

EVENT REPORT

TITLE:

Peer-Learning Seminar

SUBJECT:

Gender & Inclusiveness in Active Labour Market Policies.

Barcelona (Spain), 15-16 November 2023

Event web page, including all presentations:

[Peer-Learning Seminar: Gender & Inclusiveness in Active Labour Market Policies | ETF \(europa.eu\)](#)

Setting the scene

The European Training Foundation (ETF) organised a peer learning seminar on 15 and 16 November in Barcelona, on new approaches in definition and delivery of Active labour market policies (ALMPs) focused on gender equality and inclusiveness in the labour market.

The event gathered representatives of relevant institutions from 18 ETF Partner Countries (including 8 participants from the Eastern Partnership countries, 11 representatives of Western Balkans and Türkiye region, and 11 participants from Central Asia and the South-East Mediterranean regions), also specialists from the EU Member States (Spain, Sweden), the European Commission, European Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Union for Mediterranean and the Generalitat de Catalunya. The seminar served as a platform for policy learning through the exchange of experiences and discussion of new policy ideas to adapt ALMPs and the provision of training focused on labour market inclusion of women and persons with disabilities.

Through a combination of presentations, group exercises and discussions, participants came out with a number of conclusions that can be used for further shaping the ALMPs on gender and inclusiveness in their countries and help increase cooperation between countries.

The format for policy learning proved to be very successful, allowing for exchanges within specific regional dynamics (Eastern Partnership, Western Balkans and Türkiye, Central Asia and South-East Mediterranean), but at the same time learning from international practices. Participants representing different countries, institutions and realities, underlined the need for such an exchange and learning from each other. In addition, they identified many common priorities and challenges within their regions, discussed good practices and built mutual understanding for possible future actions. Participants also expressed the need for more policy learning and their willingness for continuation with similar peer learning seminars.

Introducing key concepts / topics; Objective and aims

The objective of the seminar was to stimulate common reflection and discussion on how active labour market policies and training systems can accompany individuals and companies cope with the challenges of gender inequalities and specific vulnerabilities. By bringing together partners from different institutional settings and regions, the seminar aimed also to co-create a wide knowledge-base of innovative practices and successful enabling factors.

During the introductory session, it was reiterated that the seminar is part of a series of peer learning events focused on policies and innovations in the EU and neighbouring countries. Next to introducing best EU and ETF Partner Countries (PCs) practices, the event addressed common challenges in the design and implementation of ALMPs. In his welcoming speech, Xavier Matheu, Senior Advisor to the ETF Director, stressed the need for effective spending of resources on active labour market policies who may support a better participation of women and persons with disabilities on labour market, providing thus a high economic and social benefits.

Key takeaways

Employment services, active labour market policies and training systems can play a crucial role in supporting an increased participation of women and persons with disabilities in labour market. Among the messages stemming from experience sharing and discussions during the event, we underline the following:

- put the principles in practice; although there is a legal framework to enable a better labour market inclusion of women and persons with disabilities, implementation is lagging behind;
- building capacity of the various stakeholders with responsibilities to approach the specific needs of vulnerable groups is a must;
- closer interinstitutional cooperation (ministries of education and labour, skills or qualifications agencies and public employment services) and strong involvement of economic sectors representatives, companies and NGOs;
- focus on competences that a person has, how they meet labour market needs, and afterwards to identify the best solutions for filling the workability gaps.

Policy approaches to the gender equality

ALMPs aim to improve the employability of specific target groups, such as the unemployed, young graduates, laid-off workers, long-term unemployed, elderly or people with obsolete skills, through the provision of different services and measures (for example training, employment and entrepreneurship incentives or subsidized employment):

- Gender inequality has proven to be a stubborn and damaging reality of the global labour market in detriment of women; no matter in which way we look at the labour statistics, women, constituting half of the world population, represent an untapped human potential.
- Vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, displaced people, young people in rural areas, or ethnic and migrant groups, and people facing intersectional inequalities, require specific activation measures to be included in the labour markets.

A tailored combination of ALMPs is needed to support the **labour market entrance and retainment of women** and of the most vulnerable groups with weak attachment to the labour market. ALMPs may remain blind regarding labour market specific challenges notwithstanding declared intentions of equality and inclusiveness, practitioners may be unarmed in front of multiple target groups and variety of challenges, and the Public Employment Services often lack the dedicated services to address the obstacles faced by women and by the most vulnerable groups, which in many cases were amplified by the pandemic.

Key success factors cover four areas: establishment of a governmental body for dealing with women specific policies, improving access of women to IT infrastructure and digitalisation, aligning education, and boosting STEM education of women, and creative funding for women-lead business and promoting successful women in business.

Numerous of interventions already creating positive results were presented by different countries.

Institute of Women, Spain, highlighted the persistent inequalities on the labour market with still a very low economic activity of women, which are facing both vertical and horizontal segregation. There is a need for a strong commitment of all key stakeholders to reduce gender gaps and inequalities, by adoption of minimum wage, parental care leave schemes (co-responsibility), equal pay and promoting companies that share these values.

Union for the Mediterranean, through the voice of Deputy Secretary General, H.E. Ambassador John Paul Grech, stressed that tailored activation measures are crucial to address inequalities and strengthen inclusion on the labour market. The potential of women in the MEDA region is vastly unutilised, especially of young women. Legislation and protection, access to education, challenging gender norms and use of technology, are all key success factors for better integration of women in the labour market.

European Investment Bank reported an increase in financing for women entrepreneurs although most of women applying for funding become entrepreneurs by necessity. Nevertheless, as another positive outcome, has been noticed that women as entrepreneurs are hiring more women than men. Another aspect in focus is financing the childcare facilities, that will lead to more women employment opportunities.

Women economic empowerment is central to **DG NEAR**, with a focus on quality employment for women, including work-life balance policies, transition from informal to formal employment, inclusive labour policies, promoting women leadership, supporting women entrepreneurship, and providing support to migrant women.

Union for the Mediterranean, is currently mainstreaming gender equality on the basis of Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society who calls member countries to promote the following Action Plan, taking into account the importance of education and vocational trainings as cross-cutting issues, in the following 4 actions: raising women's participation in public life and decision-making, raising women's economic participation, combating all forms of violence against women and girls, and challenging cultural and social norms and eliminate gender stereotypes, particularly in and through education and media.

As shown by a recent **ETF Review of gender dimension of Labour Market transitions** (forthcoming publication, 2024) and its implications for policy making in the areas of activation, upskilling/reskilling and career guidance, in most EU neighbouring countries, the activity rate and the employment rate of men is higher than that for women. The activity gap is highest in most Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, as well as in Türkiye and Kosovo*. Activity gaps are comparatively low (and below EU-27 average) in Israel, Moldova, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. The good news is that gender gaps in labour force participation and gender employment gaps have narrowed in a number of countries over the past decade (and earlier). However, in some countries, progress has

been slow, or have even been reversed. The report is concluding that overcoming gender stereotypes and changing social norms is essential to pursue gender sensitive and gender transformative activities.

Kyrgyzstan introduced the provision of social security based on social contracts, that are an agreement on mutual obligations between a low-income or limited-means family and a territorial division of the Ministry of Labour, according to which the territorial unit provides budget funds totalling 100,000 soms (\$1,119) to a low-income or limited-means family to start a business. The social contract project has started in 2022 in several pilot areas and until now the areas covered by social contract participant business projects were 16,4% in production, 6.2% in trading, 6.4% in service provision and 71% in agriculture.

Türkiye has in place incentives (priority benefit) for increased participation of women in on-the-job training programme or vocational training courses, which proved to give good results. Similarly, have been observed an increased participation of women in public works programmes.

Employment policies in **Morocco** are designed to be inclusive of both sexes, including integration programs and initiatives to improve employability of women, especially of young women. Promoting women entrepreneurship and improving women's employability is based on a partnership between the public and private sector, also involving civil society organizations. Another program is targeting rural women and seasonal workers involved in picking red fruits in Spain, aiming to help these women create an income-generating activity when they return to Morocco.

Policy approaches to the inclusion of persons with disabilities

Specific country representatives reflected also on different policies and measures introduced towards a more effective support for the **inclusion in the labour market of persons with disabilities**.

In his opening remarks for the session, Xavier Matheu, Senior Advisor to the ETF Director, emphasized a persistent lack of capacity and knowledge to proper inclusion of vulnerable groups, especially of persons with disabilities. To address this issue, the ETF is currently having an action plan to build the capacity of Partner Countries, presented below.

Key success factors are reflected through four dimensions: one of them is increased awareness on human rights, particularly in the human rights of persons with disabilities. The second dimension is assessment of national challenges, opportunities and existing preconditions (financing) for supporting persons with disabilities. Third factor is related to the stronger cooperation between important stakeholders. The fourth area of concern is to build appropriate capacities of PES and centres for vocational rehabilitation.

Generalitat de Catalunya stressed that currently there is no regulation on retirement of persons with disabilities and at large, there is a lack of awareness on the growing dependent population. It was highlighted that currently 7 out of 10 long-term jobseekers are persons with disabilities. The way forward is making use of technology, deinstitutionalization, establishment of a special training center for persons with disabilities in IT sector and adoption of an Accessibility Code, aiming to make Barcelona the most accessible city in the world.

To address the special needs of persons with disabilities, the **Municipal Institute for persons with disabilities of Barcelona**, has established labour assessment teams, and based on knowing the capacities and limitations of jobseekers, they may be able to provide individualized support such as various forms of support for vocational training or accompanying employment arrangements.

DG EMPL presented the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, with a focus on flagship initiative 2, *the Disability Employment Package to improve labour market outcome for persons with disabilities*. To this end, several publications (manuals, guidelines, toolkits) were prepared, aiming to support strengthening the capacities of employment and integration services, promoting hiring perspectives through affirmative action and combating stereotypes, and ensuring reasonable accommodation at work. Currently there are under preparation additional publications regarding exploring quality jobs in sheltered employment and pathways to the open labour market and retaining persons with disabilities in employment: preventing disabilities associated with chronic diseases.

Emphasizing their strong commitment for supporting employment of persons with disabilities in EU Neighboring Countries, the **European Training Foundation** presented the plan for 2024 which comprise four main actions:

(i) mapping of employment policies targeted to persons with disabilities, (ii) supporting implementation of the Disability Employment Package in Partner Countries, (iii) mainstreaming disability as a horizontal policy in ETF activities, and (iv) planning long-term actions for the following years.

The Municipal Institute for People with Disabilities from Barcelona, **Spain**, offers comprehensive and individualized services to people with disabilities and employers. The model matches persons with disabilities with job places. It is based on individual assessment of the capabilities of persons with disabilities and workplace requirements. Employers receive support during the recruitment process and the first employment phase. Persons with disabilities receive vocational training, support during job interviews and help in the workplace. In 2022, 45% of persons served were hired.

Employment of persons with disabilities is governed in **Serbia** by the Employment Strategy 2021-2026 and accompanying 3-years action plans, which covers measures such employment subsidies, sheltered employment programs and support of enterprises for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities. This also includes stronger cooperation between national employment agency and other entities.

Swedish inclusive model of vocational rehabilitation is mainly focused on skills and competences as a foundation of an inclusive labour market, being emphasized the sectoral responsibility for functional impairment issues within the active labour market policy. The work analysis method, aimed to identify the gap between requirements and ability, proved to be successful in designing special programmes for job seekers with functional impairments that reduce work ability. To close the gap between job requirements and work ability, three kinds of support are provided, such as grants for aids at the workplace, personal support (such as special introduction & follow-up support, and grants for personal assistant at the workplace), and financial support (including employment subsidies, sheltered employment, and start-up grants for disabled entrepreneurs).

Union for the Mediterranean presented the results of the latest research on the situation of persons with disabilities in the region. Persons with disabilities are among the most marginalized and excluded groups in the Euro-Med region. The problem is even more acute for women with disabilities. The health, climate and conflict crisis have further exacerbated challenges. Approaches to inclusion of people with disability vary significantly among countries, resulting from socio-economic, cultural, and political heterogeneity of the region. Some countries are at the forefront in this area (e.g., Jordan); in others, the situation is much more challenging. The lack of data hampers the assessment of the situation.

Countries proposals / feedback

Priorities and challenges in the EU neighbouring countries for delivery of gender equality programmes in context of Active Labour Market Policies.

The main objective of group work was to gather and discuss policy priorities, good practices and challenges related to the design and implementation of active labour market measures that address gender inequalities. The group work by geographical regions was structured by the following main topics (detailed list of questions is contained here in Annex 2):

- Priorities for action identified in your country/institution to improve access of women to quality jobs
- Good practices to reduce gender segregation in education, training and employment
- Challenges in the design and implementation

The discussions deepened the participants' knowledge about new formats of flexible upskilling and reskilling processes in the countries. Group work also allowed for collecting main takeaways of the participants, which could be further reflected in their national policies. It also helped to identify further needs for peer-learning activities and exchange of practices, eventually allowing for cooperation among smaller clusters of countries in terms of designing and implementing the same or similar ALMPs models.

Group work enhanced space for mutual interaction, knowledge sharing, and presenting a more detailed picture of the state of affairs in particular countries. Participants used post-it notes to write down their priorities and messages. Facilitators guided the regional discussions and clustered elements presented through post-it notes for each geographical region. Results of the group work are summarised below by participants from geographical regions.

Questions	Central Asia	Eastern Partnership	South East Europe and Türkiye
<p>1. What ALMPs, strategies and policies are currently being implemented by your institution to improve access of women to quality jobs? Which of them work best in your country?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic documents tackling gender equality and (female) access on labour market have been developed in all the countries. • Specific protection and support is provided in case of maternity and pregnancy, guaranteeing a job for a specific period of time. • In Kazakhstan, specifically, quota have been introduced with regards to the participation of females in management positions. Females have also guaranteed cheaper loans if setting up their own business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government of Armenia has recently approved the 2024-2026 Strategy for implementation of the Gender Policy and the Action Plan. The action envisages establishing efficient mechanisms for supporting the active participation of women in all sectors of the public life. Implementation will take place through active labour market measures to be designed in line with the plan. • Azerbaijan is facing an important gender employment gap, and the PES focuses strongly on women labour market participation, including through building partnerships within the governmental bodies. In order to tackle rural inactivity and unemployment, a partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture focused on joint actions to mitigate the gap. The cooperation with private sector is being strengthened, including through a special scheme subsidising employers contracting female workers. • Due to the sudden need for economic shifts in Ukraine, the Government is enhancing measures for business development, female entrepreneurship, including through an important subsidy scheme. Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on closing the gender pay gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic documents tackling gender equality and (female) access on labour market have been developed in all the countries. • Support for self-employment program shows good results for women in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. • Employment subsidies program works best for women in Kosovo • Alternative childcare services in North Macedonia • Apprenticeship program gives good results for women in Serbia

<p>2. What strategies, policies and measures work to reduce gender segregation in education, training and employment? How to promote that more women are, for example, employed in STEM professions and more men in female-dominated professions such as healthcare, social services and education?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No active labour market measures supporting female employability specifically have been introduced in the countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EaP group reflected upon possible solutions to mitigate gender gaps, starting from childcare and pre-school education and enhancing gender transformative policies. Women empowerment, coaching and flexible working arrangements were highlighted as key to promote as they prove to be effective in other countries. A particular concern arises from the insufficient funding, which undermines many political and strategic declarations and hinders policy implementation on the ground. • Moldova is currently implementing specific labour market measures, including entrepreneurship subsidy and subsidised employment and is piloting new forms of childcare, private and family based. Furthermore, there is a reflection on flexible working arrangements for women and flexible solutions are discussed with employers. • Ukraine faces particular challenges since 2022. Most of internally and externally displaced are women with children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong awareness raising campaigns • Targeted governmental policies • Scholarships for women attending STEM education
<p>3. What are the main challenges for your organisation to implemented strategies and measures to reduce gender inequalities and empower women at the labour market?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing challenges that impact on the situation/performance of women on the labour market are connected mainly with the cultural (and traditional) perception of women and their role in the society. Wage differences between men and female can also be identified (the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the key challenges in Moldova is women labour market participation, particularly while experiencing family care obligations. Therefore, enhancing quality childcare and pre-school education is key in the country. Furthermore, emphasis was put on fostering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrong career choices for participants in internships programs • Scarcity of family care services (childcare or eldercare) • Lack of expertise for program's evaluation • Staff overburden and over-digitalisation of services

	<p>example of Kazakhstan was mentioned). In addition, financial resources were also mentioned as one of the key barriers in developing and implementing more targeted initiatives, such as gender-sensitive career guidance or specific measures – incl. traineeships, subsidised employment – for females.</p>	<p>women entrepreneurship. Female economic activity relies heavily on keeping skills up to date. While there are no major gender gaps in education, labour market participation is challenged by e.g., skills obsolescence due to career break.</p>	
--	---	---	--

Among the **key priorities** for all countries identified through group work is specific protection and support provided in case of maternity and pregnancy, guaranteeing a job for a specific period of time, and a quota mechanism with regards to the participation of females in management positions.

Good practices are linked to support for self-employment, employment subsidies and apprenticeship programs. Moreover, good results can be achieved through incentives for increased women participation in the mainstream active measures.

Key challenge identified throughout the regions is the insufficient funding, which undermines many political and strategic declarations and hinders policy implementation on the ground. Additionally, the labour market participation of women is challenged by skills obsolescence due to career break.

A list of **national priorities** for the next period was identified, ranging from childcare and pre-school education, and enhancing gender transformative policies. Women empowerment, coaching and flexible working arrangements were highlighted as key to promote as they prove to be effective in other countries. A particular concern arises from the insufficient funding, which undermines many political and strategic declarations and hinders policy implementation on the ground. The prioritised list shows that PCs are aware of the challenges and priorities and have a precise understanding of the situation.

The participants highlighted the relevance of the topic for their current work and found important to continue with such learning opportunities. The topics of the impact of demographic shift on the labour market, flexible working arrangements and developing childcare schemes beyond public sector were highlighted as of common interest.

[Priorities and challenges in the EU neighbouring countries for delivery of labour market integration programmes for persons with disabilities in context of Active Labour Market Policies](#)

The peer learning event also allowed for an interactive teamwork by geographical regions of Central Asia, Eastern Partnership, and Western Balkans & Türkiye on inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market.

The table below provides an overview of the actions, challenges, current plans for new measures and the needs of PES and Ministry staff to better address the specific needs of persons with disabilities, as reported by the participating countries.

Questions	Central Asia	Eastern Partnership	South East Europe and Türkiye
<p>1. What actions are taken in your countries to promote the employment of people with disabilities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The support to people with disabilities and their integration on the labour market is reflected in strategic documents in all the countries. Specific measures that exist in the CA countries are, for example, quota - the requirement of having specific % of employees with disabilities in companies. Moreover, in KG/KZ PES consultants with disabilities are present and actively integrated among staff of local PES offices. In some countries, subsidies for employment of people with disabilities are also provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific measures to support persons with disabilities are employment quota, career guidance, employment subsidies and in some EaP countries subsidies for workplace adjustment costs (full or partial). • In Moldova, work ability assessment of persons with disabilities is outsourced to accredited NGOs. Support provided is covering career guidance, employment subsidies for 6 months (with 12 months job retention), workplace adaptation and transportation costs. • In Azerbaijan the employment subsidies for 12 months (50%), self-employment (including grants for equipment) public works, job creation and support for social enterprises). • In Armenia support covers specific training programs, personal assistance, employment subsidies, workplace adaptation is obligatory, the employment subsidies for 12 months. • In Georgia is implemented a 3-months internship program and also 50% of the costs for workplace adaptation are subsidised. • In Morocco PES is providing career counselling and besides start-up support, there is also a quota required for public works in institutions at local level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In all countries, similar instruments support the employment of persons with disabilities—usually quota systems and support for employers. • In Kosovo, a new instrument supporting persons with disabilities has been implemented in response to the diagnosed lack of trust of persons with disabilities in public institutions caused by the threat of loss of entitlement to social benefits related to disabilities (disability pension or social assistance benefits). Employment institutions cooperate with NGOs, reaching out to persons with disabilities and matching them to employers. The wages of persons with disabilities are subsidized for six months, and if the employer employs the person with disabilities for the next 12 months, they receive financial incentives. The program is assessed as very effective. • The role of NGOs was underlined by many participants, who emphasized that civil society organizations may play a critical role in the vocational activation of persons with disability due to a better reach-out and more flexible approach. • In most countries, instruments incentivise employers to employ persons with disabilities. They may have quota systems for employers

			above some threshold, subsidized employment, vocational training and rehabilitation. In some countries, enterprises with special status exist, providing sheltered employment for persons with disabilities (Serbia).
2. What are the main barriers to supporting the employment of persons with disabilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key challenges are seen mainly in the motivation of employers to employ people with disabilities as well as insufficient infrastructure and equipment at the workplace. There is also lack of information about such groups of clients and their needs to better plan specific support programs in most countries (specific information is needed, for example, on their qualification). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness among employers. • Performing good needs assessment • Conducting research about the specific needs of persons with disabilities. • Persons with disabilities usually have low qualifications • Fear of losing benefits • Lack of motivation and self-confidence. • Employment quota is not required in Morocco for private sector. • Employers' scepticism. • Lack of capacity, both in PES and employers. • Across de region there is a lack of training facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite limited and ineffective usage of limited and insufficient resources, in some countries, the funds are used not always in the most effective way; for example, disability assessment committees too quickly grant the status of a disabled person, subsidies for employers are too generous (inflation of wages) or misused by individuals or employers. Therefore, monitoring the usage of resources is necessary. However, it is costly. Ineffective use of scarce resources limits the possibilities of supporting those in real need. • Lack of data on persons with disabilities – in some countries, recent data are from the Census. Some countries also develop administrative data systems to collect data on persons with disabilities. • Outreach to persons with disabilities (many of them are inactive), local governments and employers to encourage them to action and employment of persons with disabilities • The political situation in Bosnia and Hercegovina impedes coordinating efforts and practical actions.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to updated working methods and tools for persons with disabilities is limited and should be improved. The competencies of the staff of employment institutions should be improved in this regard. • Support for the employment of persons with disabilities is relatively low on the policy agenda of donors. This group is sometimes supported in the frame of broader projects, but there are not any projects directly targeted to this specific group.
<p>3. Do you have any plans for developing new or improving existing employment services for this target group?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are plans in Armenia for a new employment subsidies program and an EU funded project targeting women with disabilities. • Moldova is planning to review existing mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Kosovo specialised services will be delivered to the most vulnerable groups at the regional level. Specialists will be supporting local employment offices using mobility schemes. • In Serbia, the Government plans to evaluate the current legislation and review existing instruments. • In Montenegro, the Government recently introduced legislation offering new incentives for employers to employ persons with disabilities
<p>4. Do you have sufficient knowledge about the situation and needs of persons with disabilities? What are the main gaps in your knowledge?</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner countries are very interested in solutions and methods of work in the Member States, including the path to existing solutions (how they were developed) and problems in their implementation. Participants were less interested in research on their situation and policies.

Key challenge identified throughout the regions is the lack of human and institutional capacity providing support to the persons with disabilities. Additionally, low availability and reliability of data, missing trust in public institutions, lack of targeted support from donor community and staff shortages, prevent the provision of better and more individualised services.

Good practices are linked to support for self-employment, employment subsidies and providing sheltered employment for persons with disabilities. In addition, workplace adjustment grants and accompanying support at workplace will support a better integration and retention of workers with functional impairment.

Among the **key priorities** for all countries identified through group work is the need for sharing good practices and moreover, the step-by-step process which led to achieve these good results in other countries, like it was the case of Sweeden. A critical point emphasized by the participants is the extremely low capacity of assessing the work ability/capacity by PES counsellors and cooperation with other institutions or NGOs was not always successful. As well, how to organise more targeted awareness raising campaigns among the variety of stakeholders could become a key success factor and more guidance is needed in this area.