



16th PES Board meeting, 9 – 10 December 2021, Online Meeting under the Slovenian Presidency

Outcomes- 10 December 2021

Nature of the meeting: The Board is the governing body of the European Network of Public Employment Services (PES Network), established by Decision No 573/2014/EU. It is composed of one nominated member for each Member State, from the senior management of their respective PES, and for the European Commission. The meeting is not open to the public. The adopted outcomes are published on the EMPL Europa website.

Absent: none

Welcoming

The Chair of the Network, Johannes Kopf, opened the meeting.

The 2nd Vice Chair, Mitja Bobnar, General Director of the Employment Service of Slovenia, welcomed to the meeting, highlighting topical topics such as how to reduce labour market deficits by providing mobility and developing the right skills and integrating the vulnerable groups most affected during the health crisis.

The Chair welcomed Mr. Janez Cigler Kralj, Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Slovenia. Mr. Kralj welcomed the participants and looked back at priorities of the Slovenian presidency, stressing skills, reducing employment gaps and the Social Pillar EU 2030 goals. Recovery and resilience, employment, social protection and equal opportunities were emphasized. He highlighted the importance of ensuring that structural changes and digital and green transitions are combined with new opportunities and upskilling and reskilling paths for all. The role of PES was underlined.

ITEM 1: Adoption of outcomes of last meeting and agenda

The Chair welcomed new Board members from DK, HU and the European Commission. The Chair also welcomed the new Chair of EMCO as observer.

The Board adopted the draft agenda of the 16th Board Meeting.

The draft outcomes of the 15th Board Meeting, hosted online by PT in June 2021, were adopted without comments and will be uploaded on the EMPL Europa website <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESNetwork>.

ITEM 2: Latest EU policy developments

COM (Denis Genton, Head of Unit EMPL E1 Labour Mobility, Public Employment Services, ELA) updated on the recent re-organisation of DG EMPL and on the Commission initiatives with relevance for PES. Follow-up to the State of the Union

address and the implementation of the Next Generation EU Programme were particularly emphasized. He highlighted the European Year of Youth 2022 (with a focus on the ALMA Programme of particular relevance to PES), announced new initiatives on Individual Learning Accounts and micro-credentials. The opportunities for PES to receive support from ESF+ as well as the Recovery and Resilience Facility for implementation of reform projects were stressed.

COM (Barbara Kauffmann, Director for Employment and Social Governance, Analysis) gave an overview of the overall macroeconomic situation and notably the labour markets. Labour markets have been very resilient notably due to policies, but also due to an increase in inactivity. At the same time, the labour market recovery lags behind the GDP recovery and some vulnerable groups have been more severely hit. Key challenges for labour markets, labour reallocation pressures and rising labour shortages can be due both to transitory or permanent factors and raise questions in terms of skills mismatches, insufficient inclusiveness and rising inequalities. Policies needed to address these challenges go hand in hand with the actions announced in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and the EU 2030 headlines targets. She then highlighted the EASE recommendation, other EU policy initiatives, and the role of the Semester.

The exchange touched upon the composition of shortages/mismatches before and after the pandemic. Shortages in parts of the services sector seem to be more prominent after the crisis. There is also a structural shortage because of new jobs created by digitalisation.

ITEM 3: Exchange on PES support to recovery

The 1st Vice Chair introduced the discussion by referring to the PES Labour Market Barometer's latest figures (published on 2 December) which confirm that European labour markets are continuing to recover from the COVID-19 crisis. However, improvements are now at a slower pace. Supply bottlenecks and the rising number of COVID-19 infections impacts the perspectives.

Nicola Duell presented main points of the upcoming PES Network study on "Service delivery by PES in the wake of the crisis". PES have implemented measures to meet the challenges. Some key considerations for the way forward were expanding partnerships; further digitalization and hybridization; skills analysis, promotion of geographical and facilitation of regional mobility; services for non-traditional PES customers; ALMPs for jobseekers with employment barriers; as well as services for employers.

NL gave a summary of a Thematic review Workshop on recovery, hosted by the Dutch PES on 9-10 November. Addressing labour shortages was the leading topic. Practices were shared on cooperation with employers, supporting transitions and labour market information. NL also reflected on main trends in the Dutch labour market: the recovery is strong, but compromised by uncertainty regarding sustainability. Shortages are record high, and the imbalances substantial. There is willingness among unions, employers and the education sector to take actions to meet this situation. The PES needs a mandate to reach people who are not yet unemployed.

AT presented how services to employers have been evolving. The skills shortages and imbalances are significant in AT too. The recovery has not benefited the long-term unemployed. Programmes are being implemented to meet the actual situation. The presentation focused on services for employers including "Boxenstopp" (AMS-pit stop), "Impulsberatung für Betriebe on demand" (targeted support to employers in HRM) and the role of the labour foundation to support the economic transformation.

IE reported similar trends as AT and NL – the labour market is recovering, but with many people still on emergency support. Shortages and imbalances need to be met by re- and upskilling. The Pathways to Work 2021-2025, aims to respond to these challenges. The strategy covers measures to address scale and capacity, response to changing client profiles, seamless referral to relevant upskilling opportunities and co-opting employers into working with PES.

SI introduced the Slovenian PES development strategy 2025 and its support to recovery. The PES was working well with employers already before the crisis, but a more far-reaching strategy is developed to respond to the new challenges. Main elements are activation of all available work potential by bridging skills and including vulnerable groups, a new service model which is adapted to the digital era, connecting all development activities and co-operation with stakeholders.

The 1st Vice Chair reflected on Greek situation where skills gaps are also prominent. Up- and reskilling is a major topic in the recovery plan. The role of PES is more important than ever.

ITEM 4: Virtual family photo

ITEM 5: Labour mobility and labour market shortages

The Chair highlighted how last years have showed that the structural challenges of the labour market are accelerating. The role of PES is evolving, from taking shortages rather as a fact to looking for solutions and sustainable strategies, in partnership with other actors.

EE presented the Estonian labour market and the strategic approach to labour and skills monitoring and forecasting, including the role of PES (the OSKA system). Main drivers of labour market shortages and surpluses are caused both by general megatrends and effects of the pandemic; as for example demographic change, technological change and automation, development of the neighboring export markets, greening and the evolution of the pandemic.

HR presented trends in the Croatian labour market, and highlighted the approach for monitoring, analysis and forecasting of labour market needs. This information feeds recommendations for enrolment and scholarship policies. The recommendations are produced annually at local market levels for upper secondary and tertiary education, with an aim to harmonize scholarships and education with labour market needs. The role of CISOK services was highlighted.

ES explained the employment services in Spain and presented how partnership between state actors could facilitate better anticipation of skills requirements and better adaptation of training offers. There is a focus on measures to increase capacity and support to people and employers. SEND@ is developed as a new digital tool based on statistical evidence, and with an aim to help people finding jobs. AI is being incorporated in the system for identifying occupations and training demanded by the market. An aim is also to reform and promote ALMPs.

In the exchange that followed the presentations NL stressed the uncertainty in detailed skills forecasting, and the need for employers to train their own staff and be open for trainees. LT pointed out that not only forecasting of occupations is important, but also of skills. DE referred to ongoing work in the IAB to analyse published job offers in big and small firms to see if there are systematic differences. The Chair pointed out that the PES Network seminar next year on Lifelong Guidance could explore what data are used to forecast skills.

COM presented the findings of the evaluation of EURES. The evaluation concludes that EURES effectiveness is similar to PES and cost-effectiveness has increased. Elements that need further work is enhancing, streamlining and simplification of monitoring, communication and visibility. Further efforts are also required to provide all CVs and vacancies using ESCO classification and broaden the network. COM also presented preliminary findings of the Labour mobility report. Mobility has increased a lot over time but came to a hold in 2019. Reduced growth in numbers of EU movers and increase in return mobility have impacts on overall mobility. Mobile citizens felt the effects of the crisis stronger than others.

Cosmin Boiangiu, Executive Director of the European Labour Authority, addressed ELA's role in ensuring fair and effective labour mobility, employing all its tools, including EURES. ELA activities relevant for the PES network, such as the Action Plan on Seasonal Work were also presented. Road transport will be a priority in 2022. The co-operation with the Network for exchange and discussion on transversal topics was emphasized. Finally, the key findings of the "2021 Report on the Labour Shortages and Surpluses" were shared with the audience.

ITEM 6: State of Play Benchlearning activities

PES Secretariat reported on benchlearning activities, presented the revision of the Benchlearning Manual as well as the proposal to organise remaining visits online.

The aim of the Manual revision was to integrate developments since 2017 (including the review of the excellence model in 2019 and the impact of the pandemic), in order to provide adequate guidance to participants

13 PES have been assessed virtually by the end of 2021. Formats for the 2022 assessments can be decided ad hoc as practiced so far or the entire 3rd cycle can be completed in virtual format.

The Board adopted the Benchlearning Manual and agreed upon continuing with virtual assessments for the entire 3rd cycle in principle, to ensure methodological

consistency and taking into account the quality of virtual visits. If the conditions allow, the assessment can be adapted to special needs of BE_Le Forem and ES.

ITEM 7: Election of the PES Network First Vice Chair 2022-2023

In line with the PES Network Rules of Procedure, Article 4, the Board elected Spiros Protopsaltis from the EL PES as 1st Vice Chair with a term of office of 2 years, from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023.

ITEM 8: The Slovenian Labour Market and the role of the Slovenian PES

SI presented the Slovenian Labour Market and the role and services of Slovenian PES. During the last five years, unemployment has decreased and labour shortages have emerged, with a rise in employment of foreign workers. The structure of unemployment has changed, with an over-representation of older workers as well as low skilled and challenges related to health problems and disabilities. At the same time, 51 pct. of employers report difficulties in recruiting. There is a labour potential among older workers, youth and vulnerable groups. ALMP measures are important to support these groups. PES focuses on flexibility and adaptation to the needs, for example via a green jobs initiative and strengthening digital skills for the unemployed. In addition, foreign nationals make up for 12 pct. of the employed. More than 94 pct. of the permits are issued for workers from former Yugoslavia. The demographic development is a challenge. Further digitalisation, PES staff competence, forecasts of the labour market needs and co-operation with the labour market stakeholder co-operation are keys to respond to these challenges.

ITEM 9: "Leave no one behind", post Covid-19 recovery as an opportunity for PES to address the gaps in the labour market

The 2nd Vice Chair introduced the topic, highlighting that the impacts of the pandemic has not been evenly shared. Temporary workers, self-employed, low- and medium skilled and single mothers have been more exposed to job losses. Youth were more affected at the onset of the crisis but recovered more swiftly. Confinement measures also had disproportionate impact on persons with disabilities. The challenge is to ensure a fair recovery, and that no-one should be left behind.

He welcomed Prof. Tjaša Redek and Asst. Prof. Mojca Svetek, University of Ljubljana, School of Economics. Prof. Redek raised the question whether temporary jobs are "stepping stones" or increase labour market segmentation. Research shows that the labour market is "sticky". The conversion rate from temporary to permanent jobs is generally low. Job security seems to be important to explain further labour market achievements. Facilitating transition between temporary and permanent jobs and to give vulnerable groups access to sustainable jobs are thus keys. The presentation of Asst. Prof. Svetek discussed the comparative position of selected vulnerable groups in Slovenia in terms of employment arrangements, job quality and challenges faced by these groups. Education as well as contract type have impacts. The vulnerable groups are also more exposed during a crisis. The insightful combination of administrative micro-

data and extensive qualitative analysis illustrated the situation in Slovenia, while addressing the wider implications in the European context.

Márton Csillag presented the outcomes of relevant PES network activities, in particular the September 2021 Thematic review Workshop on support to vulnerable groups and the Network survey on anti-discrimination (publication forthcoming). The Workshop explored PES practices in the fields of 1) diagnosis, targeting and local co-operation, 2) on-the-job training and in-work support and 3) long term support through social enterprises and/or wage subsidies. Preliminary results from the survey on anti-discrimination survey shows that in most countries, the mandate for PES in this area is limited. More mature PES tend to show stronger commitment and use a broader range of tools. Broadening the range of supply side measures as well as improving internal procedures are needed to proceed further in this area.

In the following Marketplace, different practices/approaches were presented:

SI: The disability employment gap: Using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health for a holistic approach to managing the needs of persons with disabilities through the collaboration of different professionals in the planning, implementation and follow-up of the rehabilitation process.

NO: The age employment gap: Interdisciplinary youth teams established locally to give young people priority and meet the young people's needs as holistically as possible, and the youth teams have extensive collaboration with both health and educational institutions.

BE_Actiris: The gender employment gap: Children's houses, a childcare service which aims to give parents, of whom many are single mothers, more time to invest in their job search and facilitate transition into employment.

LV: The gender employment gap: The project Women4IT in cooperation with the Latvian Information and Communication Technology Association where women aged 18 to 29 have the possibility to obtain practical ICT skills for career development in digital jobs.

FI: The skills employment gap: Digital services and sectoral co-operation to support lifelong learning and to bridge the skills employment gap.

ITEM 10: Tackling security challenges

The Chair recalled the tragic events in France and Norway, whereby counsellors lost their lives in 2021 following attacks perpetrated by PES customers. This concern is not new, however PES staff have been at the frontline and even more exposed to security risks since the pandemic.

FR presented their approach and plans to implement a comprehensive approach to prevent and manage risks. Main elements include professional security diagnosis of the sites, targeted investments, implementation of a culture of vigilance, co-operation with other public authorities, formalization of safety procedures, set up a safety watch, for example to monitor social media, and

working with stakeholders. Attention is recently attached to the on-site reception in local offices.

NO presented key elements in the ongoing assessment; including physical aspects of office design, furniture and alarm systems, contingency planning and training, and cooperation and information exchange with relevant cooperating partners like the police and health care institutions. A fundamental challenge is to combine openness and user friendliness with employee safety.

DE presented the main measures to ensure the security of the PES employees. The balance between staff security and an "Open house approach" was stressed. A prevention concept is developed based on science, experiences and the legal framework. Involvement of police, health institutions and other partners, as well as staff representatives is crucial. Regular drills as well as risk updates are necessary to maintain an efficient system.

The exchange of experience that followed the presentation highlighted that teleworking since the pandemic has increased the focus on security for staff working from home.

The Chair concluded by referring to activities in the draft 2022 Work Programme where the topic can be followed up; a survey on new HR challenges and the PES 4.0 Task force on digitalisation.

ITEM 11: PES Work programme

BE_Actiris reported from their Mutual Assistance Project focusing on digitalisation and covering 1) the type of data to be collected 2) strategies and tools to efficiently collect data from clients and 3) profiling, segmentation, monitoring and personalised counselling tools. DE, NL, FR, IE, SI and SE were thanked for their peer support.

AT reported from the ad hoc Working Group appointed to finalise the Network position paper on PES contribution to the greening of labour markets.

EMCO reported on EMCO's latest activities, highlighting activities related to recovery, youth and ALMPs. Equipping jobseekers and workers with relevant skills and supporting job transitions will be key topics ahead. Good and productive co-operation with the PES Network was emphasized. The upcoming EMCO reviews of ALMPs and services for long term unemployed will be concrete opportunities for cooperation in 2022.

The PES Network Secretariat presented the Network's draft Annual Report 2021 and the draft Work Programme 2022. It was announced that the 2022 Annual Stakeholder Conference on the topic 'Meeting labour and skills shortages' will take place on 7-8 April 2022, in a virtual format.

The Board adopted the PES Network position paper, the Annual Report 2021 as well as the Work Programme 2022.

AOB

FR updated on WAPES activities. The new data for the WAPES World Congress is 25 – 29 April 2022. A survey is underway regarding the strategies and challenges in 2022 for the WAPES PES. A new communication plan and visual identity will be implemented. This includes an internal social network as well as an e-learning space. The full 2022 Work Programme will be shared early 2022.

The Slovenian Presidency handed over a symbolic baton to the upcoming French Presidency.

FR presented the ambitions for the French presidency. The main issues proposed for the agenda of the next Board meeting were elaborated, namely skills, labour market integration of youth, employment of people with disabilities as well as artificial intelligence. The next Board meeting is planned to take place 23-24 June 2022.