



18th PES Board meeting, 15 – 16 December 2022

Online meeting under the Czech Presidency

Outcomes

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: HU

Welcoming

The Chair of the Network, Johannes Kopf, and Second Vice-Chair Viktor Najmon, General Director of the Labour Office of the Czech Republic opened the meeting.

ITEM 1: Adoption of outcomes of last meeting and agenda

The Chair welcomed new Board members from DE, FI and PT and alternate Board members from DE, DK, IE, IT, LV, and COM.

The Board adopted the draft agenda of the 18th Board Meeting.

The draft outcomes of the 17th Board Meeting, hosted by FR in June 2022, 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

Jordi Curell Gotor, Commission Board member, presented new information from the Eurobarometer survey on intra-EU mobility. He also updated on recent Commission initiatives with relevance for PES.

Through envisaged EUROPASS and EURES synergies, support to mobility will be further improved. This includes access to digital self-assessment tools, digital credentials, and EU wide skills intelligence. The objectives of the announced European Year of Skills are particularly relevant for PES, focusing on promoting investment in training and upskilling, making sure that skills are relevant for the labour market, matching people's skills with the job market as well as attracting people from third countries with the skills needed by the EU. The EU Talent Pool for third country nationals as well as the Talent Pool Pilot for people fleeing the war in Ukraine are new initiatives to support legal migration. Also, the latest developments in relation to European Care Strategy, Directive on Minimum Wage and Council Recommendation on Minimum Income were addressed. PES as key stakeholders were encouraged to take an active role in the Year of Skills.

Some features on the Eurobarometer numbers for mobility and intra-EU mobility initiatives were discussed among participants. The Chair stated the importance for the Network to contribute to the European Year 2023, and that several activities are part of the proposed 2023 Network Work Programme (such as the Network annual conference, taking place on 30 March 2023).

ITEM 3: Integration of people fleeing the war in Ukraine in the labour market

PES Board members discussed the latest developments in supporting people displaced from Ukraine and integration into the labour market. This included an exchange with Mr. Lodewijk Asscher, Special Advisor to Commissioner Schmit on the integration of people fleeing Ukraine as well as with Ms. Tetyana Berezna, Deputy Minister of economy in Ukraine and Ms. Yulia Zhovtyak, Head of the Ukrainian PES.

Mr. Asscher addressed findings from missions to Poland, Lithuania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Member states have adapted their labour markets and services. He underlined that labour market services work best when complemented by wider support. The Temporary Protection proves as an integration success story. The Talent Pool pilot (including the role of ELA) and the skills passport are promising initiatives. Among the challenges, "solidarity fatigue" was mentioned as well as the dilemma of insecurity/waiting (with consequences on the decision to, for example, learn language or take education in the country of residence). In solving this dilemma, the European Year of Skills offer opportunities. In a longer perspective, experiences can be useful to prepare for future migration. It is key that PES work with a broader network of service providers. Lessons learned during the mission will be shared at a conference in the spring 2023.

Ms. Berezna presented statistics about people displaced because of the war to other European countries or internally in Ukraine, and of the employment situation for internally displaced people. She explained services for the internally displaced, including online services, guidance, training, provision of micro-grants for self-employment and assistance in reallocation of enterprises from dangerous areas. She also described the needs for further operations and development of the projects on ALMPs, professional education and ICT, and appreciated support from colleagues in the Network.

CZ, DE, and LT shared experiences from their countries which have welcomed large numbers of persons displaced. EE addressed a planned initiative for co-operation with the UA PES, supported by the ILO. In the following discussion, several PES took the floor to share their experiences and practices in support to and integration of displaced people. A broad support was expressed to Ukrainian colleagues, and a willingness to follow up bilaterally.

COM recalled key features of the enlargement process with UA and other candidate countries.

The Chair concluded that the PES Network Decision opens some possibilities for co-operation, which will be explored as part of the Work Programme 2023. The PES Secretariat will share relevant information, in particular from the PES Network

Knowledge Centre. The Board agreed to publish the summary of the PES Network survey on support to displaced people from Ukraine.

ITEM 4: Virtual family photo

ITEM 5: Steps forward and challenges ahead for PES - lessons learnt from the third cycle of benchlearning

The PES Secretariat presented main findings from the 3rd cycle assessments. For each of the eight enablers clear progress can be observed in PES maturity. The 30 assessments showed that PES proved to be effective in handling the pandemic. In many cases the crisis helped speeding up developments, in particular in digitalization of services. Crisis management was assessed with the highest overall maturity. Regarding challenges, many PES still lack a strategic and systematic approach to one or more of the enablers, and they have to integrate recent developments in holistic approaches.

Remaining challenges will be addressed in Thematic Learning Dialogues. The calendar of the Dialogues and the PES involvement was presented. The 4th cycle road map was presented, as well as an overview of PES survey responses. An updated methodology and proposal for PES assessment sequences in the 4th cycle will be presented for approval at the Board meeting in June 2023.

In the following discussion, several PES highlighted the usefulness of the assessments. Some PES explained how they follow up recommendations, and some PES requested an even more structured follow up, for example also by sharing of good practices. It was seen as important to allow for sufficient time to follow up and implement change. The Board agreed to publish a short version of the main findings once the 3rd cycle is finalized.

ITEM 6: Tackling the Great Resignation in Europe

BE (Le Forem) introduced a discussion on the extent to which the 'Great resignation' is a reality in the EU. In what has increasingly become a 'jobseekers' market', how are Europeans re-evaluating their relationship to work? What does that mean for specific sectors and what can PES do about it? Survey results from the employers and workers side were used to raise some questions about the prospects, taking into account labour shortages, the economic trends and generational aspects. The Heads of PES discussed the extent of the phenomenon in their countries.

ITEM 7: The Czech Labour Market and the role of the Czech PES

The Czech PES gave an overview of the Czech labour market and the role of the PES. At the end of October 2022, the unemployment rate in the Czech Republic was at 2.1 pct. An increase in unemployment is noticed among young people until the age of 29 and people above the age of 50. There are uncertainties, particularly related to the energy prices. According to estimates, the unemployment is expected to stagnate or slightly increase.

14 pct. of registered jobseekers are people with disabilities. Projects supporting the integration of persons with disabilities are focusing on vocational rehabilitation, a dedicated counselling project "Development of a System Support

for the Employment of People with Disabilities on the Free Labour Market” and contributions to employers in the sheltered labour market.

ITEM 8: PES staff management challenges in the ‘new normal’

Łukasz Sienkiewicz presented results of the Network survey on PES strategies and activities to respond to new trends in staff management. Short term measures responding to the pandemic focused on the reallocation of staff, health related measures and online work practices. In the long-term, supporting the ongoing digitalisation of PES and upscaled online training practices for employees have stayed in focus. PES’ future is marked by the development of staff competences. Retaining staff in a changing labour market is key, and increased efforts should be made in relation to PES attractiveness as employer and to organisational transformation to the digitalised future.

Heads of PES discussed in smaller groups on the topics: 1) Staff management in the ‘new normal’ following the pandemic 2) Key competences, professionalisation and training of PES staff, and 3) Shortages/PES as attractive employer. Key topics from the discussion could be brought forward to the review of relevant benchlearning enablers.

ITEM 9: PES Network governance and the Work Programme

Supporting gender equality within the PES Network

DE highlighted the status of achievements across Europe and called for further progress within the PES Network on the subject. To allow taking gender balance in consideration during the next election, it was agreed that the first Vice Chair will also be elected next June 2023, for a mandate starting in December 2023. The PES Secretariat will organize a Workshop to inform about the roles and tasks for elected members to encourage possible candidates.

PES Network Work programme

LV reported from the ongoing Mutual Assistance Project on quality management and encouraged other PES to use this opportunity for peer support. The EMCO Chair reported on latest activities and cooperation with the PES Network and looked forward to further co-operation in 2023. The Board adopted the Annual Report 2022 and the Work Programme 2023 (as well as indicative activities for 2024). As part of the Work Programme, an opinion paper on the skills topic will be presented to the Board meeting in June. The PES Secretariat updated on the modalities of future of PES Network activities in the context of Network’s commitment to the Green Deal, with an aim of a new concept from 2024.

AOB

The Czech Presidency handed over to the upcoming Swedish Presidency.

SE presented the priorities for the presidency, which include security of EU citizens and strengthening the EU’s role in the world, stopping organised crime, speeding up the climate transition, strengthening to EU’s competitiveness for the jobs of the future and safeguarding the EU’s fundamental values. For the Network, the 2023 European Year of Skills as well as the 25th anniversary of EU PES co-

operation was highlighted. The next Board meeting will take place in person in Stockholm on 8-9th June 2023.

ES announced that the following meeting will take place in the Canary Islands on 14-15 December 2023.