



19th PES Board meeting, 08 – 09 June 2023

In person meeting under the Swedish 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: CZ

Welcoming

The Chair of the Network, Johannes Kopf, and Second Vice-Chair Maria Mindhammer, Director General of Arbetsförmedlingen (the Swedish Public Employment Service) opened the meeting.

ITEM 1: Adoption of outcomes of last meeting and agenda

The Chair welcomed new Board members from Belgium, Bulgaria, Hungary, Ireland and Slovenia as well as alternate Board members from Luxemburg; Slovenia and Sweden.

The Board adopted the draft agenda of the 19th Board Meeting. The draft outcomes of the 18th Board Meeting, hosted by the Czech Republic in December 2022, were adopted and will be uploaded on the EMPL Europa website <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESNetwork>.

ITEM 2: Attracting skills and talent from third countries

Jordi Curell Gotor, Commission Board member, touched upon the current dynamics of EU labour market and presented relevant EU initiatives. He underlined that in current context characterised by labour shortages re- and upskilling of our domestic workforce remains key. There are a significant number of people that can and should be activated for the labour market. Nevertheless, targeted labour migration, if properly prepared and rolled out, can play a significant role in filling existing labour shortages. This is highlighted by European Year of Skills priorities and captured in ongoing EU initiatives, such as Talent Pool and Talent Partnerships. In this, synergies between national and EU tools can lead to successful effects.

Anna- Karin Palm Olsson, ILO, focused in particular on the aspect that attracting and recruitment of third country nationals to the EU should take place alongside fair standards, empowering and protecting workers. Social partner involvement is crucial.

Germany focused on the German labour market pointed out that without immigration, the bottlenecks would be far greater and employment is already being built up predominantly by foreign nationals. The most recent Skilled Immigration act expands the framework under which qualified professionals can be recruited by employers.

Spain presented the new elements to the existing legislation and the revision of the process to attract skills and talents for difficult to fill vacancies. Updated division of roles and responsibilities between state actors aim at good results for employers and positive impacts on the labour market.

ITEM 3: PES Work Programme 2023

The Secretariat provided an update on the Work Programme 2023 and invited PES network members to make use of the Mutual Assistance Projects to receive peer support related to ongoing reforms or other capacity building needs: slots are still available.

Austria presented the outcomes of the Working Group on communication: recommendations will be taken forward with the new Chair and in the preparation of the 2024 Work Programme. Board members were invited to take an active role in supporting the Network's communication efforts.

Board members adopted the PES Network Opinion Paper on the European Year of Skills (presented by the Chair) and the updated Key consideration on the integration of refugees and persons displaced from Ukraine (presented by Norway as Working Group leader). Both documents will be published in the PES Network Knowledge centre: Board members were invited to disseminate them among relevant stakeholders.

An update was provided on ongoing work related to mapping PES approaches to skills and labour shortage.

Family picture

Intervention from the Swedish Minister for Employment and integration

Mr Johan Pehrson, the Swedish Minister for Employment and integration addressed Board members. He highlighted that skills supply and lifelong learning are central to creating growth and prosperity in times of green and digital transitions of the economy. He stated that the PES Network plays an important role in addressing common challenges in the European labour market. His intervention was followed by an exchange with the European Head of PES.

ITEM 4: Recent PES reforms

Board members provided an update on three ongoing PES reforms. In **Finland**, under the so-called 'TE Services - Public employment and business services - 2024 reform', the responsibility for organising public employment services will be transferred from the central government to municipalities on 1 January 2025. In **France**, the setting up of 'France Travail' aims to improve coordination between partners and stakeholders by proposing a simpler and more efficient support, preventing unemployment as well as accelerating access to the labour market. A

national report published in April 2023 presents almost 100 proposals, subject to the government's arbitration as well as parliamentary debate. In **Sweden**, over the last five years, Arbetsförmedlingen has undergone reforms to improve effectiveness and efficiency in supporting jobseekers, matching them with employment opportunities and services to employers. Key objectives include strengthening support for the long-term unemployed, investing in technology, enhancing data exchange with private suppliers, strengthening cooperation with municipalities as well as employers, educational institutions.

ITEM 5: Election of Chair and First Vice-Chair

Caroline Mancel, Deputy Director General of Actiris (Belgium) was elected Chair of the PES Network, for a term of office from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2025. She highlighted her intention to put a particular emphasis on the preparation of the evaluation of the Network with the upcoming renewal of the Decision establishing the Network, reviewing the Network's communication strategy, further developing and widening partnerships.

Inga Balnanosienė (Lithuania) was elected First Vice-Chair, for a term of office from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025.

ITEM 6: Setting the scene – The Swedish Labour market and the green transition

Arbetsförmedlingen gave an overview of the SE labour market in a European context and the role of the PES. The Swedish labour market has a relatively high unemployment rate in a European comparison. However this is largely explained by the fact that Sweden also has the highest labour force participation rate in the entire EU, combined with a very high employment rate, which is another important measure of labour market development. Arbetsförmedlingen also informed about historically large industrial investments in the Northern parts of the country, which could deeply impact societies and reform global industrial processes. This is often described as 'the light from the north'.

ITEM 7: Skills for green transition

To set the scene, OECD presented the key finding of the report "[Bridging the Great Green Divide: Job Creation and Local Economic Development 2023](#)." The report sheds light on the geography of green jobs and its impact on socio-economic inequality across 30 OECD countries, 25 of which are in Europe.

This was followed by group discussion on the following topics: 1) Forecasting and future skills 2) Up-skilling and re-skilling for vulnerable groups, and 3) Labour mobility to meet green transitions skills need.

Board members were then invited to take note of the Working group on Taxonomies' report 'Key considerations on green concepts and taxonomy', encouraging their use within their organisation and further exchange with key partners.

ITEM 8: Benchlearning

Follow-up to 3rd cycle

The PES Secretariat presented the sequence of Thematic Learning Dialogues (TLDs), which touched upon key strategic challenges identified during the assessments. 9 dialogues were hosted by 8 PES, involving 25 participating PES. PES developed action plans, which will be reviewed in the 4th cycle via the self-assessment template and the opening session. Decision upon the start of TLD in 4th cycle will be taken by mid of the next cycle. ES invited participants of the TLD for decentralized PES to a TLD in Madrid in 2025.

EU funds (ESF+, Recovery and Resilience Facility, Technical Support Instrument) can be particularly relevant to support strategic reforms triggered by assessment recommendations and addressed in TLD. Greece and Croatia presented examples of projects using both PES Network support and EU funding. The COM encourages PES to actively use mutual learning activities and support available in the PES Network (such as Mutual Assistance Projects) to support the design and implementation of ESF+, thus creating synergies between the assessments and concrete reform projects. COM will provide support, if needed.

4th cycle planning with calendar

The PES Secretariat informed that by end of June 2023 the updated proposal of the 4th cycle excellence model and the self-assessment template prepared by the Task Force will be shared with AFEPA for comments. The updated BL Manual will be submitted for Board adoption by written procedure in September.

The Board adopted the proposed structure for site visits and the option that a PES can choose between an in-person or online assessment (whereby the PES Secretariat shall be informed six months before the assessment). The Board adopted the 2024 calendar of assessments (with the exception of the DK site visit as the date is not anymore suitable: a new proposal will be sent by the PES Secretariat). The 2025 calendar will be presented in the Board meeting in December 2023. France asked for transparency of assessment reports among the Network in the 4th cycle upon agreement by each PES.

AOB

France presented an update on the World Association of Public Employment Services' work programme (Wapes).

The Swedish Presidency handed over to the upcoming Spanish Presidency. The next Board meeting will take place in person in the Canary Islands on 14-15 December 2023.

The following Board meeting will take place on 6-7 June 2024 in Liège (Belgium).