

PES Network  
Stakeholder conference

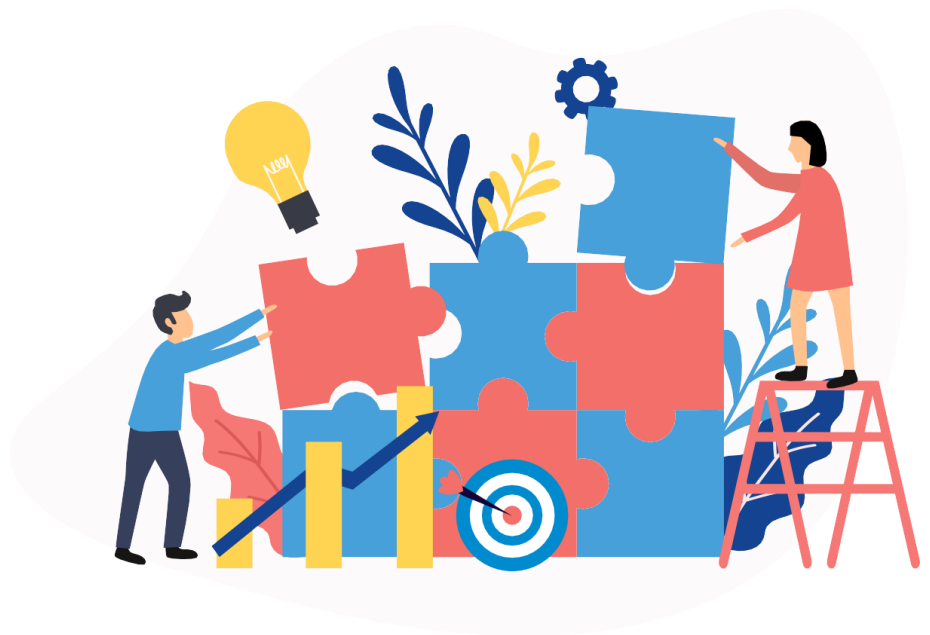
# The power of PES partnerships

20-21-22 April 2021



# 20 April 2021 (Day 1): Introducing the PES Partnership Ecosystem

The importance of partnerships to the work of public employment services has never been greater. This first day of the 2021 PES Network Stakeholder Conference is dedicated to presenting the PES partnership ecosystem which has evolved over the last ten years. Four workshops will provide insight into the different types of partnership identified by a 2020 PES Network working group and the benefits they each bring: agile partnerships, subcontracted partnerships, co-constructed partnerships, and supportive partnerships.



# Plenary session (9.30–11.00 CET)

This session will provide an introduction to the PES partnership ecosystem, including findings of a recent PES Network working group dedicated to partnerships; trends and developments in PES partnerships; and the link between partnerships and European funds. Major trends in the PES ecosystem in the past and for the future will also be touched upon.

The session will be opened by welcome messages from **Nicholas Schmit**, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, and **Johannes Kopf**, Chair of the PES Network.

## Speakers



### Nicholas Schmit

Nicholas Schmit has been serving as European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights since 2019. A member of the Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party (LSAP), he was previously a member of the government of Luxembourg from 2004 to 2019 and a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) in 2019.



### Johannes Kopf

Since July 1, 2019, Johannes Kopf has been Chair of the European network of Public Employment Services. Since 2006, he has been a member of the board of directors at the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS). From 2003 to 2006, he worked as a labour market expert in the office of the Minister for Economics and Labour and was a member of the supervisory board of the AMS.



### Marie-Thérèse Fombona

Marie-Thérèse Fombona is currently Director of International and Institutional Relations at Le Forem, the Walloon Public Employment and Vocational Training Service (Belgium). She started her career at Le Forem 20 years ago, first in international cooperation programmes, and then in intra-European cooperation. She currently manages a team dedicated to the continuous improvement of the actions of the public service of employment and vocational training in Wallonia.



### **Anette Scoppetta**

Anette Scoppetta is Deputy-Director of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research and manages the team of researchers in the Work and Welfare Unit. Her expertise comprises labour market and social policies, particularly social inclusion, precarious work, social change processes, employment partnerships, social dialogue, social innovation and regional economic development. As a senior researcher, Anette has led and contributed to many Austrian and European projects, especially in employment. Anette runs several training courses and lectures at Universities.



### **Alex Nunn**

Alexander Nunn is Professor of Global Political Economy and Director of the Centre of Social, Cultural and Legal Research at the University of Derby. His main current programme of research focuses on the mechanisms by which inter-sectional inequalities are reproduced on a day-to-day and inter-generational basis and the role of policies and institutions in either reinforcing or mitigating those inequalities. He maintains a stream of policy-related research and consultancy including in relation to arts and social inclusion among vulnerable young people and in relation to labour market policy and the role of Public Employment Services.



### **Sukti Dasgupta**

Sukti Dasgupta is Chief of the Employment, Labour Markets and Youth Branch (EMPLAB) of the ILO in Geneva. She has previously worked at the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok and the field offices in South Asia and East Asia. She holds a PhD degree in Economics from the University of Cambridge, UK. She has published widely in the areas of employment, poverty, youth labour market policies and gender. She also has extensive experience in working with policymakers on employment and labour market policies.



### **John Hurley**

John Hurley is a senior research manager in Eurofound's Employment unit. He is responsible for the European Restructuring Monitor (ERM) events database, contributes to a number of other research projects including the European Jobs Monitor and has authored or co-authored over 20 reports during his time at Eurofound. His main research interests are in the areas of comparative labour market analysis, restructuring and the changing world of work.

# Workshop one: Agile partnerships (11.20–12.20 CET)

This workshop aims to give each participant an introduction to agile partnerships and how they can help improve employment services. The content will focus on the example of the **“Karjeras” regional career centre in Alytus, Lithuania**.

This innovative practice was introduced as a pilot in 2019, as part of the wider national Vocational Guidance Model developed in 2018 by participants in the [“Create Lithuania”](#) programme. This model pinpoints improved career guidance as a tool to fight Lithuania’s rising unemployment rate and increasing number of recipients of social benefits. In particular, the model focuses on addressing a series of structural challenges: firstly, that career guidance services are often duplicated in different institutions; secondly, that such services are only available to a small percentage of the population.

In the case of Alytus, this translates to two main issues: on the one hand insufficient vocational guidance in schools due to insufficient resources, competence and clear programmes to provide quality services; on the other hand, fragmented vocational guidance in the Employment Service.

The **“Karjeras” regional career centre in Alytus** was opened on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2019, for an estimated pilot project duration of 24 months. It aims to show that cooperation between institutions – in this case the Employment Service, the local municipality and the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour – working in one space can strengthen vocational guidance delivery.

The centre mainly targets pupils, young people under 29 suffering from a lack of motivation, and people under 29 not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs). Pupils and students visiting the Career Centre are provided with subject profiling services, internship and volunteering opportunities, and entrepreneurship is encouraged. It is hoped that during the project, more young people will get to know themselves, their talents, and areas where they can improve.

The main activities include:

- career guidance services for pupils, the unmotivated, unemployed and NEETs;
- individual and group consultations;
- informational visits to companies and institutions, meetings with employers, "shadowing" in the chosen workplace;
- informational events;
- meetings with professionals, entrepreneurs and celebrities, entrepreneurship events, entrepreneurship training;
- financial literacy training;
- volunteering events;
- quizzes, discussions, motivational events, "CV writing workshops";
- events for parents of pupils;
- services of a psychologist, a lawyer and other specialists in the narrow field.

So far, the centre has proven successful in providing vocational guidance services to students, with 40% of the clients taking a career guidance test and 10% of young people starting volunteering after the tests taken and consultations received. A second major success concerns the creation of a network of 20 employers and intensifying cooperation with them. The centre has also succeeded in returning unmotivated and NEETs to the labour market through career guidance services (25% of all young people reached and counselled) and helping pupils get involved in shadowing activities (10 pupils per year). Finally, the centre has helped to find vacancies during the summer holidays, to involve parents in career guidance for children, and to involve young people in entrepreneurship through project activities.

## Speaker



### Lina Pečiulienė

Lina is a senior specialist in Employment Service Under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania. In this role, Lina Pečiulienė coordinates all aspects of strategic partnerships and youth services.

# Workshop two: Sub-contracting partnerships (11.20-12.20 CET)

This workshop aims to give each participant an introduction to subcontracted partnerships, showing how contracting with specialist providers can help public employment services to tackle complex issues. The content is focused around a partnership implemented in Estonia: the Workability Reform.

The initiative stems from a proposal originally put forward by disabled clients to fight negative attitudes which prevent the integration of people who face barriers to work or with limited work capability. The main objective is to help people with decreased work capacity to find secure employment.

To achieve this, the Estonian PES – Töötukassa – decided to partner with NGOs which work with disabled people for both service design and delivery. The services were designed together in collaboration and negotiation with partners, harnessing their experience and understanding of the particular needs and expectations of disabled people to design more inclusive services. The partners were also charged with service delivery, through legally binding agreements to meet objectives determined by PES. This allows greater flexibility than in-house provision of inclusion services and builds on the higher trust available to NGOs who often have more credibility with the disabled.

Implementation started in 2016 and the agreements were not timebound, i.e., service will continue as long as considered useful. Performance is reviewed twice a year with the delivery partners, with a satisfaction survey of both clients and partners every two years. Each counselling session is funded by the PES, with financing from the European Structural Fund and the Unemployment Insurance Fund. The partnership has volume targets for numbers of clients becoming active in the labour market, and formal agreements have been put in place to monitor them.

## Speakers



### Sirlis Sõmer-Kull

Sirlis has worked in the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund (Töötukassa) since 2014. Before that, she worked in the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs as the head of the social welfare department. She has also been active in international affairs, participating as the representative of the state in the EU Social Protection Committee and the work of the European Council.



### Kadri Sooberg-Aettik

Kadri is a mother to five boys and a Board member of the Estonian Chamber of Peer Counseling. She is also a volunteer peer counsel in Estonian East-Tallinn Central Hospital in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit, supporting families who have welcomed a premature baby. Kadri found her way to peer counselling in 2011 when her triplet boys were born prematurely at 29 weeks. She has been working for 17 years in the Talent Advisory agency Fontes as a leading talent acquisition and employer branding consultant.

## Workshop three: Co-constructed partnerships (13.00–14.00 CET)

This workshop aims to give each participant an introduction to co-constructed partnerships, showing how working with clients and harnessing customer insights can help to build better services. The workshop will focus on the use of social impact bonds by Actiris, the Brussels PES, and an example of how these have been used to improve vocational integration through digital training for Brussels jobseekers.

The use of social impact bonds by Actiris started in 2013. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, the need arose for more effective and innovative labour market policies and efficient use of all available resources. With the support of the King Baudouin Foundation, a team of researchers, social investors and PES representatives, a structure was set up for the first Actiris Social Impact Bond.

The system involves financing and development of innovative projects co-constructed between PES, the investors in the Social Impact Bond and a partner organisation selected through a call for proposals. The proposals should concern needs not yet (fully) covered by the PES. Private investments pre-finance the project and take on the risk if the project fails. If the project reaches its goals, the PES reimburses the investors using part of the budget of the Brussels-Capital-Region reserved for this purpose. Actiris also repays the investors with a potential return based on the SIB's results. The results are evaluated by an evaluator.

After successful initiatives led in 2014–2016, with “DUO for a JOB: mentoring of young migrants” and 2017–2022 with “Intervention on supply and demand: job crafting for long-term unemployed”, the third SIB, from 2020 to 2025 is called “BeCode: digital training for jobseekers”. This digital training project addresses the following double challenge: high demand for and shortage of people with digital skills despite high levels of long-term unemployment. Around 450 jobseekers are expected to receive training in web development. The target group must live in Brussels and be registered with the PES, with at least 25% non-EU nationals and 30% women. The goal is for 63% of the participants who complete training to secure employment. Budget: 2.083.450 euros for the entire project period.

The course lasts 7 months and focuses both on developing soft skills and technical skills to create a website or mobile application. BeCode also provides intensive job coaching and will put the participants in contact with a network of potential employers. This increases the chances of finding an internship (after the training follows an obligatory 3-month internship) and subsequently a job.

The BeCode Digital Training project was co-constructed between three parties. Social investors provide upfront funding to BeCode, the service provider. The private investors are represented by Kois Invest. A monitoring committee representing BeCode and the investors oversees the operation of the Social Impact Bond to ensure compliance with correct processes. PES representatives participate as observers.

The co-constructed nature of the partnership helps to promote client focus and innovation, since proposals can be launched to attract potential partners even before a detailed specification has been agreed upon. It does however require the most intensive activity to be undertaken before the project's launch, through agreement programme design and resource input from investors. The successful launch of the Bond is proof of the partnership's added value.



## Speakers



### Fanny Broussan

Fanny works in the Partnership and Employment Programmes department of Actiris, the public employment service in the Brussels-Capital Region. She is in charge of the articulation of employment and training policies with the public training service Bruxelles Formation. She is also responsible for the “Social Impact Bond (SIB) project for vocational integration through digital training for Brussels jobseekers”.



### Sarah Unger

Sarah is the co-founder and COO of BeCode, Belgium’s largest free coding school. BeCode enables motivated individuals to become web developers and AI specialists: over 4 years, BeCode has trained more than 1500 people with over 70% positive outcome. BeCode operates campuses in 5 Belgian cities. Until 2017, Sarah was an Investment Manager at Finance&Invest.Brussels, investing in Brussels-based startups and scale-ups.



### François de Borchgrave

François is the co-founder & Managing Partner of KOIS, with more than 15 years of experience in Private Equity investments and a focus on impact investing in the last 9 years. Additionally, François is co-founder of Toolbox, a non-profit that provides management services to NGOs, and was a volunteer for several NGOs such as Mother Theresa and Operation Thermos.

# Workshop four: Supportive partnerships (13.00–14.00 CET)

This workshop aims to give each participant an introduction to supportive partnerships. The workshop will focus on the Regional labour market transition teams set up in the Netherlands in the wake of the COVID-19 Crisis.

The teams developed from a support package introduced by the Ministry of Social Affairs & Employment to mitigate the negative labour market effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the transition teams aim to address an imbalance in labour demand induced by the crisis, as some sectors are in decline, while in others there is a high demand for skilled workers. This creates a risk of a steep rise in unemployment and a substantially increased risk of long-term unemployment.

The Ministry invited actors, including social partners, NGOs, vocational training institutes, private contractors, municipalities and PES to join forces in supporting jobseekers and employees who are threatened by unemployment to find new jobs.

This process was enacted in a formal partnership in which the Ministry of Social Affairs & Employment serves as the awarding authority and resulted in the development of “Regional labour market transition teams”, made up of employees from Municipalities, Unions, Employer organisations, and PES (UWV). The precise formation of the team may differ per labour market region. In total 35 regional transition teams will be formed of which about 6 are operational as of April 2021. The rest will follow later in 2021.

These teams aim to reach two sets of targets. They target those who are either at risk of unemployment or have become unemployed during the crisis, especially those who risk becoming long-term unemployed. Special attention is dedicated to youth, disabled workers and entrepreneurs. The teams also work with employers in sectors in decline and others requiring new (skilled) employees.

Services are additional to those already available from the PES and Municipalities. These include career counselling, labour market orientation, vocational education and training, job matching and coaching, as well as also tailored, custom-made services designed for specific jobseekers, for example mental health support or financial consulting. A special focus is also placed on supporting disabled workers through services to keep disabled workers “fit for work” and through sheltered work.

The partnership and the teams are funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs & Employment.

## Speakers



### **Annette W.M. de Groot**

Annette is a member of the managing board of FNV, the largest union in the Netherlands. She is responsible for the design and implementation of the Covid response labour market services provided by FNV, which play an important part in the Dutch exit strategy. Annette has a background in scientific research, policy-making & organisational development.



### **Marloes Lubberdink**

Marloes is a strategic advisor for the municipality of Amsterdam and she advises on employment, participation & income. Before that, she worked for 5 years as a policy advisor for the ministry of education, culture & science, as a project manager for an NGO on technical education and strategic advisor on education for the municipality of Amsterdam.



### **Ellen Jacobs**

Ellen is Head of Policy & Communication and a member of the managing board of UWV WERKbedrijf (the Dutch PES). In the past, Ellen worked as manager of policy at EVO (association for logistics), and as local director and national programme manager for the SME employers' organisation "MKB Nederland" representing over 170.000 employers across all sectors.