



## Online meeting of the Advisers for European PES Affairs (AFEPAs)

30 Sep 2021– 10:00 – 12:30

Participants: AT, BE-Actiris, BE-Le Forem, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, COM, PES SECRETARIAT

Absent: BE-VDAB, BG, CZ, IT, LI, PL

### ITEM 1: Introduction

The agenda of the meeting was adopted. The minutes from the Afepa meeting on 06 May 2021 were adopted and will be published.

COM introduced the PES Network Secretariat hosted in DG EMPL's Unit E1 (Labour mobility, Public Employment Services, ELA) since 1 July, which will allow further synergies with important topics such as labour mobility.

PES secretariat welcomed Brigita Voncina as new Afepa for Slovenia (SI).

Condolences were extended to the colleagues of the Norwegian PES for the tragic circumstances that led to the passing of their colleague after an attack on 20 September.

### ITEM 2: New EU financial instruments supporting ALMPs and PES

PES Secretariat presented an overview of the EU financial instruments (Recovery and Resilience Facility (RFF) and European Social Fund + (ESF+), as planning is being finalised in most Member States. Measures to support PES capacity building (such as digitalisation) and improve access to services, outreach and individualisation are amongst those put forward by Member states for the RFF. Most Member States have submitted their Recovery and Resilience plans and a majority were adopted by the Council. With regards to ESF+, the presentation restated the key objectives of the Fund and stressed the opportunities for measures that support access to employment, modernisation of institutions and gender balance.

Selected PES (EL, FR and LT) presented examples of the activities funded by these instruments. RO intervened with an example of EU funded projects. The topic could potentially be followed up within the 2022 Work Programme.

### ITEM 3: Follow-up to the June 2021 Board Meeting and state of play of the 2021 Work Programme

PES Secretariat presented the main outcomes of the last Board Meeting under Portuguese presidency (see draft minutes). Afepas were invited to share the PES Network's new strategy within their PES and also with stakeholders to help disseminate it. French and German translations will be available soon.



The state of play of 2021 work programme was presented. A thematic Review workshop on Support for Vulnerable Groups took place on 28-29 September. A thematic review workshop on Support to Recovery is planned early November. A seminar on 'Future Skills, career guidance and lifelong learning' is planned in January. Other working groups are ongoing. In terms of mutual assistance, BE – Actiris and EL have completed their mutual assistance project. LT is still progressing.

Afepas were reminded of the call for expression of interest to host a Jour Fixe meeting.

Dissemination activities of PESPod, the network's podcast, were presented. Proposals to further disseminate the podcasts were welcomed and will be taken forward by the PES secretariat. National PES were encouraged to support activities to further enhance the promotion of the podcast, taking into account actions proposed in the background paper. Additionally, EE, FR and HR expressed interest to take part in the podcast as guests in upcoming episodes.

The state of play of the benchmarking activities was presented. The Benchlearning Manual is currently being revised and will be shared with members of the benchlearning working group with a planned discussion in November. It was highlighted that interpretation services during assessments should be funded by the PES host country as a general rule. PES secretariat recalled that the shared summary after an assessment can only be fact checked but not edited by the host country. It is currently foreseen to complete the third cycle in Sep 2022, which could be followed by thematic learning dialogues and an evaluation of the third cycle. A new assessor training is planned next January and the PES are invited to submit names of PES colleagues who would like to take part in the training session. PES secretariat informed that a new video guide on "how to improve outcomes," is available from the main menu of the dashboard and new methodological papers for the virtual benchlearning visits are stored in the CIRCABC platform.

#### **ITEM 4: Preparation the PES Network Work Programme 2022**

PES Secretariat presented the process concerning the preparation of the Work Programme 2022 and proposals for discussion along four thematic clusters: 1) Recovery and structural changes 2) PES service delivery 3) PES performance management 4) PES visibility and partnerships (Item 4 document).

Afepas were divided into four breakout rooms to help clarify and prioritise topics in each cluster. The output of the discussion was presented back in the plenary.

A revised document will be shared with Afepas on 05 October for commenting on in writing and prioritisation of activities. Afepas were also invited to indicate which activities should be prioritised to take place in-person pending the circumstances of the pandemic. Afepas were invited to already start preparing their input and to submit their written comments by 12 October. The draft work programme will be finalised during the 28 October Afepa meeting, for adoption on the occasion of the December Board Meeting.

#### **AOB and closure of the meeting**

- The PES Secretariat thanked the Afepas for keeping the Secretariat informed of different surveys shared amongst members of the Network. Afepas were requested to clarify that their requests are separate from the PES Network Work Programme.
- FR gave an update on WAPES activities. The world congress will take place in Estonia (29 November- 2 December). Afepas were requested to contact EE for questions related to the congress.



- PES Secretariat informed Afepas about the participation of the Chair of the PES Network Johannes Kopf, in a webinar 'Supporting Recovery: Effective job-to-job transitions' on 1 October (co-organised by BusinessEurope and the European Economic and Social Committee's Employers group) and the upcoming Employment Committee Youth Guarantee review on 18 October.
- SI provided an overview of the planned agenda for the upcoming board meeting on 9-10 December, which will be discussed at the next Afepa meeting. The meeting is likely to highlight the post Covid-19 recovery phase with a focus on the needs of vulnerable groups, labour shortages and mobility. Johannes Kopf will discuss the priorities and format of the meeting with the Second Vice-Chair Mitja Bobnar, on 6 October. SI invited Afepas to think about those which employment gaps in the labour market are important to be addressed and to share important PES practices that they would be willing to present at the board meeting. SI specified that they will focus on narrowing the disability employment gap, but other practices, which could also be presented might be connected to narrowing gender, skills or age, disability and employment gaps in the labour market. Afepas were invited to email Brigita Voncina ([brigita.voncina@ess.gov.si](mailto:brigita.voncina@ess.gov.si)) with examples of practices.
- The next Afepa meeting is planned on **28 October at 10am CET**.