Is there anything that you think could be improved on the EURES portal

To conclude this section, the respondents were asked if there is anything that could be improved on the EURES portal. More than one third (36%, 666) of respondents said that there is room for improvement. This was closely followed by those who were unable to assess this need at the time of their answer (35%, 633). Slightly less than one third of respondents (29%, 538) were of the opinion that there is nothing to improve on the EURES portal. Thirty-one respondents preferred not to provide an opinion.

Figure 170 Is there anything that you think could be improved on the EURES portal? (n=1,837)



When a respondent selected 'Yes', they were asked to provide suggestions for the improvement of the portal. In total, 661 of respondents indicated that there were aspects for improvement. The suggestions included:

- More user-friendly interface
- Improve the filtering, matching and translation functions
- More scrutiny of job vacancies posted (i.e. avoid posting offers from recruitment agencies)
- More targeted newsletter
- Increase visibility of the EURES portal
- Possibility to apply for a job vacancy directly through the posting on the portal
- Add more key words to the matching function
- Have all job vacancies translated at least into English
- Develop a well-functioning EURES portal mobile application
- Increase the job vacancy offer and expand it to cover more sectors
- Connect the portal with LinkedIn
- Allow direct interaction between jobseekers and employers through the portal
- Include online courses
- More practical information about living and working conditions in other countries
- Introduce information for returning workers
- Possibility to make a profile dormant and not receive notifications about updating their CV, (i.e. when a registered user has a job but would perhaps like to keep their profile should they in the future were to look for a new job)
- Add an instruction video on how to use the portal
- Include success stories of job seekers and describe their process
- Easier site navigation
- Eliminate the expiration of CVs and the need to update them manually

### Questions on EURES initiatives

This section only appeared to the respondents who selected at least one of the following options:

- I attended a job fair/other recruitment event organised by EURES

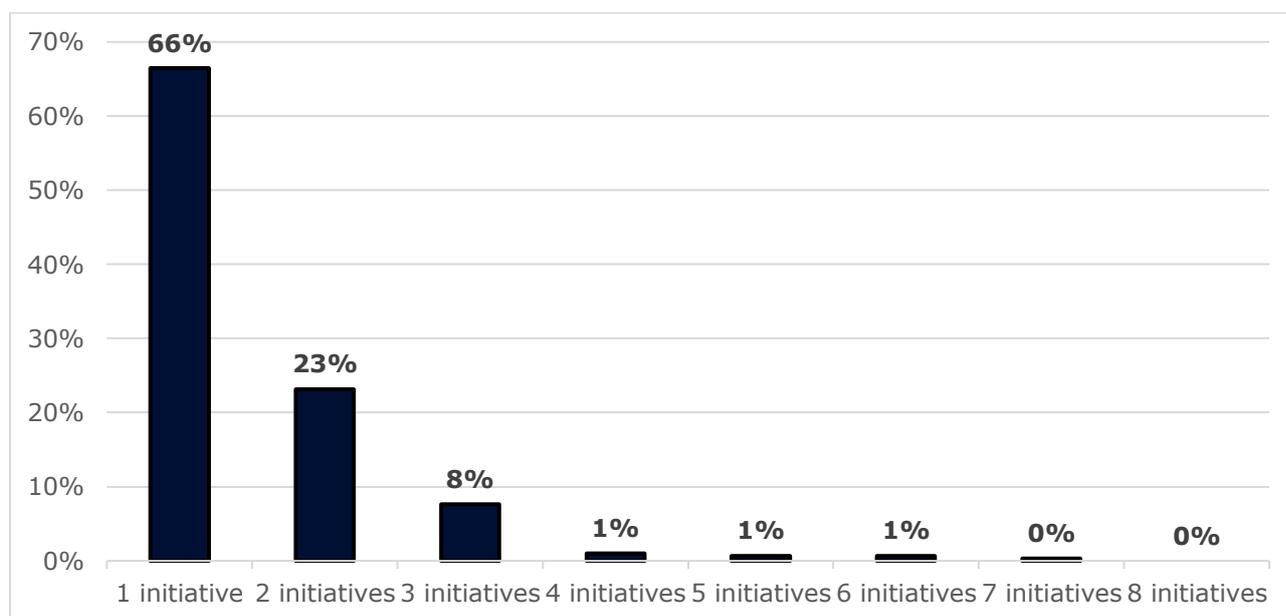
- I received support under the targeted Mobility Schemes (e.g. Your first EURES job, Reactivate)
- I received support from the Cross-Border Partnerships

In total, this section was shown to 289 respondents.

*Which of the following have you participated in?*

The respondents were asked which specific EURES initiative they have participated in. They were able to select more than one option. Most of the respondents (66%, 192) said that they took part in one EURES initiative.

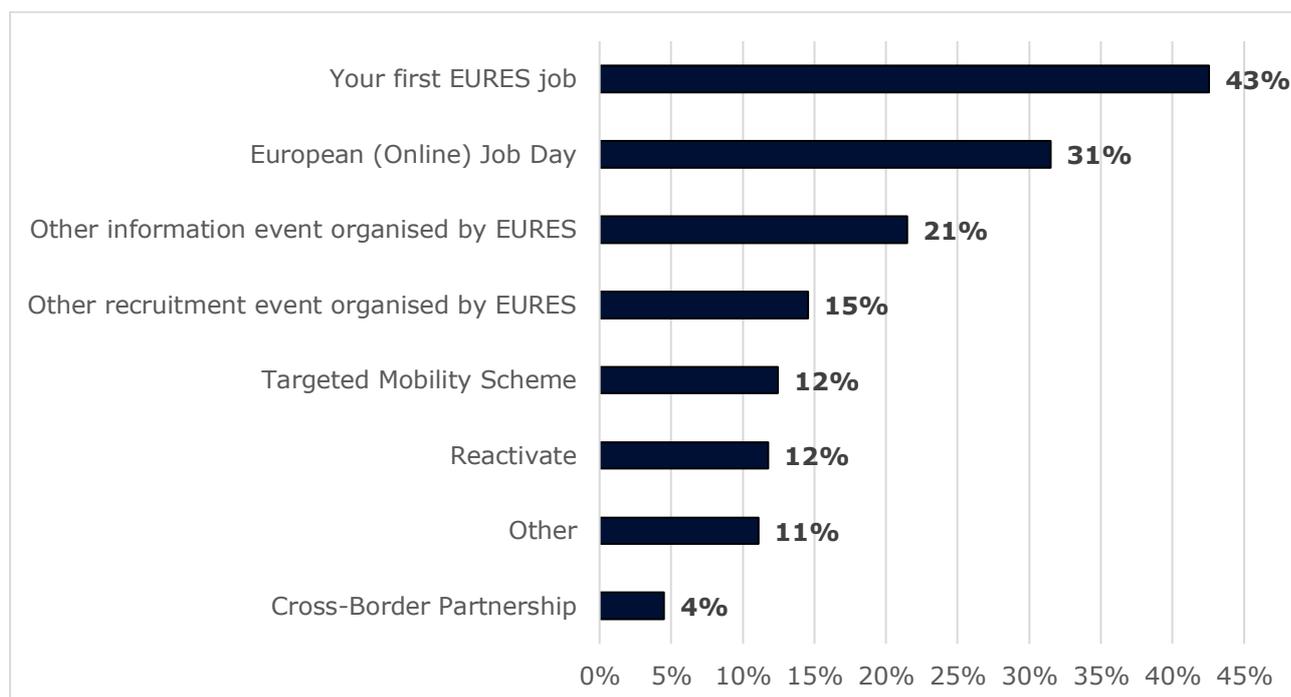
Figure 171 Which of the following have you participated in? Number of initiatives selected (n=289)



The most selected initiative was the Your first EURES job (43%, 123) followed by European (Online) Job Days (31%, 91).

Regarding the 'Other' option, respondents mentioned: Erasmus; language and technical courses; as well as receiving a mobility grant. Some respondents also used this space to indicate the names of some specific recruitment and information events they participated in.

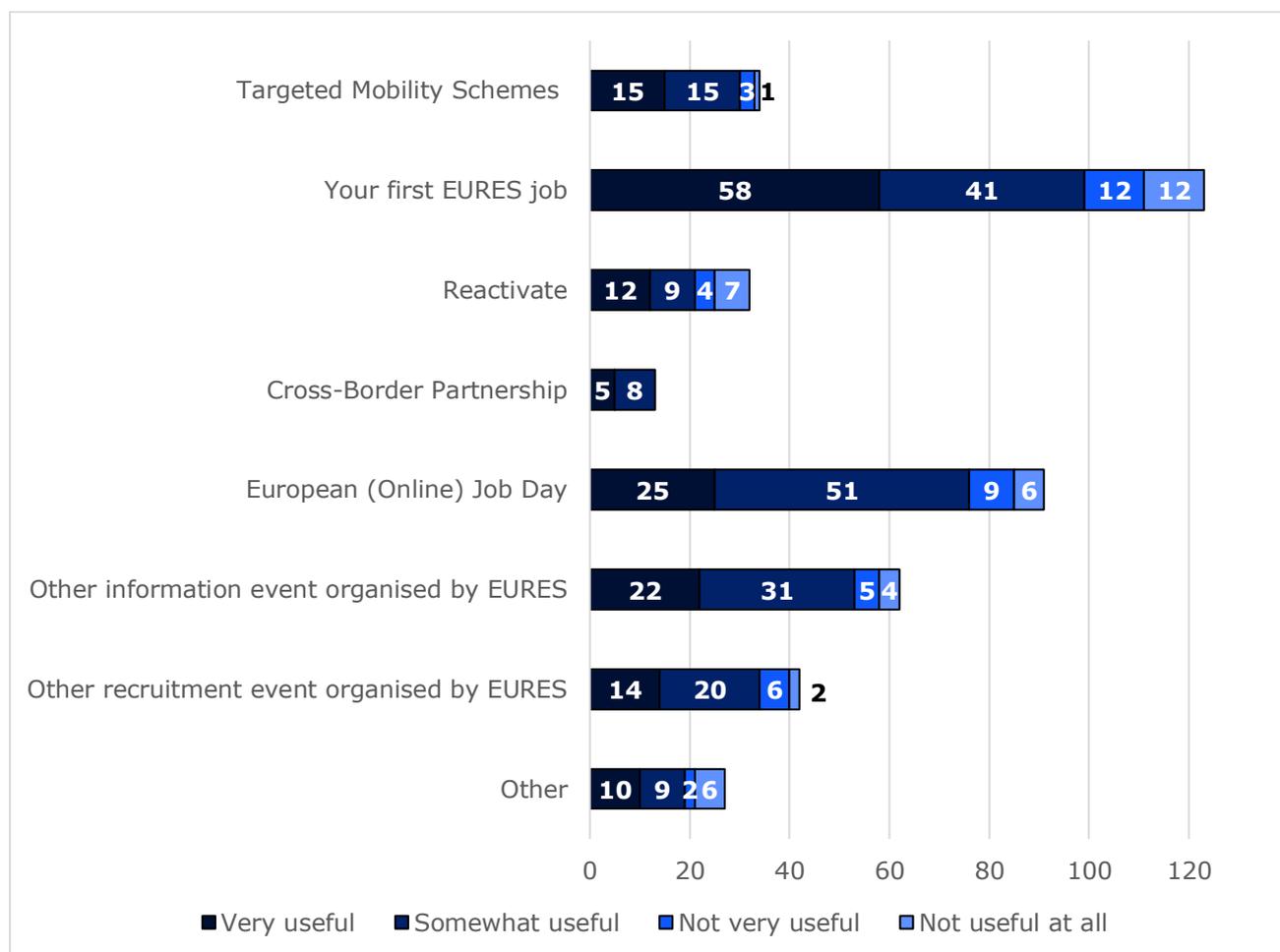
Figure 172 Which of the following have you participated in? (n=289)



*How would you evaluate the initiative?*

The respondents were also asked to assess the usefulness of the initiatives that they participated in. The vast majority of respondents found the initiatives very useful or useful.

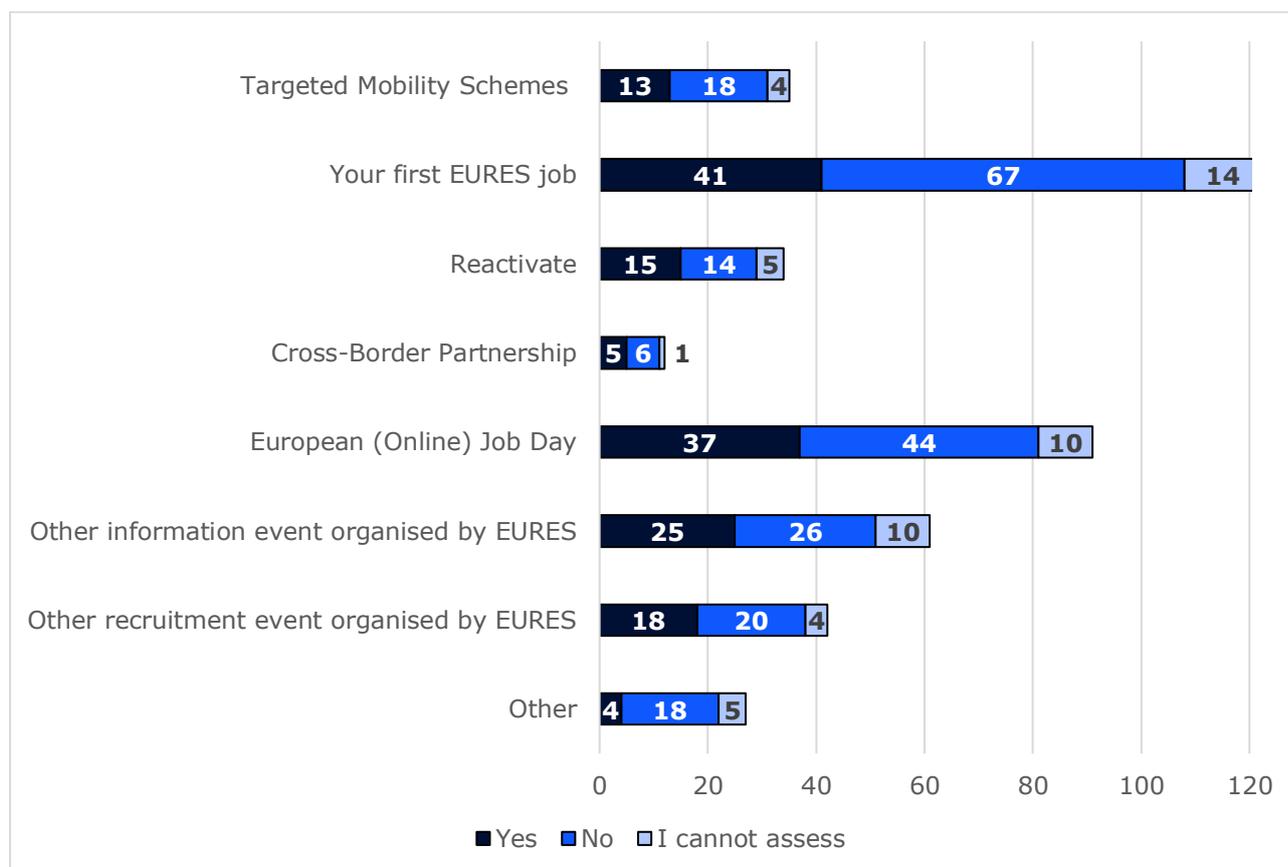
Figure 173 How would you evaluate the initiative? (n=289)



*Do you think these initiatives are visible enough?*

While the respondents find the initiatives to be useful, their opinion on whether they are visible enough is divided between those that agreed and disagreed. An exception is the “Your first EURES job”, where a majority of respondents thought it was not visible enough.

Figure 174 Do you think these initiatives are visible enough? (n=289)

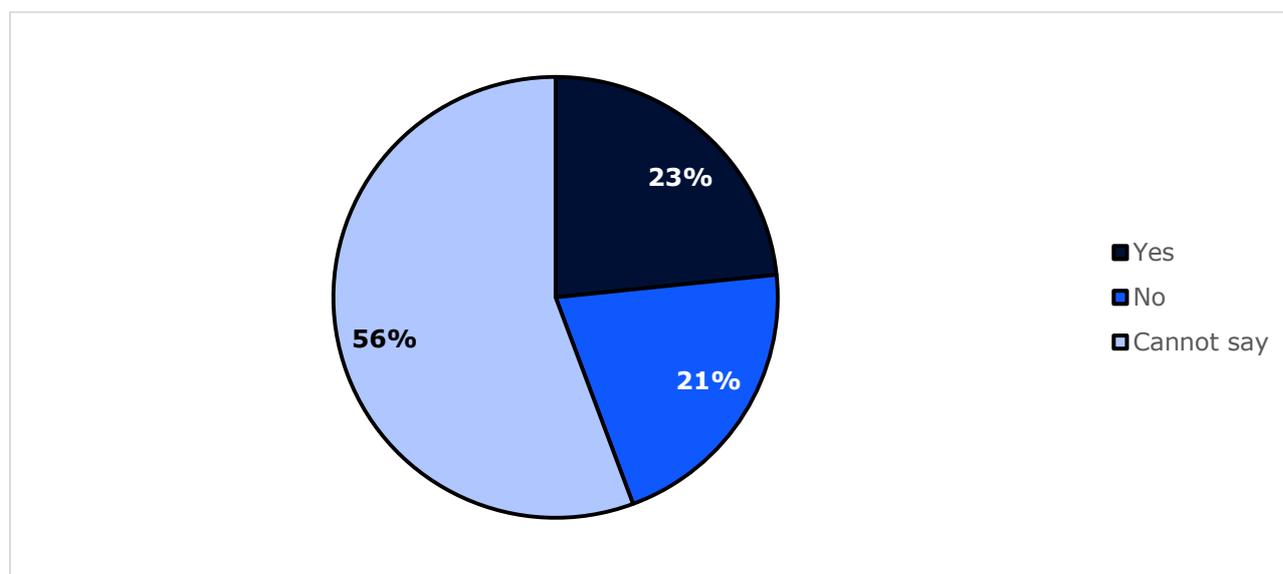


Twenty-eight of the respondents provided additional information to further justify their answer. These included opinions, once again, about improving the user-friendliness of the EURES portal and the search and filter options. Increasing the visibility of these schemes was also an often-mentioned comment. Many of these respondents mentioned that the public employment agency or another organisation told them about EURES as they would not be able to find out about it by themselves. In the respondents' opinions, EURES and its initiatives should be as well-known as Erasmus.

#### *Are there any other initiatives that you think EURES should develop/offer?*

The respondents were also asked if they think EURES should develop more initiatives. Most of the respondents were unable to assess whether there is need for more or new EURES initiatives (56%, 168). While the remainder of the respondents were nearly equally split between those who indicated that there is a need for more and new initiatives and those did not see this need.

Figure 175 Are there any other initiatives that you think EURES should develop/offer? (n=291)



Those respondents who selected 'Yes', were asked to provide suggestions for further initiatives. All 68 respondents provided at least one suggestion. These suggestions included once again a mention of improving the EURES portal and making EURES more visible. A need to organise targeted workshops (such as career advice); assistance for traineeships and scholarships; family reunification support; specific initiatives regarding tax information, social and health insurance; meet and greet sessions with employers; initiatives targeting returning workers.

### Questions on the visibility of EURES

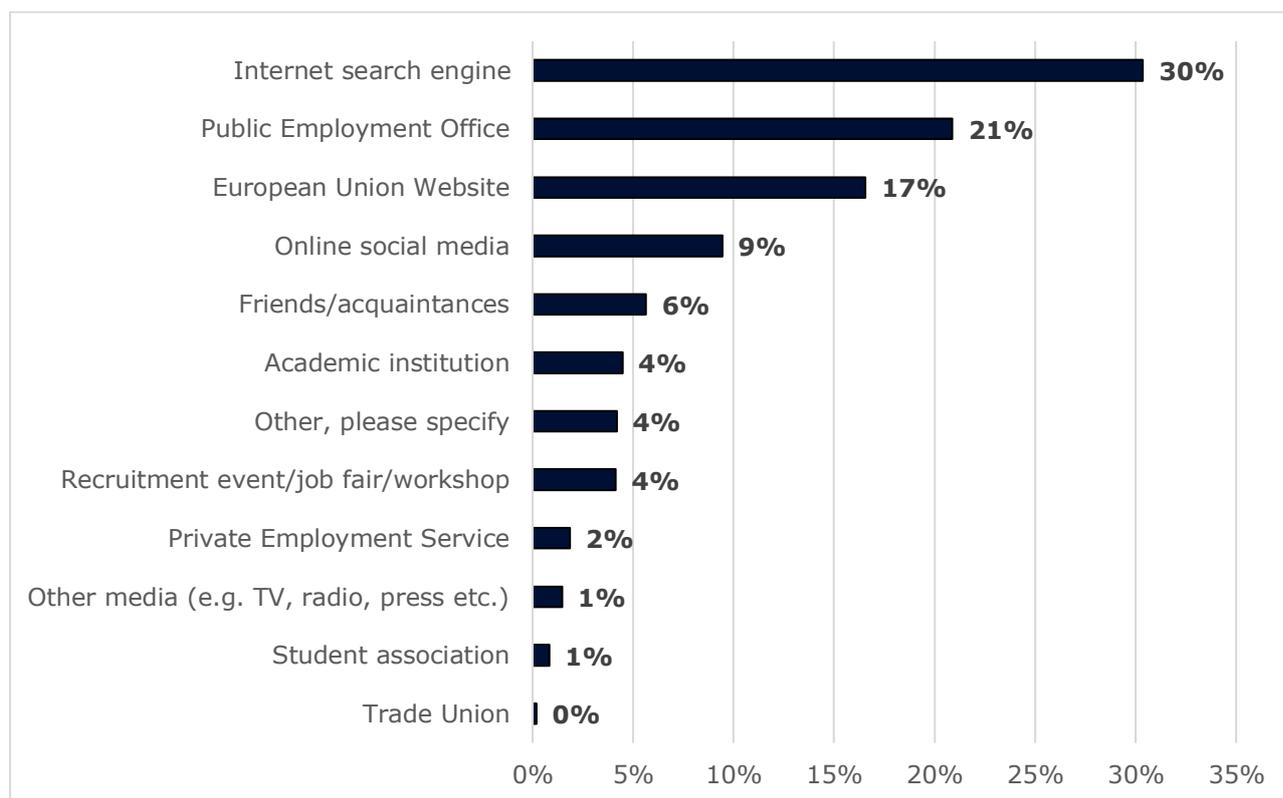
These questions were visible to all respondents participating in the survey and focused on the overall visibility of EURES and ways to improve it.

#### *Where did you first learn about EURES?\**

The respondents were asked to indicate through which mean they have found out about EURES and its services. The majority of respondents indicated that they learnt about EURES through an internet search (30%, 624), followed by the Public Employment Office (21%, 429) and the EU websites (17%, 340).

Regarding those who indicated that they found about it through 'Other' means, the responses included naming a specific search engine (e.g. Google), some of them were unsure of how they found it, some mentioned specific national employment services or a university. Some respondents also mentioned that they found out about it through other European services such as Europe Direct, by an accident when searching for something else, by visiting the European Parliament and some were turned onto EURES by previous or current employers or a youth exchange.

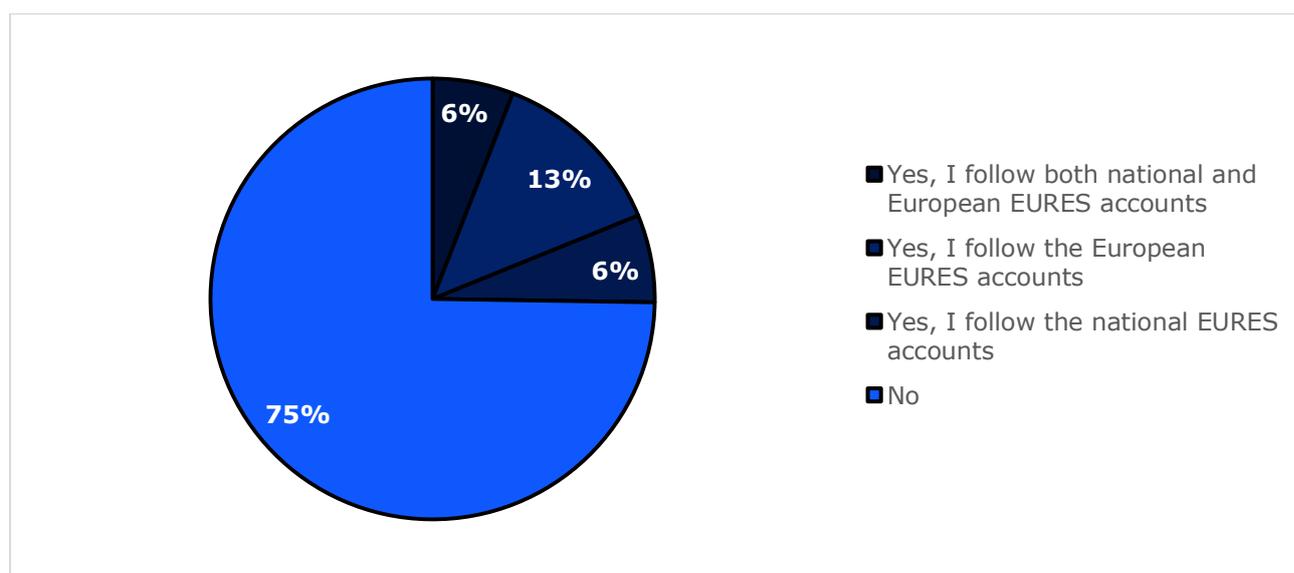
Figure 176 Where did you first learn about EURES? (n=2,055)



*Do you follow EURES on social media?*

A large majority of respondents (75%, 1,525) mention that they do not follow EURES on social media. Six percent of respondents (120) said that they followed both European and national EURES accounts. From those who indicated to follow EURES on social media, most (13%, 264) do so with the European EURES account.

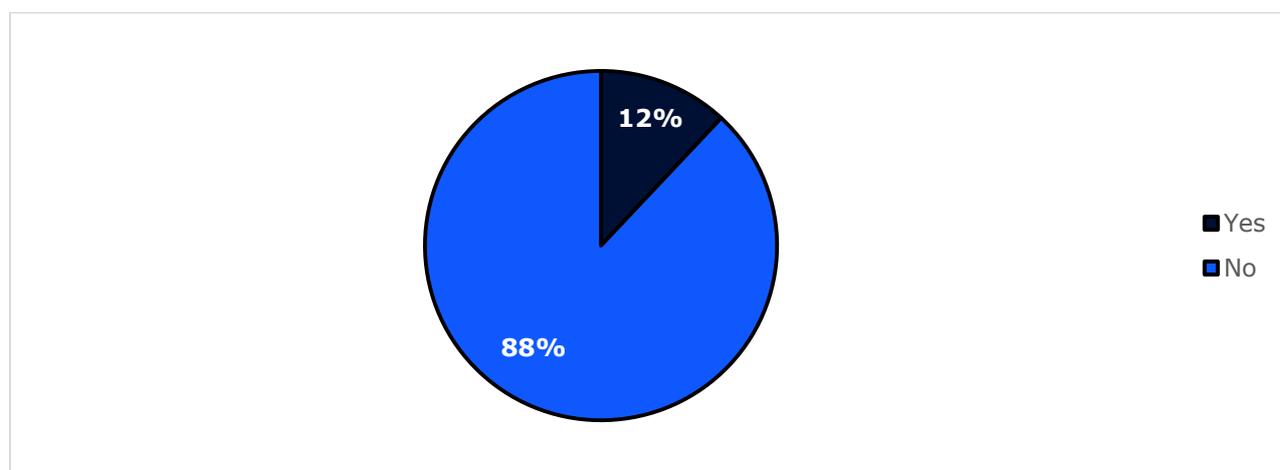
Figure 177 Do you follow EURES on social media? (n=2,040)



*Have you come across any discrepancies between the information provided in the national and European EURES accounts?*

This question was asked to those respondents who indicated that they follow both European and national social media accounts of EURES (i.e. 120 respondents). Eighty-eight percent (103) of respondents do not think that there are discrepancies, whereas 12% (14) of respondents do. When asked to further develop their answer, 14 respondents commented that discrepancies appeared with regard to the salary, job titles and requirements. One respondent also remarked that vacancies on their national website were outdated. Three respondents preferred not to answer this question.

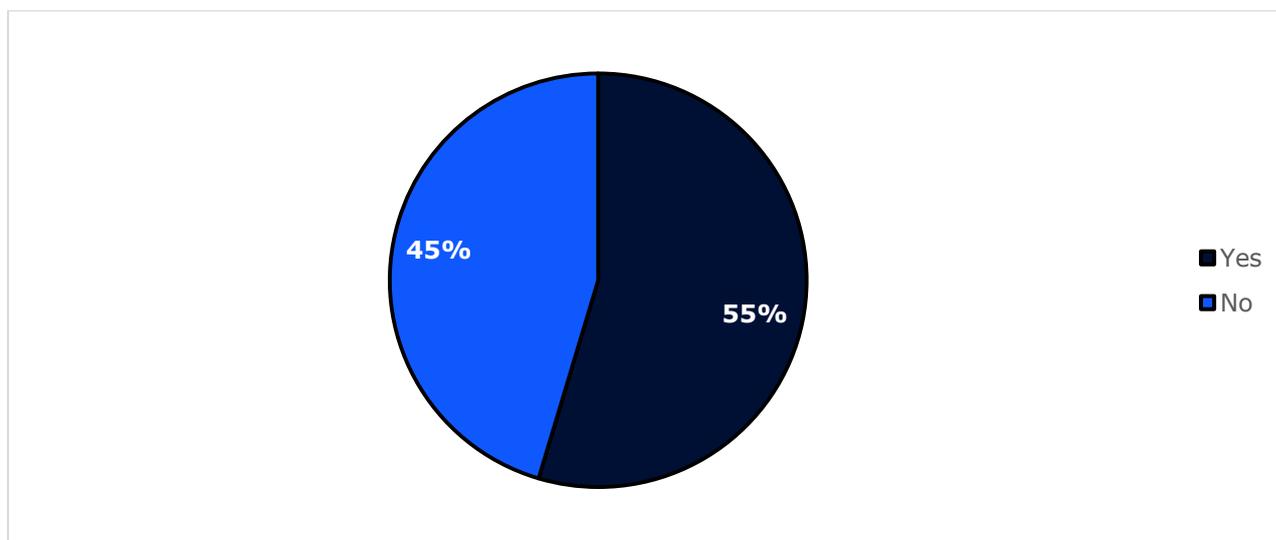
Figure 178 Have you come across any discrepancies between the information provided in the national and European EURES accounts? (n=117)



*Do you think it is easy to find information about EURES and the services it provides?*

To further enquire about the visibility of EURES, the respondents were asked if they think it is easy to find information about it and the services on offer. Slightly more than half (55%, 1,106) of the respondents think it is easy to find out about EURES and the different services as compared to 45% (919) who think the contrary. Thirty jobseekers preferred not to answer this question.

Figure 179 Do you think it is easy to find information about EURES and the services it provides? (n=2,025)



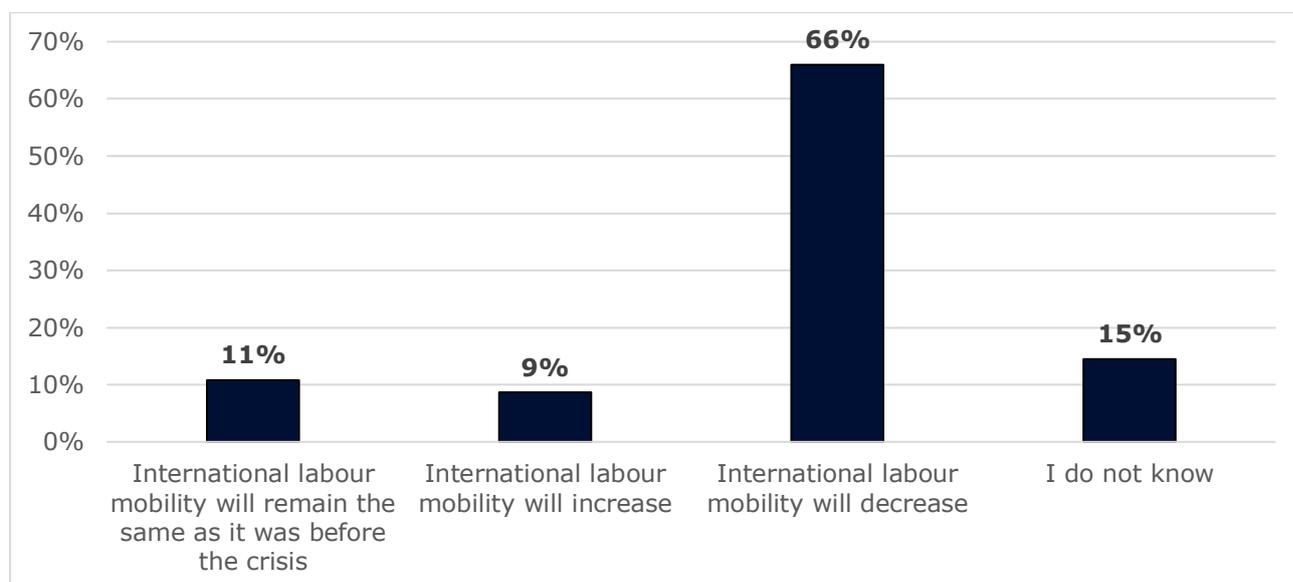
### Questions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

This section was shown to all respondents and aimed to grasp how the respondents think the COVID-19 crisis will impact labour mobility in the future. Almost all (2,048) respondents answered this question.

*To which extent do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021?*

The vast majority (66%, 1,352) of the respondents think that the labour mobility will decrease due to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. About 11% (222) of respondents are of the opinion that the mobility will remain the same as before. Fourteen percent (297) of respondents have no opinion on this matter while 9% (177) think the labour mobility will increase after the crisis.

Figure 180 To which extent do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021? (n=2,055)



The respondents were able to leave comments to accompany their responses. Hundred and seventy-three respondents made use of this possibility. Among those who indicated an increase in labour mobility, the reasoning is that the economic recession and the related difficulties in some countries would push jobseekers to seek employment abroad. Many respondents underlined that the pandemics may be opportune to labour mobility as both employees and jobseekers have started to adapt to the new labour market conditions, where remote work is increasingly becoming a norm. They believe that even if physical mobility decreases, digital mobility would increase significantly.

Those who are of the opinion that labour mobility would remain the same mention that employers will be in need to recruit as skill shortages will continue to exist. Among those who responded "I do not know" it was commented that while the pandemics will affect some industries more than the others, many jobs with new skill needs will become available.

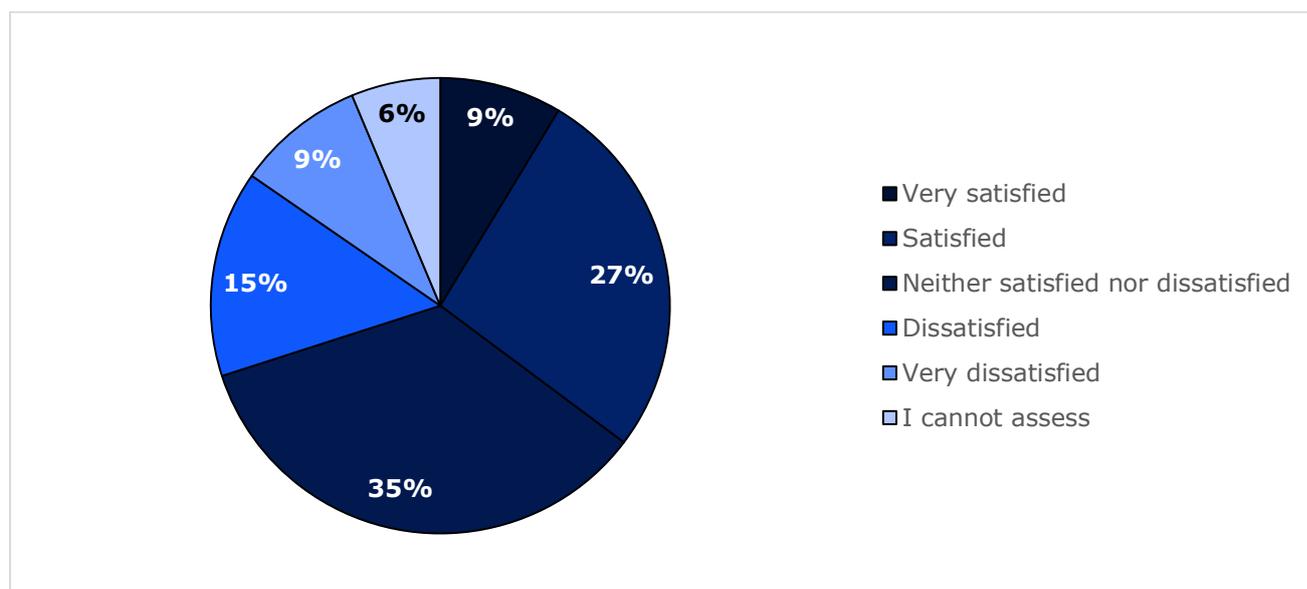
### Concluding questions

This section was shown to all respondents and aimed to gather some concluding thoughts about EURES.

#### *How satisfied are you with EURES?\**

Over one-third (36%, 724) of the respondents were either very satisfied (9%, 177) or satisfied (27%, 547) with EURES services. A considerable number of respondents (35%, 714) were neutral about their satisfaction with EURES. Another 24% (487) of the respondents were dissatisfied (9%, 301) or very dissatisfied (6%, 186) with EURES. Six percent of respondents (129) chose the "I cannot assess" answer and one respondent did not provide any answer.

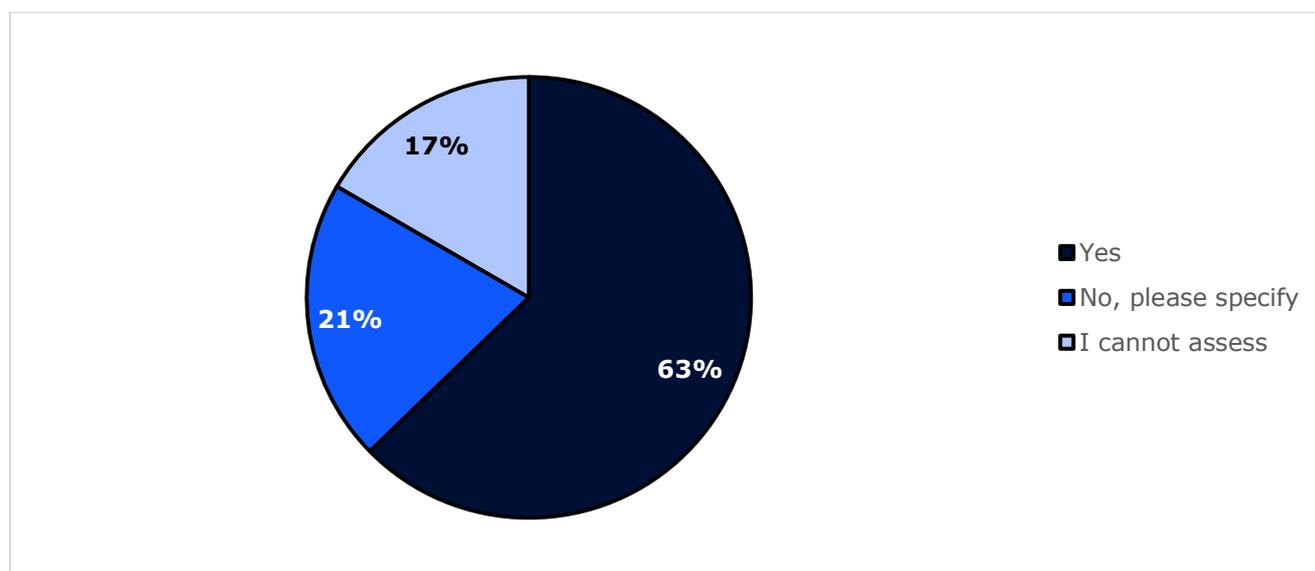
Figure 181 How satisfied are you with EURES (n=2,054)



*Would you recommend EURES to other jobseekers?\**

When asked whether the respondents would recommend EURES to other jobseekers, the majority of them (63%, 1,288) would do so. Seventeen percent (341) of respondents indicated that they could not assess whether they would recommend EURES services to other jobseekers. One respondent preferred not to answer.

Figure 182 Would you recommend EURES to other jobseekers? (n=2,054)



The respondents who indicated they would not recommend EURES to others (425) could leave comments to explain their position, which all of them did. Their opinions can be largely divided between the following topics: unsuccessful job search and the EURES Portal. Many respondents indicated their inability to find employment through EURES and some commented that it is not used by employers widely enough, which results in poor offer of vacancies, and that employers were not responsive in the recruitment process. Moreover, a significant number of respondents commented that the process of searching

for a job on the EURES Portal is complicated because of various reasons. The following list presents the most common reasons mentioned by the respondents in relation to EURES Portal:

- the website interface is not user-friendly and difficult to navigate
- information is obsolete, job offers are not up-to-date
- filtering options and matching are ineffective – there is no correspondence between the selected fields and the search results
- the job offer is limited to some sectors only and not all professions are included in the search tool

Some respondents also commented that in terms of effectiveness, they saw no added value in using EURES in comparison with other private agencies or websites (such as LinkedIn) who offer similar recruitment services; some others indicated that the degree of difficulty of registration and the job search process on EURES Portal was discouraging, also in the light of the fact that many of them found their effort little effective.

*Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with EURES network?*

To end the survey, the respondents could provide further remarks or suggestions about EURES. Six hundred and seven made use of this opportunity.

Some respondents used this space to thank the EURES staff that supported them in finding information and job vacancies. Another set of responses could be grouped around suggestions for improving the EURES portal and the services it provides. Some respondents used this opportunity to highlight the issues that were described under the previous question.

#### *2.1.4 EURES evaluation Employers survey analysis*

The survey was advertised on the EURES portal and its page about the EURES evaluation. It was also disseminated among the employers registered on the EURES Portal via the regular EURES newsletter. National EURES networks were asked to disseminate it among their clients as well. The survey did not track through which means the respondents found out about it, therefore, it is not possible to say which mean of dissemination was the most successful.

The survey was launched on 19 May and closed on 1 July 2020.

In total, 167 employers responded to the survey. If taking only the number of registered employers on the EURES portal, this is about 1% response rate. Besides the complete responses, the survey was opened 258 times where the respondents provided some answers but did not complete the survey. These partial answers are not taken into account in the analysis.

Three of the 167 respondents indicated that they are from outside of the EURES countries, therefore, they are not considered for the analysis as they are outside of EURES's scope. This means that the results presented below are based on the **164 responses received from either EU or EFTA employers.**

The survey was divided into seven sections with some questions marked as compulsory (i.e. a respondent was not able to proceed with the survey unless the compulsory question was answered). Here the compulsory questions are marked with '\*'. The survey contained a display logic where some questions appeared only if a specific answer was selected in the previous questions. This logic was introduced to ensure that the respondent was shown questions as relevant to their experience with EURES as possible.

## Introductory questions

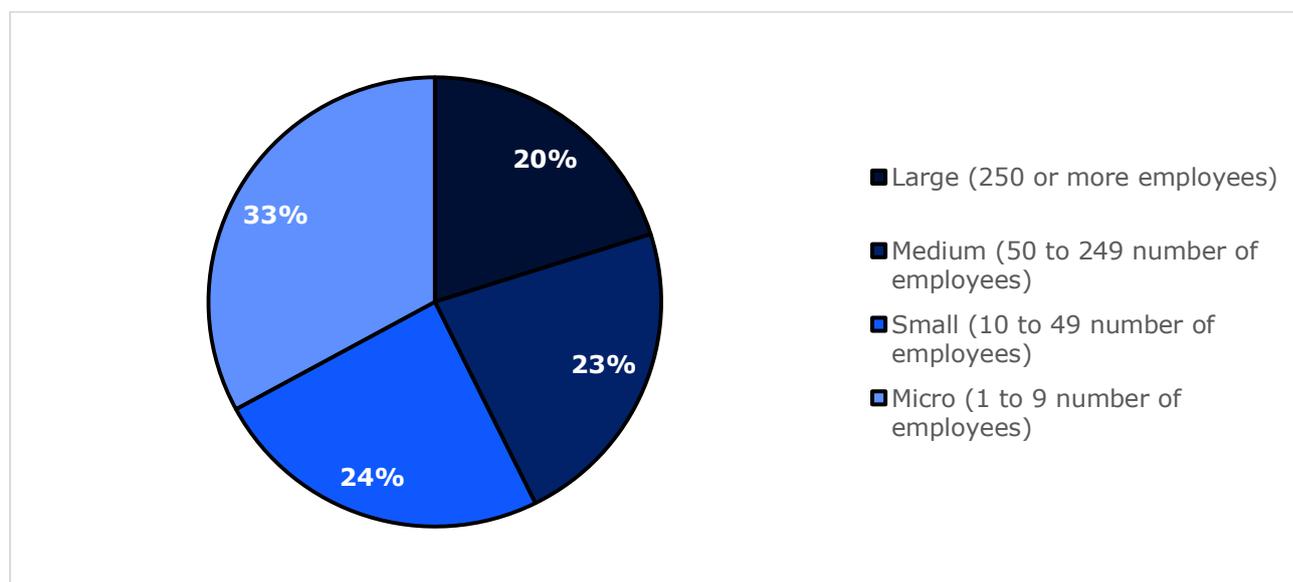
In this section of the survey, the respondents were asked to provide some background information about their company and their interaction with EURES. This section was shown to all respondents.

### *What is the size of your organisation?\**

Size-wise, the respondents are spread nearly equally across the four employers' size categories. The largest group is formed by micro companies that form about one third of the respondents (33%, 54) followed by small companies (24%, 40).

In 2017, micro companies formed about 92% of all enterprises active in the EU<sup>3</sup>, therefore, the respondent sample might not be completely representative of the European enterprise environment.

Figure 183 What is the size of your organisation? (n=164)



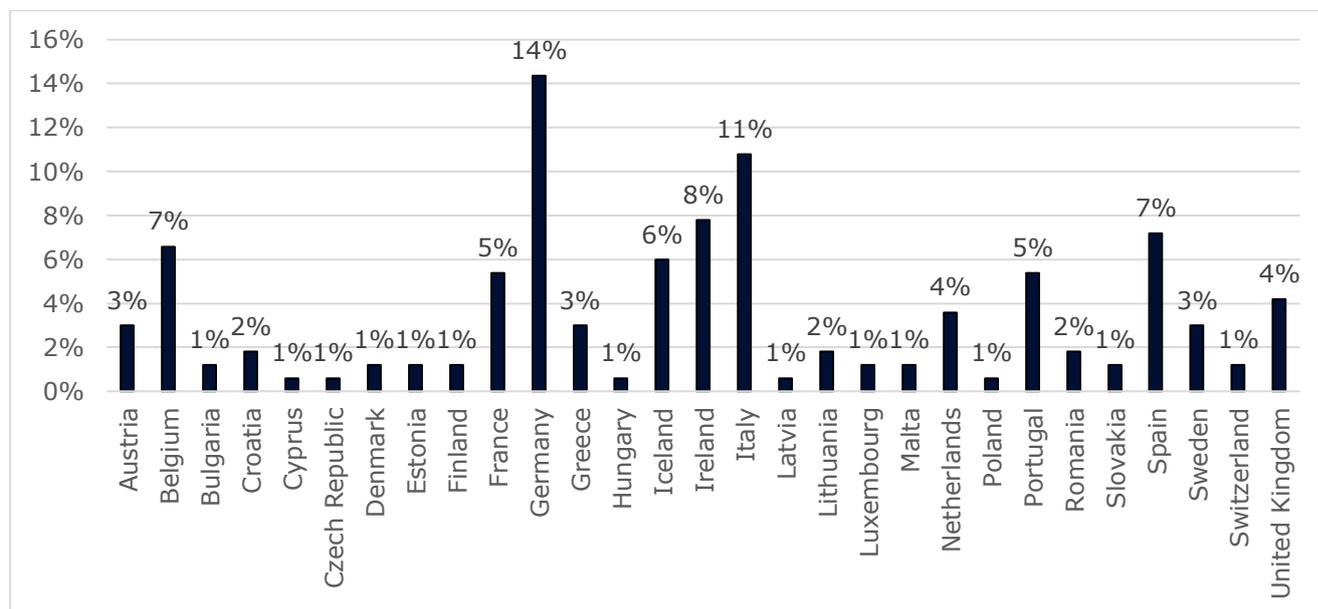
### *Country\**

From the 32 EURES countries, employers from three countries did not provide any input – Liechtenstein, Norway and Slovenia. The country with the most employers responding was Germany (14%, 24 respondents), followed by Italy (11%, 18) and Ireland (8%, 13). In

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat (2020). Annual enterprise statistics by size class for special aggregates of activities (NACE Rev. 2). [sbs\_sc\_sca\_r2]. Available at: <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>.

2017, while both Germany and Italy make up 10 and 15% respectively of all companies in the EU, Ireland’s share is only 1%<sup>4</sup>.

Figure 184 Country (n=164)

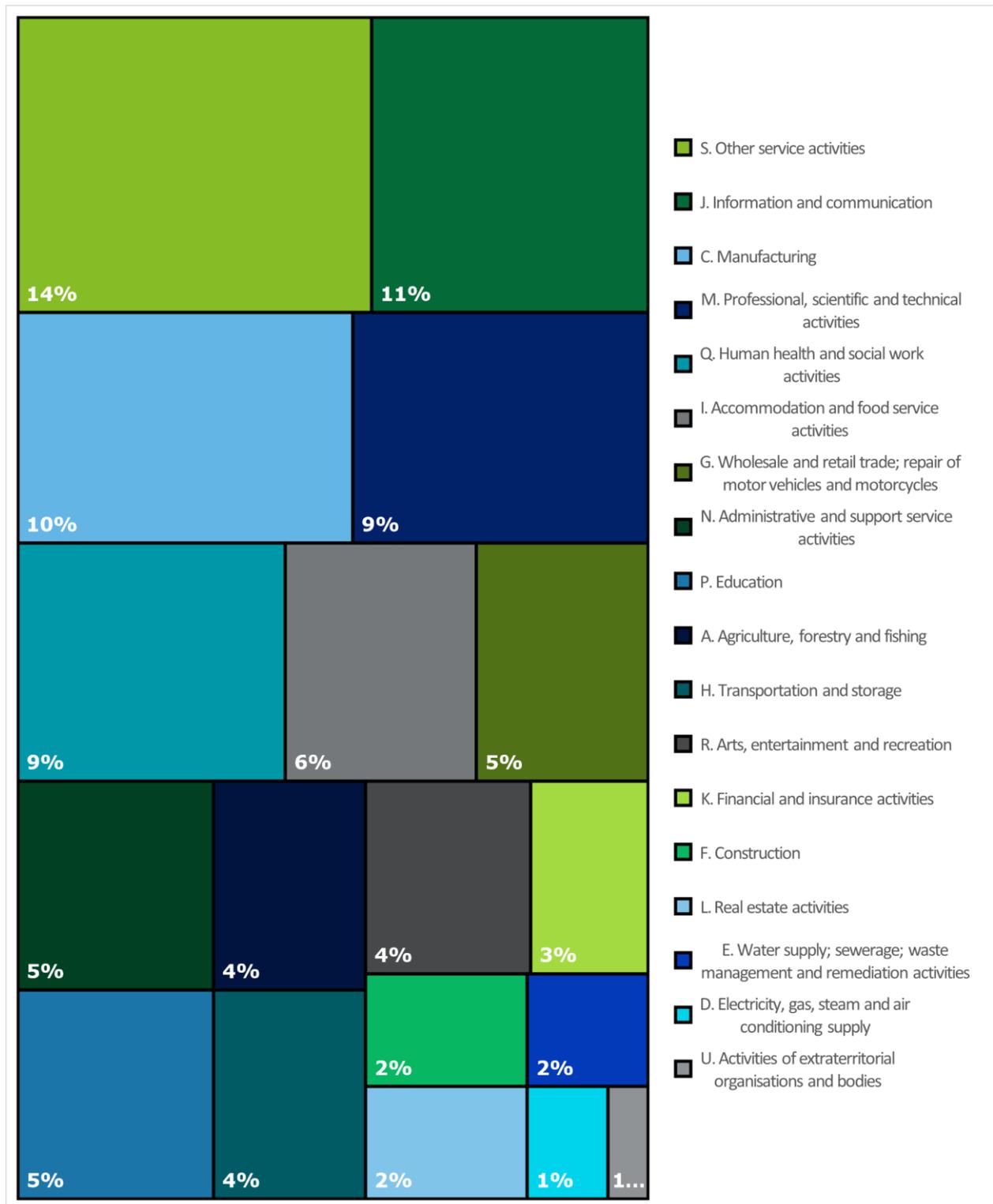


*Please specify the sector your organisation is active in\**

Regarding the sector of their operations, the biggest share of employers responded that they operate in sector ‘S. Other service activities’ (14%, 23 responses) followed by ‘J. Information and communication’ (11%, 18) and ‘C. Manufacturing’ (10%, 17).

<sup>4</sup> Eurostat (2020). Annual enterprise statistics for special aggregates of activities (NACE Rev. 2). [sbs\_na\_sca\_r2]. Available at: [https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=sbs\\_na\\_sca\\_r2&lang=en](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=sbs_na_sca_r2&lang=en).

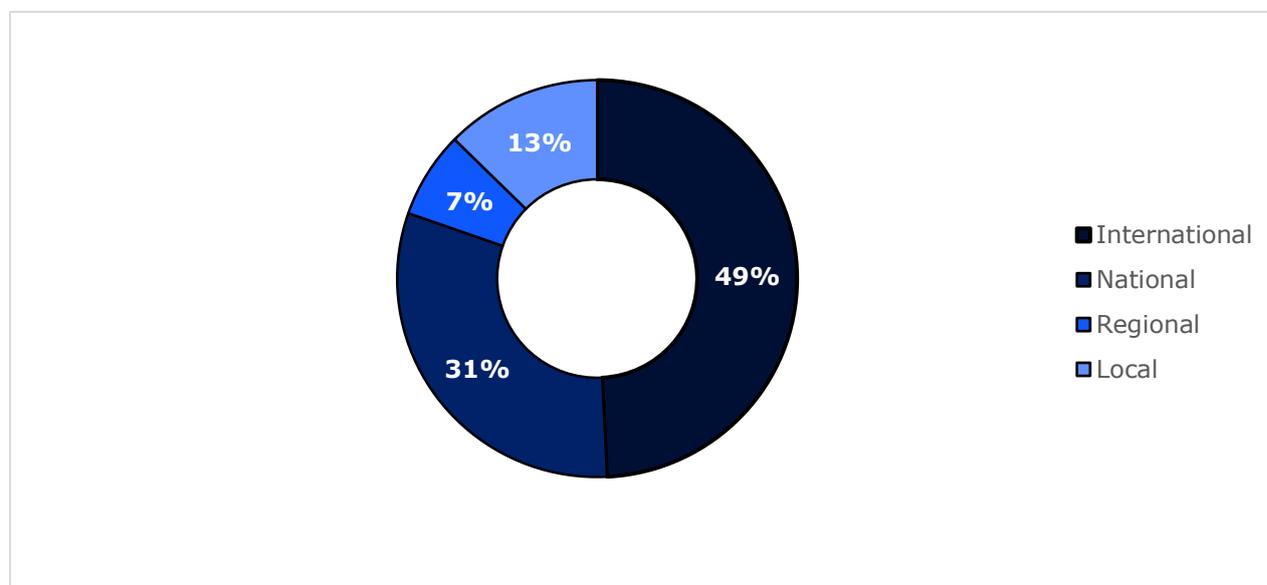
Figure 185 Please specify the sector your organisation is active in (n=164)



*Please specify the geographical scope of your operations\**

When asked to specify the geographical scope of their company's activities, nearly half of the respondents (49%, 81) said that their reach is international. This ranges from about 44% for micro companies to 64% of the large ones.

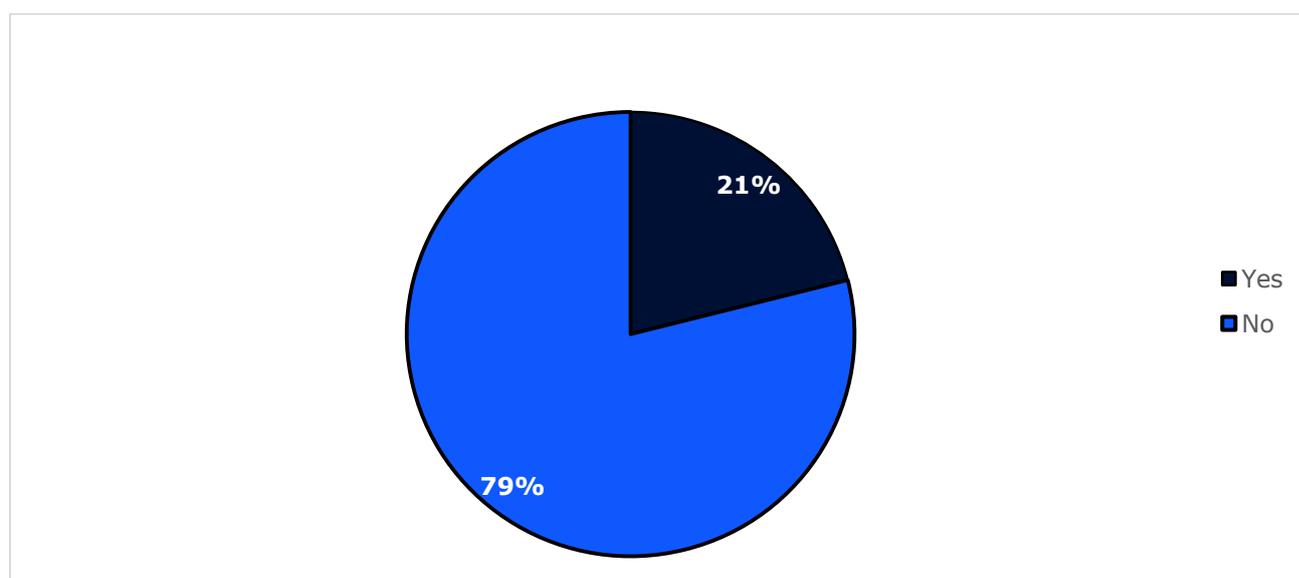
Figure 186 Please specify the geographical scope of your operations (n=164)



*Is your office located in a border area*

The majority of companies responding to the survey were not located in a border area (79%, 129), i.e. an area within 30 kilometres of the country's borders. One respondent preferred not to answer this question.

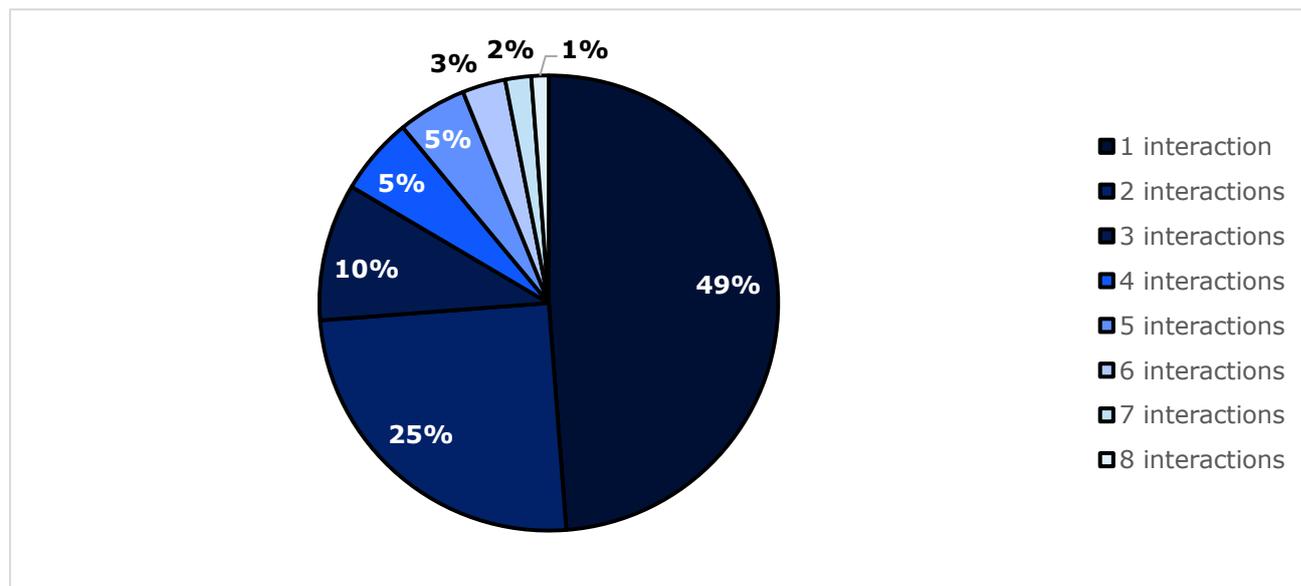
Figure 187 Is your office located in a birder area (n=163)



*How have you interacted with EURES?\**

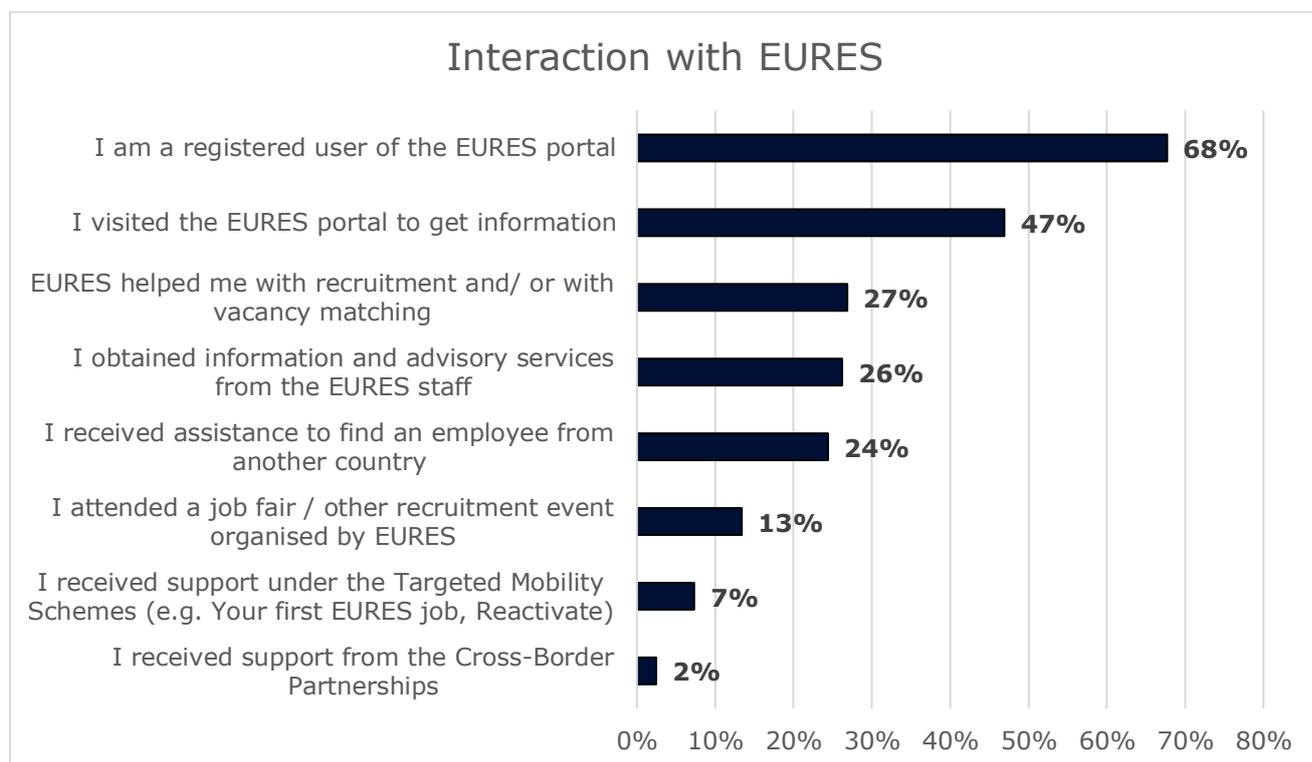
When asked about how they had interacted with EURES, the respondents could choose multiple answers from the eight types of interactions. About half of the respondents (49%, 80) selected only one type of interaction, followed by two (25%, 41) and three interactions (10%, 16). Only two respondents selected all eight interactions.

Figure 188 How have you interacted with EURES? Number of selected interactions (n=164)



The most chosen interaction was 'I am a registered user of the EURES portal' (68%, 111) followed by 'I visited the EURES portal to get information' (47%, 77). These results might be justified by the fact that the EURES Portal was one of the main channels for the survey dissemination.

Figure 189 How have you interacted with EURES? (n=164)



### Questions on EURES services

This section only appeared to the respondents who selected at least one of the following interactions:

- I obtained information and advisory services from the EURES staff
- I received assistance to find an employee from another country
- EURES helped me with recruitment and/or with vacancy matching

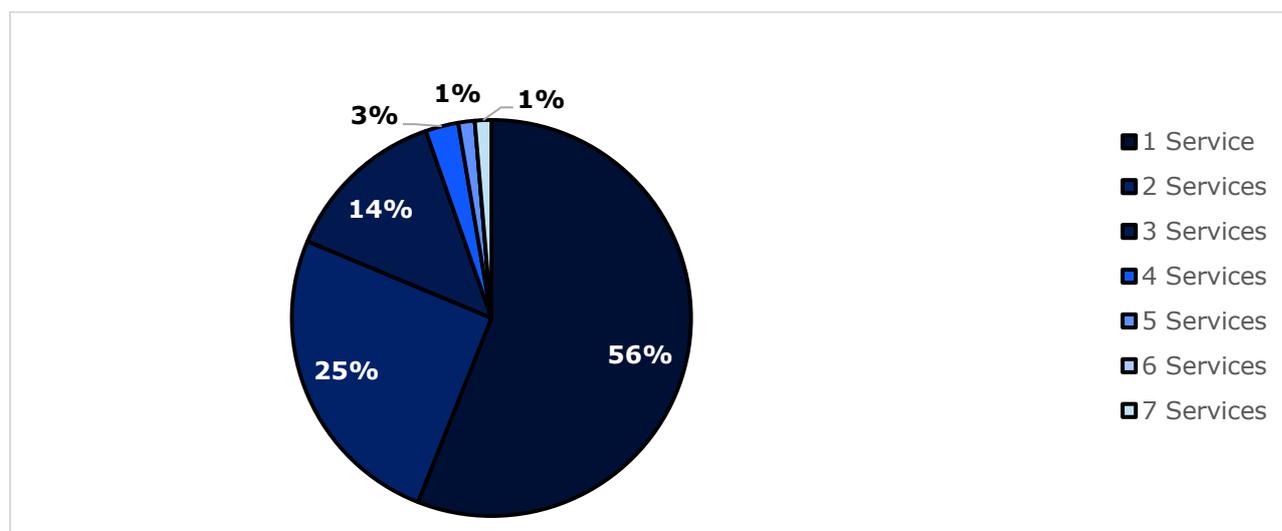
In total, 75 respondents were shown this section.

#### *Which EURES services have you used?\**

The majority of the 75 respondents indicated that they used one service (49), while one responded indicated to have used all of the seven services, which were:

- Information and guidance in finding employees from abroad
- Information and guidance in finding apprentices or trainees from abroad
- A selection of job applications to fill your job vacancies
- Support in developing integration programmes for employees from abroad
- Post-recruitment assistance to the new employees (e.g. relocation assistance or language courses in your country)
- Information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers
- Other

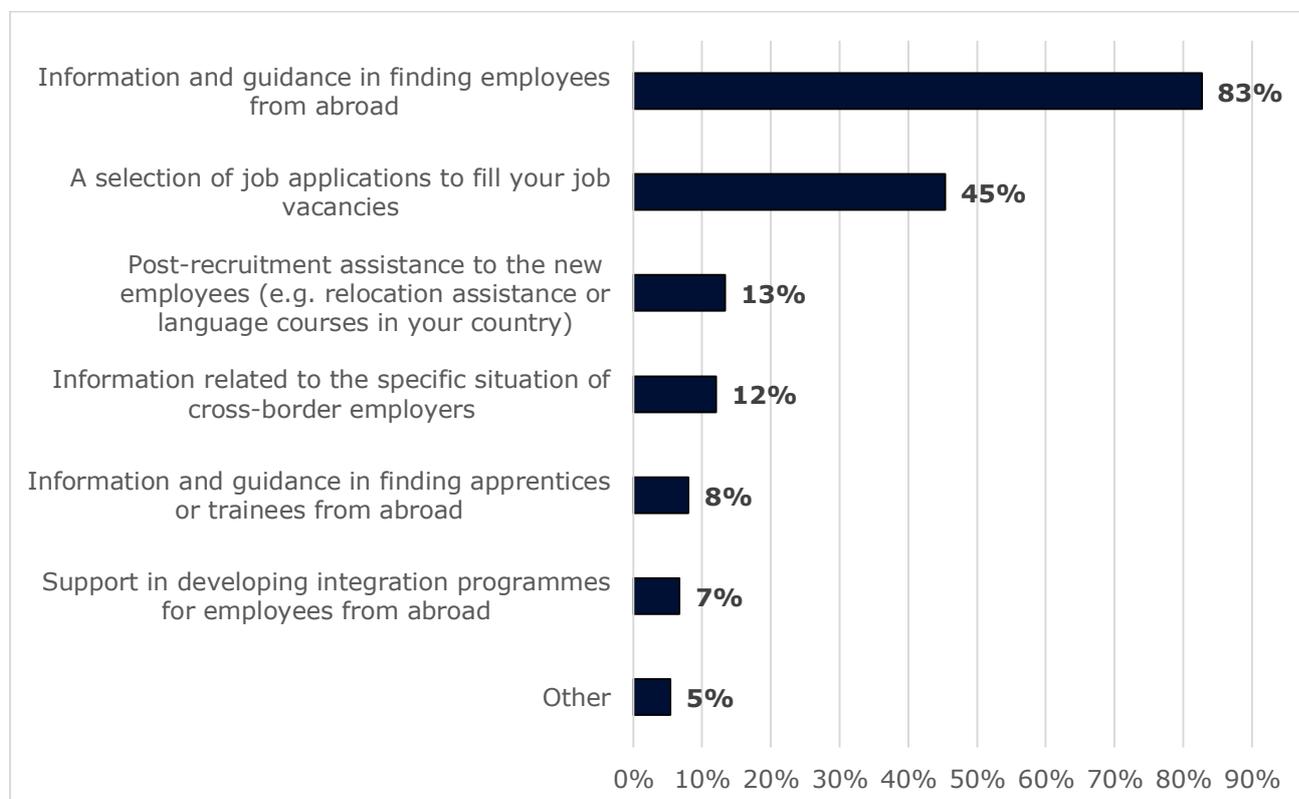
Figure 190 Which EURES services have you used? Number of services used (n=75)



For the services used, the 'Information and guidance in finding employees abroad' one was the most popular with it being selected in 62 responses. This was followed by 'A selection of job application to fill your job vacancies' (34) and 'Post-recruitment assistance to the new employees' (10).

From those respondents who selected the 'Other' option, they specified it as receiving services in relation to a specific country or recruitment and attendance at trade fairs.

Figure 191 Which EURES services have you used? (n=75)



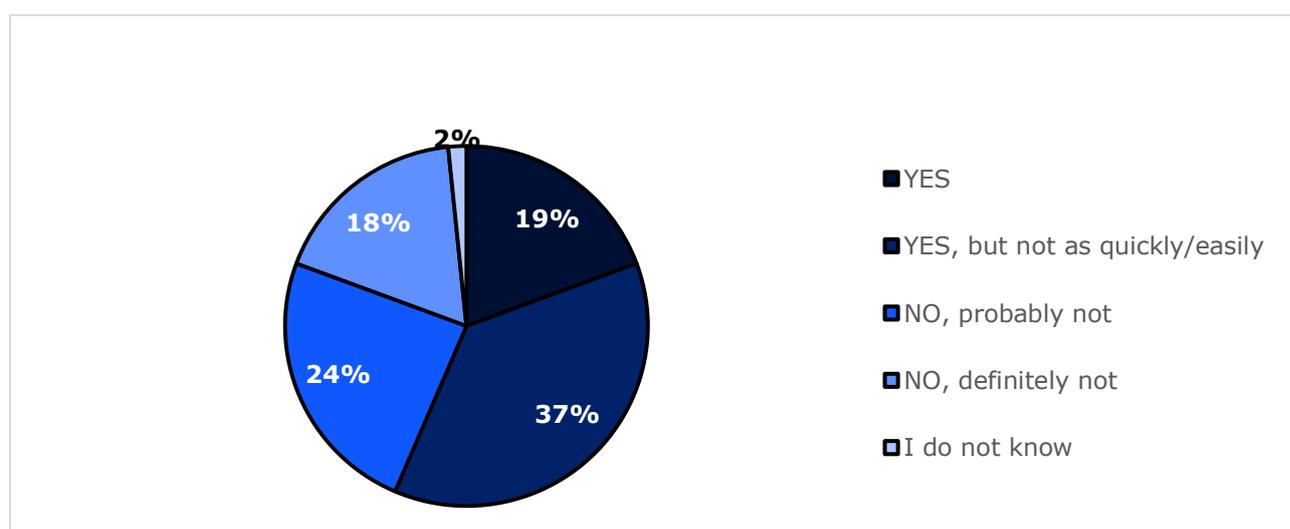
### Do you think you would have achieved the same outcome without EURES support?

For each of the selected service they have received, the respondents were asked to evaluate if the same outcome could be achieved without the support from EURES. The results were as follows:

#### Finding employees from abroad

From the 62 respondents who indicated to have received information and guidance in finding employees abroad, most of them responded that they would have been able to find the correct candidates but probably not as quickly (37%, 23), this was followed by those who said that they would probably not be able to find the right candidates without the support from EURES (24%, 15).

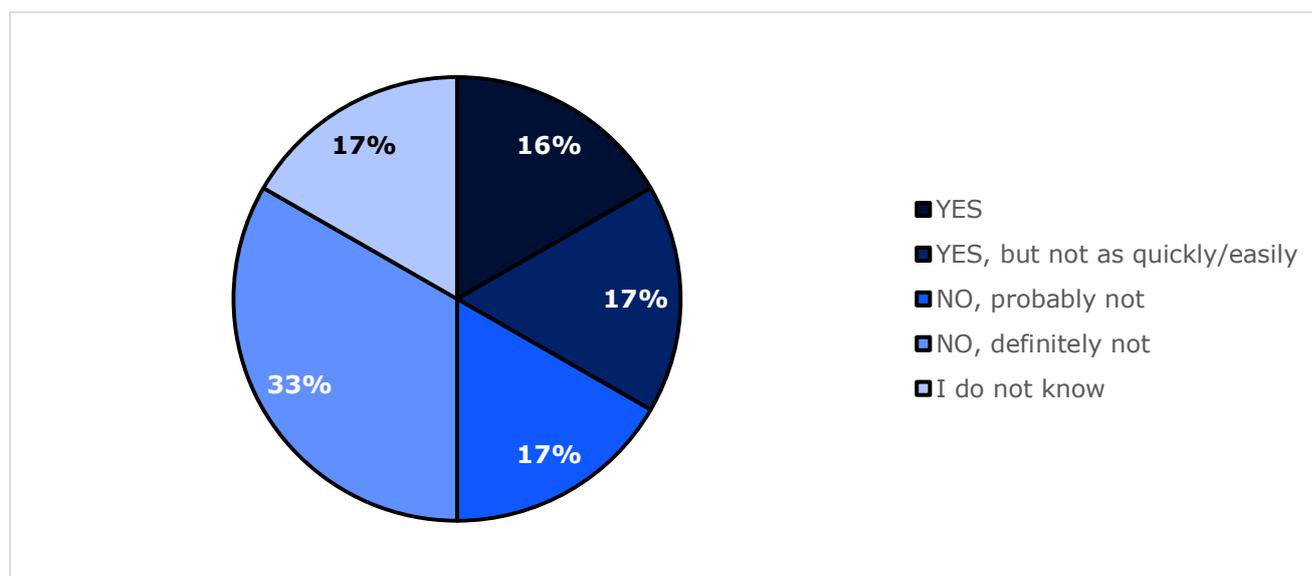
Figure 192 Finding employees from abroad (n=62)



#### Finding apprentices or trainees from abroad

The responses of those who received support in finding trainees from abroad are spread nearly equally along the five options. The only outlier is the answer 'No, definitely not' that was indicated more often than the others (33%, 2).

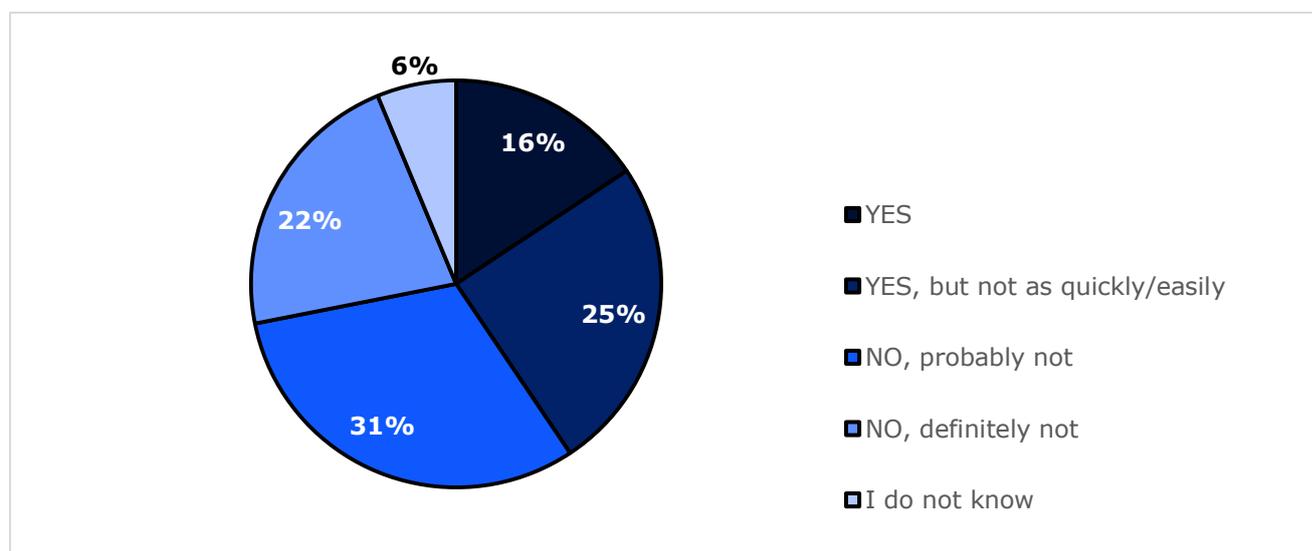
Figure 193 Finding apprentices or trainees from abroad (n=6)



### Having a wider selection of job applications to fill your job vacancies

With regard to having a wider selection of candidates for their job vacancies through EURES support, the majority of respondents indicated that this would probably not be the case without EURES (31%, 10), followed by those who thought they would be able to have a wide selection of candidates even without EURES but probably not as quickly and/or easily (25%, 8). Seven respondents mentioned that they would definitely not have the same selection of candidates without EURES.

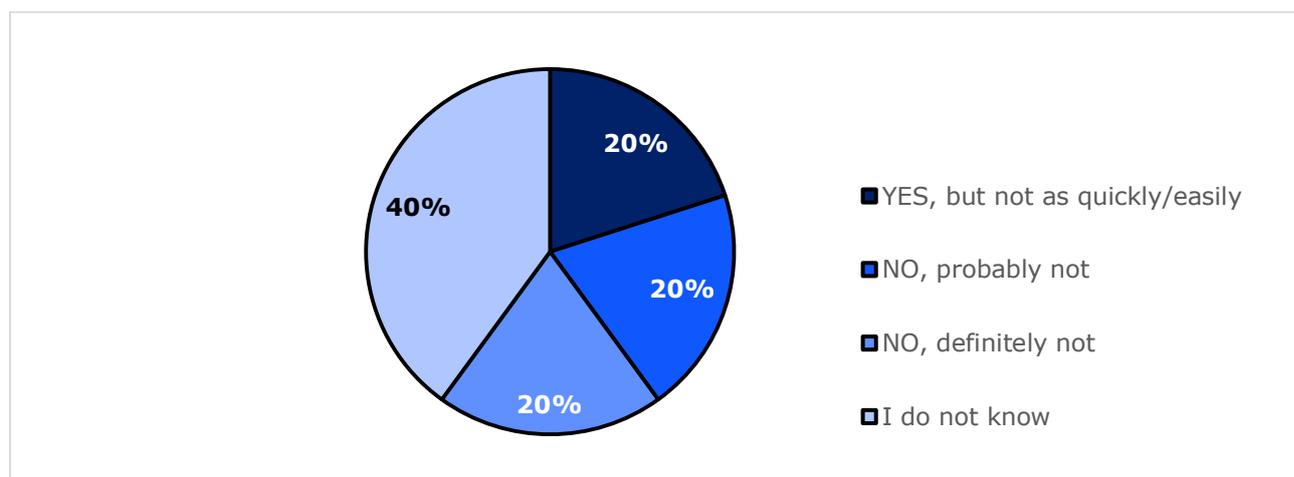
Figure 194 Having a wider selection of job applications to fill your job vacancies (n=34)



### Developing integration programmes for new employees from abroad

Regarding the ability to develop an integration programme for new employees even without EURES, the response that got the most answers was 'I do not know' (2).

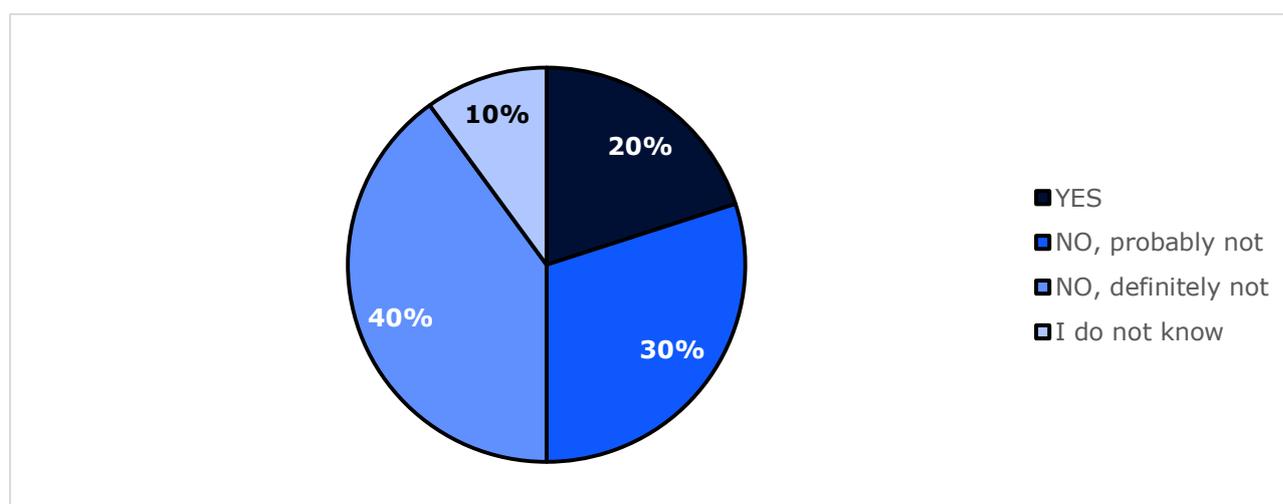
Figure 195 Developing integration programmes for new employees from abroad (n=5)



### Post-recruitment assistance to the employees

On post-recruitment assistance to employees, the majority of respondents indicated that they would probably (30%, 3) or definitely (40%, 4) not be able to provide it without the support of EURES.

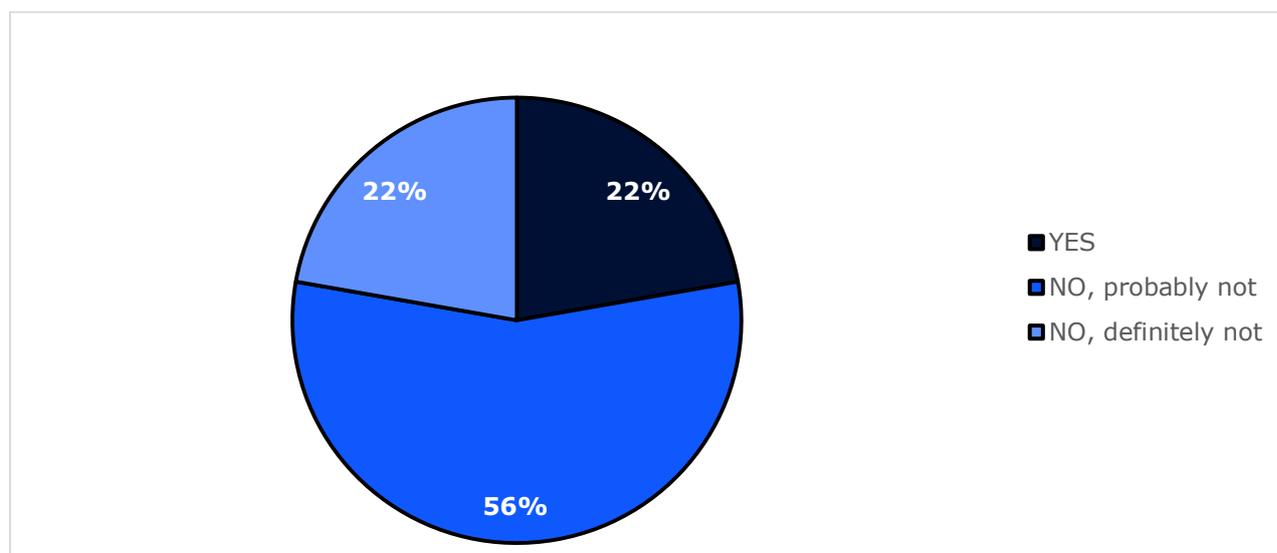
Figure 196 Post-recruitment assistance to the employees (n=10)



### Information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers

More than two thirds of respondents who received information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers said that they would not be able to find the same information without the support from EURES.

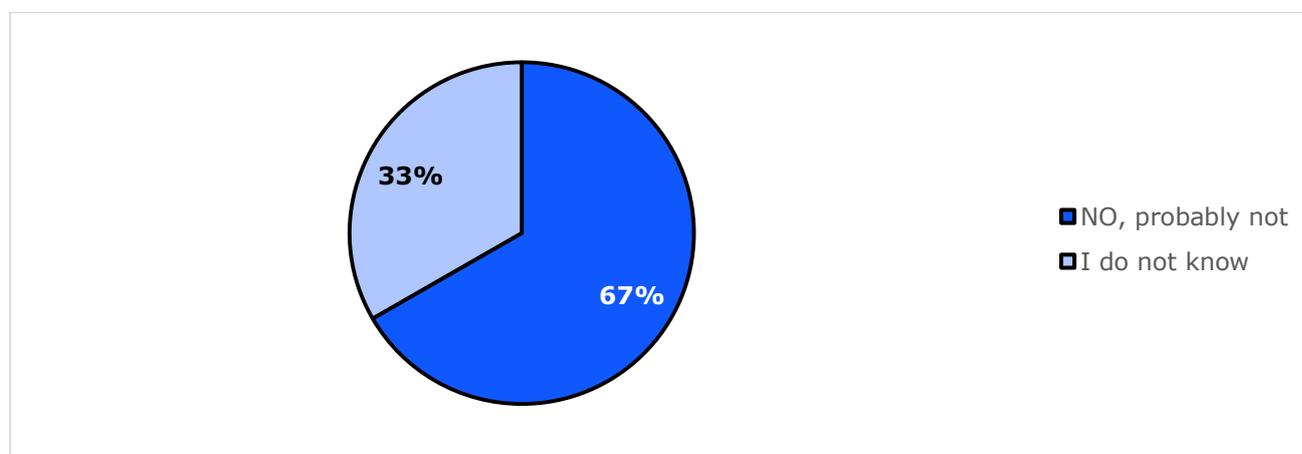
Figure 197 Information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers (n=9)



### Other

From those respondents who indicated that they received other services such as services in relation to a specific country or recruitment and attendance at trade fairs from EURES, two thirds (2) said that they would not find the same information without EURES. One respondent chose not to provide an answer.

Figure 198 Other (n=3)



### Comments

The respondents were also able to leave comments to accompany their answer to this question. Nine respondents made use of this opportunity. The comments were a mix of positive, neutral and negative contributions. The positive ones mentioned that the employers had good matches for their job vacancies and were able to find good new employees or trainees.

The neutral comments mentioned that the scope of the talent pool and financial assistance for language courses is vital for the intra-EU recruitment of medical staff. The negative comments highlighted that in their experience, the EURES database contained very few

good candidates with the necessary skills for their job vacancies and that the filters on the EURES portal are not working well and showed a number of irrelevant candidates.

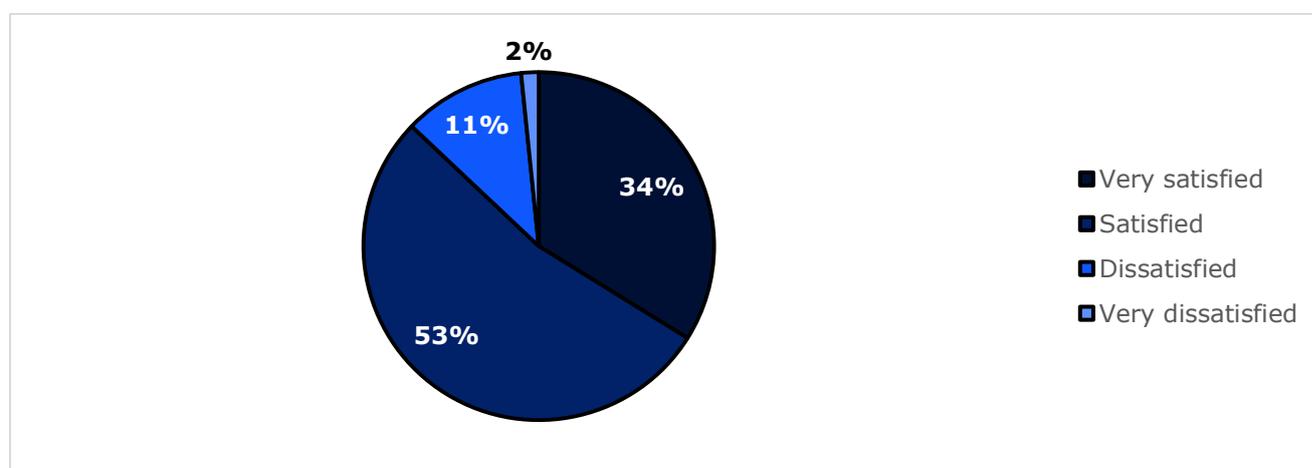
### *How satisfied were you with the services you have received?*

For each of the selected services they have received, the respondents were asked to also evaluate how satisfied they were with them. The results were as follows:

#### Information and guidance in finding employees from abroad

With the exception of eight respondents, those who received information and/or guidance in finding employees from abroad were either satisfied (53%, 33) or very satisfied (34 %, 21) with the service they have received.

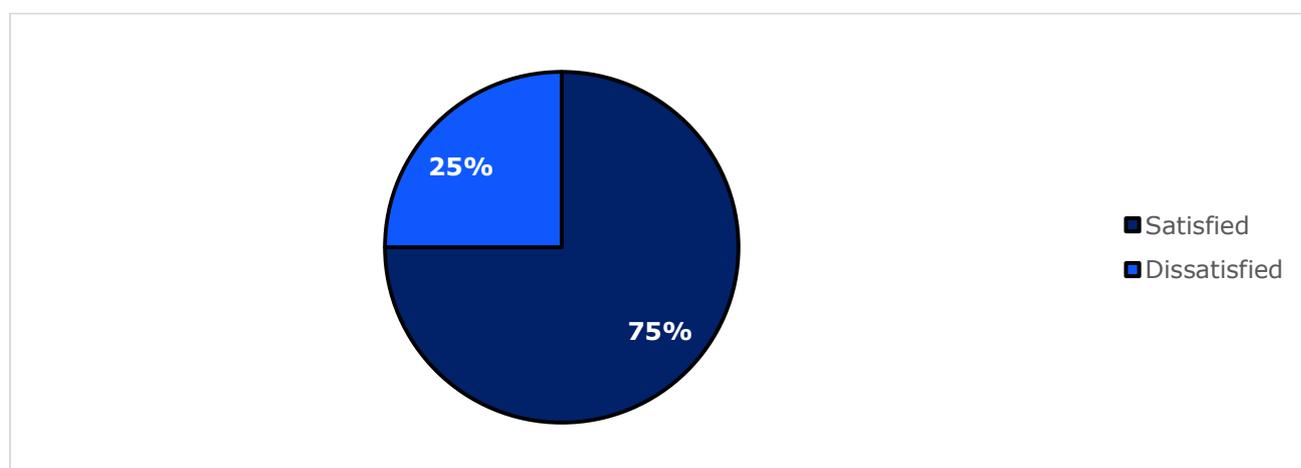
Figure 199 Satisfaction with information and guidance in finding employees from abroad (n=62)



#### Information and guidance in finding apprentices or trainees from abroad

Three quarters of the respondents that received support in finding trainees and/or apprentices from abroad were satisfied with the service provided.

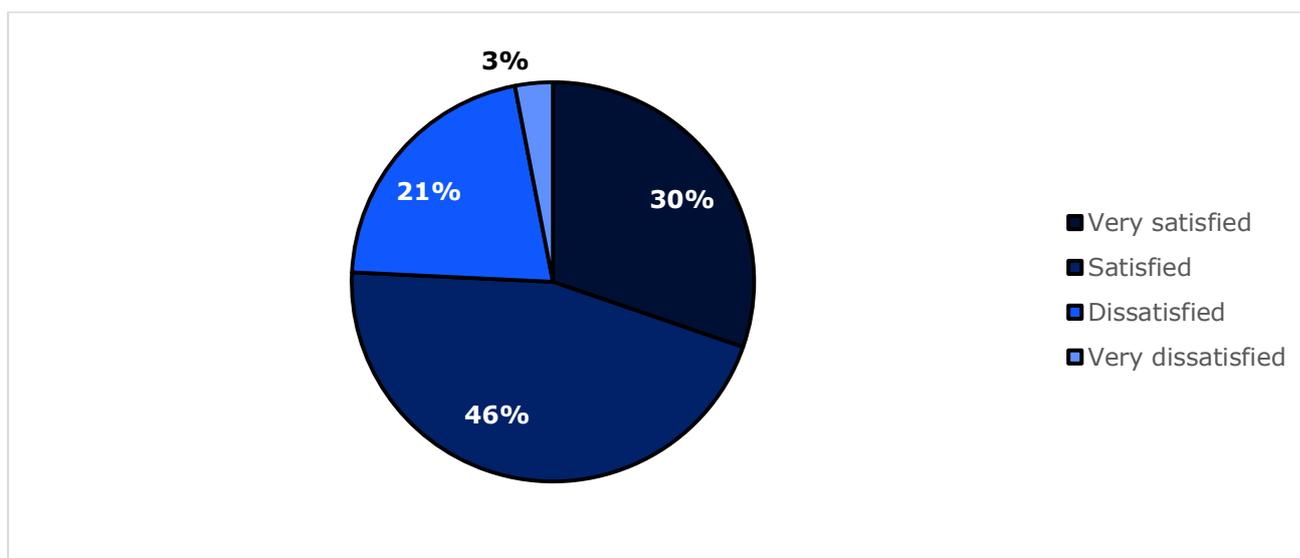
Figure 200 Satisfaction with information and guidance in finding apprentices or trainees from abroad (n=4)



### Selection of job applications to fill your job vacancies

More than two thirds of employers who received a selection of job applications for their job vacancies through EURES were either satisfied (46%, 15) or very satisfied (30%, 10) with the service provided.

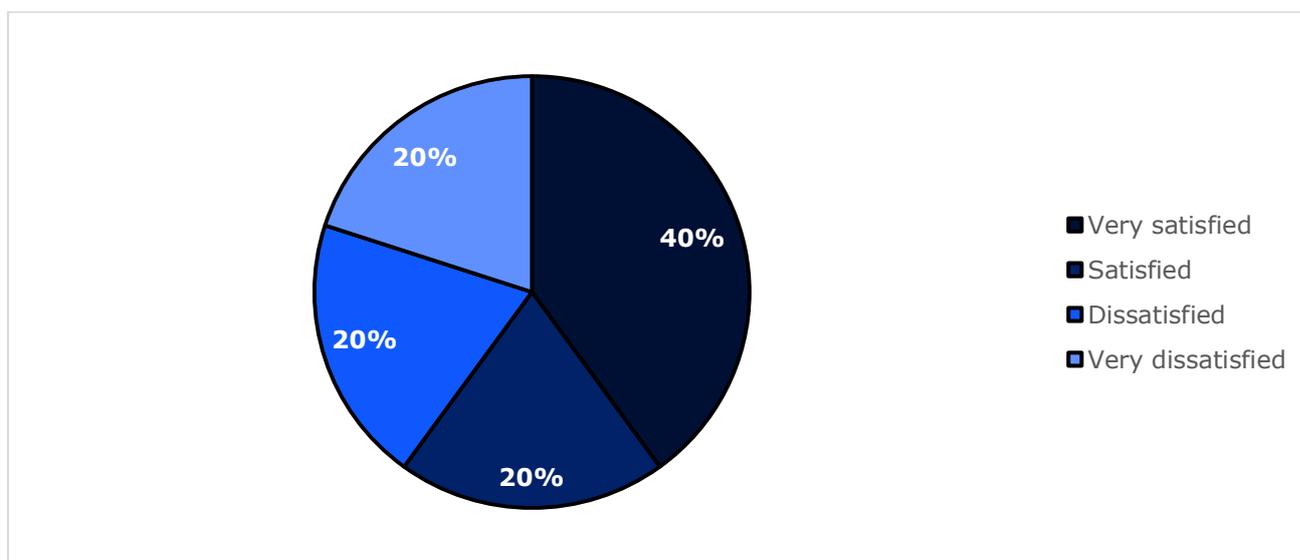
Figure 201 Satisfaction with the selection of job applications to fill your job vacancies (n=33)



### Integration support for new employees from abroad

More than a half of the respondents were (very) satisfied with the integration support for new employees from abroad that EURES provided them with.

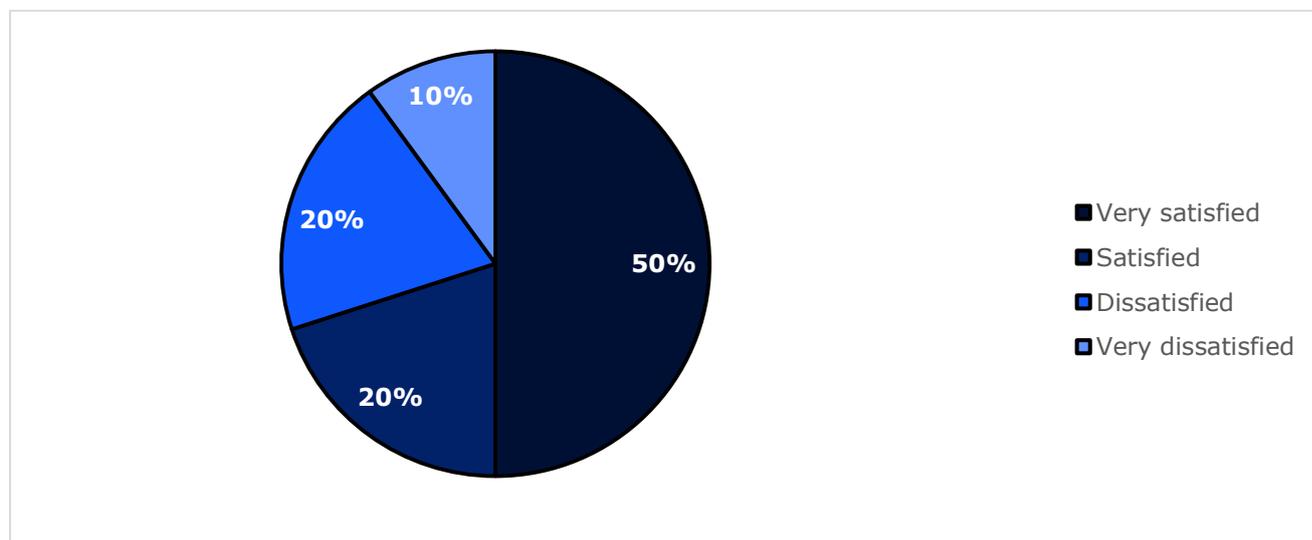
Figure 202 Satisfaction with integration support for new employees from abroad (n=5)



### Post-recruitment assistance to the employees

Regarding EURES's post-recruitment assistance, half of the respondents who received this service were very satisfied with it.

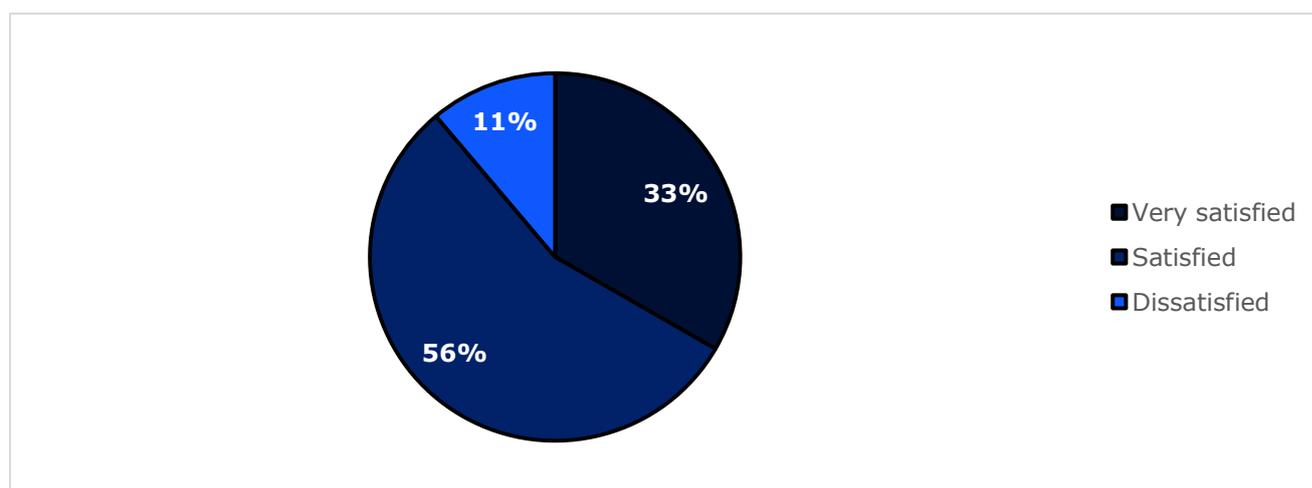
Figure 203 Satisfaction with post-recruitment assistance to employers (n=10)



### Information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers

All except one, respondents that received information related to their specific cross-border situation were either satisfied (56%, 5) or very satisfied (33%, 3) with the service. None of the respondents was very dissatisfied.

Figure 204 Satisfaction with information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers (n=9)



### Other

Regarding the other services received in the area of services in relation to a specific country or recruitment and attendance at trade fairs from EURES, one respondent indicated their dissatisfaction and one their great satisfaction. Two respondents decided not to rate their satisfaction.

## Comments

The respondents were able to provide further comments regarding their satisfaction. Nine of the respondents made use of this opportunity.

One of the respondents indicated that while they were very happy with the services they received from EURES staff, they are unable to say that they are completely satisfied as they have not yet employed a new person with the help of EURES.

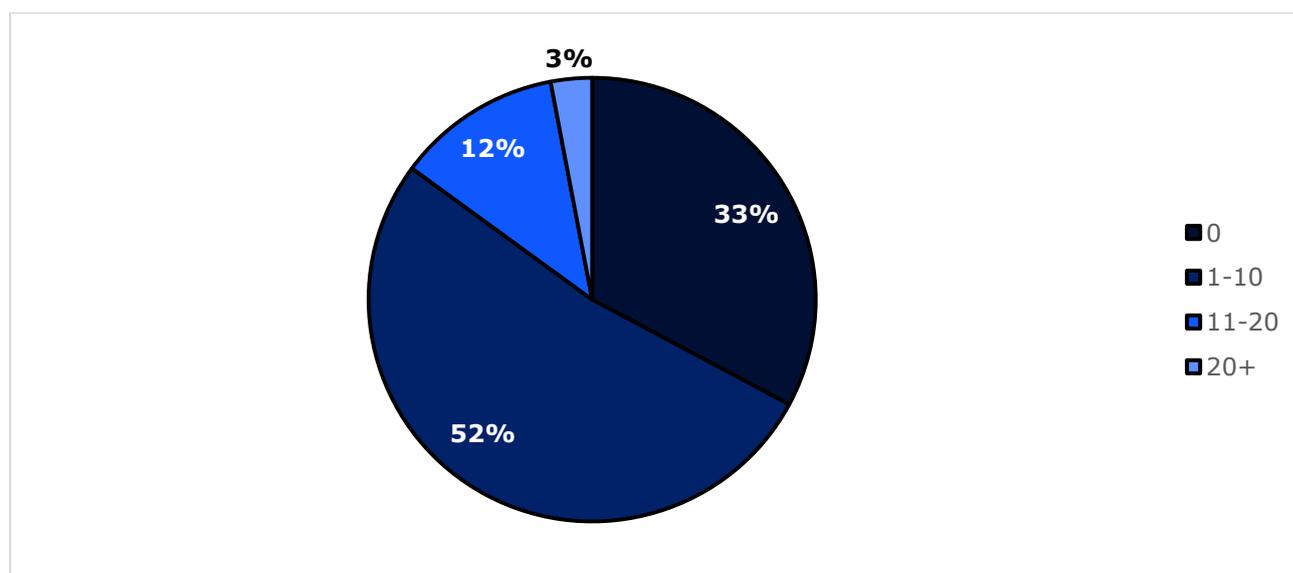
A few of the comments were related to the EURES portal and mentioned that the filter option is not accurate enough as it provides many irrelevant results. The respondents also mentioned that there are not enough suitable applicants, and not enough applicants in general, and that the whole process of posting job vacancies across Europe and registering on the EURES portal should be made easier and more user-friendly.

### *How many employees have you recruited from another country with the help of EURES?*

When asked how many employees they have recruited with the help of EURES, the respondents provided varying answers. About one third has not hired any, either because they did not find a suitable candidate or that their hiring process was still ongoing. More than half of the respondents indicated that they employed between 1 and 10 employees through EURES. There were two responses that indicated more than 20 hires, however, as both mentioned 100 hires or above, it is unclear whether this was an actual outcome, a typing or other mistake, particularly since one of these respondents indicated that they are a micro company.

Furthermore, one of the respondents highlighted that the reason why they have not hired anyone through EURES yet is because of the COVID-19 crisis. They were in the process of hiring them but due to the crisis were unable to complete the process.

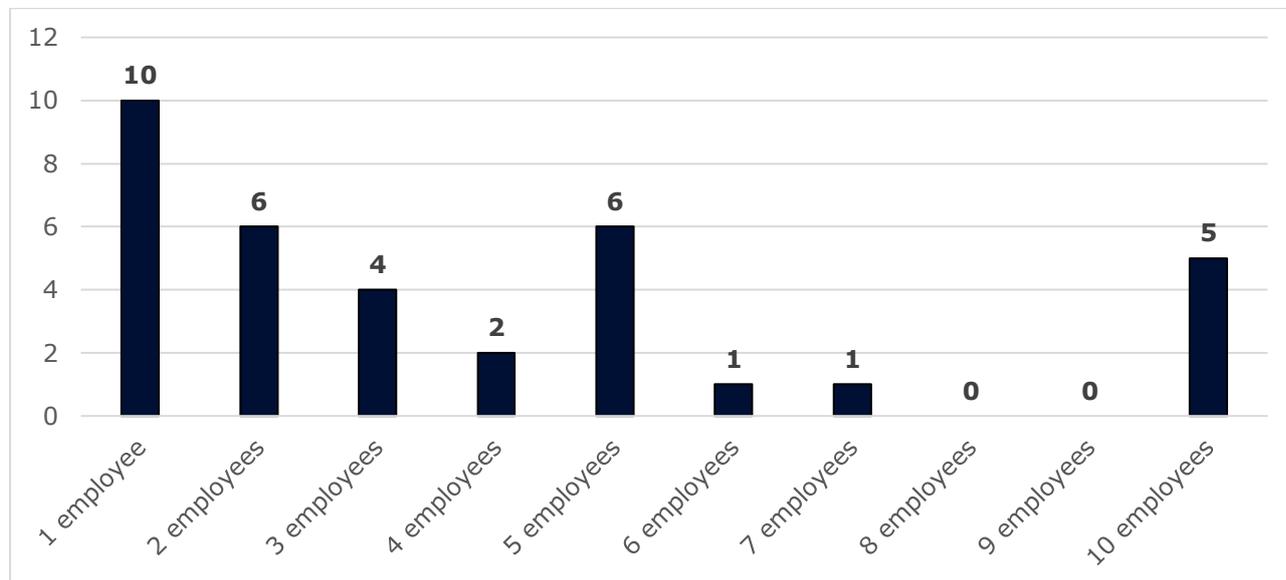
Figure 205 How many employees have you recruited from another country with the help of EURES? (n=67)



The graph below provides a closer look on the breakdown of the number of respondents that indicated that they hired between one and 10 employees with the help of EURES.

From this response group, about one third of them hired one employee (10), followed by those who hired two or five (6 respondents each). None of the respondents indicated that they hired eight or nine employees.

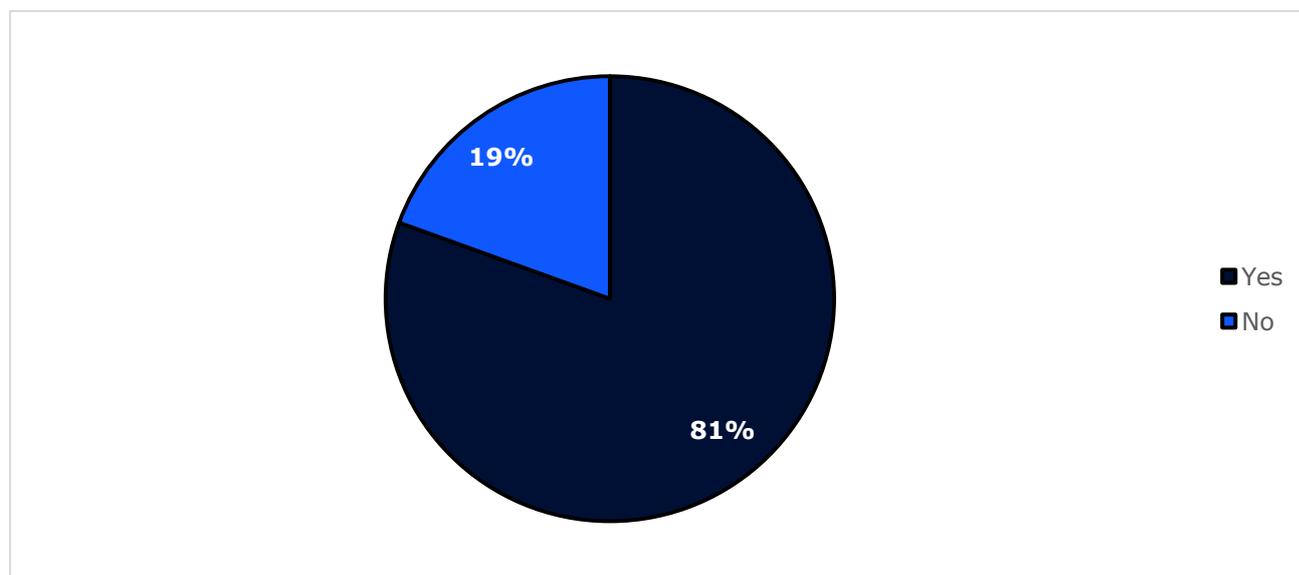
Figure 206 Breakdown of respondents who indicated to have hired 1 to 10 employees through EURES (n=35)



*Do you feel that EURES services complement each other?*

When asked whether the EURES services are complementary to each other, the vast majority of respondents are of the opinion that the services are complementary. However, through the comments section, a few of the respondents indicated that perhaps they are not entirely sure as they did not use more than one service. One respondent highlighted that they do not have a good enough knowledge of the services to be able to respond. One respondent said that using EURES services is a waste of time but no further detail was provided as to why they were so very dissatisfied with the services they received.

Figure 207 Do you feel that EURES services complement each other? (n=72)



### *How can the EURES services be improved?*

The last question in this section was an open one where respondents could write their suggestions for improvement. Thirty-two respondents provided their opinion.

A recurring mention was connected to the fact that the respondents feel that there are not enough candidates within the EURES database, particularly in some specific sectors, such as health care, which hampers the matching possibilities.

A significant number of comments were connected to the EURES portal and its matching function. Many of the respondents highlighted that the matching and specifically the filtering option needs to be more precise and user-friendly as well as the overall site navigation. Also, they highlighted that the contact information of the various EURES staff is not very visible.

A suggestion was also made that the EURES advisers should also do a pre-screening of potential candidates, particularly with regard to their actual willingness to move abroad, as oftentimes once the candidate received an employment offer they decided to remain in their country of residence. Furthermore, there is a significant gap between potential employee's expectations when searching for a job and finding the right information, and employer's expectations/communication when searching for an employee. This results in poor matching of job requests and vacancies. This means more costs and time spent on the hiring process which leads to many employers not willing to use the EURES services anymore.

Respondents would also like to receive more detailed information about skills, knowledge, and personal background of the applicants to ensure a good fit for the job vacancy and company.

In the cross-border area, it was highlighted that EURES staff should cooperate more closely with their counterparts across the border as the employment laws and regulations are quite complex and vary from each other. Now with an increased number of people teleworking from different countries, EURES should also look into this area and should offer support, for example, with providing an overview of the different laws that the companies and their employees need to comply with in each country.

Overall, EURES should improve the promotion and communication of their services.

### **Questions on the EURES portal**

This section only appeared to the respondents who selected at least one of the following interactions:

- I visited the EURES portal to get information
- I am a registered user of the EURES portal

In total, this section was shown to 128 respondents.

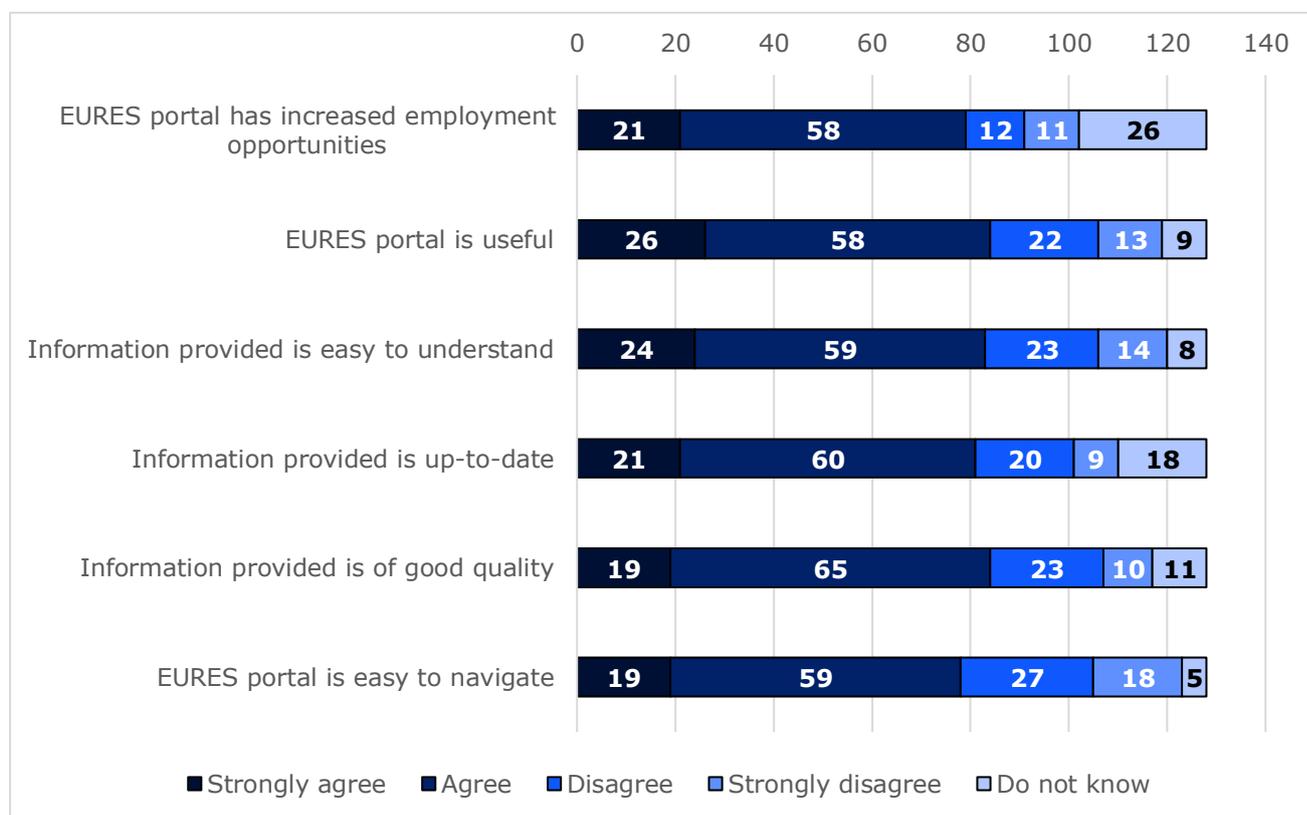
To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the EURES portal\*

In this question, the respondents were shown a series of statements about the EURES portal and were asked to indicate to which extent they agree with each.

As is visible in the graph, the majority of respondents either agree or strongly agree with all of the statements about the EURES portal. This ranges from 45% (58) agreeing with the EURES portal increasing employment opportunities and being useful, to 51% (65) of respondents thinking that the EURES portal provides information of good quality.

The highest rate of (strong) disagreement (35%, 45) is with the last statement on whether the EURES portal is easy to navigate. This result is in line with comments mentioned even in the previous section where a number of respondents highlighted that the EURES portal is not always user-friendly and at times they struggle to navigate their way around for the information needed.

Figure 208 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the EURES portal (n=128)



These sentiments are further supported by the 14 comments that the respondents attached to their responses. The most mentioned criticism include that the use of the portal could be more intuitive as it contains a lot of information but it is not always clear where each piece can be found, for example, the information on who to contact in each country or the helpdesk. It was also mentioned that, at times, the information is not up-to-date.

The respondents also commented on the matching function and the filtering options. They found both of these not precise enough to create true matches. One respondent compared the matching to a black box where no one is sure how it works exactly.

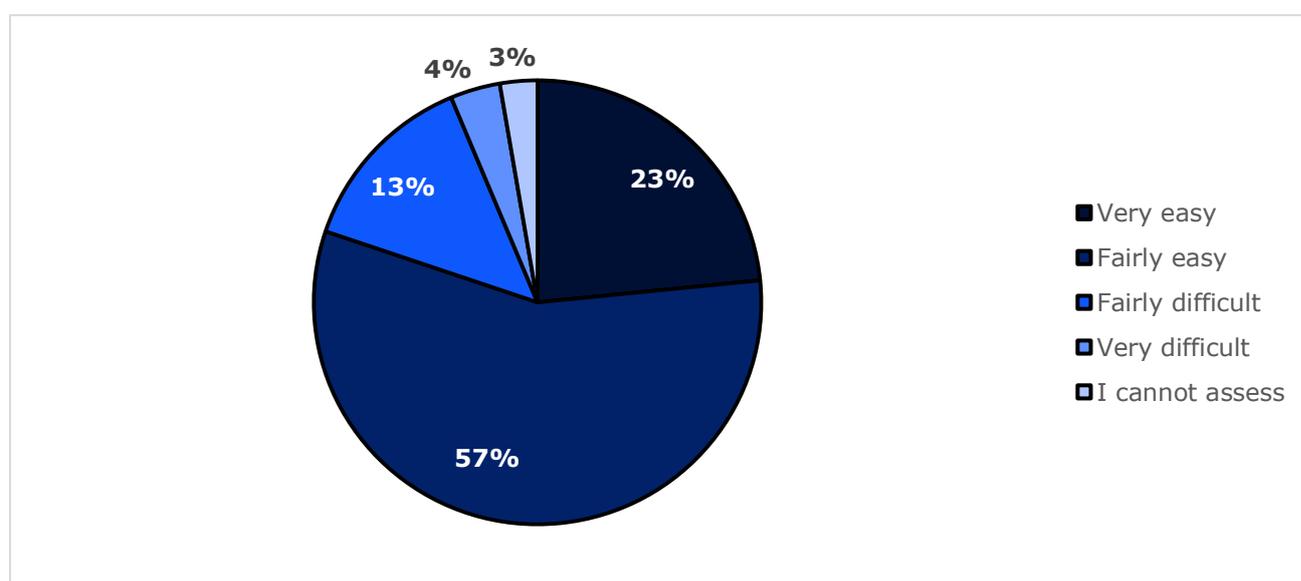
One respondent mentioned that it is quite hard to get in touch with EURES staff through the portal. Another one suggested for the portal to use a bigger font size for its text. A suggestion was also made to allow employers interact directly with the potential candidates through the EURES portal.

*How would you assess the EURES portal registration process?*

This question was shown only to those respondents who indicated that they are registered users of the EURES portal. In total, 111 respondents were asked their opinion.

Eighty-nine of the respondents indicated that the registration process is either very (23%, 26) or fairly (57%, 63) easy which makes up four fifths of the respondents. Three of the respondents were unable to assess the difficulty of the registration process.

Figure 209 How would you assess the EURES portal registration process? (n=111)

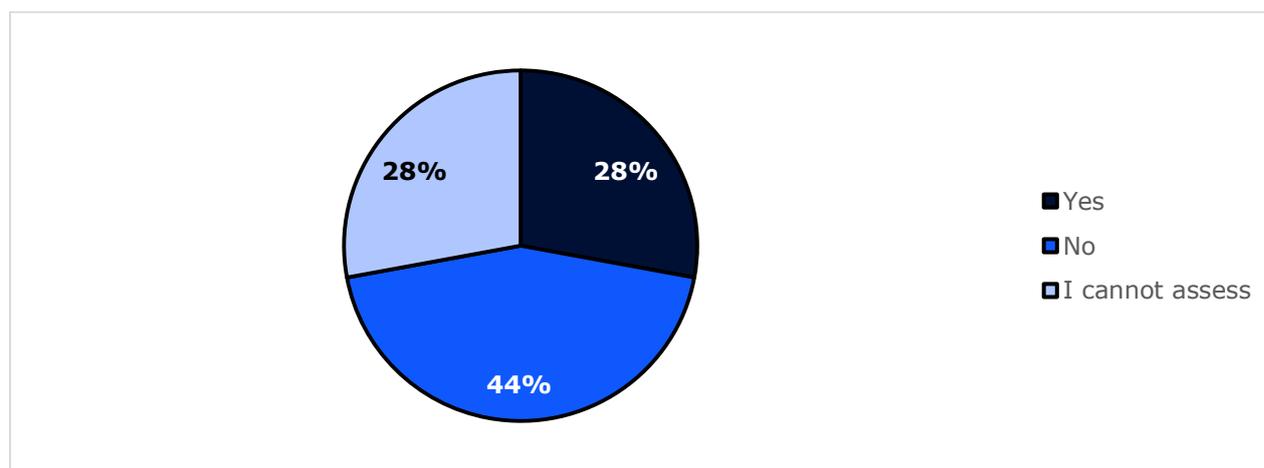


A comment mentioned that some employers are rejected from creating a profile on the portal without providing any information as to why they were not accepted.

*Is there anything that you think could be improved on the EURES portal?*

The respondents who indicated that they have used or are registered on the EURES portal were also asked if there is anything the portal should improve. Most of the respondents (44%, 57) do not think that there is anything to be improved. Same proportion of respondents (28%, 36) were either sure that there is a need to improve something on the portal or they were not able to assess it.

Figure 210 Is there anything that you think could be improved on the EURES portal? (n=128)



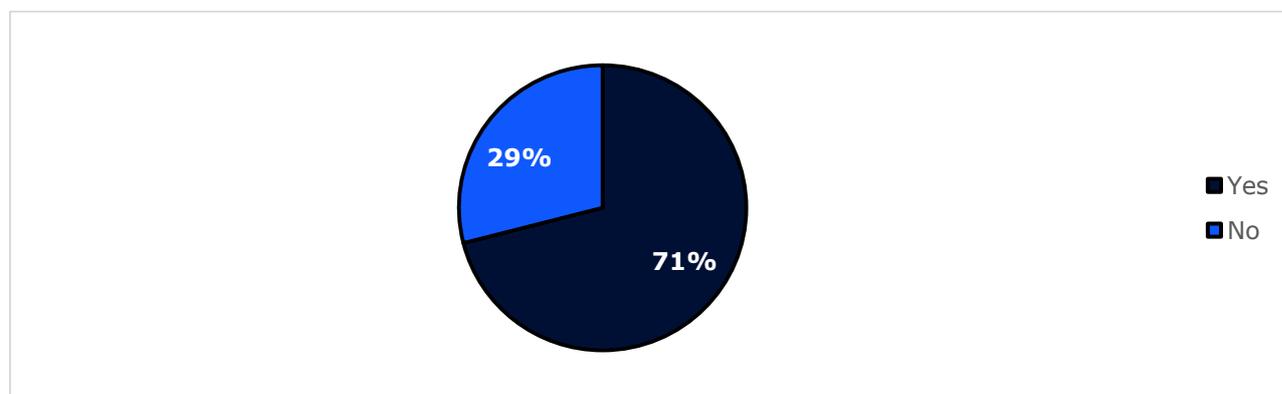
When a respondent selected 'Yes', they were asked to provide suggestions for the improvement of the portal. All 36 respondents provided a suggestion. The most mentioned suggestions included:

- Create a mobile-friendly version
- Improve the quality of information and support provided to employers
- Improve the user-friendliness
- Better filter options (e.g. skills matching option) and matching results
- Integration of customer relationship management (CRM)
- Allow direct communication with potential candidates
- Ensure up-to-date information, particularly regarding potential candidates' profiles
- More timely information on job fairs
- Improve communication

*Are you considering registering on the EURES portal?*

This question was visible only to those respondents who selected that they have visited the EURES portal to look for information. In total, 69 respondents were shown this question. More than two thirds of these respondents (71%, 49) would consider registering on the EURES portal in the future.

Figure 211 Are you considering registering on the EURES portal? (n=69)



## Questions on EURES initiatives

This section only appeared to the respondents who selected at least one of the following interactions:

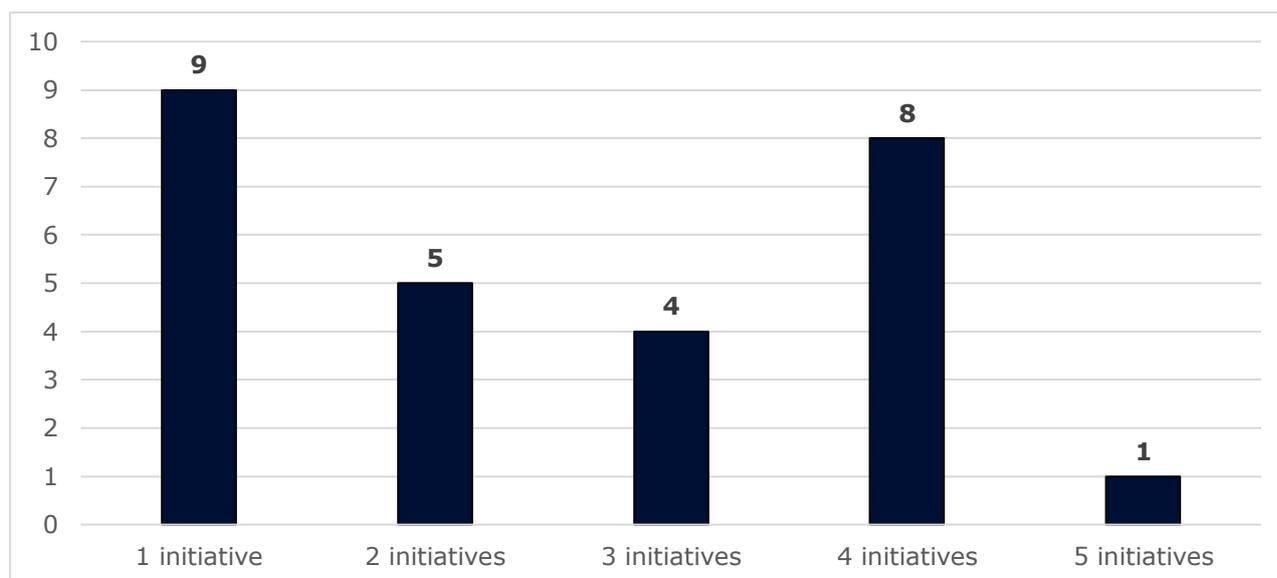
- I attended a job fair/other recruitment event organised by EURES
- I received support under the targeted Mobility Schemes (e.g. Your first EURES job, Reactivate)
- I received support from the Cross-Border Partnerships

In total, this section was shown to 28 respondents.

### *Which of the following have you participated in?*

The respondents were asked which specific EURES initiative they have participated in. They were able to select more than one option. Most of the respondents selected that they took part in one EURES initiative. One respondent mentioned they took part in five out of the eight initiatives provided.

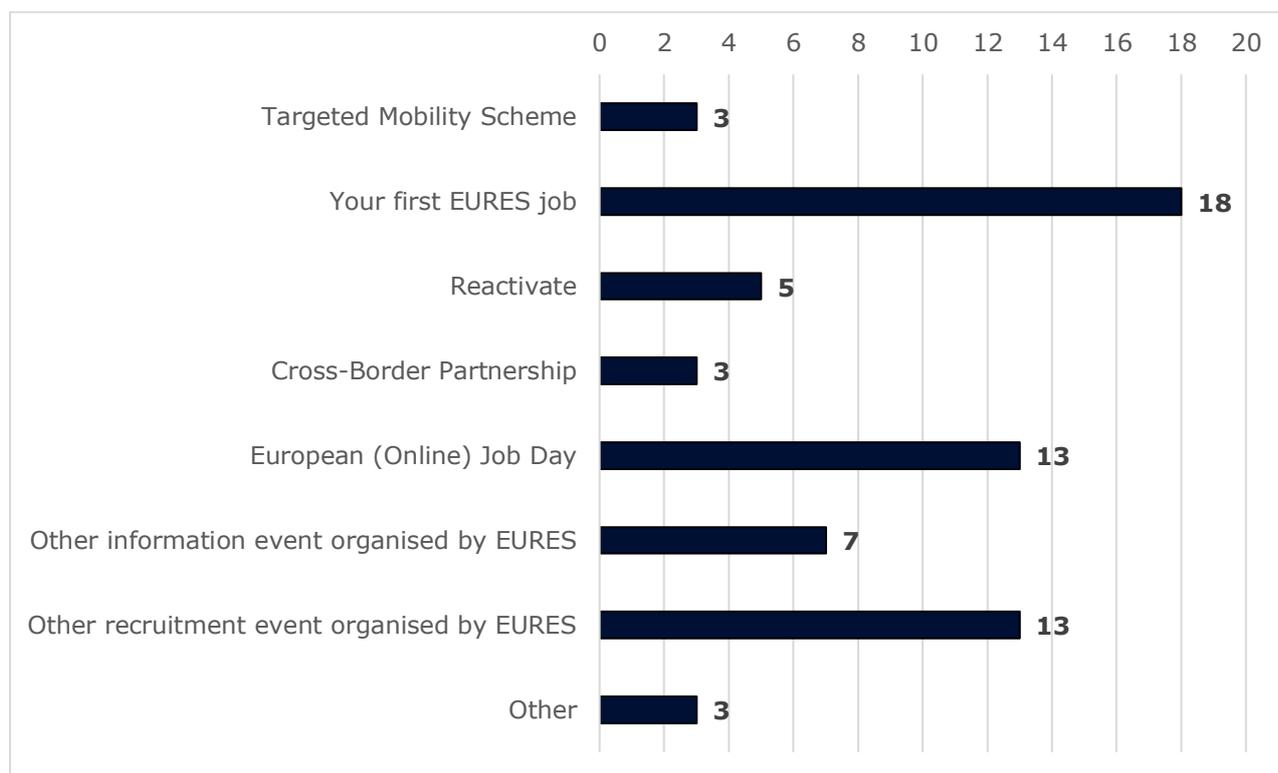
Figure 212 Which of the following have you participated in? Number of initiatives selected (n=27)



The most selected initiative was the Your first EURES job followed by European (Online) Job Days and other recruitment events organised by EURES. The majority of those who selected to have taken part in only one initiative indicated this initiative to be Your first EURES job.

Regarding the 'Other' option, the respondents indicated that they received a site visit from EURES and another respondent mentioned they received tailored support.

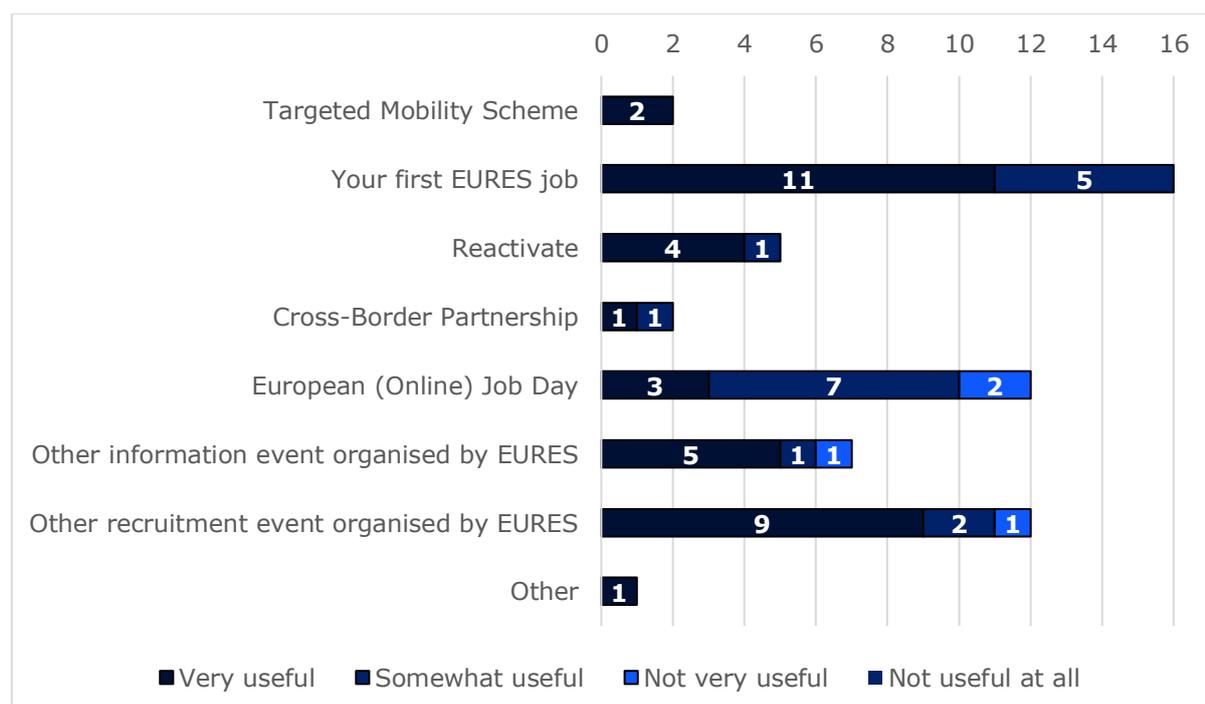
Figure 213 Which of the following have you participated in? (n=27)



*How would you evaluate the initiative?*

The respondents were also asked to assess the initiatives that they participated in. The vast majority of respondents found the initiatives very useful or useful. None of the respondents thought of the initiatives as being of no use at all.

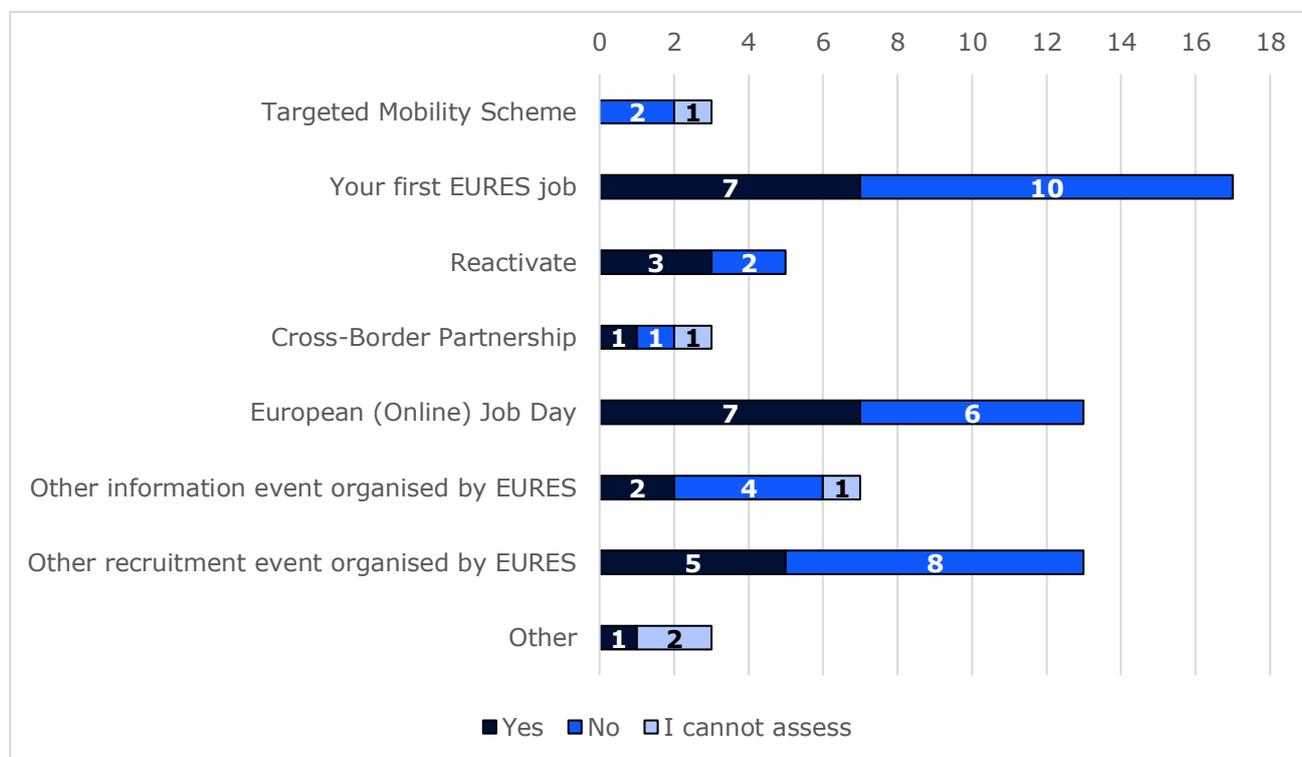
Figure 214 How would you evaluate the initiative? (n=27)



*Do you think these initiatives are visible enough?*

While the respondents find the initiatives to be useful, they also think that they are not visible enough. Perhaps with the exception of Reactivate and European (Online) Job Days were more people responded that they thought the visibility is good.

Figure 215 Do you think these initiatives are visible enough? (n=27)

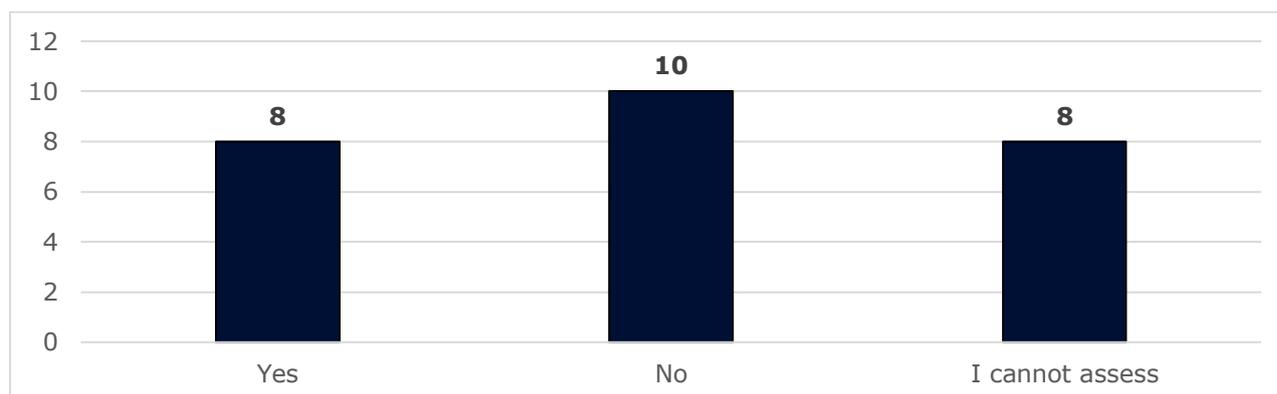


Three of the respondents provided additional information to further justify their answer. These included the opinions that the initiatives are not visible enough since they do not generate enough candidates and those who could be eligible to participate are not aware of them. It was also mentioned that recruitment events are helpful, especially if the CVs of the interested candidates are available at these events.

*Are there any other initiatives that you think EURES should develop/offer?*

The respondents were also asked if they think EURES should develop more initiatives. Most of the respondents do not think there is need for more or new EURES initiatives. While the remainder of the respondents were equally split between needing new initiatives and not being able to assess the need.

Figure 216 Are there any other initiatives that you think EURES should develop/offer? (n=26)



Those respondents who selected 'Yes', were asked to provide suggestions for further initiatives. All eight respondents provided at least one suggestion. These suggestions included once again a mention of improving the EURES portal and making the registration less complicated. A need to attract more candidates through these initiatives was also highlighted, particularly through better marketing and targeted advertising. One suggestion also mentioned the need to better implement the Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications. Opening the funding possibilities to charities and non-profit organisations was also mentioned. One respondent suggested to open the recruitment also to candidates from outside of the EU/EFTA countries.

### Questions on the visibility of EURES

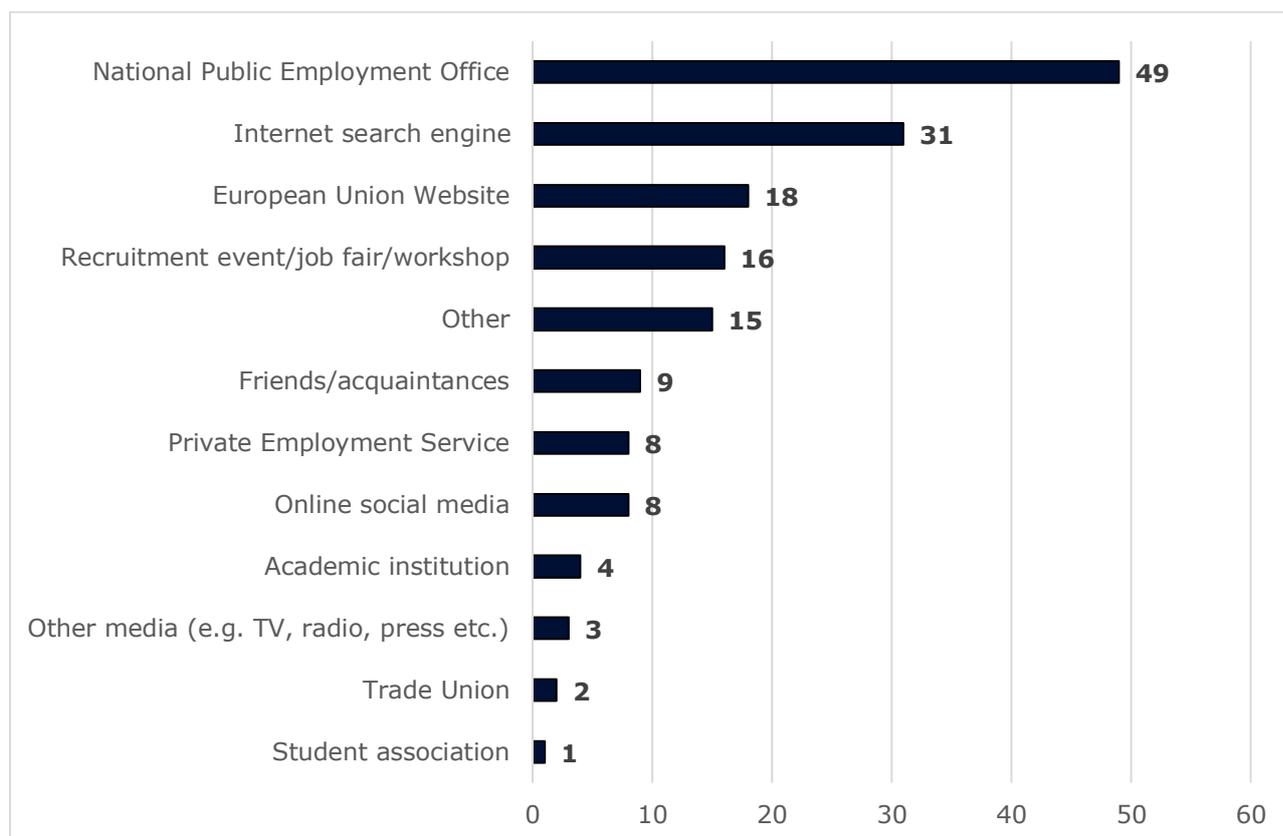
These questions were visible to all 164 respondents and focused on the overall visibility of EURES and ways to improve it.

#### *Where did you first learn about EURES?\**

The respondents were asked to indicate through which mean they have found out about EURES and its services. The majority of respondents indicated that they learnt about the support through their national public employment services followed by an Internet search and EU websites.

Regarding those who indicated that they found about it through 'Other' means, the responses included naming a specific search engine (e.g. Google), some of them were unsure of how they found it, some mentioned specific seminars and job fairs. Some respondents also mentioned that they found out about it by accident when searching for something else and some were turned onto EURES by previous or current co-workers or a youth exchange.

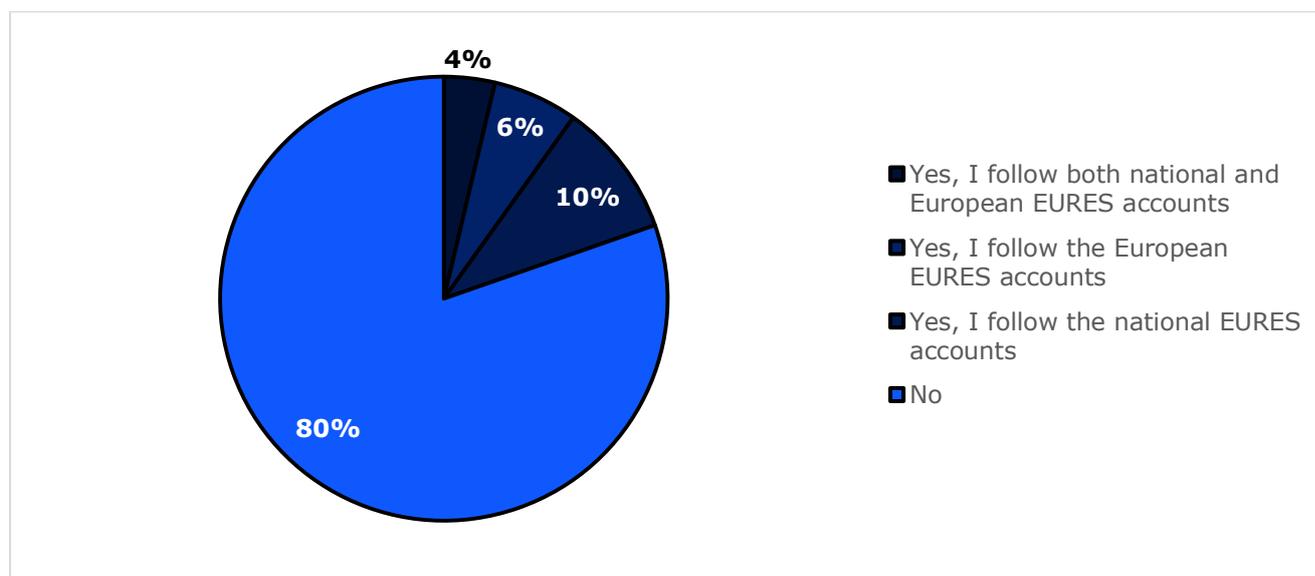
Figure 217 Where did you first learn about EURES? (n=164)



*Do you follow EURES on social media?*

The majority of respondents mention that they do not follow EURES on social media. This might be connected to the fact that it is still not that common for companies to have specific company accounts, however, this is slowly changing. From those who indicated they followed EURES on social media, they mostly followed the national accounts.

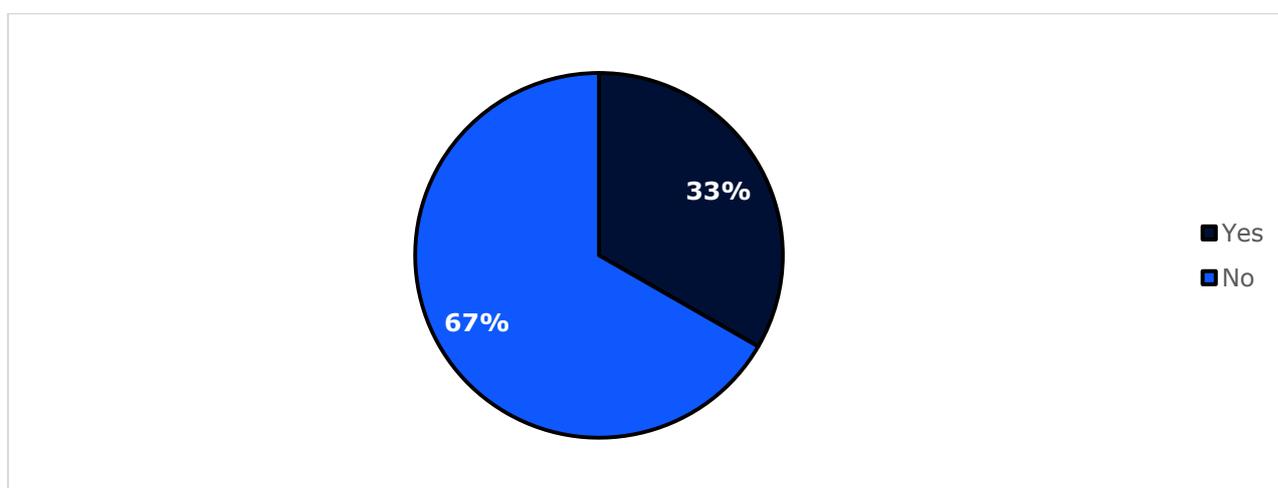
Figure 218 Do you follow EURES on social media? (n=163)



*Have you come across any discrepancies between the information provided in the national and European EURES accounts?*

Only those respondents who indicated that they follow both European and national social media accounts of EURES (i.e. 6 respondents) were asked this question. Two thirds (4) of the respondents do not think there are discrepancies, but two respondents do. When asked to further develop their answer, these two respondents indicated that either they are not sure why there are two levels of information or that at times local EURES staff applies their own approach.

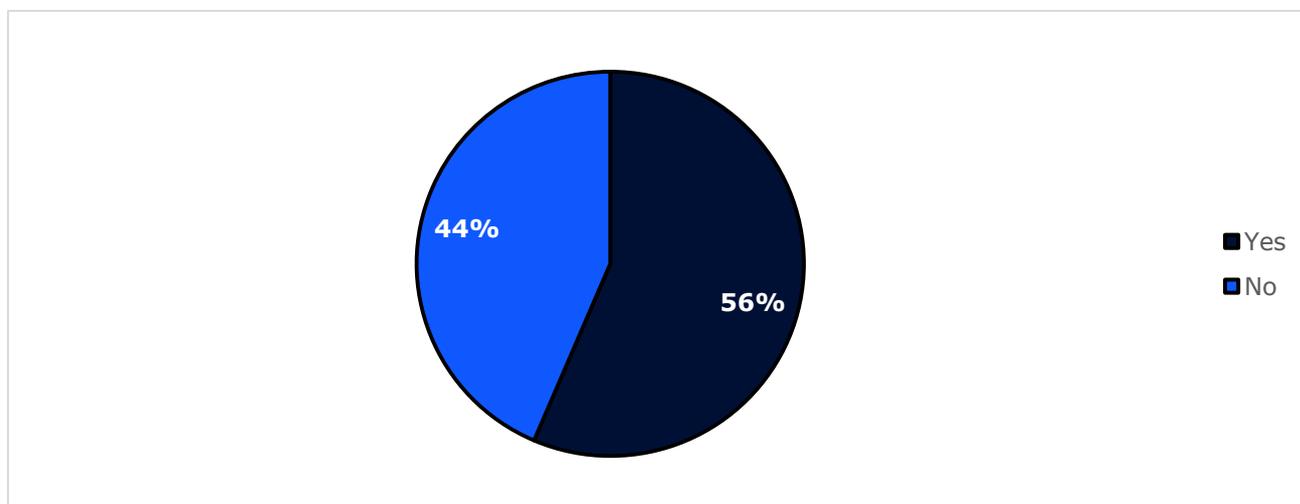
Figure 219 Have you come across any discrepancies between the information provided in the national and European EURES accounts? (n=6)



*Do you think it is easy to find information about EURES and the services it provides?*

To further inquire about the visibility of EURES, the respondents were asked if they think it is easy to find information about it and the services it offers. Slightly more than half (56%, 92) of the respondents do think it is easy to find out about EURES and the different services.

Figure 220 Do you think it is easy to find information about EURES and the services it provides? (n=163)



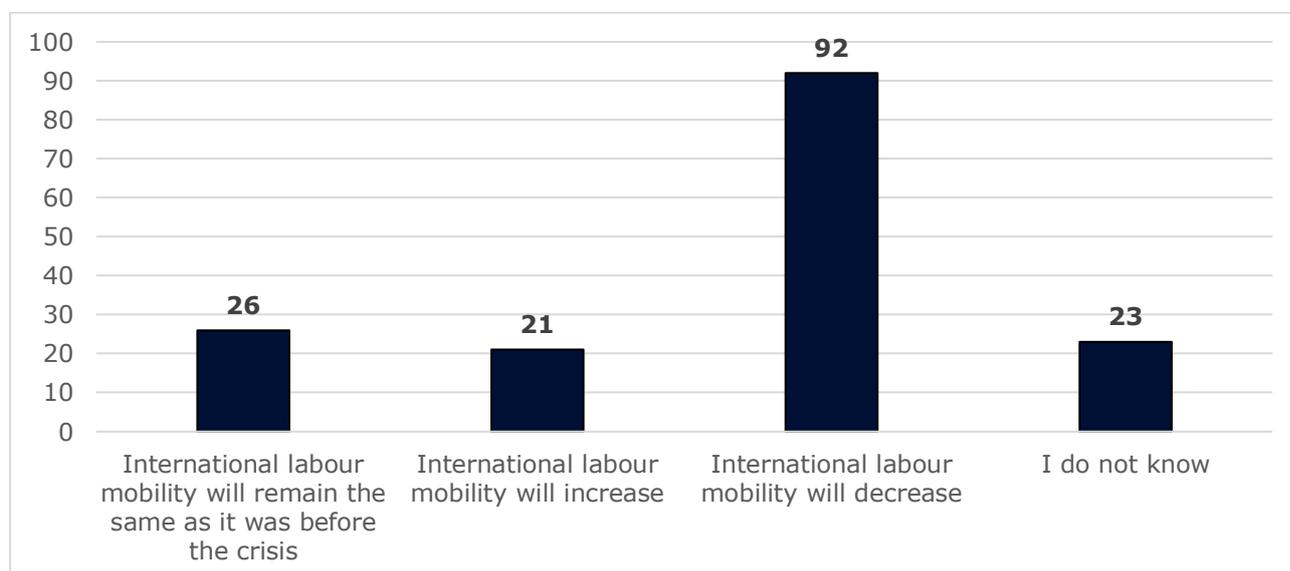
## Questions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

This section was shown to all 164 respondents and aimed to grasp how the respondents think the COVID-19 crisis will impact labour mobility in the future.

*To which extent do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021?*

The vast majority (56%, 92) of the respondents think that labour mobility will decrease due to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. About 16% (26) of the respondents are of the opinion that the mobility will remain the same as before. Fourteen percent (23) have no opinion on this matter while 13% (21) think labour mobility will increase after the crisis. Two respondents preferred not to answer.

Figure 221 To which extent do you think the COVID-19 crisis will affect international labour mobility as of 2021? (n=162)



The respondents were able to leave comments to accompany their responses. Eleven respondents made use of this opportunity. From those who indicated that the situation would remain the same, the reasoning most often used is that the employers will always have a need to recruit as there are skill shortages. They do admit that it might be difficult due to national restrictions and quarantine requirements, but the process will nonetheless continue.

Those who are of the opinion that labour mobility will increase mentioned that this will be due to people preferring not to travel and also an increased demand for teleworking (i.e. working remotely).

The reason why respondents selected that the labour mobility will increase is because they feel that perhaps people will want to leave the strongly affected countries to go to a "safer" country. They also mentioned that a number of Europeans have returned from other continents and will need to find employment within Europe. One of these respondents also mentioned that currently the EURES initiatives are not strong enough to support this increase in mobility.

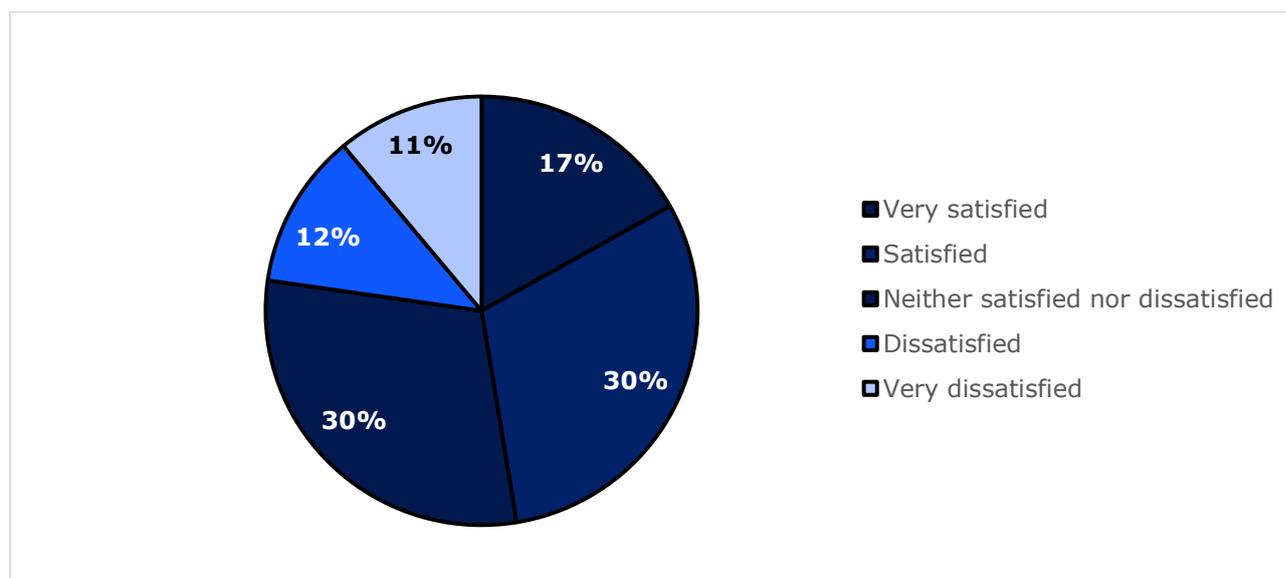
## Concluding questions

This section was shown to all 164 respondents and aimed to gather some final thoughts of the respondents on EURES.

### *How satisfied are you with EURES?\**

Nearly half of the respondents were either very satisfied (17%, 26) or satisfied (30%, 47) with EURES services. A considerable number of respondents (30%, 46) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with EURES. Nearly one quarter of the respondents were dissatisfied (12%, 18) or very dissatisfied (11%, 18) with EURES.

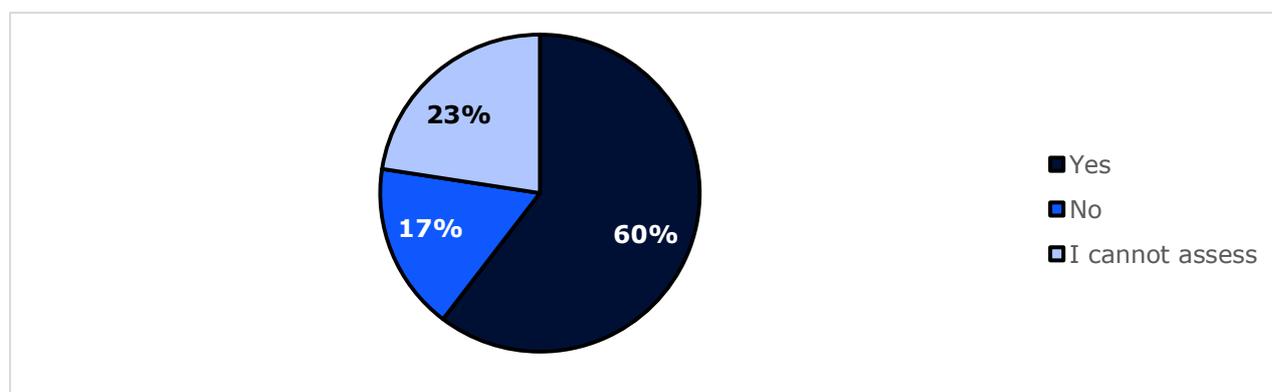
Figure 222 How satisfied are you with EURES? (n=164)



### *Would you recommend EURES to other employers?\**

When asked whether the respondents would recommend EURES to other employers, the majority of them (60%, 99) would do so. Nearly one quarter (23%, 37) is undecided whether they would recommend it.

Figure 223 Would you recommend EURES to other employers? (n=164)

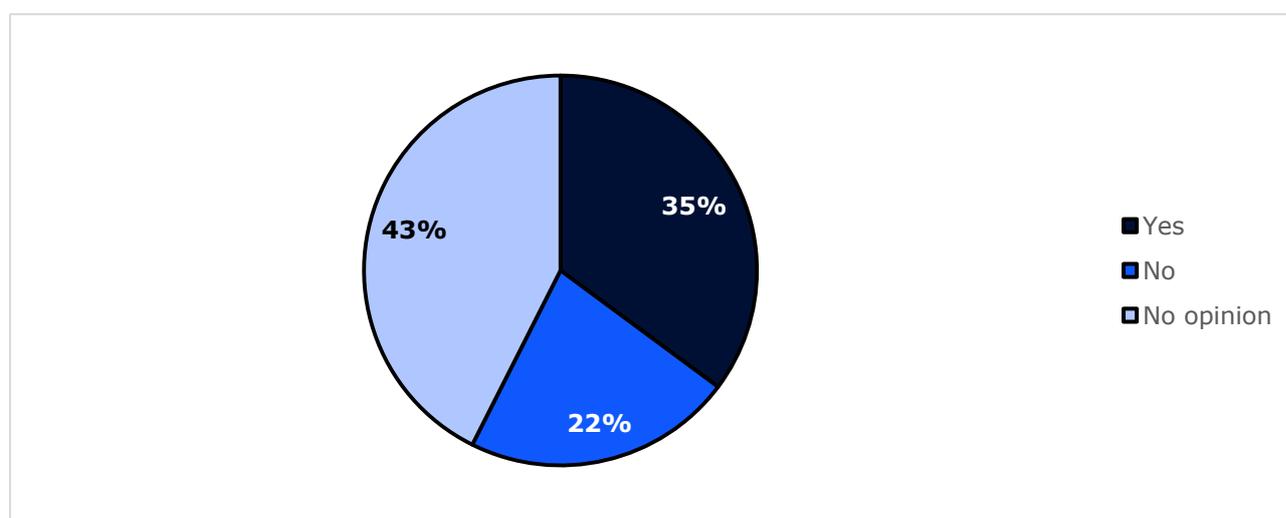


The respondents who indicated they would not recommend EURES to others were asked to provide more detail regarding their position. Twenty-eight of them made use of this opportunity. The responses were mostly connected to the fact that for these respondents, EURES was unable to find the right candidates and, therefore, found little return for their efforts. The imprecision of the filter option was again mentioned as one of the reasons for dissatisfaction. The lack of enough skilled candidates was also highlighted as an obstacle.

*In your opinion, is there anything about EURES that needs improvement?*

Nearly half of the respondents (43%, 69) have no opinion on whether EURES should be improved. This is followed by those who think EURES needs to be improved (35%, 57) and those who do not think any improvement are needed (22%, 36).

Figure 224 In your opinion, is there anything about EURES that needs improvement? (n=162)



The respondents who thought EURES needs improving were asked for suggestions. The suggestions from the 57 respondents included:

- More detail about the skills expectation for job vacancies
- Make the interaction more user-friendly
- Simplify the language used on the EURES portal and improve the translation function
- Improve the outreach to attract more jobseekers
- Vet candidates for specific job vacancies
- Strengthen ties between EURES and national employment agencies
- Better filter function
- Facilitate direct contact between employers and potential candidates
- Improve visibility
- Develop programmes to support language and skills development
- Block access to non-EU/EFTA applicants to create profiles on EURES portal
- Include an overview of EU legislation that applies to labour mobility

*Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with EURES network?*

To end the survey, the respondents could provide further remarks or suggestions about EURES. Forty-three respondents made use of this opportunity.

Some respondents used this question to thank the EURES staff that supported them in finding information and candidates.

Another set of responses could be grouped around suggestions for improving the EURES portal and the services it provides. As highlighted previously, the respondents took this opportunity to re-iterate the need to improve the filter option and the matching process. The information provided should also be up-to-date. At times, the employers are unsure whether the candidate profiles on the EURES portal are still looking for employment. Also, a few of the employers pointed out that they have hired people through EURES or were in the process of hiring them but then the individual changed their mind about working abroad. Therefore, a more thorough screening and explanation to candidates about what it entails to move to another country and post-recruitment assistance would be welcomed.

The respondents also mentioned that the portal should be open only to EU/EFTA candidates as currently many of the matches are with people outside of these countries that are then either ineligible to work or require further bureaucratic steps to be hired.

Respondents also highlighted the need to make EURES more visible, particularly among candidates to widen the selection pool. More candidates for vacancies in the construction and health sectors would particularly be welcomed. The possibility to include contract staff opportunities (i.e. employment opportunities with a specific duration) would be a good addition as well.

Some answers also mentioned that the employers should have the possibility to interact directly with potential candidates through the EURES portal as at times the national staff are not very proactive and efficient which might negatively influence the recruitment process.

### 3 DOCUMENTATION OF THE EURES VALIDATION WORKSHOP

This workshop has been organised to gather key stakeholders and experts in labour mobility in order to discuss and validate the findings of the draft final report on the EURES ex-post evaluation study. While initially it was foreseen as a one-day face-to-face event, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe, the workshop was organised online via Microsoft Teams

The main discussion points and inputs gathered are summarised below. When relevant, the insights and conclusions derived from the event have been integrated in the main report.

#### 3.1.1 Agenda

The workshop followed the agenda below.

Table 1 Agenda of the EURES Validation Workshop

Time	Who	What
------	-----	------

<b>12.30 – 13.00</b>		Virtual coffee
<b>13.00 – 13.05</b>	ECO	Welcome and introduction
<b>13.05 – 13.15</b>	Evaluation team	Ground rules and tour de table
<b>13.15 – 14.30</b>	Evaluation team	Interactive discussion (Part 1): Presentation and validation of the findings
<b>14.30 – 14.45</b>		Break
<b>14.45 – 15.45</b>	Evaluation team	Interactive discussion (Part 2): Presentation and validation of the recommendations (including priority ranking)
<b>15.45 – 16.00</b>	Evaluation team	Wrap-up and conclusive remark

### 3.1.2 Minutes of the workshop

#### Welcome remarks

ECO welcomed the participants and introduced the aim of the workshop, namely the factual validation of the findings and discussion of the recommendations of the study on the ex post evaluation of EURES.

#### Ground rules and tour de table

The study author provided the rules for the participation in the meeting. A tour de table of the participants followed.

Overall, two representatives from the European Coordination Office (ECO), 11 National Coordination Office (NCO) representatives, two social partner organisations and one Commission (COM) representative participated in the event.

#### Interactive discussion 1: Presentation and validation of the findings

The study author presented the key findings per evaluation criterion. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the main discussion points for each criterion.

##### Relevance

- An NCO representative mentioned that EURES is increasingly responding to employers' needs but it is also important to consider that for-profit and commercial Members and Partners might mostly look to fill the vacancies and may have different strategic focuses. Notably, looking at the legal context, the main focus of the Regulation is on placement and not on advice.
- A social partner representative stressed the importance of also assessing how the needs of frontier workers are met and the role of social parties.
- An NCO representative asked for a clarification on the point whether all target groups are properly reached. The COM representative pointed out that there is a need to be

careful with presenting such key finding. For example, employers could have very specific needs that cannot be addressed in a particular country, especially taking into consideration the capacities of this country. In the evaluation period, the financing has been different across countries. Therefore, there is a need to be cautious when formulating findings about subsections of target groups. With regard to seasonal workers, there are multiple projects targeting seasonal workers.

- An NCO representative pointed out that returning workers are more and more included in the programming cycle and that EURES adapts to the needs of specific groups.
- ECO agreed on the importance of nuancing the findings. It was also mentioned that seasonal workers and returnees are not mentioned in the EURES Regulation, which might explain why it is not part of the programming. Seasonal workers are also not relevant for all Member States. It is suggested to analyse this aspect in the context of the Regulation and the scope of all EURES countries.
- An NCO representative suggested to consider the legal context when looking at the relevance criteria with regards to the EURES portal, because the matching is not everything and the self-service matching tool is often appreciated by the users.
- An NCO representative stressed the importance of nuancing the key findings and putting them in context, especially linked with the mechanisms to track changes in the labour market. The word “only” when referring to the EURES mechanisms to identify changes in the implementation context.
- The contractor clarified the expressions used in the slides.
- An NCO representative suggested to use EURES Coordination Group (ECG) interactions instead of a meeting to also highlight the exchanges that take place outside the formal meetings between ECG representatives. National representatives also coordinate outside of the more formal EU settings.

### *Effectiveness*

- An NCO representative pointed out that it is not always the case that the lack of admission of EURES Members and Partners (M&P) affects the effectiveness of EURES negatively. Her experience is that even if new Partners are admitted, they are not always bringing added value. The contractor explained that the national context was taken into consideration in the analysis and also the key findings refer to the fact that EURES could be even more effective if additional conditions were met.
- An NCO representative pointed out that it takes some time before it can really be known what the effect and contribution of a Member and Partner is. Her experience shows that in some cases there is a positive effect, sometimes there is not. However, even if Members and Partners are not contributing to the EURES network, it is not easy to expel them. More time is needed to really know what the contribution is.
- An NCO representative pointed out that activities captured by the Performance Measurement System (PMS) and Programming Cycle (PC) are very much aligned with the EURES Regulation and do not always leave scope to capture all activities of EURES Members and Partners. It is very hard to add meaningful activities to the programming, and therefore to assess their real added value.
- An NCO representative doubts the connection between visibility and effectiveness of EURES. The contractor clarified that people who might need EURES services should know about them in order to receive support. The link refers to the outreach and quantity of EURES services and not their quality. Another NCO representative also raised concern whether the word effectiveness is suitable in this context. If EURES has to be sufficiently visible, a huge amount of money and resources are needed. The number of clients is very high and they have different needs. The available resources should be taken into consideration in the analysis. The assessment that the visibility is not sufficient is considered as unfair by the NCO representative.
- The contractor clarified that the context is taken into consideration in the analysis.

### Efficiency

- An NCO representative did not understand why “administrative burden” is expected to diminish in the future. There are a lot of new things to be developed, but normally at national level the network will become bigger, which means extra work for onboarding M&P, networking at international level, organisation of service delivery and reporting, etc. The conclusion that the administrative burden will decrease in the future is not that convincing.
- The contractor pointed out that the focus of the analysis was on the feedback provided by stakeholders linked to the additional burden because of PMS and PC, and the need to develop new tools from scratch. With regard to the enlargement of the network, the shift of NCOs will be towards management and there will be a one-off burden to onboard the new M&P.
- An NCO representative pointed out that there is turnover of staff which impacts the continuous need for onboarding. The contractor explained that the fluctuation in number of staff is also analysed in the report. So far, the decrease of staff has not had a negative impact on the cost-effectiveness of the three outcomes analysed under the Cost-Effectiveness Analysis. However, the reason for this might be assigned to the fact that the monitoring of outcomes has improved over the years as with the introduction of the PMS, the number of recorded placements and contacts has been steadily increasing, rather than for the EURES staff to be more efficient. In the time period analysed, there were also no negative impacts observed on the labour markets in the EU that would provide an increase in demand for EURES services.
- An NCO representative pointed out that it would be good to highlight in the report the point of view, based on which the assessment of the decreased administrative burden is concluded. Even if there are excellent IT tools, there is expected to be more work.

### Coherence

- An NCO representative looking at external coherence, pointed out that the risk of overlaps with Europass was very often pointed out during the ECG meetings but the outcome has not changed.
- An NCO representative agreed that Europass and the Single Digital Gateway (SDG) portal have overlapping sections on living and working conditions. Moreover, it is important to stress the timeline in the report: Europass and SDG came after EURES. Another NCO and ECO supported this point.
- The contractor confirmed that the timeline of these initiatives is already included in the report.

### EU added value

- ECO asked clarifications on the actual EURES added value. The contractor clarified that EURES is a relatively small programme, but still the services provided to jobseekers and employers are deemed useful to facilitate and support labour mobility.
- Specific quantitative evaluation of the added value of EURES is provided in the draft final report, however, due to the unreliability of data, it needs to be treated carefully.

## Interactive discussion 2: Validation of lessons learnt and priority ranking

The study author presented the lessons learnt identified for the future of EURES. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the main discussion points for each topic.

Notably, no comments were raised in the first three suggested dimensions (i.e. overarching framework, planning and monitoring, EURES portal in the digital age).

### *Working in an enlarged network*

- An NCO representative pointed out that enlarging the network also translates in additional challenges for the NCOs, such as the allocation and estimation of budget and human resources, as well as the alignment on the goals and planning with private Members and Partners. The fluidity of private actors makes this more difficult. Private actors have their own independence. Steering them has to be done in an encouraging way, but they will not change their focus because EURES tells them to do so. But they could be informed by NCOs in order to help them prioritise better.

### *Awareness and visibility*

- A social partner representative stressed the importance of writing forward-looking recommendations to also make sure that the European Labour Authority will take over and raise awareness on fair mobility.

### *Specific support services and mobility schemes*

- An NCO representative claimed that several efforts were put into apprenticeships and traineeships but, overall, the experiences and results were not sufficiently good to further revisit.
- An NCO representative added that EURES can only focus on apprenticeships and traineeships in the framework of employment contracts, hence it would be difficult to find room to manoeuvre and develop a definition.
- An NCO representative pointed out that the provision of post-recruitment assistance is limited in the EURES Regulation and probably it will be very difficult to reach some achievements in this regard.

### *Additional points*

- ECO suggested to call the lessons learnt recommendations. In addition, it would be beneficial to make sure legal issues are addressed to the Commission (who is the pertinent body in this respect) and not to ECO.

## **Final remarks**

The study author thanked the participants and together with ECO explained the next steps.

## **4 DOCUMENTATION OF THE COVID-19 WORKSHOP**

A COVID-19 workshop was carried out on 7 October 2020, 9:00 – 10:00 in the framework of the programming cycle annual EURES workshop, including 73 participants (representatives from European Coordination Office (ECO), National Coordination Offices (NCOs), and EURES Members and Partners).

The workshop was carried out after the submission of the Draft Final Study report and its findings are not reflected in the current report version. This note provides an overview of the key workshop findings and their impact on the report. It also documents the main discussion points from the workshop.

## 4.1 Impact of workshop on study results

The following findings from the workshop were integrated in the study report:

- Background: The impact of COVID on EURES will depend on the duration of the pandemic and can differ across industry sectors, which causes uncertainty when analysing the topic.
- Relevance: Stakeholders agree that EURES is flexible and has the tools to address changes caused by COVID, but also recognize that EURES has to address new emerging needs. The European Online Job Days service was highlighted as very important in the COVID-19 context since it continued despite the difficulties of the crisis. There are also examples of ensuring business continuity of counselling services during the pandemic by shifting to online service provision. However, in other instances the provision of EURES services was limited due to the transfer of EURES advisors to national tasks and the need to re-skill EURES staff in digital competencies. This confirms the study conclusion that the ability to adapt to changes in implementation context differ across the network.
- Relevance: Stakeholders expect EURES to continue being relevant despite disruptions in labour mobility flows. For example:
  - To support employers find very specialized profiles, difficult to find on national labour markets;
  - To provide more certainty and flexibility to employers in the hiring process;
  - To inform and provide guidance to employers in relation to teleworking and its challenges to social security.

## 4.2 Main discussion points from workshop

NCO Germany mentioned that companies fear not to be able to survive, which is a main reason for not hiring. In this context, it should be reflected how EURES could offer more flexibility to employers in the hiring process, in order to increase certainty and address their fear.

PES Spain (Canary Island) mentioned two uncertainties that impact the situation – its duration and the industry sector. For example, the Canary Island is very touristic and highly impacted. According to the Member, EURES has services to offer and needs to be flexible and adapt to the situation. EURES has tools to provide flexible support to employers. It is expected that the number of people looking for jobs abroad will increase, and EURES needs to have tools to help these people.

NCO Belgium agreed with the main findings presented and highlighted that during the EURES Coordination Group meeting in June there was a discussion about the re-start of EURES in an optimistic manner. Some EURES activities began to restart in September, but now the situation in Belgium is quite difficult. It is difficult to provide an answer to the questions due to uncertainty.

Regarding the future of EURES, employers cannot hire people from abroad and the pandemic crisis is complemented by an economic crisis. EURES has a role to play in this crisis.

Another aspect that needs to be considered is that employers shift to working remotely, which raises questions about social security. The NCO Belgium sees a role for EURES and the European Labour Authority in this regard.

ECO highlighted that it is impossible that in this situation lasts forever. However, the uncertainty is lasting longer than expected and some changes will be permanent, for instance teleworking is here to stay. The European Online Job Days remained functional during the pandemic. Perhaps there is a need for EURES to adapt, but also to remain positive. EURES has the right tools.

NCO Italy agreed with ECO that EURES in this period was very important because European Online Job Days (EOJD) was a very good tool to provide candidates with opportunities to look for vacancies abroad. Italy organized an important EOJD event at the beginning of July with a lot of participants, including employers. This happened during a very difficult period at national level.

In addition, the culture of EURES is very important within Public Employment Services (PES) because of being able to transfer competencies to local PES officers. Having more international competencies is an added value to candidates. EURES tools can be transferred to PES, which results in increase of competencies for candidates.

NCO Ireland mentioned that many EURES staff returned to national PES, which must have had an effect on the amount of EURES services delivered. EURES staff in Ireland is still in the process of returning to EURES services. Everything had to be re-designed, and a number of skills were lost in the process. Due to the fact that a high share of staff is not used to teleconferencing, this is also an opportunity to upskill staff in organizing virtual events.

NCO Austria questioned whether virtual communication is going to remain in the future. Not everything can be replaced by virtual tools. Some people tend to work a lot from home, which raises the danger of burnout caused by blurring lines between home environment and office environment. Therefore, it might not be easy to use these digital tools in the framework of EURES. Teleworking is part of the solution, but cannot be the only solution.

Not everyone has the same abilities to adapt to the current situation. The digital gap needs to be addressed by PES and other institutions. NCO Germany highlighted that balance is important when discussing the topic of teleworking. Guidelines and information about the risks and rules of teleworking are needed, which is also what the focus of EURES should be on.

When discussing the future of EURES, PES Spain (Canary Island) shared that in the next days they have a meeting with an employer opening a new plant. When a specialist is needed, EURES can help find a person fitting this specific profile across EURES, which is real added value. This is the case even if there is a high unemployment rate in the country.

NCO Estonia since March transferred counselling services online because they possessed the infrastructure before. All consultations are being implemented online and the “new reality” is functioning well. However, mobility of work has been drastically affected by COVID.

## Annex III.a – Cost-effectiveness analysis

### 1 METHODOLOGY

As specified in the Better Regulation Toolbox 57<sup>1</sup>, a cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) is normally used to evaluate expenditure programmes, as it helps identify the “value for money” of the programmes and of their separate actions. In particular, it estimates the cost of obtaining an extra unit of the outcome under analysis, such as an additional job placement. Therefore, the CEA is particularly suited in the context of this evaluation, since it provides valuable elements to reply to the evaluation questions for the efficiency criterion.

The Better Regulation Toolbox specifies that a cost-effectiveness analysis is less easily applicable to interventions with more than one main objective (as it is the case for EURES). In these cases, the analysis should single out the programmes’ actions and objectives and look separately at them. In this case, the operational goal of the CEA is to test two hypotheses, namely, that:

- (1) The implementation of the EURES Regulation increased the cost-effectiveness (CE) of EURES activities; and
- (2) EURES activities achieve additional results to what could have been achieved at national level.

In order to test these hypotheses, it was decided to implement two complementary analyses in order to assess the cost-effectiveness of EURES in a comprehensive way. On the one hand, we analysed and compared the **cost-effectiveness of EURES across time** for three indicators. On the other hand, we compared the cost-effectiveness of EURES to two different benchmarks based on one main indicator at a fixed point in time: **Public Employment Services (PES) and Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS)**. Quantitative findings and conclusions drawn from the CEA for the three indicators are further triangulated with **qualitative findings** from the rest of the evaluation study.

The remaining part of this section describes the selection and operationalisation of the indicators, the logic behind time period under analysis, and the expected results.

#### 1.1 Indicators

The first step is to select operational indicators measuring EURES, PES, and TMS activities. Having analysed the objectives and the data available for analysis, we chose and operationalised the indicators as described below.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission. Better Regulation Toolbox 57. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/better-regulation-toolbox-57\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/better-regulation-toolbox-57_en).

### 1.1.1 EURES outcomes

With regard to the outcome selection, it should be noted that EURES actions differ widely in terms of scope, impact, and goals. The new EURES Regulation introduced obligatory monitoring and reporting of the activities within the national EURES networks through the Performance Measurement System (PMS). The PMS commenced its implementation in 2018 through five core and 11 network indicators. The previous monitoring system was voluntary with fewer indicators.

Given the complexity of EURES activities and the numerous changes that occurred over time, it is not currently possible, with present data availability, to define and gather data for one particular indicator for each EURES action. Therefore, the analysis was restricted to a limited number of key indicators. These indicators for EURES outcomes aim to capture the bulk of the activities and goals performed by EURES, in compatibility with data availability. Specifically, the following three indicators have been chosen:

- the number of total placements achieved with the support of EURES;
- the number of total individual contacts between EURES staff and EURES users;
- the number of job vacancies provided by the National Coordination Offices (NCOs) to the EURES portal.

The indicators have been selected with precise and distinct rationales. The **number of total placements** achieved with the support of EURES is one of the key indicators of employment results, which belong to the main EURES operational objectives. Therefore, this indicator is the single most important measure of comprehensive EURES achievements.

The **number of total individual contacts** between EURES staff and EURES users measures the fulfilment of the following two EURES objectives: (a) to inform, guide and provide advice to potentially mobile EU workers; (b) to provide advice and guidance to workers and employers in cross-border regions. According to the EURES network, sharing information connected to labour mobility is the network's main mission, and the total number of individual contacts between EURES staff and the EURES users is the most important measurable indicator of their work. While the first indicator focuses on the outcomes of all EURES activities, this indicator, number of total individual contacts, showcases how much effort is put into these activities.

The **number of job vacancies provided** by the NCOs to the EURES portal measures how well the system of information sharing works. The development of the Single Coordinated Channel for the transfer of job vacancies was one of the main reasons behind the new EURES Regulation. In connection to this, the Commission invested considerable resources in the development of the Channel and on the consequent changes to the EURES portal. Therefore, comparing the transparency of the job vacancy offers in a pre- and post-Channel timeline can showcase whether the transfer of job vacancies has been more efficient in terms of time and resources. With the help of this comparison it is also possible to see whether this change has indirectly led to a higher offer/quality of job vacancies on the EURES portal. As regards to the indicator selected, the absolute number of job vacancies substituted, compared to earlier stages of the analysis, the number of job vacancies provided as a percentage of total job vacancies available in the corresponding

country. The main reason for this substitution is the severe data gaps emerging from the NCOs data reporting to the EURES, both in terms of missing data and lack of consistency.

The above three indicators were suggested by the study team and were approved at the inception stage as being representative of EURES activities and goals.

### *1.1.2 EURES costs*

As specified in the Better Regulation Toolbox 57, the cost component of a cost-effectiveness analysis should refer as accurately as possible to the resources disbursed for the specific outcome under analysis. This is necessary in order to make the cost of that outcome comparable to that of a similar programme or to other activities under the same programme. Therefore, for each of the indicators selected, there would ideally be a specific and different subset of the total budget. Nevertheless, in the context of this ex-post evaluation, three main issues emerge.

First, the ability to track and gather comprehensive and consistent data across time on the sources of EURES funding is limited. The funding of the EURES network at national level changed during the EURES reform process even before the entry into force of the 2016 EURES Regulation. Before 2014, the functioning of EURES was financed through annual grants deriving from a separate EU budget line, but afterwards EURES countries became in charge of securing their own budget for EURES activities. In this framework, the financial resources used by EURES countries mostly derive from two sources: the European Social Fund (ESF) and national budgets. The composition of the budget and its volume differs from one EURES country to another as some countries use only national resources, and others both. In addition, EURES countries may request financial resources available through the EURES axis of the Employment and Social Innovation programme (EaSI) to cover specific activities carried out under the Targeted Mobility Schemes and, on some occasions, additional costs such as IT developments. A limited number of EURES countries complement the available resources with additional sources, such as specific budgets of Member and Partner organisations. Many of the day-to-day EURES actions are also streamlined into PES and other EURES Members and Partners' activities.

Second, data breakdowns on how the resources are spent, detailing individual activities and specifying quantitative outputs, are rarely available for individual countries. Therefore, assigning shares of the total budget to each of the indicators selected would require a complex exercise which is not possible to perform with currently available data.

Third, the three outcomes under analysis, that were selected as an operational second-best as explained above, are horizontal to different EURES activities. As an example, the number of contacts reflects multiple activities, such as "information and guidance", "information on and access to post-recruitment assistance" and "access to information on living and working conditions". Therefore, the three outcomes are likely to be correlated. For instance, an increase in unemployment might push more people to seek support from EURES, which might be associated with an increase in both the number of contacts and possibly the number of placements.

Because of this, the available data do not allow to estimate a specific budget breakdown for corresponding indicators of EURES actions. Therefore, the only option available was to

apply the same cost to all the indicators selected, which is the **total annual budget spent on EURES activities in each country**.

### *1.1.3 Public Employment Services (PES)*

Regarding the need to measure the cost-effectiveness of PES activities, the selection of the indicators is straight-forward. On the outcome side, the main indicator of PES activities and goals is the **total number of job placements** in a country in a given year. This indicator is in line and comparable to the corresponding indicator selected for EURES, but there are potential inconsistencies due to the differences between PES and EURES activities, as underlined in the findings and limitations.

On the cost side, following the same logic applied to EURES for purposes of comparability, one indicator is considered: the **total national budget assigned to PES activities** in each country in a given year. As for the outcome, possible inconsistencies arise, as pointed out later in this annex.

### *1.1.4 Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS)*

In terms of indicators, the selection follows the same logic as PES. The **total number of job placements** is a good overall indicator of the activities and goals of Targeted Mobility Schemes, while also allowing for comparability with the main EURES indicator.

On the cost side, the picture is slightly different. In fact, we consider the **total budget of all active projects** combined rather than national budgets. This is more in line with the type of activity of targeted mobility schemes, while still allowing for comparability with EURES. For both costs and outcome, possible inconsistencies with EURES exist and are underlined in the rest of this annex.

## **1.2 Time period**

Following the selection of the indicators, the second step was the choice of time unit for comparison. Based on data availability, the selection falls on annual units. In particular, we selected four years:

- **2016** is the penultimate year before the EURES Regulation was fully implemented (i.e. the new admission and reporting systems were implemented as of 2018);
- **2017** is the last year before the EURES Regulation was fully implemented;
- **2018** is the first year of full implementation of the EURES Regulation;
- **2019** is the second year in which the EURES Regulation was fully implemented.

The inclusion of two years before and after the full implementation of the EURES Regulation allows to appreciate the effect on the cost-effectiveness of EURES activities. The choice to exclude further years is due mainly to data availability issues. Before 2016, an average of only 50% of EURES Advisors were completing the monthly EURES Advisers' Reports, which were the main data source before 2018. In addition, there was no common

standard in the methodology of data reporting before, thus creating serious comparability issues.

As for 2019, while figures are available for EURES, they are not for PES. Therefore, the comparison is limited to three years (2016, 2017, and 2018) out of which only one is selected for comparison with EURES based on data completeness. By contrast, 2019 is the first year for which data for Targeted Mobility Schemes are reported on an annual basis.

Regarding 2020, the data for the full year were not available at the time of carrying out this exercise.

### 1.3 Expected results

By looking at **descriptive statistics**, it was possible to observe the variation of the EURES budget and outcome indicators across time, establishing whether the impact of EURES activities increased. Were this the case, the outcome produced by EURES in a given year ( $o_t$ ) would be larger than the outcome produced by EURES in any previous year ( $o_t > o_{t-1}$ ). Nevertheless, it would not be possible to tell whether the larger outcome was due to a proportional increase of input ( $c_t > c_{t-1}$ ), an efficiency gain, or a combination of the two.

In order to verify the actual increase in cost-effectiveness, and its extent, the necessary condition was to observe an outcome variation more than proportional to the input (the cost) variation. Were this the case, then the **ratio between the input (the cost) and the outcome** would be smaller in a given year ( $t_n$ ) as compared to a previous year ( $t_{n-1}$ ). That is, in order to produce the same outcome, less input is needed. Formally, this can be written as  $\frac{c_t}{o_t} < \frac{c_{t-1}}{o_{t-1}}$ , where  $c_t$  and  $o_t$  are the inputs and outputs in a given year.

The data collection and following calculations produced three ratios 'total budget ( $c$ ) over total outcome ( $o$ )' for each year ( $t$ ) under examination at the EURES aggregate level. That is one ratio for each outcome 1, 2, and 3 ( $n$ ), in a given year ( $t$ ).

The ratio for the main PES and TMS outcomes, at the EURES aggregate level, was also calculated: total cost in a selected year ( $c_{PES}$ ;  $c_{TMS}$ ) over total outcome ( $o_{PES}$ ;  $o_{TMS}$ ) in the selected year ( $t$ ):

$$\frac{c_t}{on_t} = \text{cost per EURES outcome (placements, contacts, vacancies) in a given year (2016 to 2019);}$$

$$\frac{c_{PES_t}}{o_{PES_t}} = \text{cost per PES placement in a given year (2016, 2017, or 2018);}$$

$$\frac{c_{TMS_t}}{o_{TMS_t}} = \text{cost per TMS placement in a given year (2019).}$$

The result was a series of estimates of the resources spent to obtain an extra unit of each outcome. The **first three ratios** represented the cost-effectiveness of EURES activities in each year. Given the methodological choices explained above, involving both the cost and the outcome sides, comparison between the CE of different outcomes were limited, while the main focus was on cross-time comparison. By contrast, the **PES and TMS ratios** were

compared to the EURES one: in this case, the goal of the CEA was to provide a comparison with a similar activity, notwithstanding the limitations and comparability issues underlined in the findings and limitations.

Additionally, **comparing EURES to PES and TMS** showed whether EURES has been more or less cost-effective than comparable benchmarks in achieving its main goal, notwithstanding the limits to comparability that do not allow for a straightforward interpretation. Formally, this can be written as  $\frac{c_t}{o_t} < \frac{cPES_t}{oPES_t}$  and  $\frac{c_t}{o_t} < \frac{cTMS_t}{oTMS_t}$ .

The key summary indicators, calculated at the EURES aggregate level, are the **net costs and net outcomes** of EURES in 2019 as compared to 2016, and between EURES and the two PES and TMS benchmarks as it may be required for interpretation:

$$\frac{c_{2019}}{on_{2019}} - \frac{c_{2016}}{on_{2016}} = \pi = \text{net cost per one unit of output in 2019 as compared to 2016};$$

$\pi * on_{2019} = \text{total net cost per output in 2019 vs 2016};$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{c_t}{on_t} - \frac{cPES_t}{oPES_t} &= \pi PES \\ &= \text{net cost per EURES placement as compared to PES in a selected year}; \end{aligned}$$

$\pi PES * on_t = \text{total net cost for EURES placements as compared to PES in a selected year};$

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{c_t}{on_t} - \frac{cTMS_t}{oTMS_t} &= \pi TMS \\ &= \text{net cost per EURES placement as compared to TMS in a selected year}; \end{aligned}$$

$\pi TMS * on_t =$   
*total net cost for EURES placements as compared to TMS in a selected year.*

As a result of this analysis, it was possible to identify changes in the cost-effectiveness of the EURES actions between 2016 and 2019 and thus confirm or reject Hypothesis (1) on the increase of cost-effectiveness of EURES activities. In addition, it evaluated whether EURES actions are more cost effective than similar activities, thus confirming or rejecting Hypothesis (2).

The analysis also looked for and factor in other potential changes (e.g. data reporting, classifications) occurring throughout the period chosen for analysis that could nuance and/or contribute towards explaining the increase/decrease in efficiency. This was detailed in the limitations section and in the rest of this annex.

## 2 DATA COLLECTION

This section reports on the data collection process of the different indicators throughout the time period under analysis. We deal with EURES costs, EURES outcomes, and PES and TMS data in separate paragraphs. For each of these, we mention the sources used, the missing data, and the adjustment measures.

## 2.1 EURES costs

As outlined in the methodology section, the analysis took into account the total cost of EURES activities in each country in any given year. This meant combining different budget allocations, including EU sources, mainly under the ESF and the EaSI programme, and national ones,<sup>2</sup> often coming from government and regional allocations to employment services. The mix between different sources of funding varies considerably across country and so does the weight of EURES activities compared to the country dimension. The exact breakdown of funding per source cannot be obtained due to imprecise data reporting.

The data on the total annual budgets for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 for each EURES country were primarily obtained from the **Work Programmes and Activity Reports of the Programming Cycle (PC)**. Since this information was not always available in the PC reports, a corresponding question was added to the **NCO survey**<sup>3</sup>, thus allowing for data triangulation.

The research team minimised the impact of **missing data** by performing reasonable adjustments to fill in the gaps, where possible. In particular, the following values were estimated as follows:

- For Ireland, the 2019 figure was missing. Since the budget for previous years was set at a fixed amount, the 2019 was assumed to be the same.
- For Greece, Croatia, Italy, and Lithuania, a single figure was provided covering the total budget for multiple years. The figure was divided by the number of years, under the assumption that the budget is allocated equally across years.
- For Hungary and Switzerland, the figures are provided in the local currency (Hungarian Forint and Swiss Franc respectively). Therefore, the budget was converted to Euros based on the market conversion rate (on 14/07/2020 and 1/09/2020 respectively).
- For Finland, the figures for 2016, 2017, and 2018, were provided as an approximation of the exact budget, with a precise figure only being provided for 2019.
- For Sweden, two figures were provided: the total budget for multiple years and the exact budget for 2016. The 2016 budget was subtracted from the total budget and the result was divided by the number of remaining years, under the assumption that the budget was allocated equally across years.
- For Iceland, the 2016 and 2017 figures for the national budget were missing. These were assumed to be consistent with 2018 and 2019 findings, which were the same in both years, and added up to EaSI funding in order to obtain the total EURES budget.

No data for the EURES budget in the years from 2016 to 2019 were available for Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein.

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<sup>2</sup> National or regional budget allocations are not provided as a standard in Programming Cycle reports, which required further investigation through desk research and a survey to the National Coordination Offices.

<sup>3</sup> 21 countries provided data on the budget in the NCO survey.

## 2.2 EURES outcomes

### 2.2.1 Number of placements

As outlined in the methodology section, the number of placements achieved is the most important indicator of EURES activities. The data needed in order to calculate the number of placements were obtained from each country semester reports in the framework of the **EURES Performance Measurement System (PMS) for years 2018 and 2019**. In particular, the number of outgoing and incoming job finders in the semester reports were added up to obtain number of job placements per country in a given year. For 2016 and 2017, the data on the number of placements achieved with the support of EURES were obtained from the EURES Advisers' monthly reports which were voluntary.

As stated in the PMS reports, the number of total placements achieved with the support of EURES is likely to be underestimated. The main reason for this is the under-reporting, due to the lack of obligation to do so, on the part of job finders and companies. In order to deal with this limitation, the data were adjusted based on the estimated percentage of reported placements, which is provided for each country and year in the **NCOs survey** (2018 and 2019) and **EURES Advisers' monthly reports** (2016 and 2017). A standard percentage<sup>4</sup> was applied to each individual country-year in case of missing values (six countries<sup>5</sup> displayed missing values in both 2018 and 2019).

As a result, the number of placements is estimated for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. No data were available for Liechtenstein in 2016 and 2017.

### 2.2.2 Number of contacts

The second outcome is the number of total individual contacts between EURES staff and EURES users. The data needed in order to calculate the number of contacts were obtained from the **PMS six-monthly reports and the EURES Advisers' monthly reports**. More specifically, the number of individual contacts with workers, the number of individual contacts with employers, and the number of workers reached at events, were added up to obtain the total number of contacts per country in a given year.

As a result, the number of contacts is calculated for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. No data were available for Liechtenstein in 2016 and 2017, while Denmark and Austria had no data for the number of workers reached at events in 2018.

### 2.2.3 Number of vacancies posted

The third indicator is the number of job vacancies provided by the NCOs to the EURES portal. Similarly to the previous two, the data needed in order to calculate it were obtained from the **PMS six-monthly reports and data extracts from the EURES portal**. More

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<sup>4</sup> The standard percentage is calculated as a simple average of the sample values available in the same year.

<sup>5</sup> Germany, Ireland, Poland, Finland, Ireland, Switzerland.

specifically, the figure used was the number of job vacancies made available through the single coordinated channel to the EURES Portal for 2018 and 2019. For 2016 and 2017, the numbers of job vacancies uploaded by EURES advisers per country were used.

As a result, the number of job vacancies posted was obtained for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. The data were available for all countries and years, except for 10 countries in 2018, namely: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Iceland, and Norway.<sup>6</sup> In addition, no data were available for Liechtenstein in 2016 and 2018.

## 2.3 Public Employment Services (PES)

### 2.3.1 Number of placements

On the outcome side, as explained in the methodology section, the number of placements was the outcome indicator chosen for PES activities. Limitations and possible comparability issues are explained in Section 4.

Based on PES data reported by the Member States, the calculations led to obtaining values for most countries and years. Nevertheless, there was a considerable amount of missing values:

- Denmark, Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Sweden, UK, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland had no data for the whole 2016-2018 period;
- Estonia and Greece had no data for 2016 and 2017.

### 2.3.2 Costs

With regards to PES, the indicator chosen to measure the cost side was the **total national budget assigned to PES activities** in each country per year. Components of the budget which were directed at job placement activities, mainly the share of cash benefits, were subtracted from the total figures in order to obtain a more refined figure.<sup>7</sup>

Based on PES data reported by the Member States, the calculations led to obtain values for most country-years. The budget for Spain and Iceland was missing for 2018, but the survey allowed to assume that the 2019 was the same as 2018, thereby providing a reliable estimate. Nevertheless, a considerable amount of missing values remained:

- Italy, Hungary, Poland, UK, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland had no data for the whole 2016-2018 period;
- Malta and the Netherlands had no data for 2017;
- Cyprus had no data for 2017 and 2018.

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<sup>6</sup> This was due to the countries not transferring their relevant job vacancies through the single coordinated channel yet.

<sup>7</sup> The reliability of the data, as explained in Section 4, remains constrained.

## 2.4 Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS)

### 2.4.1 Schemes included

Out of the three Targeted Mobility Schemes that were implemented during the time period analysed in the evaluation (2016-2020), two were selected for comparison - "Your first EURES Job" (YFEJ) and "Reactivate". This was due to the newest of the schemes, the EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme, being implemented only since December 2019 and results are available only for the first half of 2020.

Moreover, data are only collected for 2019. Not only is 2019 the latest year for which data are available, but also the first year for which placement data were reported on an annual basis, which is necessary for comparability purposes.

### 2.4.2 Number of placements and costs

As explained in Section 1.1, the number of placements is the only indicator selected for TMS outcomes. The combined yearly budget of all the projects, which is co-financed by the EaSI Programme for a maximum of 95% of the total budget, represents the costs.

The sources used are Fourth Reactivate Monitoring Report and the 9<sup>th</sup> Progress Monitoring Report for Your first EURES Job. The two reports provide all the necessary data, and no major data gaps are to be underlined.

## 3 RESULTS

This section presents and discusses the results of the calculations, performed as illustrated in Section 1.3. A key element to underline, is the exclusion of three countries from the sample because of missing data (Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein), therefore limiting the EURES sample to  $n = 29$ .

First, the data are analysed by looking at descriptive statistics. Second, we present the aggregate ratios. Third, we calculate and discuss the net costs. Finally, we discuss possible comparisons to the PES and TMS benchmarks.

### 3.1 EURES descriptive statistics

In order to assess the extent to which the costs of the selected EURES activities are proportionate to the benefits, the first step is to summarise and organise the characteristics of the available data. The data collection and elaboration performed for the purposes of the CEA, as described in the previous sections of this annex, allow to compare the aggregate data across time, thereby providing a first baseline for the assessment.

It is important to underline that the aggregate figures presented here refer to the sample included in the CEA only, and not to the actual EURES aggregates.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the figures are not comparable to other EURES aggregates presented elsewhere in the main Report.

### 3.1.1 Country level

First, we look at the variable distribution. Figure 1 below, displays the distribution of EURES countries' budgets in each of the years under analysis. The boxplots for 2016, 2017 and 2018 show very similar patterns of distribution both in terms of range and of central tendency, with the median value being slightly higher for each consecutive year. The increase in the median value is explained by consequent slight growth in the values of the outliers. There are two outliers that are the same throughout the three years.

The boxplot for 2019 shows a broader range of values than those for 2016, 2017 and 2018. This suggests that in 2019, the difference between EURES budgets in different countries were bigger than in the previous years. In 2019, as compared to previous years, more countries disposed of larger budgets (as more countries are located in the upper 25% of the boxplot). As opposed to 2016-2018, in 2019 only one country could be considered an outlier in terms of EURES budget.

Figure 1 EURES countries' budget (in EUR) distribution per year (2016-2019)

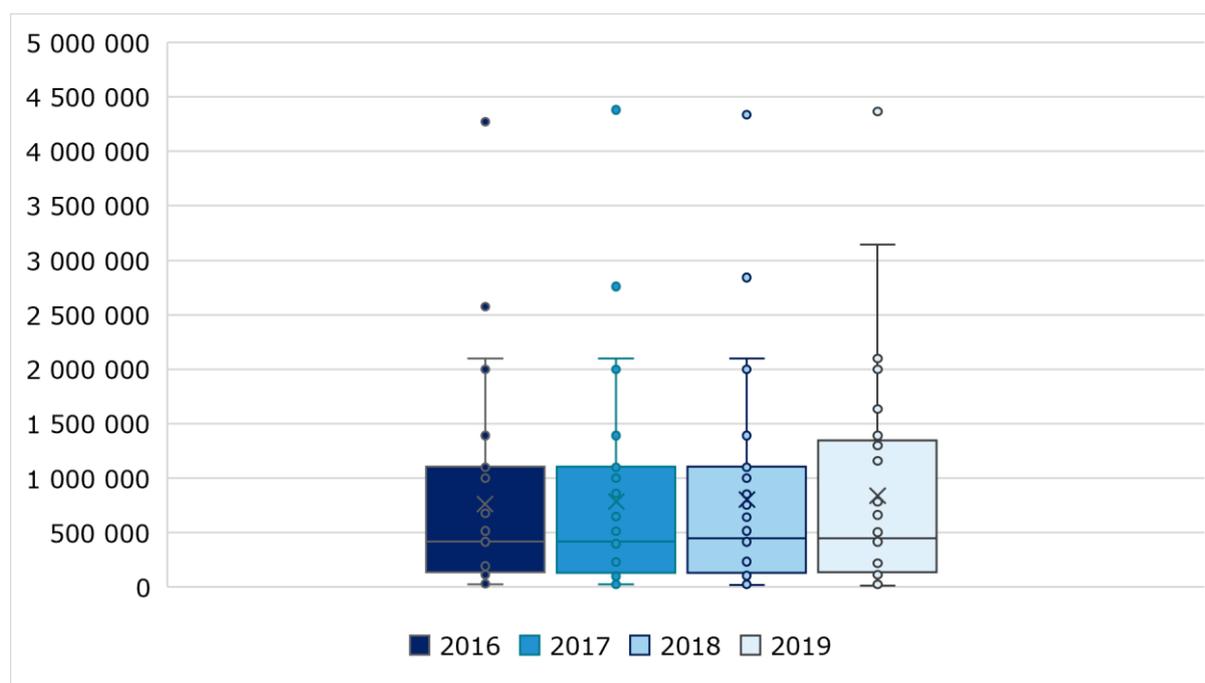


Figure 2 below, depicts the distribution of the number of placements throughout EURES countries in each of the years under analysis. The patterns of distribution are quite similar in all four years. All four boxplots show a short range for most of the countries, which suggests that in each of the years under analysis the number of placements secured in most EURES countries were within similar values. In 2018 and 2019, there is a clear

<sup>8</sup> The EURES total is calculated based on the total number of placements/individual contacts/vacancies provided and total budget of all EURES countries included in the analysis. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the aggregate figure because of missing data

increase of variance between the results obtained by the vast majority of the analysed countries and the outlier countries, which demonstrate significantly higher results.

Figure 2 Distribution of number of placements throughout EURES countries (2016-2019)

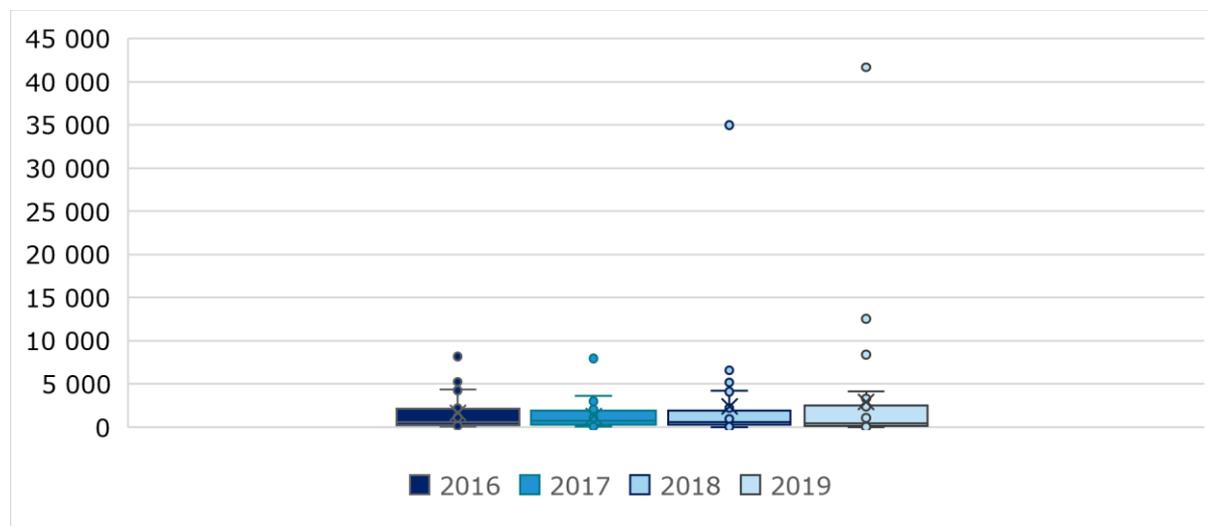
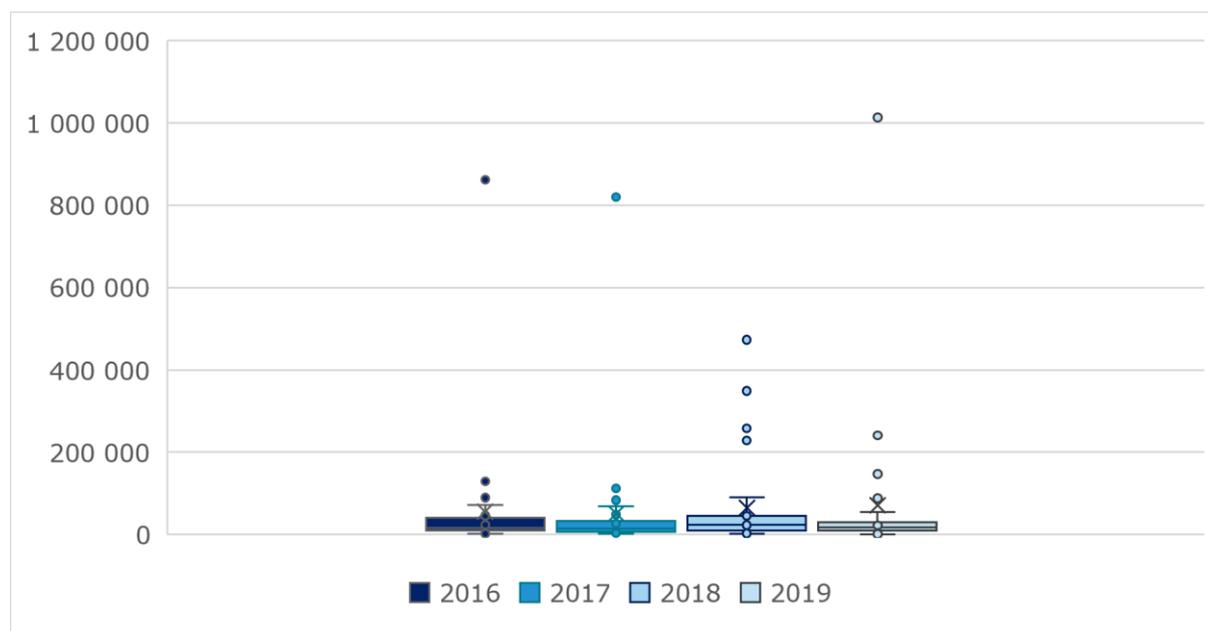


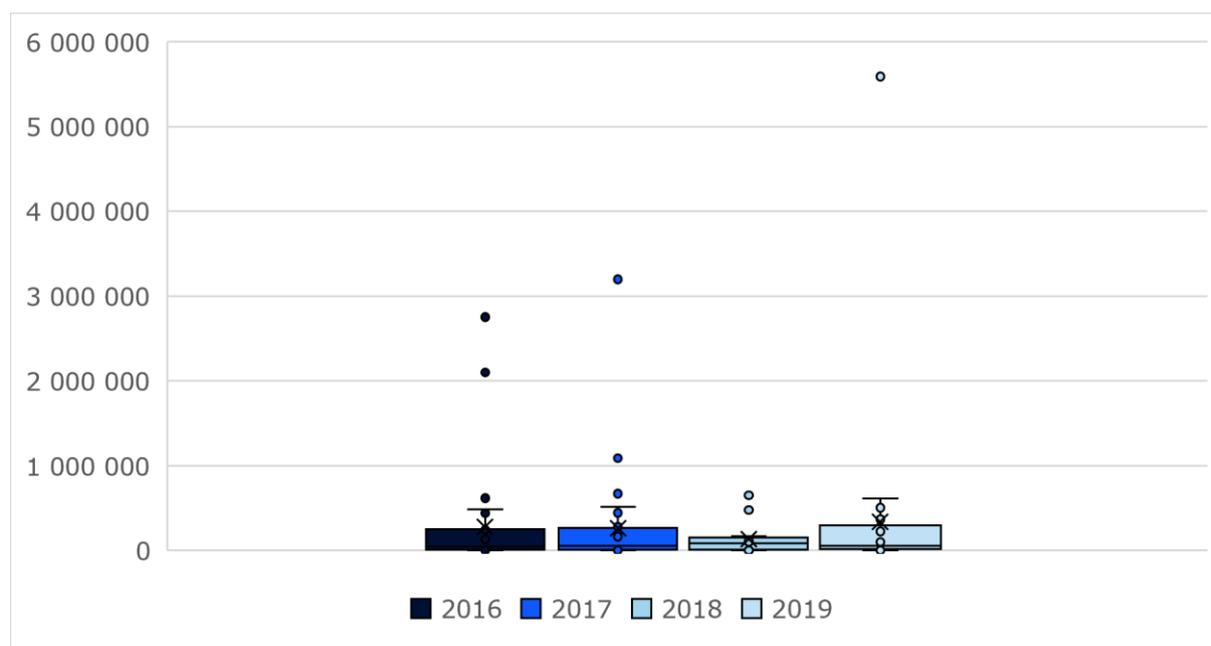
Figure 3 below presents the distribution of total individual contacts between EURES staff and users throughout EURES countries in the years 2016-2019. Looking at the range, the four boxplots are rather short, suggesting that throughout all four years, in most countries under analysis the number of individual contacts between EURES staff and users were within similar values. In all four years, there were outlier countries, which reported a significantly higher value as compared to the central tendency. In 2016 and 2017 there was one outlier, while in 2018 and 2019 there were several countries with a significantly higher number of individual contacts between EURES staff and users of EURES services.

Figure 3 Distribution of total individual contacts between EURES staff and EURES users throughout EURES countries (2016-2019)



In Figure 4, the distribution of the number of vacancies transferred by the NCOs to the EURES portal in the years 2016-2019 is presented. In terms of variance, the boxplots presenting each of the four years are quite short, suggesting that the numbers of vacancies posted by NCOs on the EURES portal are relatively similar among the analysed countries. Depending on the year, there were one to three NCOs that could be considered outliers, since they posted a significantly higher than average number of vacancies on the EURES portal.

Figure 4 Distribution of the number of vacancies posted by NCOs on the EURES portal (2016-2019)



### 3.1.2 Aggregate level

The three figures presented below compare the total estimated EURES costs to the number of placements achieved, the number of individual contacts, and the number of vacancies provided.

The total EURES budget<sup>9</sup>, as estimated for the purposes of the CEA for the years from 2016 to 2019, is reported in all the three figures. As it can be observed in the figures below, EURES budget grows continuously every year from around EUR 22 million in 2016 to almost EUR 24.5 million in 2019.

<sup>9</sup> The EURES total is calculated based on the total budget of all EURES countries included in the analysis. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the aggregate figure because of missing data.

Figure 5 Total EURES budget (in EUR) and number of placements (2016-2019)

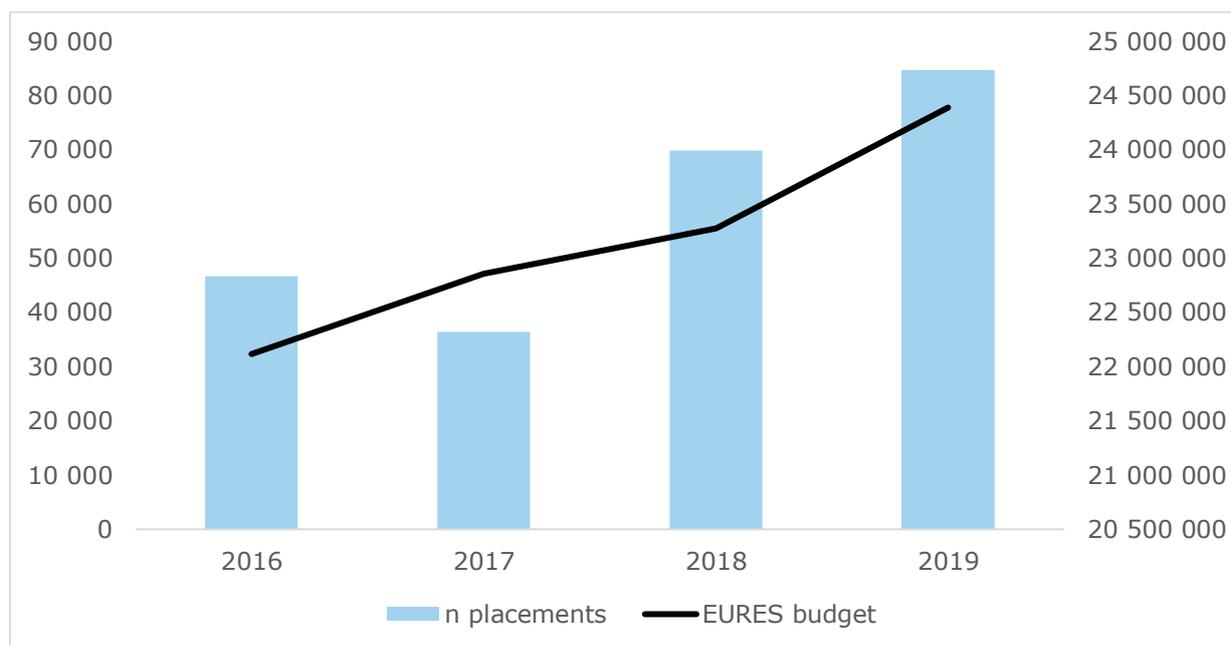


Figure 6 Total EURES budget (EUR) and number of contacts (2016-2019)

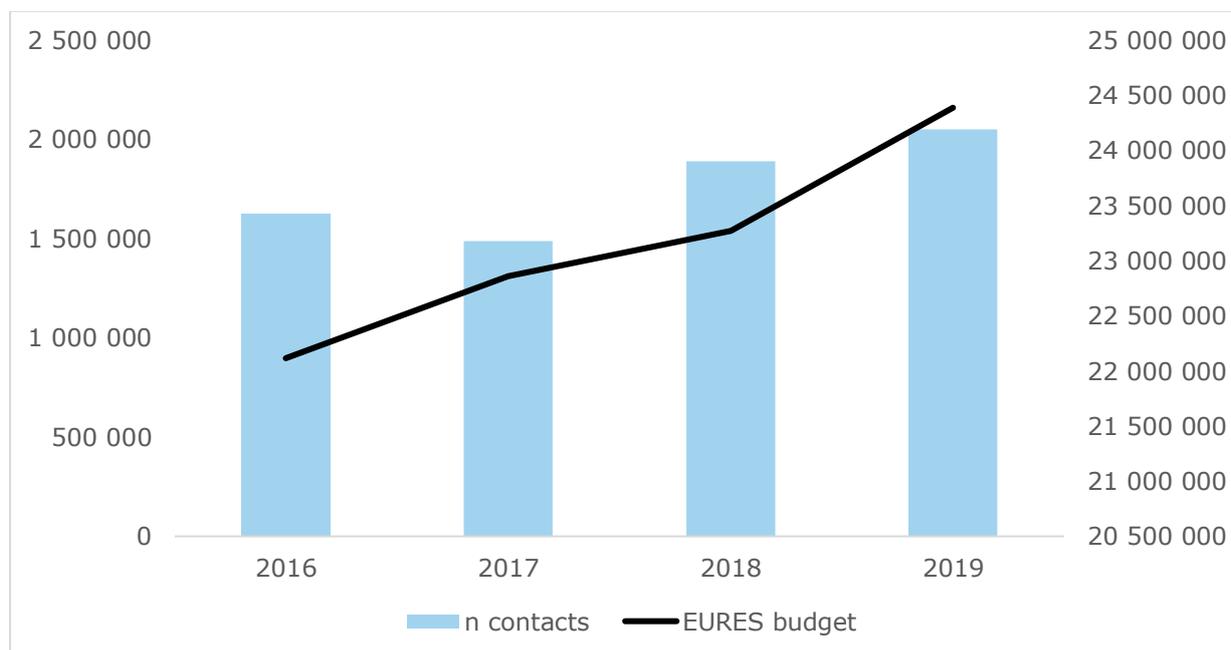
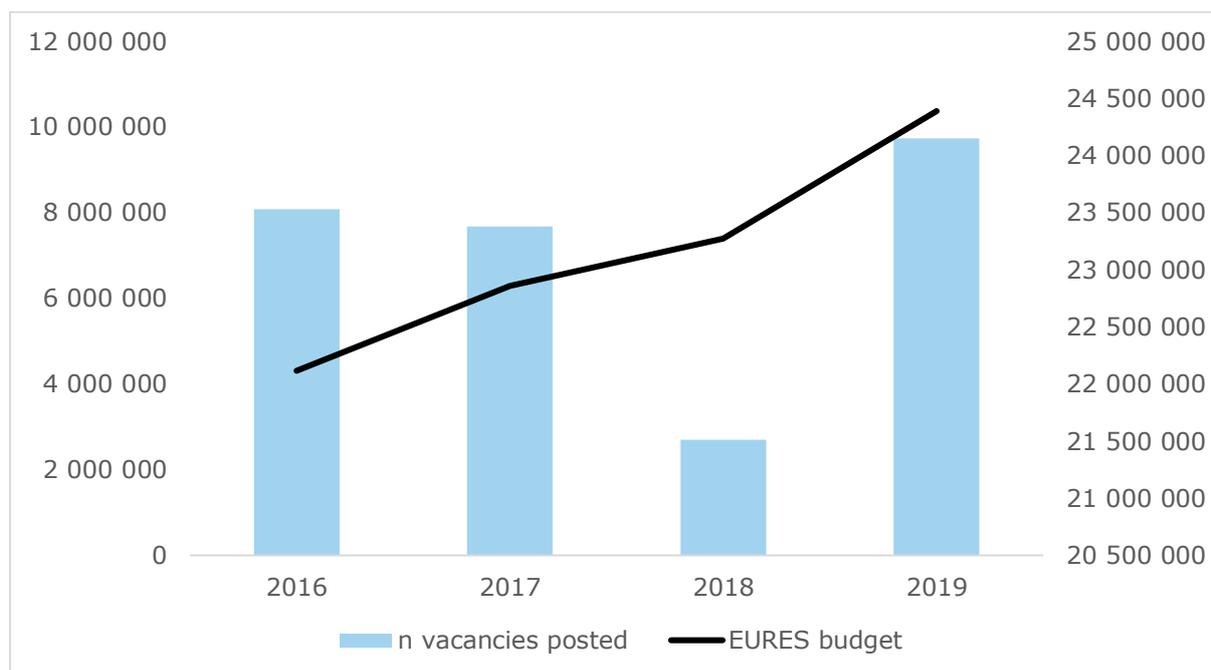


Figure 7 Total EURES budget (EUR) and number of vacancies posted (2016-2019)



Figures 5 and 6 also show the evolution in the number of total placements achieved with the support of EURES and the number of total individual contacts between EURES staff and EURES users. Both indicators follow a similar path.

First, they decrease slightly from 2016 to 2017, with placements and contacts going down respectively from around 45 000 to around 35 000 and from about 1.6 million to less than 1.5 million. Subsequently, they grow considerably in both 2018 and 2019, reaching almost 85 000 placements and around 2 million contacts.

By contrast, figure 7 tells a slightly different story. The number of job vacancies transferred by the NCOs to the EURES portal first decreases slightly as well from 8 million in 2016 to around 7.5 million in 2017. Then, it seems to decline steeply in 2018. Nevertheless, the numbers presented in this figure for 2018 do not correspond to reality: as described in detail in Section 2.2 of this annex, information on job vacancies posted by EURES countries was not fully available for 2018. Therefore, the 2018 sample is not comparable to the samples of 2016, 2017 and 2019, for which more data are available<sup>10</sup>. The number of posted vacancies was the highest in 2019 (around 9.7 million). This increase is consistent with the upward trend in the number of placements and the number of contacts between EURES staff and EURES users observed in 2019.

To sum up, a first comparison between the time trend of the aggregate costs and three indicators representative of the benefits generated by EURES, provides evidence that the benefits grow proportionally to the costs. A stricter quantification, for instance through a cost-benefit analysis and/or regression analysis, could further investigate the relationship between the two and help draw more in-depth conclusions.

<sup>10</sup> For more details on missing data, see the Data Collection chapter of this Annex.

## 3.2 EURES ratios

After the available data were collected and examined, three ratios were produced, quantifying the unit costs for the three examined outcomes. The three tables presented below report results for each of the four years under analysis.

### 3.2.1 Placements

First, the cost-effectiveness per placement at the EURES aggregate level is presented in the table below.

Table 1 Total cost per EURES placement (in EUR), 2016 – 2019

	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>EURES TOTAL<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>473.53</b>	<b>627.00</b>	<b>332.95</b>	<b>288.10</b>

The table above reports the cost of an individual placement EURES-wide for the years 2016 to 2019. The aggregate figure provides clear evidence of an increase in the cost-effectiveness of EURES in achieving job placements. In fact, the cost per placement declines by almost 40% from about EUR 473 in 2016 to just above EUR 288 in 2019, confirming the substantial reduction in costs. The exception to the trend is 2017, when the unitary cost rises to EUR 627. In fact, the cost per placement decreased to about EUR 333 in 2018, as costs stabilised and there was more scope for funding of the activities, as well as a possible learning effect in terms of administrative processes and delivery of services to employers and jobseekers.

It is plausible that the main factor contributing to the considerable decrease in the cost per placement between the years 2017 and 2018, which also continued in 2019, is the introduction of the PMS and its reporting system in 2018 since this is the only factor which has changed over this period of time. In fact, while it is important to highlight that EURES countries are still not able to report on all the placements concluded with the help of EURES (in the NCO survey only about one fourth of the 26 respondents indicated that they can account for 100% of placements, while 11 indicated that they are able to record only 50% or less), the introduction of the PMS is credited with improved efforts and results in following up on the outcomes of the EURES support provided. Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, with the improvement in recording of the results and, thus, the increased number of positive outcomes, the cost-effectiveness of placements was expected to continue to increase after 2019.

In terms of individual countries, most countries follow a downward trend leading to a decrease in the cost ratio throughout the years. While a few countries seem to follow the opposite trend, with the cost per placement going up progressively from 2016 to 2019. In some countries, the picture is more mixed, with cost-effectiveness fluctuating. In other two cases, the CE ratio is a clear outlier in the country trend. Given the different cross-time trends observed at the country level, addressing the data limitations outlined in this annex, including missing data and data reporting standards, could provide useful insights

<sup>11</sup> The EURES total is calculated based on the total number of placements and total budget of all EURES countries included in the analysis. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the aggregate figure because of missing data.

for interpretation. As a consequence, it would be possible to identify best practices and shortcomings for targeted action aimed at increasing CE.

### 3.2.2 Contacts

Somewhat similar results can be observed about the cost-effectiveness of contacts with jobseekers and employers, presented in the table below.

Table 2 Total cost per individual contact (in EUR), 2016 – 2019

	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>EURES TOTAL<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>13.60</b>	<b>15.37</b>	<b>12.32</b>	<b>11.88</b>

The table above reports the cost of an individual contact for the EURES-wide aggregate for the years 2016 to 2019. The results provide evidence of an increase in the cost-effectiveness of EURES in achieving individual contacts as compared to the past. Looking at substantial significance, the aggregate EURES ratio in 2019 is of EUR 1 188 per 100 contacts, more than EUR 400 less than in 2017 and a 12.6% (or about EUR 200 for 100 contacts) decrease from 2016.

As with the placements, the 2017 figure represents an exception, with the cost per contact going up by almost EUR 200 per 100 contacts as compared to 2016, which might be explained by transition costs as well as the change in the reporting methodology.

Individually, several countries follow the same trend, with rising costs in 2017 followed by a decline in both 2018 and 2019. While the presence of outliers is less evident than for placements, about half of the countries actually show a worse cost-effectiveness in 2019 as compared to 2016. Moreover, the values for a third group of countries fluctuate. As for the CE of placements, addressing data limitations at the country level could provide useful elements for interpretation and ground for new policy action.

### 3.2.3 Vacancies posted

The results of the cost-effectiveness of job vacancies transferred to the EURES portal are more diverse, as seen in the table below.

Table 3 Total cost per job vacancy provided (in EUR), 2016 – 2019

	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>EURES TOTAL<sup>13</sup></b>	<b>2.74</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>N/A<sup>14</sup></b>	<b>2.51</b>

<sup>12</sup> The EURES total is calculated based on the total number of individual contacts and total budget of all EURES countries included in the analysis. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the aggregate figure because of missing data.

<sup>13</sup> The EURES total is calculated based on the total number of vacancies provided and total budget of all EURES countries included in the analysis. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the aggregate figure because of missing data.

<sup>14</sup> The amount of missing data points does not allow to calculate a EURES aggregate figure for 2018. See Section 2 for details.

The table above reports the cost per job vacancy transferred by the NCOs to the EURES portal. The results provide weak evidence of an increase or decrease in the cost-effectiveness of EURES in the years between 2016 and 2019. Looking at substantial significance, the aggregate EURES ratio decreases by less than 9% from 2016 to 2019, or EUR 23 per 100 vacancies provided.

As for the other two outcomes, the cost per job vacancy provided increases from 2016 to 2017 and then decreases again in the following years. While the increase might be explained once again by transition costs, the following decrease is probably due to the introduction of the single coordinated channel. In this case, a relevant difference as compared to the other outcomes is the absence of a comparable aggregate figure for 2018, which is due to the amount of missing data that make the sample for that year not representative enough of EURES countries.

Looking at specific country trends, it can be noticed that the results are more mixed than for the other two indicators with a considerable number of countries reporting strong outliers. In sum, it is difficult to observe any clear trends.

### 3.3 EURES net costs and net outcomes

Table 4 Net costs and net outcome per Cost-Effectiveness analysis outcome (2019 vs 2016, in EUR)<sup>15</sup>

Outcome	Cost per unit in 2019	Cost per unit in 2016	Net cost per unit in 2019	Aggregate value in 2019	Total net cost	Total net outcome
<b>Placements achieved</b>	288.10	473.53	-185.42	84 652.00	-15 696 377.06	33 148.00
<b>Individual contacts</b>	11.88	13.60	-1.71	2 052 079.00	-3 517 848.86	258 683.00
<b>Vacancies posted</b>	2.51	2.74	-0.23	9 730 468.00	-2 243 876.13	819 827.00

The table above reports the results of the CEA calculations, as described in Section 1. The net costs compare the aggregate<sup>16</sup> cost-effectiveness of EURES activities in 2019 to the status quo of 2016. It can be seen that the unit cost in 2019 is smaller than 2016 across the three outcomes. This means that there has been a net cost saving. The cost per placement undergoes the most significant reduction, reaching almost 40%, while individual contacts and vacancies posted declined by about 12.6% and 8.4% respectively.

In order to quantify the total cost saving, a simple calculation was carried out. The difference between the 2019 and 2016 unit cost was multiplied by the aggregate values of the outcomes in 2019.<sup>17</sup> The result was a cost saving generated by the increased cost-effectiveness of EURES. In other words, in order to reach the same number of placements in 2016, EURES activities would have costed EUR 15.7 million more, while the same

<sup>15</sup> The figures reported here are rounded to two decimal places and might, therefore, present slight inconsistencies.

<sup>16</sup> The EURES total is calculated based on the total number of placements and total budget of all EURES countries included in the analysis. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the aggregate figure because of missing data.

<sup>17</sup> Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the CEA because of missing values.

number of individual contacts would have costed EUR 3.5 million more and the number of vacancies would have been reached with an extra EUR 2.2 million.<sup>18</sup>

Looking at the net outcome perspective, the results are even clearer. The figures can be calculated by subtracting from the 2019 figures the figures that would have been achieved with the 2019 budget under the 2016 ratios. In simple words, the increase in cost-effectiveness allowed EURES, keeping the 2019 budget constant, to achieve additional 33 148 placements, 258 683 individual contacts, and 819 827 vacancies posted. The fact that EURES is now more cost-effective than in the past suggests that the results of its activities are increasingly efficient in relation to the cost and, thus, EURES is increasingly able to deliver satisfactory results.

### **3.4 Public Employment Services (PES) benchmark**

As detailed in Section 1, the activities of Public Employment Services (PES) serve as a benchmark to test and quantify the added value of EURES activities. In order to do so, the second part of the CEA compared the cost-effectiveness of PES in achieving job placements to the additional cost of EURES in achieving a similar goal.

The cost-effectiveness of placements secured with the assistance of EURES was calculated generally following the methodology outlined in Section 1, with an important difference: the aggregate unit costs for both EURES and PES were re-calculated for a sub-set of countries in order to reflect the PES sample. The reason for this change lies in the limited availability of data related to the activities of PES. Given data availability, 2018 was selected as the comparison year, as it is the most recent year with the highest data availability. As a result, the calculations could be performed for a sample of 16 countries.<sup>19</sup>

As EURES relies on existing PES structures, and thereby benefiting from the initial investment and fixed costs being covered under PES, the EURES cost of EUR 219.09 can be interpreted as a small top-up to the PES cost of EUR 2 924.70. The additional burden is justified by the need to expand the scope of the activities from national to cross-border placements, which entail more complex information and advice activities given the differences in languages and cultures, social security and tax-benefit regimes, and working conditions. It follows that, for a relatively small additional investment as compared to PES, considerable cost-effective results can be achieved through EURES.

### **3.5 Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS) benchmark**

EURES activities are also benchmarked to Targeted Mobility Schemes, as anticipated in Section 1.

In particular, the cost per placement of TMS are considered for the year 2019, given that this is the first and latest year for which yearly figures are available. Thanks to the wide

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<sup>18</sup> Because of methodological reasons explained above, the three figures cannot be added together.

<sup>19</sup> Countries included in the sample are: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

data availability, as underlined in Section 2.4, the aggregate figures can be compared to the scope of EURES activities without re-calculating the figures for a smaller sample.

Table 5 Cost-effectiveness of TMS placements (in EUR), 2019

<b>Name</b>	<b>Total budget</b>	<b>No. of placements</b>	<b>Cost per placement</b>
<b>YFEJ</b>	EUR 5 030 000	1 724	EUR 2 917
<b>Reactivate</b>	EUR 2 074 000	483	EUR 4 294
<b>Total TMS</b>	EUR 7 104 000	2 207	EUR 3 219

The cost per placement of benchmarked TMS activities is considerably higher than those of EURES, both in aggregate terms (EUR 3 219) and for each of the two individual targeted mobility schemes: "Your First EURES Job" (EUR 2 917) and "Reactivate" (EUR 4 294). In line with these results, the figures available for the whole period indicate that the cost per placement remained on a similar scale across the whole period: EUR 2 503 for YFEJ (February 2015 to December 2019) and EUR 3 096 for Reactivate (November 2016 to December 2019).

These figures are indicative of the different scope of EURES and TMS activities. As stated in Section 3.4, EURES costs only include an additional investment based on existing PES structures. By contrast, the costs of TMS include the full cost of the programmes and are, therefore, a more precise proxy of what a full investment on cross-border placements actually costs.

Such an interpretation of the results is reinforced by an additional comparison: the cost-effectiveness of EURES and PES combined is close to the TMS one, with the former showing a slightly lower cost per placement achieved. A precise benchmarking of this kind is not possible at present time given the limited data availability<sup>20</sup> and the fact that TMS are aimed at target groups with specific needs (e.g. youth), but the results of this analysis suggest that its inclusion could reinforce the assessment of EURES efficiency.

Given the nature of the programmes, the above cost figures should be viewed with caution. In fact, placements and budget figures reported under YFEJ and Reactivate schemes partially overlap with those reported under EURES. Nevertheless, the results confirm what was underlined under the first benchmark, namely, that the small investment in EURES activities generates comparatively good results, as shown by the relatively stronger cost-effectiveness.

#### **4 LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS**

As explained in the methodology section of this annex, the CEA performed in the context of this evaluation had to be adapted to the specific needs and constraints of the case. While the main findings remain valid, given the assumptions made, it is important to underline the three main limitations encountered, suggesting possible improvements for future evaluation that will use this CEA as a baseline.

<sup>20</sup> The sample of countries and the years under exam for PES and TMS do not correspond.

**The first main limitation** comes from the fact that the first part of the CEA relies on a cross-time comparison, while a cost-effectiveness analysis would ideally compare two policy options available to reach the same results, all other factors being kept constant. This makes it difficult to rule out the effect of other variables and attribute all changes to EURES performance. In fact, time can affect the result because of, for instance, the changing general performance of the economy and labour markets. Nevertheless, it is also true that in this specific example time variations should have a limited impact, since the time span between the analysed scenarios is limited (four years) and no relevant positive or negative shock hit the European economy before the COVID-19 crisis of 2020.

**The second limitation** regards the comparability with benchmarked activities. In fact, the scope of EURES, PES, and TMS activities is only partially comparable, with implications on the indicators used and in particular on the budget side. PES activities are aimed at the national labour market, while EURES and TMS activities have a cross-country nature, which entail more complex information and advice activities given the differences in languages and cultures, social security and tax-benefit regimes, and working conditions. In addition, TMS are aimed at special target groups with specific needs (e.g. youth, unemployed, long-term unemployed), which might generate additional costs (e.g. lower likelihood of obtaining a job because of lesser experience/skills). Furthermore, EURES costs do not account for the burden sustained by PES, whose initial investment and fixed costs directly benefit EURES. Moreover, the subset of countries analysed for the EURES-PES comparison is not necessarily representative of the whole EURES network, particularly for those countries where there are non-PES Members and Partners in the national network. Lastly, TMS, in addition to being organised by project rather than country, display overlapping placements and budget figures with those reported under EURES. Since countries do not indicate when this is the case, it is impossible to identify the exact overlap, thus generating comparability issues. Therefore, the comparison of the CE should only be considered as indicative only.

**The third limitation** is related to the availability of data. While implementing the preliminary data collection, the research team identified several issues with the available sources, as detailed in Section 2. While several values are missing, reporting methods vary as well both between and within countries, and across time. The strategy adopted by the research team to minimise the impact of missing data consists of two steps. First, a number of additional cost-effectiveness-related questions have been added to the survey for National Coordination Offices. Second, the costs and outputs were kept constant across the two scenarios, excluding specific countries from both years (and thus keeping the aggregates comparable) when the magnitude of missing values was large enough to threaten the overall reliability of the results. Specifically, while three countries were excluded from the EURES cross-time comparison, the sample for the EURES-PES comparison was reduced to 16 countries.<sup>21</sup>

In conclusion, the CEA provides evidence that EURES activities became (i) more cost-effective as compared to the past, and that (ii) they bring a strong value added that could not be achieved at national level.

Nevertheless, the limitations outlined suggest caution in interpreting the data. In order to increase the reliability of the figures, thereby increasing the strength of the evidence,

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<sup>21</sup> See previous sections, and in particular Section 2, for more details.

future interventions could aim at some specific improvements. First, it is key to increase the general reliability of the data by improving data reporting standards in terms of comparability, completeness, and breakdowns. Second, triangulating results, as the rest of the evaluation did through the use of several research tools, could prove key. With particular reference to quantitative findings, the elaboration of a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) could complete and expand on the findings of the CEA. Lastly, the inclusion of additional benchmarks could reinforce the comparison, a first step could be the inclusion of the new Targeted Mobility Scheme implemented since December 2019 and their comparison to the aggregate EURES-PES figures, as underlined in Section 3.5. Cross-Border Partnerships and programmes externalising placements to private companies pose data availability and comparability issues, as preliminarily assessed for this evaluation and might only be suitable for inclusion at a later stage.

## Annex III.b – Comparative analysis of the labour market

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this analysis is to contextualise EURES implementation in the context in which the programme operates, to glean insights into the relevance and EU added value of the network.

The analysis is run in three steps: (1) a review of labour market and labour mobility trends, to set the scene of labour mobility, its main determinants and barriers and how have they evolved since the adoption of the EURES regulation, also identifying groups of countries with similar contextual factors and those which might be most in need of support; (2) an assessment of the available EURES implementation data against labour mobility patterns; and (3) an investigation into EURES EU added value, asking EURES beneficiaries to reflect counterfactually on whether and how the programme has made a difference to them. The timeframe of the analysis is contingent on data availability thus typically from 2014 until 2018. So, it covers a few years before and after the regulation was adopted and for which comparable data is available.

This analytical framework specifically aims to (i) create a backdrop against which overall evidence from the study can be assessed in the different contexts (ii) contextualise and examine monitoring data on the implementation of the programme (step 2) as well as survey data on the difference the programme made to its beneficiaries (step 3).

The main findings are summarised by step as follows:

- **Step 1 (review of labour market and labour mobility trends):** although the EU has been working towards enhancing labour mobility, obstacles remain. The 2014 Impact Assessment (IA),<sup>1</sup> which informed the policy making towards the adoption of the EURES regulation, identified as main issues (i) low labour mobility with respect to international benchmarks and EU citizens' firm intentions to leave (ii) labour market imbalances such as high unemployment rates in some Member States coupled with unfilled vacancies and employers' difficulties in finding the skills they needed and (iii) contextual factors such as an ageing workforce and the rapid pace of technological change risking to compound such labour market imbalances and skills mismatches. The IA ultimately considered low labour mobility as a missed opportunity for a proper functioning of the Single Market confirming the need for efforts at the EU level to make it easier for individuals and employer to find opportunities across the EU. More recent figures on the gap between actual mobility and citizens' intention to leave do not exist.<sup>2</sup> However, based on the evolution of determinants of labour mobility (in particular, income gaps, unemployment gaps and the opportunity for career developments abroad) the analysis in step 1 confirms that they continued to be strong during the evaluation period. In particular, the analysis showed that whilst differences in income and unemployment levels across the EU have tended to drop during

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<sup>1</sup> SWD(2014) 9 final, COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT Accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European network of Employment Services, workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, Annex 2: Data and analysis on flows, benefits and the potential of intra-EU labour mobility

<sup>2</sup> The latest world Gallup survey on individuals' intention to leave run through 2015-2017. It showed data in line with the previous iteration, but essentially focused on the pre-EURES regulation period.

the evaluation period, the volume of labour mobility, be that of people moving permanently abroad or cross border as well as posted workers, remained steady or even increased. This was arguably aided by EURES, several EU initiatives reducing administrative barriers, increasing proficiency in foreign languages in most EU countries as well as joint efforts to ensure that skills and qualifications are recognised across the board. A growing network of nationals living abroad is also considered to have played a role, and so has the fact that the with respect to 2014 the pool of unemployed people is relatively more populated by high-skill (thus comparatively more mobile) jobseekers. Nevertheless, labour market imbalances identified in the Impact Assessment remained and so did, though to a smaller extent, obstacles to labour mobility. In particular, countries with higher-than-average barriers to labour mobility (especially language and administrative barriers) tended to be also those with worse income or employment prospects, often in conjunction with a large pool of overqualified workers.<sup>3</sup> In these countries, often southern European ones, the efficiency of the matching process for labour supply and demand remained far below pre-crisis levels and did not improve tangibly over the evaluation period (2014-2018). Thus, the untapped potential for a better functioning of the Single Market and a continuing need of tools and initiatives supporting labour mobility remain apparent, especially in these countries. It is expected that EURES might provide even more crucial support to mitigate the consequences of the COVID crises, given the increasing uncertainties about working and living in another EU country in such complex times.

- **Step 2 (EURES activities in the context):** the analysis of implementation data and their trends in the context is hampered by low comparability of data over time due to changes to the EURES monitoring system. Nevertheless, some early indication could be gleaned, to be confirmed as updated data on both EURES implementation and labour mobility become available:
  - in terms of EURES “output”, there seems to be an overall trend of increasing contacts by EURES services with jobseekers and employers especially in countries with a worsening socio-economic context. The increases are also more significant in high-barrier countries compared to low-barrier ones, providing some support for the relevance of EURES strategy given the increasing volume of activity on the ground in countries which might be most in need of it.
  - In terms of EURES “results”, based on placement data in comparison with overall mobility trends, the programme appears to be covering an increasingly high share of labour mobility that goes from countries with an unfavourable economic context (especially if worsening) towards more attractive countries. This is in line with the needs identified in the comparative analysis, at least at an aggregate level. Conversely, EURES is covering a progressively smaller share of placements in countries with an unattractive economic context, especially where this is worsening. Such a trend suggests that the EURES strategy is increasingly aligned with socio-economic needs and might be contributing to reducing labour market imbalances. Similarly, placements of outgoing workers based on EURES and EUROSTAT data point to a larger coverage of EURES placements in high barriers/non attractive economic context countries. Thus, also such data tend to confirm the active role EURES is increasingly playing in helping redress imbalances in the single market. Such findings are however caveated due to the low quality of monitoring data on the programme.

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<sup>3</sup> In this step, countries have been also clustered based on whether they displayed below(above) average labour mobility barriers, below(above) average real wages, unemployment rates, skills mismatches. Actual labour mobility data was then analysed across the different clusters.

- **Step 3 (added value of EURES for its beneficiaries):** the majority of EURES beneficiaries,<sup>4</sup> both jobseekers and employers, broadly confirm that EURES made a difference to them, either by allowing labour mobility which would have not otherwise occurred or by facilitating it. There is some (statistically significant) evidence that jobseekers from countries with high barriers to labour mobility attribute slightly higher added value to the support they received than those in low barrier countries. A statistically significant and positive correlation is also found between the number of services offered to jobseekers and the probability that they declare to have found a job thanks to EURES. Overall, one in five of the respondents being employed at the time of the survey declared to be so thanks to EURES, which indicates a significant contribution of EURES to increasing the chances of jobseekers of finding a job abroad. In terms of differences between the services, the provision of employment offers (profiles) in line with and jobseekers' skills (employers' needs), post recruitment assistance and the development of integration programmes have been considered as those with higher added value.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In this Annex we present the full comparative analysis, which is made up of three steps, notably:

1. Step 1: the identification of clusters of countries with comparable determinants (push-pull factors) and barriers to labour mobility
2. Step 2: an analysis of EURES implementation data from a cross-cluster perspective
3. Step 3: an analysis of the self-reported counterfactual questions from a cross-cluster perspective

The purpose of the comparative analysis is to contextualise the trends in EURES implementation in the evolution of the labour market, as implementation of EU programmes does not happen in void. Therefore, the role of EURES should be seen in the broader picture of how the determinants and barriers of labour mobility, as well as their possible change over time. The individual's decision to move to another country in order to find a job or to work cross-border can be determined by different factors, some of which may not be observable or for which common metrics do not exist. However, according to the literature - as further detailed in the following sections, the main drivers and barriers of intra-EU labour mobility might be stylised around three main elements: economic context, administrative and regulatory barriers, and language<sup>5</sup>.

Hence, observing the cross-country differences in the trends and figures of these three factors can help assess how EURES implementation is ongoing in different socio-economic contexts, as well as determine whether differences in the perceived EU added value of EURES exist or might be explained by contextual issues. This also provides us with some insights into the relevance and effectiveness of EURES.

In principle, such an analysis could take into account a range of idiosyncratic features of each EURES country, including their attractiveness (see e.g. the role of amenities)<sup>6</sup>, the presence of

<sup>4</sup> Between approximately 50% to 70%, depending on the form of support they received. Employers, on average, believed EURES made a greater difference to them than jobseekers, although such differences could not be studied statistically, so they should be treated with caution.

<sup>5</sup> These are identified amongst others in the 2017 Intra-EU Mobility Report

<sup>6</sup> Albouy, D., Cho, H., and Shappo, M. (2019) Immigration and the pursuit of amenities, *J Regional Sci.* 2020; 1– 25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jors.12475>

networks, actual or perceived quality of life, the suitability of weather condition, cultural or social similarities, the distance to the country of origin and so forth.

However, this would greatly increase the complexity and tractability of the analysis, as well as make inference harder due to inconsistent implementation data<sup>7</sup> as well as small sample sizes for statistical analysis. Thus, based on the information and data analysed on the determinants of labour mobility and its barriers (sub-section 2.2/2.3 below) and labour mobility flows (sub-section 2.4 below), the first step has been to identify clusters of relatively comparable countries in terms of their environmental factors for labour mobility (sub-section 2.5), to then exploit this classification in order to detect any patterns in the implementation of EURES activities (section 3) as well as in the appraisal of job-seekers and employers about the EURES services they availed themselves of (section 4).

It is important to stress from the outset that the clustering exercise presented and the analysis of push-pull factors as well as barriers to labour mobility (Step 1, section 1.2) do not aim to provide a detailed explanation nor prediction of labour mobility flows, but rather a simple categorisation of countries based on aggregated trends which aids the analysis of EURES implementation data as well as the results of the self-reported counterfactual questions to EURES beneficiaries in their context.

## **2 STEP 1: IDENTIFYING CLUSTERS OF COUNTRIES WITH COMPARABLE DETERMINANTS**

### **AND BARRIERS TO LABOUR MOBILITY**

#### **2.1 The needs identified in EURES' 2014 Impact Assessment**

EURES' Impact Assessment, carried out in 2014 prior to the adoption of the EURES regulation,<sup>8</sup> identified a range of issues linked to the functioning of the Single Market and the role to be played by intra-EU labour mobility, including:

- Great potential of intra-EU labour mobility but insufficient impact on reducing labour market imbalances, with evidence of
  - Persisting unemployment gaps across EU Member States<sup>9</sup>
  - High job vacancy rates couple with high unemployment rates
  - Employers indicating difficulties in finding employees with the skills they need
- Weak mobility flows with respect to
  - International benchmarks<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The EURES feature a comparatively new monitoring system. Much emphasis was placed on this thanks to the 2016 Regulation but the system is not yet fully operational and, in any event, more consistent data is available only starting from 2018. This means that a country by country analysis would be flawed by volatility in the recorded trends stemming from inconsistent reporting.

<sup>8</sup> SWD(2014) 9 final, COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT Accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European network of Employment Services, workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, Annex 2, Data and analysis on flows, benefits and the potential of intra-EU labour mobility

<sup>9</sup> Annex 2 cites, for instance, labour shortages in Germany accompanied by high unemployment rates in Spain

<sup>10</sup> Though historical and contextual factors differ, a comparison was made by the IA among annual mobility rates in the EU27 (based on OECD data, estimated at 0.29% of the EU27), in Australia (1.5%) and in the US (2.4%)

- People declaring firm intention to leave<sup>11</sup>
- Contextual factors such as the ageing workforce likely to compound labour market imbalances due to skills obsolescence

The analysis of the labour market and its evolution carried out below investigates how drivers as well as barriers to labour mobility have evolved during the evaluation period in EURES countries and according to the latest data available on intra-EU labour mobility. This is also to understand whether the baseline issues identified by the Impact Assessment continued to affect the EU Single Market.

## 2.2 Main determinants of labour mobility

One of the key messages of EURES' IA was that untapped potential for intra-EU labour mobility which could help redress labour market imbalances through a fully functioning EU Single Market was vast. Amongst the key indicators used to measure the gap between potential and actual labour mobility, the IA referred to EU citizens' "firm intentions to leave" in the following 12 months, as measured by the Gallup World Poll and analysed in the June 2013 EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review (ESSQR)<sup>12</sup> against data from the OECD on actual annual mobility flows. The IA estimated that only about 29% of the individuals intending to leave had actually done so in the same year, concluding that more should be done to facilitate mobility. One possible way about analysing whether and to what extent the situation has changed since 2014 would be to look at the same data over time.

However, this approach faces two main issues:

- Individuals' firm intentions to leave are not necessarily a good proxy of the potential for labour mobility in a fully functioning EU Single Market. For instance, it might be that more people would be willing to leave had they received better information about employment prospects abroad, or in case they had a better knowledge of the country's of destination administrative rules or just language and culture.
- More pragmatically, no data is available on EU citizens' intentions to leave after 2016 and, in addition, data on labour mobility flows available for recent years through EUROSTAT is not fully comparable to information from the OECD used in the impact assessment.

Hence, the starting point for the analysis of the context for labour mobility, to understand if and where there is untapped potential for a fully functioning EU Single Market, is that of analysing the determinants (push-pull factors) as well as barriers to labour mobility. These can be later compared with actual mobility flows and labour market imbalances, to ultimately identify areas where support to labour mobility would be needed the most.

Labour mobility within the EU is mostly motivated by economic, cultural and social drivers,<sup>13</sup> including network effects.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Potential EU movers estimated at 2.9 million per year, based on data from Gallup World Poll, analysed in the June 2013 EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review (ESSQR), pp. 38-39.

<sup>12</sup> pp. 38-39.

<sup>13</sup> Albouy, D., Cho, H. , and Shappo, M. (2019) Immigration and the pursuit of amenities, *J Regional Sci.* 2020; 1– 25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jors.12475>

<sup>13</sup> The period covered

<sup>14</sup> Landesmann, M. & Leitner, S. M. (2015) Intra-EU Mobility and Push and Pull Factors in EU Labour Markets, Estimating a Panel VAR Model, The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (WIIW), Working Paper 120 accessed at

In the ensuing sections, we describe how EURES countries stack up one another based on a small selection of indicators suitable for comparative analysis as well as their trends over time.

### 2.2.1 Economic context

A stagnant or unattractive economic context can influence the decision to move to another country where growth is higher, GDP per capita is higher and unemployment rates are lower, and where labour demand is higher and better fitting a mover's skills. Actual and expected wage differentials and differences in standards of living between communities of origin and destination are consistently considered in the literature as significant push-pull factors in shaping both internal and international human mobility<sup>15</sup>. Economic opportunities significance concerning migration is also highlighted with the availability of employment opportunities in destination countries, usually analysed through employment rates or economic growth, or the perceived difference in job opportunities between origin and destination<sup>16</sup>.

In line with this body of literature, the Single Market Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2013 showed<sup>17</sup> that respondents willing to work in another Member State in 2013 were by far most motivated by their desire to get a better salary (50 % of respondents), followed by better professional development or career opportunities and the inability to find a job in their own country (28 % of respondents). The first driver (desire to get a better salary) can be related to **differences in the GDP per capita in PPS**<sup>18</sup>. In the literature, there is evidence of migrant being willing to move also in view of nominal differences in wage (e.g. to attractive cities despite the higher cost of living), which could be either due to the quest for amenities<sup>19</sup> or the perspective of generating higher remittances or savings to be spent back in the country of origin<sup>20</sup>, but differences in real wages appear to be a better predictor overall. A second key push-pull factor can be related to **unemployment gaps and labour market imbalances such as skills mismatches**.

Hence, we turn to assess how these factors differ across EURES member states, as well as their evolution over recent years.

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<https://wiiw.ac.at/intra-eu-mobility-and-push-and-pull-factors-in-eu-labour-markets-estimating-a-panel-var-model-dlp-3671.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Ortega, F., and Peri, G. (2013). "The effect of trade and migration on income", NBER Working Paper 18193, National Bureau of Economic Research; Borjas, G. (1989). "Economic theory and international migration", *International Migration Review*, Vol 23(3), pp. 457-485

<sup>16</sup> Beine, M., Bourgeon, P., and Bricongne, J.-C. (2017). "Aggregate Fluctuations and International Migration", *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, Vol 121(1), pp. 117-152

<sup>17</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_398\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs_398_en.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> The volume index of GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) is expressed in relation to the European Union average set to equal 100. If the index of a country is higher than 100, this country's level of GDP per head is higher than the EU average and vice versa.

<sup>19</sup> Albouy, D., Cho, H. , and Shappo, M. (2019) Immigration and the pursuit of amenities, *J Regional Sci.* 2020; 1- 25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jors.12475>

<sup>20</sup> Generating remittances can be a reason to work abroad not only for altruistic reasons, such as supporting relatives, but also as an investment decision, such as higher interests in the country of origin (see for instance Mallick, H. & Kumar Mahalik, M (2015) Motivating Factors Of Remittances Inflows Into Developing Asian Economies, *The Singapore Economic Review*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (2015) 1550063))

### Income differences

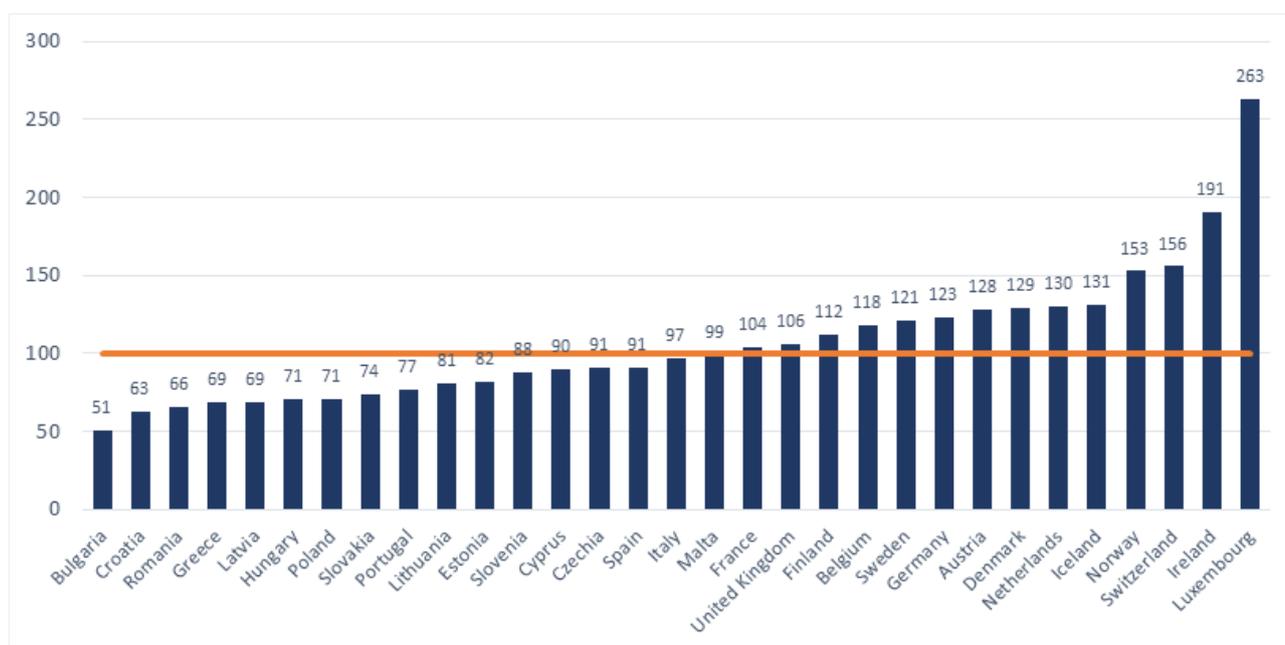
EU migration flows are mostly directed towards countries where the expectation of earnings is higher<sup>21</sup>. Therefore, as a first step, we describe Eurostat GDP per capita in PPS data and its evolution between 2012 and 2018.<sup>22</sup>

Figure 1 below shows the levels of GDP per capita in PPS in EU Member States and EFTA countries<sup>23</sup> in 2018. The orange line in the graph indicates the baseline value of 100, which corresponds to the EU average GDP.

The line allows us to quickly single out countries with a higher than average GDP per capita in PPS: France, United Kingdom, Finland, Belgium, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Ireland and Luxembourg.

This indicates that, as expected, northern-western European and EFTA countries form a group of countries having a higher than average GDP per capita.

Figure 1 GDP per capita in PPS in EU-28 and EFTA in 2018



Source: Eurostat nama\_10\_gdp

The rest of the countries had a lower than average GDP per capita in PPS. However, some of them were close to 100 with values above 90: Malta, Italy, Spain, Czech Republic and Cyprus.

The lowest GDP per capita in PPS is found in Bulgaria (51), followed by Croatia (63), Romania (66), Greece (69), Hungary (71), Poland (71), Slovakia (74), Portugal (77) and then Lithuania, Estonia and Slovenia display GDP per capita in PPS values between 80 and 90.

<sup>21</sup> As explained in Section 1.2 of a 2016 report by the Committee of Regions on Labour Mobility: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/Labour%20mobility%20and%20Local%20and%20Regional%20Authorities%20-%20Benefits,%20challenges%20and%20solutions/Labour-mobility.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> The volume index of GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) is expressed in relation to the European Union average set to equal 100. If the index of a country is higher than 100, this country's level of GDP per capita is higher than the EU average and vice versa.

<sup>23</sup> Data not available for Lichtenstein

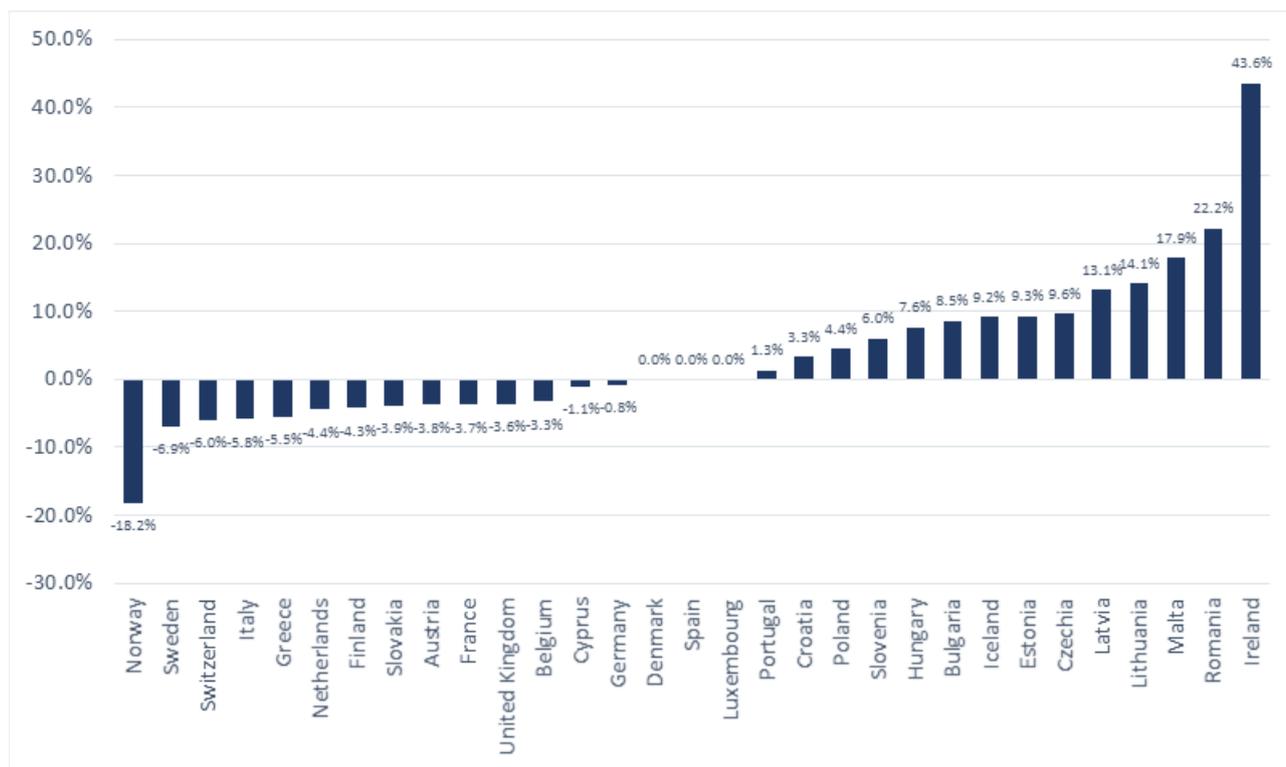
It can be observed that Eastern-European countries are the ones where GDP per capita was lowest.

Next, Figure 2 below describes the evolution of GDP PPS per capita between 2012 and 2018.

Based on the 2012-2018 trends, we can identify three main categories of countries:

- Higher income countries – North-western European countries: France, United Kingdom, Finland, Belgium, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Ireland and Luxembourg
  - which had a decrease in GDP per capita in PPS between 2012 and 2018: Norway (-18.2%), Sweden (-6.9%), Switzerland (-6%), Netherlands (-4.4%), Finland (-4.3%), Austria (-3.8%), France (-3.7%), UK (-3.6%), Belgium (-3.3%), Germany (-0.8%)
  - which has an increase or no overall change in GDP per capita in PPS between 2012 and 2018: Luxembourg, Denmark and Ireland
- Lower income countries - Eastern European and North-Eastern countries with lower than average GDP per capita: Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovenia, Czech Republic:
  - which had a decrease in GDP per capita in PPS between 2012-2018: Slovakia (-3.9%)
  - which had an increase: all the others, in particular Romania (+22.2%)
- Southern-European countries with lower than average GDP per capita: Greece, Portugal, Cyprus, Spain, Italy, Malta. It should be noted that within this cluster Italy, Spain and Malta have a GDP per capita level in 2018 very close to the EU average, whereas Greece and Portugal have a much lower GDP per capita (more in line with Eastern-European countries). Cyprus is relatively close to the EU average.
  - which had a decrease in GDP per capita in PPS between 2012-2018: Italy (-5.8%), Greece (-5.5%), Cyprus (-1.1%)
  - which had an increase or no overall variation: Spain (no variation), Portugal (1.3% increase), Malta (17.9% increase)

Figure 2 Growth rate of the GDP per capita in PPS between 2012 and 2018

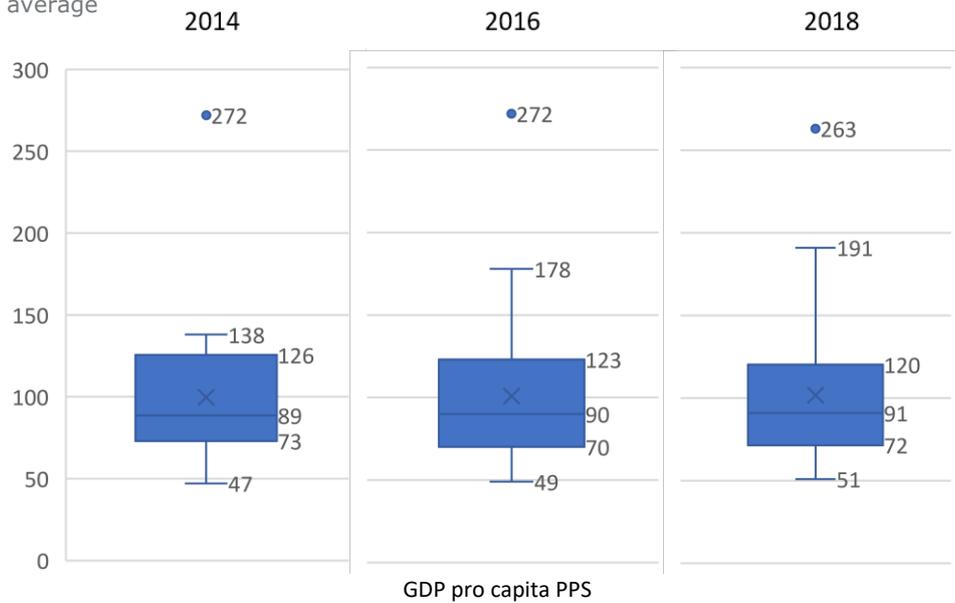


Source: Eurostat nama\_10\_gdp. Missing data for Lichtenstein

On the one hand, these trends show reducing **income gaps** among most Eastern-European countries (except Slovakia) and North-western countries (except Ireland, which has been growing faster). On the other, southern-European countries – and particularly Italy and Greece – displayed slower growth rates over recent years, drifting away from the EU average. Yet, most of them, except Greece, continued to show higher levels of GDP per capita in PPS than Eastern-European countries in 2018.

From a higher EU-level perspective, if one looks at GDP values in PPS for EU-28 MS using scatter plots (Figure 3 below), one can see that the central half of the EU MS were comprised between 73% and 126% of the average EU GDP in 2014, i.e. an interval of 53 p.p.. The length of such interval was cut by 5 p.p. (from 72% to 120%) in 2018, pointing to narrower distances from the average. Also the median value grew from 89% to 91%, hence closer to the average.

Figure 3 Distribution of per capita GDP in PPS for EU Member States, 2014, 2016 and 2018. Values as % of the EU average



Source: Eurostat, GDP per capita in PPS [TEC00114]

Some convergence in GDP values that is particularly relevant for EU labour mobility is especially found between traditionally sending countries such as Eastern European ones (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Romania), showing an average per capita GDP in PPS which grew from 67 of the EU-28 in 2014, to 68 in 2016 and 72 in 2018 (i.e. an increase of 5 p.p. in the period through 2014-2018). At the same time, for the two main receiving countries (Germany and the United Kingdom) it decreased by 5 p.p., so the gap was effectively cut by 10 p.p.

Box 1 Determinants of labour mobility: GDP imbalances and their evolution

Based on the above, one could expect that, in aggregated terms, push-pull factors of labour mobility linked to GDP imbalances:

- have been strongest between lower-income Eastern European countries (plus Greece) and high income North-western European countries, as income differences in 2018 were still highest between these two groups of countries, though decreasing given some convergence
- have been getting stronger in Southern-European countries with decreasing GDP per capita (Italy and Cyprus). Regarding Spain and Portugal, but also Malta, the lower per-capita GDP might be compensated by a more sustained pace of growth of such economies.

Overall, income gaps across EU Member States have been narrowing during the evaluation period.

**Unemployment gaps**

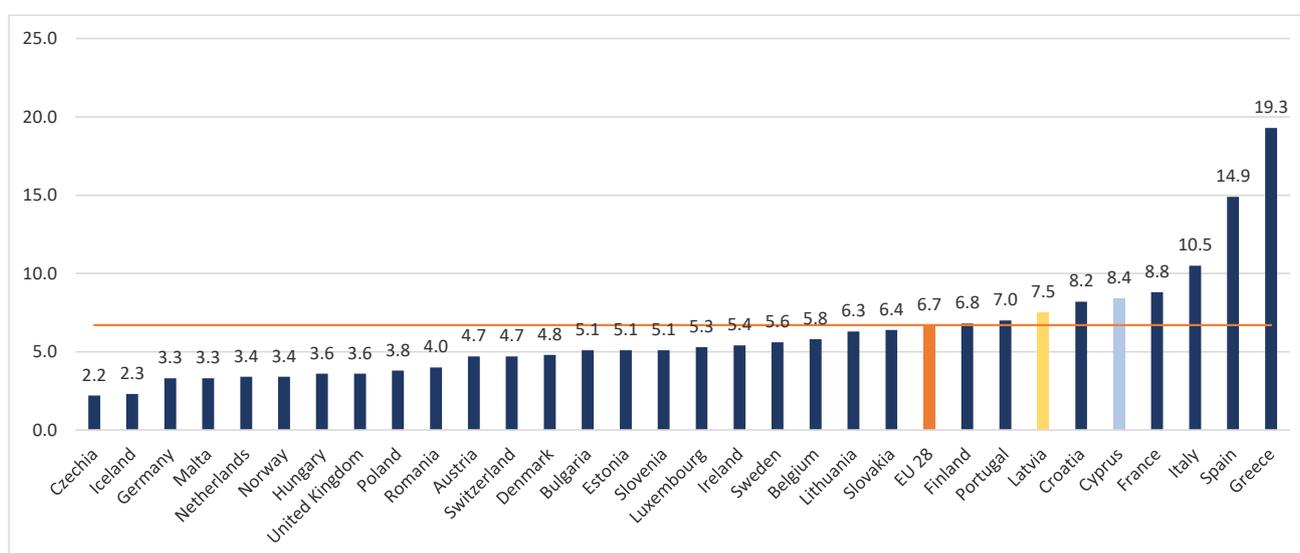
Attention is now turned to unemployment rates and their trends between 2012 and 2018.

Looking at the situation in 2018 (see figure below), the EU-28 average unemployment rate was 6.7%. Most EU Member States and all EFTA countries<sup>24</sup> had a below average unemployment rate.

The unemployment rate was particularly low (below or equal to 4%) in Czechia, Iceland, Germany, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Hungary, UK, Poland and Romania. The remaining 12 countries had unemployment rates ranging from 4.7% in Austria to 6.4% in Slovakia.

EU Member States with an unemployment rate well above average were Greece (19.3%) and Spain (14.9%). They were followed by Italy (10.5%), France (8.8%), Cyprus (8.4%) and Croatia (8.2%). A few countries were above the average but relatively close: Latvia (7.5%), Portugal (7.0%) and Finland (6.8%).

Figure 4 Unemployment rate of working age population (20-64 years old) in 2018

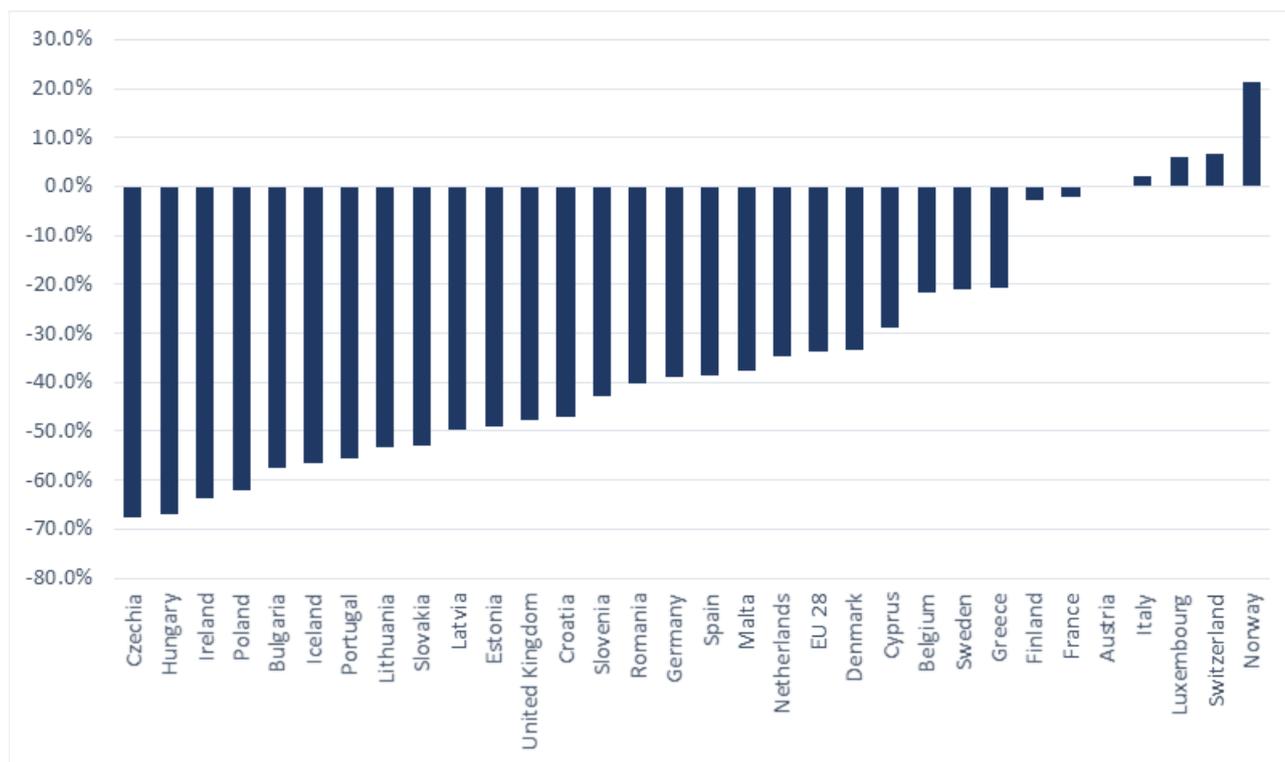


Source: Eurostat LFS data [lfsa\_urgaed]

In terms of the 2012-2018 evolution, it should be noted that the period 2012-2015 has been characterized by an economic crisis and post-crisis situation. Thus, higher levels of unemployment were observed as a consequence to the crisis. Most countries experienced an increase in their unemployment rate from 2012 to 2013. On average, in the EU-28, unemployment rate decreased by around 33% from 2012 and 2018, but started decreasing only after 2013. The decrease has been stronger after 2016 compared to 2013-2016.

<sup>24</sup> Missing data for Lichtenstein

Figure 5 Total variation of unemployment rates between 2012 and 2018



Source: Eurostat LFS data [lfsa\_urgaed]

In any case, the figure below shows that all Eastern-European countries experienced a consistent (from around 70% to 40%) reduction of their unemployment rates between 2012 and 2018. In addition, except for Latvia and Croatia, they all had below average unemployment rate in 2018.

In addition to this group of countries, in Ireland, Iceland and Portugal the unemployment rate decreased by more than half, and in the UK it decreased by almost half. However, in Portugal the unemployment rate was still above the EU 28 average in 2018.

A few countries experienced a reduction in their unemployment rate between 40 and 20%, hence closer to the EU-28 average reduction of 33%, notably: Germany, Spain, Malta, Netherlands, Denmark, Cyprus, Belgium, Sweden and Greece. However, among these Spain and Greece continued to show high level of unemployment in 2018.

Finland and France experienced a very small reduction (-2.9% and -2.2% compared to 2012 respectively).

In Austria, there was no overall variation between 2012 and 2018.

Only four countries experienced an increase in their unemployment rate between 2012 and 2018: Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Norway. It should be noted, however, that among those countries only Italy has an unemployment rate higher than the EU-28 average in 2018. Unemployment rates in Luxembourg, Switzerland and Norway, although they have slightly increased since 2012, remain low.

We therefore observe increasing gaps in the unemployment rates between Eastern-European and northern European countries on the one hand, and Southern Europe on the other, especially Italy,

France and Greece where unemployment rates have either been increasing or decreasing at a slow pace and continued to display above average levels in 2018. For Spain in particular, the unemployment rate is still comparatively high, but it has been decreasing at a sustained pace since 2012.

Box 2 Determinants of labour mobility: unemployment imbalances and their evolution

The data and trends described above suggest that, considering the unmatched labour offer as a push-pull factor of labour mobility also in combination with GDP data:

- the imbalances have been strongest between countries with high unemployment rates (Greece, Spain and Italy in particular) and high income North-western European countries with low unemployment rates. Although, for Spain, the decrease in unemployment rates suggests a convergence path
- Although unemployment rates have been low and decreasing in most Eastern-European countries, income differences described in the previous section were still high in 2018, not only in real terms but also and especially in nominal terms.<sup>25</sup> As anticipated, we should also bear in mind the role of amenities and the attractiveness of innovative high-income cities, that of networks and path dependency and so forth, which might have continued to sustain labour mobility.

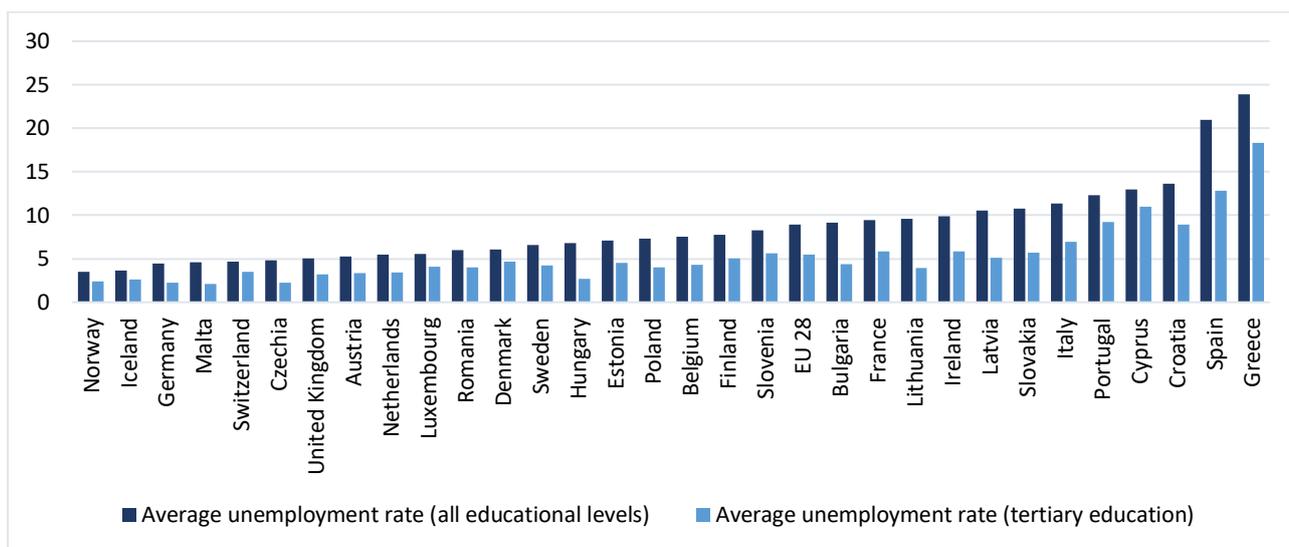
Clearly, these are just rough indications on the way in which general drivers might have shaped labour mobility. As anticipated, a range of cultural as well as locally determined elements exist which might explain mobility flows but go beyond the scope of such analysis and broad categorisation. At any rate, one additional macro aspect which could be assessed based on comparable data is the distribution of unemployment rates by educational attainment level<sup>26</sup>. This has to do especially with the issue of talent shortages and vertical skills mismatches. The figure below shows that across Europe, tertiary graduates always kept an average unemployment rate that is lower than the overall unemployment rate, indicating, as it can be easily expected, that active citizens with a lower educational attainment level generally struggle more with unemployment.

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<sup>25</sup> Differences in nominal wages might be relevant in as much as remittances and / or the prospect of spending or investing part of the income in the home country play a role in the individual's decision to work abroad.

<sup>26</sup> Three levels are considered, based on ISCED 2011 classification: less than primary, primary and lower secondary (levels 0-2), upper-secondary and post-secondary non tertiary (levels 3 and 4), and tertiary education (levels 5-8).

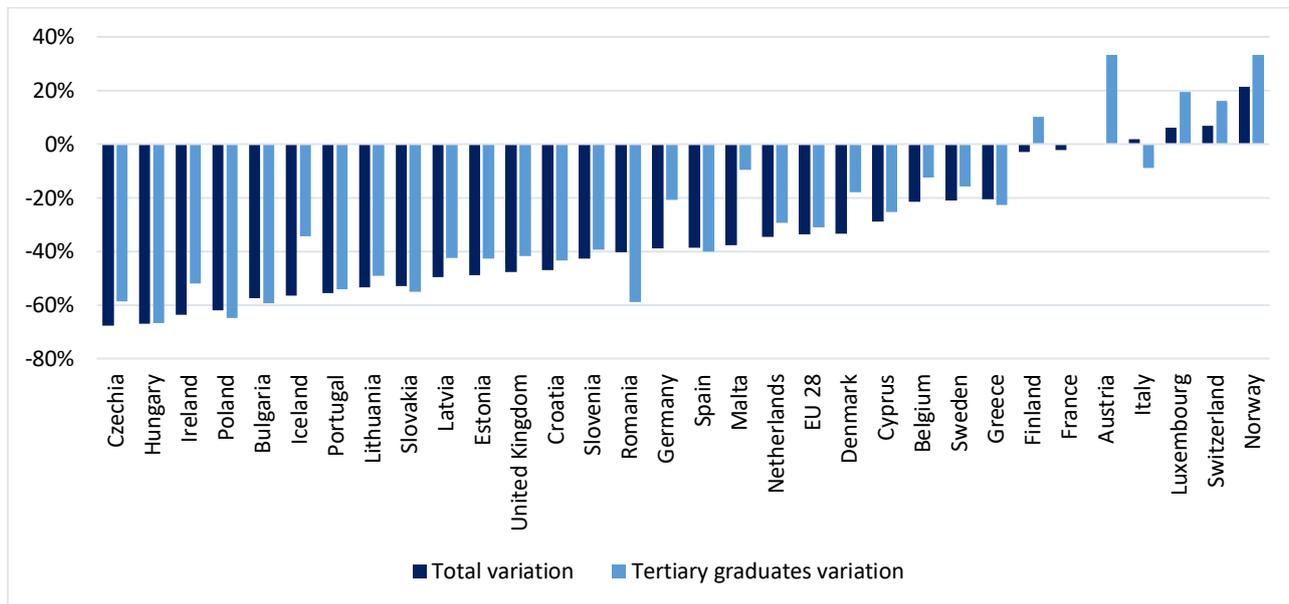
Figure 6 Average (2012-2018) overall unemployment rate vs Average unemployment rate of tertiary graduates



Source: Author’s elaboration based on Eurostat LFS data [lfsa\_urgaed]

However, looking at the variation rate of unemployment rates between 2012 and 2018, we see that in most countries unemployment rates of tertiary graduates either decreased by a smaller percentage compared to the overall unemployment rate, or increased by a higher percentage. The graph below presents the results.

Figure 7 Percentage variation of overall unemployment rate vs tertiary graduates unemployment rates, between 2012 and 2018



Source: Author’s elaboration based on Eurostat LFS data [lfsa\_urgaed]

This is a first indication that there have been compositional changes in the pool of those seeking for a job over recent years, with ramifications also on the extent to which they might intend to migrate to another country. The section below will tackle labour market shortages in more detail.

## Labour market imbalances: skills mismatches and talent shortages

### Overview

Labour market imbalances are broadly defined as a shortage or excess of candidates with a certain set of skills needed in the labour market. Unemployment in connection with recruitment difficulties and high vacancy rates are typical examples of imbalances. These imbalances are typically measured as unmet labour demand (e.g. job vacancy rates), vertical skills mismatch (e.g. over or underqualification) or horizontal skills mismatch (type of education not in line with type of occupation).

Looking at Eurostat's job vacancy statistics<sup>27</sup>, the EU-28 average job vacancy rate<sup>28</sup> was 2.2% at the end of 2018. The same rate was above average in particular in Czech Republic (6%), Belgium (3.4%), Germany (3.4%), Austria (3.1%), and Netherlands (2.9%). At the same time, unemployment rate<sup>29</sup> in EU-28 in 2018 was 6.7% while it was below average in Belgium (5.8%), Germany (3.3%), Austria (4.7%) and the Netherlands (3.4%). However, data is missing on the overall job vacancy rate for a few countries, which affects the comparability between countries using this indicator.

Employers having difficulty 'finding the right skills or talent' or 'filling jobs' is commonly quoted by policymakers as the most prominent of skill mismatch types in European job markets. According to Cedefop's survey<sup>30</sup>, four in 10 EU employers had difficulty finding people with the right skills, while unemployment rates peaked after the crisis. Standard European sources (such as the European company survey) tend to indicate that difficulty in finding talent is most pronounced in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Poland, Romania, and in the Baltic states. By contrast, the countries mostly affected by rising unemployment rates during the post-2008 crisis era, including Greece, Spain and Cyprus, are characterised by fewer talent shortages. Overall, rapidly increasing shares of firms have declared they experience labour shortages, especially in eastern and central European countries<sup>31</sup>, whilst the values remain more stable in southern European countries.

Employers' concerns about finding the skills they need seem also to be increasingly hampering their investment choices. In particular, 77% of firms reported in 2018 the limited availability of skills as an impediment to investment, up from 65% in 2016.<sup>32</sup>

In what follows and for the purpose of this comparative analysis, we focus on one experimental skills mismatch indicator developed by Eurostat which allows for a better comparability across countries and years of interest. This indicator measures **vertical skills mismatches** (over-qualification), which is one of the two experimental indicators developed by Eurostat<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Eurostat job vacancies statistics, 2018

<sup>28</sup> The job vacancy rate (JVR) measures the proportion of total posts that are vacant, according to the definition of job vacancy above, expressed as a percentage as follows:  $JVR = \frac{\text{number of job vacancies}}{\text{number of occupied posts} + \text{number of job vacancies}} * 100$

<sup>29</sup> Of individuals of working age (20-64)

<sup>30</sup> Cedefop's European skills and jobs survey, 2014

<sup>31</sup> European Business Surveys, several years. In 2014, about 10% of central European countries and 15% of eastern European countries declared to have experienced labour shortages. In 2017, 16% and 40% respectively.

<sup>32</sup> Based on the EIB Investment Survey (EIBIS) accessed at <https://www.eib.org/en/publications/econ-eibis-2019-eu.htm>

<sup>33</sup> Using EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) data, Eurostat proposes experimental indicators measuring the "vertical" and "horizontal" skills mismatch. "Vertical" measures focus on discrepancies between educational attainment levels (ISCED 2011 1-digit) and occupations (ISCO 2008 1-digit). "Horizontal" measures focus on misalignments between the educational field of the highest level of education attained (ISCED-1999 fields of education and training) and occupations (ISCO 2008 3-digit). We focus on vertical mismatches because data is available for the period 2012-2018, hence it is better aligned with the timeframe of this task, whereas data on horizontal mismatch is available only from 2014 onwards.

*Vertical skills mismatch: over-qualification*

According to Eurostat's definition, overqualified workers are defined as "employed persons who have attained tertiary education (ISCED 2011 level 5-8) and who work in occupations for which a tertiary education level is not required; equivalent to the major groups 4 to 9 of the ISCO 2008 classification"<sup>34</sup>.

Over-qualification of workers indicates a labour market imbalance, and can be driven by either of the following:

- An excess in the supply of labour: when employers have no difficulties in filling a position as there is an abundance of supply, they will raise the level of qualification required for the position, so people will be generally overqualified for the posts they occupy;
- A labour demand shortage: when employers are looking for less tertiary graduates to fill in position than the number of tertiary graduates, and therefore the demand for qualified workers is lower than its supply

Figure 8 presents the over-qualification rate in 2018. As it can be observed, most countries had a lower than average (EU 28 average) level of over-qualification, which is explained by a few countries presenting particularly high rates. These include Spain (37.3%), Cyprus (33.3%), Greece (31.6%) and Ireland (29.5%). This appears in line with the fact that, as reported above and based on standard European sources, Greece, Spain and Cyprus are characterised by fewer talent shortages on average.

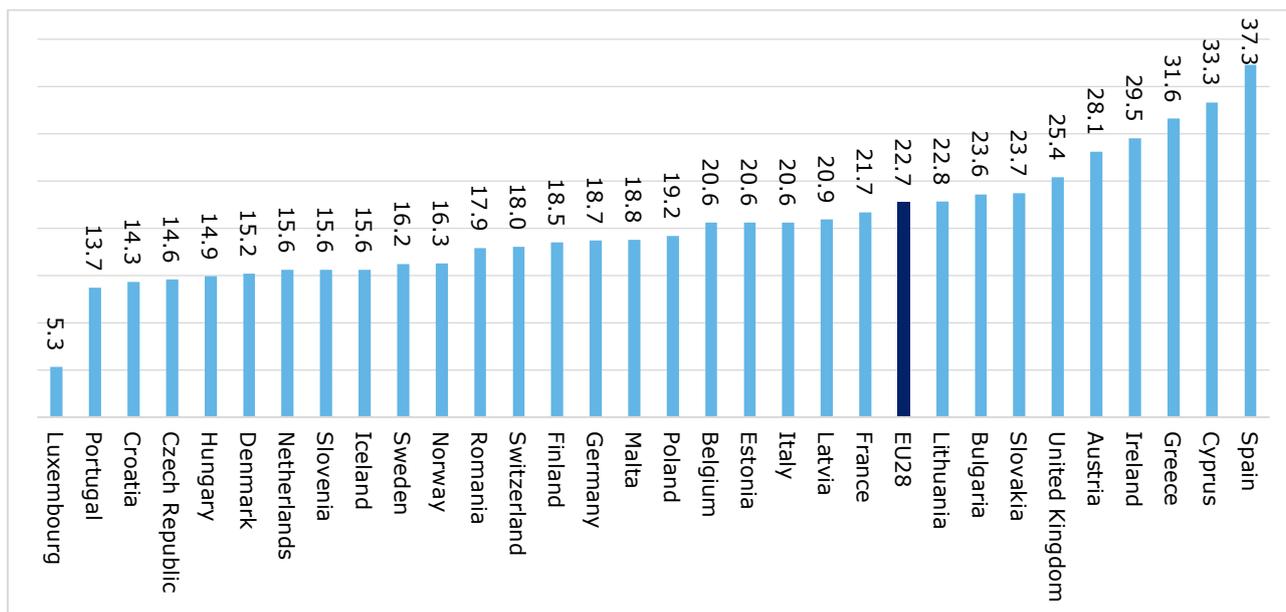
These are followed by Austria (28.1%), United Kingdom (25.4%), Slovakia (23.7%), Bulgaria (23.6%), Lithuania (22.8%). Belgium, Estonia, Italy, Latvia and France are below the EU 28 average of 22.7% but very close.

Over-qualification seems to be less of a problem particularly in Luxembourg (5.3%), Portugal (13.7%), Croatia (14.3%), Czech Republic (14.6%) and Hungary (14.9%). The rest of the countries present over-qualification rates going from around 15% to around 19%.

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<sup>34</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/7894008/9596077/Methodological\\_note.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/7894008/9596077/Methodological_note.pdf)

Figure 8 Overqualification rate in 2018



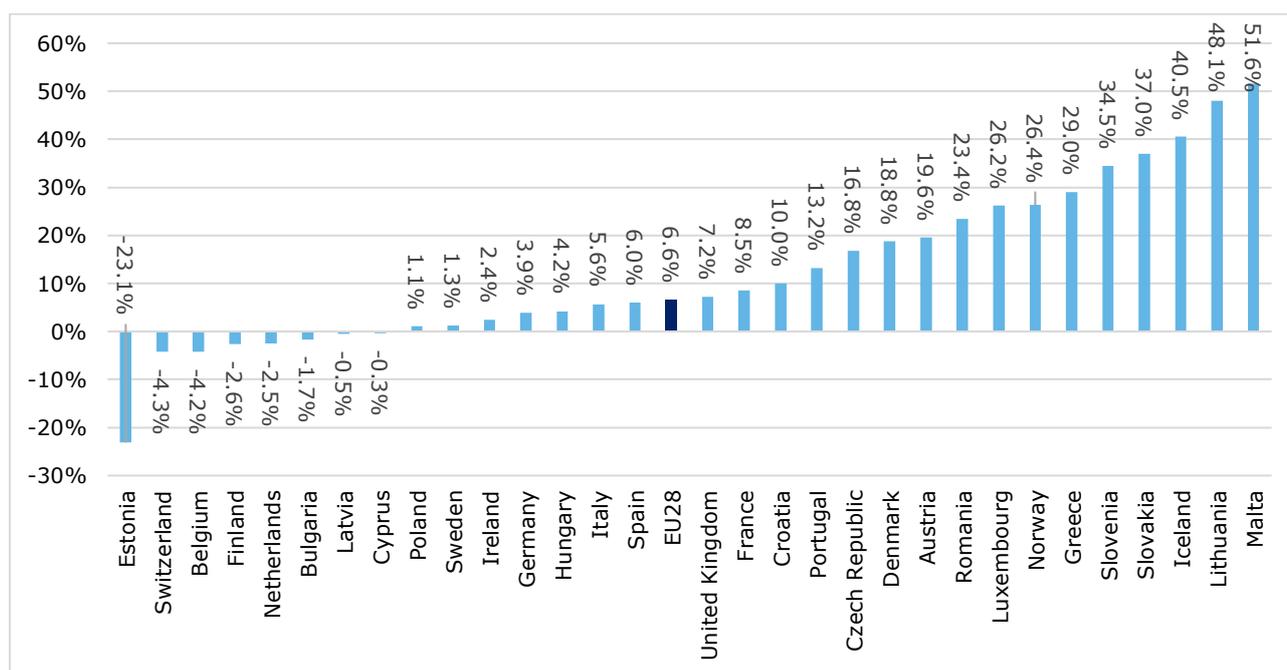
Source: Eurostat experimental indicators on skills mismatches.

Looking at the variation of the over-qualification rate over the period 2012-2018 in the figure below, we can observe that there has been an increasing trend in most countries. This has to be considered in the light of the post-crisis situation during which unemployment rates have been higher than in the past for most countries. In fact, unemployed people returning to work are more likely to enter less skill-intensive jobs that may not develop their skills; 42% of adult workers looking for a job in the years following the crisis had few opportunities to find jobs suitable for their skills and qualifications<sup>35</sup>. In addition to post-crisis adjustments, overqualification might be due to the increasing supply of skilled labour force or even the preferences of a few individuals for job security or proximity to the workplace.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Available online at [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3072\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3072_en.pdf) .

<sup>36</sup> CEDEFOP (2015), Skills, qualifications and jobs in the EU: the making of a perfect match? Evidence from Cedefop’s European skills and jobs survey.

Figure 9 Variation rate 2012-2018 of the over-qualification rate



Source: Eurostat experimental indicators on skills mismatches. Low reliability of data in 2016 and 2017 for Luxembourg

Intra-EU labour mobility can be a tool to address labour imbalances such as over-qualification. Cedefop's conclusions<sup>37</sup> in terms of EU policy implications are that increasing the transparency and validation of qualifications and adult workers' skills and investing in better labour market and skills intelligence will ultimately support mobility among the groups most in need. It is therefore important for European initiatives like EURES to contribute to those goals in order to support an efficient labour mobility that allows movers to be correctly matched with occupations abroad, for which they have the required and recognizable skills.

#### Box 3 Determinants of labour mobility: skills mismatches and their evolution

Labour market imbalances are broadly defined as a shortage (excess) of skills supply (demand). Although the issue is subject of constant review, fully standardised measures of imbalances for comparative analysis in scope are rare given the underlying methodological challenges. Focusing on the experimental indicator for Eurostat on vertical skills mismatches (over-qualification), complemented with additional surveys:

- Over qualification increased over recent years in most EU-countries, generally due to limited or unsatisfactory job opportunities and an increasing supply of tertiary graduates
- A few countries showed consistently high levels of over-qualification. This happened not only in Mediterranean countries with weak labour market demand (e.g. Greece, Cyprus, Spain), but also in the Baltics (e.g. Lithuania) central-eastern countries (e.g. Slovakia) and some Northern European countries (e.g. the UK and Ireland)
- Standard European sources (such as the European company survey) tended to indicate that difficulty in finding talent has been most pronounced and increasing in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Poland, Romania, and in the Baltic states. By contrast, the countries mostly affected by rising unemployment rates during the post-2008 crisis era, including Greece, Spain and Cyprus, have been characterised by fewer talent shortages.

<sup>37</sup> Available online at [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3075\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3075_en.pdf) .

- Firms having reported they consider lack of adequate skills in the labour market as an obstacle to investments have also been on the rise in the period of evaluation.

Overall, the above suggests that labour market imbalances remained widespread across the EU and even showed a tendency to increase over time in some cases, despite a certain convergence in income and employment levels across the EU.

#### *Matching efficiency and the Beveridge Curve*

Another key element at play in connection to labour market imbalances and skills mismatches is the so called “matching efficiency”, that is, the capacity of an economy to create the conditions for labour demand and supply to meet quickly and effectively.

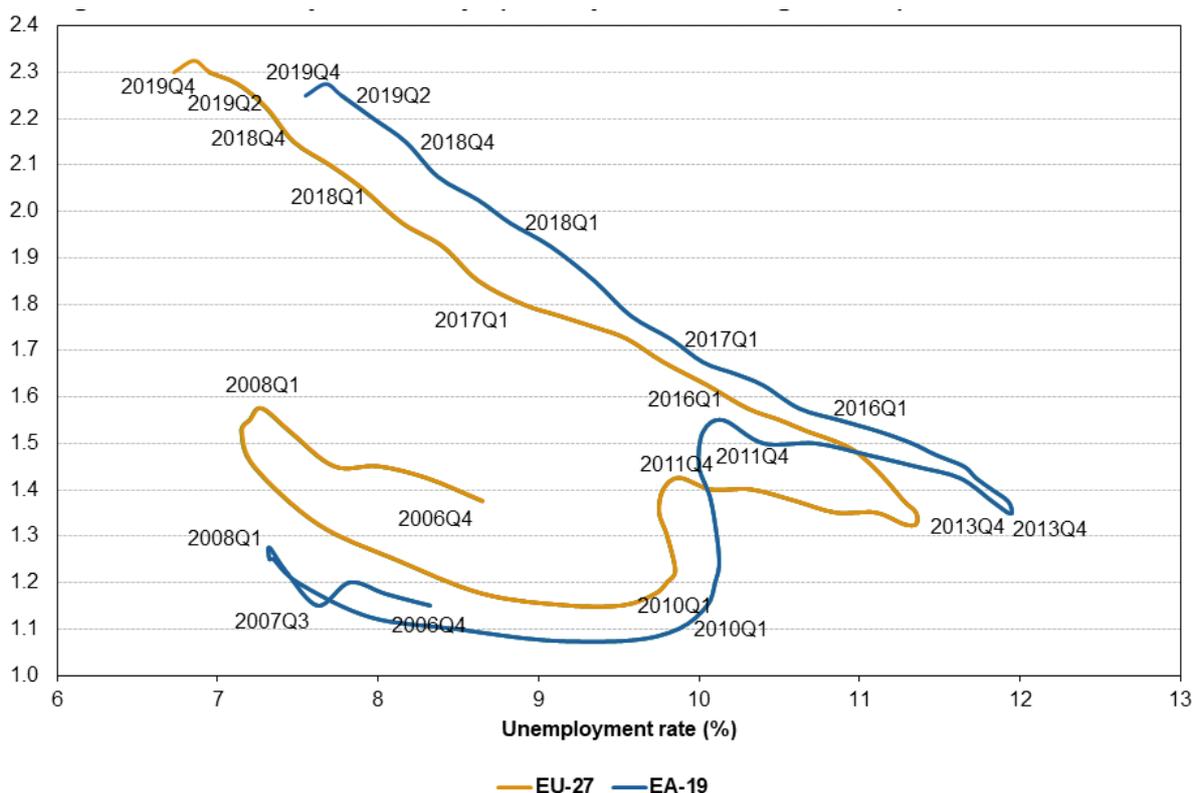
Amongst the ways in which matching efficiency can be observed, as already in the EURES’ Impact Assessment, is the Beveridge Curve, traditionally describing the relationship between unemployment rates and vacancies.<sup>38</sup> The curve typically takes a hyperbolic form, with a downward slope reflecting the assumption that the higher the unemployment the lower the number of vacancies. Movement of the curve along the X axis to the left (inward) or to the right (outward) indicate that the matching efficiency is increasing (inward) or decreasing (outward). In essence, if the curve shifts inward it means that there is lower unemployment when job vacancies are close to zero, whereas the unemployment is higher in the same situation of very few vacancies if the matching efficiency is lower (a curve shifted outward).

The figure below shows how the relationship between unemployment rates and vacancy rates for the EU from before the 2008 crisis up to 2019.

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<sup>38</sup> In some cases, a revised version of the curve was used showing the relationship of unemployment rates with, for instance, difficulties experienced by employers in finding the skills they need. The underlying rationale is the same, to understand to what extent unemployment persists in presence of unfilled labour demand.

Figure 10 Evolution of the Beveridge curve, quarterly data, Euro Area and EU-27



Source: elaboration from Eurostat based on Eurostat data (jvs\_q\_nace2 and lfsq\_urgan)

Disentangling all factors playing a role in the movement of the Beveridge curve as well as its actual shape is a complex exercise, which goes beyond this exercise.

However, it is easy to notice that there has been a significant shift outward since the crisis and up to 2013, which results into much higher job vacancy rates in 2018 despite similar unemployment rates of 2008. This clearly points to reduced matching efficiency with respect to the pre-crisis levels, but there is great cross-country variation.<sup>39</sup>

Interestingly, this movement of the aggregated EU or Euro Area’s curves, appears to be mostly driven by some Member States, typically Southern European countries.<sup>40</sup>

From 2013 onwards, it is possible to see that the path of the relationship between unemployment and vacancies is not hyperbolic, suggesting a small inward shift of the curve (increased efficiency), which is however difficult to determine in absence of dedicated research in the literature. Comparison is also hampered, as highlighted in the overview, due to the fact that data for some countries is missing or not sufficiently reliable.

Nevertheless, the main lessons connected to the evolution of the Beveridge Curve remains that matching efficiency has dropped significantly compared to pre-crisis levels, especially in some countries, and that does not yet show sufficiently clear signs of improvement.

<sup>39</sup> Bonthuis, B., Jarvis, V. & Vanhala, J. Shifts in euro area Beveridge curves and their determinants. IZA J Labor Policy 5, 20 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40173-016-0076-7>

<sup>40</sup> Brunello, G. and Wruuck, P. (2019) Skill shortages and skill mismatch in Europe: A review of the literature, European Investment Bank, ECONOMICS – WORKING PAPERS 2019/05

Box 4 determinants of labour mobility: social, cultural and environmental factors

Despite some difficulties in interpreting the changes of the relationship between unemployment and vacancies also due to updated research on the subject and limited data availability, it is possible to observe that compared to pre-crisis levels, high unemployment rates persist in presence of high vacancy rates. This suggests an outward shift of the so-called Beveridge Curve, which means reduced matching efficiency, especially for some southern European countries.

### 2.2.2 Social and cultural factors

In addition to drivers for labour mobility linked to the economic context, social and cultural factors often play a pivotal role.

Amongst others, language similarities, common cultural roots, but also the attractiveness of specific cities and areas in terms of "quality of life" aspects, including their cultural or recreational offer, climate conditions and so forth. The role of networks, that is, the presence of a community of people of the same area abroad, was also found to hugely facilitate intra-EU labour mobility<sup>41</sup>, in line with standard theories on path-dependency.

Most of these aspects might be considered as idiosyncratic, in as much as they are germane to specific areas and tend to be time-invariant (or change slowly over time). Furthermore, there is no common metrics which could be applied to measure the extent to which such factors affect labour mobility trends. Hence, they are not used directly in the clustering exercise, but considered qualitatively on a case by case basis in the interpretation of our findings.

Box 5 determinants of labour mobility: social, cultural and environmental factors

Labour mobility might be facilitated by social and cultural proximity, network effects, expectations over the quality of life, the attractiveness of specific cities or areas and so forth. These factors tend to be time-invariant, cannot be measured on a common metric and need to be considered on a case by case basis.

### 2.2.3 The "Erasmus" generation

Every year, over 300 000 students from higher education institutions move to another country within the frame of an exchange programme funded by the Erasmus+, with figures that have been constantly increasing over time.

According to a study financed by DG EAC in 2014 on the impact of Erasmus, pupils participating in the programme represent a share of the population with higher propensity to work and live abroad.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, the participation in the programme further strengthen their desire to do so (values were 3p.p. higher for the answer "I can easily imagine living abroad at some point

<sup>41</sup> Landesmann, M. & Leitner, S. M. (2015) Intra-EU Mobility and Push and Pull Factors in EU Labour Markets, Estimating a Panel VAR Model, The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (WIIW), Working Paper 120 accessed at <https://wiiw.ac.at/intra-eu-mobility-and-push-and-pull-factors-in-eu-labour-markets-estimating-a-panel-var-model-dlp-3671.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> 90% of Erasmus students answered "I can easily imagine living abroad at some point in the future" vs 78% of non-Erasmus students.

in the future” and 6 p.p. lower for the answer “I would like to live and work in my home country” after participation).

This is generally confirmed in the literature discussing the impact of student mobility on labour mobility.<sup>43,44</sup>

So, looking at Erasmus+ data in MS might complement an outlook for prospect labour mobility flows.

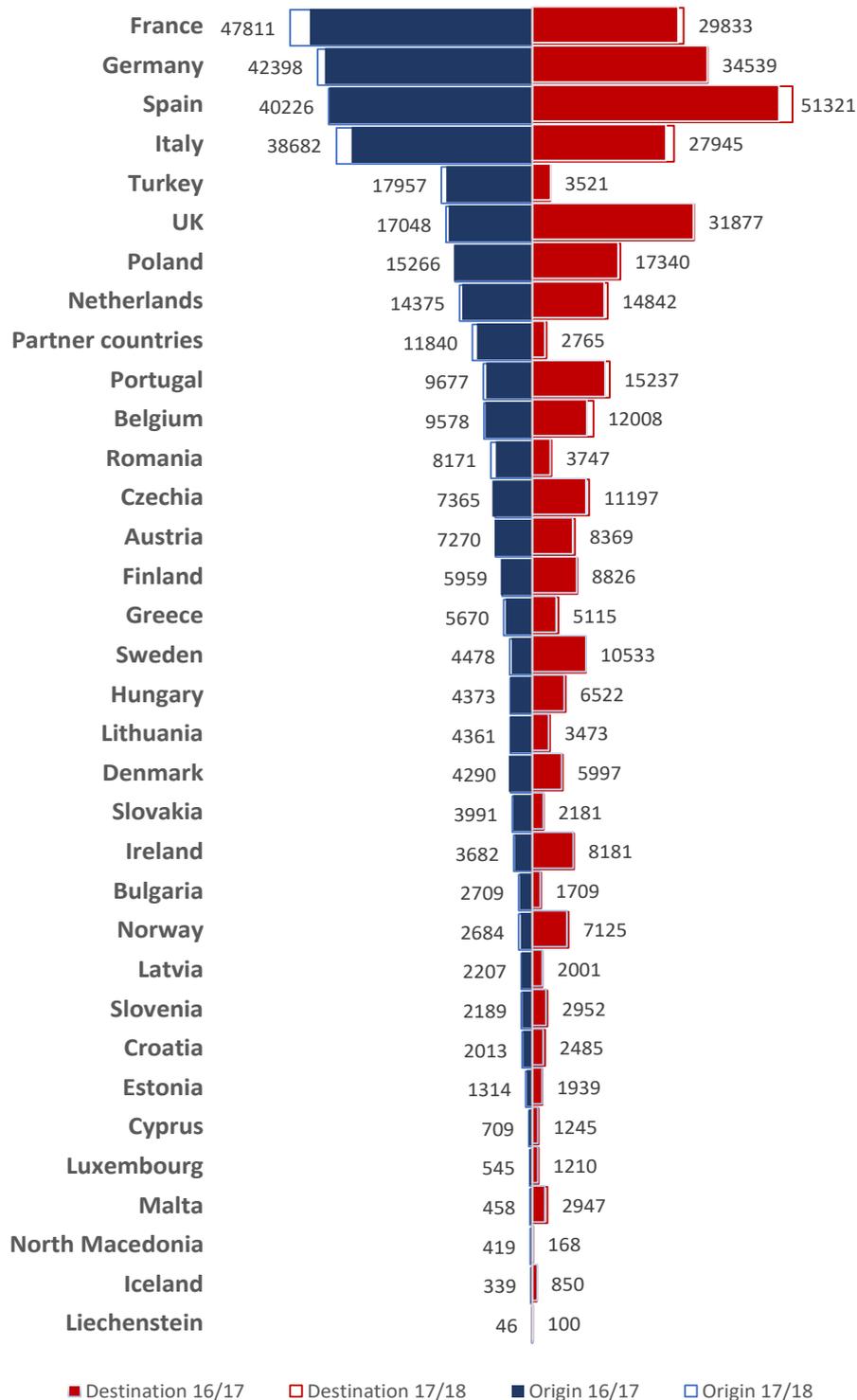
Figure 11 below describes Erasmus+ mobility by Member state (country of origin and destination) for the two latest available years (17/18 and 16/17).

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<sup>43</sup> Stray, A., Fajth, V., Dubow, T. M., Sigel, M. (2018) Determinants Of Migration Flows Within The EU, Maastricht University, Reminder Project, Literature review. P. 88 "*..study can play a role in triggering later movements: an important finding from recent literature is that past experiences seem to greatly influence the likelihood of future movements. Not only first work experiences, but also Erasmus study periods as well as holidays in a specific European country often stimulate future movements, be it in the form of further employment, education or retirement in the respective country.*"

<sup>44</sup> Parey, M. and Waldinger, F. (2011), Studying Abroad and the Effect on International Labour Market Mobility: Evidence from the Introduction of ERASMUS\*. The Economic Journal, 121: 194-222. doi:[10.1111/j.1468-0297.2010.02369.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0297.2010.02369.x)

Figure 11 Participants in Erasmus+ by MS in '17/'18 and '16/'17



It is interesting to notice that the country with the highest number of incoming students is Spain, followed by Germany and the UK, whose performance is nearly matched by that of France and Italy.

The strong inflow of higher education students in countries with seemingly unattractive economic performance underlies the fact that the decision to study abroad might follow a different logic

than that to study abroad, given the pivotal role that the quality of education plays, as well as cultural or social factors.

Yet, the fact that every year approx. 50 thousand soon-to-be tertiary graduates looking for a job have a study experience in Spain means there is a constantly increasing pool of people getting acquainted with the language and culture of their host country, which might contribute to mobility flows. It is also worth noticing that, like Spain, countries such as Portugal and the Czech Republic, in addition to the UK and Scandinavian Countries, are net receivers of mobile students.

Box 6 Determinants of labour mobility: student mobility

There is consensus in the literature that participation in study mobility programmes such as Erasmus+ increases the likelihood of working or living abroad, even beyond the fact that mobile students represent a sample of the population that is intrinsically more prone to do so. Looking at the net student mobility flows, it is interesting to notice that, in addition to Germany, the UK and Scandinavian Countries, also Spain, Portugal and the Czech Republic have been large and net receivers of higher education students from other EU or partner countries. This is a factor which might have facilitated labour market inflows. However, it should be stressed that the choice of the country of destination for studying abroad does not necessarily follow the same rationale of that of working abroad. Thus, this information will be used qualitatively.

## 2.3 Main barriers to labour mobility

### 2.3.1 Overview

The above section provides a description of some of the main socio-economic indicators for labour market imbalances which might affect and “drive” labour mobility in Europe – including as a way to ensure a better functioning of the Single Market by allowing countries to reduce imbalances through the free movement of workers across Europe.

However, there are some important obstacles and barriers to mobility which individuals face when they seek or gain employment in another EU/EFTA country. This is the key element with respect to EURES intervention: the sheer size of the EURES is rather small in comparison with macroeconomic push-pull factors for labour mobility such as pay and unemployment gaps or labour market imbalances. It can, however, play a role in reducing the barriers to mobility to facilitate the free movement of workers.

CEPS’ 2016 research paper on Labour mobility in the EU<sup>45</sup> categorised the main barriers that individuals face when they decide to move abroad for work along the lines of the below:

- **Barriers related to the transparency of information**, i.e. jobseekers’ difficulties in assessing employment options in other Member States
- Administrative and regulatory barriers, including:

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<sup>45</sup> Barslund, M. and Busse, M. (2016) Labour Mobility in the EU, Addressing challenges and ensuring ‘fair mobility’, CEPS special report, No. 139 / July 2016 available at <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/labour-mobility-eu-addressing-challenges-and-ensuring-fair-mobility/>

- Uncertainties with respect to the functioning of social security when moving between countries. Those have however been partly eliminated by social security coordination<sup>46</sup>.
- The issue related to pension portability, which has partly been solved by the Pensions Portability Directive (PPD) adopted in 2014<sup>47</sup>.
- Informal competences and past experience (skills) may also be subject to recognition difficulties and therefore affect the potential remuneration of a worker in the destination labour market.
- Taxation and transport issues, for cross-border workers in particular<sup>48</sup>
- Language barriers
- Cultural barriers

CEPS' research paper stated that "the most important challenge to achieving a single EU labour market is language proficiency". The LFS ad-hoc module on obstacles to employment by migration background confirms that lack of language skills is perceived as one of the main barriers to find a suitable job among EU movers of the first generation. Looking at the countries for which data is available (See figure below), language skills constitutes an obstacle in particular for foreign-born workers moving to Finland (35%), Belgium (24%), Luxembourg (29%), Austria (24%), and Estonia (29%). The lack of recognition of qualifications (administrative barrier) is mostly a problem for foreign-born workers moving to Germany (25%), Italy (27%), Austria (27%) and Belgium (18%).

A public consultation carried out by the European Commission in 2015<sup>49</sup>, directed to citizens, businesses and public authorities in intra EU/EFTA border regions, found that legal and administrative barriers were reported as an obstacle to mobility by the majority of respondents (53%) and language barriers were perceived as an obstacle by 38% of respondents, followed by difficult physical access (32%), economic disparities (29%), public authorities' interest in working together (29%) and sociocultural differences (20%). One of the most cited concerns among legal and administrative barriers is the lack of recognition of education and qualifications, followed by differences in social security, pension and taxation systems.

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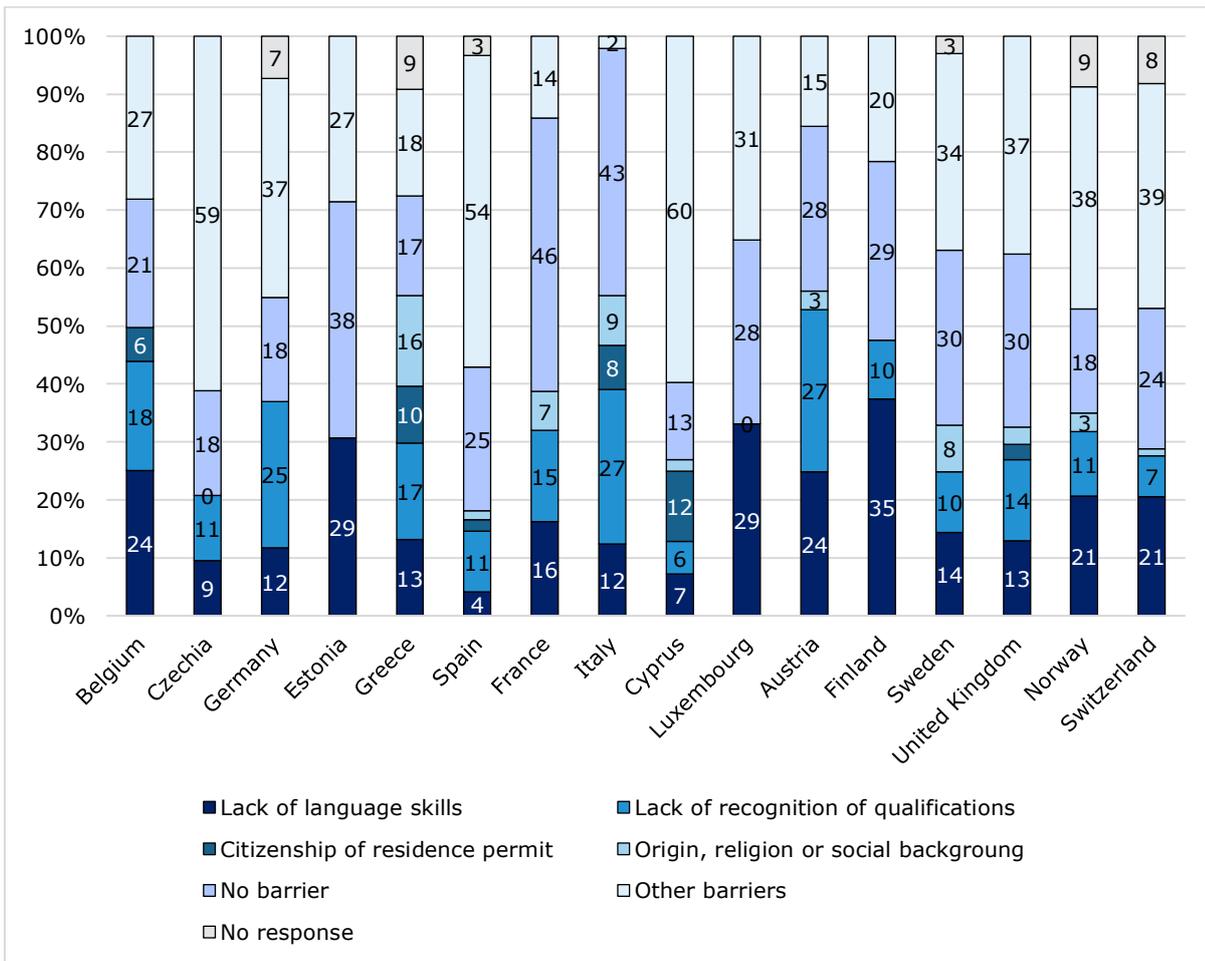
<sup>46</sup> As from 1 May 2010, new Regulations on modernised coordination (Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009) apply. On 13 December 2016, the Commission proposed a revision of the EU legislation on social security coordination. The proposal is currently still being discussed by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.

<sup>47</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1400777407289&uri=CELEX:32014L0050>

<sup>48</sup> In fact, as opposed to social security, in the field of taxation there exist no rules at EU level regarding the definition of cross-border workers, the division of taxing rights between Member States or the tax rules to be applied. Neighbouring Member States with many persons crossing borders to work often agree special rules for cross-border workers in their bilateral double taxation conventions.

<sup>49</sup> European Commission, 2017, Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the document 'Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions, SWD (2017) 307 final.

Figure 12 Reported obstacles to getting a suitable job for foreign-born employed EU-28 movers, 2014 (%)



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, obstacles to getting a suitable job by migration status, labour status and citizenship (lfso\_14ociti)

All in all, language barriers and the lack of recognition of education and qualifications seem to be the most relevant barriers that need to be tackled.

In the next two sections, we take a closer look at two of the main barriers, which also allow some measurability and comparability across countries: language and recognition of qualification.

In interpreting the data below, it is important to bear in mind that:

- A number of EU initiatives exist also beyond EURES that try to tackle such barriers, including Your Europe, SOLVIT<sup>50</sup>, constant work on the coordination of social security systems, the pension portability directives as well as the European Qualification Framework.
- There are a range of country specific or non-measurable barriers which might hamper labour mobility. Family ties, different lifestyles or weather conditions, the distance from the country of origin and so forth, might all discourage people from working abroad. These cannot,

<sup>50</sup> As explained in the 2018 Special Report of the European Court of Audit "Free Movement of Workers – the fundamental freedom ensured but better targeting of EU funds would aid worker mobility", YOUR EUROPE and EURES provide a good basis to get information on individual rights and national labour markets. SOLVIT is a robust system for complaints against unfair treatment by national administrations and YOUR EUROPE ADVICE provides the possibility to contact a legal expert.

however, be standardised for the purposes of this comparative analysis and will be considered qualitatively.

### 2.3.2 Language

Eurostat provides data on the level of the foreign language reported as best-known in the country (self-reported) in 2007, 2011 and 2016<sup>51</sup>. Looking at the percentage of the population being proficient in the language report as best-known in the country can give a useful indication of how “easy” it would be to find a job in another country, especially for citizens of countries whose language is only spoken in their own country.

Clearly, regarding for example German, citizens from Germany, Austria, and additional German-speaking regions (in Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, Poland and Luxembourg) have the possibility to go work in another country/region where German is spoken without having to face a language barrier. The same is true regarding French (for France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland), English (for the UK and Ireland) and Italian (for Italy and Italian-speaking Switzerland).

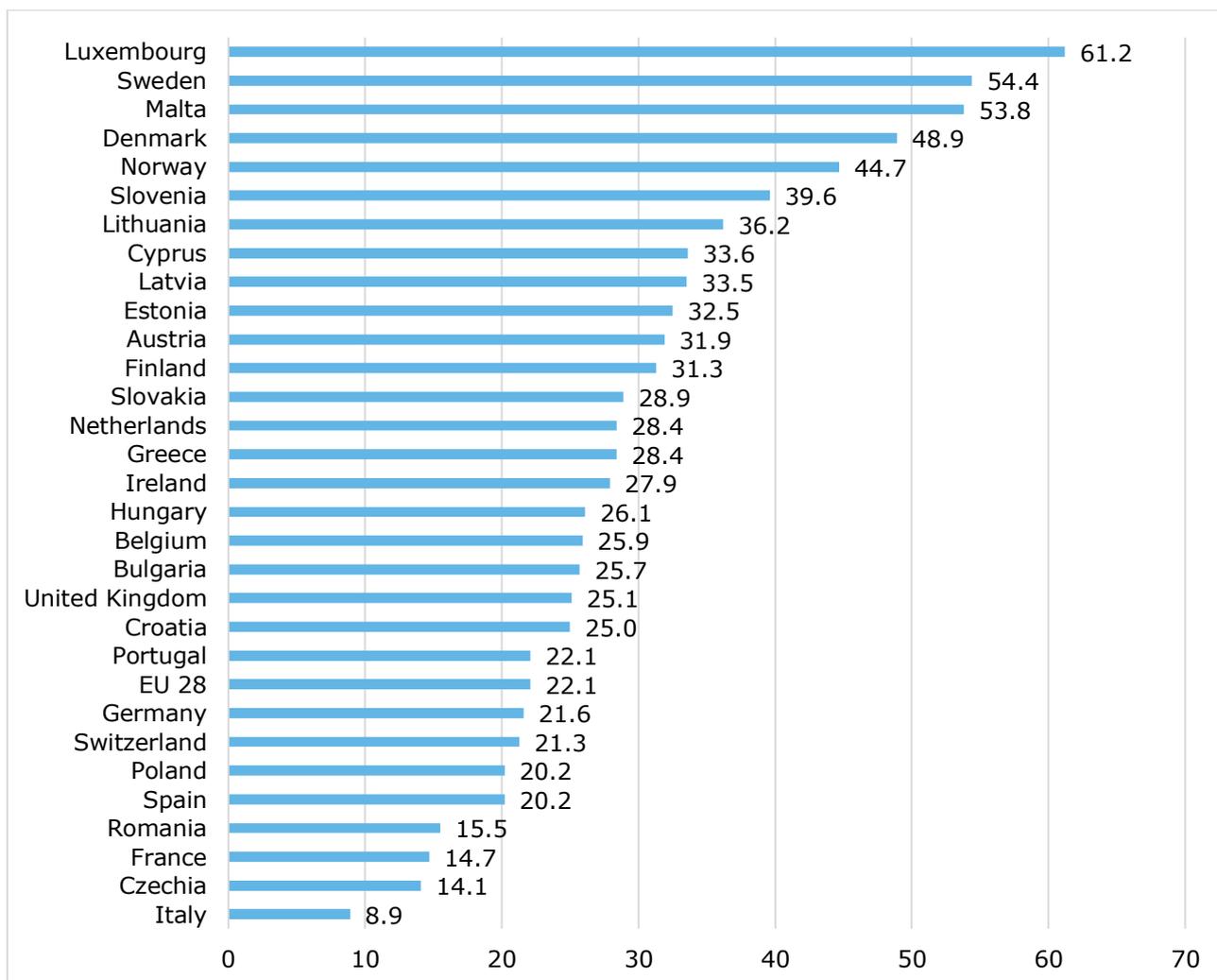
Looking at the data for 2016, in the graph presented below, we can see that Luxembourg, Sweden, Malta, Denmark and Norway were the only countries in which more than 40% of the population was proficient in the foreign language reported as best known in the country.

The EU 28 average was much lower, with only 22.1% of the population being proficient. The EU 28 average is brought down by major countries like Germany, Spain, France and Italy where the percentage of the population being proficient in the foreign language reported as best known in the country is below the EU 28 average, especially in Italy and France.

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<sup>51</sup> edat\_aes\_l54

Figure 13 Percentage of the population being "Proficient" in the foreign language reported as best known in the country, 2016

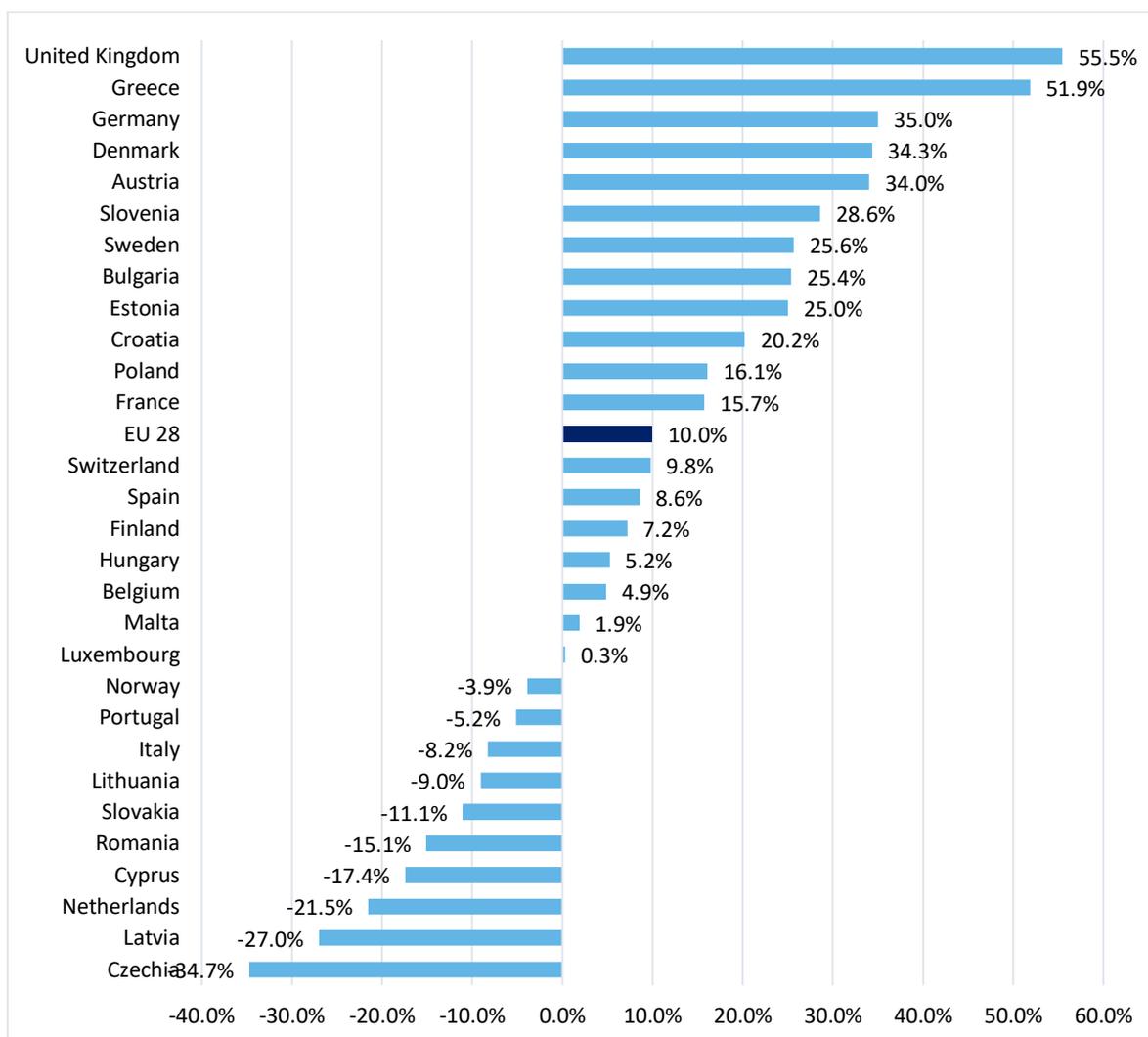


Source: Eurostat edat\_aes\_I54

In terms of how language proficiency evolved over time<sup>52</sup> as shown by Figure 14, we see that at the EU 28 level a slow but positive trend is registered between 2011 and 2016, with an overall increase of 10% of the population being proficient (from 20.1% in 2011 to 22.1% in 2016) in a second language.

<sup>52</sup> Data was collected at three points in time: 2007, 2011 and 2016. We look at the variation rate between 2011 and 2016. Unfortunately, data availability is not homogenous across countries: data is available for all countries for 2016, and for most countries also for 2007 and 2011. However, no data is available for Ireland for 2007 and 2011. For Croatia, Romania and the UK no data is available for 2011. For these three countries, we will calculate an approximation of the variation rate between 2011 and 2016 dividing by 2 the variation rate between 2007 and 2016.

Figure 14 Variation rate of language proficiency between 2011 and 2016



Source: Eurostat edat\_aes\_I54. Missing data for Ireland. Variation rates of Croatia, Romania and UK are an approximation, equal to the variation rate between 2007 and 2016 divided by 2 due to data availability.

The trend has been particularly positive in the UK, Greece, Germany, Denmark and Austria, where the percentage of proficient population has increased by more than 30%. However, for some countries the percentage of the population being proficient in the foreign language reported as best known in the country decreased, especially in Czech Republic, Latvia and the Netherlands.

Box 7 Barriers to labour mobility: language proficiency and its evolution

Proficiency in the best foreign language best-known in the country can be used as proxy for the existence of language barriers to labour mobility. Based on this, as of 2016:

- A general increase in the language proficiency was recorded across the EU-28
- Countries such as Italy, Czech Republic, Spain and Romania tended to show high language barriers with little or no progress over time
- Countries such as the Malta and Cyprus, Scandinavian Countries, but also Slovenia and Slovakia showed higher than average language proficiency with a positive or neutral trend.

There are clearly some common linguistic areas (e.g. German, French, Italian speaking countries or regions etc) which significantly reduce barriers within the same areas.

### 2.3.3 Recognition of qualifications

As mentioned above, the lack of recognition of qualifications and educational attainments can be an important obstacle to mobility. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common European reference framework whose purpose is to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems. The EQF covers qualifications at all levels and in all sub-systems of education and training, thus providing a comprehensive overview over qualifications in the 39 European countries currently involved in its implementation. By 2019, all EU 28 and EFTA countries have referenced their frameworks to the EQF. However, the national qualification frameworks being adopted or refined did not show in some cases a close alignment with the EQF.

The core of the EQF is its eight reference levels defined in terms of learning outcomes, i.e. knowledge, skills and autonomy-responsibility. Learning outcomes express what individuals know, understand and are able to do at the end of a learning process. Countries develop national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) to implement the EQF. However, not all countries closely aligned their NQF descriptors to EQF ones<sup>53</sup>.

As explained in the Cedefop analysis and overview of NQF level descriptors in European countries<sup>54</sup>, *"close alignment to the EQF descriptors may aid cross border comparison"*. However, *"it may also reduce the ability to capture national specificities and complexities. The development of national level descriptors has largely taken place within this tension."*

For the purpose of this study, we have categorised countries based on their level of alignment with EQF (following Cedefop's categorisation<sup>55</sup>). Countries where the NQF is closely aligned to EQF or where the NQF is influenced by the EQF can be considered as countries where cross-country comparison of qualifications might be easier. Countries that decided to maintain their national specificities and adopt a more comprehensive notion of competence - by significantly adapting and modifying learning outcomes definitions and descriptions by level - are countries where cross border comparison might be less straightforward. In this case, the barrier arises both for a mover coming from abroad to a country where the NQF is difficult to compare with the mover's NQF, and for a national of a country where the NQF is difficult to compare with others who wants to work in another country. It is therefore easier to move to and depart from countries with an NQF that is aligned or influenced by the EQF to another country where the alignment or similarity is present.

<sup>53</sup> In fact, some countries broadened and partly reoriented their descriptors, mainly modifying the "autonomy-responsibility" column, but still have an NQF that is influenced by the EQF. Another group of countries see competence as an overarching and complex concept, significantly influencing the way learning outcomes are defined and described in level descriptors. These countries emphasize a more comprehensive notion of competence. According to this approach, knowledge, skills and attitudes are not atomised entities which can be judged in isolation from each other; individuals have to combine and apply them in the concrete contexts provided by work and learning. For more details: [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5566\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5566_en.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> [https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5566\\_en.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5566_en.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> The distinction between countries whose NQF is influenced by the EQF but broadened/modified and countries which have a more complex framework that maintains country specificities is not always clear-cut. See the Cedefop Analysis and overview of NQF level descriptors in European countries published in 2018 for more details.

Table 1 below presents the categorisation of countries.

Table 1 Countries classified by category of NQF

<b>Close alignment</b>	<b>Influenced by EQF</b>	<b>More comprehensive approach</b>
<b>Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia</b>	Bulgaria, Denmark, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland	Belgium, Germany, Ireland, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Czech Republic (NQF not fully developed yet)

Box 8 Barriers to labour mobility: alignment to the EQF

<p>Amongst the legal and administrative barriers, the lack of recognition of qualifications and educational attainments can be an important obstacle to mobility. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common European reference framework whose purpose is to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems. Based on available research from Cedefop, countries can be categorised by their level of alignment to it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close alignment: Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia</li> <li>• Influenced by EQF: Bulgaria, Denmark, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland</li> <li>• More comprehensive approach: Belgium, Germany, Ireland, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Czech Republic (NQF not fully developed yet)</li> </ul>
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### *2.3.4 Concluding Remarks and implications on well-being*

Even if intra-EU labour mobility is protected by European Law and supported by several EU policies and instruments<sup>56</sup> and already involves a significant share of the population in Europe, obstacles remain that prevent workers from seeking working opportunities abroad and employers from finding the skills they need abroad.

Amongst those discussed above, language and the recognition of competences appear to be the most significant obstacles for intra-EU labour mobility.<sup>57</sup>

Based on available data, language proficiency was still pretty low across the EU<sup>58</sup> although increasing by 2 p.p., from 20.1% to 22.1% between 2011 and 2016.<sup>59</sup>

The European Commission, Cedefop and the Member States have focussed on a better recognition of qualifications as part of the creation and implementation of a common European framework of

<sup>56</sup> E.g. [MoveS](#), [EU Cohesion policy](#), [European Pillar of Social Rights](#).

<sup>57</sup> Based on Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, obstacles to getting a suitable job and Barslund, M. and Busse, M. (2016) Labour Mobility in the EU, Addressing challenges and ensuring 'fair mobility', CEPS special report, No. 139 / July 2016 ISBN 978-94-6138- 529-1 accessed at <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/labour-mobility-eu-addressing-challenges-and-ensuring-fair-mobility/>

<sup>58</sup> Concerning languages, the comparative analysis shows that Luxembourg, Sweden, Malta, Denmark and Norway are the only countries in which more than 40% of the population is proficient in a second language, more specifically the foreign language reported as best known in the country.

<sup>59</sup> More updated data does not exist, hence the need to describe the trend with 2011 and 2016 data.

qualification (EQF). As of 2018, most EU Member States had completed the first stage, that is, the referencing to the EQF. However, the national qualification frameworks being adopted or refined did not show in some cases a close alignment with the EQF. In as much as regulated professions are concerned, further to the revision in 2013 of the Professional Qualifications Directive (Directive 2013/55/EU), and despite some improvements, obstacles seem to remain also in this domain<sup>60</sup>. In this case too, the main barriers identified appear to be the complexity and fragmentation of the recognition process, especially in some Member States, and language hindrances.

Amongst other administrative obstacles, steps towards a fuller harmonisation of the social security systems are expected following the adoption of the Directive 2014/50/EU on minimum requirements for enhancing worker mobility between Member States by improving pension rights. The impact of the directive was hard to assess conclusively given its late transposition in national legislations<sup>61</sup>.

Information on job opportunities was still considered to be low overall by the European Court of Auditors<sup>62</sup>, although the specific role of EURES in this respect and the progress being made are discussed more in detail in the study's results.

In general, our analysis shows that countries with higher barriers to labour mobility tended to be those with worse employment prospects, often coupled with high levels of overqualified workers. This is especially true of Southern Mediterranean countries. In these countries, matching efficiency too appears to have significantly dropped with respect with the pre-crisis level, with only marginal improvements – if any – through 2014-2018<sup>63</sup>.

This has consequences in terms of persisting labour market imbalances, which, in turn, implies costs for individuals, firms and the economy as a whole. Such consequences spill over to countries which are relatively better off in terms of their socio-economic context and yet show increasingly high levels of job vacancy rates and increasing struggles to match their labour demand also from a qualitative point of view.

In particular, evidence from the literature indicates<sup>64</sup> that at the individual level skills mismatches tend to compress earnings - permanently in the case of the so-call "overqualification trap"<sup>65</sup> -, exert downward pressure on wages of the low skilled, and be conducive to lower skills development.

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<sup>60</sup> Adamis- Császár, K., De Keyser, L., Fries-Tersch, E., et al. Labour mobility and recognition in the regulated professions, Study for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, European Parliament, Luxembourg, 2019

<sup>61</sup> COM(2020) 291 final, Report From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council And The European Economic And Social Committee on the application of Directive 2014/50/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on minimum requirements for enhancing worker mobility between Member States by improving the acquisition and preservation of supplementary pension rights, p. 16

<sup>62</sup> European Court of Auditors (2018), Free Movement of Workers – the fundamental freedom ensured but better targeting of EU funds would aid worker mobility, Special Report No 6 accessed at <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=44964> on the lack of complete information on job opportunities

<sup>63</sup> This is demonstrated by a significant outward shift of the Beveridge Curve, which describes the relationship between job vacancy rates and unemployment rates. Job vacancy rates have increased in these countries despite high and increased unemployment rates, as clarified in Brunello, G. and Wruuck, P. (2019) Skill shortages and skill mismatch in Europe: A review of the literature, European Investment Bank, ECONOMICS – WORKING PAPERS 2019/05

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> See for instance Erdsiek, D. (2017) Dynamics of Overqualification: Evidence from the Early Career of Graduates, Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW) Mannheim, Discussion Paper No. 17-020 accessed at <http://ftp.zew.de/pub/zew-docs/dp/dp17020.pdf>

For firms, skills mismatches are traditionally associated with lower productivity and innovation potential<sup>66</sup> as well as higher costs of hiring (due to higher turnover of employees ill matched with their job).

At the aggregate level, although the evidence is more mixed given the complexity of the issue from a macroeconomic perspective, skills mismatches and labour market imbalances have been associated with higher structural unemployment<sup>67</sup>, lower average productivity<sup>68</sup> and significant reductions of the economy's output<sup>69</sup>.

Hence the pivotal role that EURES is expected to play in providing information on job opportunities, living and working abroad, language training as well as post-recruitment assistance<sup>70</sup>, redressing barriers to labour mobility and thus helping improve matching efficiency towards a better functioning of the Single Market.

## 2.4 Stock and Flows: actual mobility and labour mobility outlook

After having discussed main determinants and barriers to intra-EU labour mobility, and how countries compare one another in this respect, attention is turned to actual mobility trends. This is relevant for two main purposes: first, to describe the flows to which EURES activities contribute and, second, to contrast the picture of push-pull factors and barriers of labour mobility taking into account real labour mobility - which can be influenced by a range of non-observable factors as anticipated.

It is important to clarify from the outset, labour-related mobility can take different forms and thus be measured through different indexes. The main dimensions of labour mobility investigated in this study are the following:

- General labour mobility, which includes:
  - Mobile individuals of working age who were born in an EURES country but reside in an EURES country that is not their country of origin. Not all of them are employed, but might be inactive (studying) or looking for a job abroad. This data is based on migration statistics, and allows distinguishing between inflows and outflows of people of working age (20-64). This data is however not available by educational attainment level.

<sup>66</sup> See for instance, Adalet McGowan, M. and D. Andrews (2015), "Labour Market Mismatch and Labour Productivity: Evidence from PIAAC Data", *OECD Economics Department Working Papers*, No. 1209, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5js1pzx1r2kb-en>.

<sup>67</sup> Driehuis\*, W. (1978), LABOUR MARKET IMBALANCES AND STRUCTURAL UNEMPLOYMENT. *Kyklos*, 31: 638-661. doi: [10.1111/j.1467-6435.1978.tb00664.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6435.1978.tb00664.x)

<sup>68</sup> Adalet McGowan, M. and D. Andrews (2015), "Labour Market Mismatch and Labour Productivity: Evidence from PIAAC Data", *OECD Economics Department Working Papers*, No. 1209, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5js1pzx1r2kb-en>. but also Bennet, J. and McGuinness, S. 2009, Assessing the Impact of Skill Shortages on the Productivity Performance of High-Tech Firms in Northern Ireland, *Applied Economics*, Vol. 727-737

<sup>69</sup> For instance, in Garibaldi, P., Gomes, P. and Soprasedu, T. (2020) Output Costs of Education and Skill Mismatch, IZA DP No. 12974 accessed at <https://www.iza.org/de/publications/dp/12974/output-costs-of-education-and-skill-mismatch> the cost of skills mismatches translates into differences in output for 17 OECD economies which range from -1% to +9%. The key variable that explains the output cost of mismatch is not the percentage of mismatched workers but their wage relative to well-matched workers (the larger the difference the higher the cost)

<sup>70</sup> The importance of post-recruitment assistance in this respect is linked to the support with taxation and social security matters as well as language training it can provide. Expectations over the receipt of such support are likely to incentivise the move by tackling its root barriers.

- Mobile workers, that is, individuals in employment who were born in an EURES country but reside in an EURES country that is not their country of origin. Data on flows is not available, but data on educational attainments is.

Given the respective limitations, and in order to compare stock and flows, data on individuals of working age and of people of working are discussed jointly.

- Cross-border workers: these are individuals who reside in an EURES country but work in another EURES country.
- Posted-workers: workers who are sent by their employers to work in another EURES country on a temporary basis. This is often related to a contract of services, an intra-group posting, or a hiring out through a temporary agency.

Overall, looking at LFS data, in 2019 the stock of working age EU-28 movers<sup>71</sup> reached 13.2 million, an increase of 2.3% compared to 2018<sup>72</sup>. Between 2017 and 2018 it had increased by 1.9% compared to 2017. Both represented a less prominent increase compared to the annual growth rate of approximately 5% each year between 2012 and 2016. The stock of EU-28 and EFTA movers in 2019 was 13.5 million.

However, since 2012, there has been an overall increase in the stock of working age EU-28 movers of 31.5%, from around 10 million in 2012 to the 13.2 million in 2019. Looking at EU-28 plus EFTA movers, there has been an overall increase of 31% (from 10.2 million in 2012 to 13.5 million in 2019).

This overall data describes the trend of intra-EU mobility of people in working age in aggregated terms. In what follows we break down the analysis at the country level and look at both mobility of people in working age (data on flows) as well as figures for mobile workers (data on stock), including cross-border mobility.

### *2.4.1 General labour mobility<sup>73</sup>*

For the purpose of this study, mobile workers are defined as employed EU-28 citizens who reside in a Member State or EFTA country other than their country of citizenship. We are therefore interested to observe labour mobility **stocks** and their characteristics both in terms of citizenship of movers (from where they are moving, “sending countries”) and their country of residence (where they are going to, “hosting countries”). We are also interested in immigration and emigration **flows**, as they will then serve as a point of comparison with corresponding yearly inflows and outflows of EURES job finders.

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<sup>71</sup> EU-28 citizens who reside in an EU-28 or EFTA country other than their country of citizenship

<sup>72</sup> Eurostat lfst\_lmbpcited

<sup>73</sup> Because of data availability, when looking at mobile workers by country of citizenship using Eurostat public data we are only able to work out the number of those who are employed. Employed movers are a majority (78.4% of EU 28/EFTA movers in 2019), but when interpreting the data presented in what follows it should be taken into account that labour mobility figures would be higher if we could also include the number of those who are unemployed – and thus active. That being said, the purpose of this study is not to provide a detailed assessment of the number of movers from each country, but rather to describe general trends and characteristics of movers. By looking at employed movers only, we will still be able to understand which are the main sending and hosting countries.

In this section, we look at the stocks of employed EU/EFTA citizens. They will be referred to as “mobile workers” in what follows. We also look at the flows of EU/EFTA movers of working age<sup>74</sup> (immigration and emigration flows).

Looking at LFS data, in 2019 the stock of EU-28 mobile workers was at 10.4 million, an increase of 3.4% compared to 2018. Between 2017 and 2018 it had increased by 3.1% compared to 2017. Both represented a less prominent increase compared to the annual growth rate of approximately 6.6% each year between 2012 and 2016. The stock of EU-28 and EFTA mobile workers in 2019 was 10.5 million and followed a similar trend since 2012. Looking at **mobility flows** (immigration and emigration flows), they have remained more or less stable over the years; however **they increased slightly from 2014 to 2017** (around 1.5 million in 2014, 1.6 in 2015, 1.6 in 2016 and 1.7 in 2017) and went back to around 1.6 million in 2018.

**Since 2012, there has been an overall increase in the stock of EU-28 mobile workers of 43.5%**, from around 7.2 million in 2012 to the 10.4 million in 2019. Looking at EU-28 plus EFTA mobile workers, there has been an overall increase of 43% (from 7.3 million in 2012 to 10.5 million in 2019). Therefore, the stock of mobile workers seems to have been increasing more than the stock of overall movers.

Box 9 Mobility and labour mobility: an overview of stocks and flows

Over recent years, there has been an increasing stock of EU and EFTA of individuals of working age, and an even more significant increase of mobile workers, from 7.3 million to 10.5 million. In 2017-2019 the rate at which stocks are growing is lower than through 2012-2016.

In terms of flows, that is, people in working age moving to a different country each year, the figures have remained comparatively steady over 2012-2018, with over 1.5 million individuals per year moving to a different country.

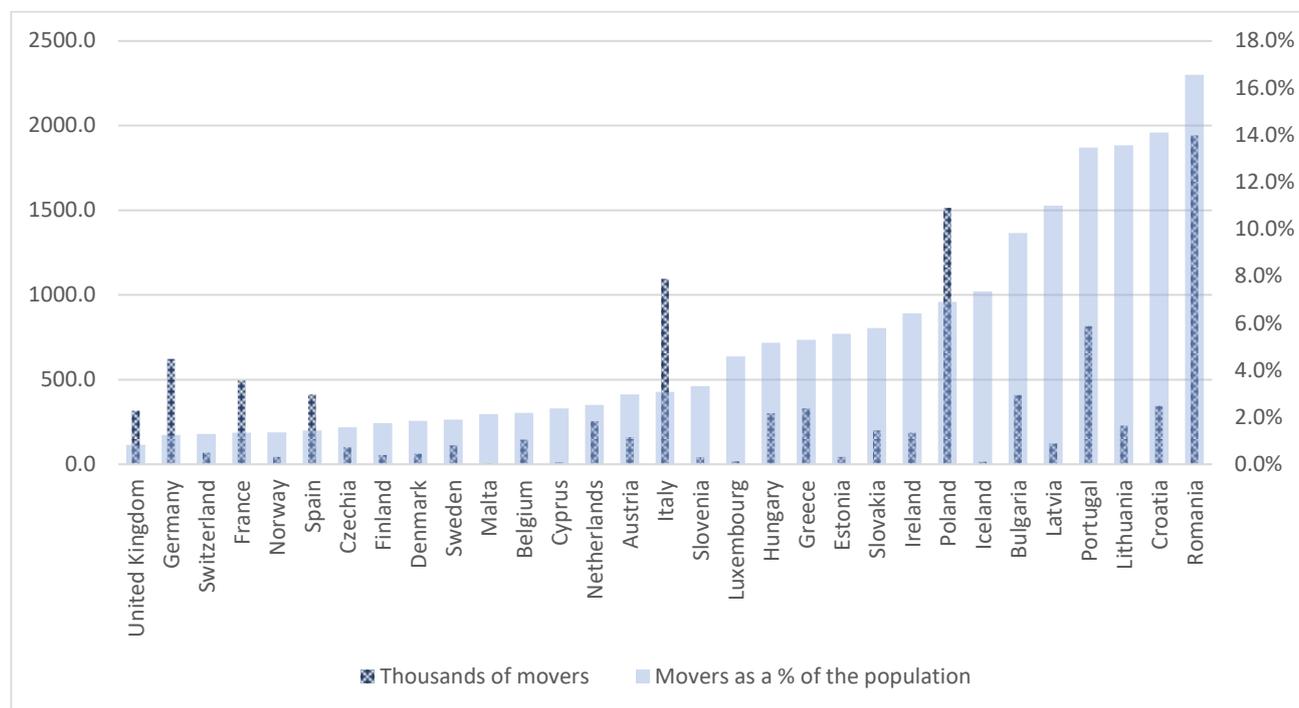
### **Sending countries**

The figure below presents the stock of employed movers by their country of citizenship in 2019, in thousands and as a percentage of the total working age population.

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<sup>74</sup> Eurostat [migr\_imm5prv] and [migr\_emi3nxt]. The data available does not allow to only account for active or employed movers; however only including movers of working age should limit the risk of taking into account non-labour mobility.

Figure 15 Employed EU/EFTA citizens of working age who usually reside in another EU/EFTA country by country of citizenship (20-64 years old) in 2019, thousand persons and as % of total working age population



Source: Eurostat, calculations based on [lfst\_lmbpcited], [lfst\_lmbercited] and [lfsq\_pganws]

The main countries of origin, i.e. “sending countries”, of mobile EU/EFTA workers in terms of volume are **Romania** (almost 2 million citizens), Poland (1.5 million), Italy (1.1 million), followed by **Portugal, Germany, France, Spain and Bulgaria** where more than 400 thousand employed citizens were residing in another EU/EFTA country in 2019.

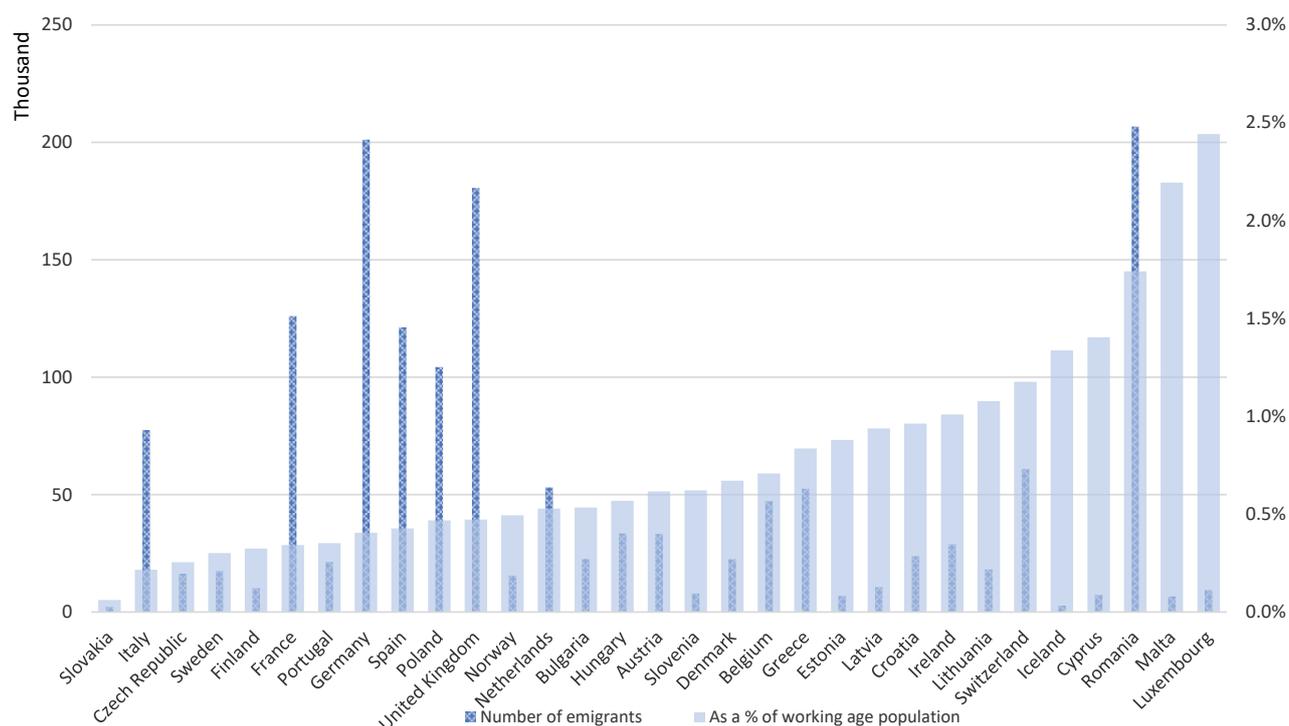
If we look at it in relative terms, i.e. the number of mobile employed citizens as a proportion of the total population, the “ranking” is modified. However, **Romania remains the most important country of origin of mobile workers**, with 16.6% of its citizens being employed and residents in another EU/EFTA country. **Portugal** also remains at the top, with 13.5% of its citizens. Regarding Germany and Spain, only 1.3% and 1.4% respectively of their citizens are employed and reside in another EU/EFTA country. In combined terms (absolute and relative values), Romania, Portugal, Poland, Croatia and Bulgaria appear as the main sending countries.

Looking at **emigration flows**<sup>75</sup> in Figure 16 of working age population in 2018<sup>76</sup> (by country from which they emigrate to a different EU/EFTA country), in absolute terms the largest outflow of working age movers took place from Romania in 2018, followed by Germany, UK, France, Spain, Poland and Italy. In relative terms, however, **emigration from Luxembourg was the largest as a % of the total working age population**, followed by Malta, Romania, Cyprus, Iceland, Switzerland, Lithuania, Ireland, Croatia and Latvia. Hence main sending countries in combined terms appear to be Romania, Greece, Lithuania, Croatia, Belgium and a few smaller countries such as Cyprus, Malta, Luxembourg.

<sup>75</sup> Eurostat, [migr\_emi3nxt]

<sup>76</sup> Data not yet available for 2019

Figure 16 Emigration flows of working age population by country in 2018, absolute values and as a % of total working age population



Source: Eurostat [migr\_emi3nxt]

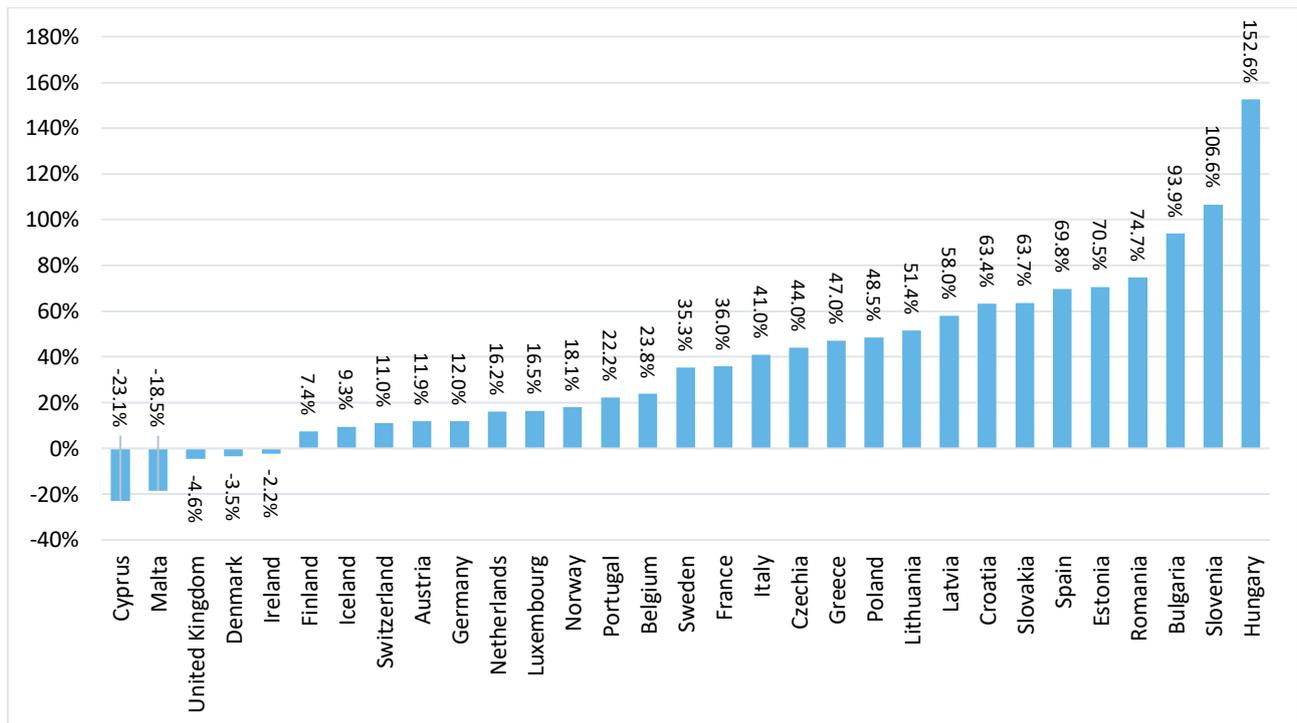
We now look at the evolution over time in the stock and flows of movers.

Figure 17 shows the variation rate between 2012 and 2019 in the stock of movers.

**The greatest increase since 2012 in the stock of mobile workers took place among citizens from Eastern-European countries**, especially from Hungary (with an increase of 152.6%), Slovenia (106.6%), Bulgaria (93.9%), Romania (74.7%) and Estonia (70.5%). A consistent increase also took place among Spanish (69.8%), Greek (47.0%) and Italian citizens (41.0%). Northern-European countries all experienced relatively lower increases in the stock of their citizens working abroad since 2012.

The stock of mobile workers decreased since 2012 only for movers from Cyprus (by 23.1%), Malta (18.5%), UK (4.6%), Denmark (3.5%) and Ireland (2.2%).

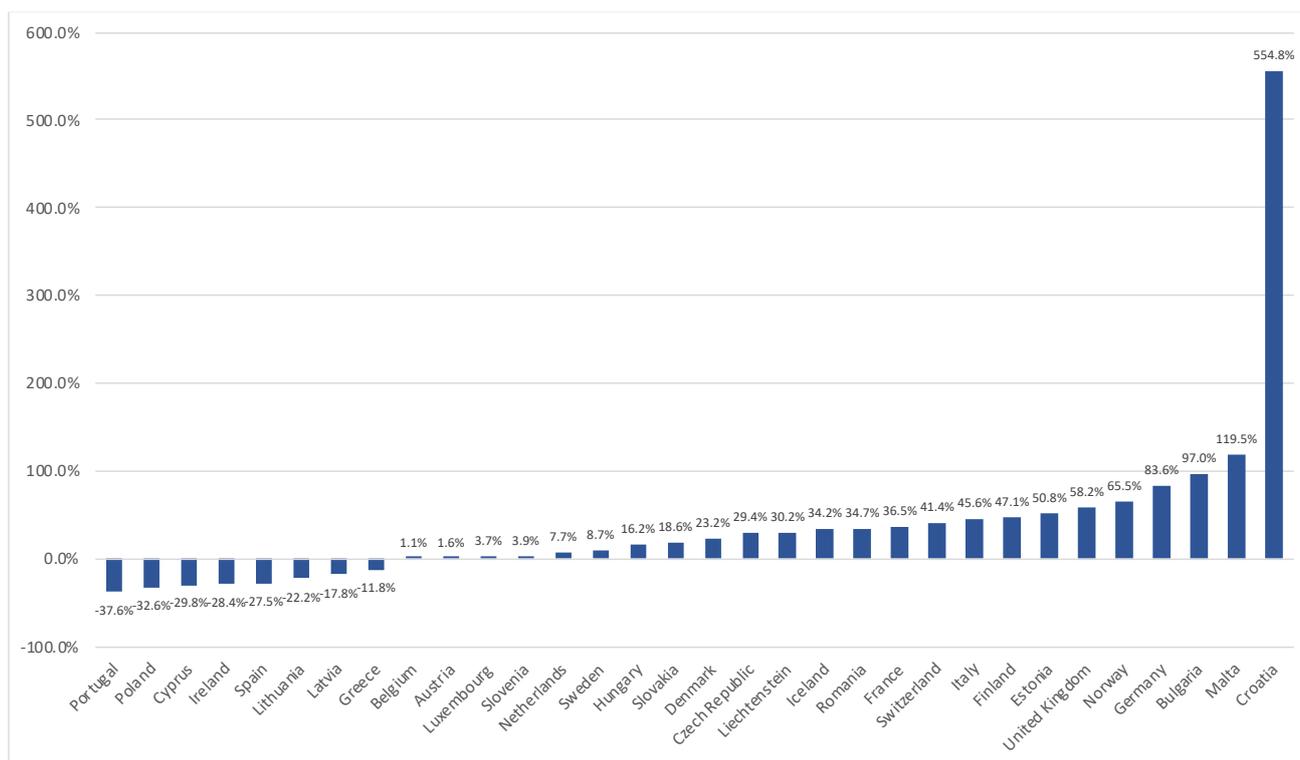
Figure 17 Variation rate between 2012 and 2019 of the number of employed EU/EFTA citizens of working age who usually reside in another EU/EFTA country, by country of citizenship



Source: Eurostat, calculations based on [lfst\_lmbspced], [lfst\_lmberced]

Comparing yearly emigration flows in 2018 with emigration flows in 2013 (Figure 16) shows that emigration flows were higher in 2018 compared to 2013 for most countries – particularly Croatia, but also Malta and Bulgaria.

Figure 18 Variation of the yearly emigration flows between 2013 and 2018



Source: Eurostat [migr\_emi3nxt]

Emigration flows have instead been decreasing - they were higher in 2013 than in 2018 - from Portugal, Poland, Cyprus, Ireland, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia and Greece.

When looking at the average annual variation rate before and after 2016 of the stock of movers, we see that overall – EU 28 and EFTA average – **mobility stocks have been increasing more rapidly between 2012 and 2016 than between 2016 and 2019**: the average annual variation rate was 6.6% in 2012-2016 and it was 3.5% in 2016-2019.

For 11 countries, the average annual growth rate of movers was instead higher after 2016. This is the case for Belgium, Germany, Croatia, Cyprus, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, UK, Iceland and Switzerland. Only for UK citizens the average annual variation rate of mobile workers has stayed negative since 2012. Hungary displays the highest difference between pre and post 2016: the number of movers from this country was increasing by around 21% every year before 2016, and only by around 5% every year after 2016. Thus, although the stock of mobile workers has been increasing since 2012, the rate of this increase has been slowing down in the most recent years.

Box 10 Mobility and labour mobility: main sending countries, stock and flows

In terms of stock, the main sending countries as of 2019 were Romania, Portugal, Poland, Croatia and Bulgaria, hence central-eastern European countries, followed by Member States in the Mediterranean area, confirming the role of income differences as a push factor. The 2012-2019 differences of the stock of workers too point to large increases for the same countries, even more so for Spain, Greece and Italy especially after 2016 as difference in income started to narrow for central-eastern EU countries.

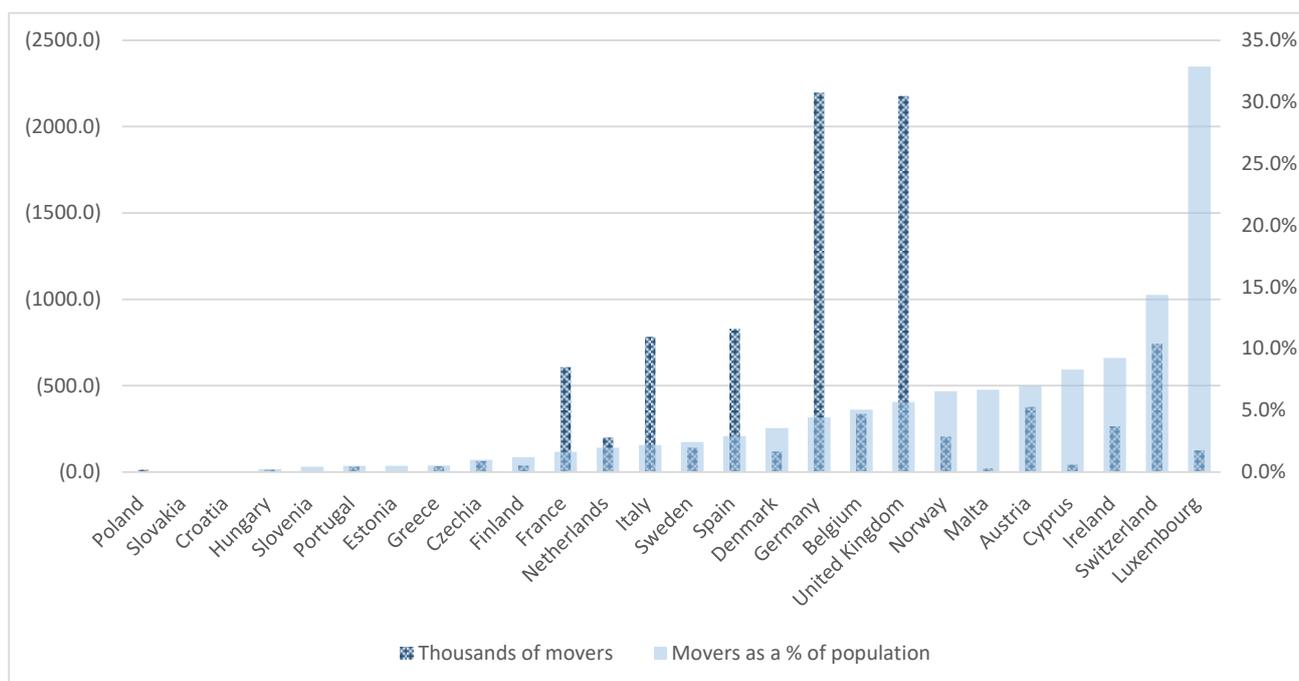
In terms of flows, the main sending countries in 2018 in combined (relative<sup>77</sup> and absolute) terms were Romania, Greece, Lithuania, Croatia, Belgium and a few smaller countries such as Cyprus, Malta, Luxembourg. In terms of trend, mobility has overall slightly decreased between 2013 and 2018, and especially so in for countries experience steady growth over recent years such as Poland, Portugal, Cyprus and Spain. This seems consistent with the evolution of aggregate push-pull factors. Amongst the countries with increasing flows we find especially Croatia – and inevitably so given the entry in the EU – but also Malta, Bulgaria, Germany, Norway and the UK.

### Hosting countries<sup>78</sup>

Figure 19 presents the data on the number of EU 28<sup>79</sup> mobile workers by country of residence, i.e. “hosting countries” in 2018, in thousands and as a percentage of the total working age population.

**Germany and the UK** are by far the two most important countries of residence for EU 28 movers in absolute terms, with more than 2 million of movers each. They are followed at a distance by Spain, Italy, Switzerland and France, with an amount of EU movers ranging from around 606 thousands in France and 830 thousands in Spain.

Figure 19 Employed EU 28 citizens of working age who usually reside in another EU/EFTA country by country of residence (20-64 years old) in 2018, thousand persons and as a % of working age population



Source: Eurostat LFS, data provided by COM. Missing or unreliable data for Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Iceland.

It is however interesting to also look at employed EU 28 citizens by country of residence **as a percentage of the total population of working age in the same country**, to have an idea of the relative amount of foreign EU 28 workers in each hosting country.

<sup>77</sup> As a share of total working age population

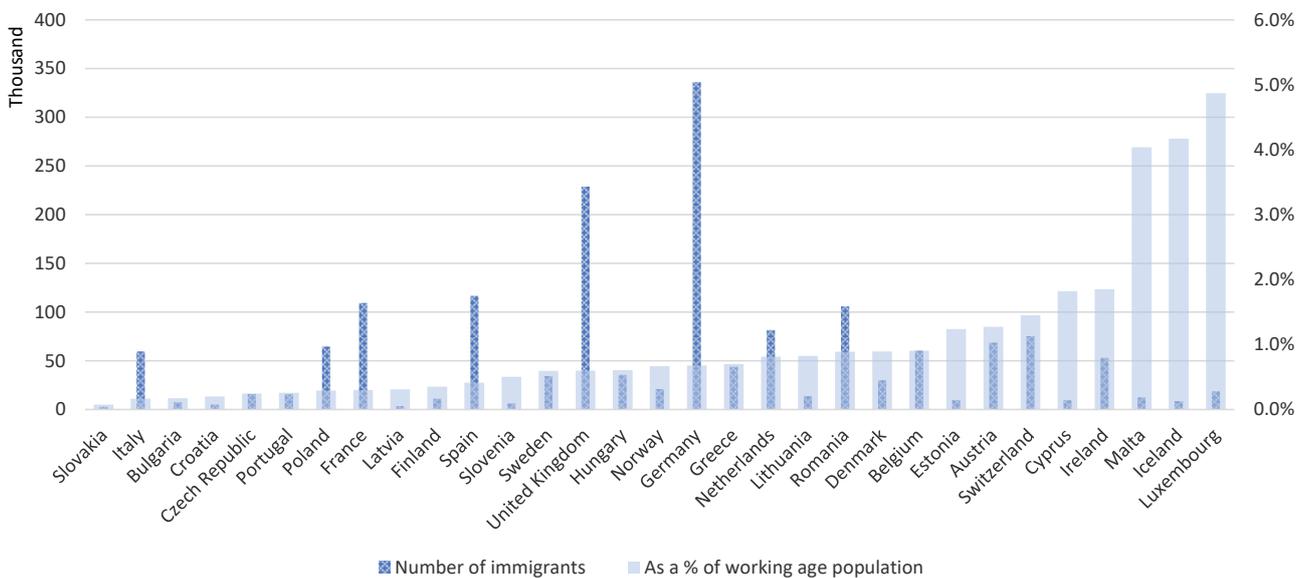
<sup>78</sup> Data availability for this study on the total stock of employed movers by country of residence is unfortunately limited to the period 2016-2018.

<sup>79</sup> Due to data availability, there are no figure on the aggregate EU/EFTA movers.

The collected information shows that in relative terms, **Luxembourg is by far the country with the highest percentage of EU 28 mobile workers coming from abroad (32.9%)**, followed by **Switzerland (14.3%)** and **Ireland (9.2%)**. In the UK, EU 28 mobile workers represent 5.7% of the working age population and in Germany 4.4%. These are still quite high considering that both countries, in particular Germany, are highly populated.

Looking at the **immigration flows** of EU28/EFTA movers of working age, in 2018 Luxembourg was also the country with the highest relative amount of EU28/EFTA movers moving to Luxembourg within the year, followed by Iceland, Malta, Ireland, Cyprus, Switzerland and Austria. Figure 20 presents the amounts of immigrants in 2018 both in absolute and relative terms (as a % of working age population).

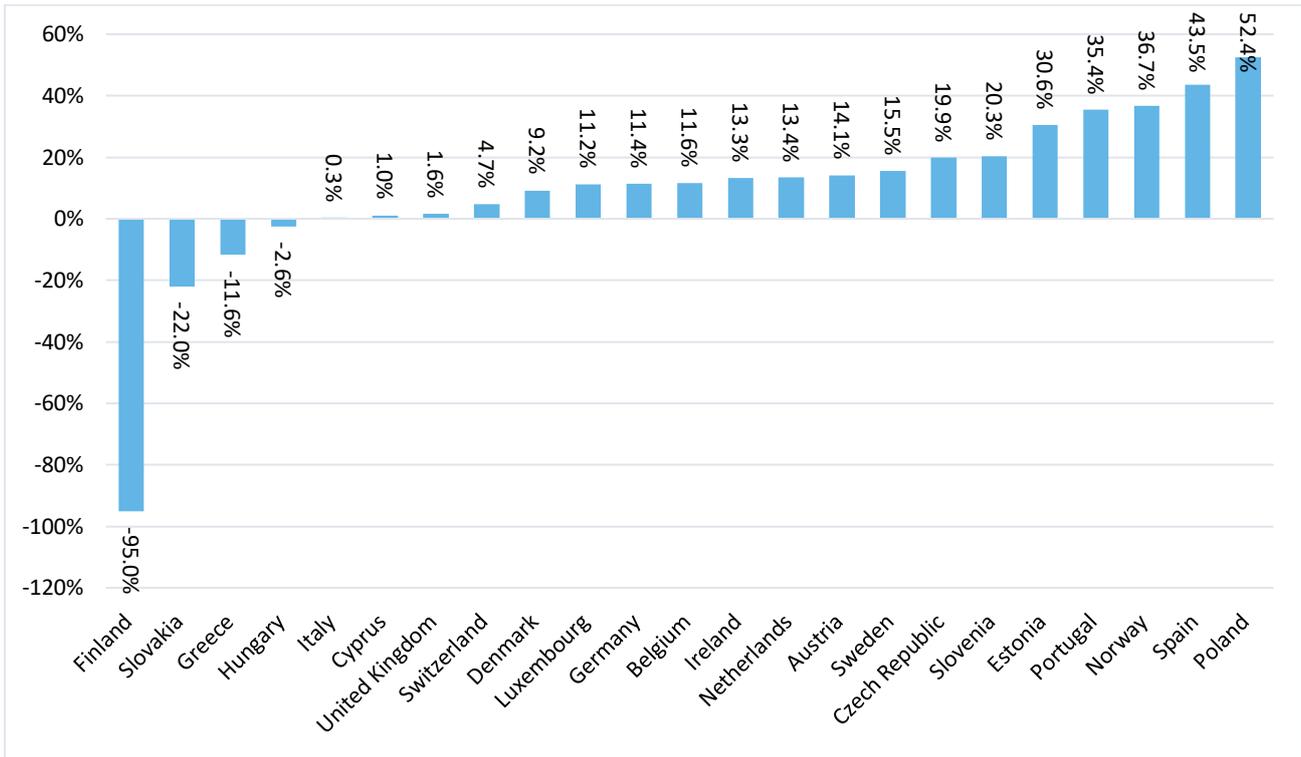
Figure 20 Immigration flows in 2018 of working age population, absolute value and as a % of working age population in the destination country



Source: Eurostat [migr\_imm5prv]

We then look at variation rates. The figure reported below shows the variation rate in the stock of workers over the period 2016-2018.

Figure 21 Variation rate between 2016 and 2018 in the number of mobile workers by country of residence



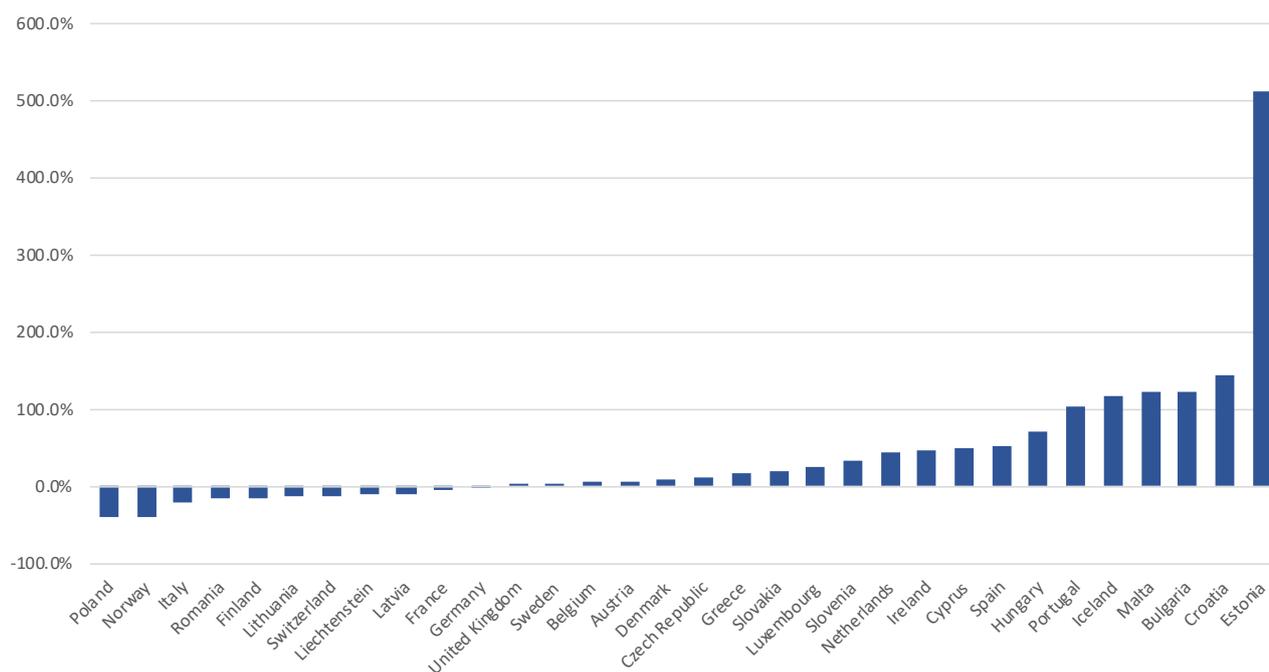
Source: Eurostat LFS, data provided by COM. Missing or unreliable data for Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Iceland.

Two countries are excluded from the graph for being outliers: France seems to have experienced an increase in the stock of mobile workers residing in France of 1537% - from 37 thousands in 2016 to 606 thousands in 2018. This figure is however surprising and might be due to some mistake in the collection of data for the year 2016. Malta is also an outlier with an increase in the number of mobile workers residing in Malta of 635% - from 3 thousands in 2016 to 20 in 2018. These trends are not found when looking at general mobility trends<sup>80</sup>, suggesting that they are likely not fully reliable, especially regarding France.

Looking at variation between 2013 and 2018 in the yearly flow of incoming movers of working age (immigration flows) in Figure 22, we observe that inflows were particularly larger in 2018 compared to 2013 in Estonia, followed by Croatia, Bulgaria, Malta, Iceland, and Portugal. The inflow was lower in 2018 than in 2013 in Poland, although as seen in Figure 21 the total stock of movers residing in Poland has increased between 2016 and 2018.

<sup>80</sup> Looking at Eurostat LFS data extraction provided for this study by ECO

Figure 22 Variation of immigration flows between 2013 and 2018 of movers of working age



Source: Eurostat [migr\_imm5prv]

Box 11 Mobility and labour mobility: hosting countries, stock and flows

Main hosting countries in terms of stock in 2018 are by far Germany and the UK, but also countries like Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland, Ireland and Austria, especially in relative terms. Central-European Countries and countries such as Greece and Portugal host a very small number of mobile workers, whereas for countries such as Italy and France the absolute amount is relatively small but still sizeable. It is interesting to notice that the variation in stock, especially through 2016-2018, confirms the increasing attractiveness of countries such as Poland, Spain and Portugal. Mobility flows tend to confirm the trends observed in the variation of stock.

**Educational attainment level of mobile workers**

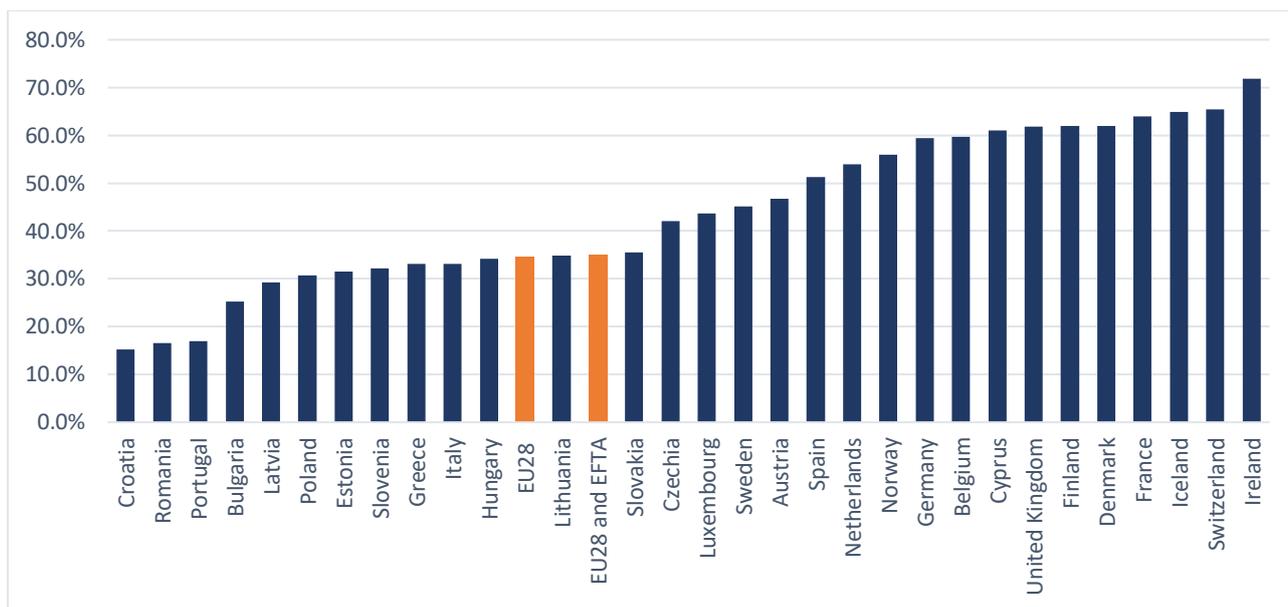
Employed movers with tertiary education represented 35.0% of all EU/EFTA employed movers in 2019. This percentage varies greatly across countries, ranging from 15.3% for Croatian movers and 71.8% for Irish ones. The results are illustrated in the figure below.

The data shows that mobile workers coming from Northern European countries tend to be mainly tertiary graduates, with the exception of mobile workers from Austria, Sweden and Luxembourg – from which however more than 40% of mobile workers are tertiary graduates.

The share of tertiary graduates is above 50% also among mobile workers from Cyprus (61.0%) and Spain (51.3%). Regarding Italy and Greece, two other Southern-European countries, the share of tertiary graduates is lower and close to a third of all mobile workers from both countries. Mobile workers from Portugal with tertiary education represent only 16.9% of the total.

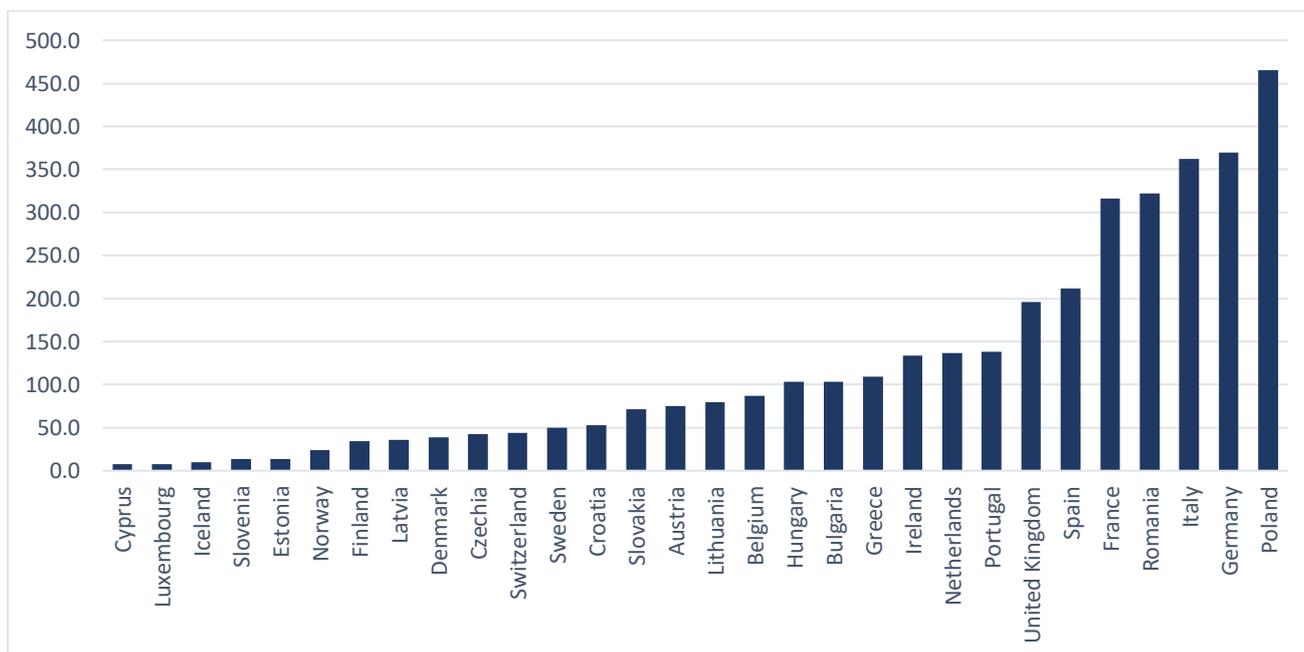
The share of mobile workers with tertiary education from Eastern-European countries is generally lower than the EU28/EFTA average of 35.0%, with the exception of Slovakia and Czechia – which are however not too far from the average.

Figure 23 Employed mobile workers with tertiary education as a percentage of total employed mobile workers by citizenship, 2019



Source: Eurostat, calculations based on [lfst\_Imbpcited], [lfst\_Imbercited]. Missing data for Malta

Figure 24 Employed EU/EFTA citizens with tertiary education who usually reside in another EU/EFTA country by country of citizenship (20-64 years old) in 2019, thousand persons



Source: Eurostat, calculations based on [lfst\_Imbpcited], [lfst\_Imbercited]. Missing data for Malta

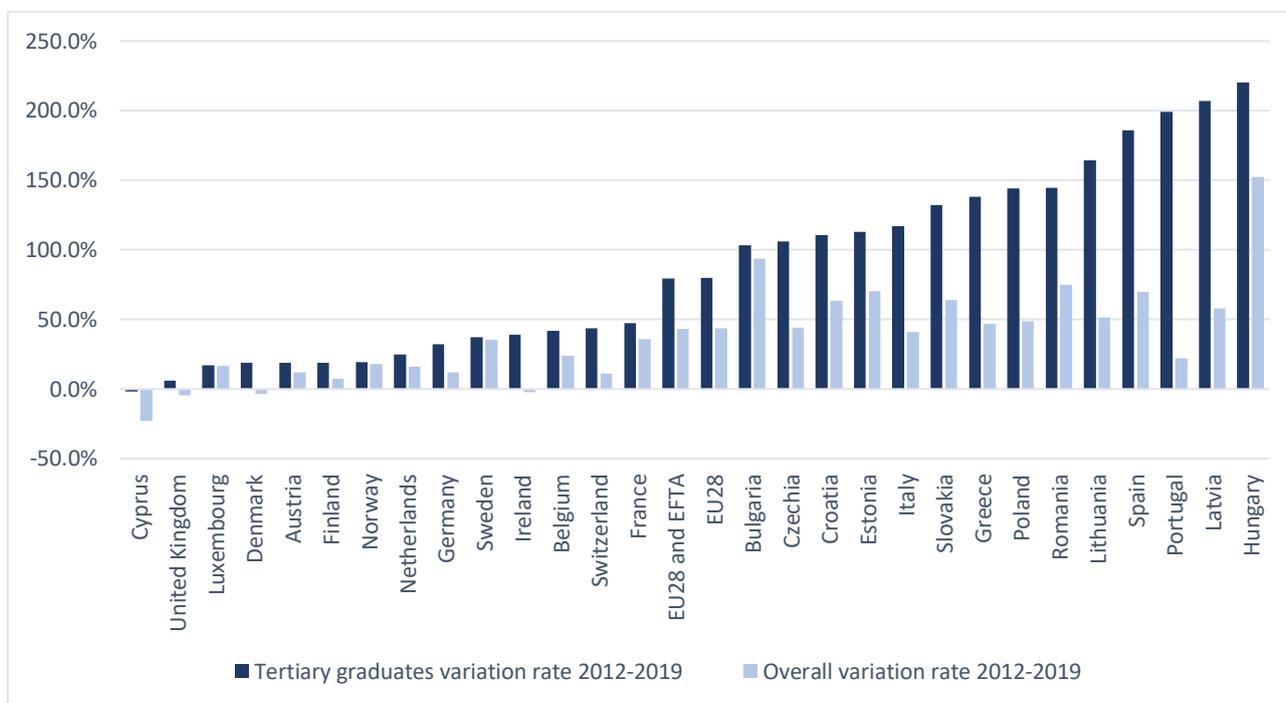
When we look at the volume of mobile workers with tertiary education in 2019, we find that the highest number of them is from Poland, followed by Germany, Italy, Romania, France and Spain – as shown in the graph above.

We are then interested to see if the stock of mobile workers with tertiary education increased/decreased more or less compared to the overall variation in the number of mobile workers between 2012 and 2019. Overall, at the EU28 and EFTA level, mobile workers with tertiary education increased by 79.2% (80.1% at EU28 only level) between 2012 and 2019,

compared to the 43% overall increase in mobile workers. EU28 and EFTA tertiary graduates moving to work abroad therefore increased at a higher rate than all other mobile workers between 2012 and 2019 overall.

As shown in the figure below, the same tendency applies to all countries individually.

Figure 25 Variation rate 2012-2019 of the number of mobile workers, tertiary graduates vs overall



Source: Eurostat, calculations based on [fst\_Imbpcited], [fst\_Imbercited]. Missing data for Malta, Slovenia and Iceland

It should be noted that in all countries covered by this analysis, **the amount of tertiary movers has been increasing more rapidly than the overall amount of movers<sup>81</sup>** and at the same time, the overqualification rate has been increasing at the EU 28 level and in most EU/EFTA countries individually, the only exceptions being Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, the Netherlands, Finland and Switzerland. In addition, looking at the variation rate of unemployment rates between 2012 and 2018, we see that in most countries unemployment rates of tertiary graduates either decreased by a smaller percentage compared to the overall unemployment rate, or that it increased by a higher percentage.” These two elements are in line with the **increasing difficulties they face to gain employment as demonstrated by relatively higher unemployment rates than the other classes and increasing vertical mismatches.**

We are also interested to look at the educational attainment level of EU movers by country of residence. This can allow to gather some insights on the type of immigration taking place in each country.

Figure 26 shows the percentage of tertiary graduates on the total amount of active<sup>82</sup> EU 28 movers by country of residence, i.e. country of destination of movers in 2018.

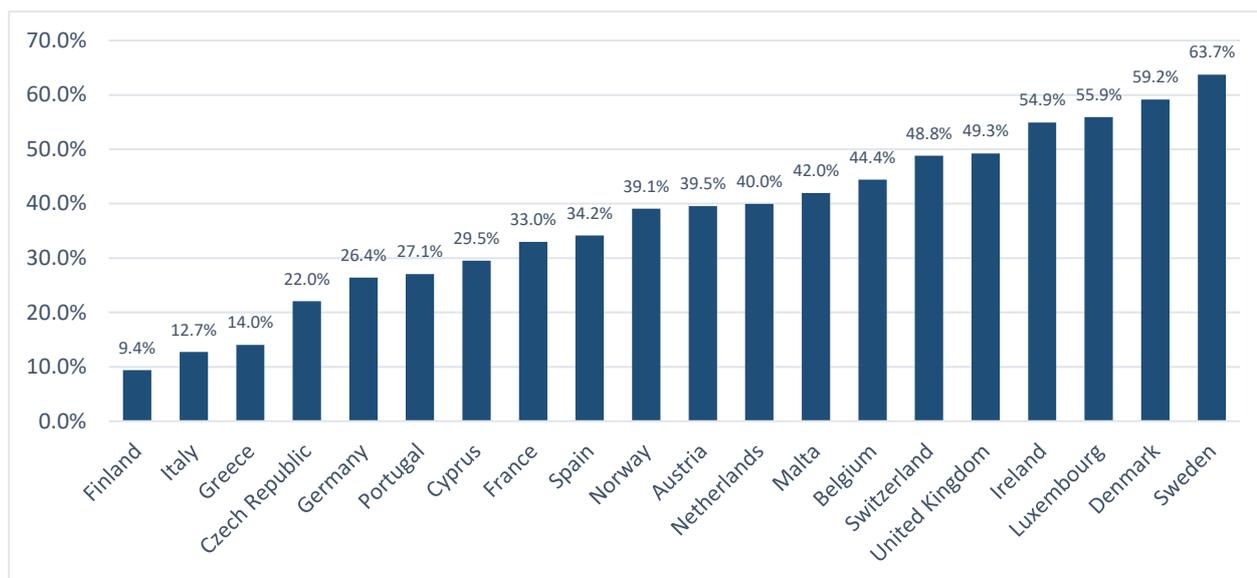
<sup>81</sup> Eurostat, calculations based on [fst\_Imbpcited], [fst\_Imbercited]

<sup>82</sup> Due to data availability, we only have data on active EU 28 movers, and not on employed EU/EFTA movers. In addition, data is available only for 2017 and 2018, which does not allow to make comparisons over time.

The data shows that most EU movers going to Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg and Ireland are tertiary graduates. Around half of movers going to the UK, Switzerland and Belgium are tertiary graduates. More than 40% of movers going to Malta and the Netherlands are tertiary graduates.

The main countries where immigration of active EU 28 citizens is mostly characterized by low and medium educational attainment level of movers are Finland, Italy, Greece, Czech Republic, Germany Portugal and Cyprus.

Figure 26 Tertiary graduates as a percentage of total active EU 28 movers by country of residence, 2018



Source: Eurostat data provided by ECO. Missing data for Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Iceland.

Box 12 Mobility and labour mobility: educational levels and compositional changes over time

The educational attainment of mobile workers varies significantly in terms of both country of origin as well as destination. Roughly, we see that mobile workers from northern countries are more often tertiary graduates, whereas especially Croatia, Romania, Portugal and Bulgaria show below average rates. Mobile workers who are tertiary graduates tend to also move to northern countries (with the exception of Finland) whilst their share is small especially in Italy and Greece but modest also in Germany and the Czech Republic. Interestingly, tertiary graduates are accounting for an increasing share of mobile workers, and this is in line with the increasing struggles they seem to face in the labour markets (unemployment rates are decreasing slower than average and overqualification rates are increasing).

### 2.4.2 Cross-border mobility

Cross-border workers are persons who work in one EU Member State or EFTA country but live in another. EU internal border regions cover 40% of EU territory<sup>83</sup> and cross-border mobility of workers has been growing over the years. In 2018, around 1.8 million workers<sup>84</sup> lived in a EU 28 country and worked in another EU 28 or EFTA country. Compared to 2015, this number has

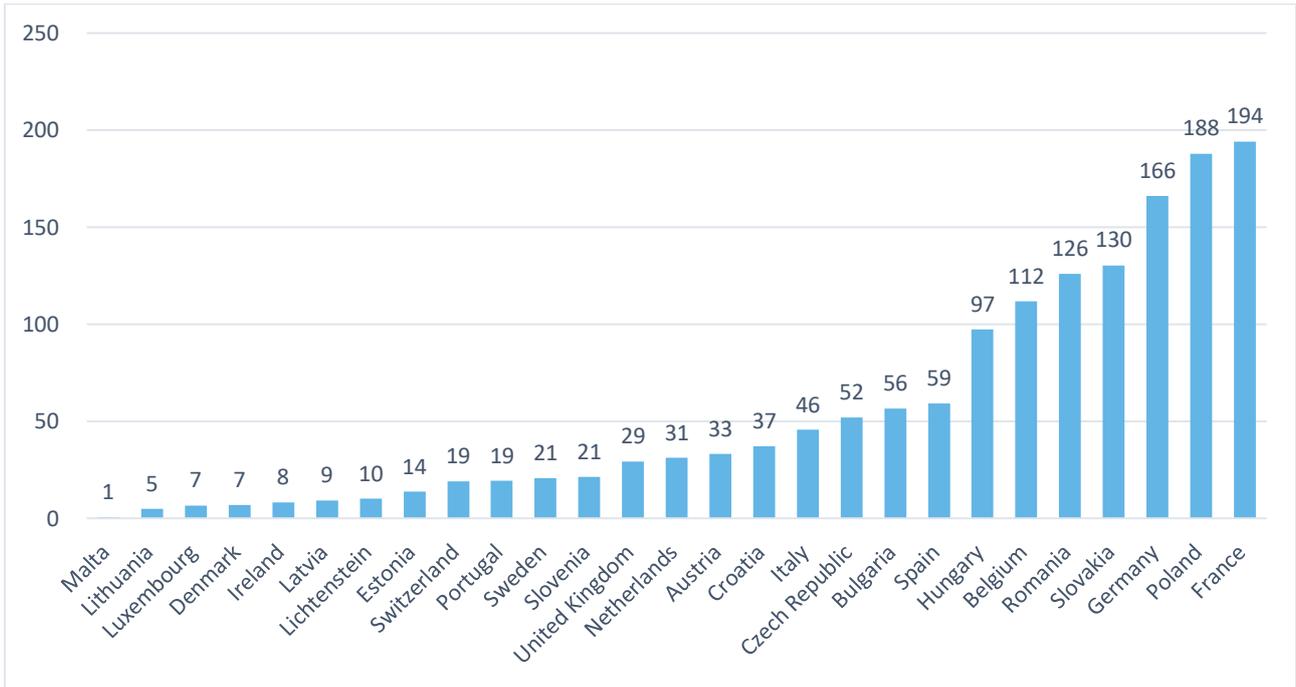
<sup>83</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/eures-in-cross-border-regions#/list>

<sup>84</sup> Eurostat LFS data – provided by ECO

increased by 11% overall. However, although it has been increasing between 2015 and 2017, a slight decrease (-2%) in the number of cross-border workers residing in EU 28 countries took place between 2017 and 2018.

We look more in detail at EU 28/EFTA cross-border workers by their countries of residence and then their country of work in 2018. The graph below shows the number (in thousands) of EU 28/EFTA cross-border workers by their country of residence.

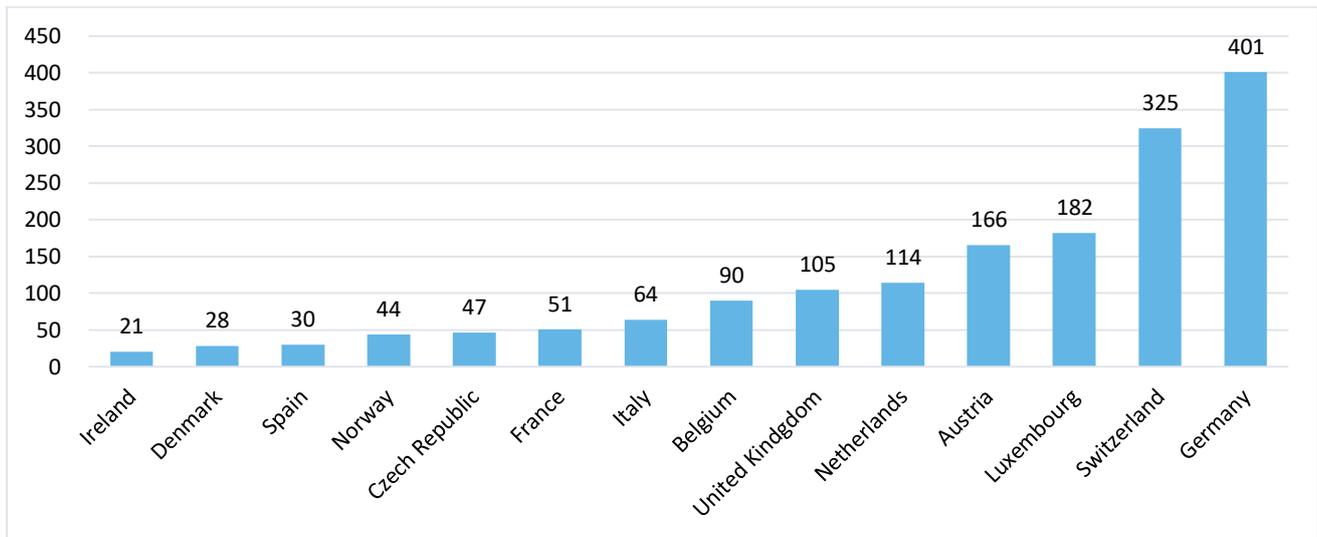
Figure 27 Cross-border workers of EU-28 and EFTA citizenship, by EU-28/EFTA country of residence (thousands), 2018



Source: Eurostat LFS data provided by COM

Most cross-border workers resided in France, Poland and Germany in 2018. These three countries, in particular France and Germany, share borders with many different countries – often with a common language, which facilitates the cross-border exchange.

Figure 28 Main countries of work of EU 28 cross-border workers, 2018



Source: LFS data provided by COM

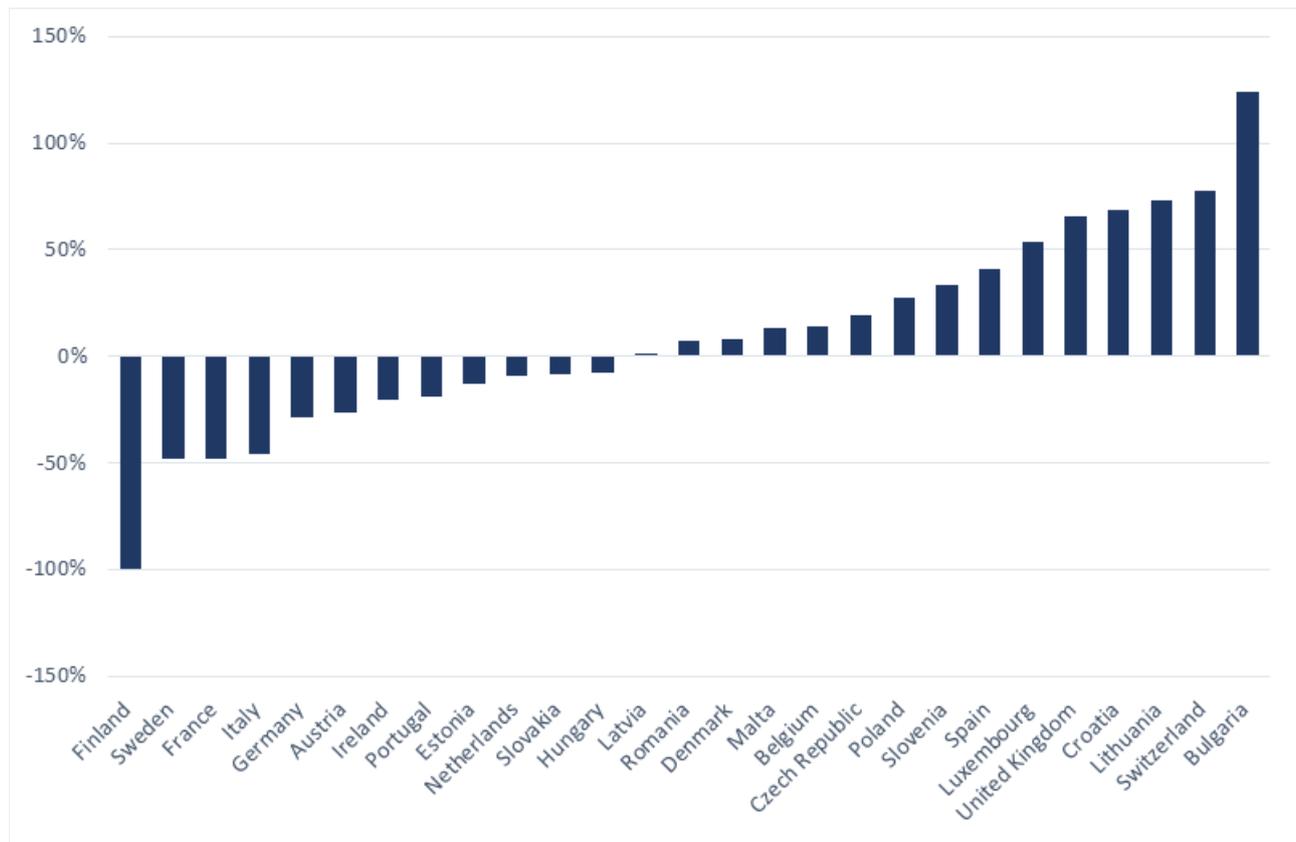
Germany is also the most important country of work of EU 28 cross-border workers (who reside in another EU 28 Member State). It is followed by Switzerland, Luxembourg and Austria.

Looking at which are the border countries where cross-border workers residing in France mainly work, they appear in fact to be Switzerland, Luxembourg, Belgium and to a lesser extent Germany. Cross-border workers residing in Poland mainly work in Germany. Regarding German cross-border workers, they mainly go work in Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Slovak cross-border workers mainly work in Austria and to a lesser extent in Czech Republic.

Compared to 2015, the number of resident cross-border workers decreased for some countries and increased for others (see figure below). Looking at France and Germany, for example, which are still among the top 3 countries of residence of cross-border workers in 2018, the number of cross-border workers was higher in 2015 and it in fact decreased by 48% for France and 29% for Germany. At the same time, **Germany increasingly became a country of work, whereas it is not the case for France**, for which the number of cross-border workers going to France to work decreased over time.

Germany therefore has less residents going cross-border in 2018 than in 2015 but more cross-border foreigners coming to Germany to work.

Figure 29 Variation rate of the number of cross-border workers by country of residence, 2015-2018



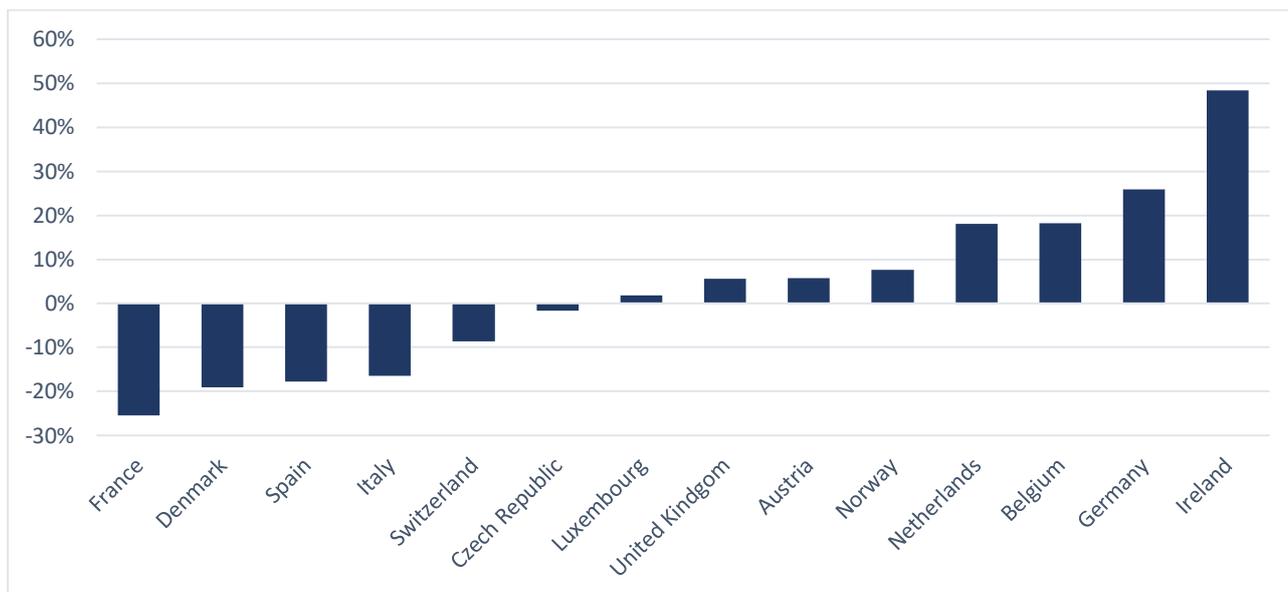
Source: Eurostat LFS data provided by COM

Regarding Poland – the second most important country of residence in 2018 – there has been a 28% increase in the number of Polish cross-border workers since 2015. **An increasing number of resident cross-border workers also emerged in other Eastern-European countries and more recent EU Member States:** Bulgaria, Lithuania, Croatia, Czech Republic and Romania.

Among Northern-European countries, the number of resident cross-border workers increased since 2015 in Switzerland, the UK, Luxembourg, Belgium and, to a lesser extent, Denmark.

Looking at countries of work presented in the figure below, only a few countries experienced a consistent increase in the number of cross-border workers and in particular Ireland, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. Switzerland, which is still among the most important countries of work, experienced a slight decrease since 2015 and the same goes for France as already mentioned above.

Figure 30 Variation rate of the number of cross-border workers by country of work, 2015-2018



Source: Eurostat LFS data provided by COM

In the next section, we present a summary of the data and information gathered on labour mobility drivers and barriers, with the help of some clusters of countries to guide the interpretation.

Box 13 Labour mobility: overview of cross border workers and their evolution over time

Cross border mobility in 2018 is around 10p.p. higher than in 2015 and concerns some 1.8 million workers.

Main countries of work (i.e. hosting countries) are high-income countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Ireland too has showed a strong increase over recent years, together with Belgium. These are typically countries included in a common language area. France, Denmark, Spain and Italy have seen the number of cross-border workers decrease over recent years.

Main countries of residence (i.e. sending countries) are France and Germany, especially due to their size and the spread of their languages, closely followed by central-eastern countries such as Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. Significant increases are registered in Bulgaria, Switzerland, Lithuania, Croatia, the UK and Luxembourg but also Spain. It is interesting to notice that for France and Italy the variation of cross-border mobility is negative in both directions.

### 2.4.3 Posted Workers

The available data on posted workers<sup>85</sup> is based on the number of PDs A1<sup>86</sup> issued by the EU Member States and EFTA countries during reference years, specifically from 2012 to 2018<sup>87</sup>. It is worth mentioning that data on PDs A1 do not depict the precise situation of postings taking place under the Coordination Regulations and the Posting of Workers Directive, but they only provide indicative information. This is due to the different definitions that the Posting of Workers Directive and the Basic Regulations give to the notion of “posted”, as well as to all the postings that are not formally communicated to the institutions.

Nevertheless, data shows that almost 3 million PDs A1 were issued in 2018, (corresponding to approximately 1,900,000 posted workers<sup>88</sup>) nearly doubling the numbers from 2012 (1,525,123 PDs A1, corresponding to approximately 900,000 posted workers<sup>89</sup>) and increasing by almost 30% the figure from 2016 (2,291,176 PDs A1). In 2018, Poland, with a total of 605,785 documents issued, and Germany, with 475,704 PDs A1, were the two main issuing MSs: together they released around the 36% of the total number of PDs A1. Right behind, Spain issued 248,532 PDs A1, along with Italy, Belgium, Slovakia, Slovenia, France, Austria and the Netherlands that released more than 100,000 PDs A1. Between 100,000 and 50,000 PDs A1 were issued by Luxemburg, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Croatia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic; while the United Kingdom, Denmark, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Latvia, Estonia, and Sweden released between 50,000 and 10,000 PDs A1. Finally, less than 10,000 PDs A1 were issued by Finland, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Cyprus, Malta, Liechtenstein, and Iceland.

In terms of trends, Croatia shows the higher average annual growth observed between 2012 and 2018 (45.2%, data available from 2013) followed by Malta (41.8%), Lithuania (33.2%) and Greece (30.3%). For all these four countries, data reveal that the most substantial increase took place between 2016 and 2017.

Table 2 Number of PDs A1 by sending country, 2012-2018

Sending MS	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Change 2018 vs 2017		Average annual growth between 2012 and 2018
								Numbers	%	
BE	59,832	83,582	79,771	86,218	104,307	134,398	137,022	2,624	2.0%	14.8%
BG	11,896	14,185	14,203	15,839	19,595	36,22	26,315	-9,905	-27.3%	14.1%
CZ	24,162	30,912	31,675	37,174	47,578	67,933	63,693	-4,24	-6.2%	17.5%
DK	19,592	25,22	20,409	30,031	29,595	37,848	47,453	9,605	25.4%	15.9%
DE	243,125	254,469	255,724	240,862	260,068	399,745	475,704	75,959	19.0%	11.8%
EE	18,606	15,927	15,054	15,363	17,953	18,977	19,862	885	4.7%	1.1%
IE	7,799	7,396	7,654	7,899	7,339	7,745	7,464	-281	-3.6%	-0.7%

<sup>85</sup> A “posted worker” is a worker who is sent by his employer to work in another Member State on a temporary basis. This is often related to a contract of services, an intra-group posting, or a hiring out through a temporary agency.

<sup>86</sup> ‘Portable Document A1 (PD A1)’ is a document issued by the Member State whose social security legislation remains applicable for workers temporarily working in another Member State, including posted workers.

<sup>87</sup> See: F. De Wispelaere, L. De Smedt and J. Pacolet (2019), ‘Posting of workers. Report on A1 portable documents issued in 2018’, Network Statistics FMSSFE, European Commission.

<sup>88</sup> As estimated in: E. Fries-Tersch, M. Jones, B. Böök, L. de Keyser, T. Tugran (2020), ‘2019 Annual Report on Intra-EU Labour Mobility. Final Report January 2020’, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission.

<sup>89</sup> Estimated at about 60% of the number of PDs A1 issued according to F. De Wispelaere, J. Pacolet (2015), ‘Posting of workers Report on A1 portable documents issued in 2014’, Network Statistics FMSSFE, European Commission.

Sending MS	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Change 2018 vs 2017		Average annual growth between 2012 and 2018
								Numbers	%	
EL	1,889	2,131	3,608	4,789	6,924	7,204	9,251	2,047	28.4%	30.3%
ES	76,96	101,705	111,557	125,711	147,424	191,148	248,532	57,384	30.0%	21.6%
FR	140,805	130,435	125,203	139,04	135,974	111,659	119,516	7,857	7.0%	-2.7%
HR		10,227	27,556	38,998	42,602	60,026	65,949	5,923	9.9%	45.2%
IT	52,237	59,114	74,431	91,74	114,515	152,528	169,774	17,246	11.3%	21.7%
CY	2,282	2,192	1,955	3,091	3,552	4,04	4,04			
LV	5,402	7,425	6,656	7,738	10,83	20,689	20,199	-490	-2.4%	24.6%
LT	14,041	17,342	19,208	25,254	30,723	70,18	78,384	8,204	11.7%	33.2%
LU	44,256	32,472	62,141	62,947	68,725	73,875	79,831	5,956	8.1%	10.3%
HU	65,182	68,489	68,234	63,663	65,185	82,881	64,217	-18,664	-22.5%	-0.2%
MT	327	322	324	228	504	1,388	2,655	1,267	91.3%	41.8%
NL	84,202	95,719	116,06	95,017	98,687	103,738	100,66	-3,078	-3.0%	3.0%
AT	40,038	42,171	48,815	64,373	75,132	68,956	110,687	41,731	60.5%	18.3%
PL	341,1	385,422	428,405	463,174	513,972	573,358	605,785	32,427	5.7%	10.0%
PT	55,901	82,851	75,577	64,97	64,459	85,074	74,109	-10,965	-12.9%	4.8%
RO	44,459	51,939	57,194	46,871	50,855	84,743	71,207	-13,536	-16.0%	8.2%
SI	65,871	83,898	103,303	126,902	164,226	190,976	127,059	-63,917	-33.5%	11.6%
SK	48,924	56,442	89,494	98,383	112,028	112,978	135,151	22,173	19.6%	18.5%
FI	6,223	6,892	6,94	9,369	8,155	8,061	9,882	1,821	22.6%	8.0%
SE	6,152	11,664	10,951	12,502	11,456	10,71	10,593	-117	-1.1%	9.5%
UK	43,1	41,049	33,092	44,332	49,21	49,496	49,225	-271	-0.5%	2.2%
IS	306	277	245	283	239	293	245	-48	-16.4%	-3.6%
LI	454	548	646	1,239	1,343	1,024	1,024			
NO	n.a.	n.a.	3,252	3,887	4,134	4,097	4,357	260	6.3%	7.6%
CH	n.a.	19,077	20,649	21,305	23,887	31,291	28,642	-2,649	-8.5%	8.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,525,123</b>	<b>1,741,494</b>	<b>1,919,986</b>	<b>2,049,192</b>	<b>2,291,176</b>	<b>2,803,279</b>	<b>2,968,487</b>	<b>165,208</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
<b>EU-15</b>	882,111	976,87	1,031,933	1,079,800	1,181,970	1,442,185	1,649,703	207,518	14.4%	11.0%
<b>EU-13</b>	642,252	744,722	863,261	942,678	1,079,603	1,324,389	1,284,516	-39,873	-3.0%	12.2%
<b>EFTA</b>	760	19,902	24,792	26,714	29,603	36,705	34,268	-2,437	-6.6%	88.7%
<b>EU-15</b>	57.8%	56.1%	53.7%	52.7%	51.6%	51.5%	55.6%			
<b>EU-13</b>	42.1%	42.8%	45.0%	46.0%	47.1%	47.2%	43.3%			
<b>EFTA</b>	0.0%	1.1%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%			

Source: F. De Wispelaere, L. De Smedt and J. Pacolet (2019), 'Posting of workers. Report on A1 portable documents issued in 2018', Network Statistics FMSSFE, European Commission.

#### Box 14 Labour mobility: overview of posted workers and their evolution over time

The number of posted workers in 2018 was over twice as large as in 2012, concerning some 1.9 million workers in EURES countries.

Main sending countries were Poland, Germany, Spain and Italy. Most significant increases were recorded in Greece, Croatia, Lithuania and Malta.

### 2.4.4 Labour mobility as a whole

Irrespective of the type of labour mobility observed, it is clear that this has either increased or remained stable during the evaluation period. In particular:

- **Movers of working age:** since 2012, there has been an overall increase in the stock of working age EU-28 movers of 31.5%, from around 10 million in 2012 to 13.2 million in 2019; in terms of flows (individuals moving each year) they have remained more or less stable over the years, increasing slightly from 2012 to 2016 (from 1.3 million in 2012, to 1.6 in 2016) and then remaining stable through 2018
- **Movers who work and reside abroad:** focusing on employed workers who reside in another EU country, an increase of over 40% from 2012 values<sup>90</sup> is registered, with their reaching 10.4 million in 2019;
- **Cross-Border Workers:** in 2018, around 1.8 million workers<sup>91</sup> lived in a EU 28 country and worked in another EU 28 or EFTA country. Compared to 2015, this number has increased by 11% overall.
- **Posted workers:** almost 3 million Portable Documents A1<sup>92</sup> were issued in 2018, (corresponding to approximately 1,900,000 posted workers) nearly doubling the numbers from 2012 (approximately 900,000 posted workers) and increasing by almost 30% the figure from 2016<sup>93</sup>

The sending countries remained eastern European ones, but with an increasing role being played by Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Greece and Spain. Main countries of destination have traditionally been northern European countries, and especially the UK and Germany, with the former showing the strongest increases in recent years also due to the Brexit.

## 2.5 Summing up and clustering

In this section we make use of relevant contextual data presented in the previous sections in relation to the determinants of labour mobility, barriers and labour mobility flows with a view to providing a contextualisation of EURES implementation.

We start by sorting countries across groups, or “clusters”, that allow us to group those with similar determinants of labour mobility and their trends and with similar levels of barriers to labour mobility. Clustering countries will help easing and guiding the analysis and the understanding of data and trends in relation to the context in which EURES operates, but it does not have the intention to create or suggest any strict categories of countries. In fact, not all relevant drivers and barriers to mobility can be measured (such as cultural barriers) and therefore the clusters will merely be used and considered inasmuch as they can help simplify and organise the analysis, but they cannot take into account all countries’ specificities. Clusters will be used, as anticipated, in Step 2 and 3.

<sup>90</sup> with an average rate of increase around 3% between 2016-2019 and over 6.5% between 2012-2016.

<sup>91</sup> Eurostat LFS data – provided by ECO

<sup>92</sup> ‘Portable Document A1 (PD A1)’ is a document issued by the Member State whose social security legislation remains applicable for workers temporarily working in another Member State, including posted workers.

<sup>93</sup> Data available at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=471>

### 2.5.1 Countries with similar context and barriers

In order to cluster countries, we take into account two relevant dimensions represented through different indicators as described in previous sections:

- the **economic determinants (push-pull factors) of labour mobility** (differences in GDP PPS per capita and unemployment, vertical mismatches) and their variation over time;
- **barriers** to labour mobility (foreign language proficiency, geographical spread of national language, alignment with EQF).

#### **Economic context in relation to mobility drivers**

The three economic context indicators used to describe the determinants of labour mobility (GDP PPS per capita, unemployment and vertical mismatches) were chosen as they represent the main measurable contextual determinants of labour mobility. As previously explained, a difficult or less attractive than average economic context can effectively influence the intent to leave and move to a country where growth is higher, GDP per capita is higher and unemployment rates are lower, and where there is more labour demand that is adapted to the mover's skills. We have observed, already in section 2.3, as these differences in the economic context and their variation are in line with the data on actual labour mobility.

For the purpose of this analysis, we are interested in both the current<sup>94</sup> levels as well as variation rates of these indicators. We therefore built two separate standardized indicators (see Methodology in Annex I) based on:

- the **average value** over the period 2012-2018 of the GDP PPS per capita, unemployment rate and vertical mismatches for each country;
- the **average annual growth rate** of the same indicators over the period 2012-2018.

Indicators are built in such a way that below-average values correspond to above-average attractiveness of the economic context for labour mobility (i.e. higher GDP, lower, unemployment, lower vertical mismatch); lower values of the average annual growth rate indicator correspond to a higher than average improvement of the context. It should be noted that we purposefully oversimplify when, in what follows, we say "worsening, improving" in relation to EU averages and the specific economic variables used: this is all in comparative terms and such terms are related to the drivers for labour mobility only – it isn't the overall socio-economic context that should be considered to be worsening or improving.

#### **Barriers to mobility**

Regarding indicators related to barriers to mobility, most barriers are not measurable and therefore cannot be included to build such an indicator. However, two of the most important barriers to mobility<sup>95</sup> are language and recognition of qualification.

Since language and recognition of qualifications are the only two barriers that can be measured, they were used to measure the incidence of barriers related to language and recognition of qualifications for each country. Three indicators are used: one related to language proficiency, a

<sup>94</sup> Latest available year

<sup>95</sup> See Annex I, for detailed explanation

second one to the geographical spread of the national language, and a third one on alignment of the NQF with the EQF<sup>96</sup>.

### 2.5.2 Building the clusters

We first look at the economic determinants of labour mobility and their variation over time by country.

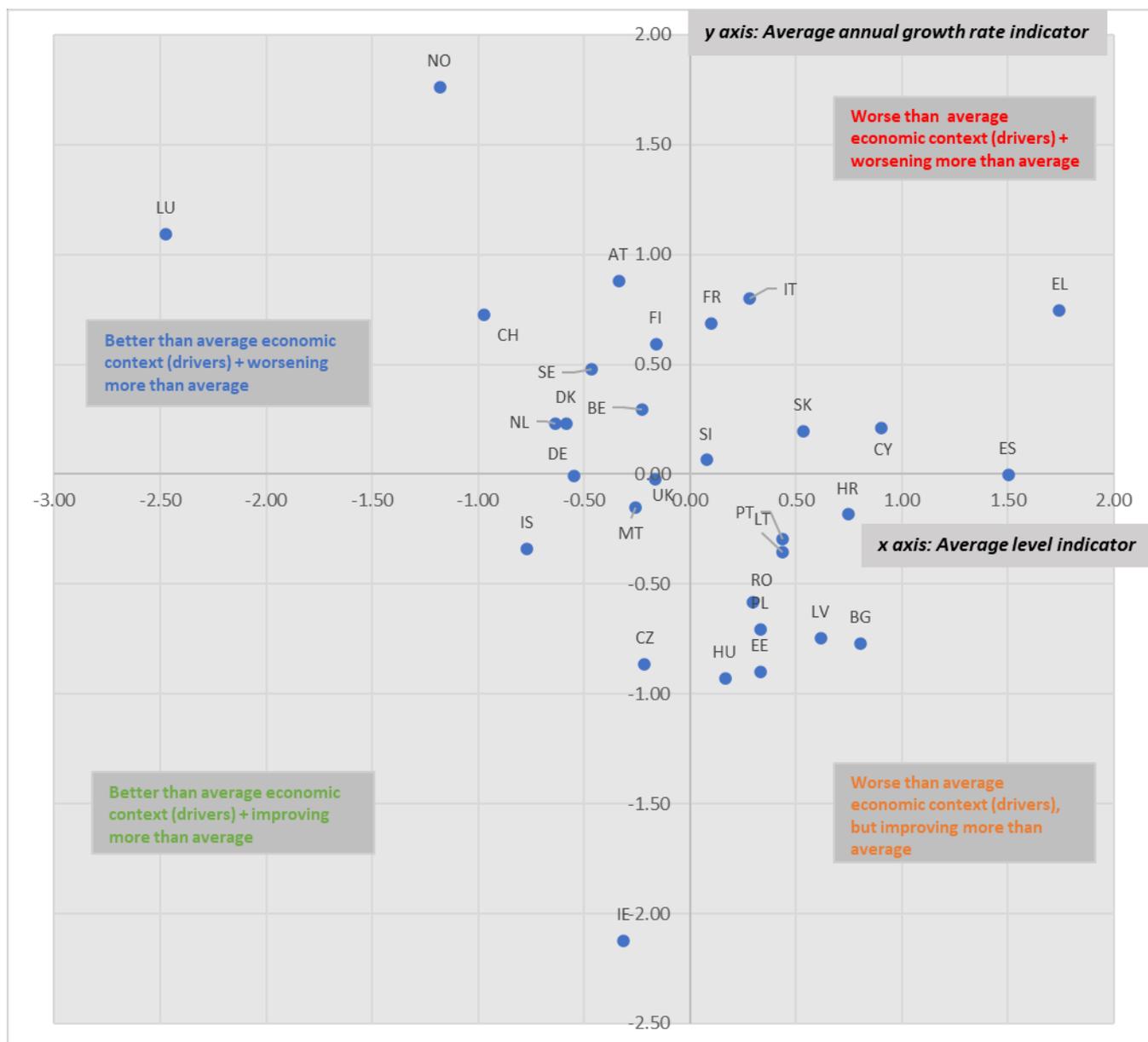
Thanks to the 2 standardized indicators based on the three economic indicators mentioned above, we can already identify the following 4 macro-clusters of countries, as presented in Figure 31:

1. Cluster A: countries with persistent/increasing high GDP PPS per capita, and/or low unemployment, and/or low vertical mismatches (bottom-left quadrant): these are countries that would typically be "hosting" or receiving movers from abroad;
2. Cluster B: countries with high GDP PPS per capita, and/or low unemployment, and/or low vertical mismatches but that have been worsening over time more than average (upper-left quadrant): these are countries that would be typically hosting/receiving movers from abroad, but where worsening economic determinants of mobility might end up reducing the amount of movers received;
3. Cluster C: countries with persistent/decreasing low GDP PPS per capita, and/or high unemployment, and/or high vertical mismatches (upper right quadrant): these are countries that would typically be "sending" movers abroad;
4. Cluster D: countries with low GDP PPS per capita, and/or high unemployment and/or vertical mismatches but for which the situation has been improving over time more than average (bottom-right quadrant): these are countries that would typically be sending movers abroad, but where an improving context might end up reducing the need to move away.

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<sup>96</sup> More specifically: The average percentage of the population being "Proficient" in the foreign language reported as best known in the country; The number of other countries or regions where the national language of a country is also an official language (assigning 1 point for each country and 0.5 for each Region); The alignment of the NQF with EQF, assigning -1, 0 and 1 based on the level of alignment, based on Cedefop's classification.

Figure 31 Countries by standardized level of average GDP PPS per capita, unemployment and vertical mismatch and standardized average annual growth of GDP PPS per capita, unemployment and vertical mismatch, 2012-2018



Authors' elaboration based on Eurostat data (nama\_10\_gdp, lfsa\_urgaed, LFS experimental statistics on skills mismatch, edat\_aes\_I54) and own elaborations of qualitative information on NQF and geographical spread of national languages

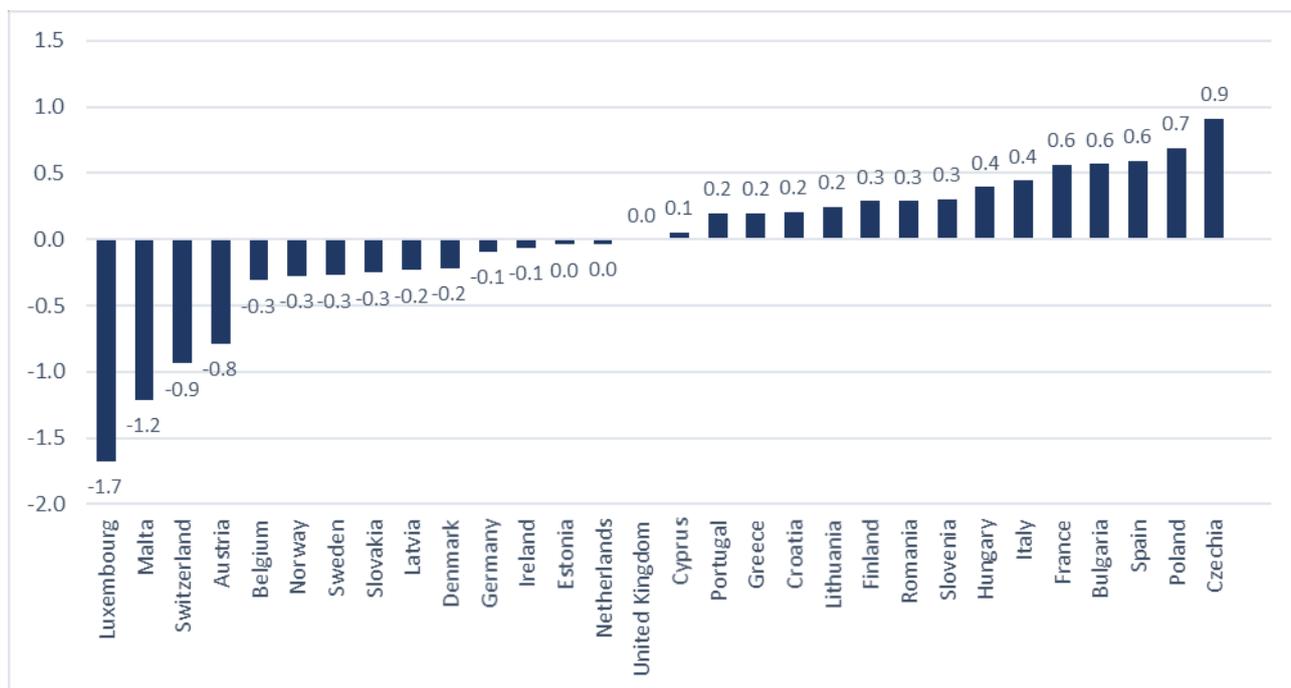
This scatter plot can provide an overview of where each of the countries covered stand, on average, in terms of economic context/mobility drivers and their variation over time. However, it should be interpreted with caution: **the presence of a country in a certain quadrant of the scatter plot does not imply that it will be sending or receiving workers from abroad.** In fact, it is not meant to give indications on mobility flows but only on **countries' economic context in relation to the main mobility drivers, whose impact on actual mobility might be influenced by other country specific or non-observable factors as recalled from the outset.** Considering Czech Republic, for example, it is not a main hosting country for mobile workers although the fact that it stands in the lower-left quadrant of the graph might suggest that it should be attractive to movers. However, although it has a very low unemployment rate and low vertical mismatch, its GDP per capita is still below average and there are surely other

factors at play that can explain why Czech Republic is not a top hosting country, such as unobservable cultural barriers, lifestyle, weather conditions and so forth. In addition, low unemployment combined with low salaries/lower GDP per capita PPS might indicate that there is a low job vacancy rate which may in turn encourage mobility outflows.

In addition to economic drivers, we described in 1.2.2 possible barriers to labour mobility. Hence, for the clustering, a **standardized indicator**<sup>97</sup> is built that can represent the **incidence of barriers** related to language and recognition of qualifications for each country. Having such an indicator can help identify which countries are struggling the most with these two types of barriers, considered to be the most relevant barriers to mobility.<sup>98</sup>

The indicator is built in such a way that that lower levels of the indicator correspond to lower level of barriers. Figure 32 shows that the countries presenting lower than average levels of barriers are Luxembourg, Malta, Switzerland, Austria and Belgium, followed at a distance by Norway, Sweden, Slovakia, Latvia, Denmark, Germany and Ireland. They are mostly North-Western European countries with the exception of Slovakia and Latvia. Estonia, the Netherlands and the UK have barriers that are in line with the average. Barriers to labour mobility seem to be more of a problem for Czech Republic, Poland, Spain, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Finland, Lithuania, Croatia, Greece, Portugal and Cyprus: mostly Eastern-European and Southern-European countries with the exception of Finland.

Figure 32 Standardized indicator for mobility barriers related to language and recognition of qualifications, by country



**EURES’ main goal is facilitate worker mobility across Europe by helping overcome barriers.** We can therefore work out a first clustering countries based on their **levels of barriers** in , and then further differentiating between countries based on the **level and variation** of those

<sup>97</sup> see the Methodology section for details

<sup>98</sup> They are already being addressed, in part, through the provision of support for language training and the development and gradual implementation of ESCO<sup>98</sup>, in addition to information and guidance on social security, taxation and other issues that can be another type of support to address language barriers – together with other administrative and legislative ones. But clearly there is still room for improvements.

economic context indicators that act as labour mobility drivers, which can help understand each country's needs in terms of mobility. However, EURES' goal is specifically to promote fair mobility, thus preventing phenomena such as brain drain of tertiary graduates and supporting amongst others return mobility. In the analysis that follows, this aspect should be taken into account when discussing the apparent opportunity for some countries - with lower GDP, and/or higher unemployment and/or higher vertical mismatches - to contribute to a rebalancing of these variables through labour mobility outflows.

Table 3 First clustering of countries with similar levels barriers, labour mobility determinants and trends

CLUSTER	COUNTRIES
<b>HIGH BARRIERS</b>	
<b>Cluster A</b>	Czech Republic
<b>Cluster B</b>	Finland
<b>Cluster C</b>	Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Slovenia, France, Italy, Slovakia <sup>99</sup>
<b>Cluster D</b>	Bulgaria, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Poland, Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia <sup>100</sup>
<b>LOW BARRIERS</b>	
<b>Cluster A</b>	Ireland, Malta, UK, Germany
<b>Cluster B</b>	Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway

However, in the analysis that follows in section 3 (step 2) and 4 (step 3) of the Annex (EURES activities in context and EURES added value - self-reported counterfactual analysis), **we focus only on four clusters** as showed in Table 4.

Table 4 Definitive clustering of countries based on their level of barriers and economic context trends

CLUSTER	COUNTRIES
<b>HIGH BARRIERS</b>	
<b>Worsening/stable economic conditions</b>	Finland, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Slovenia, France, Italy, Slovakia <sup>101</sup>
<b>Improving economic conditions</b>	Bulgaria, Czech Republic Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Poland, Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia <sup>102</sup>
<b>LOW BARRIERS</b>	

<sup>99</sup> Slovakia was originally found to be among countries with low barriers to mobility. However, after a closer look, it was moved to the cluster of high barriers countries because although it has a NQF that is closely aligned with EQF (causing its barriers indicator to decrease), it still has high language barriers.

<sup>100</sup> Latvia was originally found to be among countries with low barriers to mobility. However, a closer inspection showed that the low level of barriers was due to a high proficiency in the foreign language reported as best known in the country, which is mostly Russian - and therefore not particularly relevant to intra-EU mobility.

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CLUSTER	COUNTRIES
<b>Improving economic conditions</b>	Ireland, Malta, UK, Germany
<b>Worsening/stable economic conditions</b>	Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway

In fact, among low barriers countries the **level** of economic context indicators is always higher than average and therefore does not add a relevant dimension to the analysis; among high barriers countries all countries except Czech Republic<sup>103</sup> and Finland had a **level** of economic context indicators below average, so that differentiating between different levels of the indicators again does not add a much relevant dimension to the cluster.

### 2.5.3 Interpreting the data and understanding the barriers

In what follows, we compare labour mobility flows over the period 2012-2019 (by citizenship, "sending countries") or 2016-2018<sup>104</sup> (by country of residence, "hosting countries") with the characteristics of each cluster of countries, and therefore with the determinants and barriers of labour mobility.

#### **Countries with high barriers to mobility**

Based on our clustering, we find that 16 out of the 29 countries covered present higher than average barriers to mobility in relation to language and/or recognition of qualifications. These are: Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Slovenia, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Poland, Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania. Countries with high barriers to labour mobility might be the ones worthy of attention when trying to help overcome barriers in order to improve the functioning of the Single Market.

We can differentiate between countries based on their economic context in relation to labour mobility drivers. In some countries, the context is such that mobility needs are more apparent, for example when unemployment rates and vertical mismatches are higher than average, suggesting that the country might benefit from more labour mobility to address labour market shortages.

Among countries with high barriers, most of them have a less attractive than average economic context in relation to mobility drivers. In fact, the only two with a more attractive than average context are Czech Republic and Finland, although they are quite close to the average.

We would expect to see countries with lower GDP per capita, higher unemployment and higher vertical skills mismatches among countries that are sending mobile workers abroad. Data on the employed EU/EFTA citizens of working age who usually reside in another EU/EFTA country as a percentage of the total population of working age in their country of citizenship (Figure 33) shows that it is mostly the case. This is a first indication of the fact that labour mobility, by sending workers from countries with lower GDP per capita, higher unemployment and higher vertical

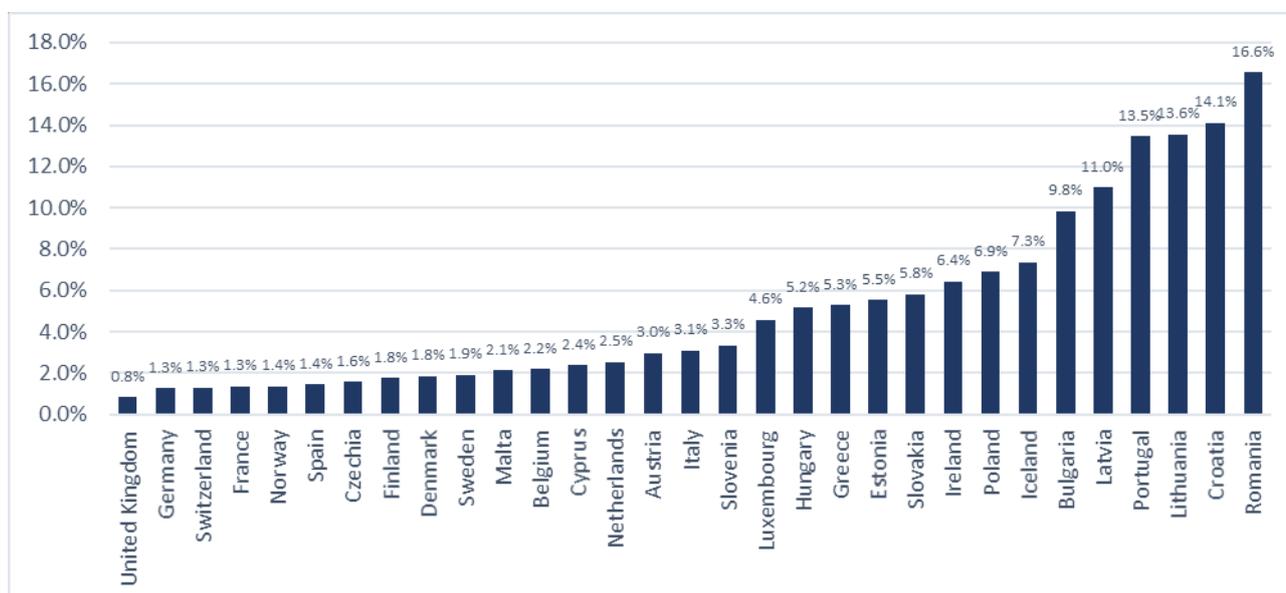
<sup>103</sup> In addition, despite the low unemployment rate, Czech Republic is a comparatively low-income country, especially in nominal terms, which is not directly used in the cluster for simplicity but might be used qualitatively to re-classify.

<sup>104</sup> This is due to the unavailability of data from previous years on employed mobile workers by country of residence

mismatches (i.e. excess labour supply or labour demand shortage) might be helping rebalance the existing gaps<sup>105</sup>.

Romania, Croatia, Lithuania, Portugal, Bulgaria, Poland, Estonia, Greece, and Hungary – mostly **Eastern-European countries**, except **Greece and Portugal** - are all among the countries with a less attractive than average economic context, meaning that they are all experiencing below average GDP PPS per capita, sometimes coupled with above-average unemployment rates and vertical skills mismatches. At the same time, they are **among the countries with the highest share of population working abroad**, all with more than 5% of their working age population employed in another EU/EFTA country. At the same time, yearly emigration flows from some of them (Portugal, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia – all experiencing improving economic conditions) were lower in 2018 compared to 2013, suggesting that **emigration flows and the need to find a job abroad may be decreasing as economic conditions improve**.

Figure 33 Employed EU/EFTA citizens of working age who usually reside in another EU/EFTA country as a percentage of the total population of working age in their country of citizenship, 2019



Source: Eurostat, calculations based on [lfst\_lmpercited], [lfst\_lmpercited] and [lfsq\_pganws]

Greece presents a particularly high unemployment rate over the period 2012-2018 (23.9%) and higher than average vertical mismatches (28% vs 19.5% on average), as well as a lower than average GDP per capita in PPS. Its situation has not been improving over time, and the stock of mobile workers has continued growing since 2012 and remains consistent, although emigration flows were actually lower in 2018 compared to 2013, which however may also depend on other factors (such as the gradual overcoming of the economic crisis).

However, due to high barriers, outflows might increase even more as a consequence to more efforts in reducing those barriers.

Another sub-group of countries can be identified looking at Spain, Cyprus, Slovenia, France and Italy. These are all countries with a lower percentage of their population having moved abroad for work compared to those mentioned above, especially Spain and France, and consistently they

<sup>105</sup> In the case of GDP per capita, workers leaving a country where GDP per capita is lower than average can help rebalance income gaps by putting an upward pressure on salaries and ultimately income in the country of origin.

are also countries with relatively high GDPs - although unemployment rates have been and still are above average in those countries, particularly in Spain, Cyprus and Italy. Vertical mismatches are also higher than average. Among these countries, Spain presents a particularly high unemployment rate (21% on average between 2012 and 2018) and high vertical mismatches (36.4%, compared to an average of 19.5%), which may indicate a need to rebalance labour market shortages also through labour mobility. However, it does not appear among the main "sending" countries. This might in part be due to the presence of high barriers to mobility. Some similar considerations can be made about Cyprus. Italy, instead, has a higher outflow of mobile workers although the need seems to be less intense compared to Spain (unemployment rate is higher than average but lower than Spain, and vertical mismatches are in line with the average). France, based on GDP per capita, unemployment and vertical mismatches, seems to have a less prominent need to rebalance economic and labour market shortages through mobility.

It is important to note, however, that **additional unobservable cultural barriers are likely to play an important role** when it comes to moving to another country or staying. Voluntary labour mobility is likely to take place more easily between countries with a similar cultural background, traditions, work culture, lifestyle, etc. At the same time, citizens of a certain countries might not be willing to move very easily when they have a strong cultural tie, even though the labour market conditions should normally create incentives to move.

Box 15 Combining determinants, barriers and actual mobility: countries with high barriers and above average pull factors

A first important observation that can be made thanks to the clustering of countries is that among countries with high barriers, most of them have a less attractive than average economic context in relation to mobility drivers. In fact, the only two with a more attractive than average context are Czech Republic and Finland, although they are quite close to the average. Finland for example has been operating bilateral recruitment schemes (within and outside EURES) with Greece and Spain to overcome the high language barriers.

The need to reduce economic labour market imbalances is particularly apparent in countries with lower GDP per capita, higher unemployment and higher mismatches. Among these countries, some – especially Eastern-European countries and Portugal - are seeing consistent outflows, in line with a rebalancing of economic and labour market imbalances, but at the same time most of them have experienced some improvements over time in their economic context in relation to labour mobility drivers. As a matter of fact, yearly emigration flows from some of them (Portugal, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia) were lower in 2018 compared to 2013, suggesting that the need to find a job abroad may be decreasing as economic conditions improve. Some countries instead did not experience particular improvements:

- **Greece is a country with high apparent needs and relatively high outflows as well, but the presence of high barriers to mobility – mostly language barriers experienced by outgoing workers in this case - may suggest that the flows could still be too weak. Emigration flows were actually lower in 2018 compared to 2013, which however may also depend on other factors (such as the gradual overcoming of the economic crisis).**
- **Spain is another country with high apparent need (very high unemployment and vertical mismatches in particular), but the stock of mobile workers abroad do not appear to be as strong – although it has been growing since 2012 by 70%, yearly emigration flows have been decreasing. The fact that flows are reducing is in line with the improving economic prospects of the country; however, addressing the**

**high barriers to mobility might help creating more incentives to foster voluntary and fair mobility as one of the tools to further reduce imbalances such as high unemployment and vertical mismatches. They might also reflect low labour mobility rates in the past. Similar considerations can be made regarding Cyprus.**

- **Italy too presents rather high unemployment rates and mismatches, and, although with a higher stock of mobile workers than Spain, is on a flatter trend for labour mobility (second to last in terms of relative flows in 2018).**
- **This problem of high apparent needs combined with weak mobility flows is present though to a slightly lesser extent also for Slovenia, where the stock of mobile workers as a percentage of the total working age population is slightly higher in comparison to Spain, and increasing at a good pace.**
- **France, based on GDP per capita, unemployment and vertical mismatches, seems to have a less prominent need to rebalance economic and labour market shortages through mobility and in fact French workers residing abroad only represent 1.3% of the total population of working age in France.**

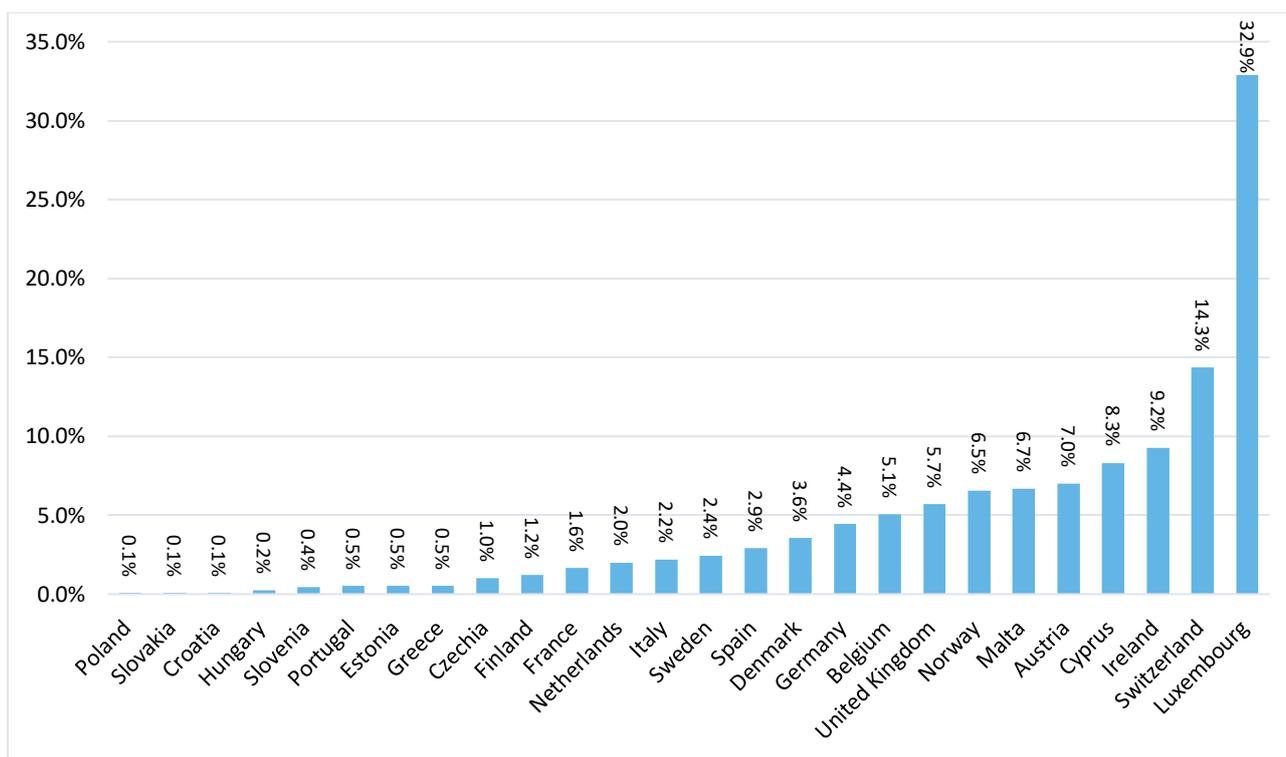
However, for all these countries, the presence of high barriers to mobility might indicate that outflows of mobile workers could increase if barriers were reduced, to the benefit of the functioning of the EU Single Market, jobseekers and employers alike.

#### **Countries with low barriers to mobility**

Countries with low barriers to mobility tend to be higher income countries, and/or countries with lower unemployment rate and lower vertical mismatches. Looking at countries with a more attractive than economic context, we would expect them to be receiving workers from other EU/EFTA countries.

And in fact, Germany and the UK are the two most important receiving countries in terms of stock volume, but looking at the number of employed EU 28 movers by country of residence as a percentage of the total population of working age in the country of residence might be more insightful to understand which countries are hosting more movers in relative terms.

Figure 34 Employed EU 28 citizens of working age who usually reside in another EU/EFTA country as a percentage of the total population of working age in the country of residence, 2018



Source: Eurostat LFS, data provided by COM and [lfsq\_pganws]. Missing or unreliable data for Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Iceland. (brackets) = figure lacks reliability due to small sample size

**Luxembourg and Switzerland** appear to be the countries hosting most EU 28 movers in relative terms. This is not surprising, as they both have much higher than average GDP per capita in PPS (154% higher than average in Luxembourg and 55% higher than average in Switzerland), in addition to the fact that they present lower than average barriers to mobility. In fact, both countries are multilingual and have official languages that are spoken in other EU countries as well, making it easier for movers from French, German and Italian-speaking (only for Switzerland) countries to find a job, but also for citizens from other EU countries that are proficient in any of these foreign languages. Luxembourg also has particularly low vertical mismatches, suggesting that it is not suffering from an excess labour supply or labour demand shortage compared to other countries. Vertical mismatches are lower than average also in Switzerland. Although they have both experienced some increase in unemployment rates between 2012 and 2018, in addition to increasing vertical mismatches in Luxembourg and slightly decreasing GDP per capita in PPS in Switzerland, the economic context remains very positive and attractive. Both countries also experience a slight increase in the number of resident mobile workers between 2016 and 2018.

Ireland also hosts a large relative amount of EU 28 movers. It is a country that, unlike Luxembourg and Switzerland, has been experiencing exceptional improvements of the economic context since 2012: the unemployment rate decreased from almost 15% in 2012 to only 5.4% in 2018 and GDP per capita in PPS increased by 43.6% over the same period. Combined with lower than average barriers to mobility, this may explain why it has been hosting more and more mobile workers. However, vertical mismatches are still higher than average, suggesting that Ireland may still benefit from some mobility outflows inasmuch as they can reduce the excessive labour supply or labour demand shortages causing the mismatch. The trend however is currently the opposite, as yearly emigration flows from Ireland have been decreasing between 2013 and 2018 (by

28.4%), arguably due to the other pull factors (increasing GDP and decreasing unemployment) as just described.

Germany and the UK are the two most important hosting countries in terms of volume, but they also appear among the most important ones in relative terms. While Germany has experienced an increase in the number of mobile workers between 2016 and 2018, the number remained more or less stable in the UK and it is probably set to decrease over time with Brexit.

Low barriers in Luxembourg, Malta, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium and Germany are **strongly related to the linguistic advantage** they have being countries in which the official language(s) are used not only nationally but also in a few other countries. This clearly facilitates movement from and to these countries that share at least a language. In the case of Malta, having English as a second official language open the doors both to EU/EFTA English-proficient citizens moving to Malta and to Maltese citizens moving to English-speaking countries like Ireland and the UK or other European countries where English proficiency is high.

The indicator level for the UK should be interpreted by keeping in mind that language proficiency in the language reported as best known in the country is lower than average: for most countries this language is likely to be English, but UK citizens are already English natives, which lowers the barriers mostly for EU/EFTA movers working in the UK. UK citizens, instead, might encounter some barriers if they want to leave the UK. A similar reasoning can be made for Ireland.

Norway and Sweden, although they do not have an advantage related to the geographical spread of their national language, are both countries where the population's proficiency in the foreign language reported as best known in the country (likely English) is higher than average, which can facilitate citizens from these two countries when moving to English-speaking countries or other English-proficient countries. Austria experiences lower than average barriers also thanks to the fact that the NQF is closely aligned with EQF, which can in principle facilitate cross-country comparison and thus mobility of workers.

Box 16 Combining determinants, barriers and actual mobility: countries with low barriers and above average pull factors

A first important observation that can be made thanks to the clustering of countries is that among countries with low barriers, all have higher than average GDP per capita in PPS and lower than average unemployment, and in most cases they also have lower than average vertical mismatches, suggesting that they have less need to rebalance their labour markets through labour mobility outflows. Two countries – Austria and Ireland – present higher than average vertical mismatches and at the same time they also have a relatively higher stock of their citizens working in another EU/EFTA country compared to the rest of the countries in this cluster, although yearly outflows from Ireland (emigration) have been decreasing since 2013 and increased slightly from Austria.

It is worth noting that most of the “top” hosting countries (Luxembourg, Switzerland, Ireland, Austria, Malta, UK, Belgium, Germany) are countries with lower than average language barriers, both in relation to foreign language proficiency and in relation to the geographical spread of their national language(s), which somewhat proves the critical importance of language as a barrier or incentive to move and multilingualism is a relevant EU policy objective.

In any case, EURES cannot directly act upon any macroeconomic variable such as unemployment and mismatches, but it can indirectly affect them by helping overcome barriers to mobility when

these are consistent. **Therefore, countries with lower barriers – mostly related to a relevant linguistic advantage – might also need less policy intervention.**

### Focus on tertiary graduates

Previously we saw that in all countries covered by this analysis, the amount of tertiary movers has been increasing more rapidly than the overall amount of movers<sup>106</sup> and at the same time, the over-qualification rate has been increasing at the EU 28 level and in most EU/EFTA countries individually, the only exceptions being Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, the Netherlands, Finland and Switzerland. At the same time, the increase in the number of tertiary movers is in line with unemployment rates trends: looking at the variation rate of unemployment rates between 2012 and 2018, we see that in most countries unemployment rates of tertiary graduates either decreased by a smaller percentage compared to the overall unemployment rate, or that it increased by a higher percentage. This is likely to have repercussions on overall labour mobility in as much as high-skill individuals tend to be more mobile than low skill ones according to the available literature.<sup>107</sup>

However, we should wonder if movers are going to countries with lower over-qualification rates in order to have the needed re-balancing effect.

The reported figures show that most EU movers going to Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg and Ireland are tertiary graduates. Around half of movers going to the UK, Switzerland and Belgium are tertiary graduates. Among these countries, Sweden, Denmark and Luxembourg have the lowest over-qualification rates, suggesting that tertiary graduates moving to those countries have a better chance at finding a job that matches their educational attainment level.

Box 17 Combining determinants, barriers and actual mobility: focus on tertiary graduates

In a time when overqualification rates are growing in most EU countries and unemployment rates for tertiary graduates decreasing at a slow pace, it is unsurprising to see that mobility of tertiary graduates is on the rise.

Studying actual trends one can see that people are moving to countries where the overqualification rates are below EU average (except for the UK), and unemployment rates for tertiary graduates are particularly low. These are also high-income Northern Countries. Hence, one can see that labour mobility of tertiary graduates is effectively helping reduce imbalances in the labour markets.

## 2.6 Concluding remarks on labour market and labour mobility

### trends

This brief overview of labour mobility drivers and obstacles, together with the information on actual labour mobility above, suggests that although the EU has been working towards enhancing labour mobility, obstacles remain. Whilst updated data on firm intentions to move of EU citizens,

<sup>106</sup> Eurostat, calculations based on [Ifst\_Imbpcited], [Ifst\_Imbercited]

<sup>107</sup> Amior, M. (2015) Why are Higher Skilled Workers More Mobile Geographically? The Role of the Job Surplus, CEP Discussion Paper No 1338, Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics and Political Science accessed at <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/dp1338.pdf>

used by the Impact Assessment as reference point, are not available,<sup>108</sup> based on the evolution of determinants of labour mobility one can see that the determinants of labour mobility continued to be strong during the evaluation period.

In particular, the analysis showed that whilst income and unemployment gaps between Member States, have tended to drop during the evaluation period, the volume of labour mobility, in its many guises, remained steady or even increased. The role of EURES and several EU initiatives aimed at reducing administrative barriers, increasing proficiency in foreign languages in most EU countries and joint efforts to ensure skills and qualifications are recognised across the board. A growing network of nationals living abroad is also considered to have played a role.

However, labour market imbalances identified in the Impact Assessment remained and so did obstacles to labour mobility. In particular, our analysis shows that countries with higher than average barriers to labour mobility tended to be also those with worse income or employment prospects, often in conjunction with a large pool of overqualified workers. Thus, the untapped potential for a better functioning of the Single Market and a continuing need of tools and initiatives supporting labour mobility remain apparent. It is expected that EURES might provide even more crucial support to mitigate the consequences of the COVID crises, given the increasing uncertainties about working and living in another EU country in such complex times.

### **3 STEP 2: EURES ACTIVITIES IN CONTEXT**

Data collected on EURES activities over time can provide some insights into the trends observed between 2014 and 2019 (when possible) on some of the indicators presented in Chapter 3 (overview of the implementation, cluster B, Eures services to employers and jobseekers). By keeping in mind the main drivers and barriers to mobility, looking at these trends may help contextualise EURES support within the broader picture of labour mobility trends, to serve as a basis to understand EURES role in supporting labour mobility. Any analyses would however be hampered by the changing requirements for the data collection under EURES, and the resulting low comparability over time of the data at hand. Therefore, findings below should be treated with caution and triangulated with other sources.

The incomparability of data may be assigned to the introduction of the Performance Measurement System (PMS) in 2018. Until then, while data was provided on a monthly basis along a few established indicators, the data provision was voluntary and there were no specific guidelines for the definition of indicators to be collected. It is estimated that on average, only 50% of EURES Advisors were filling in the monthly reports. With the introduction of the PMS, the data reliability has improved, nonetheless, one of the conditions of the PMS is that it will not be used to compare the results achieved by individual EURES countries to accommodate the difference in labour market status and focus on national labour policies

The indicators we look at – for which data is available from before 2018 – are the following:

- Individual contacts with workers
- Individual contacts with employers

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<sup>108</sup> The latest world gallup survey on individuals' intention to leave run through 2015-2017. It showed data in line with the previous iteration, but essentially focused on the pre-EURES regulation period.

- Job finders

### 3.1 Individual contacts with jobseekers and employers

Although the data collection method has changed since the introduction of the PMS and the data collected before that is less reliable and more subject to biases, we can still try to see if some interesting trends in the number of individual contacts with workers and employers can be observed.

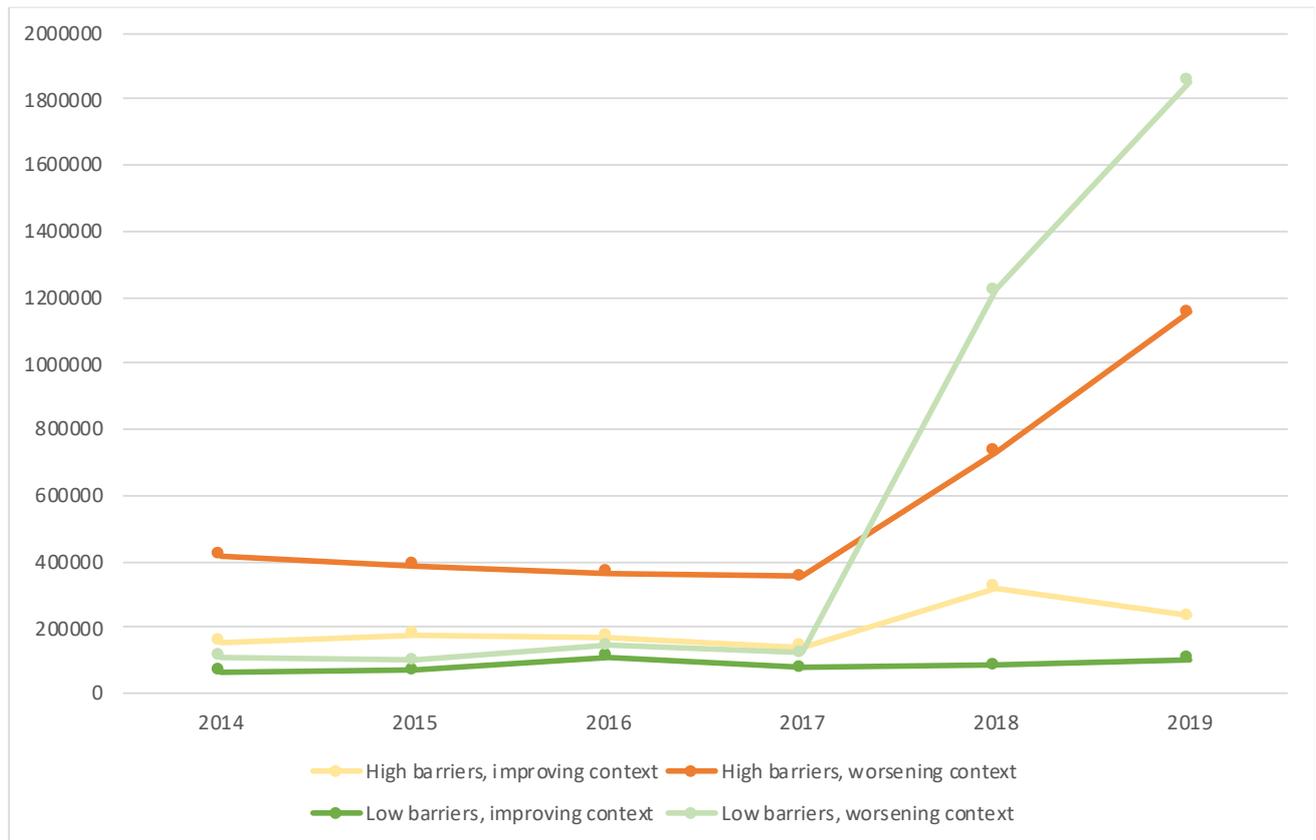
The numbers before 2018 (pre-PMS) may likely be underestimated, due to the limitations in relation to pre-PMS data resulting in under-reporting by Member States.<sup>109</sup>

**In countries where the economic context has not been improving over time**, both with high and low barriers, **there has been an increase in the number of individual contacts with jobseekers** between 2014 and 2019, in particular between 2017 and 2018 (which may be overestimated) but also between 2018 and 2019. At the same time, **in countries with an improving economic context** – both low and high barriers – **individual contacts remained more or less stable over time.**

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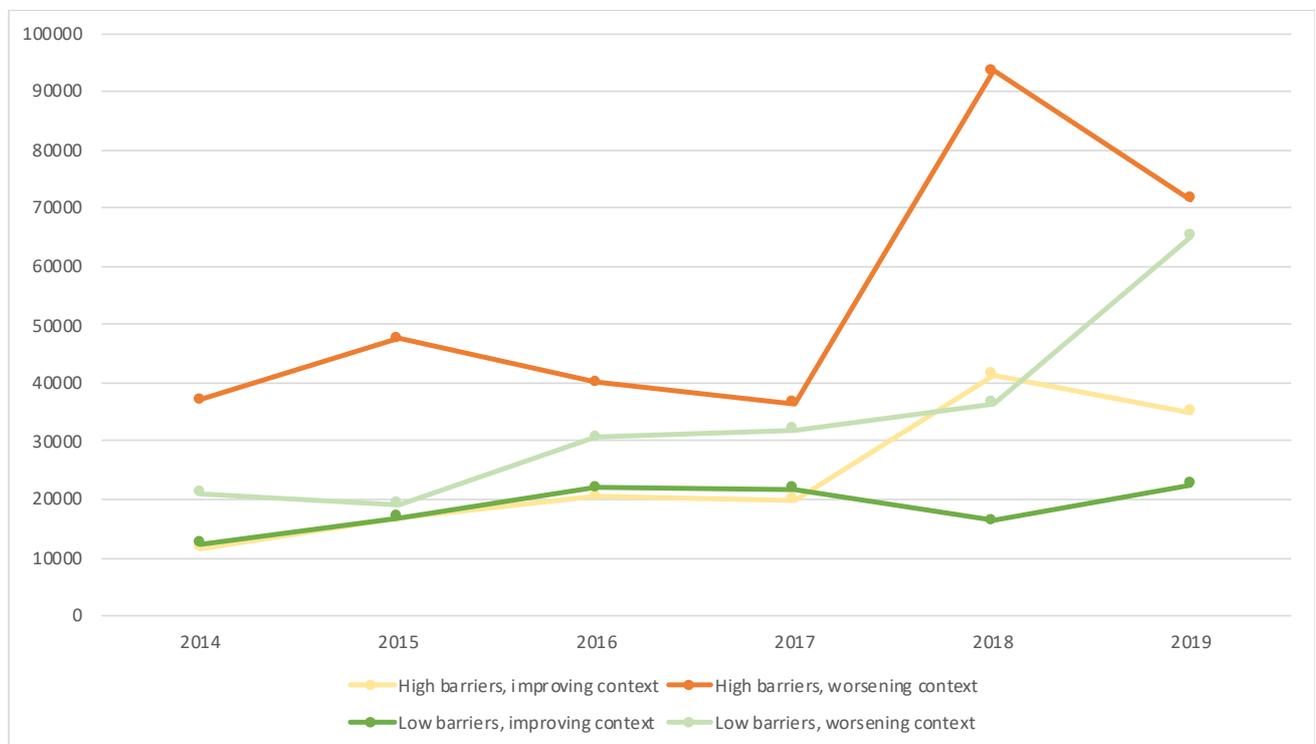
<sup>109</sup> From the European Commission's view, the reporting was left to the individual EURES Advisors' discretion, however, national EURES networks might have imposed some internal conditions to motivate the staff to fill in the reports. Based on the data obtained, it can be deduced that this form of data collection favour countries with lower number of EURES Advisors, but that's not sufficiently consistent and meaningful to be treated as a factor in the ensuing analysis.

Figure 35 Individual number of contacts with jobseekers by clusters of countries, 2014-2019



Source: PMS data (from 2018) and pre-PMS data collection templates (2014-2017)

Figure 36 Individual number of contacts with employers by clusters of countries, 2014-2019



Source: PMS data (from 2018) and pre-PMS data collection templates (2014-2017)

Regarding individual contacts with employers (Figure 36), these have overall increased in the countries covered by the comparative analysis<sup>110</sup> from 82 055 in 2014 to 194 261 in 2019 but with differences across clusters. They have particularly increased between 2017 and 2018 (switch to PMS) in countries with high barriers, but then decreased again in both clusters after 2018. The latter trend should be affected by bias to a lower extent, given the same monitoring system was in place for both observations. The only cluster of countries where contacts with employers have been increasing steadily is the one of countries with low barriers and a context that has not been improving over time. This is however in line with expectations, as this cluster includes countries with relatively low unemployment and low mismatch – where employers are therefore increasingly likely to need support to fill in vacancies.

Box 18 EURES implementation in the context: individual contacts with individual and employers

The analysis of trends is hampered by low comparability of data over time due to the switch to the PMS. Nevertheless, there seems to be an overall trend of increasing contacts with jobseekers and employers especially in countries with a worsening socio-economic context. The increases are also more significant for high barrier countries compared to low barrier ones, providing some support for the relevance of EURES strategy given the increasing volume of activity on the ground in countries which might be most in need of it.

### 3.2 Job placements

The number of job finders who found a job through EURES increased every year between 2014 and 2019, an **increase of 40.4%**.<sup>111</sup>

At the same time, as seen in the previous sections, **the stock of mobile workers has been increasing over the years** – from around 8.2 million mobile workers in 2014 to around 10.4 in 2019, i.e. an increase of 27.8%. Even more significantly for EURES, **yearly gross mobility flows** (calculated as immigration flows of movers of working age from EU28/EFTA countries except reporting country, plus emigration flows of movers of working age from each country to other EU28/EFTA countries except reporting country<sup>112</sup>) remained more or less stable over the years, but with cross country variation.

This might already provide a rough indication, despite some caveats about the reliability of EURES monitoring data, that EURES support is growing faster than labour mobility as a whole, thus increasingly supporting those seeking to find employment abroad as well as employers in search of the right skills.

<sup>110</sup> Iceland and Lichtenstein are not included because of data limitations

<sup>111</sup> It should be noted that for the purpose of this analysis and in order to reduce the impact of a few breaks in the time series following the introduction of the PMS, we narrowed down the scope of the estimates on EURES countries displaying sufficiently smooth trends in the data. This has led to the use of 2017 data for SK also for 2018 and 2019. In addition, we have made estimates for missing data in Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark based on averages from the previous years or linear trends). Finally, Lichtenstein and Iceland are excluded from our analysis as there was no comparable data on barriers (language and recognition of qualifications). Hence, current PMS data might differ from what presented in this analysis.

<sup>112</sup> Based on Eurostat migration data, which however does not allow to differentiate movers by employment status. It should also be considered that the values used for this exercise might differ from those reported in the EU intra-mobility reports, as considering the presence of missing data for a few large countries in those reports and that only values up to 2017 were available, it was decided to use a slightly broader reference population and a different process to close the data gaps. This might have led to a slight underestimation of EURES coverage. The purpose of this exercise is however to give an indication of the way in which trends are evolving rather than updating mobility statistics.

It is interesting to differentiate between incoming and outgoing workers, to detect any cross-country or cross-country deviation in trends<sup>113</sup> and how the figures compare with overall intra-EU mobility flows from and to these groups of countries. This can provide some insights into EURES' relevance, in the sense that one could check if EURES is stepping up its support where it is most needed.

The main parameters to assess whether EURES has been relevant by covering higher shares of labour mobility where it is most needed are:

- Whether EURES is covering a higher share of mobility where barriers are higher (both incoming and outgoing)
- Whether EURES is covering a higher share of incoming mobility in countries with better than average and/or improving conditions (i.e. mostly low barriers countries with higher than average GDP per capita, lower unemployment, lower vertical mismatch) and a higher share of outgoing mobility from countries with lower than average and/or worsening conditions.

It is important to note that in the analysis that follows, we base the interpretation of results mostly on these dimensions (barriers to mobility and socio-economic context). However, as we could not include in our analysis data in relation to other factors such as **specific labour shortages by sectors** in different countries, it should be kept in mind that other **factors could be at play to determine EURES' relevance**. For example, if there are specific shortages in the manufacturing sector of a country with a worse than average socio-economic context – which may lead to think, based on our clustering, that workers should rather be helped find a job in another country by EURES - EURES support to try to send workers to such country to fill the shortage through labour mobility would still be relevant.

### 3.2.1 Incoming job finders

Looking at the variation in the number of **incoming EURES jobseekers** we observe that these have generally **increased over the years in countries with low barriers to mobility, also corresponding to countries with a better than average socio-economic context and** particularly in those with an economic context that has not been improving over time<sup>114</sup>. We compare figures of EURES inflows with data on immigration<sup>115</sup> of EU/EFTA movers of working age, which allows looking at flows instead of stocks of movers<sup>116</sup>, by calculating the share of EURES inflows over total immigration. Figure 37 shows this share over the years 2014-2018.

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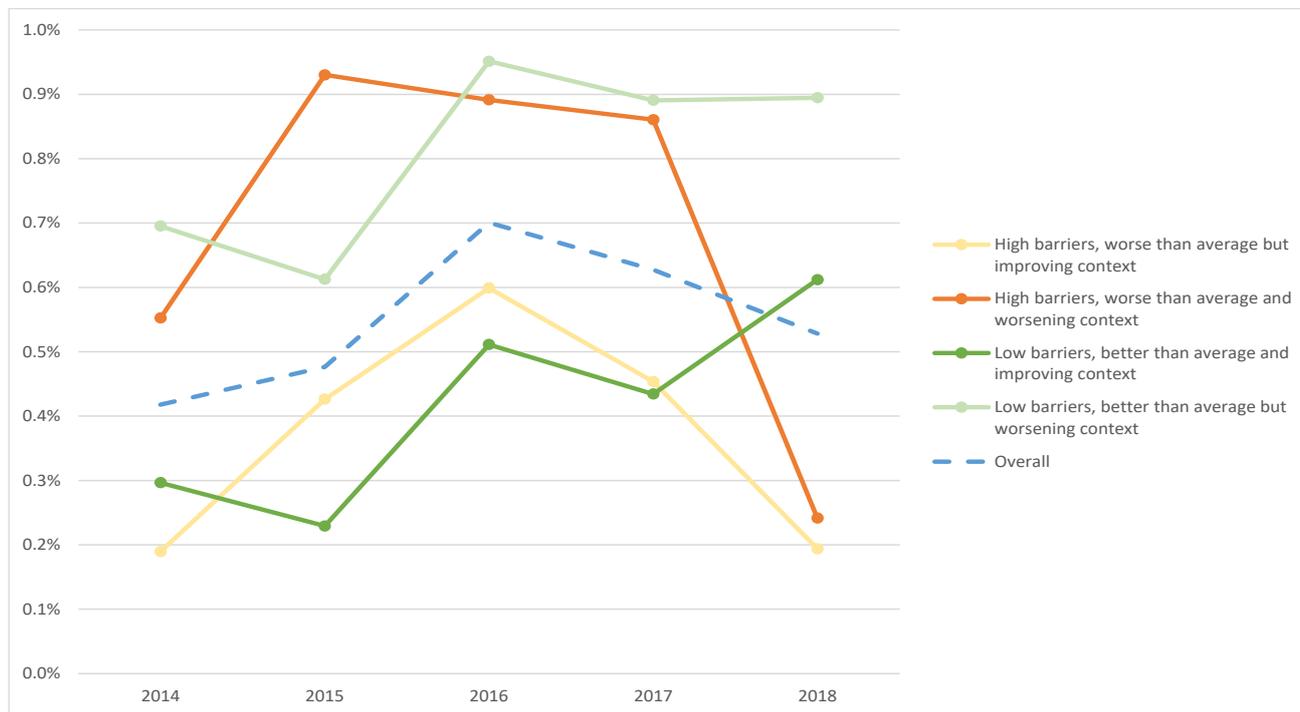
<sup>113</sup> Based on their GDP per capita, unemployment, vertical mismatch and labour mobility barriers, as seen in step 1 of this Analysis.

<sup>114</sup> The steep increase between 2018 and 2019 in this cluster is attributable to a possible outlier.

<sup>115</sup> Immigration by age group, sex and country of previous residence [migr\_imm5prv]. Country of previous residence in our case is any EU28 or EFTA country other than the reporting country.

<sup>116</sup> The limitation is that we cannot limit the observations to employed or active movers; however setting the age range to working age (20-64) limits the risks of including inactive people.

Figure 37 Share of EURES inflows by clusters of countries over total immigration of working age EU/EFTA population in the same clusters



Source: PMS data (from 2018) and pre-PMS data collection templates (2014-2017) and Eurostat [migr\_imm5prv].

The most interesting and apparent trend is between countries with a better and worse than average economic context, e.g. potential hosting countries versus potential sending countries. It is clear from the graph that **EURES is covering and increasingly higher share of labour mobility that goes from countries with an unfavourable economic (especially if worsening) context towards a better one (especially if improving), in line with the needs which could be inferred from the comparative analysis, at least at an aggregate level.** Conversely, EURES is covering a progressively smaller share of placements in countries with an unattractive economic context, especially where this is worsening. **Now such a trend is interesting as it suggests that the EURES strategy aligns with socio-economic needs and might contribute to reducing imbalances.**

In particular, in countries with **low barriers and an improving context**, yearly immigration flows of EU/EFTA movers to countries in this cluster have been generally decreasing over time since 2015 whereas inflows of EURES job finders have been generally increasing – especially after 2017. The result is that **EURES is covering an increasingly higher share of placements in these countries**, as Figure 37 shows, where labour market and economic conditions are favourable and movements from countries where GDP per capita is lower, and/or unemployment and/or vertical mismatches are higher to countries in this cluster may contribute to a reduction of imbalances, suggesting that EURES support has been relevant to this end. Clearly, people incoming to allegedly low barrier countries might well be from high barrier countries. This is why it is not contradictory that these countries are relevant targets of EURES support.

A similar observation can be made regarding the other low barriers countries, where the share of EURES incoming job finders remains higher than the overall share although it has not been increasing after 2016. Since these are countries where, although the context (GDP per capita, unemployment, mismatch) did not improve over time, it still remains very attractive – so that

again EURES is facilitating movements which may contribute to a reduction of imbalances if the inflows are from countries with a less positive context. It is interesting to notice that the increase in coverage of EURES services is smaller than for countries with an improving socio-economic context, again in line with the comparative analysis of the labour markets.

In **both high-barrier clusters of countries, the share of EURES incoming job finders** over the total immigration flows **has been decreasing over time** and was below average in 2018. This could be interpreted by considering the fact that by trying to contribute to reducing **imbalances in the Single Market**, EURES support is more relevant when it helps moving to countries with higher GDP per capita, lower unemployment and lower vertical mismatch – as it seems to be the case.

Clearly the below can only roughly depict the trends which are far more articulated in terms of specific sectors, regions, occupations and so forth. However, it provides an aggregated picture of the direction in which EURES support is moving. Based on this picture, one can see that EURES is increasingly supporting job placements in countries with an attractive labour market, which is in line with the idea of reducing imbalances and the aims of the programme.

Box 19 EURES implementation in the context: job placements (incoming job finders)

EURES, based on placement data as compared to overall mobility trends, appears to be covering an increasingly higher share of labour mobility that goes from countries with an unfavourable economic context (especially if worsening) towards more attractive countries. This is in line with the needs identified in the comparative analysis, at least at an aggregate level. Conversely, EURES is covering a progressively smaller share of placements in countries with an unattractive economic context, especially where this is worsening. Now such a trend suggests that the EURES strategy is increasingly aligned with socio-economic needs and might be contributing to reducing imbalances.

### 3.2.2 *Outgoing job finders*

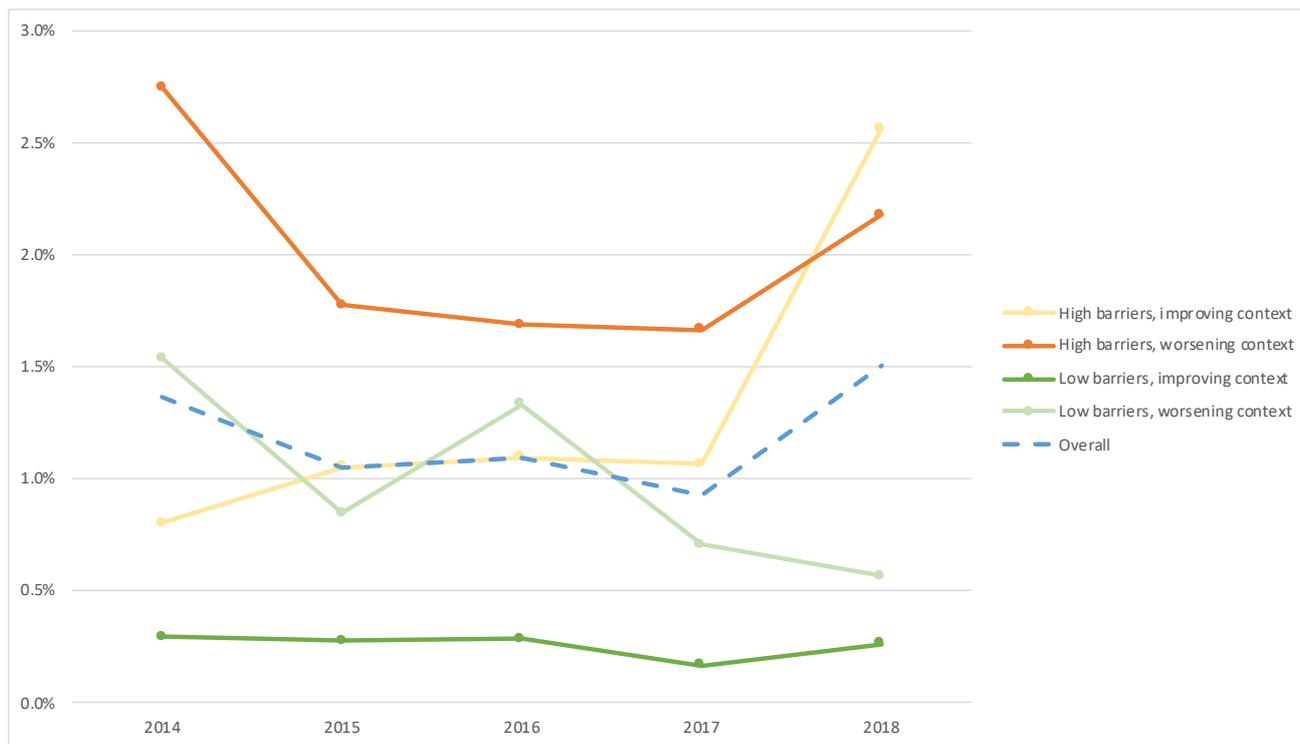
Looking at the share of EURES outgoing job finders over the overall emigration flows<sup>117</sup> from the same clusters of countries, we observe that (Figure 38) this share has stayed above average throughout the period 2014-2018 in the group of countries with **high barriers, an unfavourable and worsening context** in relation to mobility drivers (i.e. with a decreasing or stable GDP per capita, and/or increasing unemployment, and/or increasing vertical mismatch). It went above average since 2016 for countries with high barriers and an unfavourable but improving context. Although the EURES share decreased between 2014 and 2017 in countries with high barriers and worsening socio-economic context, it increased again after 2017. All this, in addition to the constantly increasing share of outgoing placements covered in the other high barrier cluster, indicates the significant and increasing relevance of EURES support **in countries where needs were highest.**

Regarding countries with **high barriers and an improving context**, the **share of outgoing EURES job finders over total emigration flows has been more or less increasing year to year**, and particularly between 2017 and 2018 (which may be due to a switch in the data collection method). There has been a relatively stable amount of EURES job finders departing

<sup>117</sup> Eurostat [migr\_emi3nxt]

from countries in this cluster. At the same time, overall emigration flows from this cluster of countries show a **decreasing trend in the number of emigration flows since 2016** – which may be in line with the improvement of local economic and labour market conditions – so that EURES seems to be covering an increasingly higher share of total emigration flows because the latter are decreasing.

Figure 38 Share of EURES outflows by clusters of countries over total emigration of working age EU/EFTA population in the same clusters



The share of **outgoing EURES job finders has been increasing to a smaller extent or decreasing in countries with low barriers** where, in general, the economic context in terms of mobility drivers is rather positive, as all have a higher than average GDP per capita - although levels of unemployment and/or vertical mismatch might have slightly increased over time in some of them, hence putting them in the category of “low barriers and worsening context”.

Box 20 EURES implementation in the context: job placements (outgoing job finders)

Placements of outgoing workers based on EURES and EUROSTAT data point to a larger coverage of EURES placements in high barriers/non attractive economic context countries, with a difference that has been increasing over time and especially in 2017-2018. Hence, similar to the situation of incoming placements, also the trends of outgoing placements tend to confirm the active role EURES is increasingly playing in helping address imbalances in the single market. This finding is however caveated pending a confirmation of this trend based on consistent PMS data.

#### 4 STEP 3: ADDED VALUE OF EURES – SELF-REPORTED COUNTERFACTUAL

The online surveys sent to employers and jobseekers included questions that asked respondents to reflect counterfactually through survey questions directed at EURES participants – jobseekers and employers (‘counterfactual as self-estimated by program participants’ method<sup>118</sup>, CSEPP).

The hypothetical counterfactual questions were included in the online surveys, and asked jobseekers and employers if in the absence of EURES, certain outcomes related to EURES support would have been achieved. The outcomes identified and tested in the survey are based on EURES intervention logic (presented in Annex I).

There are some potential biases associated with this method that should be taken into account:

- **Self-estimation bias:** generally, using the difference between current and self-estimated counterfactual ratings of participants as an estimate for the causal intervention effect may be biased because of participants’ over- or under-estimation of the true but non-observable counterfactual. Given that the counterfactual is a scenario in which participants have never actually been, it seems reasonable to assume that there is some deviation between self-estimated and true counterfactuals. This bias, which equals the difference between the true treatment effect on a participant and the treatment effect on the same person estimated by CSEPP, is denoted as self-estimation bias (SEB) (Mueller, Gaus, & Rech, 2014).
- **Self-selection bias:** those responding to the survey may have a specific interest in doing so, that is, answer strategically or only answer if they are particularly happy or unhappy about the services received. It is a problem that very often results when survey respondents are allowed to decide entirely for themselves whether or not they want to participate in a survey.
- **Lack of representativeness:** respondents may represent only some subsets of the population (such as country, gender, type of EURES activity). This means that we need to reweigh the respondent sample to account for differential probabilities of selection among subgroups and bring the respondent sample data up to the dimension of the study population.

Self-estimation bias is a problem that cannot be overcome within this study, lacking detailed micro-data on mobility flows as clarified during the inception phase with the Commission. Hence this limitation is acknowledged and will be mitigated by triangulating different sources of evidence in the overall design of the study.

In terms of self-selection bias, again answering to the survey could not be made mandatory and it is a limitation to be acknowledged. However, there is no reason to believe that respondents have overstated the difference EURES made to their life, or that the group of those benefitting the most is over-represented, as it is equally likely that people particularly unhappy with the support they received might want to be vocal about it. This is because the survey is anonymous and strategic behaviour would be hard to explain lacking e.g. financial support being offered through the fund and the low stake beneficiaries might have in the continuation or discontinuation

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<sup>118</sup> A recently introduced approach, denoted as the “counterfactual as self-estimated by program participants” (CSEPP; Mueller, Gaus, & Rech, 2014; Mueller & Gaus, 2015), capitalizes on people’s ability to think counterfactually (e.g., Roesse & Olson, 2014) and builds on the idea that intervention participants are capable of directly estimating their counterfactual scenario, that is, the state they would have been in after an intervention without having participated. In previous studies it was found that CSEPP worked relatively well for assessing the effects of communicative interventions on various types of self-reported attitude and behavioral intention (Mueller, Gaus, & Rech, 2014; Mueller and Gaus, 2015).

of the service. In addition, and in order to ensure that the average opinion of the respondent calculated based on survey data is better representative of the actual average opinion of the EURES population, we calculate country-level post-stratification weights<sup>119</sup> to prevent certain countries to be over or underrepresented<sup>120</sup>. This is done for all self-reported counterfactual questions on the added value of each of the services provided by EURES.

In the sections that follow, we present the results and findings from the jobseekers' survey first and then from the employers' one by cluster. For each of them, we first present a brief overview of respondents, to check if there is over or underrepresentation of specific sub-samples of the population, followed by a presentation of unweighted and weighted results, seeking to account for the possible misrepresentation. We then test any cross-cluster difference to see if the average opinion of respondent in difference clusters differs in a statistically significant manner using ANOVA analysis and post-hoc tests<sup>121</sup>. Although sample sizes might be too small to see statistically significant differences in some cases, and this does not necessarily imply that they are irrelevant, such tests allow us discriminating among weaker and stronger findings and to better nuance the interpretation of the survey's results.

Box 21 Self-reported counterfactual questions: overview of methodology and limitations

The online surveys sent to jobseekers and employers included questions that asked respondents to reflect counterfactually if, certain outcomes related to intervention logic of EURES would have been achieved also in absence of the programme. This analysis might be liable especially by self-estimation bias, but this is a caveat which need to be acknowledged as no other counterfactual techniques could be applied due to lack of disaggregated data. Increased representativeness of the analysis is sought by using simple post-stratification weights. Differences in respondents' answers are tested statistically (through ANOVA and post-hoc tests).

## 4.1 Jobseekers

### 4.1.1 Overview of respondents

To start with, some information on the survey respondents' is included, to get a sense of the sample size and possible overrepresentation with respect to the actual population of people benefitting from EURES support.

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<sup>119</sup> The weights are calculated on the basis of the ratio between the number of jobseekers/employers registered on the EURES portal and the sample proportion per each Member State. This can help reduce any over(under)representation of a given country in the EU level averages. After discussion with project's partners, the number of jobseekers/employers registered has been identified as the most reliable proxy of the volume of activity within a certain MS. Frequent data gaps for the provision of other EURES services made this choice somewhat inevitable. Additional stratification criteria (e.g. age, educational attainment, sex etc.) were not included directly given no country specific values are available. In any event, differences in the opinion of such sub-categories which could potentially lead to bias have been tested statistically through the ANOVA analysis.

<sup>120</sup> The population of reference used is the number of jobseekers self-registered on the EURES Portal, as explained in methodology, for all types of support with the exception of support received to receive information on the specific situation of cross-border workers. In the latter case, the population of reference used is the PMS indicator on the number of individual contacts with workers on the topic of cross-border work.

<sup>121</sup> These tests are performed on STATA software. Do files available upon request.

After having cleaned the data to prepare it for the analysis of the self-reported counterfactual questions<sup>122</sup>, the database used for the subsequent analysis includes a total of 493 respondents<sup>123</sup>.

Most respondents to the survey are males (65.3%, and 34.3% females). The vast majority (76.3%) of respondents have a tertiary education diploma (Bachelor, Master or PhD) and only 0.6% have a primary education. 15.2 % of respondents have a secondary education. Comparing it with PMS 2019 data on educational attainment level of EURES jobseekers, although data is missing for many countries, tertiary graduates do not represent a vast majority of jobseekers: they represent 17.1% of them, while the rest is represented by secondary and post-secondary (ISCED levels 3 and 4) graduates. This will be taken into account in the interpretation of the survey's results, especially in case statistically significant differences by educational attainment level should appear.

There is at least one respondent for each EU28/EFTA country, except Iceland and Lichtenstein. The distribution of respondents across countries presented in Table 5 shows that respondents from Spain, Italy and France are the most numerous, followed by Germany and Portugal. For all other countries the share of respondents remains below 5%. Population proportions (looking at registered EURES jobseekers on the Portal) are also highest for Italy and Spain (respectively 22.4% and 18.9% of all registered jobseekers). Regarding France, data is missing on the number of registered jobseekers in 2019. Germany and Portugal Italy and Spain follow in terms of population proportion as well, so that the sample of survey respondents seems to more or less represent the population of EURES jobseekers registered on the Portal in terms of country of residence.

Responses are missing from Iceland.

Table 5 Respondents to the self-reported counterfactual questions by country of residence

Country	Number of respondents	As a % of total
Austria	6	1.2%
Belgium	14	2.8%
Bulgaria	10	2.0%
Croatia	13	2.6%
Cyprus	1	0.2%
Czech Republic	6	1.2%
Denmark	4	0.8%
Estonia	2	0.4%
Finland	9	1.8%
France	62	12.6%
Germany	44	8.9%
Greece	27	5.5%

<sup>122</sup> Test answers and partial responses that were blank were removed. Partial responses that contain some answers are included. Respondents who indicated a non-EURES country of residence were excluded from the analysis.

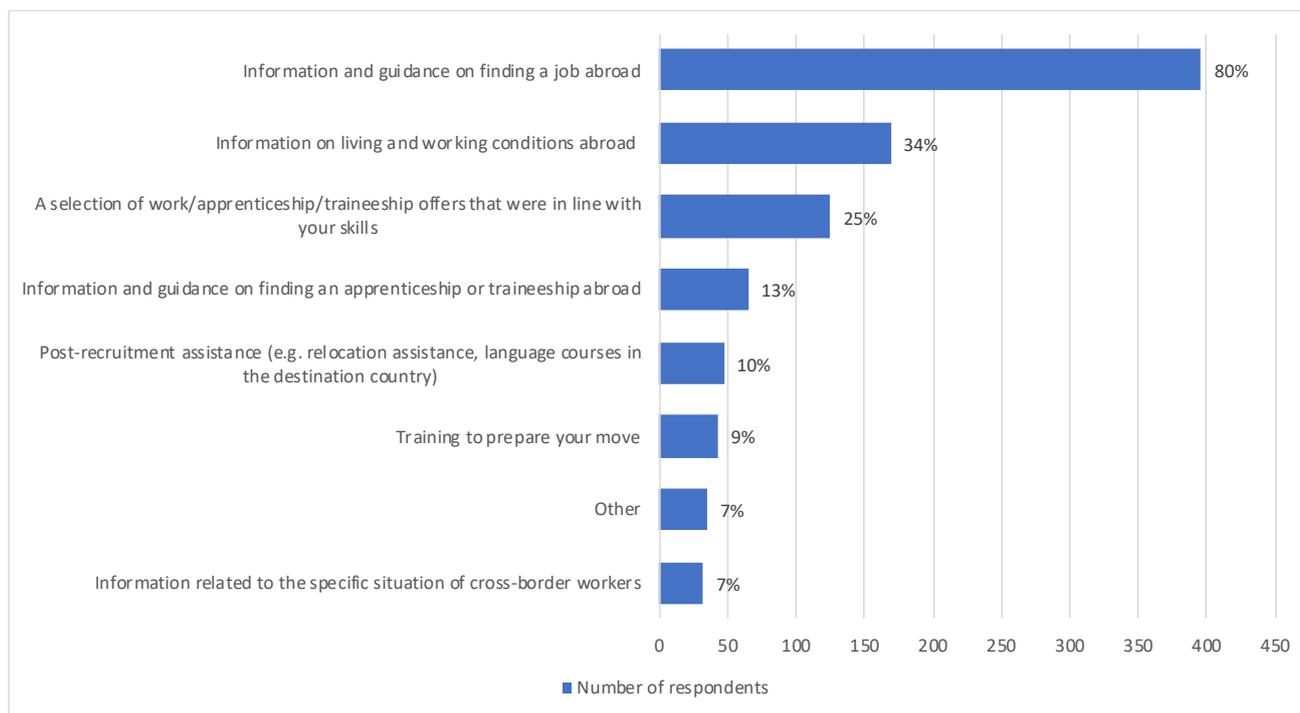
<sup>123</sup> These are respondents who only received some direct support from EURES – and therefore excludes those who were only registered on the EURES Portal with no further activity and/or only visited the Portal. The consequence is that the sample is smaller than the sample of all jobseekers who interacted with EURES, which may overestimate the perceived added value of EURES as respondents to these self-reported counterfactual questions received some concrete and direct support, whereas if respondents who only visited the Portal were to express their opinion on the added value of EURES it would probably be lower.

Hungary	7	1.4%
Ireland	9	1.8%
Italy	68	13.8%
Latvia	2	0.4%
Lithuania	6	1.2%
Luxembourg	3	0.6%
Malta	1	0.2%
Netherlands	17	3.4%
Norway	11	2.2%
Poland	6	1.2%
Portugal	33	6.7%
Romania	5	1.0%
Slovakia	6	1.2%
Slovenia	6	1.2%
Spain	77	15.6%
Sweden	15	3.0%
Switzerland	4	0.8%
United Kingdom	19	3.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: online survey to jobseekers

Respondents had to indicate which type(s) of support they have received through EURES (Figure 39). **Most of them (80.3%) received information and guidance on finding a job abroad**, followed by information on living and working conditions abroad (34.3%). Around a fourth of respondents received a selection of work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers in line with their skills. Only 6.5% of respondents received information on the specific situation of cross-border workers, which is not surprising considering that not all EURES countries are involved in CBPs, and the workers/jobseekers concerned only represent a smaller share of all workers/jobseekers in a country. On average, **each respondent received around 2 different types of support from EURES** (1.95).

Figure 39 Respondents (jobseekers) by type of EURES support received



Source: online survey to jobseekers

Box 22 Self-reported counterfactual questions: overview respondents and description of the sample of jobseekers

The survey of jobseekers received a total of 493 answers, with males, tertiary graduates and participants from Italy and Spain being slightly overrepresented in the sample. This is accounted for in the subsequent analysis.

In terms of the types of support respondents have received on average 2 different services. 4 in 5 respondents have received information and guidance on finding a job abroad, 1 in 3 on living and working condition and 1 in 4 a selection of work/apprenticeships/traineeship offers in line with their skills. Other services, including information on cross-border workers, are less frequent.

#### 4.1.2 EURES added value by type of support

For each type of EURES support they received, respondents were asked to indicate whether a certain outcome would have been achieved even in absence of EURES support – therefore trying to reflect counterfactually on what would have happened without EURES. Respondents could express their views on a scale from:

- No, definitely not;
- No, probably not;
- Yes, but not as quickly/easily;
- I do not know
- Yes.

Their answers were re-classified turning the Likert-scale opinions into numbers **from 1 to 5**<sup>124</sup>, where 1 indicates that the respondent thinks he/she would have achieved the same outcome without EURES support (thus EURES had no added value), and 5 indicates that the respondent thinks he definitely would not have achieved the same outcome.

In the following sub-sections we present respondents' "counterfactual" opinion in relation to each of the **main types of support received**.

### **Finding a job or apprenticeship/traineeship abroad**

Respondents who indicated that they received information and guidance on finding a job or an apprenticeship abroad were then asked to say whether they thought they would have found a job or apprenticeship abroad anyways in the absence of EURES support. 394 respondents expressed an opinion. A first look at the responses – before applying weights - suggests that **most respondents (54.4%) seem to have a comparatively positive opinion of EURES' added value in finding a job abroad**<sup>125</sup>. In fact, they responded that **they would not have found a job or apprenticeship abroad without EURES** (25.5% of respondents) or that **they would have but not as quickly/easily** (28.9% of respondents). Another 14.4% of respondents responded that they do not know, which may indicate that they are not sure about EURES added value but they also not sure that it did not help, and could therefore be considered as a "neutral" opinion between negative ("Yes", the same outcome would have been achieved) and positive ("No, definitely not", "No, probably not" ; "Yes, but not as quickly/easily") opinions.

The next step is to convert the scale of opinions into a numerical scale from 1 to 5 as explained above, to be able to apply post-stratification weights. When converting these opinions into numbers from 1 to 5 we should consider **any average opinion above 2** (corresponding to "I don't know") **as a positive one**, indicating that there has been some EURES added value on average among participants and therefore that **EURES has had a role in facilitating the outcome**. The closer the average is to 5, the bigger the added value of EURES in achieving a relevant outcome, according to the respondents.

Before having weighted each country's average to take into account the population of reference dimension, the unweighted average opinion is equal to **2.56**, and therefore higher than the baseline of 2 under which respondents did not perceive an added value of EURES in finding a job abroad at all. We then applied country weights to have a more representative result. Overall, the weighted average opinion is equal to **2.84** – slightly higher than the unweighted ones. This can be explained by the fact that some countries where the opinion was more positive on average were slightly underrepresented in sample of respondents.

This value suggests that **overall respondents were facilitated by EURES in trying to find a job abroad**, although its role was on average not determinant (they would have found a job abroad anyways, but probably not as quickly/easily).

<sup>124</sup> Assigning the numbers as follows: No, definitely not: 5; No, probably not: 4; Yes, but not as quickly/easily: 3; I do not know: 2; Yes: 1.

<sup>125</sup> It should be noted that over the 394 respondents who said to have received information and guidance on finding a job and/or apprenticeship abroad and expressed an opinion on whether they would have found a job without EURES, only 75 then say they actually got a job abroad thanks to EURES. So many respondents expressed a counterfactual opinion on whether finding a job would still be possible without EURES even though they did not actually (yet) found a job through EURES. We still take their opinion into account, considering that some respondents, although they did not end up getting a job abroad (yet), can still perceive an added value of EURES in the process of trying to find a job abroad. They might have received information and guidance to find a job abroad that got them closer to finding one - for example they may have had one or several interviews thanks to EURES - while maybe trying through other channels did not produce any effect at all.

We then compare the weighted averages differentiating between countries identified as having low barriers to mobility (in terms of language and recognition of qualifications<sup>126</sup>) and those with high barriers. There is some difference in the average opinion, although small, between high and low barriers countries (2.91 vs 2.73). Running a one-way analysis of variance<sup>127</sup> (ANOVA) allows to confirm that **this difference is statistically significant**<sup>128</sup>.

Respondents from **high barriers countries seem to be more facilitated by EURES when trying to find a job abroad**. In fact, respondents from countries with low barriers might perceive a lower added value of EURES because the alternative (searching on their own or through other services) should more easily get them to find a job abroad as they are facing lower barriers, compared to those who reside in countries where barriers are higher and so they may be in more need of EURES support. In addition, all countries in the group **of low barriers** are countries with a positive economic context in relation to labour mobility, i.e. they have higher than average GDP/capita, and/or lower unemployment and vertical mismatch. Therefore, **we may think that they need less support to find a job abroad** as there is a less "pressing" need for them to search for a job abroad.

All in all, a higher added value of EURES among jobseekers who need to find a job abroad but are facing high barriers to mobility is a positive result, as EURES intervention might generally be more relevant in countries where barriers are higher.

Countries with low and high barriers could be further differentiated between those where GDP per capita has been increasing over time and/or unemployment rates and vertical mismatches have been decreasing (improving context in relation to labour mobility drivers), and those where the opposite trend was observed in the last years.

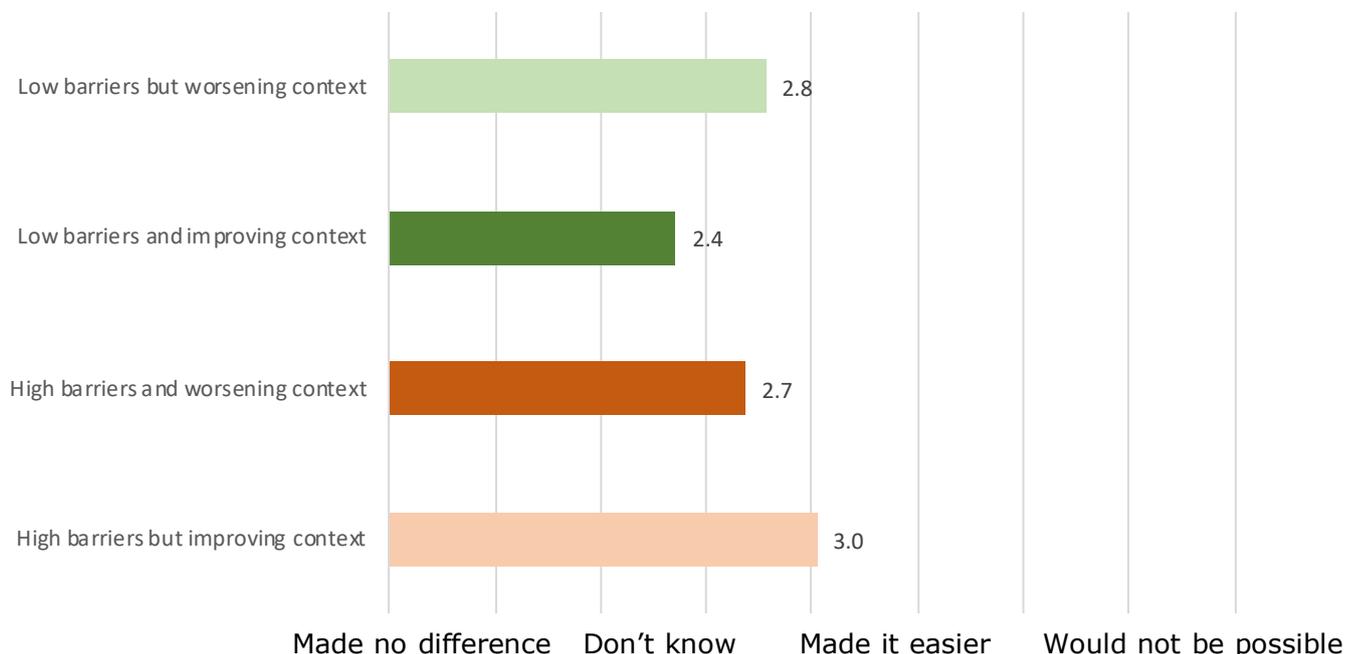
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<sup>126</sup> As already discussed, barriers to mobility are limited to these two dimensions as they are among the most identified barriers to mobility in the literature but also the only ones which allow to make quantifiable comparisons across countries.

<sup>127</sup> To check whether the difference in means is statistically significant. In what follows, we only run this test when there are at least two groups to compare with at least 10 respondents in each.

<sup>128</sup>  $p < 0.05$

Figure 40 Average “counterfactual” opinion of respondents in relation to finding a job or apprenticeship/traineeship abroad after having received information and guidance through EURES – answering to the question: “For “support to finding a job abroad”, could you please specify if the same outcome would have been achieved without EURES support?”



Source: online survey to jobseekers

Figure 40 shows the different average opinion regarding EURES added value to find a job abroad for these different subgroups of countries. The ANOVA test suggests that there is a statistically significant<sup>129</sup> difference in means between these four clusters of countries. Pairwise comparisons of the differences in means however show that only the comparisons between **high barriers and improving context countries** (mostly Eastern European and Baltic countries) **with low barriers countries (both with improving and with worsening context)** are statistically significant<sup>130</sup>.

Countries with high barriers to mobility but an improving context in terms of mobility drivers are almost all **Eastern-European countries and Baltic countries**, and respondents from this cluster of countries seem to be the ones **most facilitated by EURES in finding a job or apprenticeship abroad** compared to the other clusters. The biggest difference is found when comparing jobseekers from this cluster with **jobseekers from low barriers countries with an improving context**, which is also statistically significant as mentioned above. Countries in the cluster of high barriers and improving context are countries where, as opposed to low barriers countries, typically GDP per capita is still below EU28 average. EURES therefore seem to have facilitated jobseekers from this sub-cluster of high barrier countries more than jobseekers from low barriers countries. In fact, the former may have a higher perception of how much of a difference EURES can make when trying to find a job because of a higher underlying need to be supported caused by high barriers and contextual factors (especially lower than average GDP per capita, in this case).

<sup>129</sup> p<0.05

<sup>130</sup> p<0.1

## Box 23 Self-reported counterfactual questions: support to finding a job, main findings

The first counterfactual question was posed to those having received information on jobs or apprenticeships abroad, that is, over 80% of the respondents and concerned the difference EURES made to finding an employment opportunity abroad.

One in four answered that they would have not found a job without EURES, with an additional 30% percent suggesting EURES has made it easier for them. This means that over half of the respondents confirm EURES added value. If we weight-in the fact that some countries are overrepresented in the survey, the overall picture further improves.

Importantly, respondents from high barrier countries have a generally better appraisal of EURES added value, which becomes statistically significant in the case of central-European and Baltic countries.

### **Receiving a selection of work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers that were in line with your skills**

Respondents who indicated that they received a selection of work/apprenticeship/traineeship offers that were in line with their skills were then asked to say whether they thought they would have received such selection anyways in the absence of EURES support. 123 respondents expressed an opinion. A first look at the responses suggests that **most respondents (63.4%) seem to have a rather positive opinion of EURES' added value**. In fact, they responded that **they would not have received a selection of offers in line with their skills without EURES** (33.3% of respondents) or that they would have but not as quickly/easily (30.1% of respondents). At the same time, around **a third (30.1%) of respondents** said that they **would have received such a selection anyways**. Another 6.5% of respondents responded that they do not know.

Before having weighted each country's average to take into account the population of reference dimension, the unweighted average opinion is equal to **2.76**, and therefore again higher than the baseline of 2 under which respondents did not perceive an added value of EURES in finding a job abroad at all. We then applied country weights to have a more representative result. Overall, the weighted average opinion is equal to **3.0** – slightly higher than the unweighted ones. This value suggests that **on average, EURES facilitated jobseekers and made it easier/quicker for respondents to receive a selection of job/apprenticeship/traineeship offers in line with their skills**.

Looking at the weighted averages for low and high barriers country<sup>131</sup>, we observe again a gap between them: respondents from **high barriers countries** in this case have a **consistently higher perception of EURES added value** (with a weighted average equal to 3.48) when it comes to receiving offers in line with their skills than respondents in low barriers countries (1.89). However, the **difference in means between high barriers and low barriers countries is not found to be statistically significant in this case**<sup>132</sup>.

## Box 24 Self-reported counterfactual questions: offer of employments, main findings

The second counterfactual question was posed to those having received an offer of employment in line with their skills, that is, to around 25% of the respondents.

<sup>131</sup> However, regarding this type of support, not all countries are represented in the responses. There is missing data for: Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia (high barriers) and Malta, Switzerland and Luxembourg (low barriers).

<sup>132</sup> Through one way ANOVA test. P-value=0.29

One in three answered that they would have not found a job without EURES, with an additional 30% percent suggesting EURES has made it easier for them. This means that around two thirds of the respondents confirm EURES added value. If we weight-in the fact that some countries with a slightly less positive opinion are overrepresented in the survey, the overall picture further improves.

Importantly, respondents from high barrier countries have a significantly better appraisal of EURES added value, although the difference is not statistically significant likely due to the reduced sample size.

### Receiving training to prepare the move

EURES jobseekers can receive training to prepare their move and increase their language or other soft skills – for example in the framework of Your first EURES job (YfEj), language courses and soft skills Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are offered to all jobseekers registered on the YfEj platform and short-listed for a vacancy. Only a few respondents to this survey indicated that they received this service and expressed an opinion on its added value (40 respondents). On average, the perception of an EURES added value seems to prevail over the perception of no added value for this type of service, as 62.5% of respondents indicated either that **they would not have received training to prepare their move without EURES** (27.5% of respondents) or that they would have but not as quickly/easily (35.0 % of respondents). Around a third of them (32.5%) however said they would have still received some training to prepare their move.

Before having weighted each country's average to take into account the population of reference dimension, the unweighted average opinion is equal to **2.73**, and therefore again higher than the baseline of 2 under which respondents did not perceive an added value of EURES in finding a job abroad at all. We then applied country weights to have a more representative result. Overall, the weighted average opinion is equal to **2.52** – slightly lower than the unweighted ones.

When comparing high barriers and low barriers countries, we find that on average **EURES has facilitated respondents from high barriers countries (average opinion 3.04) more than those from low barriers countries (2.08) and this difference is statistically significant<sup>133</sup>**, although it is difficult to draw conclusions since we only have 13 observations in the low barriers group of countries (and 27 in the high barriers one).

Box 25 Self-reported counterfactual questions: training to prepare your move, main findings

The third counterfactual question was posed to those having received training to prepare for their move, that is, to around 40 respondents. It concerned the added value of EURES in receiving training to prepare for their move.

27.5% answered that they would have not received training without EURES, with an additional 35% percent suggesting EURES has made it easier for them. This means that around two thirds of the respondents confirm EURES added value.

As in other cases, respondents from high barrier countries have a statistically significant better appraisal of EURES added value.

### Receiving post-recruitment assistance

EURES jobseekers may also benefit from post-recruitment assistance through EURES, such as e.g. relocation assistance and language courses in the destination country. Only a few respondents to this survey indicated that they received this type of support and expressed their

<sup>133</sup> p<0.05

opinion on its added value (46 respondents). However, in general most respondents - more than two thirds of them (73.9%) - did perceive an EURES added value regarding this type of service, as almost half of respondents said they would not have received this type of support without EURES and around a fourth of them (26.1%) said they would have received some support but not as quickly/easily.

Before having weighted each country's average to take into account the population of reference dimension, the unweighted average opinion is equal to **3.22**, indicating that respondents on average did perceive an added value of EURES. We then applied country weights to have a more representative result. Overall, the weighted average opinion is equal to **3.40** – slightly higher than the unweighted ones. This value also suggests that **on average, EURES support** not only facilitated jobseekers by making easier/quicker to obtain any of these outcomes/support, but it was probably **determining – i.e. jobseekers probably would not have obtained the same outcome or support**. We do not find any significant difference in this case between high barriers and low barriers countries.

Box 26 Self-reported counterfactual questions: post-recruitment assistance, main findings

The fourth counterfactual question was posed to those having received post recruitment assistance (46 respondents) and concerned the added value of EURES in providing this service. Nearly half of them answered that they would have not received post-recruitment assistance without EURES, with an additional 26% percent suggesting EURES made it easier for them. This means that over two-thirds of the respondents confirm EURES added value. Differences between high and low barrier countries are not significant, but weighted results appear to be slightly better than raw results.

### **Obtaining information on living and working conditions abroad**

Jobseekers or mobile workers in the EU can receive information on living and working conditions in other EU countries through EURES, on issues such as taxation, work contracts, pension entitlement, health insurance, social security and active labour market measures. Among respondents, 159 of them have received this type of support and expressed their opinion regarding its added value. Again, we see that overall more than half of respondents (60.4%) seem to have perceived an added value of EURES, while 35.2% of respondents said they would have obtained the same information anyways.

Before having weighted each country's average to take into account the population of reference dimension, the unweighted average opinion is equal to **2.54**. We then applied country weights to have a more representative result. Overall, the weighted average opinion is equal to **2.67** –very close to the unweighted ones. This result suggests that on average, **EURES has facilitated the obtention of information on living and working conditions abroad for jobseekers, by making easier/quicker to obtain it.**

We compare the weighted average of respondents' perceived added value of EURES in providing this type of information for respondents from high barriers countries and those from low barriers countries. In this case, we find that low barriers countries perceive a slightly higher added value of EURES on average (weighted average) compared to high barriers countries (2.73 vs 2.63). However, data is missing for two countries in the low barriers cluster (Luxembourg and Denmark) and the ANOVA test does not find any statistically significant difference between high barriers and low barriers countries.

Box 27 Self-reported counterfactual questions: information on working and living conditions abroad, main findings

The fifth counterfactual question was posed to those having received information on working or living conditions abroad (159 respondents) and concerned the added value of EURES in providing this service.

Over half of them answered that they would have not received such information without EURES or that it has made it easier for them, confirming EURES added value in this respect. Differences between high and low barrier countries are not significant and weighted results too remain close to raw values.

### **Obtaining information related to the specific situation of cross-border workers**

Cross-border workers<sup>134</sup> are persons who work in one EU Member State or EFTA country but live in another. In 2018, around 1.8 million workers<sup>135</sup> lived in a EU 28 country and worked in another EU 28 or EFTA country. These workers may need to obtain information on their specific situation as cross-border workers, which can be provided through EURES. Among respondents to the survey, only 30 indicated that they obtained information of this kind and expressed the perceived added value of EURES; most respondents (66.7%) did perceive it with different degrees – one third said they would probably or definitely not have obtained this information without EURES, while a bit more (36.7%) said they would have but not as easily/quickly.

Before having weighted each country's average to take into account the population of reference dimension, the unweighted average opinion is equal to **2.77**. We then applied country weights to have a more representative result. Overall, the weighted average opinion is equal to **2.72** – very close to the unweighted ones. Again, this value suggest that on average **EURES did make some difference to jobseekers trying to obtain information by making it easier or quicker to find**, although they would have probably still managed to obtain it eventually. There is not statistically significant difference between high barriers and low barriers countries.

Box 28 Self-reported counterfactual questions: information on conditions for cross-border workers, main findings

The sixth counterfactual question was posed to those having received support within a cross-border partnership and concerned the added value of EURES in providing this service.

Over half of them answered that EURES has made some difference to them, with minor differences across countries.

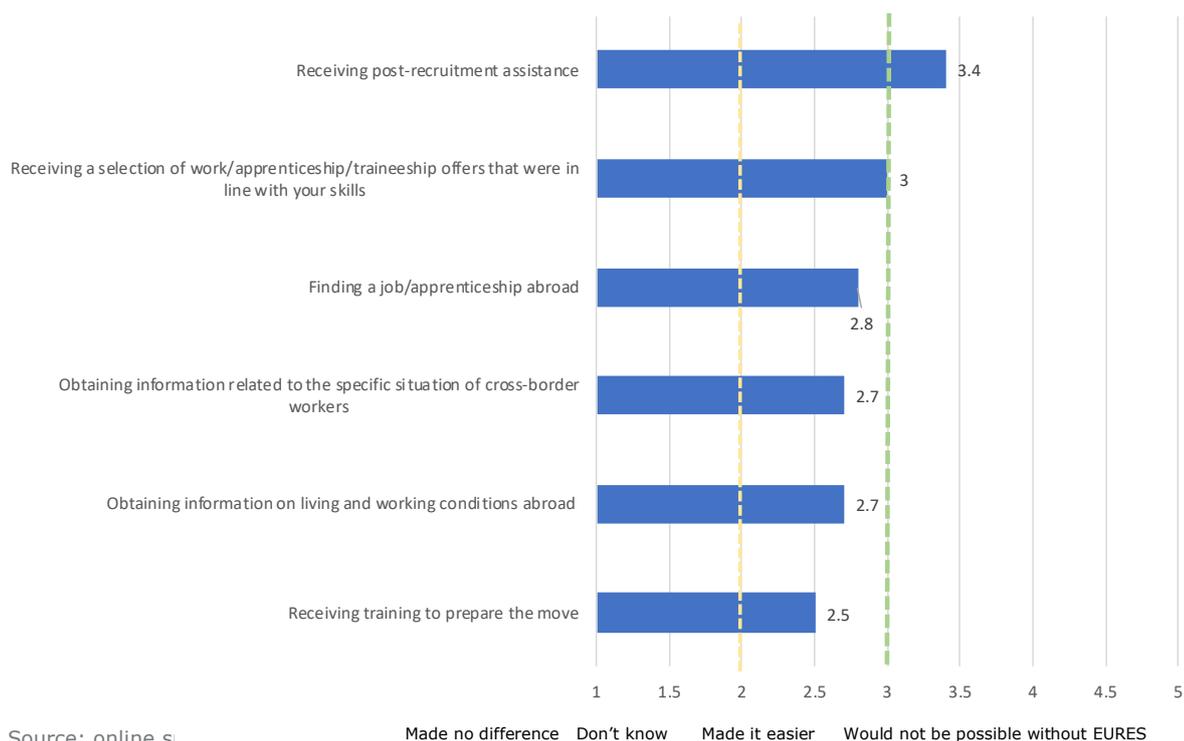
### **Summary of results**

The figure below summarizes the results of weighted averages calculated for each type of outcome/support.

<sup>134</sup> For the purposes of this study, cross-border workers are defined as EU citizens who live in one EU or EFTA country and work in another, regardless of their precise citizenship (provided they are EU-28 citizens). Cross border workers therefore move across borders regularly. They can be EU-28/EFTA movers – meaning they live in a different Member State than their country of citizenship – and cross-border workers at the same time (for example, where a British person lives in Belgium and works in Luxembourg). Cross-border workers as measured by the LFS may include the legally defined groups of seasonal and frontier workers and may also include some posted workers.

<sup>135</sup> Eurostat LFS data – provided by ECO

Figure 41 Average weighted opinions of jobseekers in relation to EURES' added value by type of support/outcome



Looking at weighted averages by type of support/outcome, the yellow and green dashed line can guide the interpretation: we may consider that any average above the green line (above 3) suggests that **EURES support not only facilitated jobseekers** by making easier/quicker to obtain any of these outcomes/support, but it was actually determining – i.e. **jobseekers probably would not have obtained the same outcome or support**. This is the case for receiving **post-recruitment assistance** and **receiving a selection of training/apprenticeship/job offers** in line with one's skills.

Between the dashed yellow and green lines (between 2 and 3) we may say that on average **EURES facilitated** jobseekers **but** it was not determining – i.e. **jobseekers would have obtained the same outcome or support even in the absence of EURES**. This is the case for finding a job/apprenticeship/traineeship abroad, obtaining information on living and working conditions and on the specific situation of cross-border workers, and for receiving training to prepare the move.

In addition to respondents' counterfactual opinion, the survey also investigates whether respondents did eventually find a job thanks to EURES.

Overall, **17.5% of all respondents said that they have found a job thanks to EURES**. That is not a negligible result, if one considers, as referred to in a recent meta-analysis on the effects of active labour market policies of Card and Kluve,<sup>136</sup> that a difference of 10 percentage points in employment rates is what it is observed in the US between people with secondary and tertiary education. Clearly the two results are not directly comparable, and there can be self-estimation bias together with a range of limitations as explained in the introduction, but this suggest that

<sup>136</sup> Card, D., J. Kluve and A. Weber (2018), What Works? A Meta-Analysis of Recent Active Labor Market Program Evaluations, Journal of the European Economic Association 16(3). Available at <https://academic.oup.com/jeea/article-abstract/16/3/894/4430618?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

**that EURES has a role in helping people find a job abroad** which might be non-negligible in macro-economic terms.

Among those who found a job thanks to EURES, **68.2% are employed or in an apprenticeship/traineeship at the time of the survey**, while the remaining ones are mostly unemployed (28.2%) or students (3.5%), meaning that they have found a job thanks to EURES in the past but they are currently no longer employed. **Among respondents who are currently employed or in an apprenticeship/traineeship (270 respondents), 21.5% found their job thanks to EURES.** Of those who are employed or in an apprenticeship/traineeship and **received information and guidance** on how to find a job abroad from EURES, **23.8% found it thanks EURES.**

We find that the percentage is higher among respondents from low barriers countries (19.2%) than among respondents from high barriers countries (16.8%). We also find that secondary graduates in the survey who found a job thanks to EURES are 21.2%, whereas tertiary graduates are 16.5%. Looking at the share of respondents having found a job thanks to EURES by age, we find that 21.3% of young respondents (up to 29 years old) did, compared to 17.0% of middle-age respondents (30 to 50 years old) and 15.6% of older respondents (over 50 years old). However, based on the one-way ANOVA test, none of these differences appear to be statistically significant.

We then look at whether the **percentage of respondents having found a job through EURES varies as the number of types of support received through EURES increases.** We find that there is a statistically significant difference between respondents who received only 1 service and 2 services versus those who received 5: 11.3% of respondents who only received one type of support found a job thanks to EURES and 17.9% of those who received 2, vs 60% of those who received 5 types of support. Therefore, **we may say that finding a job thanks to EURES was easier when more than one type of support was received by jobseekers.** However, it should be noted that there are 42.1% of respondents who received only one type of support and 33.4% who received two, while only 2.1% of them received 5 types of support.

A set of regressions using a probit model with age, educational attainment and the cluster of country of residence as controls factors (categorical variables) and the number of services received as continuous variable, confirms a strong a statistically significant correlation between the numerosity of services received and the opinion of the respondent on the fact that they have found a job thanks to EURES. Each additional service would increase that by 24%.

Box 29 Self-reported counterfactual questions: overview of EURES added value for jobseekers

EURES added value is generally confirmed by the results of the survey on jobseekers.

In particular, 17.5% of the respondents believe they have found a job thanks to EURES. This might be a non-negligible share also in macro-economic terms considering that the benchmark traditionally used in assessing the effectiveness of active labour market policies is that of tertiary education in the US, which increases employment chances by approx. 10 p.p.

A probit model fitted to the answers of the respondents, and also controlling for their age, educational attainment and cluster of residence, suggests that having received more than one service increases the probability for a respondent to have found a job thanks to EURES in a statistically significant manner.

In general, the EURES' added value in finding a job seems to be stronger for high barrier countries, individuals with secondary education and younger participants, though none of these distinctions are statistically relevant.

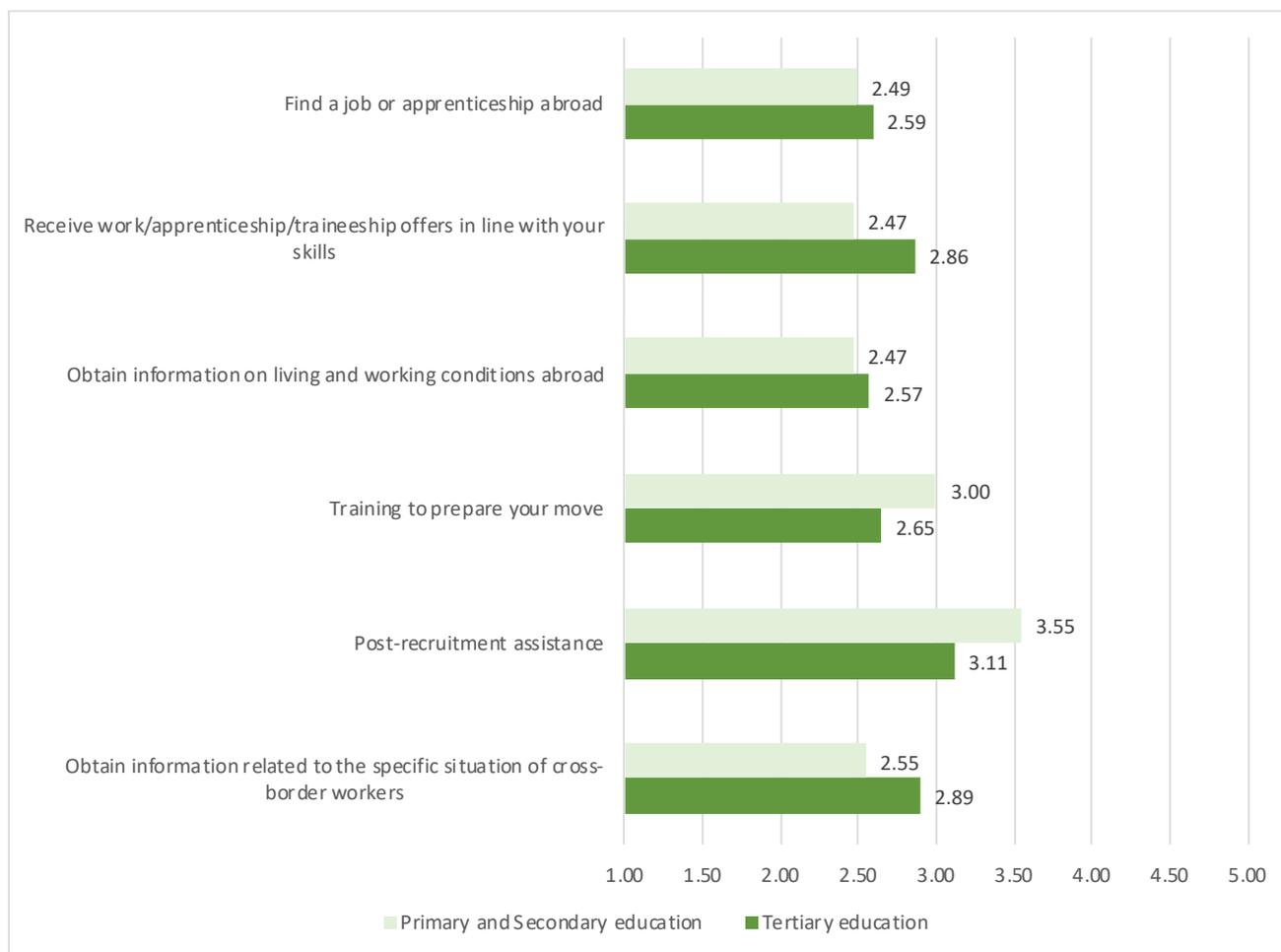
For the entirety of the EURES services examined, over half of the respondents believe that in absence of EURES support it either would not have been possible to achieve the same outcome or that it would have been harder. This is particularly true of some specific services such as post-training assistance (three quarters of respondents confirming EURES added value) as well as of the provision of an employment offer in line with the respondent's skills.

#### *4.1.3 EURES added value by education level of jobseekers*

As already mentioned in the overview section, a large majority (76.3%) of respondents have a tertiary education diploma (Bachelor, Master or PhD) and only 0.6% have a primary education. 15.2 % of respondents have a secondary education.

Respondents in the survey who are **tertiary graduates on average report a greater importance of EURES' contribution for most types of support** – except training to prepare the move and post-recruitment assistance, for which the very small sample of respondents does not allow to draw any conclusion. However, none of these differences in averages between tertiary graduates and all others can be considered as statistically significant based on the one-way ANOVA test results. This suggests that it is not possible to draw any statistically significant conclusion pointing to the fact that tertiary graduates have been more facilitated by EURES than secondary and primary graduates. This is important also as tertiary graduates are slightly overrepresented in the survey.

Figure 42 Average self-reported counterfactual opinion (scale 1 to 5) by type of EURES service/outcome and education



Source: online survey to jobseekers

In any case, the results could be considered to be in line with contextual trends. We have seen in the background section on tertiary graduates that in all countries covered by this analysis, **the amount of tertiary movers has been increasing more rapidly** than the overall amount of movers<sup>137</sup> and at the same time, the **over-qualification rate has been increasing at the EU 28 level** and in most EU/EFTA countries individually, the only exceptions being Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, the Netherlands, Finland and Switzerland. At the same time, the increase in the number of tertiary movers is in line with unemployment rates trends: looking at the variation rate of unemployment rates between 2012 and 2018, we see that in most countries **unemployment rates of tertiary graduates** either decreased by a smaller percentage compared to the overall unemployment rate, or that it increased by a higher percentage. These trends in the context can be an indication of the fact that **tertiary graduates are in higher need** of exploring job opportunities abroad – thus explaining that **they may feel that EURES support makes more of a difference compared to primary and secondary graduates.**

<sup>137</sup> Eurostat, calculations based on [fst\_Imbpcited], [fst\_Imbercited]

Box 30 Self-reported counterfactual questions: overview of EURES added value for jobseekers, by educational attainment level

When expressing their opinions about the added value of EURES, tertiary graduates typically emphasised the role of EURES more than people with secondary education, except for pre and post-recruitment assistance and training. However, differences are not statistically significant.

## 4.2 Employers

### 4.2.1 Overview of respondents

After having cleaned the data to prepare it for the analysis of the self-reported counterfactual questions<sup>138</sup>, the database used for the subsequent analysis includes a total of 82 respondents.

**Most employers (54.9%) responding to the survey are micro (1-9 employees) and small organisations (10-49 employees).** A bit more than a fifth (23.2%) are large organisations (250 or more employees) and the rest (22.0%) are medium (50-249 employees). **Almost half of these organisations (48.8%) have an international scope** in their operations, while 36.6% have national one and the remaining ones have a local or regional scope.

Looking at countries where these employers are based in Table 6, only those from Belgium, Ireland and Germany represent more than 10% of respondents each. Comparing it to the proportion of employers registered on the EURES Portal by country, the highest share of employers registered on the EURES Portal is for those based in Germany (31.2% of all employers registered), followed at a distance by those based in the UK (8.7%), which is in line with the fact that Germany and the UK are two main “hosting” countries. However, Belgian and Irish employers registered on the EURES portal only represent 3.0% and 4.2% respectively of the total.

Responses are missing from Latvia, Luxembourg, Hungary, Slovenia and Norway.

Table 6 Respondents to the self-reported counterfactual questions by country

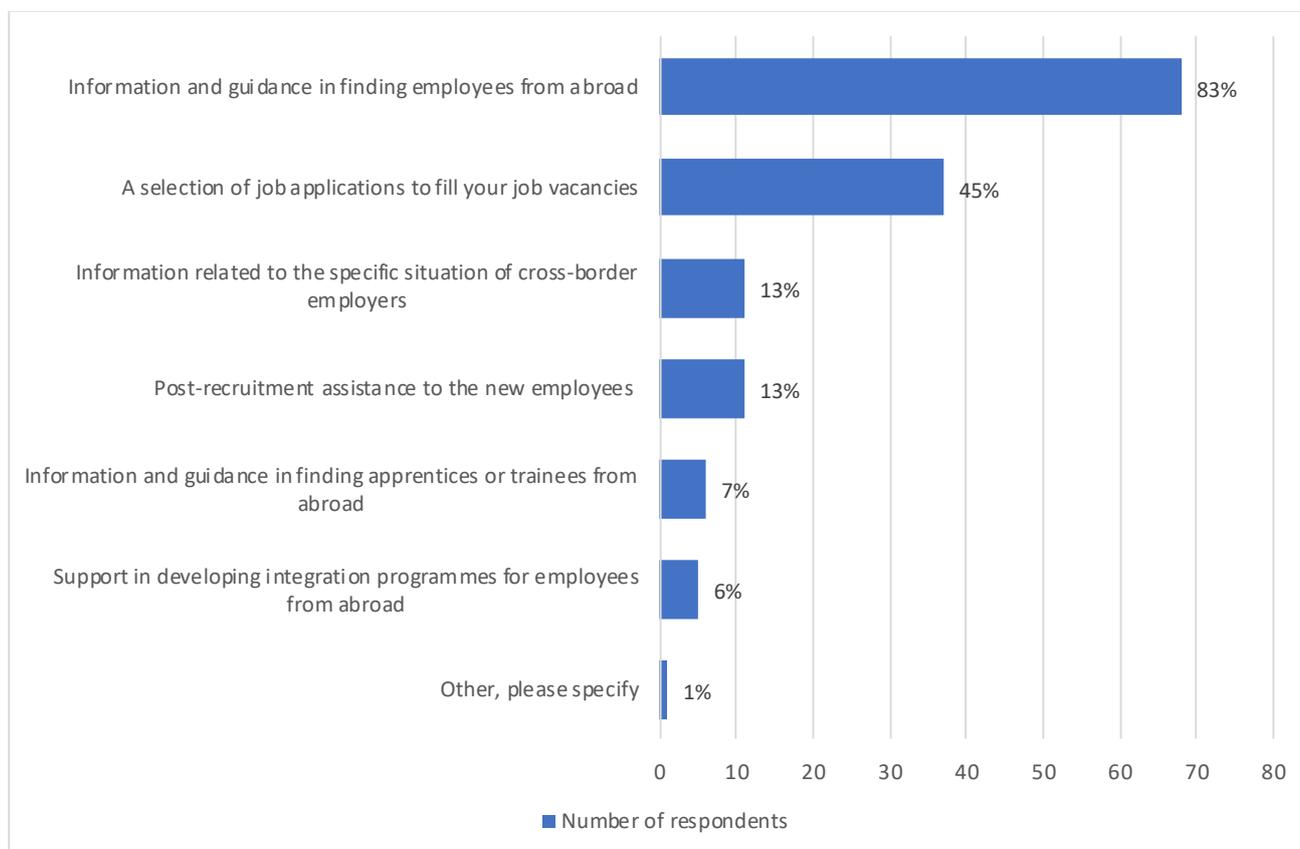
Country	Number of respondents	As a % of total
Austria	2	2.4%
Belgium	9	11.0%
Croatia	2	2.4%
Cyprus	1	1.2%
Czech Republic	2	2.4%
Denmark	2	2.4%
Estonia	1	1.2%
Finland	1	1.2%
France	1	1.2%
Germany	11	13.4%

<sup>138</sup> Test answers and partial responses that were blank were removed. Partial responses that contain some answers are included.

Country	Number of respondents	As a % of total
Greece	1	1.2%
Iceland	7	8.5%
Ireland	12	14.6%
Italy	3	3.7%
Lithuania	2	2.4%
Malta	2	2.4%
Netherlands	3	3.7%
Poland	1	1.2%
Portugal	4	4.9%
Romania	1	1.2%
Slovakia	1	1.2%
Spain	7	8.5%
Sweden	1	1.2%
Switzerland	1	1.2%
United Kingdom	4	4.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: online survey to employers

Figure 43 Respondents (employers) by type of EURES support received (multiple answers allowed)



Source: online survey to employers

Respondents had to indicate which type(s) of support they have received through EURES (Figure 43). **Most of them (82.9%) received information and guidance in finding employees**

**from abroad**, followed by 45.1% who received a selection of job applications to fill their job vacancies. On average, each employer received less than 2 different types of support (1.7).

Box 31 Self-reported counterfactual questions: overview respondents and description of the sample of employers

The survey of employers received a total of 82 answers, with Belgian and Irish employers slightly overrepresented in the sample and German one slightly underrepresented. Responses are missing from Latvia, Luxembourg, Hungary, Slovenia and Norway.

In terms of the types of support respondents have received on average 2 different services. 4 in 5 respondents have received information and guidance in finding employees from abroad, almost half of them a selection of applicants to fill their vacancies and smaller shares of respondents for the other services (information for cross-border employers, post-recruitment assistance to new employees, support in the development of integrated programmes for employees from abroad and information and guidance in finding trainees from abroad).

#### 4.2.2 EURES added value by type of support

##### **Finding employees, apprentices or trainees from abroad**

Employers who indicated that they received information and guidance on finding employees, apprentices or trainees from abroad were then asked to say whether they thought they would have found them anyways in the absence of EURES support. 67 respondents expressed an opinion. A first look at the responses – before applying weights - suggests that **most respondents (77.6%) seem to have a rather positive opinion**. In fact, they responded that **they would not have found a employees from abroad without EURES** (38.8% of respondents) or that they would have but not as quickly/easily (same percentage). 20.9% of respondents said that they would have found employees anyways.

Before having weighted each country's average to take into account the population of reference dimension, the unweighted average opinion (on a scale from 1 to 5 as explained in 3.6.1.2.) is equal to **3.1**. We then applied country weights to have a more representative result. Overall, **the weighted average opinion is also equal to 3.1**. This value suggests that on average employers were facilitated by EURES when trying to find employees from abroad and part of them would not have found them without EURES support.

It is interesting to compare the different averages between high barriers countries, typically also with a lower than average GDP per capita and/or higher unemployment rate and/or vertical mismatch, with **low barriers countries – all with higher than average GDP per capita, and most importantly lower than average unemployment rates and vertical mismatches**, indicating that they are countries with a need and capacity to host workers from abroad. We would expect the latter group of countries to have employers more in need of EURES support to find employees, apprentices and trainees from abroad.

Based on the survey data, **the weighted average among low barriers countries is higher than among high barriers countries** (3.2 vs 2.8). This is in line with expectations based on the clustering of countries: **low barriers countries with lower than average unemployment and/or vertical mismatch seem to be more facilitated by EURES in trying to find employees from abroad**, which could be explained by the fact that they also have a higher need but could also be due to an upward self-estimation bias: employers from countries with a

more positive economic context may be able to offer better opportunities to people, which in turn may make it easier to find the right candidate and thus increase the satisfaction with respect to the service received. However, we find that differences in averages between low and high barriers countries are not statistically significant.

Box 32 Self-reported counterfactual questions: support to finding an employee from abroad, main findings

The first counterfactual question was posed to employers having received support in finding employees, apprentices or trainees from abroad, that is 83% of the respondents, who were then asked to state whether they thought they would have found them anyways in the absence of EURES support.

Almost 40% of the respondents declared that they would have not found an employee abroad in absence of EURES, and the same share that it would have been harder without EURES, thus largely confirming EURES added value in this respect.

Opinions of countries with low barriers and good economic context (i.e. hosting countries) reported a better appraisal on average, but the difference is not statistically significant. The weighted value is identical to the raw one.

### **Having a wider selection of job applications to fill your job vacancies**

Employers who indicated that they received a selection of applications to fill in their vacancies were then asked to say whether they thought they would have had a wider selection anyways in the absence of EURES support. 35 respondents expressed an opinion. A first look at the responses – before applying weights - suggests that **most respondents (80.0%) seem to have a rather positive opinion**. In fact, they responded that **they would not have received a wider selection of job applications to fill their vacancies without EURES** (48.6% of respondents) or that they would have but not as quickly/easily (31.4%). 14.3% of respondents said that they would have had a selection of job applications to fill their vacancies anyways.

Before having weighted each country's average to take into account the population of reference dimension, the unweighted average opinion (on a scale from 1 to 5 as explained in 3.6.1.2.) is equal to **3.3**. We then applied country weights to have a more representative result. Overall, the weighted average opinion is also equal to **3.4**, almost equal to the unweighted one. This value suggests that **on average EURES facilitated employers, and made it quicker or easier to have a selection of applications to fill their vacancies**.

Lastly, the weighted average among **low barriers countries is slightly higher than among high barriers countries** (3.4 vs 3.3), again in line with expectations based on the clustering of countries. However, we find that this difference is not statistically significant.

Box 33 Self-reported counterfactual questions: provision of applicants to fill in vacancies, main findings

The opinion of employers is particularly favourable also with respect to the provision through EURES support of a selection of applicants in line with the requirements of their vacancies. Most of them consider that this was possible only thanks to EURES or that EURES made it easier for them. The answer are comparable across clusters.

### **Developing integration programmes for new employees from abroad and post-recruitment assistance**

Employers who indicated that they received support to develop integration programmes for new employees and post-recruitment assistance, were then asked if they would have received the

same services in the absence of EURES support. Only 15 respondents expressed an opinion. However, among them, **most respondents (11 out of 15) seem to have a more or less positive opinion of EURES' added value**. In fact, they responded that **they would not have been able to develop integration programmes and post-recruitment assistance for employees from abroad without EURES** (10 respondents) or that they would have but not as quickly/easily (1 respondent). 3 respondents said that they would have had a wider selection of job applications anyways.

Before having weighted each country's average to take into account the population of reference dimension, the unweighted average opinion (on a scale from 1 to 5 as explained in 3.6.1.2.) is equal to 3.4. We then applied country weights to have a more representative result. Overall, the weighted average opinion is equal to **4.3 – suggesting that EURES has been determining to allow employers in the survey to receive this type of services**. In this case, we do not have enough respondents to analyse differences between clusters of countries and to test the significance of this result.

Box 34 Self-reported counterfactual questions: support in developing integration programmes for employees from abroad, main findings

Employers further indicated that EURES has been determining in developing integration programmes and post-recruitment assistance for employees from abroad.

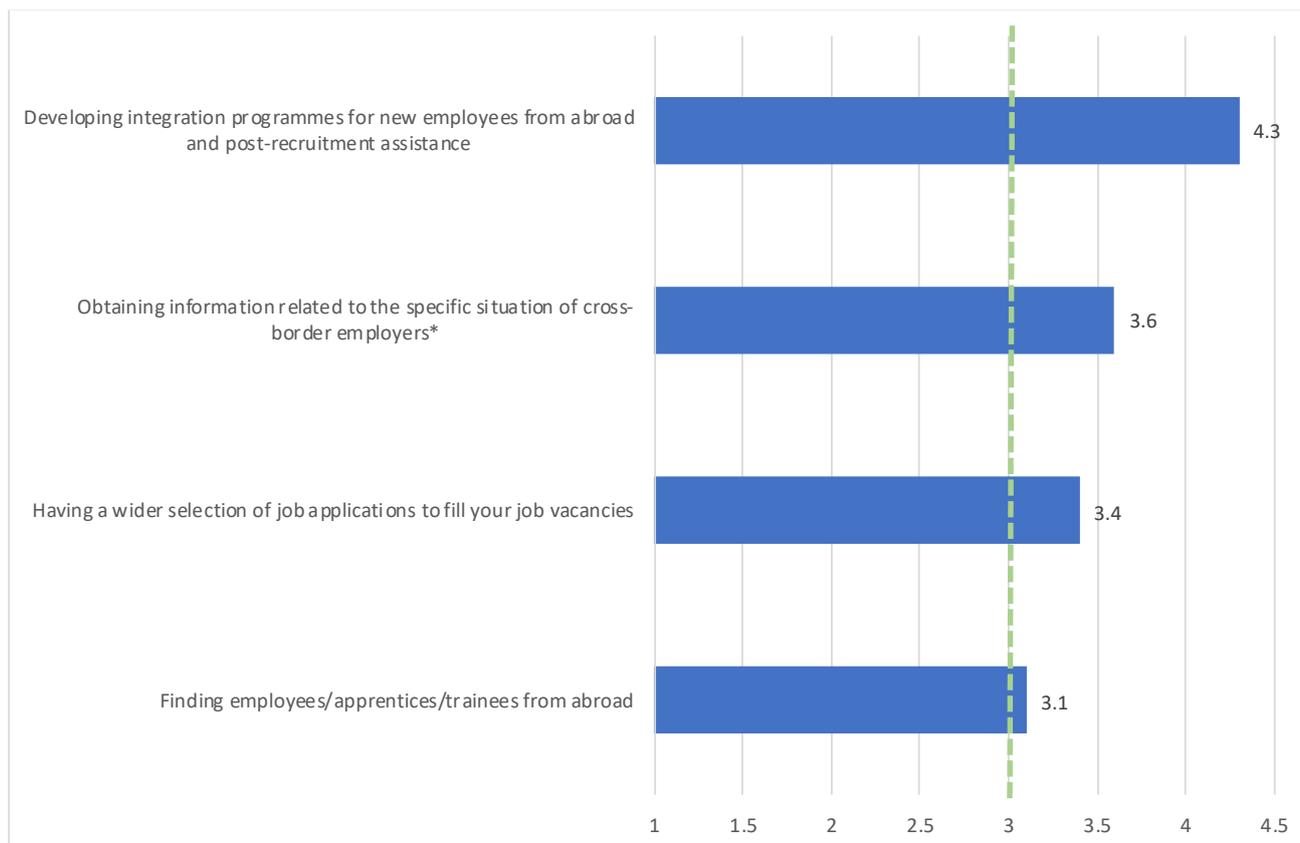
#### **Obtaining information related to the specific situation of cross-border employers**

Employers who indicated that they received information on the specific situation of cross-border employers were then asked if they would have received the same information in the absence of EURES support. However, only 10 respondents expressed an opinion, which limits the possibility to make statistical inferences. In any case, 6 respondents said they would have (probably or definitely) not received this information and 4 say that they would have, but not as quickly/easily.

#### **Summary of results**

Figure 44 summarizes the results of weighted averages calculated for each type of outcome/support. We may consider that any average above the green line (above 3) suggests that **EURES support not only facilitated employers** by making easier/quicker to obtain any of these outcomes/support, but it was actually determining – i.e. **employers probably would not have obtained the same outcome or support**.

Figure 44 Average weighted opinions of jobseekers in relation to EURES' added value by type of support/outcome



Source: online survey to employers - \*Unweighted average. The weighted average for this type of support is not presented as it changes to average to 1.1 – only based on one employer who responded that the same information would have been obtained without EURES, but whose country weights more than any other thus overturning the result. However, since it is only based on one response, the result would be too biased.

### 4.2.3 EURES added value by size of employers

As mentioned in the overview, most employers (54.9%) responding to the survey are micro (1-9 employees) and small organisations (10-49 employees). A bit more than a fifth (23.2%) are large organisations (250 or more employees) and the rest (22.0%) are medium (50-249 employees).

Looking at the average counterfactual opinions by size of the employer, it seems that **large and medium organisations perceived a slightly higher added value of EURES in terms of finding employees from abroad (average of 3.2) and having a wider selection of job applications to fill their vacancies (average of 3.5)** compared to small and micro organisations (with averages of 3.0 for finding employees and 3.1 for having a wider selection). These differences are however not statistically significant.

The same is true regarding the development of integration programmes for new employees from abroad and post-recruitment assistance, for which large and medium organisations seem to perceive a slightly higher added value on average (3.4 vs 3.3 in micro and small ones). However the low number of responses in relation to this type of EURES support makes it difficult to draw any conclusion.

Regarding information related to the specific situation of cross border employers, micro and small enterprises seem instead to have perceived a slightly higher added value on average (3.9 vs 3.7 for large and medium).

Box 35 Self-reported counterfactual questions: EURES added value by size of employer and geographical scope, main findings

All in all, it **does not seem that the size of employers can explain differences** in the level at which EURES facilitated the obtaining of support. A similar analysis performed looking at differences between employers with a different **geographical scope** (international vs national/regional/local) comes to the same conclusion.



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