



# **The Role of PES in Outreach to the Inactive Population**

**Study report**

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# **The Role of PES in Outreach to the Inactive Population**

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## **Executive Summary**

The inactive population is not a traditional target group for the Public Employment Services (PES), although a significant share of the inactive population wants to work and is potentially available for work. Concerns about demographic trends have made the inactive an increasingly central focus of EU labour market policy. A rapidly shrinking labour force can negatively affect the full economic potential of the Union. Since the inactive are ordinarily not clients of PES, the PES, or other actors, have to engage in outreach activities to establish a relationship to this target group. The aim of the study is to provide an overview of outreach measures for the inactive with particular reference to the role of PES.

Within the framework of this small scale study, we focus more narrowly on outreach activities for three target groups among the inactive that are central to current policy discussions on increasing labour force participation and social inclusion:

1. Inactive older workers
2. Working-age women not in the labour force
3. Ethnic minorities and migrants.

The first part of the study surveys existing policy regimes and outreach measures for the selected target groups, based on the existing research literature and on national and EU sources. The second part examines in greater detail outreach measures for the target groups in 6 country case studies.

### **Role of PES in outreach to the inactive**

Over the last two decades Member States have undertaken remarkable and to a large extent successful efforts to increase labour force participation and employment rates of both older workers and women. The PES, however, has not (or rarely) played a central role in implementing these strategies.

For both inactive older workers and inactive women of working age the principal focus of public policy in the EU has been on making the choice of employment over inactivity more attractive (e.g. by changing incentives in pension and benefit systems, making employment more flexible, improving access to family services) and on changing societal attitudes toward older workers and female employment. Special services and outreach measures play only a subordinate role:

1. PES outreach activities that target inactive older workers do not seem to exist, aside from PES publicity about special services for the older unemployed. Outreach efforts that exist are proactive, directed at employers and through them also at older workers with the aim of prolonging working lives and reducing inflow into activity.
2. Outreach activities directed specifically at inactive working age women appear to be few and mostly small-scale, most offer initial information or counselling related to beginning search for employment or starting a business. In many, if not most cases the lead agency is not the PES or Labour ministry but others (e.g. Family or Women's affairs) or organized by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Most of the projects are funded, at least initially, through the European Social Fund (ESF) grants.

For ethnic minorities activation normally falls under the standard procedures of the public employment services. The activity rates of EU mobile citizens from other EU28 countries are, on average, not significantly lower than for native citizens. Special outreach measures exist primarily for unique ethnic minorities, especially Roman and Sinti, for refugees and to a lesser extent for migrants from non-EU28 countries. In many cases the primary emphasis is on social inclusion rather than specifically on activation.

Based on our literature survey, outreach programmes directed at the inactive are relatively rare. Major outreach measures in which the PES play a central role were identified in only a few countries:

- 1) Older workers (Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Norway, UK), whereby the relevant measures were directed primarily at employers or older employed workers
- 2) Working age women (Austria, Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic)
- 3) Ethnic (Roma) minorities (Sweden, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria) and migrants (Lithuania).

In numerous other cases national outreach measures for the three inactive target groups are the responsibility of other ministries in which the PES may play a role and there is, in addition, a large number of regional and local projects (see Tables 2-1, 2-3 and 2-4).

Expanding the labour force and extending PES service to a broader clientele is a plausible policy priority for PES with adequate resources and in countries or regions with tight labour markets but not in countries with high levels of unemployment and overstretched PES resources. Unsurprisingly, outreach efforts by the PES targeted at the inactive are most frequently found in North and Western Europe, where the concerns about the aging of the labour force and impending labour market shortages are greatest.

Activation of passive benefit recipients is a functional alternative to purely voluntary outreach efforts, and in many cases the preferred choice, where there is an existing relationship to the PES, or to a related social agency (e.g. welfare, disability or other social benefits). In this case, contact with the PES, and eventually uptake of labour market programs and services is facilitated, and eventually made obligatory. In many cases the ILO inactive (not searched for work in the last 4 weeks) may already be registered job-seekers or even unemployment benefit recipients, if the intensity of PES activation is low. In such cases the first step in outreach to the inactive can be to increase the frequency and intensity of interaction with the PES's own clients.

## **Conclusions and recommendations for the three target groups**

### *Inactive Older workers*

Older inactive workers (55-64) are by far the least promising target for PES outreach efforts: Relatively few want to work (18%) and even older workers seeking employment are difficult to place and for the PES resource intensive. Rather than outreach to the inactive Member States have prioritized proactive strategies to extend working lives, especially by raising statutory retirement ages, and by restricting access to early retirement. We find no evidence of PES outreach activities toward older inactive workers not already PES clients.

Outreach is important for increasing the labour force participation of older workers but the kind of outreach needed is that directed at employers and employed workers to change attitudes toward age in employment and to promote life-long learning. Labour market policies can play an important role here, in particular by supporting further training for middle-aged and older employed workers.

The success of these policies for extending working lives has important consequences for the PES. More older jobseekers can be expected to need PES services as their share in the labour force increases and receipt of benefits is increasingly made conditional on availability for work. There is thus an increasing need for innovative employment promotion strategies for older unemployed workers.

*Working-age women*

Prime age inactive women (25-49) are a promising focus for outreach measures to increase labour force participation. Reported willingness to work is high (32%) as is their activation potential, particularly for women re-entering the labour market after an extended family break. Economically inactive, in particular qualified women, who have ceased work for family reasons, present an unused potential for the labour market.

National policies to increase female labour force participation have emphasized in particular childcare, availability of part-time work and flexible work schedules, leave-related policies and other family friendly measures (54.5% of inactive women in this age group state that family responsibilities as the principal reason for not seeking work). Our survey did, however, identify a significant number of outreach initiatives directed at inactive working age women, although many of the programs are relatively small and local.

Re-entry after a career break for family reasons is now a typical form of labour market transition for (mostly) women, but it has received too little systematic policy attention. Based on our survey, there is a general lack of PES specialized counselling and support services to facilitate a successful career re-entry appropriate to their skills potential.

*Ethnic minorities and immigrants*

The PES is normally responsible for the labour market integration of ethnic minorities and refugees who have established residency. Although migrants as a group do not have a lower labour force participations rates, foreigners with non-EU citizenship do (73.1% vs. 65.4%), despite their more favourable age structure. This participation gap is largely due to markedly lower participation rates for adult prime-age women (59%).

The relatively few outreach efforts of the PES or other public agencies are usually reserved for ethnic communities that have special problems not only in labour market integration but in interacting with the mainstream procedures of public authorities for linguistic or other reasons, especially Sinti and Roma and some non-European migrant groups.

In view of the significant communities of ethnic minorities and the growing trend in immigration, there is a clear need for increased efforts for outreach programmes among these groups. Outreach activities may need to focus on women specifically, as they are particularly likely to remain outside the labour force. It is advisable that such programmes are closely linked to the PES in order to maintain a focus on employment.

Robust policy recommendations for all three target groups require a more systematic analysis of a set of similar types of outreach programmes examined in the case studies (mentoring or mediator programmes for ethnic minorities; re-entry outreach programs for women; employer outreach for proactive further training and other measures for employed older workers), and need to be based on good evaluation data. This goes beyond our limited survey based on secondary analysis.

## **Preface**

The aim of this study is to provide an overview of outreach activities for inactive persons of working age, with particular reference to the role of PES, to identify promising practices, and to provide policy recommendations. The study focuses on outreach activities for three target groups among the inactive that are central to current policy discussions: 1) Working-age women not in the labour force; 2) Inactive older workers; 3) Ethnic minorities and migrants. This report does not address youth as a specific target group, although inactive youth not in education or training (NEETs) were very much in the centre of policy discussions, since a large volume of EU-based research is already available in the context of the Youth Guarantee (see 1.1 below).

The inactive population is not a traditional target group for the Public Employment Services, although about 20% of the economically inactive working age population are interested in work and potentially available for work (Eurostat 2017). Concerns about demographic ageing and its impact on the labour market have made the inactive an increasingly central focus of EU labour market policy. Recent Commission financed research shows that the profiles of people excluded from the labour market are heterogeneous and that the types of policies and services they require in order to facilitate labour market reintegration are very diverse.<sup>2</sup> Since the inactive are by definition not current clients of PES – i.e. registered jobseekers or registered unemployed – PES have to engage in outreach activities to establish a relationship to this target group.

Outreach can take a variety of forms, for example:

- outreach through print and mass media to make PES services known, establish trust and encourage participation
- internet-based outreach (e.g. dedicated web-pages, on-line registration and job banks, social networks)
- outreach through and data exchange with other social programmes and actors serving target group
- community outreach services in shopping centres, schools, enterprises, job fairs etc.)
- outreach directed at employers to encourage acceptance and hiring of inactive and publicise available support measures
- outreach through groups and organisations that deal with or represent inactive target groups.

Outreach is only sensible if the PES can offer the inactive measures and service, either alone or in cooperation with other partners, to address their specific needs. It is not an end in itself but an element of a broader activation strategy. The actual services offered vary, depending on the needs of particular target groups and the resources of the PES.

Individual measures by the PES and other actors for the benefit of the inactive are only one element of national strategies for increasing labour force participation. More important, in addition to the labour market situation, are a diverse set of policies that may or may not incentivise labour force participation, e.g. pension levels and regulations, the availability and cost of social services –especially child care, availability of parental leave, employment law, social security and income tax systems etc.

In the first phase of the study a survey of existing policy regimes and outreach measures for the selected target groups was carried out based on the existing research literature

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<sup>2</sup> See at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2154>;  
<http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/faces-of-joblessness.htm> .

and on national and EU sources. While some outreach measures may be implemented by the PES, in many cases other actors and institutions are responsible.

In the second phase, six case studies of outreach measures for the inactive were carried out based on available programme documentation, monitoring data and literature. Two cases were selected for each target group. Insofar as possible the cases were selected to reflect the existing diversity in outreach practices and to achieve geographical balance.

The following country cases were selected:

1. Inactive older workers:
  - Poland: Solidarity across generations (Solidarnosc pokolen)
  - The Netherlands: Perspective 50 plus (Perspectief voor vijftigplussers).
2. Working age women not in the labour force:
  - Germany: Perspective Reentry (Perspektive Wiedereinstieg)
  - Austria: Return to Work (Beruflicher Wiedereinstieg)
3. Ethnic minorities and migrants
  - Sweden Bridge-building programme (Brobyggare)
  - Portugal Volunteer mentoring for immigrants (Programa Mentores Para Migrantes)

Each of the country case studies also reports on the more general policy regime for the target group within which the outreach measure is situated and on the spectrum of institutional responsibilities for the target group. In practice the relevant policy domains go beyond labour market policy to include social and family policies, pension, disability, education etc., involving multiple actors at various levels. The PES itself is often not the principal actor.

## **Structure of the report**

This report is organized as follows:

1. **Introduction.** Outlines recent discussions on the PES mandate related to the inactive (1.1) and summarizes available Eurostat data on the size and structure of the inactive population, their willingness to work and reasons for not seeking employment (1.2).
2. **Literature review.** Concise literature review of outreach efforts and policy regimes in the EU to increase the labour for participation of (2.1) inactive older workers, (2.2) working age women and (2.3) ethnic minorities.
3. **Case studies.** Six case studies outreach for inactive older workers (3.1); working age women not in the labour force (3.2) and ethnic minorities (3.3).
4. **Comparison of Member States' practices** along key characteristics and a mapping of responsibilities for the inactive in the case study countries.
5. **Conclusions and policy recommendations**

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The PES mandate related to the inactive

The inactive population is not a traditional target group for the Public Employment Services, although a significant share of the inactive population may want to work or be potentially available for work<sup>3</sup>. Concerns about the ageing work force as a risk factor for the European economy and for the sustainability of the welfare state have made the inactive population an increasingly central focus of EU labour market policies.

The Europe 2020 strategy, adopted by the European Council on 17 June 2010 emphasised smart, sustainable and inclusive growth to overcome the structural weaknesses in Europe's economy, improve competitiveness and productivity and make the social market economy sustainable. The guidelines for employment policies in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy mandate that the Member States implement policies to increase the labour market participation of women and men, and to promote labour market participation for those furthest away from the labour market ([Council Decision 2010/707/EU of 21 October 2010](#)).

The EU employment target, one of the 5 headline Europe 2020 targets, is to raise the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 to 75 % by 2020 through the increased labour force participation of young people, older workers and low-skilled workers and the better integration of migrants. In accord with the open method of coordination, Member States set their own national targets, taking into account national circumstances, toward the overall Europe 2020 employment rate target of 75%.<sup>4</sup>

The financial and economic crisis of 2008/2009 and the subsequent slow pace of recovery reversed much of the progress achieved in European labour markets. In response to increasingly high levels of unemployment, the European Commission launched in 2012 a set of measures to boost jobs, the so called Employment Package, with a strong emphasis on the problem of inactive and unemployed youth, culminating in the Youth Guarantee.

The Youth Guarantee aimed to ensure that every young person aged less than 25 should get a good-quality, concrete job offer within four months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. Since school leavers in most cases are not clients of the public employment service, implementation of the Youth Guarantee and other programs for the target group faced a special problem of outreach, which was addressed for the first time systematically. There is now an extensive literature on outreach to inactive youth not in education or training (NEETs).<sup>5</sup>

Supporting the integration of persons excluded from the labour market is also among the objectives of the European Network of Public Employment Services as defined in Article 3 of the [Decision on Enhanced Co-operation between Public Employment Services](#) of 15 May 2014. Also, the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) as proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission on 17 November 2017 sets out a general right to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve employment or self-

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<sup>3</sup> Duell et al.: Long-term Unemployment in the EU Trends and Policies.

<sup>4</sup> Progress toward the 2020 employment targets is tracked by a Eurostat monitoring system of employment indicators ([Eurostat news release 69/2017](#)).

<sup>5</sup> See for example: [Exploring the Diversity of NEETs](#) (Eurofound, 2016); [PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs](#) (Commission, 2015); [Practitioner's Toolkit: Sustainable Activation Of Young People not in Employment, Education or Training \(NEETs\)](#), (Commission, 2016)<sup>4</sup>) [Catalogue of measures for implementation of the Youth Guarantee](#) (Commission, 2014); [The local implementation of Youth Guarantees: Emerging lessons from European Experiences](#) (OECD, 2014); [The Youth Guarantee Programme in Europe: Features, implementation and challenges](#) (ILO, 2015).

employment prospects, including the right to receive support for job search, training and re-qualification. Such a general right would offer opportunities to the inactive population to (re)integrate into the labour market. In particular, principle four of the Pillar (active support to employment) explicitly broadens the scope of assistance "to improve employment [...] prospects" to everyone willing to work. It also calls for a right to "transfer social protection and training entitlements during professional transitions." More recently, the Commission proposal on the new employment guidelines<sup>6</sup> stresses that "inactivity should be tackled, including through timely and tailor-made assistance based on support for job-search, training, and requalification."

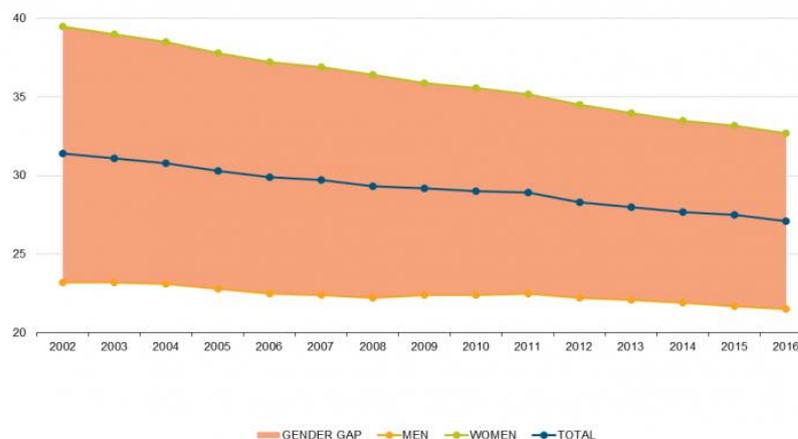
## 1.2 Who are the inactive?

In absolute numbers there were 89 million inactive persons of working age in the EU in 2016 (54 million women and 35 million men). Only a fraction of the inactive can be regarded as are willing to work, based on labour force survey data. Prime-age women (25 - 54) constitute by far the largest group among the inactive who want to work (6.5 million) as do 2.7 million older workers. Among youth (15-24) most are in education and not available for or interested in work (Eurostat 2017, *Table 8*).

The profiles of people excluded from the labour market are diverse and differ across the Member States.<sup>7</sup> There are, however, overall patterns and trends in labour market exclusion in the EU that are consistent across the Member States. Activity rates in the working age population vary strongly with gender, age and ethnic minority status and educational attainment.

**Gender** is the single most important determinant of labour force participation, which was 78.5% for men but only 67.3% for women in the working age population (15-64) in the EU28. Although the gender gap is still large, it declined continuously over the 2002-2016 period from 16.3 to 11.2 percentage points. Between 2002 and 2016 the inactive population in the EU28 declined from 31.4% to 27.1% (see Figure 1-1). This overall improvement is primarily due to a 6.8 percentage point increase in the labour force participation rate of women (men = +0.7% p.p.). There are wide differences across the Member States. In general participation and employment rates for working-age women are highest in north western and in central Europe (Eurostat 2017).

**Figure 1-1:** Inactivity rates by sex, EU-28, 2002-2016 (%)



**Source:** Eurostat 2017 (*lfsa\_argan*). Working-age population 15-64

<sup>6</sup> COM (2017) 677 final

<sup>7</sup> See recent Commission financed research by the [World Bank](#) and the [OECD](#).

**Age** is after gender the second most important determinant of inactivity. In contrast to the overall labour market participation rate (72.9%) that for persons 55-64 years of age is markedly lower (59%)<sup>8</sup>. This represents, nevertheless, a marked improvement. The overall rise in labour market participation by men over the 2002-2016 period is almost entirely attributable to the decline in inactivity among older men (55-64), while the labour market participation of prime age males (25-54) remained virtually constant. The increased labour force participation by women was on the contrary due to a decline in inactivity not only among older but also among prime-age women. The inactivity rate of older men declined by 15 percentage points and that of older women by 19 percentage points over this period (from 49% to 33 % and from 69 % to 48 % respectively; see Table 1-1).<sup>9</sup>

**Migrants** and their descendants are an increasingly large share of the population in the EU and their social and labour market inclusion is a prominent policy concern. Migrants are, however, a diverse group and Eurostat labour force survey data show no general pattern of lower activity rates for foreign nationals in comparison with that of citizens of the resident country (see Table 1-1). For men the overall activity rates for foreign nationals is actually slightly higher than that for nationals (80.5% vs. 78.3%), primarily due to their more favourable age structure – a greater percentage of prime-age persons. However, if we distinguish between EU mobile citizens and third country nationals, important differences emerge. EU mobile citizens have, on the whole, significantly higher activity rates than do nationals (79% vs. 73.1%) in all gender and age subcategories except for prime-age women (78.7% vs. 80.9%). By contrast third country nationals have overall a markedly lower rate of labour force participation in comparison with nationals, despite their more favourable age structure (73.1% vs. 65.4%) – a larger percentage share of prime-age persons. This difference is primarily attributable to much lower levels of female labour force participation among third country nationals, especially prime-age women (80.9% vs. 59.2%).<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1-1: Activity rates by sex, age and citizenship, EU-28, 2016**

	Citizen	Foreign country	Other EU28	Other non-EU28	Total
<b>Females</b>					
From 15 to 24 years	38.9	39.1	47.1	33.8	38.9
From 25 to 54 years	80.9	67.6	78.7	59.2	79.5
From 55 to 64 years	51.9	53.5	59	48.7	52
From 15 to 64 years	67.8	62.2	72.4	54.5	67.3
<b>Males</b>					
From 15 to 24 years	43.8	45.7	53.1	41.3	43.9
From 25 to 54 years	91.7	89	93.7	85.5	91.4
From 55 to 64 years	66.5	68.7	70.8	66.5	66.6
From 15 to 64 years	78.3	80.5	85.7	76.6	78.5
<b>Total</b>					
From 15 to 24 years	41.4	42.5	50.1	37.8	41.5
From 25 to 54 years	86.3	78.1	86	72.1	85.5
From 55 to 64 years	59	60.8	65	56.8	59.1
From 15 to 64 years	73.1	71.2	79	65.4	72.9

Source: Eurostat (fsa\_argan).

<sup>8</sup> Men = 66.6%, women = 52%.

<sup>9</sup> The percentage of youth 15-24 not in the labour force was over 50% - the majority of youth are in education or training. Their inactivity rate actually increased slightly after 2009 for both men and women, which is attributable to the economic crisis (Eurostat 2016).

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that this analysis is limited by the fact that migrants are identified in these data based on citizenship. In many countries first or second generation migrants may already be citizens. An analysis of ethnic differences in activity rates and inclusion would have to take this into consideration.

**Education** is a further important determinant of labour market participation. Labour market participation increases markedly with increasing educational attainment for men and for women across all age categories. For example, the activity rate for the prime age population is 19 percentage points higher for persons with a tertiary education (technical or higher education) in comparison with those with only at most a lower secondary (basic) education (92.1% vs. 72.7%) and 28 percentage points higher for older persons 55-64 years of age (74.6% vs. 45.8%). The activity rate of women in particular increases markedly with their level of education. The largest participation gap between those with only a basic education and persons with tertiary education is for prime age women and older women (28.8 and 32.3 percentage points respectively). The gender gap between women and men in labour force participation is consistent across all age categories and level of educational attainment -with one interesting exception: the activity rate of young women 15 to 24 with a tertiary education is equal to that of their male counterparts (see Table 1-2).

### Inactive willing to work

Many inactive persons are willing to work. Seventeen percent of the inactive working-age population not seeking work report that they would like to work.<sup>11</sup> The inactive that are willing to work are the most receptive potential target group for PES or other outreach efforts to the inactive population. This group comprised over 15 million people of working age (9 million women and 6 million men in 2016). Among the subgroups of the inactive, declared willingness to work was highest among prime-age (25-54) women (41.1%) and men (33.3%). These two groups alone comprise 5 million females and 2.7 million male inactive persons with an expressed interest in employment. Among older inactive the percentage interested in employment is markedly lower (11.8% and 14.8% respectively), in total 4.2 million persons. (Table 1-3). These findings suggest that prime-age inactive persons, especially women, have a high potential for activation, whereas the activation potential of older inactive persons of working age is markedly lower.

**Table 1-2: Activity rates by sex, age and educational attainment (%)**

	<i>Level 0-2*</i>	<i>Level 3-4**</i>	<i>Level 5-8***</i>
<u>Age 15-24</u>			
F	20.7	50	68.7
M	28.5	57.8	68
T	24.9	54	68.4
<u>Age 25-54</u>			
F	60.3	80.2	89.1
M	83.8	92.2	95.6
T	72.7	86.5	92.1
<u>Age 55-64</u>			
F	37.5	54.5	69.8
M	56.3	66.5	79.2
T	45.8	60.6	74.6

**Source:** Eurostat (*Ifsa\_argaed*). Own calculations, EU28, 2016

\*Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (ISCE 0-2);

\*\*Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education

<sup>11</sup> Willingness to work is assumed if a person explicitly states that he or she is willing to work.

**Table 1-3: Inactive population not seeking employment, sex, age and willingness to work**

	Would like to work	Do not want to work	No answer	Total (1000s)
<b>Females</b>				
<i>From 15 to 24 years</i>	11.1%	85.0%	3.9%	15926.2
<i>From 25 to 49 years</i>	30.2%	69.5%	0.2%	16463.5
<i>From 50 to 64 years</i>	11.7%	87.2%	1.1%	20131.6
<i>Total 15 to 64 years</i>	17.3%	81.0%	1.7%	52521.4
<b>Males</b>				
<i>From 15 to 24 years</i>	11.7%	83.9%	4.3%	15336.3
<i>From 25 to 49 years</i>	41.1%	58.4%	0.4%	6481.5
<i>From 50 to 64 years</i>	14.8%	83.3%	1.9%	12354.8
<i>Total 15 to 64 years</i>	18.4%	78.9%	2.7%	34172.5
<b>Total</b>				
<i>From 15 to 24 years</i>	11.4%	84.5%	4.1%	31262.5
<i>From 25 to 49 years</i>	33.3%	66.4%	0.3%	22945
<i>From 50 to 64 years</i>	12.9%	85.7%	1.4%	32486.4
<i>Total 15 to 64 years</i>	17.8%	80.2%	2.1%	86693.9

**Source:** Eurostat lfsa\_igawwlf. Own calculations

### Main reasons for not seeking work

Family and caring responsibilities were the single most important reason for not seeking work for prime aged women 25 to 49 years (54.5%), primarily looking after children or incapacitated adults (39.4%) as well as other personal or family responsibilities (15.1%) (see Table 1-4). Women with small children (> 6) have the highest inactivity rates. Even for older women 50-64 years of age care responsibilities continue to be an important reason for inactivity. These findings are indicative of the importance of the availability of affordable child care and family services, career breaks and family leave and working time flexibility for increasing the labour force participation of prime-age and to a lesser extent of older women. For inactive prime age and older men, as well as for young women, family responsibilities are only a relatively minor reason for inactivity (8.3%, 3.4% and 5.7% respectively).<sup>12</sup>

Among inactive older workers 50-64 years of age retirement is the most important reason for both men (48.7%) and women (35.5%). The desire of older inactive persons to seek employment is low (see above) and the main reason given is retirement status. Policy in the Member States to increase the labour force participation of older persons of working age has focused on extending working lives by delaying entry into retirement.

Illness or disability is the second most important reason for inactivity for both older women (21.1%) and men (32.1%). people but also for inactive prime age men (35.9%) and women (14.4%). Inactivity for health reasons is in sum the main reason for inactivity for more than 8 million or 25% of the prime aged and older inactive persons 50 to 64 years of age. Activation of persons with disabilities has consequently become a principal policy focus of the European Commission as well as in the Member States<sup>13</sup> with the goal of significantly increasing their labour market participation, which suggest a potential policy focus.

<sup>12</sup> In the case of young men even fewer (1%) give this as the main reason.

<sup>13</sup> In the context of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

**Table 1-4: Main reason for not seeking work by sex and age, % inactive population, EU-28, 2016**

	Family/care responsibility	Retired	Illness or disability	In education or training	Think no work available	Awaiting recall	Other
<b>Females</b>							
From 15 to 24 years	5.7	0	1.7	87.3	1.1	0.1	4
From 25 to 49 years	54.5	0.8	14.4	8.3	6.8	0.6	14.6
From 50 to 64 years	18.4	35.5	21.1	0.3	6.1	0.2	18.4
<b>Males</b>							
From 15 to 24 years	1	0.1	2.5	90.1	1.6	0.1	4.6
From 25 to 49 years	8.3	2.9	35.9	20.3	11.5	1.3	19.8
From 50 to 64 years	3.4	48.7	32.1	0.3	6	0.4	9.1
<b>Total</b>							
From 15 to 24 years	3.4	0.1	2.1	88.7	1.4	0.1	4.3
From 25 to 49 years	41.5	1.4	20.4	11.7	8.1	0.8	16.1
From 50 to 64 years	12.7	40.5	25.2	0.3	6.1	0.3	14.8

**Source:** Eurostat Ifsa-igar. Own calculations.

In summary: Labour force survey data for the EU 28 indicate that many inactive not seeking work are willing to work (17%). Prime age inactive persons, especially women, who report the greatest willingness to work, are a promising focus for policies and measures to increase labour force participation. The two groups, however, have very different needs and activation potential. Whereas family and caring responsibilities are the single most important reason for not seeking work for prime aged women, is sickness or disability for the (much smaller group of inactive males in this age category it.<sup>14</sup> By contrast very few older inactive workers are interested in seeking employment, which makes them by far the least promising target for outreach efforts. Migrants as a group do not have a lower labour force participations rates. However, if we use non-EU citizen ship as an indicator for minority status, participation rates are markedly lower for prime age (25-54) non EU migrants. This participation gap is largely due to markedly lower participation rates for adult prime-age women. Participation rates vary markedly with increasing educational attainment across all demographic groups.

<sup>14</sup> In addition to education or training for the younger cohorts.

## **2. Literature Review: The Role of PES in Outreach Towards the Inactive**

### **2.1 Older Workers**

#### **Policy regime and institutional responsibilities and for increasing labour force participation of older workers**

Over the past two decades there has been a paradigm shift in employment policies toward older workers from early exits to extending working lives. Both the European Union and the OECD have been strong policy advocates for this response to the demographic ageing that has affected employment policy in all Member States, with national differences in its pace and composition.

The main institutional elements of the reforms have been a variety of changes in old age and disability pension systems, unemployment insurance and welfare programs intended to incentivize remaining in employment or re-entering employment after job loss (European Foundation 2012; Knuth 2012; Konle-Seidel 2017, [Retirement Ages in the Member States](#)). These include:

- Raising the statutory pension age and curtailing or eliminating lower pension ages for women <sup>15</sup>; the factual age of retirement is lower in all countries but raising the formal age increases the financial penalty for early retirement options.
- Encouraging work beyond the statutory pension age by paying actuarially increased benefits if retirement is deferred (The Netherlands, UK, Germany) or higher benefits if pensioners continue to work after having begun to draw a pension (France, Lithuania, Germany).
- Curtailing access to or eliminating early retirement schemes, making it financially less attractive for older workers (e.g. reduction factor) and more expensive for employers, which has arguably had an even greater impact on the factual retirement age.<sup>16</sup>
- Restricting access to functionally equivalent paths to inactivity via sickness benefits and disability pensions. Disability is not a clearly defined medical condition but a labour market status defined by social insurance and welfare programs that may exempt individuals from the obligation to seek employment and entitles them to benefits.<sup>17</sup>Raising statutory pension ages would have little practical impact without restricting these alternative pathways to inactivity.<sup>18</sup>

Policy changes to promote the extension of working lives have been accompanied in many countries by public campaigns and programs to change attitudes toward older workers and by initiatives and measures to promote management awareness of age issues and openness to work force diversity. In most cases these have been government action plans: For example, the "Age Positive Initiative in the UK", "Solidarity across generations" in Poland, "Vitality Package" in the Netherlands, the French "Concerted Action

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<sup>15</sup> In the EU15 states, the general retirement age is now 65 years, with the exception of France. Lower retirement ages in some newer Member States have been or are being raised to the same level over the next decade. In Denmark, France, Germany, Spain and the UK the retirement age is being raised from 65 to 67. In the UK compulsory retirement ages in employment contracts are prohibited.

<sup>16</sup> [Early Retirement Conditions in the EU](#)

<sup>17</sup> Access to disability pensions has historically expanded or contracted in response to changes in labour market conditions, more restrictive eligibility conditions for unemployment benefit or other benefits and fiscal pressures (Scharle 2013).

<sup>18</sup> There are distinctive national patterns in non-employment for older workers. Low unemployment rates are often associated with high disability or inactivity rates. In Germany and France unemployment insurance has been heavily used as a path to early retirement while in the Netherlands and Norway there was greater use of disability pensions (Konle-Seidel 2017).

for the Employment of Older Workers”, the Norwegian tripartite agreement on “More Inclusive Working Life” or the “50+ Initiative in Germany initiated by the German Ministry of Social Affairs. PES also engage in similar campaigns and public relations activities through various outreach channels (Konle-Seidel 2017, Knuth 2012)<sup>19</sup>.

This broad policy shift is the principal reason for the increase in activity and employment rates and microeconomic studies point toward a strong impact (e.g. Manoli and Weber 2016, Hanel and Riphahn 2012, Geyer and Welteke 2017). Other factors are also undoubtedly important at the macro level, in particular the broader shift toward a service economy as well as advancing age cohorts with higher levels of education and labour force participation.<sup>20</sup>

### **Institutional responsibilities for older workers**

National governments bear overall responsibility for the statutory reforms in pension, early retirement and disability benefit systems that have been the principal reason for rising activity and employment rates among older workers. They are also responsible for other statutory complementary supportive reforms such as increased individual flexibility in working time and employment and anti-discriminatory legislation.

Unemployed older workers are as a rule the responsibility of the PES, in particular if they receive unemployment benefits. In most countries unemployed benefit recipients are required to register as unemployed with the PES. Whether registered unemployed actually actively seek employment depends, among other factors, on the intensity of PES activation efforts and on PES priorities; a significant share of older registered unemployed will be inactive by ILO definition, i.e. not actively seeing employment within the last 4 weeks.

Neither the PES nor other institutions are responsible for outreach to inactive older workers. Those, who are willing to work can, however, use PES services like other jobseekers. A few PES offer special services for the target group, especially counselling and placement services to support them in (re-)entering the labour market (see above). In some countries there are special services available for some categories of older workers (e.g. the disabled, women and migrants) for which the PES or other specialized actors are responsible.

### **Outreach for older workers**

PES and governmental outreach efforts to promote extended working lives and awareness of the demographic ageing challenge are directed at employers, employer organisations and trade unions (and through them at employed workers) or at the general public. These policy regimes do entail important elements of outreach, if not outreach directly targeted at the inactive unemployed. We can distinguish different types of outreach according to their goals and corresponding targets. Broader outreach initiatives often pursue multiple goals combining different outreach targets. They are categorized here by their principal focus (see Table 2-1).

The different types of outreach all make use of a variety of outreach methods, typically combining several different approaches, for example: Internet-based (e.g. dedicated web-pages, through social networks); print and online media and television; through employers to target group (e.g. to encourage acceptance and hiring publicise available support measures); through intermediary organisations (groups and organisations that

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<sup>19</sup> For more details see the Peer Review country papers at [PES and Older Workers](#).

<sup>20</sup> Noteworthy is that while the age employment gap between prime age and older men has narrowed the improvement for prime age women was even greater than that for older women.

deal with or represent inactive target groups); community outreach (e.g. shopping centres, neighbourhood, meeting (e.g. job fairs etc.).

**Impact on the PES**

These changes in the institutional framework of work life are not labour market programs in the traditional sense directed at individuals but aim at:

- increasing older workers’ incentives to remain in the labour force and making pathways to inactivity less financially attractive, or
- complementary changes in the attitudes of management and the public toward older workers in the workplace.

Though not initiated by the PES these changes do have a major impact on the PES since extending working lives means also more older jobseekers can be expected to utilize PES services. The primary mechanism here is not PES outreach to the inactive but the fact that receipt of benefits is increasingly made conditional on participation in activation measures for which, in many cases, the PES is responsible:

- In many countries the older unemployed, who are typically entitled to an extended period of unemployment benefits, were exempted from job search requirements.<sup>21</sup> For example, the “58er-regulation” in Germany until 2008 allowed older unemployed to continue to receive benefits without having to search for work.<sup>22</sup> The PES was in effect functioning as a pathway to inactivity. The reversal of these policies has made many older long-term unemployed active PES clients.
- More restrictive access rules for long-term sickness and disability benefits frequently make them conditional on participation in activation measures which has given the PES new responsibilities for previously inactive persons (Grödem 2016, Scharle 2013).
- Social assistance (non-insurance) benefits for able-bodied recipients of working age, many of whom are older long-term unemployed whose insurance benefits have expired, are increasingly made conditional on participation in activation measures that are in many cases a responsibility of the PES (e.g. Denmark, Germany).<sup>23</sup>

**Table 2-1: Outreach initiatives and measures for older workers: selected examples**

1.Outreach activities and measures to change employers attitudes and policies	Anti-discrimination legislation & Prohibition of compulsory retirement ages in employment (UK) Tripartite Agreement on “More Inclusive Working Life” (NO) Perspective 50+ (DE) Vitality Package (NL) Solidarity Across Generations (PL)
2.Outreach directed at older workers to change their attitudes/ increase willingness to work	WeGebAU [training in SMEs] (DE)

<sup>21</sup> In the past such extended benefits were misused as a strategy for coping with redundancies until workers became eligible for early retirement.

<sup>22</sup> It had the added advantage for the PES that they were no longer counted as unemployed. The Netherlands and Norway, among others, had similar regulations (Konle-Seidl, 2017).

<sup>23</sup> Mosley 2012.

3.Outreach directed at the public at large to change societal attitudes/ combat discrimination	Age Positive Initiative (UK)
4.Outreach marketing to increase awareness of services & encourage uptake	Image Campaign [institutional marketing](DE)
5. Outreach as offering special support services or measures in (re)entering the labour market.	Talent 55+ (NL) Work Programme (UK) & New Deal 50+(UK)

### Obstacles to activation of older workers

Older workers are less likely to become unemployed, but also less likely to re-enter employment. They remain unemployed longer and if they exit unemployment it is more likely into sickness/disability, retirement or inactivity. Inactive older workers, even those willing to work, are likely to face even more severe obstacle to finding employment if they re-enter the labour force.

Older workers are diverse and so much so that many PES reject an activation strategy based on special labour market measures for older workers apart from mainstream programs. There are, however, some special issues affecting older workers frequently cited which labour market measures have sometimes sought to address (Knuth 2012, [PES and Older Workers](#))

- Age stereotypes and discrimination, which have negative effects not only on firms' willingness to hire older workers but also on older workers own self-perception and search behaviour (loss of self-esteem). There is in particular the assumption that older workers are less productive. PES staff themselves may also share these stereotypes and be sceptical about older workers chances of finding employment.
- Displaced older workers may have unrealistic wage expectations. Seniority wage differentials mean that older workers seeking new employers will often have to make wage concessions that they may be reluctant to make.
- Special national or regional situations: Older workers with low geographical mobility may be left behind in rural areas or in regions with economies and populations in decline. In many countries for historical reasons older generations of workers are less qualified than younger cohorts and even higher qualifications can be outdated.
- Special institutional factors affecting older unemployed play a role in some countries. Statutory employment protection at a specific age may deter employers from hiring them in some countries (e.g. Hungary, Poland).<sup>24</sup> Where the statutory retirement age is low (e.g. under 65 in France, Estonia, Lithuania, Hungary) the willingness to enter new employment contracts decreases for both employers and workers.

Activation of older workers who are currently not seeking employment is an even more daunting task. The inactive in this age category who are willing to work would be the most receptive potential target group for PES or other outreach efforts to the inactive population.<sup>25</sup> However only 12.9% of older inactive persons 50 to 64 years of age (4.2

<sup>24</sup> And create perverse incentives to dismiss workers before they reach that age.

<sup>25</sup> Willingness to work is assumed if a person explicitly indicates that he or she is willing to work.

million persons in 2016) want to work; most older inactive persons report that, for various reasons, they do not want to work<sup>26</sup> (Eurostat lfsa\_igawwlf).

Among inactive older workers 50-64 years of age the main reason given for not seeking work is that they regard themselves as being retired (35.5% of the women and 48.7% of the inactive men in this age group). Illness or disability (25.2%) is the second most frequent reason given for inactivity among the older population of working age (32.1% of men and 21.1% of women). Family and caring responsibilities are the third most frequent reason reported (12.7%). Especially for older women 50-64 years of age care responsibilities continue to be an important reason for inactivity (18.4%), whereas relatively few men cite this as a main reason (Eurostat lfsa\_igar; see Table 4 above).

### **PES services and measures for older worker**

The primary mission of PES is to provide services for the unemployed and other jobseekers. Except for services for youth transitioning from school to work and for the reintegration of the disabled PES outreach services and programs for target groups seeking to enter the labour market are uncommon (e.g. for migrants and for women re-entering the labour force). This historical self-definition may be outdated and need revision but it is strongly rooted in PES practice.<sup>27</sup>

Mainstream PES services are open in principle to all jobseekers and some PES have developed special programmes and services for older unemployed clients, although the predominant viewpoint seems to be that individually customized mainstream services are preferable to special programs for the target group. In this view older workers are not deemed to have a sufficiently distinct clustering of impediments to employment to justify such an approach. A target group approach to older workers is said to ignore their heterogeneity and risks stigmatization (e.g. Germany, UK). Instead PES rely on profiling or other types of client segmentation (e.g. duration of unemployment) (Konle-Seidel 2017, Knuth 2012).

Hiring subsidies to employers to compensate the presumed lower productivity are the most common type of age-specific programme for older and difficult to place workers. In some countries only unemployed over a certain age are eligible for subsidies of a longer duration (e.g. France, The Netherlands or Germany). Other countries have experimented with wage subsidies that partially compensate the older unemployed for accepting employment at lowered wages (e.g. Switzerland and Germany). In some countries surveyed public job creation programs though not exclusively for older workers offer them extended periods of participation and they are a large share of the participants (Konle-Seidel 2017, Knuth 2012; Scharle 2012).

There are relatively few PES services and measures specifically earmarked for older workers beyond wage subsidies, most frequently in placement services. For example, "Talent 55+" in the Dutch PES functions as a job club for older unemployed in which experience, information and advice is exchanged. The meetings are supported by specialized work coaches. In Poland in the context of the "Solidarity across generations" initiative for clients 45+ a large number of placement counsellors have been trained specifically to support older unemployed. Another Dutch measure addresses the perceived risk of greater health problems by offering a type of insurance to employers for sickness and absenteeism of older workers. Some countries have age specific practices in placement services that foresee earlier intervention or more intense contact, for example, initial interviews during the first month of registration (France); face to face contacts with a job

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<sup>26</sup> Willingness to work is highest among prime-age inactive 25-49 years of age (33.3%).

<sup>27</sup> Schmid 2008.

coach after three months (The Netherlands) or at shorter contact intervals (Austria). Belgian employers (ACTIRIS) are required to finance outplacement services for employees 45+ made redundant in restructuring situations. If the PES is to be a vehicle for combating societal age stereotypes in employment, it must raise awareness internally. The Austrian PES provides its staff with guidelines for discussion with employers and older job-seekers (Konle-Seidel 2017, Knuth 2012).

### **Conclusion: The PES and outreach to older workers**

Like any modern service organisation, the PES engages in a variety of outreach activities directed at its own clients, both jobseekers and employers, its many public and private partners, interest organisations, policy makers and the general public through a wide range of channels. It is engaged in the broader societal effort to increase employment rates and labour force participation in the face of the challenge of demographic aging. Nevertheless, our literature survey finds no evidence of PES outreach activities toward older inactive workers not already PES clients.

National policies to increase labour force participation and employment rates of older workers have implicitly prioritised other strategies to extend working lives by reducing the flow into inactivity:

- Retention: Retention of older worker in employment and delaying retirement decisions – extending working lives – is a more effective and efficient approach than reintegration or reactivation of older workers after they have become unemployed or inactive.
- Conditionality: Restricting access to other paths to inactivity and making disability, welfare, and unemployment benefits increasingly conditional on participation in activation services makes otherwise inactive persons to PES clients. Activation of passive benefits is a functional alternative to purely voluntary outreach efforts to the inactive.

## 2.2 Working Age Women not in the Labour Force

### Introduction

The labour market participation of women remains scarred by persistent traditional gender roles; the higher inactivity rates of working age women are mainly due to family responsibilities.<sup>28</sup> Women are the primary caregivers and devote considerably more time to household tasks. There is, nevertheless, considerable variation in their activity rates across the EU. Activity rates are highest for women in North West and Central Europe and markedly lower in Southern European countries (see Figure 2-1).

Although gender role models are similar across Europe, there is a noteworthy difference between the “old” and the “new” Member States. In the old Member States labour force participation is below the EU average for women 35 to 50 years of age and above average for women 55 to 64 years of age, whereas the pattern is inverse in the “new” Member States, where the main policy challenge is low participation of older women 55 to 64 years of age. Most of the latter have had the common experience of centrally planned economy with obligatory full employment and childbirth-related leaves<sup>29</sup> still among the most generous in the EU and a female retirement age significantly below that for men.

### Policy regimes and institutional responsibilities for increasing labour force participation of working-age women

In order to increase female labour force participation policy changes have been initiated at the national level to support female labour market participation. These can be grouped into (Eurofound, 2016):

- Childcare support measures
- Leave-related policies (incentivising shorter leaves, partners’ sharing leaves, etc.)
- Active labour market policy programmes and tax-benefit incentives
- Flexible working and other work-family reconciliation policy measures

There is rich and empirically well-grounded evidence showing that female labour supply is very responsive to policies supporting childcare (Lefebvre and Merrigan, 2008) (Schone, 2004) (Gelbach, 2002). Low accessibility of such services seems to contribute significantly to the negative employment effect of parenthood.<sup>30</sup> In addition to the lack of available places, difficulties in access (distance, opening hours, and strict eligibility criteria), the high out-of-pocket cost of these services, and poor quality may limit the use of these services. (European Commission, 2016, p. 4)

There is also a clear trend toward prolonging leave entitlements around childbirth observable among the OECD countries, although significant differences remain at the country level.<sup>31</sup> While the existence of paid leaves around childbirth, with a strong contribution of job protection during the leave, has positive effects on female employment; leaves longer than 125 weeks seems to have an opposite effect, resulting in a decline in female employment (Thevenon and Solaz, 2013, p. 29) (OECD, 2011, p. 140). Incentivising shorter leaves, as well as their sharing among both parents, might result in an increase in the female labour supply (Hobson et al. 2011; OECD 2011; Esping-Andersen 2009). Interactions of such policies with the availability of child-care services as well as flexible working arrangements usually play a substantial role in making these policies work (Kalíšková, 2015).

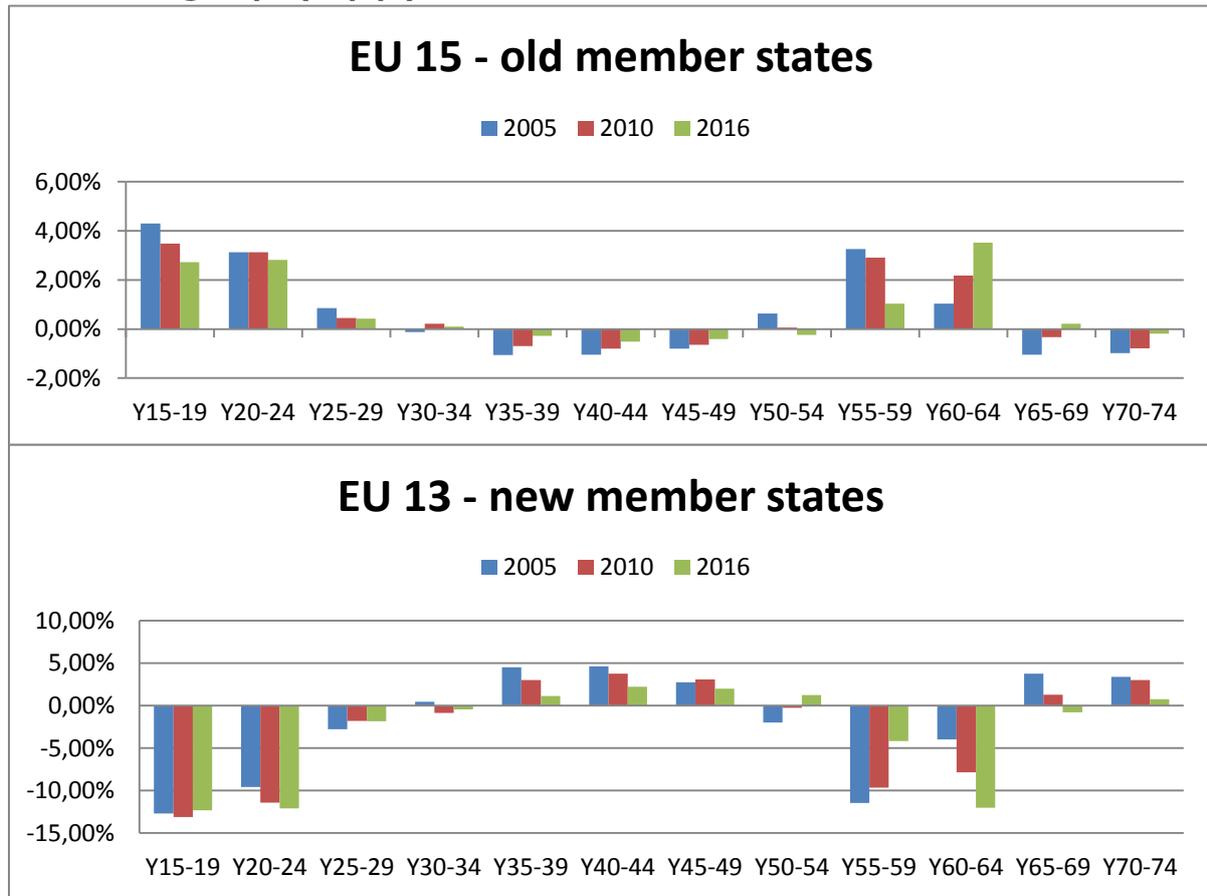
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<sup>28</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People\\_outside\\_the\\_labour\\_market](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People_outside_the_labour_market)

<sup>30</sup> This seems to be particularly the case of the post-socialist EU member states, explaining a big share of the difference displayed in Figure 1. (Lovász, 2016)

<sup>31</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/els/family/PF2\\_5\\_Trends\\_in\\_leave\\_entitlements\\_around\\_childbirth.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/els/family/PF2_5_Trends_in_leave_entitlements_around_childbirth.pdf)

**Figure 2-1: Difference from the EU 28 participation rate of women by age groups (in p.p.)**



**Source:** Eurostat *lfsa\_pganws*

Non-traditional work arrangements with a high degree of flexibility attract women to the labour market and thus pull them out of inactivity or informal activities for the household or family (Edwards and Field-Hendrey, 2002).

Finally, economic theory suggests that female labour supply is more elastic to changes in working wage because women have more alternative (substituting) options to allocate their time (Bergemann and van den Berg, 2008) (Evers, De Mooij and Van Vuuren, 2006). As a result, female reservation wage is higher. Specific measures aiming to reduce this gap can have the form of changes in the tax-benefit system that make work more financially attractive for women or active labour market policy programmes (hiring incentives, targeted employment counselling, coaching or training, targeted self-employment support).<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The decision between informal and formal economic activities during, and shortly after the leave seems to play an important role. While delivering services within the household or for family members is usually informal, some of these activities might be formalised and thus open a path to formal economic activity. Measures on formalising informal activities (also in the form of a self-employment support programme or service vouchers) within the household may also serve as increasing economic activity of women (Caliendo and Kunn, 2015).

### **Obstacles to re-entry of women**

Detachment from the labour market for a longer period may result in negative psychological effects of underestimating their employment potential or the utility of being employed; focused employment counselling might, therefore, yield favourable effects.

Since inactive women prefer for financial and other reasons to devote their time to alternative activities, specific effects of ALMP programmes could be expected. As their reservation wage is higher; successful skill-enhancing training programmes could increase their potential wage and thus push them to employment (Bergemann and van den Berg, 2008, p. 5).

From the employers' perspective, the information from their CVs may be considered as obsolete and thus less valuable in the hiring process (Van Belle, et al., 2017). Empirical studies show that measures reducing this information asymmetry may have a positive impact on the unemployment duration of female clients (Abel et al., 2017). Employment subsidies might work similarly, as the subsidy might compensate for the reluctance to hire an individual based on obsolete information (Deidda, 2015).

Programmes on supporting the start of self-employment might ease the formalisation of informal activities of inactive women and thus attract women into the labour market (Caliendo and Kunn, 2015).

### **The PES and outreach for inactive women**

Potential PES strategies for overcoming the challenge of outreach to inactive working age women, and other inactive, differ depending on the institutional responsibilities of the PES and the extent to which the national PES has effectively implemented activation policies. By definition, economically inactive persons are not jobseekers; nevertheless, in practice, individuals often register with the PES as jobseeker for a variety of reasons although they do not seek work, especially where activation policies are not very intensive. For example, health insurance contributions for those out of work are frequently made conditional on PES registration as a jobseeker. National bodies implementing PES are also often responsible for implementing passive as well as active labour market policies, including administration of other social benefits. Where this is the case, the clientele or "reach" of PES, or its parent ministry, goes beyond those registered as jobseekers.

In countries where a lower percentage of the unemployed are registered and PES is not responsible for distributing other social transfers, outreaching towards inactive persons would have to rely to a greater extent on mass or social media campaigns. Focused mass and social media campaigns can be designed to attract inactive women in working age into registered unemployment. These are of special importance in countries where this target group is not covered by other PES activities, such as where health insurance is not conditioned on being registered as a job seeker or where the PES agency is not paying relevant social transfers (maternity, parental, minimal income benefits).

In practice, PES outreach strategies can potentially rely on their internal information on clients. PES caseworkers can refer clients to services based on their profile and eligibility. In spreading the information about targeted ALMP programmes to female clients, PESs usually rely on traditional methods, such as information flyers, information websites, and caseworker referrals. Positive role-models are often used to attract the attention towards a particular programme or female employment in general.

## **PES outreach measures and services for working age women not in the labour force**

Several PES offer special employment counselling combined in some cases with training to women wanting to return to work after a career break due to child care or other family reasons. For example in Austria (Beruflicher Wiedereinstieg<sup>33</sup>), Germany (Perspektive Wiedereinstieg<sup>34</sup>), in the Czech Republic (Helping new mothers back into work<sup>35</sup>) or the UK (Career break returner programmes<sup>36</sup>). There are also measures focused on special target groups, for example, "From empowerment to employment: job-related support for refugee women in Sweden"<sup>37</sup> or the WING<sup>38</sup> programme for the return to work of female scientists after a career break, as well as numerous local ESF projects (e.g. *Women aim to restart careers in Germany* in Ostallgäu - Bavaria<sup>39</sup>). These types of programmes aim at compensating for the skills obsolescence during the maternity or parental leave. Skills updating often starts with the CV creation skills but also covers soft-skills and occupation-specific skills.

Before or during the maternity/parental leave, the specialised advice might be provided about the flexibility in the selection of alternative parental leave tracks<sup>40</sup> (e.g., the Czech Republic<sup>41</sup>) or options related to sharing parental leaves among parents (e.g., UK, Norway, Slovakia, or Sweden). This is usually provided within the framework of the usual interaction with the client, not in the form of a specialised programme.

ALMP programmes supporting self-employment of women support a fresh start after the leave or formalisation of existing economic activities delivered by women otherwise considered as inactive. Financial support is usually combined with advisory and mentoring. The Swedish programme for Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship<sup>42</sup> stresses the importance of positive role models in this context. A formalisation effect is also expected in the case of the Universal service employment cheque (Chèque emploi service universel)<sup>43</sup> implemented in France. Service vouchers ease the administrative burden linked to formalising employment and thus support the creation of formal short-term employments and mini-jobs. This type of measure is usually used to tackle the informal economy. It has a twofold effect on women in households: firstly, as potential employers of domestic service workers benefiting from the vouchers and tax benefits, with women accounting for most beneficiaries and vouchers being used for childcare in 70% of cases; and, secondly, as potential employees in the sector benefiting from improved working conditions and increased employment opportunities (Eurofound, 2016).

Some countries have restructured benefit systems in order to make work more financially attractive, for example, the "In Work Credit"<sup>44</sup> programme in the UK does so in the form of a cash payment. Inexpensive or free child care is also an important policy for making work pay, especially for women entering lower paying jobs. Although childcare service

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.ams.at/service-arbeitsuchende/angebote-frauen/wiedereinstieg>

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.perspektive-wiedereinstieg.de/Navigation/DE/Das\\_Aktionsprogramm/Aktionsprogramm/aktionsprogramm\\_node.html](https://www.perspektive-wiedereinstieg.de/Navigation/DE/Das_Aktionsprogramm/Aktionsprogramm/aktionsprogramm_node.html)

<sup>35</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=46&langId=en&projectId=1978>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/career-break-returner-programmes-launched-to-help-people-back-to-work>

<sup>37</sup> Swedish programme on refugee women:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=46&langId=en&projectId=2799>

<sup>38</sup> (ILO, 2016, p.93)

<sup>39</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=67&langId=en&newsId=2819>

<sup>40</sup> Tracks differ in the length of the leave and monthly contribution.

<sup>41</sup> (Kalíšková, 2015)

<sup>42</sup> <https://wagate.eu/swedish-programme-promoting-women%E2%80%99s-entrepreneurship-sweden>

<sup>43</sup> <http://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/droit-du-travail/remuneration-et-participation-financiere/remuneration/article/le-cheque-emploi-service-universel-cesu-declaratif>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/in-work-credit>

provision is not a PES responsibility, subsidising employer- provided childcare by might also be effective. Additionally, PES can be active in assisting in looking for childcare services, which already takes place where the PES is the responsibility of local authorities or work together closely in one-stop-shops (e.g. Jobcenters in Germany for social assistance recipients).

Similarly, promotion of flexible working arrangements for parents and disseminating information to employers is important for increasing women's participation. Educating employers about their options of introducing flexible working arrangements or other family-friendly policies is also an element in the German *Perspektive Wiedereinstieg* programme, which also offers an information website for employers.

### **Conclusion: The PES and outreach to working-age women**

Economically inactive working-age women present an unused potential for the labour market. The costs of such an unused potential increase when labour force becomes scarce, such as in rapidly ageing countries. Developing this potential must be a joint responsibility of several institutions, including as a rule the department of the central government responsible for labour and education; the PES; regional and local authorities; the social partners, but also employers.

There is robust evidence on the negative impact of parenthood on female employment and labour market participation. A variety of measures target explicitly the transition from child care and family responsibilities. One type usually aims at compensating for the skills obsolescence and increased distance from the labour market; the second aims at incentivising the (re)entrance to employment financially, or through subsidized childcare or other services.

Based on the country-level experience, supporting childcare services has an observable effect on female inactivity. Its support is a long-term priority also at the EU level, starting with the 2002 Barcelona European Council, through the Lisbon Strategy to the Europe 2020 (European Commission, 2016, p.4). Policies supporting childcare services provision are usually not the responsibility of the PES<sup>45</sup>, but childcare provision policies need to be set up in concert with leaves entitlements around childbirth as well as other public services provided to parents. They jointly need to be set up in the way to make "work pay" for parents, but not incentivise individuals away from having children.

While the security effect of the paid leave, strengthened by the job protection period, results in an increase in female employment, a leave which is too long might harm future employment chances (Thevenon and Solaz, 2013, p. 29) (OECD, 2011, p. 140). As the distance to the labour market broadens during the leave, work-related skills get more obsolete. Moreover, employers' are more reluctant to hire individuals after a long leave from employment.

Depending on the responsibilities of the PES implementing agency, there is variety of services that are being delivered even to inactive working-age women. A substantial share of the target group already has a relationship to PES or to another governmental body, either through social benefits or payment of mandatory social contributions. Referring clients within or between public institutions, therefore, seems to be the most commonly used outreach strategy. Straightforward practices, such as information leaflets, posters, information websites or phone assistance are also used in practice to spread information about existing services. Finally, the design of the programme or service offered is essential to the success of the outreach. It needs to be tailor-made, delivering

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<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, this strongly depends on the context. For example Malta has one Ministry responsible jointly for employment and education.

apparent value, because inactive working age women present a target group with other options.

**Table 2-2: Outreach initiatives and measures for working age women by goals and targets: selected examples**

<p>1. Outreach directed at working age women returning to employment after a family-related leave</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vocational Reintegration - Perspektive Wiedereinstieg (DE)</li> <li>- Vocational Reintegration - Beruflicher Wiedereinstieg (AT)</li> <li>- Helping new mothers back into work (CZ)</li> <li>- Swedish programme for Promoting Women’s Entrepreneurship (SE)</li> </ul>
<p>2. Outreach towards inactive female through incentivising employment (of the second earner)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Phasing out the transferability of the general tax credit (NL)</li> <li>- In Work Credit (UK)</li> <li>- Flexible parental leave scheme (SE)</li> </ul>
<p>3. Outreach directed at working age women through enabling a better work-family balance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Successfully combine family life with work (DE)</li> <li>- Working Hours Adjustment Act (NL)</li> <li>- Flexible working regulations (UK)</li> </ul>
<p>4. Outreach directed at women in a higher risk of future inactivity or unfavourable career development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From empowerment to employment: job-related support for refugee women (SE)</li> <li>- Young Mums Will Achieve (UK)</li> </ul>
<p>5. Outreach activities and measures to change employers attitudes and policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parenthood Charter in Enterprise (FR)</li> <li>- Vocational reintegration (DE)</li> </ul>
<p>6. Outreach as offering special support services or measures in (re)entering the labour market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Helping nurses back to work by providing childcare (CZ)</li> <li>- Guaranteed day care (DK)</li> <li>- Family centre offers practical support (HU)</li> <li>- Nurturing families, nurturing opportunities (FR)</li> <li>- Supplement for the free choice of childcare (FR)</li> <li>- Public childcare and child-rearing allowance (SE)</li> </ul>

**Table 2-3: Selected PES initiatives and measures for working-age women**

<b>Country</b>	<b>PES project</b>
<b>Austria</b>	Beruflicher Wiedereinstieg
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Helping new mothers back into work Helping nurses back to work by providing childcare
<b>Denmark</b>	Guaranteed day care
<b>France</b>	Nurturing families, nurturing opportunities Universal service employment cheque (Chèque emploi service universel) Parenthood Charter in Enterprise Supplement for the free choice of childcare
<b>Germany</b>	Perspektive Wiedereinstieg (Vocational reintegration) Counting on women Successfully combine family life with work Women aim to restart careers in Germany WING Programme
<b>Hungary</b>	Family centre offers practical support
<b>Lithuania</b>	Making a "success" of work and family life
<b>Netherlands</b>	Phasing out the transferability of the general tax credit (Algemene heffingskorting) Working Hours Adjustment Act*
<b>Poland</b>	Helping women reach their business potential
<b>Portugal</b>	Maternity leave means work for unemployed women
<b>Spain</b>	The right to a family, and working life Promoting equal opportunities in Rioja Back to school for Asturias' women entrepreneurs
<b>Sweden</b>	Flexible parental leave scheme From empowerment to employment: job-related support for refugee women Swedish programme for Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship
<b>UK</b>	In Work Credit Young Mums Will Achieve Breaking down barriers Employment projects of the City of London Flexible working regulations*

Notes: \* (Eurofound, 2016)

## **2.3 Ethnic Minorities and Migrants**

### **Institutional responsibilities and policy regimes for increasing labour force participation of the target group**

The labour market integration of minority groups requires concerted action in several policy areas by a host of institutions. Coordination among ministries is crucial so that the inclusion of minority groups does not remain an issue for social development and human rights ministries but is supported by actions in education, healthcare and economic policy as well (OECD 2003).

Demand side barriers may for example be tackled by legal protection against discrimination, quotas to encourage the hiring of minority job seekers that may apply to public and/or private employers, targeted wage subsidies or tax credits for hiring or employment and promoting anti-discrimination, e.g. by benchmarking employers (EEPO 2014).

Supply side actions may range from measures to improve the accessibility and quality of public education for minority children and youth, through the provision of public day-care for the children of disadvantaged mothers, to tightening the job search conditions of accessing particular welfare benefits. For refugees, knowledge of the host country's language and the recognition of skills and work experience acquired in their home country are further crucial elements of successful integration (OECD 2014).

The labour market integration of ethnic minorities, in most EU Member States, follows the mainstream procedure, i.e. it is the responsibility of the PES in the case of the insured unemployed and may be delegated to municipalities or jointly managed by local agencies in the case of the long-term unemployed (European Commission 2014). The same applies to people who have been granted protection status. The PES is responsible for job matching and skills development in most countries and typically these services are mainstreamed into regular PES activities (PES Network 2017).

For people awaiting the evaluation of their refugee status, there are specific institutional arrangements in most countries, which may or may not involve the PES at some stage in the integration process. The institutional arrangement of services offered to those awaiting the evaluation of their claim for asylum status varies greatly across countries. At one end of the spectrum, Sweden delegated all responsibility to the PES and activation starts as soon as a permanent or temporary protection status is assigned (Eurofound, 2016). In other Scandinavian countries the main coordinator is the municipality, but the PES have some role as well. The PES mandate in Denmark and Norway is less comprehensive and PES get involved there at a later stage of these programmes. The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (NAV) checks if some of the labour market measures can be used or adapted into the inclusion programme and assesses the need for assistance in the final stage of the programme. At the other end of the spectrum, the PES may not be involved at all. For example, in Italy, integration services are coordinated by municipalities and provided by local providers in co-operation with civil society organisations (Caneva 2014). In many EU countries the delivery of integration services for refugees is fragmented and role division is often unclear (Konle-Seidl, 2017).

With a few exceptions, the main receiving countries typically do not provide immediate access to labour markets for asylum seekers. The waiting period is 3 months in Germany and immediate in Sweden, while it ranges between 6 and 9 months in most other countries (in compliance with the 2013 Reception Conditions Directive) (EPRS 2015).<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The 2013 Directive requires Member States to ensure that asylum seekers have access to the labour market within nine months of filing their application for international protection.

## **Obstacles to labour force participation**

Ethnic minorities (whether immigrants or national) often face multiple disadvantages in the labour market. They often lack resources both in terms of wealth and human capital. This is typically due to the disadvantages inherited from older generations or due to losses incurred during the migration journey, and is often aggravated by inefficiencies in public services (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2007). For example, children from ethnic minorities may often receive poor quality public education that cannot compensate for the disadvantages accumulated due to their family background. Minorities (especially if they have recognizable distinctive features such as skin colour or accent) often face geographic isolation and may be discriminated by employers on account of their (perceived) low productivity, which impedes their access to quality jobs and career advancement (O'Higgins 2013). Some minorities (especially recent migrants) may also have weaker ties to networks in the majority population. In the case of refugees, further barriers may include the lack of language skills, lack of documentation of their skills, or the lack of work permits. They may also have health or mental health issues related to traumatic events during the migration process (Crew 2008, Abbott 2016).

Minority groups may face physical, financial, informational or attitudinal barriers to accessing PES services (Crew 2008). Jobseekers in rural areas obviously face more difficulty as they need to spend more time and money to reach a PES office. There is also some research evidence that unemployed or socially excluded individuals have less trust in public institutions and less self-confidence about handling bureaucratic procedures (Boyle 2013 for the UK). They may also be less aware of the available services. Therefore the PES need to improve its image and use various channels to attract their clientele (Pieterse 2011).

## **PES outreach activities and special services and measures for the target group**

Considering current PES practices, there are five main types of PES outreach activities focusing on ethnic minorities.<sup>47</sup> It should be noted that outreach is typically not a stand-alone activity but part of an integrated approach developed for minorities or a broader group of disadvantaged job-seekers. It should be noted that for newly arrived migrants these activities may already be too late, in the sense that first contact with the PES should be a standard element of the claim assessment process. Evidence from OECD countries suggests that early intervention is critical to the success of integration policies (OECD, 2016a, Konle-Seidl/Boltis, 2016).

- 1. Information services - online or via other channels:** Information and communication technologies (ICT) provide the most cost-effective way of enhancing access to information via user-friendly websites or mobile apps where people can easily browse for information or services provided by the PES. The actual benefits of online tools depend on the accessibility, quality and relevance of their contents: thus it is important to clearly identify the key users, make the content easily reachable and understandable and keep it up-to-date. As online information channels largely depend on the pro-active attitude of clients to visit and use the website, the marketing of these channels is also very important. Online advertisements, awareness raising spots, social media campaigns are often used to attract users, e.g. in Belgium (Hall et al. 2015). There is a risk that ICT tools may exclude certain groups of jobseekers belonging to an ethnic minority, e.g. due to language barriers. People in remote areas may have scarce internet access and low skilled

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<sup>47</sup> This section is based mainly on Duell and Scharle 2016.

or older jobseekers may have limited ICT skills or limited confidence in using internet.

2. *Peer to peer approach:* In the peer-to-peer approach counsellors are selected from the target group and trained by the PES, thus increasing the effectiveness of communication with the potential clients. A Swiss study found that the similarity of social background between caseworkers and jobseekers (in terms of nationality, gender, educational level and age) can indeed have positive impacts on employment and job stability, possibly through channels such as motivation, trust or more effective communication strategies. Similarity in only one or two personal characteristics did not lead to detectable effects on employment (Behncke, Frölich, and Lechner 2010). This approach was used for example in Bulgaria, where some labour offices successfully employ Roma mediators for dealing with the very disadvantaged Roma minority. These mediators were typically Roma themselves (Dimitrov and Duell 2014).
3. *Mobile PES:* Mobile PES or temporary remote PES offices can facilitate outreach to people in need of support and services. In this approach PES regularly (usually once or twice a month) visits local municipalities to raise awareness of the available vacancies or specific labour market programmes, and may also deliver counselling and mediation services or training (HoPES Working group, PES Efficiency Working Group 2013). Mobile offices are used for example in Bulgaria, Estonia or Germany (HoPES Working group, PES Efficiency Working Group 2013, European Commission 2015c).

Mobile PES services are conducted by the PES staff and can be costly, taking into account travel time and staff costs (European Commission 2015c), especially in large countries and where the minority population lives in remote areas. In order to make these services efficient, it is highly important to organise these events carefully and reach as many people as possible. Partnerships with local municipalities and public institutions or local NGOs are essential. Local actors can provide the premises and cover the running costs and also use their local networks to advertise PES visits. Local institutions – both public and non-governmental – also tend to have more information of the social situation of local residents, and thus assist the PES in finding the target groups and mediate between the PES and locals. In many cases PES face negative stereotypes that people hold about them and their procedures. The trust in local actors and local institutions can be highly influential in bridging this kind of distance. Lastly, local organisations can provide information on local needs and might help identify the gaps in PES activities in the locality. Formal cooperation agreements with municipalities or other local organisations may increase commitment on both sides (DWP 2009).

4. *Providing services in the clients' community:* Another frequent form of reaching out to target groups is to hire specific case-workers who meet them in their own environment. Their role is primarily to provide support services to people in need, inform them about the possibilities the PES can offer and motivate and mobilise them to participate in the necessary measures. This kind of direct contact is often used in relation to youth. In Ireland street-counsellors, in the UK, so called gang advisors are hired to seek cooperation with young people (European Commission 2015c). In order to earn the trust of youth, the counsellors need to have good knowledge of the local area, and the local situation of youth. Based on the experiences in the UK, counsellors need very specific skills and competences: to be a patient listener, to empathize, to be encouraging, and to have excellent communication skills (Hall et al. 2015). Austria has a special outreach program for migrant

youth. The success of the program lies in the cooperation of youth and migrant organisations and in the engagement with the local community by visiting and organizing events for youth and their parents in mosques, cultural centres and youth clubs (European Commission 2011a).

5. *Community-based outreach:* Lastly, a less formal but potentially very effective and economical approach is to rely on local capacities in disseminating information on the PES. The involvement of (informal) community leaders or respected and trusted members of the community can efficiently facilitate PES outreach. In this case the role of local actors is restricted to identifying people in need, providing information on the available PES services and referring people to the competent PES office. The strengths of this approach are manifold. The personality of the community leader can increase the legitimacy of the PES, communication barriers are minimized, information is provided in their own environment, and the power relations are much less daunting than in an institutional setup, where vulnerable people might feel less confident.

## **Summary**

The labour market integration of ethnic minorities, in most EU Member States, follows the mainstream procedure, i.e. it is the responsibility of the PES in the case of the insured unemployed and may be delegated to municipalities or jointly managed local agencies in the case of the long-term unemployed. The same applies to people who have already been granted protection status. The role of the PES in activating asylum seekers during the claim procedure varies widely across Europe, with Sweden being the only country where the PES bears sole responsibility for this task.

The labour market barriers of minorities and migrants are similar and may typically include lack of skills, discrimination, and lack of awareness or trust in public services. Outreach activities currently used by PES in the EU usually take one of the following five main forms:

- information services tailored to the specific target group (in terms of the information channel, the language and the content)
- peer to peer approaches in which the PES employs members of the target group
- mobile PES for geographically segregated communities
- service provision in the clients' community via PES case workers or social workers
- the community-based approach, which relies on trusted members of the community.

In the non-representative sample of outreach initiatives collected for this study, the most commonly used form is service provision in the clients' community via PES case workers or social workers, beside information provision is obviously part of the standard toolkit of most PES. Many of these initiatives (and especially those implemented in Central and Eastern Europe) are small scale and sparsely documented.

**Table 2-4: Overview of outreach examples for ethnic minorities and migrants**

Services	Roma	Other Ethnic Minorities	Migrants
<p><b>Physical Distribution of Information</b></p> <p><b>Online info services</b></p>	<p>Promoting decent work opportunities for Roma Youth in Central and Eastern Europe (pilot in Eastern Europe)</p>		<p>Integration package for unemployed migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (Slovenia)</p> <p>PES website promotes its services for refugees in their native languages (Sweden)</p>
<p><b>Peer to peer (mentor/counsellor coming from same community)</b></p>	<p>SUNSHINE (Slovakia)</p>	<p>'Stadtteilmütter' (Street Mother programme) – (Germany)</p> <p>Mentoring Program for Migrants (Portugal) and <a href="#">similar programme</a> in Denmark</p>	
<p><b>Mobile PES</b></p> <p><b>Providing services in the clients' community</b></p>	<p>Employment Caravans (Romania)</p> <p>Remote PES posts in rural communities (Bulgaria)</p> <p>Development of support mechanism of Roma integration into labour market (Lithuania)</p> <p>Reaching Communities Project (UK)</p> <p><a href="#">Brobyggare/Bridge-builders in PES (Sweden)</a></p>	<p>Ethnic minority outreach Vienna PES for Youth (Austria)</p> <p>EVU Business Counseling (Denmark)</p> <p>Ethnic Minority Outreach - EMO (UK)</p> <p>Partner Outreach for Ethnic Minorities -POEM (UK)</p>	<p>Gurkha Resettlement Education and Adult Training - GREAT (UK)</p>
<p><b>Community-based outreach</b></p>	<p>MigRom Research Programme (UK)</p> <p>City of Jyväskylä's Romani Services (Finland)</p> <p>Roma and Sinti – Securing Employment and Livelihood through Self-Organisation (Germany)</p>		

### 3. Outreach Case Studies: The Netherlands, Poland, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Portugal

#### 3.1 The Netherlands: "Talent 55 plus"

##### **National labour market context: labour force participation of older workers**

In the Netherlands activity rates for both men and women (87% and 76%) are high in comparison with the EU-28 as a whole and have risen significantly over the last decade. Activity rates for older workers 55-to 64 years of age are lower (68.4%), especially for women (58.6%), but above average for the EU (59.1%). Activity rates for both older men and women have increased strongly over the last decade (men + 17.8%, women +20%). Retention rates in employment in the Netherlands are high and the effective labour force exit rate has increased significantly over the past decade (see Table 3-1). Dutch policies to extend working lives by curtailing access to early retirement and other pathway to inactivity for older workers have been effective.<sup>48</sup>

##### **National policy regime and institutional responsibilities for increasing labour force participation of older workers**

The national policy regime to increase the labour force participation of older workers has four principal pillars:<sup>49</sup>

1. Increasing older workers' incentives to remain in employment
2. Reducing barriers to employing older worker for employers
3. Changing attitudes toward age and work and combating discrimination
4. Increasing older workers' incentives to remain in employment

This has primarily taken the form of restricting access to and reducing the financial attractiveness of early retirement or other functional equivalent pathways to inactivity closing indirect pathways to early retirement. This national policy regime, agreed between the government and the social partners (see below), is the strategic context for the individual measures discussed here.

##### **Pension reform**

Pension reform has been the most important element of Dutch active aging policies. Restricting access to early retirement began in the civil service in 1997 and by 2006 had encompassed all economic sectors. Early retirement is still possible but pensions are actuarially reduced if taken before the statutory retirement age (Euwals et al. 2012). In 2011 the social partners entered into an agreement for further modernising the pension system. It foresees a rise in the pensionable age to 66 years in 2020 and to 67 years in 2025.<sup>50</sup> In the future the retirement age will be periodically adjusted in line with rising life expectancy (UWV 2012; Gasior and Zolyomi 2013, de Grip et al. 2013: 230).

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<sup>48</sup> Over the past decade the effective labour force exit age increased by 3.5 years for men and 1.3 years for women. The effective exit age for the labour force differs from the average retirement age people may exit the labour force without a pension or continue working after retirement.

<sup>49</sup> For an overview see OECD 2014.

<sup>50</sup> The Dutch General Old-Age Pension Act (AOW).

### **Disability benefit reform**

Parallel to the changes in early retirement use of other transfer programs as an alternative path to early exit from the labour market have been restricted, in particular disability benefits and extended unemployment benefits for older workers.

Since 2006 high disability rates have been markedly reduced. Screening is now stricter and receipt of disability benefit prior to the pensionable age is only open to those fully and permanently disabled. Returning to work is incentivized by reducing benefit levels with increasing duration. The Dutch system went from “probably...the most lenient program with easy access to a much more stringent program where only the severely and permanently disabled qualify for permanent benefits” (García-Gómez et al. 2011; Gasior and Zolyomi 2013:25-27; Kalwij et al. 2013: 2).

### **Unemployment benefit reform**

Extended periods of unemployment benefit for older workers reflect their real difficulties in finding employment but they are also have been (mis)used by employers and employees as a veiled form of early retirement. The duration of an unemployment benefit in the Netherlands depends on the length of employment (one month for each year of employment). In order to restrict access to long-term unemployment benefit as an alternative form of early retirement the maximum duration of unemployment benefits was reduced in 2006 from 5 years to 38 months. In 2003 the -called followed-up benefit was abolished, which had paid workers a flat-rate non-means-tested unemployment benefit after their earnings-related benefits had expired (Gasior and Zolyomi 2013) As in many other countries, until 2004 benefit recipients over 57.5 years of age were not even obligated to seek employment.

### **Reducing barriers to employing older worker for employers**

Although employers' organisations in the Netherlands are fully committed to addressing the demographic crisis,<sup>51</sup> surveys indicate that individual Dutch employers are in international comparison particularly reluctant to recruit or retain older workers in order to meet their personnel needs (UWV 2012). This is rooted among other factors in their concerns about higher costs due to perceived lower productivity, the seniority component in wages, potentially higher sickness costs and stringent employment protection regulations. In addition to efforts to dispel stereotypes and promote age management (see below) policies in enterprises, the Dutch government has relied in particular on wage subsidies for employers and measures to reduce potential risk of hiring or retaining older workers. These include, for example, the “mobility bonus”, a wage subsidy for hiring workers and an extended probation period before employment protection applies for older workers (50 and 55 years of respectively). Trial placements during which the employer has no wage costs for up to three months are available for all unemployed on benefits. Employers receive a subsidy in the form of reduced social security contributions for retaining workers over 62 years of age in employment (€ 6.500/year). The PES also pays sickness benefits for employees over 55 if they are ill for a longer period (see Table 3-2 for further details).

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<sup>51</sup> In their Policy Agenda for 2020 the social partners have set the goal of raising the activity rate of older workers 55 or older to the same level as that for persons under 55.

## **Changing attitudes toward age and age management<sup>52</sup>**

The Dutch state together with the social partners have long actively sought to counter the negative image of older workers among employers through various information campaigns and dissemination of knowledge and support for age management policies (OECD 2014). For example:

- The “Grey at Work” task force (2004-08) sought to inform the public and employers about the benefits and expertise that older employees can bring to the workforce. The tools developed for the project are still available on its website.
- Employers are urged to adapt the workplace to employees’ individual health profile. Moreover, they are required by law to carry out regular risk assessments and reduce the negative impact of work environment on health and safety of an employee.
- The “Temporary Subsidy Regulation to Stimulate Age-awareness Policies” sponsored from 2004 to 2010, a total of 444 age-awareness policy projects.
- “Sustainable Employability programme” initiated in based on an agreement with the social partners in 2012, which is voluntary for firms, promotes and disseminates good practice on work-related health issues and extension of working of working life for all ages. More than 1 000 firms were involved in its first two years.

## **Role of PES: PES outreach activities and measures for older workers**

The primary focus of the Dutch PES (UWV WERKbedrijf) is on unemployed jobseekers. Inactive older workers are not an explicit target. Its services are, however, in principal open to all jobseekers, including inactive older workers willing to work. Most ALMP programmes are mainstreamed in the Netherlands and not targeted on specific groups. The PES does distinguish between jobseekers assumed to be largely autonomous and those who need assistance. In the aftermath of the economic downturn 2008/2009 the unemployment rate among older workers rose rapidly and the PES gave increased emphasis to providing placement services and support specific to their particular needs of older workers. Almost half of the unemployment benefits in the Netherlands currently goes to persons above 50 years of age. After a peak in March 2016 the percentage of older benefit recipients has levelled off as the economy improved (UWV 2012; OECD 2014).

## **Policy measure: Talent 55+<sup>53</sup>**

The Dutch Special placement support measure for older workers has existed in practice continuously since 2007 with the same basic methodology, albeit under slightly changed definitions of the target group. It originated as a special project, “Talent 45,” to support the reintegration of older workers. Its good results led the PES to integrate the measure in its regular services in 2010 with a focus on 55+ jobseekers. In simplest terms, Talent 55+ consists of networking groups of 55+ jobseekers moderated by specially trained job coaches, supported by representatives from employers. The aim is to strengthen job search skills and work focus and to give older jobseekers insight into employers’ priorities in recruitment. It was renewed in 2013 and most recently in 2017 with a slightly different name and focus, “Perspective 50plus,” although the programme has remained essentially unchanged. Noteworthy outreach elements are its strong peer-to-peer element, a parallel media campaigns to improve the image of older workers, and outreach to employers with the involvement of the social partners.

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<sup>52</sup> For an overview see UWV2012; OECD 2014: 96.

<sup>53</sup> The following summary description of the programme is based largely on UWV 2012; OECD 2014, and the [government’s presentation](#) of the successor programme “Perspectief voor vijftigplussers.”

## **Challenges and objectives of the policy measure**

The goal of the measure is to promote the labour participation of older jobseekers by intensifying and improving the quality of services offered to older jobseekers persons. The aim is to address specific deficits in job search behaviour of older workers (e.g. lack of information about the local labour market, outdated job-search skills, weak self-presentation in applying for jobs and in interviews) as well as to motivate them and build self-confidence. The principal challenge to reintegration of older workers is the reluctance of employers to hire (or retain) old workers and the low self-esteem of older unemployed. The Talent 55+ programme addresses this issue too, parallel to various government support programs that address employers' concerns (see Table 3-2), through an accompanying media campaign and outreach efforts to employer.

## **Main elements and of the policy measure<sup>54</sup>**

The Talent 55+ measure relies expressly on a group approach that combines regular service offerings of the PES with additional resources and support in the 55+-group moderated by a specially trained work coach. The regular labour market services available to older jobseeker in which the Talent 55+ measure is embedded include, for example, drafting a job search plan and analysis, counselling and support, use of a Competence Test Centre.

All 55-plus jobseekers receive face-to-face contact with the job coach after three months and become automatically eligible for the intensive service package and can participate in the networking meetings. A network training group consists of 12 to 15 persons who meet for 10 sessions. The meetings are moderated by the job coaches who are specialized in supporting older workers in the labour market. When a new group starts, the initial meeting is used to identify the needs of the group and what the group's focus should be. The work coach or trainer is free to select how the specific topics are addressed. Groups can also invite external speakers. After six meetings, the aim, in principle, is for the group to organize a minimum of two and a maximum of four meetings itself. The group is also encouraged to continue their network outside the WERKbedrijf. In networking 55-plus groups, the participants exchange information, offer each other tips and advice, use each other's networks, learn presentation skills, prepare CVs, and practice job interviews as well as looking for suitable job vacancies (see Table 3-3).

Special training for the dedicated work coaches for the 55+ project is provided by the PES Working Academy. They learn how to train and motivate 55+ jobseekers, what networking means and how to make effective use of the network. The number of work coaches has increased gradually as the program was expanded. Some temporary employees with specific expertise in the field also participate in the project.

## **Management and size of the programme**

Management and implementation of the programme is the responsibility of the PES. During the 2010-2013 period it was financed with the support of the ESF Operational Programme for the Netherlands and thereafter by the Dutch government.

Talent 55plus and its successor measures are large national programmes. It is publicized in the internet and invitations are sent to older unemployed workers in the age category. Currently over 20,000 older workers participate in the programme annually, which represents approximately 20% of the unemployed in the age category. The planned financial volume of the network meetings alone amounted to 39 million Euros over the most re-

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<sup>54</sup> See Ministry of Labour 2009 and Sienkiewicz 2012 for an overview.

cent 2013-2016 period. Approximately 120 job coaches are assigned to moderating the networking groups.

### **Outreach strategy**

In addition to its peer-to-peer element, the original and subsequent versions of the Talent55plus project measure have been accompanied by a national public relations campaign, "Open for 50-plus", which aims to (1) change the image that employers have of 55+ jobseekers and (2) to promote positive self-image 55+ jobseekers, which is deemed essential to improving the labour market prospects of older jobseekers. The PES conducts the Open for 50-plus campaign since 2014 jointly with the MKB-Nederland (Association of Small and Medium Enterprises). Employers are encouraged via radio spots and online commercials to invite people over 50 to job interviews and calls upon companies to report vacancies to the regional PES offices. In May 2016 ABU and NBBU, the national organisations representing the temporary employment sector, also joined the campaign. Various larger employers act as ambassadors for the program. On the [PR campaign webpage](#) employers can join the campaign and explanations are given about financial arrangements that make it interesting for employers to hire over-50s. No published information is available on the impact of the PR effort.

### **Evaluations**

The measure has not been formally evaluated. Monthly monitoring data is collected on how many older workers have found a job or started their own business and each participant completes an evaluation form at the end of the training. The outflow rate of programme participants into employment was 32% in comparison with 6% for non-participants, or about four times as high (UWV 2012). The measure is regarded as relatively cost-efficient because it stimulates "self-help" and participants are said to often continue to meet on a voluntary basis after the ten meetings organised through the PES. There is a problem of selection bias in the reported results since these data are based on a start-up phase (2011) of the programme in which the measure was targeted at more highly motivated people (OECD 2014). It has now been expanded to a much broader group for which no published monitoring data is available.

In a more recent survey of a sample of recent participants in 2015, 73% report that the training had helped in their search for work, in particular to look for work more specifically and through more channels, in dealing with social media, writing a CV or an application letter and in how they can network. About half think that the training improved their chances of finding a job. Others did not think it had helped because they hardly learned anything new, or because it remains difficult to find a job in their occupation. The most frequent suggestion for improvement was for less diversity in the groups in terms of level of education, occupational group and / or age (UWV 2015).

### **Other actors**

A distinctive feature of the Dutch approach has been the role of the social partners in the active aging policies. The Netherlands has a strong tradition of tripartite co-operation and government policy on active aging has been closely coordinated with the social partners in broad social agreements. Policies to reduce early retirement and raise the effective exit age are coordinated with and supported by the social partners. In June 2011 STAR (the bipartite Foundation of Labour) launched Policy Agenda 2020 as the social partners' route map for investment in the participation and employability of older workers. The 2013 Social Agreement foresees further measures to close early retirement pathways and increase work incentives (OECD 2014). The proactive role of the social

partners in age management policies and the Talent 55+ measure described above are further examples.

### **Summary and assessment**

As in other EU Member States, Dutch policy for extending working lives has focused on raising the statutory pension age and curtailing or eliminating early retirement and functionally equivalent pathways to early withdrawal from the labour force. Retention in employment by changing incentives for employers to retain older workers longer and for older workers to delay retirement has been the primary strategy. Outreach to older workers who have already left the labour force plays no meaningful role. The significant outreach efforts that do exist are rather directed at changing employers' attitudes toward older workers, work place practices and the self-image of employed and unemployed older workers still in the labour force. The PES itself plays only a subordinate role and is primarily concerned with the reintegration of a rising case load of unemployed older workers, which has been a consequence of the economic crisis but also of the closure of paths to early withdrawal from the labour force.

### **Policy recommendations**

The lessons from the Dutch case are, in addition to a consequent strategy of increasing the effective retirement age, the need to address the demand side, i.e. employers' attitudes and their willingness to retain and hire older workers. The Dutch case also illustrates the use of extensive national media campaigns in outreach, not only to employers but to employed workers and public opinion. Both of these strategies are eminently transferable to other countries. Particularly striking in the Dutch case is the role and importance of the social partners in developing and supporting Dutch policy on age awareness and on extending working lives. Dutch corporatism is, however, relatively unique and this outreach approach is only feasible to a lesser extent in most other Member States.

**Table 3-1: Older workers scoreboard: Poland, The Netherlands & EU28, 2006 and 2016**

	Poland		EU28 (a)		Netherlands	
	2006	2016	2006	2016	2006	2016
<b>Demographic situation</b>						
-- Old-age dependency ratio	0.21	0.25	0.28	0.32	0.23	0.31
-- Effective labour force exit age (years) Men (b)	61.3	62.6	62.0	63.4	60.9	63.5
Women	57.6	59.8	60.5	62.0	61.0	62.3
<b>Activity</b>						
--Activity rate, 20-64 (% of the age group)	69.7	73.8	74.8	77.5	79.1	81.6
- of which Males	77.3	81.3	82.80	83.80	86.3	87
- of which Females	62.4	66.3	66.80	71.40	71.8	76.2
-- Activity rate, 55-64 Total	30.7	48.3	46.10	59.10	49.6	68.4
- of which Males	42.6	58.6	55.90	66.60	60.4	78.2
- of which Females	20.3	39	36.90	52.00	38.6	58.6
<b>Employment</b>						
-- Employment rate, 20-64 (% of the age group)	60.1	69.3	68.9	71.1	76.3	77.1
- of which Males	67.3	76.4	76.8	76.9	83.5	82.6
- of which Females	53.1	62.2	61.1	65.3	69.0	71.6
of which 50-54	59.8	75.0	73.1	77.9	76.5	80.3
-- Employment rate, 55-64 Total	28.1	46.2	43.3	55.3	45.7	63.5
of which 55-64 Males	38.4	55.7	52.5	62.0	58.0	72.8
55-64 Females	19.0	37.6	34.7	48.9	37.2	54.2
-- Gender gap in employment, 55-64 (ratio women/men)	0.50	0.68	0.66	0.79	0.63	0.74
<b>Dynamics</b>						
-- Retention rate, after 60 (% of employees t-5) (c )	28.7	44.0	37.1	48.8	-	60.0
-- Hiring rate, 55-64 (% of employees) (d)	7.3	6.4	6.1	5.8	1.7	5.1
<b>Joblessness</b>						
-- Unemployment rate, 55-64 (% of the labour force)	8.5	4.4	6.1	6.4	4.3	7.2
-- Incidence of long-term (e) unemployment , 55-64 (% of total unemploy	54.9	45.7	49.8	63.7	70.9	69.9
-- Marginally attached workers(f), 55-64 (% of the age group)	3.1	2.1	2.4	1.9	2.3	2.6
<b>Employability</b>						
-- Share of 55-64 with tertiary education (% of the age group)	12.5	13.9	17.2	22.9	24.6	27.4
-- Participation in training (g), 55-64						
Absolute (% of all employed in the age group)	-	31.0	-	-	-	52.1
Relative to employed persons aged 25-54 (ratio)	-	0.75	-	-	-	0.78

a) Weighted averages for 28 European Union member countries with the exception of the employability indicators which are unweighted.

b) Effective exit age over the five-year periods 2001-06 and 2011-16. The effective exit age (also called the effective

c) All employees currently aged 60-64 with job tenure of five years or more as a percentage of all employees aged 55-59 5-years previously.

d) Employees aged 55-64 with job tenure of less than one year as a percentage of total employees; e) Unemployed for more than one year;

f) Persons neither employed, nor actively looking for work, but willing to work and available for taking a job during the reference week;

g) Job-related training during year prior to the survey in 2012.

**Source:** OECD estimations from the OECD Employment Database, OESC Education at a Glance and the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC). Activity and Employment rates = Eurostat LFS.

**Table 3-2. Measures to reduce costs and risks of employing older workers**

*Mobility bonus* – If an employer hires a person receiving benefits who is older than 50, their employers' contribution will be reduced by EUR 7 000 per year. This reduction is lowered if the employee works less than 36 hours per week.

*No-risk policy* – If an employee who is over 55 and has been unemployed long term becomes sick for a long period, the Public Employment Service (PES) will pay the sickness benefit. The employee must have received an unemployment benefit for at least one year; if they become sick in the first five years of their new job, the PES will pay their income and for the WGA (partial/ temporary benefit) contribution differentiation.

*Abolition of WGA contribution differentiation* – Normally the contribution an employer pays depends on the risk profile of the staff; this measure abolishes the difference in contribution between relatively young and relatively old employees.

*Extended probation period* – The standard trial period of three months could be prolonged to six months for workers above the age of 55.

*Trial placement* – During the first months of work the employer does not pay a salary to the employee still receiving unemployment or disability benefit. The maximum period of trial placement is three months, with the possibility of extension to six months in special circumstances. The measure is applicable to anyone with unemployment or sickness/disability benefit.

*Experience Certificate* -- Validates skills acquired on the job, which is especially valuable for older workers seeking employment, who have acquired skills on the job but lack certificates to prove it.

**Source:** Adapted from (OECD 2014)

**Table 3-3: ESF Talent 55+ Project**

<p><b>Objective:</b> Promote labour participation of jobseekers aged 55-60 years</p> <p><b>Working method</b></p> <p><b>Services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Draft Work Plan and analysis</li><li>➤ Use of Competence tests and earlier acquired skills certificate</li><li>➤ Targeted approach of preferred employers</li><li>➤ Utilization of available subsidy opportunities</li><li>➤ Specific job fairs and speed dating with employers</li><li>➤ Participation in Networking Groups</li></ul> <p><b>55+ network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Learn from each other &amp; give advice to each other</li><li>➤ Elevator pitch</li><li>➤ Making CVs</li><li>➤ Practice job interviews</li><li>➤ Looking for suitable jobs or starting their own business</li></ul> <p><b>National PR campaign</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Change the image that employers have of 55+ jobseekers</li><li>➤ Promote positive self-image 55+ jobseekers</li></ul> <p><b>The dedicated work coaches 55+</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The work coaches are specially trained</li><li>➤ What does it mean to work with 55+ clients?</li><li>➤ How to work with groups and group dynamics</li><li>➤ How to explore your own network and the network of others</li><li>➤ How to find jobs in your network</li><li>➤ How to present yourself: elevator pitch</li><li>➤ How to present your competences?</li></ul>
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**Source:** Adapted from UWV WERKbedrijf, *Arbeidsmarktinformatie*, 12/2011.

## **3.2 Poland: “Solidarity across generations”**

### **National labour market context: labour force participation by older workers**

The problem of an aging work force as measured by the old-age dependency ratio<sup>55</sup> is less acute in the short run in Poland in comparison with the EU28 as a whole (25% versus 32% in 2016). Nevertheless, the long-term prognosis for the impact of demographic aging on the labour force are among the worst among OECD countries due the relatively low active life expectancy, a low birth rate and a negative net migration rate (OECD 2015). Employment rates are markedly lower for the population 55-64, especially for men, although there have been marked improvements in employment and activity rates and in reducing the gender gap since 2006 (Table 3-1 above; European Commission, 2017)

### **National policy regime and institutional responsibilities for increasing labour force participation of older workers**

The national government, which has primary responsibility for longer term economic development and the sustainability of the social security system, has taken the initiative in a broader societal effort to extend working lives discussed here. A number of institutional actors are involved in the formulation and implementation of these policies, as described below. Although there is in Poland, as in other countries, no particular institution responsible for the activation of older workers, the Ministry of Labour was given particular responsibility for monitoring the success of the government plan.

### **Labour market problems and barriers to activation**

Surveys indicate that employers regard older workers as being more expensive (higher salaries) and less productive. They are said to be more frequently ill, have difficulties adapting to change and do not update their skills (either do not want to or have difficulties learning). On the supply, side older workers have less willingness to train, lack of IT skills have lower motivation and tend to prefer withdrawal from the labour market. Older unemployed are usually less qualified and lack frequently even formal vocational qualifications (ca. 40.4% of 50+ unemployed).

The pension system was identified as a central obstacle to extending working lives. Not only was the statutory pensionable age in Poland relatively low (60 for women and 65 for men Poland) but access to early retirement and disability pensions was relatively generous so that the financial incentives for older workers to remain in employment were weak.

### **Policy measure: “Solidarity across generations. Actions for professional activation of people over 50” (Solidarnosc pokolen)**

#### *Aims and objectives of the policy measure*

The Solidarity across generations program, adopted in 2008 and updated in 2013, is based on a comprehensive approach to increasing the activation and employment rates of older workers. It addresses problems both on the demand and the supply side as well as institutional deficits, particularly in the pension system, and in societal attitudes toward older workers. Focusing on three age groups, persons 45-49, 50-54 and 55 and above, its principal stated goal is to achieve an employment rate of 50% for people aged

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<sup>55</sup>The percentage of the population 65 years of age and older as a percentage of the working age population (15-64)

55-64 by 2020. The programme comprises a package of measures designed, on the one hand, to increase incentives for employers to hire or retain people over 50 and, on the other hand, to foster the improvement of qualifications and skills of older workers. It assumes that an effective strategy for extending working lives of older workers must intervene at an even earlier stage and be oriented toward life-long learning.<sup>56</sup>

*Main elements and rationale of the policy measure<sup>57</sup>*

The Solidarity across generations legislative programme pursues 4 complementary strategies to extend working lives of persons over 50:

- Curtailment of early retirement or other pathways facilitating withdrawal from the labour market;
- Qualification and other measures for employed older workers to promote continued employment;
- Activation programmes for unemployed older workers;
- Changing attitudes not only of employers but of workers themselves toward age in employment.

The programme foresaw the following more detailed elements:<sup>58</sup>

- 1) Curtailment of early withdrawal from the labour market by raising the effective retirement age and equalizing of the retirement age of women and men.
- 2) Reduction of labour costs for older workers (e.g. exemptions from social security contributions and reduction in the number of days of sick pay paid by the employer);
- 3) Upgrading skills and qualifications of employees over 50 (e.g. promotion of life-long learning, and adjusting training offers to their needs);
- 4) Improvement of the working conditions for older workers and promotion of the development of the age management policy in companies (e.g. adjusting working conditions of people over 50 to their needs);
- 5) Activation of the unemployed or people threatened by unemployment that are over 50 (e.g., through individual action plans and adjustment of ALMP programmes to the needs of people over 50);
- 6) Activation of the disabled (e.g., through improved occupational rehabilitation and public campaigns aiming to raise awareness);
- 7) Expanding the opportunities of employment for women (e.g., development of child care and other family services that facilitate work-life balance the career).

In practice these elements have been unevenly weighted. The principal impact of public policy on Polish activity and employment rates has come through changes in the pension system, especially the curtailment of early retirement options.

*Outreach strategy*

Outreach to the inactive in the narrow sense of direct efforts to engage inactive older workers and increase registration with the PES do not exist, aside from routine PES publicity and internet information about its services. As in other countries observed, out-

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<sup>56</sup> For an overview, see Ministry of Labour, 2009; 2012a; Urbaniak and Wiktorowicz 2014:84-85. Sienkiewicz 2012.

<sup>57</sup> See Ministry of Labour, 2009 and Sienkiewicz 2012 for an overview.

reach efforts that exist are proactive directed at employers and at employed workers with the goal of prolonging working lives and reducing inflow into activity.

### *Management and implementation*

The reform initiative was initiated at the national level by the Polish government. Coordination and monitoring of implementation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. In addition to the PES a broad spectrum of institutions has been involved in its implementations (e.g. Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) as well as regional and local governments.

### *Size of the programme*

The Solidarity across generations program is a large national wide program that is not formally time-limited. It has existed since 2009. Largely financed through ESF co-funding which account for ca. 2/3 of total funding, the current planning cycle ends in 2020. The preliminary financial assumptions show project expenditures of 3.94 billion PLN (€ = 930 million) for the 2014 -2020 period (see *Table 3-2*).

### *Evaluation of the program*

As the coordinating agency the Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs is responsible monitoring and reporting regularly on the implementation of the program. The key indicator for the implementation of the Program The key indicator and principal goal is the achievement of an employment rate of 50%. for older workers 55-64 years of age by 2020. Other related success indicators are increasing the average effective age of retirement and reducing the number of persons in this age group receiving pensions, early retirement or benefits. There are also a number of ancillary goals and indicators that are monitored.<sup>59</sup>

Official monitoring data is available only for the initial years 2009-2011. Eight of 13 indicators show improvement, including the employment rate of people aged 55-64 years, average retirement age and participation in lifelong learning in the age group 45-64. (Ministry of Labour 2012a). After the pension reform, the actual retirement age in Poland increased from around 59 to 61 for men and from around 56 to almost 60 for women. At the same time, between 2008 and 2014 the employment rate for people aged 55-64 increased from 31.6% to 42.5% (Eurostat).

Other measures were less successful, at least initially. The promising training measures for employed workers and for reimbursement of employers' training costs for workers 45+ was little used (only 601 employees in 2010; Sienkiewicz 2012). The ministry attributes this low uptake to the fact that local labour offices chose to invest their limited resources in services for the unemployed during this crisis period. The principal challenge is, however, negative stereotypes regarding older workers by employers and the need to

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<sup>59</sup> 1) Improve working conditions, promote employment of employees aged 50 and above (% of victims in accidents at work aged 55-64); 2) Improve the skills and qualifications of employees after 50 years of age (% of people aged 45-64 in training );3) Reducing labor costs associated with employing workers after 50 years of age (employers' savings associated with shorter funding of the disease);4) Activation of the unemployed or at risk of losing their job after the age of 50 (% of unemployed aged 55-64 seeking job over 12 months);5) Vocational activation of disabled people Age 45-64 (number of companies paying penalties for PFRON); 6) Increase employment opportunities for women by developing services that allow for reconciliation work and family life (employment rate of women aged 55-64 and % of children aged 0-6 years covered by institutional care); 7) Extending the effective retirement age (the average age of retirement from the labour market); 8) Employment effectiveness and cost effectiveness of ALMPs for people 45+ (in employment within 3 months after completing the program) and (cost of delivering ALMP per participant who found job).

promote among older workers a positive perception of their role in the labour market (Ministry of Labour 2012a).

***Role of PES - PES outreach activities and special services and measure for target group***

PES services and measures for older workers are directed either at the unemployed, employed older workers and their employers or more generally at PES stakeholders (Ministry of Labour 2012a; Sienkiewicz 2012). See *Table 2-1* for an overview of PES special measures for older workers in Poland.

*Placement services*

Unemployed over 50 are considered a disadvantaged group and given preferential access to PES services and measures. This is important since the PES is severely understaffed and underfunded.<sup>60</sup> As a consequence the PES is obligated to create an Individual Action Plan for unemployed people above the age of 50 within 180 days from the date of registration. This should include an offer of employment or activation measure (work practice, training, and apprenticeships for adults).<sup>61</sup> Moreover PES staff training now includes training in the specific needs of clients 45+ as well as e-learning platform for employment services staff. 'Outreach' to PES staff is an important and neglected aspect of PES activation of older workers.

*Lifelong learning*

Lifelong learning is a central element the Polish approach. Employed workers aged 45+ are eligible for some ALMP programmes, including financing of trainings, postgraduate studies, reimbursement of the cost of examinations required to obtain certificates, licences or professional titles and training loans. In practice however uptake is reportedly low since local PES offices have given priority to support for the unemployed. Employers who have established training funds can receive preferential rates of reimbursement for the costs of training employees who are aged 45 and over. Training for older employed workers was given further impetus by the establishment of the National Training Fund (NTF) to subsidize the cost of training for workers aged 45 and over.

*Reducing employers' costs*

Reducing the costs of employing older workers is an important component of efforts to promote retention and hiring of older workers. For employed workers approaching retirement age (women 55 and men 60 years of age) employers are exempted from the obligation to pay contributions for unemployment insurance and related benefits<sup>62</sup> Employers can also receive a temporary exemption from these contributions (12 months) if they hire registered unemployed workers over 50 years. In addition, since 2011 employers' obligation to pay wages during the absence of older workers due to illness has been reduced from 33 to 14 days -in response to the perception of that older workers cause higher health-related costs (see *Table 3-3*).<sup>63</sup> Polish authorities deem these incentive measures to be effective (Ministry of Labour 2012a).

The PES also disseminates information to all stakeholders on anti-discrimination obligations based on age or disability and has established a webpage for this purpose.

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<sup>60</sup> The Polish PES is, moreover, highly decentralized and local labour offices can conduct tailored programmes for older unemployed in addition to the basic PES service offer.

<sup>61</sup> This rule applies only to older workers, unemployed youth and former prisoners.

<sup>62</sup> Contribution to the Labour Fund and the Fund for Guaranteed Employees' Benefits constitute 2.45 % and 0.10 % of wages respectively.

<sup>63</sup> There are a number of general PES wage subsidy measures for which older workers are also eligible.

## **Other actors -outreach measures**

### *Pension reform*

Like other EU countries Poland has sought to extend working lives primarily through changes in the pension system intended to retain older workers in employment and the labour force by curtailing pathways to inactivity through early retirement and disability pensions. The first reforms in 2009 were aimed at curtailing early retirement. Previously there were many possibilities to retire before the statutory pensionable age of 60 for women and 65 for men.<sup>64</sup> The second reform foresaw an increase in the statutory retirement age beginning in 2013 by 4 months per year to 67 for men and women by 2020 (men) and 2040 (women).

### *Age management*

[The Polish Agency for Enterprise Development](#) is principally responsible for the promotion and implementation of age management in enterprises. Its activities aim to increase employers' awareness of the benefits of the employment and development of employees 45+. It offers training programmes for employers and employees, consulting and advisory services as well as publications and other dissemination activities. In its initial period of activity up to the end of 2011 more than 900 companies had participated in training, 200 companies had used direct consulting services, 56 companies had successfully implemented an age management system and 161 people were prepared to act as mentors in the workplace.

There are in addition numerous ESF-national, regional and local ESF-funded projects (e.g. 'Age with a plus training for employers', 'Equalising chances on the labour market 50+') to promote and disseminate the concept of active aging (Sienkiewicz 2012: 9-10).

## **Summary and assessment**

Polish policy to extend working lives is similar to that in other EU Member States. Primary attention is given to the retention of older workers in employment rather than direct attempts at outreach to older inactive workers who are willing to work.<sup>65</sup> Based on curtailing paths to early retirement and increasing the retirement age in state pensions, this policy has been effective. Available data from 2006 to 2016 (latest available) indicates that Poland is on target to achieve its EU 2020 employment rate target of 71% for persons 20-64 years of age. Between 2006 and 2016 the employment rate for this age group increased from 60.1% to 69.3%. The employment rate for workers 55-64 increased even more strongly from 28.1% to 46.2% over the same period. This is attributable both to a strong increase in the activity rate of older workers (30.7% to 48.3%) as well as to a sharp reduction in the unemployment rate for this age group over the same period (8.5% to 4.4%). The employment rate for older workers is, however, still substantially short of the EU 2020 target of 50% set by the Solidarity across generations program.

The achievement of both these EU 2020 targets is however, now in jeopardy. The step-wise increase in the retirement age for men to 67 by 2020 and the elimination of the lower retirement age for women by 2040 proved to be unpopular and the reform was cancelled by the new government elected in 2015. Beginning in 2017, the former retirement ages of 60 for women and 65 for men have been reinstated in Poland. The state

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<sup>65</sup>So-called marginally attached older workers, i.e. persons who are neither employed nor looking for work, but willing to work and available for taking a job during the reference week, represent only about 2.1% of inactive older workers in Poland in 2016.

pension agency ZUS has estimates that 331,000 people (ca. 2% of the workforce) could now opt to retire (Chłoń-Domińczak, 2015).

### **Policy recommendations**

The Polish program for extending working lives is many faceted and exhibits an impressively comprehensive approach, addressing both the supply and demand sides as well as public attitudes. Its emphasis on lifelong learning and on the need to include even younger workers 45 years of age and over is instructive, although PES support measures for employed older workers appear to have been little used. As the cancellation of the pension reform suggests, the stance of the current Polish government toward the reforms program envisioned by the "Solidarity across generations" programs is at best ambiguous. The Polish case is noteworthy as a reversal of the general European policy shift toward higher pension ages and longer working lives, although it has one of the most rapidly aging populations in Europe.

**Table 3-4: Estimated costs of implementing the Program Solidarity across generations, 2014-2020 (PLN million)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2014-2020
<b>National Measures</b>	171.5	189.0	188.4	188.4	188.4	188.4	188.4	1302.5
<b>Structural Funds</b>	308.1	391.6	388.4	388.4	388.4	388.4	388.4	2641.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>479.6</b>	<b>580.6</b>	<b>576.8</b>	<b>576.8</b>	<b>576.8</b>	<b>576.8</b>	<b>576.8</b>	<b>3944.4</b>

**Source:** Program Solidarność pokoleń Działania dla zwiększenia aktywności zawodowej osób w wieku 50+, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 2014, p.60.

**Table 3-5: PES special measures for older workers**

Type of measure	Brief operational description of measure	Dates	Effectiveness	Reasons for effectiveness or ineffectiveness
<b>Legal regulations</b>	The PES is obligated to create an Individual Action Plan for unemployed person above the age of 50 within 180 days from the date of registration. This rule applies to all groups considered as being in a difficult situation in the labour market (see Section 2.1).	2011-	3	The PES system in Poland is decentralised. Whereas the quality standards are set on the central level, performance results depend on the local labour offices
<b>Legal regulations</b>	The local labour office should present to every registered unemployed aged 50+ within 6 months since the date of their registration proposal of employment or other paid work, or instrument of activation (work practice, training, apprenticeships for adults). This rule applies only to this group and 2 other groups considered as being in a difficult situation in the labour market – unemployed age up to 25 and former prisoners	2011-	3	
<b>Subsidies</b>	The employers obtain temporary exemption (12 months) from the obligation to pay contributions for the Labour Fund and the Fund for Guaranteed Employees' Benefits for employing people over 50 years of age. For employed women aged 55 and men aged 60, they do not pay these contributions	2009-	4	The tax incentives are very attractive to employers
<b>Proactive upskilling etc.</b>	Some ALMPs are available for workers aged 45+ which include: financing of trainings, postgraduate studies, reimbursement of the cost of examinations required to obtain certificates, licences or professional titles and training loans.	2009-	3	In the situation of budgetary constraints, labour offices decided to spend the majority of funds on the ALMPs for the unemployed..
<b>Proactive upskilling etc.</b>	The employers who have established training funds can obtain preferential rates of reimbursing the costs of training the employees aged over 45.	2009-	3	In the situation of budgetary constraints, labour offices decided to spend the majority of funds on the ALMPs for the unemployed.
<b>Staff training</b>	'Professionalization of labour market services', including training of 1264 PES staff and 145 coaches in specific needs of clients 45+	2009	--	
<b>Anti-discrimination awareness</b>	Dissemination of information to all PES stakeholders on anti-discrimination obligations based on age or disability (ministry webpage)		--	

**Source:** Polish Ministry of Labour, 2012a

**Note:** Effectiveness assessment of Polish Ministry of Labour (1 = not very effective, 5 = very effective).

### 3.3 Germany: “Prospects for re-entering the workforce”

*National labour market context: labour force participation by working age women*

Germany fares relatively well in international comparison considering only female employment rate. The picture changes if we distinguish between full-time and part-time employment; almost every second woman employed in Germany works only part-time, although it is predominantly a voluntary decision - the share of involuntary female part-time employed is below the EU average.<sup>66</sup> The relatively higher share of part-time employed among German women also drives the unadjusted gender wage gap, which is above average for the EU.

**Table 3-6: Main Labour Market indicators by gender (2016)**

	GEO/TIME	Males	Females	Male – Female in p.p.
<b>Economic activity 20-64</b>	EU28	83.7	71.4	12.3
	DE	86.5	77.3	9.2
<b>Employment rate 20-64</b>	EU28	76.8	65.3	11.5
	DE	82.7	74.5	8.2
<b>Gender pay gap (2015)</b>	EU28			16.3
	DE			22
<b>Share of part-time employed</b>	EU28	8.9	31.9	-23.1
	DE	9.4	46.5	-37.1
<b>Involuntary part-time employment</b>	EU28	37.6	24.6	13.0
	DE	18.8	10.4	8.4
<b>Enrolment rates in pre-primary education of 3 to 5 year old (2014)</b>	OECD		85.65	
	DE		96.98	

Source: Eurostat

Paid maternity leave in Germany is relatively short (14 weeks), whereas the maximum job-protection period of parental leave (148 weeks) is one of the longest among the OECD countries.<sup>67</sup> In sum, the paid leave around childbirth in Germany is above average for OECD countries. The enrolment rates in pre-primary education of 3 to 5 years old in Germany are very high (ca. 97%), clearly above the OECD average.

Longer leaves have been shown to have a negative impact on female employment (Thevenon and Solaz, 2013, p. 29; OECD, 2011, p. 140), driven mostly by skills obsolescence and the increased distance to the labour market. Based on the European Commission, the negative impact of parenthood on female employment in Germany is the sixth highest in the EU and the second highest among the EU15 member states<sup>68</sup>. This is in stark contrast to the needs of the tight German labour market. Germany is in need of

<sup>66</sup> It is also well below the share of involuntary part-time employed males in Germany

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/gender/data/length-of-maternity-leave-parental-leave-and-paid-father-specific-leave.htm>

<sup>68</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester\\_thematic-factsheet\\_labour-force-participation-women\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_labour-force-participation-women_en.pdf)

skilled labour force, at the same time dependent on incoming migration, while underutilising its own human resources.

### ***National policy regime and institutional responsibilities for increasing labour force participation of working-age women***

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales) (BMAS) identified female labour participation as one of the three main policy challenges in the comprehensive G20 Employment Plan for Germany in 2014<sup>69</sup>. Female labour force participation is thus a prominent component a strategic-policy framework. The responsibilities, in this respect, are dominantly shared between the BMAS, the Public Employment Service (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) (BA) and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend) (BFSFJ).

### ***Policy measure: Prospects for re-entering the workforce (Perspektive Wiedereinstieg)***

The programme **Prospects for re-entering the workforce** (Perspektive Wiedereinstieg) (PWE). It provides intensified and targeted counselling for individuals after a longer, family-related leave from the labour market. PWE was implemented in three phases: 1) First, as a Pilot, between March 2008 and February 2012 (PWE I); 2) In the second phase, between March 2012 and the end of 2014 (PWE II); 3) The third phase started in July 2015 and is supposed to continue until 2021<sup>70</sup> under the project "Perspektive Wiedereinstieg - Potenziale erschließen" co-financed by the European Social Fund.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend) (BFSFJ) and the Public Employment Service (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) (BA) are managing the implementation of the PWE. The actual implementation is streamlined through 22 executing agencies<sup>71</sup> at the regional level. The PWE offices are distributed across the whole Germany with an overrepresentation in the federal states (Länder) of former West Germany.

#### *Size of the outreach effort*

PWE is a relatively large but low-cost programme. Programme participation data are inexact since client contact depended on individual needs: Three types of clients are distinguished in the programme:

- a) Information clients (up to two sessions per the executing agency)
- b) Counselling clients (three to five sessions per the executing agency)
- c) Supported clients (more than five sessions per the executing agency).

At the time of the evaluation, 2683 supported clients, participated in multiple (more than 5) counselling sessions, provided in specialized client service centres under the PWE II (between March 2012 and December 2014), approximately 27% of the total number of ca.10,000 clients reached under the PWE II. The number of participants thereafter is un-

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<sup>69</sup> [https://www.bmas.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Thema-Internationales/g20-employmentplan-germany.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.bmas.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Thema-Internationales/g20-employmentplan-germany.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

<sup>70</sup> [https://www.perspektive-wiedereinstieg.de/Navigation/DE/Das\\_Aktionsprogramm/ESF-Bundesprogramm/esf-bundesprogramm\\_node.html](https://www.perspektive-wiedereinstieg.de/Navigation/DE/Das_Aktionsprogramm/ESF-Bundesprogramm/esf-bundesprogramm_node.html)

<sup>71</sup> The number of executing agencies was changing between, or even within the phases. While it is 22 during the third phase, it was up to 18 during the second phase; and up to 28 during the first phase. The actual list can be found at:

[https://www.perspektive-wiedereinstieg.de/Navigation/DE/Das\\_Aktionsprogramm/ESF-Standorte/esf-standorte\\_uebersicht\\_node.html](https://www.perspektive-wiedereinstieg.de/Navigation/DE/Das_Aktionsprogramm/ESF-Standorte/esf-standorte_uebersicht_node.html)

known but presumably much greater since the PES has now adopted the same approach as part of its regular services, parallel to the ESF project.

### *The target group*

Based on the evaluation of the second implementation phase – BWE II (Diener et al. 2015a, p. 23), the structure of the group of supported was biased towards older participants (2/3 are over 40), married (87%) or living with a partner (82%), with higher education. 93 percent of the participants are from West Germany. Only 13 percent of participants live in a household with income lower than 2000 euro (in contrast to 59 percent of the group of eligible). One of two participants was re-entering after a leave longer than ten years. Data from the first implementation phase indicate that about 80 percent of the participants have worked fulltime before the leave. A dominant share of participants left the labour market to deliver childcare; only about 10 percent of them took care of other persons in need of care (Diener et al., 2013).

### *Principal outreach strategy*

A central outreach tool present through all three implementation phases is the information webpage (<https://www.perspektive-wiedereinstieg.de/>). This is continually improving based on past experiences, not only by adding examples of good practice but also by changing its structure and outline. The webpage directs clients based on their interest and provides a checklist for a labour market re-entry and a calculator showing the feasibility of the re-entry for the household<sup>72</sup>. Moreover, the webpage provides practical information ranging from the address of the closest client centre, through the accessibility of household related services (including childcare), skills assessment, career guidance and advice on how to start a self-employment. It also allows for networking of returnees to share experiences with their situation.

Since the findings of the PWE I and PWE II qualitative evaluations point at the importance of the partner in the process of labour market re-entering, there is a separate section targeting returners' partners.

The information webpage is supported by a set of information flyers and brochures, each introducing a different aspect of PEW:

- the overall structure of the support;
- the content of the information webpage;
- the motivation for labour market re-entry;
- the accessibility of household services.

An important outreach element of PWE lies in the fact, that the information centres through which PWE is implemented are solely focusing on returnees after a family related leave. These were also often not a part of the PES office, as the programme is implemented through the executing agencies, with their networks of regional client centres. As noted, PES offices adopted the PWE procedures in the later stages of its implementation.

Based on the evaluation study (Diener et al., 2013, p. 41), participants mostly learned about the programme from the media (Newspapers, Internet, Radio, TV). Recommendations from friends and past participants were the second most important channel directing others to the PWE program. These were followed by printed flyers, posters and information booklets and information provided by the client centre of the regional PES office; all attracting the attention of more than 20 percent of the participants. Only approximately 12 percent of participants were attracted to the programme by its webpage.

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<sup>72</sup> <http://www.wiedereinstiegsrechner.de/>

Based on the results of the evaluation (Diener et al., 2013), PWE participants are more satisfied with the encouragement to labour market entry than were non-participating PES clients and their motivation to find a job is higher.

Moreover, the attempt to approach re-entrants through their partners, by providing specific advice for partners, is rather innovative and stems from the rich experience from the long evaluation-supported implementation of the programme.

PWE outreach also targets employers by sharing good examples of family-friendly workplaces.

#### *Rationale and objectives of the PWE*

The primary objective of the PWE is to compensate for the career-harming effect of a longer family-related leave. First, this is done mainly by providing labour market information via a webpage, information flyers and personal counselling in client-service centres. Second, the programme tries to support favourable re-entry environment by mediating access to household-related services,<sup>73</sup> addressing partners and potential employers with specialised advice. Third, PWE participants are directed either to a suitable job offer or a more intensive ALMP. The PWE is implemented by various executing agencies, whose concept of intervention is not entirely the same.

#### *Principal challenges*

The main challenge of PWE seems to be in outreaching towards returnees from low-income households, (and/or) with low education. A big part of the success of the measure, in terms of participants' satisfaction but also employment effect, lies in the mechanism for assessing the local costs and eventually mediating access to local household-related services. This is also done by calculating the net gain of getting a job after household duties have been outsourced. This mechanism seems to be working well for returnees with higher education, whose opportunity costs of remaining out of the labour market are higher. Moreover, the outreach strategy can be considered as quite demanding in terms of competencies. The webpage is rather complicated and relies heavily on calculating the benefits of working. This aspect can also have an exclusion effect on low-skilled potential participants. For these reasons, expansion of the programme in East Germany, where wages and income are lower, remains a challenge.

#### *Evaluation of the program - Key success conditions*

PWE is an excellent example of a programme implemented in successive phases, followed by evaluations and learning out of the previous phase experiences. PWE was acknowledged by the United Nations Public Service Award in 2012-2013 as one of the Good Practices and Innovations in Public Governance<sup>74</sup>.

First two phases of the programme implementation were evaluated, using quantitative (matching) as well as qualitative (interviews) evaluation techniques (Diener et al., 2013) (Diener et al., 2015a). The main results show that:

- The successful completion of the programme was high (60% in the second phase)
- Satisfaction with PES services was higher in the case of participants
- The motivation to look for a job was higher in the case of participants

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<sup>73</sup> The intensity of the the mediation of household-related services differs, depending on the services available but also regionally. A common pattern is to support regional household related service providers by distributing their information to potential clients.

<sup>74</sup> <http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN93578.pdf>

- The likelihood to be registered as jobseeker or dependent on social benefits during the post-programme period is higher for non-participants
- Participants are more willing to commute or accept a time inflexible job or a job outside of their professional specialisation.
- Post-programme employment rates of participants are higher than those of non-participants (62 vs. 52 percent in the case of the second PWE II), but a dominant share of both groups end up in a part-time job.
- The reasons for preferring part-time work can be found in understanding each particular economic situation. Single parents, divorced, or those having an unemployed partner seek full-time employment more often. Returnees with higher education often report problems in finding an adequate part-time job. The role of partner and his attitude also plays a role in deciding between a full or part-time job.
- PWE participants use household-related services more often than comparable non-participants (14 vs. 7 percent in the case of PWE II). The stated reasons for not using such service are either not needing them or not being able to afford them (Diener et al., 2015a).

PWE provides labour market information, short training and intensive counselling. It is strongly nested in the German system of active labour market policy programmes, in the sense that PWE participants are often directed to one of the more intensive ALMPs. Out of the potential programmes following on PWE are:

- Training programmes covering longer, vocational training of all registered job seekers without further restrictions based on gender, nor age<sup>75</sup>
- Self-employment support<sup>76</sup>
- Employment subsidies.

#### *Other outreach measures for target group*

Comparable programmes, addressing the same target group, are emerging at the regional level. They are usually implemented by regional NGOs or employment service providers; such as the training programme in North Rhine-Westphalia<sup>77</sup>, or the intensified re-integration counselling programme in Ostallgäu region of Bavaria<sup>78</sup>. In 2011 the Ministry of Finance and Economics in Germany launched a pilot programme named WING to support the reintegration of women engineers and scientists after a family-related leave. The programme was implemented through the German Aerospace Academy and aimed at increasing competences and professional networks outdated during the leave<sup>79</sup>.

#### **Summary and assessment**

Germany has one of the longest job-protected childbirth-related leaves among the OECD countries. This has a negative impact on employment and labour market participation of women. Although the male vs. female difference in labour force participation and employment are below the EU average; an above average wage gap together with a high share of part-time employed women suggest a high underutilization of female labour force. For this reason, the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth together with the Public Employment Service introduced the pro-

<sup>75</sup> For evaluation on female returnees see: (Doerr., 2017)

<sup>76</sup> For evaluation on female participants see: (Caliendo et al., 2015)

<sup>77</sup> Successfully combine family life with work:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=46&langId=en&projectId=9>

<sup>78</sup> Women aim to restart careers in Germany:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=67&langId=en&newsId=2819>

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.german-asa.com/projects/wing/project-reentry-wing-for-women-engineers-and-scientists-register-now/>

gramme *Prospects for re-entering the workforce (Perspektive Wiedereinstieg)* implemented since 2008, in three phases by regional executing agencies.

The programme consists of tailor-made counselling, supported by a rich information webpage. Provided counselling is nested in further services such as short training, advice on self-employment start-up and support of household related services. Based on the experience in from the first implementation phase, particular attention is paid to providing "good example" information to partners of returnees as well as to potential employers.

The programme shows a clear positive impact on the motivation of participants to look for a job; it also seems to be linked with a high level of participants' satisfaction. The employment effect of the programme is positive but rather moderate. Nevertheless, in a cost-benefit assessment, the programme would fare rather well, because of its low costs.

More worrisome is a potentially high cream-skimming effect of PWE, which was not explicitly addressed by any of the evaluation studies. Participants come from households with relatively higher income and are rather more educated than eligible non-participants. PWE manages to increase the motivation of those returnees which have a choice and means to re-enter the labour market. The question remains, whether this programme is effective also in increasing the participation of those whose opportunity costs of remaining outside of the labour market are lower.

Easing the access to affordable household-related services is considered an essential channel for enabling a labour market re-entry. These services appear not to be available for potential returnees from low-income households.

### ***Policy recommendations***

PWE is a tailor-made programme providing targeted advice and counselling to a large group of highly employable individuals. Programs for returning to the labour market after a family-related leave, therefore, seems to offer favourable prospects for positive employment effects by providing specific information to the target group, which is a relatively less-cost service. That is precisely the focus of PWE. Facilitating these transitions is a promising opportunity for increasing activity and employment rates in every EU country.

PWE represents a product of long-term, systematic development based on continuous evaluations. Transferable experience can be found in the design of the provided counselling; particularly in the central role of the PWE information webpage, the involvement of family partners and potential employers in the re-integration process, as well as in the role of accessible household-related services.

Based on the German experience, the limitations of this kind of targeted counselling in outreaching towards potential returnees from low-income households become apparent. Involving these groups of potential returnees would need to be linked with intensified and thus more costly services.

### 3.4 Austria: “Career Re-entry”

#### **National labour market context: Labour force participation of working age women**

While the gender difference in the participation, as well as employment rate in Austria is below the EU average, the gender pay gap remains above the EU average. This is driven by a substantially higher share of part-time employment among women in comparison with men.

**Table 3-7: Main Labour Market indicators by gender (2016)**

	<b>GEO</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Male - Female in p.p.</b>
<b>Economic activity 20-64</b>	EU28	83.7	71.4	12.3
	AT	84.0	74.8	9.2
<b>Employment rate 20-64</b>	EU28	76.8	65.3	11.5
	AT	78.7	70.9	7.8
<b>Gender pay gap (2015)</b>	EU28			16.3
	AT			21.7
<b>Share of part-time employed</b>	EU 28	8.9	31.9	-23.1
	AT	10.5	47.1	-36.6
<b>Involuntary part-time employment</b>	EU28	37.6	24.6	13.0
	AT	19.6	11.3	8.3
<b>Enrolment rate in pre-primary education of 3 to 5 year old (2014)</b>	OECD		85.65	
	AT		83.34	

Source: Eurostat

In 2016, the maternity leave in Austria was 16 weeks; paid parental leave was 44 weeks. The total paid leave (60 weeks) was slightly above the OECD average. The average payment rate was 85.3 percent (maternity leave = 100% & parental leave = 80%<sup>80</sup>), which is relatively high in comparison to other OECD countries. The job protection period lasted only a bit longer than the paid leave - 87.3 weeks. Paid, job-protected leave around childbirth in Austria is of average length. Women, after having children chose to work part-time, in most cases voluntarily. The enrolment rate in pre-primary education of 3-5 years old children is below the OECD average, which is surprising considering the relatively higher participation, as well as employment rate. This evidence suggests for persisting traditional gender differentiated role models.

#### **National policy regime and institutional responsibilities for increasing labour force participation of working-age women**

The Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK) sets out the increase in female labour market participation as one of the four, main strategic objectives in the Strategy report for the Federal Financial Framework Law 2013-2016 (Bundesministerium für Finanzen, 2012). In reaction, BMASK has instructed the Public

<sup>80</sup> [https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF2\\_1\\_Parental\\_leave\\_systems.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF2_1_Parental_leave_systems.pdf) , (Table PF2.1.A.)

Employment Service Austria (AMS) to spend 50% of ALMP funds on women clients (BMASK, 2014, p. 243). Economic sectors and occupations with a high concentration of female employment are a concern in the Austrian context, BMASK acts actively in compensating for existing gender imbalances (BMASK, 2014). Moreover, early childcare services seem to be underutilized in Austria. There is empirical evidence on the elasticity of female employment to childcare costs in Austria (Mehring and Zulehner, 2012). Child-care subsidies can be acquired as a part of several ALMPs.

***Policy measure: „Career Reentry “(Beruflicher Wiedereinstieg)***

BW offers low - threshold information, help with planning a worker's return to the labour market in due time. In order to improve counselling quality, each regional PES office has specialised counsellors or staff responsible for the programme (BMASK, 2014, p. 104). A special course entitled "returners with a future" (Wiedereinstieg mit Zukunft) assists women in successfully re-entering the labour market.

BW is managed by BMAS and implemented by AMS, taking advantage of the regional network of AMS offices, which also operates special counselling centres for women<sup>81</sup> that provide assistance in vocational orientation as well as childcare and family, legal or psychological issues. Some services are being delivered by the local governments (The Länder organisations).

The evolution of female counselling into the BW programme was a continuous process, with several changes in the name of the programme. It is, therefore, hard to reconstruct the complete history of the programme. Family-related leave re-integration support can be traced to 1995 with the start of Wiedereinsteigerinnen-Initiative (Lassnigg et al., 1999).

BW is a Country level programme covering all Austria. It is funded from the main ALMP budget, but no figure, referring particularly to the costs of BW, is being published. BW is a part of AMS everyday operation.

BW addresses mainly women after a family-related leave. Comparing to the group of eligible, BW participants are more educated, with older children, a bigger share of them were housewives. They are past the paternal leave, with children at a higher age (23 percent with children over 15). BW participants, in comparison to the eligible population at a parental leave, are more past the caring period and already looking for employment; they are more prepared and motivated to re-enter the labour market. The importance of timing of the re-entry support seems to play an important role in this context (Lassnigg et al., 1999, p. 26).

*Outreach strategy*

Based on interviews with caseworkers, an ideal time to contact potential BW returnees would be one year before the moment of re-entry. Regional initiatives of active approach towards potential BW returnees, using contact details from administrative data, ran into a clash with the data protection legislation (Achatz, 2015, p. 29). Caseworkers have to rely on outreach through the webpage or a personal visit of a potential returnee to the AMS office or one of the counselling centres for women. Some initiative from the side of potential returnees is, therefore, expected. The main outreach element of the programme thus remains in the specific design of the support provided to the target group. The support is provided through PES regional offices as well as through service centres specifically for women.

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<sup>81</sup> <http://www.ams.at/service-arbeitsuchende/angebote-frauen/beratungsstellen/frauenberatungsstellen>

The BW information webpage<sup>82</sup> is a central tool of outreach as well as to systematise counselling provided at the regional level. It provides a clear idea of AMS support and particular steps of the labour market re-entry, including all the general level information in a simple and compendious way. The webpage instructs potential returnees to arrange a personal visit at one of the AMS offices, provides worksheets (Arbeitsblätter), serving as diagnostics tools to be filled in, or at least to provide an idea about the content of the counselling they are about to receive. The worksheets are organized around the particular steps of the BW:

- **First orientation** – basic data collection and diagnostics
- **Re-entry as an opportunity** – career counselling and competence diagnostics
- **Compatibility of work, family and private life** – counselling on the rearrangement of time between family and work; including information on the supply of childcare and other household related services in the region
- **Orientation and professional development** – a bridge to the FiT programme offering career re-training (including FiT salary calculator to provide extra motivation)
- **Concrete steps to return to work** – a precise plan of steps to be taken during the re-entry, including the first week of work.

The worksheets are supplemented by a brochure “How to succeed in your return to work”, summarising all the information about the re-entry and related services. A printed version of the brochure can be ordered online for free or collected at one of the AMS regional offices. An electronic version of the brochure can be downloaded from the BW information webpage.

Although no media campaign is specifically mentioned in relation to the BW programme. The Programme has quite a long tradition so that the public awareness could be high. Nevertheless, interviews with the BW caseworkers suggest that in the phase when clients approach their office, it is already too late to explore all the options provided by the BW programme; as for example the possibility of re-training under the FiT programme (Achatz, 2015).

The involvement of employers in the programme is limited to initiatives emerging at the local level. The BW programme does not explicitly recognise the role of employers in the outreach towards the BW target group.

*Rationale: Labour market problem or barriers of the target group addressed*

In Austria, one of two employed women works only part-time. Additionally, the concern of Austrian BMASK is a high concentration of female employment in few economic sectors or occupations, with additional barriers for female free career choice, such as lack of available training (especially in later stages of the career) and lasting prejudices. (BMASK, 2014) BW programme should compensate for that by using the moment of labour market re-entry to: a) explain the implications of a lifetime earnings loss when choosing a part-time job career; b) support career re-orienting with relevant information and training.

The BW programme is nested in a set of services to improve female access to the labour market. The rationale of this cluster of services is to:

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<sup>82</sup> <http://www.ams.at/service-arbeitsuchende/angebote-frauen/wiedereinstieg>

- Offer tailor-made information and counselling services for women and support their job integration;
- Offer initial and special training programmes within basic skills training;
- Provide assistance under the Austria-wide “support returners” programme (Wiedereinstiegunterstützen) to women returning to the labour market after family-related career breaks. Some of the programmes combine assistance to women returners with options for childcare;
- Support job take-up through grants for childcare (childcare subsidies);
- Provide specially trained counsellors for returners catering to the needs of this target groups; in addition, counselling meetings address the issue of part-time and its impact on lifetime earnings;
- Provide special counselling services, German language courses, intensive training to women for being recognised as skilled workers accompanied by language courses (special German terminology) for women from a migrant background;
- Expand the jobs available to women by active outreach to employers, canvassing qualified (part-time) positions, ensuring equal treatment when positions are filled;
- Encourage the employment of women in private-sector companies and non-profit organisations (integration subsidies, subsidies to apprenticeships for girls and women in occupations with a low percentage of women);
- Offer information and counselling on the path to self-employment (business start-up programme);
- Provide targeted guidance and support in cooperation with counselling centres for (young) women to help women enter the labour market. (BMASK, 2014, p. 243)

#### *Evaluation of the programme*

Based on (Lassnigg et al., 1999) 87% of the BW participants would recommend the BW programme. Based on a survey of participants, BW programme provides useful information about the options of a returnee and increases woman self-esteem.

In terms of employment effect, a negative short-term employment effect is observed, with an increased share of unemployed participants. In a follow-up questionnaire, the post-participants explained their longer job-search period by their increased self-esteem resulting from the career counselling they have received, making them pickier. Positive employment effects are reported two, and two and a half, years after the participation (Lassnigg et al., 1999, p. 39). Positive effects on job quality and income effect were observable in the follow-up survey (Lassnigg et al., 1999, p. 45).

#### *Other outreach measures*

While the BW programme is connected to several programmes out of the system of ALMPs, one training programme, targeting women in general, is usually distinguished by the literature. Austria struggles with a high concentration of female employment in specific economic sectors or occupations. The FiT programme is supposed to compensate for that, by motivating women to enter training in non-traditional occupations. PES funding may be claimed for apprenticeship training as well as for training at upper secondary technical or vocational schools, secondary colleges for engineering or technical universities of applied sciences. The programme includes preparation and support measures, e.g. vocational guidance, counselling (also on childcare options) and assistance during training (BMASK, 2014, p. 104). Fit, like BW, has been positively evaluated (Lutz et al., 2013).

A training course Re-entry with future (Wiedereinstieg mit Zukunft) is being provided by AMS office in Austria in addition to the BW programme. It offers competence analysis, application training and educational advice.

### **Summary and assessment**

BW programme is a well-elaborated programme of tailor-made counselling for women after a family-related leave from the labour market. It is nested in a set of related ALMPs, offering vocational training, or childcare subsidies. In the case of Austria, special emphasis is put on enabling a change in the career towards a less traditional female occupation or sector. This is supported by motivating clients to take this direction and by providing vocational training. For increasing the share of those who actually use the moment of re-integration as the opportunity for changing their career path, an active outreach towards potential BW clients could be beneficial.

BW information webpage, together with the brochure, present the central outreach tools of the programme. The programme is organised in clear and subsequent steps. It is implemented by the AMS regional offices already for a long time, since 1995.

The evaluation results for the BW programme show a high satisfaction rate of clients as well as positive employment and income effects.

### **Policy recommendations**

The framework of the assistance provided in relation to the labour market re-entry is well elaborated, simple and comprehensive. The identification of re-entry steps is logical and grasps the situation of the returnees. The steps include a consideration of changing the career-path as well as assistance on the effective organisation of time before and during the start of a job. The design of the counselling model is to a large extent transferable.

Information and counselling services are easily accessible via the AMS regional offices and online. The programme does not seem to be creaming off only better educated and well-off clients. The intensity of help, especially when combined with other related programmes, is intensive enough to offset the eventual lack of resources (for example for childcare, or barriers to training participation). Austrian BW is a good example of a synergic effect of various interconnected programmes.

The counselling model implemented under BW does not provide specific information to support partners in the re-integration process. Nor does it work explicitly with employers. The counselling model is fine-tuned by a long period of implementation, but the main framework of the model might be somewhat outdated, centring on the returnee and devoting only a limited attention to their wider environment (e.g. partner, future employer).

The strongest aspect of the BW programme is that it identifies the moment of labour market re-entry as an opportunity to reconsider the past career path of the returnee. The combination of counselling and targeted advice (received from BW), and further training options (as part of the FiT programme), offer a real chance to change career paths of labour market returnees. Positive effects might be expected at the individual level, but also at the national level. This aspect of the Austrian experience should be easily transferable to other countries.

### **3.5 Sweden: “Bridge-building”**

#### ***National labour market context: labour force participation by Roma***

According to Council of Europe estimates, there were 50 000 Roma in Sweden in 2012, which is around 0.5% of the population (the highest in the EU15) (EC, 2014b). The large majority of the Roma population live in the main urban centres, such as Malmö and Stockholm. As the Personal Data Act prohibits the processing of personal data on ethnicity, there is no publicly available information on the educational composition or labour market participation of the Roma in Sweden. There is some information based on official inquiries and interviews with Roma representatives suggesting that the educational attainment and the employment rate of the Roma is significantly below the population average. Guesstimates for the Roma community in Malmö and Stockholm put their employment rate as low as 10 % (Skaborg Institute for Research and Development, 2012). Prejudice and discrimination, as well as lack of education are considered to be the main barrier to the labour market inclusion of the Roma population (EC, 2012).

#### ***National policy regime and institutional responsibilities for increasing labour force participation of Roma***

In 2012, Sweden adopted a comprehensive national strategy of Roma inclusion, the Strategy of Roma Inclusion for 2012-2032, targeting socially excluded Roma persons who face discrimination in everyday life. The strategy is based on the principles of human rights and non-discrimination. The Strategy identifies several areas for action but gives priority to the education and employment of Roma and defines women, youth and children as priority target groups. The main goal of the Strategy is that by 2032, a Roma person aged 20 in 2012 should have the same education, employment, housing, health, social care and cultural opportunities as a non-Roma person (EC, 2012). Municipalities are the main actors who are responsible for the implementation of the Strategy of Roma Inclusion, particularly for making sure that Roma have access to labour market opportunities. The Stockholm County Administrative Board is in charge of coordination and follow-up support to municipalities in 2016-2019 (Ministry of Culture of Sweden, 2016). The Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) also bears responsibility for cooperating with municipalities in bringing Roma persons to the labour market. So far, Roma inclusion has been implemented using national and EU funds (EC, 2012).

#### ***Policy measure: Bridge-building (Brobyggare)***

##### *Aims and objectives of the programme*

In 2012, within the framework of the Strategy of Roma Inclusion, the Swedish government launched a so called Bridge-building programme for persons with Roma language and cultural skills to work as mediators between the Roma community and the public sector. The programme targets all socially excluded Roma persons that are subject to discrimination (Swedish Agency for Public Management, 2016).

##### *Main elements and rationale of the Bridge-building programme*

Initially, the Bridge-building programme was implemented in five pilot municipalities (Luleå, Gothenburg, Linköping, Helsingborg and Malmö out of Sweden's 290 municipalities), and has been gradually rolled-out to other municipalities.<sup>83</sup> The programme has

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<sup>83</sup> Municipalities that have entered the Bridge-building programme: 2012-2015 (Luleå, Gothenburg, Linköping, Malmö, Helsingborg) and 2016-2017 (Haninge, Stockholm, Sundsvall, Upplands, Väsby, Västerås, Örebro).

two stages. First, bridge-builders complete a new 2-year part-time university-level programme at Södertörn University where they learn about intercultural perspectives on the history and contemporary situation of Roma and travellers, mediator's role regarding Roma, literacy and learning from a minority perspective and other issues (Rodell Olgac & Dimiter-Tajkon, 2015). The eligibility requirements that participants have to meet to enrol into programme are the same as to other university degrees (County Administrative Board of Stockholm County, 2016b). Second, after completing the programme, bridge-builders are employed by different public agencies such as nurseries, schools, social and healthcare services and employment offices (Rodell Olgac & Dimiter-Tajkon, 2015). Local PES offices employ bridge-builders to disseminate information about services that the PES offer to the Roma community. Using knowledge and skills acquired during the first stage, bridge-builders reach out to Roma community by organizing awareness-raising activities in shopping malls, schools, recreation centres, associations and social media. They also provide support to Roma jobseekers such as conducting motivational conversations after they register with the PES (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014).

*Rationale: Labour market problem and barriers to activation of Roma*

Cultural differences that exist between Roma and non-Roma persons in Sweden create barriers to the integration of Roma into society.<sup>84</sup> The Roma population is divided into five main groups according to origin, culture and mother tongue. About half belong to the Travellers, while the Swedish Roma, the Finnish Roma, earlier immigrants and recent immigrants (mainly from the former Yugoslavia) represent smaller sub-groups. Many Roma have not completed compulsory education. There is also mistrust among the Roma towards the public sector triggered by experiences of vulnerability, discrimination violations of human rights and bans on business activities (EC, 2012). The rationale of hiring Roma bridge-builders is that they speak the same language and share similar cultural circumstances as the targeted Romany community. This enables them to build trust with the Roma and inform them about public services (County Administrative Board of Stockholm County, 2016b).

Bridge-builders are expected to increase the level of trust of Roma persons towards the public sector and encourage them to use the PES and other public services. The bridge-builders are intended to close the gap between Roma and public sector in general and the PES in particular by disseminating knowledge to the Roma minority about municipal activities and Arbetsförmedlingen's service and support. Bridge-builders are also responsible for providing individual advice to Roma (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014).

The Swedish PES recognized the importance of the mutual understanding between Roma and public sector. Thus, apart from working with Roma community, bridge-builders are also responsible for increasing the level of knowledge about Roma as an ethnic minority and their needs among the authorities, social workers and employment officers (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014).

*Outreach strategy*

In 2011, municipalities were invited to voluntarily apply to become one of the five pilot municipalities (Edström, 2015). In the first phase of the programme, in total, 5 bridge-builders were employed in 5 pilot PES offices (1 bridge-builder per PES office) to serve as

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The Bridge-building programme is currently rolling out to all municipalities (County Administrative Board of Stockholm County, 2017).

<sup>84</sup> Note that the Strategy for Roma Inclusion (hence, the Bridge-building programme too) targets Swedish residents, i.e. EU citizens staying in Sweden for less than three months, and asylum seekers are not in its primary focus.

mediators between Roma and the PES. Several of the bridge builders were already engaged in Roma inclusion activities before they were employed by the PES. This has resulted in a wide local Roma network, which is a huge advantage in contacting Roma and other stakeholders (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014).

The main responsibility of bridge-builders is to support PES in outreach activities and make sure that Roma come and register with the PES. However, they can also provide support (such as conducting motivational conversations with Roma job seekers) to job counsellors after a Roma has registered with the PES (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014).

Outreach activities vary across the five pilot municipalities and include awareness-raising activities in shopping malls, associations, colleges, recreation centres, schools (e.g. IRIS schools – a special primary school for adult Roma), libraries, social media and group information sessions for Roma jobseekers about employment services and support provided by PES and the bridge-building role, some of which were organized jointly with the PES.

Additional activities varied by the local context. In Luleå, it has been extremely difficult to reach out Roma due to widespread lack of confidence among Roma in society's support functions and a small size of the target group compared to other municipalities. The bridge-builder has started a Roma youth group with the aim of creating a single platform for Roma youth meetings (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014). In Gothenburg, the bridge-builder organized several awareness-raising activities linked to broader events that engaged the local Roma community. One such event was an exhibition at Gothenburg City Museum titled "Are you a Roma?" (Rom san - Är du rom?), where Roma told about their everyday life and history (Gothenburg City Museum, 2015). Helsingborg City has developed a blog about how the outreach activities have been progressing in Roma inclusion. The blog highlights the bridge-worker's scope of work, responsibilities and activities (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014). In Malmö, the bridge-builder has used the Roma Information and Knowledge Centre as the main communication channel with the Roma community. Also, the bridge-builder's work has been integrated into the regular operations of the Malmö PES, which enables the bridge-builder to be engaged fully in designing and implementing outreach activities (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014).

### *Management and implementation*

The bridge-building programme was initiated by the government in 2012. The National Agency for Education and the National Board of Health and Welfare were invited to start a university-level education for bridge-builders in cooperation with the Södertörn University. Stockholm county administrative board was tasked with coordinating and monitoring the pilot project in five municipalities (EC, 2012).

Outreach activities that involve the bridge-builders are coordinated and implemented by the PES (Arbetsförmedlingen). Other actors engaged in implementation of outreach activities are schools, regional networks that deal with Roma issues, education and knowledge centres (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014).

Recognizing the importance of public service employees having necessary and right understanding of Roma as an ethnic minority, the PES office in Luleå, for example, has offered an education package called "Equality for Roma in the labour market" to its 275 employees in pilot offices (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014).

### Size of the programme

The Bridge-building programme is a pilot programme that was launched in 5 municipalities in 2015 and by 2015 has been rolled out to 8 municipalities. In 2012-2015, the government has allocated over 1.4 million EUR<sup>85</sup> and Arbetsförmedlingen has allocated around 1.2 million EUR (Swedish Agency for Public Management, 2016). In 2017, for further implementation of the programme, 1.6 million EUR has been allocated to the National Agency for Education and the National Board of Health and Welfare, and 2.2 million EUR has been given to additional six municipalities (County Administrative Board of Stockholm County, 2017). By 2015, 24 bridge-builders have been trained. The next round of the 2-year training programme will start in spring 2018 (Ministry of Culture of Sweden, 2017).

### Evaluation of the programme

Arbetsförmedlingen monitors local outreach activities by preparing quarterly status reports that contain indicators of main outcomes and description of how work is progressing at a local level. Status reports are prepared jointly by the bridge-builder and his/her case manager, and follow-up of the Strategy at a national level is based on results provided by pilot offices. However, not all Roma openly identify themselves as belonging to the minority, which induces a downward bias in the outcome indicators. This bias may be reduced if the bridge-builder is in contact both with a Roma jobseeker and jobseeker's PES counsellor (after registration) (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014).

Table 3-8 presents estimated results in the pilot municipalities for 2013. The bridge-builders have reached more than 3000 Roma persons, 297 out of whom have registered with the PES. Of those who registered with the PES in 2013, at least 86 people have been employed. Though women are given priority in the Strategy for Inclusion, roughly equal numbers of men and women have registered with the PES, and more men than women have taken up internship or employment offers.

**Table 3-8. Estimated results in pilot municipalities, 2013**

No. of Roma persons	Men	Women	Total
Registered with the PES	150	147	297
In internship	40	17	57
In vocational training	28	26	54
In post-secondary studies (folk high school, high school, Komvux or college)	37	36	73
In employment (all forms)	58	28	86

**Notes:** (1) Numbers apply to both newly unemployed persons and jobseekers with a longer history of unemployment. (2) Not all Roma who have enrolled in post-secondary studies are registered with the PES. (3) Numbers do not refer to unique individuals, i.e. there may be double counting in case if the same individual goes to employed after participating in training. (4) No information on these figures before the outreach activities have started in pilot municipalities, hence, no causal relation between outreach activities and figures.

**Source:** PES report on activities in pilot PES offices related to Roma inclusion, 2014

<sup>85</sup> Exchange rate as of 21 November 2017.

The evaluation of the Swedish Agency for Public Management identified a number of aspects in which the programme could be strengthened:

- Establish effective consultation with the municipality, in which the Roma minority is well-represented;
- training opportunities for Bridge-builders and caseworkers;
- defining the Bridge builder role in concrete terms;
- establishing forums for sharing experiences so as to enable the development of bridge-building activities.

#### *Role of PES – PES outreach activities and special services and measure for target group*

In April 2012, the PES was commissioned to participate in the pilot cycle of the Bridge-building programme with a further plan to roll out to all municipalities. The PES activities in reaching out Roma community were designed to promote diversity and counteract discrimination in the labour market. Its mission has been to cooperate with the pilot municipalities and Roma mediators in reaching out Roma community and ensure individual support to Roma. Successful cooperation at the pilot stage is crucial to ensure that the PES has necessary and right understanding of Roma as an ethnic minority in Sweden (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014).

At a national level, PES outreach activities include participation in several conferences and information efforts in order to disseminate knowledge about the Roma situation in the labour market, participation in a youth conference organized by the Roma Youth Union (RUF) which gathered about 100 Roma youth from 20 cities, translation of PES outreach material about services to different Roma dialects, and publishing "Open your door" brochures<sup>86</sup> in Swedish. These were particularly used by bridge-builders in contacting with employers and urging them to hire Roma people on equal terms as they hire non-Roma people (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2012).

#### *Other actors – outreach measures*

Actors such as schools, regional networks that deal with Roma issues, education and knowledge centres have been heavily involved in implementation of outreach activities. In Gothenburg, for example, a number of the Romans with which the PES office has come into contact have not completed their primary education. Therefore, the PES office collaborated with Agnesberg Folk High School, which is a folk high school with Romanian orientation. In Linköping, the PES office is a member of the regional network of municipalities and employers in Östergötland for Roma issues with a particular focus on Roma inclusion. The PES office also collaborates with the municipal Job and Knowledge Centre, which is responsible for labour market inclusion and adult education. In Malmö, the PES office cooperates with the Roma Information and Knowledge Center (RIKC) which is a municipal agency under the social resource management (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2014).

#### *Similar programmes in other countries*

A similar approach was used in a pilot project in the Czech Republic in 2012-2014, which targeted immigrants (EC, 2016). This initiative involved the development of a training course for cultural mediators ('intercultural workers'). Among other skills, the training prepares mediators to cooperate with other experts working towards the social inclusion of immigrants.

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<sup>86</sup> The brochures were published within the framework of the ESF project "Equal Opportunities for Roma in the Labour Market".

### **Summary assessment**

The Bridge-building (Brobyggare) programme introduced mediators to support members of the Roma minority in accessing PES (and other public) services. Though the programme is relatively small, its current coverage seems well targeted as it focuses on the main urban areas where most Roma live. The labour market integration aspect of the programme is strengthened by the fact that mediators are employed by the PES. The quality of mediation activities is ensured by a purpose-designed training programme, which, however, increases the costs of the initiative. Given the cultural diversity and segregation of the Roma in Sweden, the emphasis on cultural and language skills in the training of mediators seems appropriate.

### **Policy recommendations**

In view of the potential transferability of this programme, the following aspects seem important:

- effective and stable (institutionalised) links with the relevant municipalities
- ensuring that once contacting the PES, the Roma receive services tailored to their needs (including sensitisation of employers if discrimination is an issue)
- clear role description of mediators, based on the in-depth analysis of outreach barriers
- regular monitoring and feedback on the activities of mediators.

### 3.6 Portugal: “Mentoring Programme for Migrants”

#### **National Labour Market Context: Labour Force Participation by immigrants**

Portugal’s immigrant population includes four main groups of roughly equal size (originating from the EU Schengen area, Eastern Europe, former Portuguese colonies in Africa, and Brazil respectively) and a much smaller fifth group originating from Asia. According to LFS data, there were 160 thousand (2.4%) recent immigrants in the working age population in 2016.<sup>87</sup>

Latest LFS data show that non-Portuguese citizens are employed at a similar rate (64-69%) as Portuguese nationals (65% in 2016, Eurostat online *lfsa\_ergan*). However, the unemployment rate of immigrants is almost twice as high as for nationals and immigrants seem to be more affected than Portuguese nationals by downturns in economic activity. The 2008 ad hoc module of the LFS also showed that about half of immigrant workers had fixed-term contracts, which are typically associated with jobs with lower wages, compared to 25 per cent for other employees in 2008. Immigrants in Portugal were, on average, paid below the wages of native workers over the 2002-2008 period. In addition, the proportion of workers that are paid below the minimum wage is substantially higher for immigrants than for natives (Cabral and Duarte 2010).

#### **National Policy regime and institutional responsibilities for increasing labour force participation of immigrants**

In Portugal, the government has a comprehensive approach for promoting the inclusion of immigrants in a holistic perspective that covers housing, education, work, health, and language. Refugees are expected to integrate into Portuguese local communities rather than be concentrated in refugee centres or segregated urban communities (Calado 2016). Since 2007, government goals and actions have been defined by the Action Plans for Immigrant Integration, which outline the role and measures for each relevant ministry. The High Commissioner for Migration – (Alto Comissariado para as Migrações, ACM) monitors and coordinates the implementation of the Action Plans drafted by the ministries, and has the overall responsibility for the integration of immigrants (as well as for promoting the return of Portuguese emigrants).<sup>88</sup> ACM is a public institution integrated in the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. It is responsible for interlinking different ministries to develop, implement and evaluate crosscutting policies that targets migrants, including refugees and Roma communities, and that promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue, combating all forms of ethnic and racial discrimination.

Portugal has committed itself to make a generous contribution to the EU relocation scheme, increasing its national share to 4,500 and is willing to accept a total of about 10,000 refugees over a two-year period (Eurofound 2016).

In 2015, a Working Group to the European Agenda for Migration was set up in order to develop an action plan for the integration of immigrants. Delegates represent the General-Directorate of European Affairs/Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Alien and Borders Service; Social Security Institute; Labour and Professional Training Institute; General-Directorate of Health; General-Directorate of Education and High Commission for Migration.

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<sup>87</sup> These data cover all persons who live in Portugal but have not yet obtained citizenship, whether coming from an other EU Member State or a third country.

<sup>88</sup> [http://www.equineteurope.org/spip.php?action=memberdata\\_pdf\\_export&arg=12&hash=85f16945fd2ef75eabae24976491e396256e35c9&redirect=%23SELF](http://www.equineteurope.org/spip.php?action=memberdata_pdf_export&arg=12&hash=85f16945fd2ef75eabae24976491e396256e35c9&redirect=%23SELF)

Portugal has also been committed to ensuring the participation of migrant communities in the design and implementation of integration policies. The government provides financial and technical support to migrant associations and migrant leaders and encourages their participation in the discussion and validation of migration policies in the Consultative Council for Migration (Calado 2016).

Outreach measures for immigrants consist mainly of one-stop shops and the promotion of intercultural mediators in public and municipal services. Overall coordination for these rests with ACM, while actual implementation is managed by ACM and municipalities.

- **One stop shops.** In 2004, ACM established a network of National Immigrant Support Centres (CNAI) that provide a one-stop-shop service to immigrants. The centres host services that are supervised by eight different ministries (one of which is IEFPP, the Portuguese PES) under the same roof (Calado 2016). This implies that immigrants typically reach PES services via referral by one of ACM's CNAI.
- **Mentoring services.** A pilot project was started in 2012 to provide mentoring for immigrants by volunteers. Mentors help mentees in various matters, such as finding out about PES services. This programme is described in more detail below.
- **Project of Intercultural Mediation in Public Services – MISP.** The main goal of the Project of Intercultural Mediation in Public Services (MISP) is to support social cohesion, and quality of life in municipalities with a significant cultural diversity, by the mediating intervention and the participation of local actors.
- **Municipals teams of intercultural mediation (EMMI).** The project set up municipal teams of intercultural mediation (EMMI). Each EMMI must be heterogeneous regarding the ethnical origin, nationality, sex, age, migratory experience or professional training and/ or education.

### ***Policy measure: "Mentoring Programme for Migrants" (Programa Mentores Para Migrantes)***

#### *Aims and objectives of the volunteer mentoring programme*

The 'Programa Mentores Para Migrantes' promotes experiences of exchange, mutual aid and support between volunteers (Portuguese citizens) and migrants (migrants and immigrants) and / or refugees. It allows the mutual sharing of knowledge, and the recognition that individuals face the same difficulties, concerns and challenges of everyday life. Mentored immigrants receive support, follow-up, and guidance to solve their difficulties or concerns. Mentored refugees receive voluntary support at their arrival in Portugal. Mentors can further develop their personal skills, and openness to diversity. In more general terms, the project promotes equal opportunities and raises awareness of the richness of diversity. It also promotes volunteering, and participatory citizenship.<sup>89</sup>

#### *Main elements and rationale of the programme*

The Mentoring Program for Migrants was based on an earlier Danish model called Kvinfor Mentor Network. The programme is designed mainly to empower migrants but it is also a way of raising awareness on intercultural dialogue, through the relationships that are established during the mentoring processes, which is beneficial for both parties.

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<sup>89</sup> <http://www.acm.gov.pt/-/programa-de-mentores-para-imigrantes>

The programme is composed of three areas of intervention<sup>90</sup>:

### **1. Communication and project dissemination**

Partner organisations (public bodies and companies) disseminate the program in the local context using leaflets, radio spots, testimonial videos and referral from service providers. In the initial phase there was a national campaign that engaged public figures to promote the value of mentoring and mobilize prospective mentors and mentees.

### **2. Mentoring and matching**

The process includes 5 steps to be followed by both mentors and mentees:

- 1) Prospective mentors and mentees can apply using an online form. After registration they are invited to an individual interview to verify their qualifications, motivations, and expectations.
- 2) Once accepted, mentors and mentees are matched according to their profiles.
- 3) Matched parties meet to draft a commitment to carry out their duties. Volunteers provide support, guidance, and advice to migrants. During biweekly meetings, they also provide access to their professional networks, give advice on jobs application and interviews, information on work culture, evaluate job possibilities, and so on.
- 4) On a monthly, bimonthly or quarterly basis, communications are sent by the project management team to carry out intermediate evaluations and follow up on any doubts or questions both parties might have during the process.
- 5) At the end, all processes are evaluated by mentors and mentees to determine whether or not the goals have been met. If not reached, they can redefine them, and both parties have the possibility to start a new process.

### **3. Training and networking activities**

For joint reflection on their respective roles and how to fill it most effectively. Networking activities are organised across the country to enable the sharing of experiences. ACM also provides training to facilitate the dynamics between partners of the network and to develop their competences in mentoring management. The training covers methodology, procedures, and tools.

The basis of the joint work is a [Guide for Implementation](#), and a set of on-line training materials. Both workshops and tutorials are structured along 3 main themes:

- 1) How to communicate the project to participants and other potential partners;
- 2) How to develop training workshops for participants (mentors and mentees);
- 3) How to use the IT platform to manage mentoring processes.

In the pilot phase, the typical duration of the mentoring process ranged between 4 to 6 months (62 % of cases); some are shorter (31%), some others are longer (8%).

#### *Implementation and responsibilities*

The initiative consists of a national network of volunteer mentors and mentees. The mentoring managers – from companies, organisations, institutions and municipalities across the country – help establish contact between mentors and mentees via the online platform.

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<sup>90</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/mentoring-program-for-migrants>

The programme started as a pilot-project in 2012, in the partnership of the High Commission for Migration (ACM, IP) and the Group of Reflection and Support to Corporate Citizenship (GRACE). GRACE is composed of companies that promote several initiatives in corporate volunteering. The 2nd phase of the project involved 56 partners, located all over the country and brought together in a national network of organisations that implement the programme locally. The High Commission for Migration, as the coordinator of this network of partners, provides access to the methodology and materials.<sup>91</sup>

GRACE and ACM maintain a common IT platform to support the participants' registration, matching and managing all procedures regarding the mentoring processes (LL2II 2013). The programme is formally linked to the PES via ACM, which is responsible for coordinating PES services for immigrants via its network of one-stop-shops. There may be informal connections as well via the volunteer mentors who may have personal contacts at the PES.

The pilot phase was financed by the European Fund for the Integration of Third Countries Nationals (FEINPT) and by the companies associated to the project. Currently the programme is implemented with no external funding, based on the existing resources of the partner organisations. It is a low cost initiative of an annual budget of around 60.000,00 € that covers salaries of paid coordinators, materials and tools. Employees include a part time coordinator (approximately 3 hours a week), a full-time project manager; a full-time project assistant; and 42-part time mentoring managers (at 3 hours a week).

#### *Size of the outreach effort*

Compared to the annual inflow of immigrants in Portugal (estimated to be around 30 thousand in 2014), the programme is quite small.<sup>92</sup> The matching of mentors and mentees is based on the mentees' professions and needs, which requires that the mentors' pool is sufficiently varied. This explains why the number of registered mentors has evolved faster than the number of mentees (Table 3-9).

**Table 3-9: Main programme indicators**

	2013-2014 (pilot period)	2015	2016	2017
Mentoring processes	32*			
Registered mentors	67	462	500+	622
Registered mentees (immigrants)	124	158		255
Partner companies	19	53		46

\*Of that, 43% received support in training and job search, 20% in entrepreneurship.

**Sources:** <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/mentoring-program-for-migrants> and <http://www.ll2ii.eu/es/mentoring-program-for-migrants>

<sup>91</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/mentoring-program-for-migrants>

<sup>92</sup> OECD (2017), Permanent immigrant inflows (indicator). doi: 10.1787/304546b6-en (Accessed on 30 November 2017)

### *Evaluation*

The programme uses 3 separate evaluation forms: one for mentors, one for mentees and a third one for joint evaluation. In the latter, both parties reflect on the mentoring process, in terms of goals achievement, while in the individual evaluations they reflect on their own role and the role of partners, and describe their perception of the impact of their participation in the project.

In this internal evaluation, most mentees report to have improved their situation and feel more integrated. Most mentors report that they have gained intercultural competences and a more positive image of immigrants (<https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/mentoring-program-for-migrants>).

### *Similar programmes in other countries*

Volunteer-based integration activities for immigrants are wide-spread in Europe, though not all such activities involve support in labour market integration. The earliest such schemes were started in 2003 in Denmark (KVInfo) and Germany (MiMi). The **Austrian Mentoring for Migrants** was established in 2008 by the Federal Economic Chamber and is currently managed in cooperation with the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) and the PES (AMS). The Estonian [Johannes Mihkelson Centre \(JMC\)](#) also set up a scheme in 2008, inspired by Finnish practices, started training and coordinating mentors for refugees. Sweden introduced a scheme for immigrants focusing on vocation and social inclusion in 2010. To support the systematic matching of volunteers' contributions with refugees' needs, national online platforms have been established in some countries, e.g. in [Belgium](#), the [Czech Republic](#), [Estonia](#) and [Austria](#) (Mikaba 2016).

### **Summary and assessment**

The Portuguese 'Programa Mentores Para Migrantes' is a mentoring scheme supported by a national IT platform and training for mentors, which is jointly managed by a public agency (ACM) and an employers' association (GRACE). The programme is formally linked to the PES via ACM (which is responsible for coordinating PES services for immigrants) and informally via the volunteer mentors who may have personal contacts at the PES. The scheme offers support and follow-up to the mentees while it also aims to promote openness to diversity among mentors and society in general.

The involvement of volunteers makes the programme cheap. The partnership of GRACE ensures a strong focus on job outcomes, however, the links to the PES in the current set-up seem weak, which may imply that mentees access to PES services remains limited. This cannot be ascertained on the basis of the limited monitoring information.

A recent study suggests that such mentoring schemes can be an effective remedy for the lack of transparency in immigrants' skills, as a low-threshold approach to skill assessment and development (Adecco 2017).

Overall it seems that this approach has considerable potential but its effectiveness should be evaluated rigorously.

### **Policy recommendations**

In view of the potential transferability of this programme, the following aspects seem important:

- 1)** as Portugal has a network of one-stop-shops for immigrants, the programme can be highly individualised and focus on person-specific needs. In countries where services for immigrants are delivered in a fragmented way, mentors may need to

spend more time in supporting their mentees to navigate the system, and should be prepared for this task;

- 2)** the programme builds on the openness and willingness of employers to encourage volunteering among their employees, this may however not be readily available in some countries;
- 3)** a formalised link to PES services may increase the effectiveness of the programme;
- 4)** the programme may be more effective in the case of highly skilled and experienced immigrants.

## **4. Comparison of Member States' practices**

The review of existing outreach activities reconfirmed the main finding of earlier studies that outreach activities are not yet part of the standard toolkit of most European PES and rarely go beyond information provision. It should be noted however that the existing literature on outreach activities is relatively thin (especially compared to standard ALMP) and, given the range of target groups and potential actors, it was not possible to conduct a comprehensive survey of member states within the time and resource constraints of this project.

Based on the review of the available documentation, existing initiatives targeting women or older workers tend to be larger in terms of geographical coverage and participant numbers, while programmes for minorities and refugees are often of a smaller scale. This may be related both to the relative size of the target group and also to the fact that minorities often live in geographically segregated communities.

The impact of outreach activities is rarely evaluated in a counterfactual framework (or if so, it cannot be separated from the impact of a broader policy measure) and often, monitoring information is missing or not publicly available. This applies especially to programmes that are implemented mainly by non-governmental organisations. A non-representative selection of ten European initiatives displays a wide variety of interventions including media campaigns, dedicated web-sites, special services, mentoring, peer-to-peer counselling and proactive outreach to employers (see Table 4-3).

This section compares outreach for the three with particular reference to the six detailed case studies, focusing mainly on three aspects: the diversity of goals, the relationship between the target group and the main outreach channel, and lastly the implementing institutions. The section concludes with some reflections on the need for further research on the effectiveness of the six programmes.

### **Diversity of outreach goals**

The effective activation of inactive older workers, working age women and minorities/migrants entail multifaceted social and institutional changes and not merely measures aimed at inactive individuals. This implies that outreach efforts are designed to reach different goals depending on the target group of the programme.

In the case of older workers, the main challenge is to address incentives to remain in the labour force and discrimination by employers. Accordingly, outreach activities aim at changing employers' attitudes and age management policies. In some cases, this may be supplemented by a broader campaign to change public attitudes towards ageing.

In the case of women, return to the labour market may be hindered by attitudes and concerns related to care responsibilities in the family, a depreciation of skills acquired before child birth, and lack of information on labour market opportunities and PES services. Employer discrimination may also play a role, especially in the case of mothers with children below school age. This is reflected in the goal of outreach activities targeting women: they either focus on increasing awareness of PES services and on providing special support services or measures. The German initiative (PWE) also addresses employers by providing good examples of family-friendly workplaces.

In the case of minorities and immigrants, labour market exclusion is often embedded in a broader problem of social exclusion that may be coupled with a lack of trust in public institutions, a lack of awareness of existing services, limited access to network ties in the majority population and discrimination on the part of employers. Consequently, trust-

building and awareness-raising is the main focus of outreach activities for this target group.

**Table 4-1: Overview of diversity of goals in selected outreach initiatives**

Goals	Older workers	Women	Immigrants & ethnic minorities
<b>1. Outreach activities and measures to change employers attitudes and policies</b>	Anti-discrimination legislation & Prohibition of compulsory retirement ages (UK) Tripartite Agreement on "More Inclusive Working Life" (Norway) Perspective 50+ (D) Vitality Package (NL) Solidarity Across Generations (PL)	Parenthood Charter in Enterprise (FR) Vocational reintegration (DE)	Brobyggare/Bridge-builders in PES (SE)
<b>2. Outreach directed at inactive groups to change their attitudes/ increase willingness to work</b>	WeGebAU [training in SMEs] (D)	Phasing out the transferability of the general tax credit (NL) In Work Credit (UK) Flexible parental leave scheme (SE)	
<b>3. Outreach directed at the public at large to change societal attitudes/ combat discrimination</b>	Age Positive Initiative (UK)		Volunteer mentoring for immigrants (DK, PT)
<b>4. Outreach marketing and mentoring to increase awareness of services, build trust and encourage uptake</b>	Image Campaign [institutional marketing](D)	Vocational reintegration (AT, DE) Helping new mothers back into work (CZ) Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship (SE) From empowerment to employment: job-related support for refugee women (SE) Young Mums Will Achieve (UK)	'Stadtteilmütter' (DE) Volunteer mentoring for immigrants (DK, PT) Mobile PES and Remote PES posts in rural areas (BG, RO) Reaching Communities Project (UK) Brobyggare/Bridge-builders in PES (SE) Ethnic minority outreach Vienna PES for Youth (Austria) EVU Business Counseling (DK) Partner Outreach for Ethnic Minorities - POEM (UK)
<b>5. Outreach as offering special support services or measures in (re)entering the labour market.</b>	Talent 55+ (NL) Work Programme (UK) & New Deal 50+(UK)	Helping nurses back to work by providing childcare (CZ) Guaranteed day care (DK) Family centre offers practical support (HU) Nurturing families, nurturing opportunities (FR) Supplement for the free choice of childcare (FR) Public childcare and child-rearing allowance (SE)	City of Jyväskylä's Romani Services (FI) Roma and Sinti - Securing Employment and Livelihood through Self-Organisation (DE) Gurkha Resettlement Education and Adult Training (UK)

### Relationship between outreach channels and target groups

The comparison of the outreach cases surveyed (see Tables 4-2 and 4-3) also suggests that the target groups and goals also tend to determine the main outreach channels of the interventions. Web based information provision is used in most of the examples, regardless of the target group but it is not the main channel in either of them. Consistent with their goals, the two outreach programmes targeted at women focus on special services tailored to the needs of the target group and also rely on community counselling centres for disseminating information and referring clients to the PES. The latter channel is especially group specific in the sense that such community centres, where they exist, often serve one or another particular target group (e.g. youth, women, or immigrants) and can be used as a link to PES services only for that target group. In the case of minorities and immigrants, the main channel is peer to peer contact in both case studies. Peers may be defined in terms of ethnic background (as in the Swedish case) or along professional groups or other shared personal interests (as in the Portuguese mentoring programme). In both cases the rationale for using the peer to peer approach is that a shared background and / or interest can foster mutual trust. The involvement of employers is either not part of the outreach phase (in Sweden) or only serves to facilitate the recruitment of mentors with a variety of professional backgrounds (in Portugal).

**Table 4-2: Main outreach channels by target group (six cases)**

Target Group	Web-Based Information Provision	Community Counselling Centres	Special (PES) Services	Peer To Peer	Via Employers
Women	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓
Minorities and Immigrants	✓	✓	✓	✓✓✓	(✓)
Older workers	✓		✓	✓	✓✓

✓ denotes importance of the channel in the examples

As the outreach programmes for older workers mainly focus on informing and influencing employers, the main channel is obviously employers' engagement in both the Dutch and the Polish example. In the Dutch case, the programme has a strong peer to peer elements as well, in the form of networking groups of 55+ jobseekers moderated by specially trained job coaches that are designed to improve the outdated job search skills and low self-esteem of older unemployed.

### Implementing organisations and the role of the PES

Outreach policies are addressed to diverse subgroups within the inactive population that face specific and often multiple barriers to employment. This implies that outreach activities need to interact or at least be harmonised with policy domains that go beyond labour market policy, such as social and family policies, health care, disability policies, education or income support, implemented by multiple actors at various levels of government. Accordingly, while the PES is often involved in outreach activities it may not be the lead implementer.

In our extended sample of ten initiatives (see Table 4-3 below), the PES is explicitly involved in 7 cases, but this is partly due to the fact that PES involvement was one of our selection criteria. In three of the examples, the PES is part of a broader cooperation, typically including the line ministry and municipalities as other partners. In four of the examples, the PES is the main implementer.

The role of the PES in outreach programmes seems to depend partly on the target group and the approach, and partly on the broader institutional framework. The PES obviously plays a central role in programmes that focus on marketing and providing tailor made employment services (as in the two programmes focusing on women and the Dutch programme for older workers). Its role may be less prominent if the intervention is community based, small scale, and uses a peer to peer approach. In such cases the lead organisation may be the municipality or NGOs, which are more likely to have the local contacts and capacity at the local level. The Swedish case (where Roma mediators are employed by the PES) seems an exception rather than the rule, and may be explained by the fact that the Swedish PES is highly developed and has a strong capacity (and mandate) to serve disadvantaged clients.

However, even when the PES does not play a dominant role in the outreach phase, there is a formal link to PES activities in all the programmes. This seems important in order to ensure a smooth client journey from awareness raising through accessing PES services to successful labour market (re)integration.

### **Need for further research**

The detailed case studies suggest that, compared to standard ALMP, outreach activities are poorly documented and monitored. Further research would be necessary in several aspects of outreach activities:

- What is the impact of outreach activities on awareness and use of PES services?
- Design adequacy: are current practices effective in tackling the specific barriers to using PES services for their target group?
- If there are alternative methods for reaching out to the same target group, which of these are most cost-effective?
- Are there constraints (e.g. in legal provisions on personal data protection) that could be eased in order to facilitate the use of cost-efficient methods (e.g. automated referral between public institutions)?
- What is the contribution of outreach activities to the activation of formerly inactive labour market groups?

**Table 4-3: Summary of selected examples of outreach activities**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Sponsorship/Implementation</b>	<b>Content/goal</b>	<b>Type / principal outreach element</b>	<b>Scope and size*</b>	<b>Impact **</b>
Professional return (BW) <b>(AT)</b>	1998-	Women re-entering work after break	PES	Counselling, coaching and training	internet-based navigator, dedicated counselling centres	N	+
Perspective Re-entry <b>(D)</b>	2008-	Women re-entering work after break	Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women, cooperation, PES	Counselling, coaching and training especially for women re-entrants	community counselling centres; internet-based navigator	N	+
Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship <b>(SE)</b>	2007-2014	Women entering self-employment	Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth	Initial information counselling, mentoring and assistance in building up networks. Financial support for starting female businesses distributed	special community counselling centres	N	?
Bridge-builders for Roma <b>(SE)</b>	2012-	Roma	Arbetsförmedlingen (PES)	mediators with Romani language skills help connect the Roma community and public services (education, social initiatives and the PES)	peer-to-peer	P	(+)
Mentoring <b>(PT)</b>	2014-	Immigrants	High Commission for Migrations	Support immigrants by volunteer mentors, training and networking. Involves awareness raising about the programme.	mentoring	N	(+)
Street Mother Program <b>(D)</b>	2004-	New ethnic minority families	Neukölln and other Berlin local authorities	Longer ethnic residents provide information on employment, education and society to more recent immigrants	peer-to-peer	L (but has become a model)	(+)
Talent 55+ <b>(NL)</b>	2010-	Older workers (job seekers)	UWV Werkbedrijf (PES)	55+ job search networks (job clubs) supported by ca 120 specially trained job counsellors	media campaign & special services	N	(+)
Solidarity across generations <b>(PL)</b>	2008-	Older workers (employed)	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, regional/local governments, PES, other public bodies	curtailing paths to early retirement and increasing the retirement age	proactive outreach to employers	N	(+)
Perspective 50+ <b>(D)</b>	2005-2015	Older workers (jobseekers)	Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, local employment pacts, PES	Increase labour force participation through mobilization of local networks (employment pacts) and individual support measures	proactive outreach to employers	N	+
WeGebAU <b>(D)</b>	2007-	Older workers (lower skilled employed)	PES	Retention of older workers though upskilling & HR counselling to SMEs	proactive outreach to employers	N	+

\* L=local, P=pilot, N=national. \*\* +=formal evaluation found significant positive effects; (+) monitoring indicators or qualitative evaluations suggest possible positive impact

## **5. Conclusions and recommendations: the role of the PES in outreach to the inactive**

### **What is outreach?**

There is no clear and agreed definition of what is meant by “outreach.” In the public sector “outreach” is used to describe a variety of activities or measures by a government agency or programme to communicate with or engage other organisations, individuals not, or not yet, its clients or customers, or the general public.<sup>93</sup> The three target groups that are our focus, inactive older workers, women of working age not in the labour force and the inactive among ethnic minorities are not ordinarily PES clients. Insofar as their participation is voluntary, PES activation efforts for these groups have to be based on outreach.

Outreach is not an end in itself but an element of an activation service strategy. It is only sensible if the PES, or other responsible agencies, can offer the inactive measures and services, either alone or in cooperation with other partners, to address the specific need of the inactive in order to facilitate their entry into employment. The actual services offered will of course vary greatly depending on the needs of particular target groups among the inactive and the resources available. The choice of concrete forms of outreach depends on the goals of the outreach effort, the particular target group and the resources available.

In practice outreach options also depend on whether the PES, or another implementing agency, has a relationship to inactive persons in the target group that can be instrumentalised for outreach purposes. For example, if inactive persons receive welfare, parental leave, early retirement or disability benefits through the PES, or other state institutions, identification of and communication with inactive persons may be facilitated through existing relationships.

### **Outreach in national strategies to increase labour force participation**

Member States have in fact undertaken remarkable and to a large extent successful efforts to increase labour force participation and employment rates over the last 15-20 years, both of which have risen significantly for older workers and women. They have, however, prioritized other strategies.

For both inactive older workers and inactive women of working age the principal focus of public policy in the EU has been on making the choice of employment over inactivity more attractive (e.g. by changing incentives in pension and benefit systems, making employment more flexible, improving access to family services) and on changing societal attitudes toward older workers and female employment. Special services and outreach measures directed at the inactive play only a subordinate or even negligible role:

- Outreach activities in strict sense targeted directly on inactive older workers do not seem to exist, aside from some PES publicity about its special services for older workers. Outreach efforts that exist are proactive directed primarily at em-

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<sup>93</sup> Sara Dewson, Sara Davis and Jo Casebourne, “Maximising the role of outreach in client engagement,” Department for Work and Pensions, Research Report No 326, 2006. Duelle and Scharle 2016. In European employment policy outreach issues have been addressed recently in the context of youth employment policies (Youth Guarantee) and PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs (see Hall A-M, Metcalfe H, Irving P (2015) PES Practices for the Outreach and Activation of NEETs: A Contribution of the Network of Public Employment Services, Brussels: European Commission.

ployers and through them also at older workers with the aim of prolonging working lives and reducing inflow into activity.

- Outreach activities directed specifically at inactive working age women appear to be few and mostly small-scale, most offer initial information or counselling related to beginning search for employment or starting a business. In many if not most cases the lead agency is not the PES or Labour ministry but others (e.g. Family or Women's affairs) or organized by NGOs. Most of the projects are funded through ESF grants.

For ethnic minorities activation normally falls under the standard procedures of the public employment services. The activity rates of internal migrants from other EU28 countries are, on average, not significantly lower than for native citizens. Special outreach measures exist primarily for unique ethnic minorities, especially Roma and Sinti, for refugees and to a lesser extent for ethnic minorities from non-EU28 countries. In many cases the primary emphasis is on social inclusion rather than specifically on activation.

In all six case study countries there were comprehensive strategies to increase the labour force integration of the respective inactive target groups. However, as we noted in the project midterm report, our impression from the literature survey is that strategies and measures to increase activity and employment rates of the target groups are most frequently found in Member States in North and Western Europe in which the challenge of an aging labour force and demographic change is greatest. The distribution of migrants and refugees and outreach measures for them to be appears similar (Midterm Report, p.7). It would require a more systematic survey of all Member States to verify this finding, which was not feasible within the context of a small scale study.

Where such measures exist, they are often the responsibility of actors other than the PES. National outreach measures for the three inactive target groups studied in which the PES play a central role were identified in only a few countries:

- (1) Older workers (Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Norway, UK), whereby the relevant measures were directed primarily at employers or older employed workers;<sup>94</sup>
- (2) Working age women (Austria, Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic);<sup>95</sup>
- (3) Ethnic (Roma) minorities (Sweden, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria) and migrants (Lithuania). The distribution of outreach measures for Roma is largely reflects their pattern of settlement.

In numerous other cases national outreach measures for the three inactive target groups are the responsibility of other ministries in which the PES may place a role and there is, in addition, a large number of regional and local projects (see Tables 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4 above.)

### **Outreach in transformational policies**

Extending working lives, facilitating the (re-)entry of working age-women and the labour market integration of ethnic minorities and migrants represent call for broad transformations- in labour market institutions, work place practices and public attitudes and perceptions. Effective national strategies by European governments have been comprehensive. The spectrum of supporting outreach efforts observed in our literature survey and case studies is correspondingly broad.

Our survey the practice of outreach in the Member States makes clear that a broader understanding of outreach in terms of the goals and addressees as well as particular

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<sup>94</sup> In the latter two cases the parent ministries were primarily responsible.

<sup>95</sup> Or the recently announced UK Career Break Returners Programmes under the Ministry of Education.

method used is necessary. With respect to outreach for the inactive it is useful to distinguish different types of outreach according to their goals and targets, of which outreach directed at affected individuals is only one element:

1. Outreach in a narrow sense directed at the target group to communicate with, engage and offer services to persons not already not already clients or customers of the PES.
2. Outreach can take the form of offering tailor-made services for the target group in (re)entering the labour market. Outreach is only sensible if the PES, or other providers, can offer the inactive measures and services that address their specific needs
3. Outreach activities of the PES and other actors are not only directed at inactive individuals but also at employers, the demand side, in order to influence their attitudes and practices toward employment of the inactive target groups and to secure their participation in employer-oriented PES measures. The engagement of employers and other partners is likewise voluntary and based on effective PES outreach, and on incentives.
4. Outreach marketing to enhance the visibility and public perception of the PES and to make its services better known, either to the general public or to specific hard to reach target groups. The willingness of jobseekers, employers or the inactive to utilize its services depend ultimately its reputation and public image, as for any large service organisation.
5. Outreach information campaigns directed at the public at large to challenge stereotypes regarding. older workers, working women and ethnic minorities and to combat discrimination.

The different types of outreach all make use of a variety of outreach methods, typically combining several different approaches.

### **Role of the PES in outreach to the inactive**

PES regard the unemployed as their primary responsibility. The inactive are not a traditional target group and, based on our survey, outreach programmes directed at the inactive are relatively rare. Expanding the labour force and extending PES service to a broader clientele is a plausible policy priority for PES with adequate resources and in countries or regions with tight labour markets but not in countries with high levels of unemployment and overstretched PES resources. Unsurprisingly, outreach efforts by the PES targeted at the inactive are most frequently found in North and Western Europe, where the concerns about the aging of the labour force and impending labour market shortages are greatest.

Activation of passive benefit recipients is a functional alternative to purely voluntary outreach efforts to the inactive and in many cases the preferred choice. In this case contact with the PES and eventually participation in labour market programs and services is made obligatory. In many cases, the ILO inactive (not searched for work in the last 4 weeks) may be registered unemployed and or unemployment benefit recipients, if the intensity of PES activation of its own clients is low. In such cases the first step in outreach to the inactive can be to increase the frequency and intensity of interaction with the PES's own clients.

### **Conclusions and recommendations for the three target groups**

Conclusions and recommendations for the three target groups examined are addressed here separately since each represents a distinctive activation challenge:

### *Inactive Older workers*

Older inactive workers (55-64) are by far the least promising target for PES outreach efforts: Relatively few want to work (18%) and even older workers seeking employment are difficult to place and for the PES resource intensive. Rather than outreach to the inactive Member States have prioritized proactive strategies to extend working lives by reducing the flow into inactivity by extending working lives, especially by raising statutory retirement ages, and by restricting access to early retirement. We find no evidence of PES outreach activities toward older inactive workers not already PES clients.

Outreach is important for increasing the labour force participation of older workers but the kind of outreach needed is that directed at employers and employed workers to change attitudes toward age in employment and to promote life-long learning. Labour market policies can play an important role, in particular by supporting further training for middle-aged and older employed workers.

The success of these policies for extending working lives has important consequences for the PES. More older jobseekers can be expected to need PES services as their share in the labour force increases and receipt of benefits is increasingly made conditional on availability for work. There is thus an increasing need for innovative employment promotion strategies for older unemployed workers. The Dutch "Talent 55+" placement services initiative and to a lesser extent the Polish staff training component on placement of older workers are both promising and transferable approaches, although the level of information available is insufficient for a qualified assessment. The Polish case is also instructive for its strong emphasis on life long-learning and on the need to include even younger workers 45 years of age and over, although further training for the employed appears to have been displaced in practice by the demand for services for the unemployed.

### *Working-age women*

Prime age inactive women (25 -49) are a promising focus for outreach measures to increase labour force participation. Reported willingness to work is high (32%) as is their activation potential, particularly for women re-entering the labour market after an extended family break. Economically inactive, in particular qualified women who have ceased work for family reasons, present an unused potential for the labour market. The costs of such an unused potential increase when labour force becomes scarce, such as in rapidly ageing countries.

National policies to increase female labour force participation have emphasized in particular childcare, availability of part-time work and flexible work schedules, leave-related policies and other family friendly measures (54.5% of inactive women in this age group state that family responsibilities as the principal reason for not seeking work). Our survey did, however, identify a significant number of outreach initiatives directed at inactive working age women, although many of the programs are relatively small and local.

Two of these programs "Perspective Re-entry" in Germany and "Vocational Re-Entry" in Austria highlight services for women re-entering the labour market after a career break typically for family reasons. Both provide tailor made counselling nested in a broader service offering and information on available family services. The focus of the German program is on understanding the financial incentives (and costs) related to the decision to seek employment. A distinctive aspect of the Austrian program is an emphasis on viewing the re-entry as an opportunity to adjust career trajectories, also by enabling a change to less traditional female occupations. The German (ESF pilot) programme takes place in special centres apart from the PES, whereas the Austrian programme is run by the PES. This seems to be fundamental design choice. Outreach in the German program is organized independently of the PES and only a small fraction of the participants are referrals from the PES.

Re-entry is now increasingly a typical work transition for (mostly) women. Based on our survey, there is, however, a lack of PES specialized counselling and support services to facilitate a successful career re-entry appropriate to their skills potential. In addition to a few public programs, there are also numerous private sector initiatives (e.g. in the UK financial sector) for "Returners," especially professional women. A more systematic study of the potential of existing programs for returners, public and private, and eventually increased EU support for such an approach is warranted.

#### *Ethnic minorities and immigrants*

The PES is normally responsible for the labour market integration of ethnic minorities and refugees who have established residency. Although migrants as a group do not have a lower labour force participations rates, foreigners with non-EU citizenship do (73.1% vs. 65.4%), despite their more favourable age structure. This participation gap is largely due to markedly lower participation rates for adult prime-age women (59%).

The relatively few outreach efforts of the PES or other public agencies are usually reserved for ethnic communities that have special problems not only in labour market integration but in interacting with the mainstream procedures of public authorities for linguistic or other reasons, especially Sini and Roma and some non-European migrant groups. They are often more social programmes rather than having primarily labour market goals, albeit social integration is a prerequisite for labour market integration. The most common form of outreach is service provision in the clients' community via PES case workers or social workers.

The two programmes examined in greater detail differ in their target groups, outreach strategy and degree of formalization. The Swedish Bridge-building programme uses specially trained (culturally and linguistically) mediators to support Roma minority in accessing PES (and other public) services in participating municipalities. The Portuguese programme is a volunteer mentoring scheme jointly managed by a public agency (ACM) linked to the PES, and an employers' association (GRACE). The linkage to the PES and, in the latter case, also to the employers' association potentially strengthens their labour market orientation. Their diffuse integration goals and lack of available monitoring data on program outcomes makes them difficult to assess, although especially the Swedish programme has clearly defined organisational structures and responsibilities.

In view of the significant communities of ethnic minorities and the growing trend in immigration, there is a clear need for increased efforts for outreach programmes among these groups. Outreach activities may need to focus on women specifically, as they are particularly likely to remain outside the labour force. While it is advisable that such programmes are closely linked to the PES in order to maintain a focus on employment, the Swedish example may prove infeasible in countries where PES resources are limited. In these countries, cooperation with NGOs can support the sustainability of outreach programmes and may improve their effectiveness where NGOs are well connected in the local community and have the diverse cultural and language skills to engage with ethnic minorities.

Robust policy recommendations require a more systematic analysis of a set of similar types of outreach programmes examined in the detail cases above (mentoring or mediator programmes for ethnic minorities; re-entry outreach programs for women; employer outreach for proactive further training and other measures for employed older workers). And need to be based on good evaluation data. This goes beyond our limited survey based on secondary analysis.

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### **6.1 Literature review**

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## Outreach to working-age women

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