



European Network of Public Employment Services

Assessment Report on PES Capacity

2020

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFEPAs	Advisors for European PES Affairs
ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
BL	Benchlearning
DG EMPL	Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Directorate General
EaSI	European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation
EC	European Commission
ESF	European Social Fund
FTE	Full-time equivalents
GMI	Guaranteed Minimum Income
HRD	Human Resource Development
IAP	Individual Action Plan
IB	Intermediate Body (ESF)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IPA	International Protection Applicants
LMP	Labour Market Policy
LTU	Long-Term Unemployed
MA	Managing Authority (ESF)
NEET	Young person who is Not in Education, Employment, or Training
OP	Operation Programme
PES	Public Employment Service(s)
PrES	Private Employment Services
SoE	Sustainability of Employment
UB	Unemployment Benefit
UI	Unemployment Insurance
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative
YG	Youth Guarantee

HEADLINE MESSAGES

The European PES Network: monitoring capacity in a changing context

This 2020 Assessment Report on the Capacity of Public Employment Services (PES) provides an overview of the main trends in the development of PES, describing aspects of their capacity and the client services they offer. It provides an information base to support the work of the European PES Network. It is based on PES replies to the annual PES Capacity survey received from 27 PES in July and August 2020¹. Supporting information came from the annual PES Benchmarking data collection. The main findings of this report are summarised below. This year's questionnaire included a question on adjustments to the PES strategic objectives and targets in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The responses from the PES show that the pandemic in fact affected all areas of their work. In 2020, an ad hoc module of the PES Capacity survey was dedicated to 'Integrated services for the long-term unemployed' and a separate report presents these findings².

Tasks and responsibilities generally stayed the same

Roles and responsibilities remained the same for all PES, with the exception of the Luxembourg PES that was tasked with supporting the anticipation and the development of future skills in the context of the 'Future Skills Initiative'. Also, in the 4th quarter of 2019, Jobsplus, the Maltese PES, became fully responsible for the provision of employment advisory services for the long-term unemployed, while previously it had worked in partnership with external stakeholders.

Several PES reported changes in their organisational structure (HU), operational changes (CZ, BE-VDAB and LT), or further developments in their digital services (BE-VDAB, BG and SE).

This year's survey revealed more details on the involvement of PES in national European Social Fund (ESF) structures. Two PES act as the Managing Authority (BE-Actiris and FI) for the ESF in their country, fifteen PES as the intermediate body (BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, LV, MT, PL and PT), while another eight receive co-financing from the ESF for the activities, but they are not involved in the organisation (AT, BG, DK, LT, LU, NL, SE and SI). No information was available for IE and SK.

Most PES are independent, but sometimes the national context creates an interesting variety in legal status

The legal status of the vast majority of PES (20 out of 27) is that of an independent public institution. The classification of their legal status was created in close consultation with the PES, as definitions and the use of terms such of 'independent' or 'legal entity' vary according to national legislation. Important distinguishing features are that the PES is not a department or Directorate-General of a Ministry and that it has its own director or governing board. The fact that the PES is placed 'under the authority of' or is 'supervised by' a Ministry does not detract from this classification. From a comparative EU perspective, the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR) has been classified as an independent agency, although in the Danish context the STAR comes under the Ministry of Employment. The Ministry includes the actual department itself, two government agencies

¹ The network includes 27 Member States of the EU (the three regional PES in Belgium are separate), together with Iceland and Norway. Iceland, Italy, Norway, and Romania are not included in this year's analysis, due to the non – or late completion of the survey.

² The report on 'Integrated services for the long-term unemployed' can be found in the PES Knowledge Centre: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1163&langId=en>.

and a research centre. Furthermore, in certain countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands, the municipalities are responsible for the provision of employment services and ALMPs at the local level.

In four countries, the PES is an integral part of the national Ministry responsible for employment affairs (CY, CZ, FI and IE). In two additional countries, Spain and Poland, the national PES is integrated into the national Ministry, while the regional PES are under the authority of regional governments. Finally, in Hungary, the PES is a department in the Ministry for Innovation and Technology, while the county and local units come under the responsibility of the Prime Ministers' Office.

Labour market situation already taking 'a turn for the worse' in 2019

The latest 2019 figures on the labour market show that even before the start of the pandemic the labour market situation was already starting to deteriorate, and COVID-19 naturally exacerbated this situation during the course of 2020.

During 2019, the longer-term trend of a decreasing number of unemployed PES clients seems to have weakened. In 2018, the *overall* decrease (EU PES clients as a whole) compared to the previous year amounted to -6.4%, while the *average* change in the PES concerned was -10.1%. In 2019, these figures shrank to -4.0% and -3.2% respectively. Six PES had already seen the number of registered jobseekers increasing in 2019, compared to three PES in 2018. Target groups such as young people, older people and the long-term unemployed (LTU) also showed a similar pattern³.

Vacancies, on the other hand, have been increasing since the 2008/2009 crisis. However, this increase was already very small (0.4%) between 2017 and 2018, and then turned into a *decrease* of -5.5% between 2018 and 2019 (data for 30 PES).

PES expenditure overall remains stable

To ensure comparability across PES, the financial comparisons in this report do not include expenditure on unemployment or other benefits, or pro forma expenditure⁴. Overall, total expenditure excluding these two categories, with a 0.2% increase between 2018 and 2019, hardly changed. In addition, almost equal numbers of PES increased or decreased their expenditure between 2018 and 2019, in contrast to the relatively high number of PES that increased expenditure in the previous period.

For individual PES, an expenditure increase from 2017 to 2018 was often followed by an expenditure decrease the next year, and vice versa. Exceptions to this pattern are six PES with continued expenditure increases over the past two years (BE-FOREM, DK, EE, IS, MT and SK) and two PES with repeated decreases in their expenditure (LT and SE).

The division of expenditure across categories also remains more or less the same over time.

Total PES staff employed in the EU is decreasing

Information on total staff numbers is available for 25 European PES, excluding IE and PL where not enough data were available. Collectively, the total number of PES staff, measured in Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), has been decreasing over the last four years, although the -0.5% decline between April 2019 and April 2020 was somewhat lower than

³ All data for 22 PES.

⁴ Expenditure items that feature in the PES budget but are transferred to other organisations without any PES involvement in their further spending.

in previous years. More or less equal numbers of PES saw their staff decreasing or increasing. Contrary to previous years, PES staff turnover rates (i.e., the proportion of total staff leaving the PES in a given year) decreased overall in 2019 in the 25 PES where this information is available.

COVID-19 affecting staffing policies in 2020

In 2020, only four PES planned to decrease their staff numbers. Of the 12 PES that planned staff increases, five PES reported that these were directly related to the need to manage the massive inflow of unemployed people as a result of COVID-19. Four PES reported changes in the allocation of their staff for similar reasons in 2020: BE-Actiris had already upgraded their call centre (on a temporary basis), while the Cypriot PES prepared for staffing needs resulting from services having to be delivered digitally. In Spain, 1 000 temporary employees from the COVID-19 programme joined the PES in 2020, with the possibility of appointing an additional 500 temporary employees. In Slovenia, the PES reallocated part of the staff on the basis of temporary organisational changes to cope with the new epidemic-related tasks. At the same time, changes in staff volume and deployment due to budget considerations, adjustments in PES services or a focus on specific target groups continued in several PES. A recent overview of measures taken by PES can be found in the EU's 'PES Knowledge Centre'⁵.

New labour market measures more often aimed at job creation

In total, 58 labour market policies and services were newly introduced, and 45 existing ones modified in 2019. New policies and services were reported by 17 PES (AT, BE-Actiris, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, LV, PT, SI and SK), while 14 PES reported modifications (BE-Actiris, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EL, ES, FR, HR, MT, SE and SI). The largest group of new measures were those aimed at providing employment incentives (30 new measures), followed by new measures for client services, training and direct job creation. The latter category was higher than in previous years, with five PES introducing 12 direct job creation measures (one each in DK, EE, LV, and multiple measures in EL and SK). In terms of modifications, the largest group of adaptations concerned training measures, followed by client services and employment incentives. The most cited modifications are: an extension of the measure to other target groups, a budget increase, programme extension, and changes in financial compensation or financial incentives.

Vulnerable groups - important targets for new measures

Both new and modified measures target a broad range of client groups, as in previous years. However, amongst the target groups for new measures the importance of the most vulnerable groups, including difficult-to-place people or people distanced from the labour market, stands out. Given the importance of measures specifically targeting young people in the past, including NEETs, it comes as no surprise that the largest groups of modifications occurred in these measures.

COVID-19 means almost half of the PES already adjusting objectives or targets

At the time of the survey – the first half of 2020 – nine PES said they had adapted their objectives to the new situation (BE-Actiris, BG, CY, CZ, HR, HU, LU, LV and SE). Two more PES (BE-FOREM and EE) were considering such changes and planned to discuss them later

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22859&langId=en>

in 2020. Some other PES drew attention to new measures related to COVID-19 without reporting a change in objectives, such as AT, DK and PL.

At the time of the survey, seven PES had already adapted their targets to the new situation (AT, BG, CY, CZ, LU, SE and SI) and two PES planned to do so in the future. VDAB is currently adjusting their targets for 2020, in the light of the COVID-19 crisis and uncertainty about the development of their labour market. The Latvian PES plans to revise the targets related to the performance indicators in their 2020-2022 Operational Strategy by including branch office performance indicators and indicators from their Employers Strategy.

PES refocus objectives in response to the pandemic

Adjustments occurred in specific objectives and often consisted of refocusing these objectives to accommodate new approaches. A relatively new objective, which has been given a new impetus by the COVID-19 pandemic, is keeping employees in employment and saving workplaces from collapsing, e.g., in Poland, Bulgaria and Croatia.

New approaches accompanying new specific objectives

The Cypriot PES increased the focus on the 'unemployed Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) benefit recipients' and the 'unemployed over age 50' target groups. In Hungary, a specific wage-subsidy was designed to help realise the government's aim of maintaining companies' capacities. The Latvian PES developed a specific support offer for employers in need of staff in seasonal work, while the Bulgarian PES provided support for enterprises and self-employed people whose economic activity was directly affected by the adverse effects of the state of emergency imposed on the country. The Antivirus Programme managed by the Czech PES supports the objective of maintaining employment through a partial reimbursement of wages paid to employees.

New ways of working introduced – or reinforced – in PES

BE-Actiris aims to have a holistic, inclusive and non-discriminatory approach to avoid excluding the most vulnerable from its services during the pandemic. The Swedish PES increased its focus on starting early with active measures to prevent long-term unemployment for those who became unemployed as a result of COVID-19. The need for social distancing boosted digital services in PES. The Luxembourg PES reinforced the digitalisation of its services, while BE-Actiris aimed to ensure 100% digital transformation of services to facilitate distance working. In Hungary, the PES management has been trying to move towards online registration opportunities for new jobseekers' claims.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview and analysis of the main trends in the development of PES, linked to the various aspects of PES capacity and the services PES offer their clients. This report, together with the complementary report on integrated services for long-term unemployed, provides an information base to support the work of the European Network of PES⁶.

Despite the massive efforts required from PES to deal with major influxes of unemployed people, most of the PES managed to provide the information required for this report. Their responses also show how the virus and the measures to combat its spread profoundly affected the way PES deliver their services and the deployment of their staff. While the pandemic typically did not change the PES' strategic objectives, it did influence the targets they set themselves or their expectations of achieving their pre-existing targets.

This present paper is the sixth annual report published on PES capacity. It is principally based on 27 questionnaire responses received from European PES during July and August 2020 (Iceland and Romania did not submit their responses, while Italy and Norway submitted them too late to be included). The report also makes use of the data collected in previous years, as well as data obtained during the annual PES Benchlearning data collection exercise. All PES provided data for this year's PES BL dataset, with the exception of Italy. In countries with a strongly decentralised structure, the national PES supplied as much information as possible, although the amount of information these countries were able to provide was inherently limited.

This report begins with a description of the institutional set-up of PES (Chapter 2), followed by a discussion of key trends in the environment in which PES operate (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 then examines the available PES resources and how those resources are deployed, as well as how the PES organise their work. Chapter 5 concentrates on the services offered to clients by the PES, in particular the Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) they use. The final Chapter summarises the strategic objectives and the key targets set for 2020.

⁶ In May 2014, the European Council and the European Parliament published a Decision that led to the creation of the European Network of Public Employment Services in June of that year. This formalised the long-standing cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES) in Europe, going back to 1998. This network is made up of 31 EU/EEA PES organisations (comprising 27 national PES, the three separate services in Belgium and one each from Iceland and Norway). Within this network, a number of working groups have been established to pursue different themes of interest to the Heads of Public Employment Services (HoPES). A new Decision amended the 2014 one and was published on 30 November 2020. It is available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1606741261195&uri=CELEX%3A32020D1782>.

2. INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

2.1. Tasks and responsibilities

As the 'Headline Messages' showed, formal responsibilities remained the same for all PES, with the exception of the Luxembourg PES that was tasked with supporting the anticipation and the development of future skills in the context of its Future Skills Initiative. Also, in the 4th quarter of 2019 Jobsplus, the Maltese PES, became *fully responsible* for the provision of employment advisory services for the LTU, while previously it had worked in partnership with external stakeholders. Following a remodelling of the ministerial structures in Spain, the competencies of the Spanish national PES (SEPE) on vocational training have been redefined, including their responsibility for a large variety of workers' training.

This year's survey gathered more detailed information on the involvement of PES in national ESF structures. Two PES act as a managing authority (BE-Actiris and FI) and 15 PES as an intermediate body (BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, LV, MT, PL and PT). Another eight PES report that they receive co-financing from the ESF for activities, but that they are not involved in its organisation (AT, BG, DK, LT, LU, NL, SE and SI). For two PES (IE and SK), no additional information was available on this subject.

Table 1 below shows the responsibilities PES have, including the new information on their role in managing the ESF.

Table 1. PES responsibilities* in 2020

	1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8a	8b	9	10	11	12
AT	P	F	P	F	No	P	F	No	No	P	P	P	P
BE-ACTIRIS	F	P	No	No	No	F	No	F	No	No	No	No	P
BE-FOREM	F	P	No	F	No	No	No	No	F	No	No	No	No
BE-VDAB	F	P	No	F	No	P	No	No	F	No	P	No	P
BG	F	F	No	No	F	P	F	No	No	No	No	P	P
CY	F	P	No	No	F	P	F	No	F	No	No	No	No
CZ	F	F	F	F	P	F	P	No	F	F	F	No	F
DE	P	F	F	No	P	P	P	No	F	P	P	F	P
DK	F	P	No	P	F	P	No	No	No	P	No	No	No
EE	F	F	F	No	No	No	P	No	F	No	P	P	F
EL	F	F	F	F	No	F	No	No	F	P	No	No	No
ES	F	F	P	F	F	F	No	No	F	No	F	No	P
FI	F	F	No	No	No	F	P	F	No	No	No	No	No
FR	F	P	F	No	P	P	No	No	F	No	No	No	P
HR	F	F	F	No	No	No	No	No	F	No	No	P	P
HU	F	F	F	No	F	No	No	No	F	No	No	F	P
IE	F	F	F	No	No	No	No	No	n/a	F	F	No	P

	1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8a	8b	9	10	11	12
IS	F	F	F	No	P	No	F	n/a	n/a	P	No	No	No
IT	F	F	No	No	F	No	P	F	n/a	No	No	No	P
LT	F	F	No	No	P	P	F	No	No	No	No	No	P
LU	F	F	F	No	No	F	P	No	No	No	P	P	P
LV	P	F	No	No	F	No	No	No	F	No	No	F	P
MT	F	F	No	P	No	No	P	No	F	No	No	No	No
NL	P	P	No	No	No	P	F	No	No	No	No	P	No
NO	F	F	F	F	No	No	No	n/a	n/a	F	F	No	No
PL	F	F	F	No	P	P	P	No	F	No	No	P	P
PT	F	P	P	F	F	P	No	No	F	No	No	No	No
RO	F	F	F	F	F	F	No	No	No	No	No	No	P
SE	F	F	No	No	No	P	No	No	No	P	No	P	No
SI	F	F	F	No	No	P	F	No	No	No	No	P	P
SK	F	F	No	No	P	No	P	No	n/a	F	F	P	P

Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaires, 2018 to 2020.

*F=fully, P=partly (for some tasks, other institutions are exclusively or jointly responsible), No= not responsible, n/a = information not available.

**Classification of duties:

1. 'Individualised paths': the implementation of services offering tailored ('individualised') assistance (for example intensive counselling and guidance, and job-search assistance) and follow-up for unemployed people provided as part of a planned path towards durable (re-)employment (cf. services as in Eurostat LMP database Category 1.1.2).
2. ALMPs: the implementation of ALMP measures (any measures within Eurostat LMP database cats. 2-7) financed by national funds or co-funding from the European Social Fund (ESF).
3. Unemployment benefits: the administration of the national unemployment benefit (UB) scheme (the handling of UB claims, payments, financial planning and reporting etc.).
4. Training centre: managing training centre(s) for jobseekers (training centres that are an integral part of the PES).
5. Licensing and supervising private employment agencies (PrES).
6. Apprenticeship places: the notification of apprenticeship places and the placement of apprenticeship candidates.
7. Work permits: issuing work permits for third-country nationals (for example approving and issuing applications, keeping records, reporting, etc.).
- 8a. Acting as the Managing Authority (MA) for the ESF.
- 8b. Acting as Intermediate Body (IB) for the ESF.
9. Social allowances: the administration of social types of allowances (for example child allowances for Unemployment Benefit recipients).
10. Disability benefits: the administration of benefits for people with disabilities or handicapped people.
11. The approval of layoffs made by employers.
12. Careers advice and guidance for young people still in education.

Several PES reported changes in their organisational structure (HU), operations (CZ, BE-VDAB and LT), or further development of digital services (BE-VDAB, BG and SE).

The development and use of digital services has had a strong impetus from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Swedish PES constitutes an example of the opportunities digitalisation offers to PES and their clients (see text box).

Sweden and digitalisation of PES services

Even before COVID-19, Arbetsförmedlingen enacted a transition from registration in offices to registration via digital self-service ('digital customer journey') and Personal Distance Meeting (PDM) as part of a Digital First policy. The share of customers registering digitally has continued to increase from already high levels, and has accelerated with the COVID-19 pandemic, with 92.5% digital registrations in March 2020 and 93.7% in April 2020. Instead of local support, Arbetsförmedlingen now offers employers digital solutions for recruitment meetings, including 'speed interviews' ('snabbintervjuer') for digital/remote recruitment and quick interviewing of a large number of candidates.

As of 30 March 2020, a new service ('Customer choice Equip and match' – KROM in Swedish) started in six regions, consisting of 32 municipalities. This service uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to identify who most needs the service. A statistical assessment tool is used for profiling and measuring a jobseeker's distance from the labour market.

Another new service enables employment after education. Employers can find candidates that are still participating in a labour market programme contracted by the PES.

In order to better reach jobseekers who are far from the labour market, the podcast 'New in Sweden' was launched in March 2020. So far 13 episodes have been made available, including in Arabic, Persian, Somali, English and 'easy Swedish'. Several episodes are being produced. Topics include: 'The path to work in Sweden – this is what you do', 'Write your best CV', 'Write a personal letter' and 'The recruitment interview – how to prepare'.

2.2. Organisational structure

The strategic objectives of a PES are typically heavily defined by the political and public policy priorities, independent of how that PES is organised. However, the degree of operational freedom and the degree of coordination with other services is closely related to the legal status of a PES. Two determining factors in this respect are the degree of independence and the degree of decentralisation of PES responsibilities in a country.

The vast majority of PES (20 out of 27) are an independent public institution. This means in particular that they may be supervised by, but are not part of, a Ministry. The classification of their legal status was done in close consultation with the PES, as definitions and the use of terms such of 'independent' or 'legal entity' are very dependent on the national legislation. Important distinguishing features in this respect are that the PES is not a department or Directorate-General of a ministry and that it has its own director or governing board. The fact that the PES is placed 'under the authority of' or is 'supervised by' a ministry does not detract from this classification. From a comparative EU perspective, the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR) has been classified as an 'independent agency'. It should be noted, however, that within the Danish taxonomy, STAR is part of the Ministry of Employment. This Ministry consists of the actual department, two government agencies and a research centre. Furthermore, in certain countries, notably Denmark and the Netherlands, the municipalities are responsible for the provision of employment services and ALMPs at the local level.

PES that are part of a governmental organisation differ in respect to the involvement of regional and local authorities. In four countries, the PES is an integral part of the national ministry responsible for employment affairs (CY, CZ, FI and IE). In two further countries, Spain and Poland, the national PES is integrated in the national Ministry, while the regional PES are under the authority of regional governments. Finally, in Hungary, the PES is a department in the Ministry for Innovation and Technology, but the county and local units fall under the responsibility of the Prime Ministers' Office.

Table 2. Legal status of PES in 2020

Status	No	PES
Independent public institution with Managing Board (representatives of social partners, government, etc.)	20	AT, BE-Actiris, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, DE, DK, EE, EL, FR, HR, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PT, SE, SI and SK
Integrated in the responsible Ministry (national, regional and local PES units are all part of this Ministry)	4	CY, CZ, FI and IE
Integrated in the responsible Ministry at national level, but with PES regional organisations operating under the authority of Regional Governments	2	ES and PL
Other	1	HU

Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire, 2020.

Notes: Information for 27 PES, no information or insufficient information on IS, IT, NO and RO.

3. DEVELOPMENTS IN SUPPLY AND DEMAND

PES provide services for all jobseekers who ask for PES assistance, regardless of their labour market status. The jobseekers can be active or inactive when contacting PES. This means that PES deal not only with people who have lost their jobs or who have completed their education, but also with employed people who would like to find another job, students, retired people, the people with disabilities, refugees and so on.

This section focuses on unemployed jobseekers registered with their PES. This Chapter relies on data on the registered unemployed provided by PES during the annual PES Benchmarking data collection process. The figures on the registered unemployed show the annual average of the 'stock' of the unemployed registered with the PES at the end of each month of that year, who are available for the labour market and who are, or who should be, looking for a job, excluding those on any active labour market measure. This definition differs slightly from the one for job-seeking clients used in the data in reports before 2019⁷.

In 2019, the longer-term trend of a decreasing number of unemployed PES clients seemed to be weakening. In 2018, the *overall* decrease⁸ compared to the previous year amounted to -6.4%, while the *average* decrease⁹ in the PES concerned amounted to -10.1%. While the overall change depicts the situation for the EU citizens as a whole, the average change summarises the development of the context for individual PES. In 2019, these figures shrank to -4.0% and -3.2% respectively. Six PES already saw the number of registered jobseekers increasing in 2019, compared to three PES in 2018¹⁰.

Table 3. Developments in the number of registered unemployed, 2015-2019

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Number of PES with increasing numbers	5	5	1	3	6
Number of PES with decreasing numbers	25	25	29	27	24
Overall percentage change	-4.4%	-6.1%	-7.1%	-6.4%	-4.0%
Average percentage change	-6.3%	-8.0%	-10.6%	-10.1%	-3.2%

Source: Annual PES Benchmarking Data Collection.

Note: Average monthly 'stock' of the registered unemployed compared on an annual basis, who are available for the labour market and who are, or who should be, looking for a job, excluding those on an active labour market measure. No data are available for IT.

Figure 1 below shows that a decrease in the number of registered unemployed occurred in most countries during the last two years, but that the decrease was smaller between 2018 and 2019. In four PES, the decrease in previous years turned into an increase last year during this period (EL, MT, and to a lesser extent LU and SE). In Estonia and Iceland, the number of registered unemployed had already increased in 2018 and grew even more in 2019. The one exception to this development was Lithuania, where the number of

⁷ Before 2019, data were collected through the PES Capacity survey. In the questionnaire, the definition of job-seeking clients included participants in ALMPs (except Eurostat LMP categories 5-7) and the figures in principle reflected the situation at the end of April. Furthermore, the number of PES responding to this question in the annual Benchmarking data collection tends to be somewhat higher than the number of PES responding to the survey.

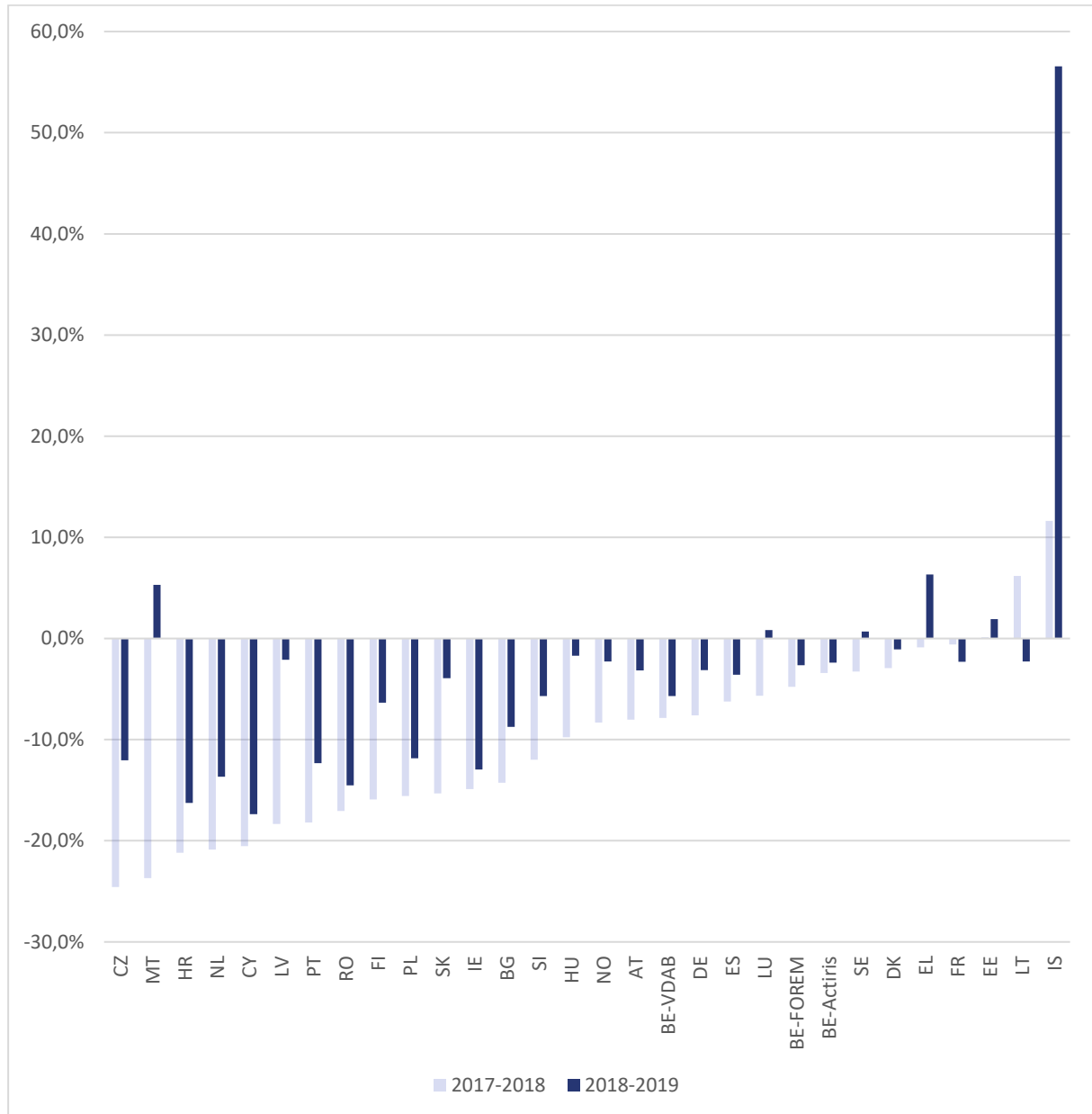
⁸ i.e., the total of all PES clients in those countries where the PES responded to this question.

⁹ Average of the individual PES changes.

¹⁰ No information was available for Italy.

registered unemployed grew rapidly between 2017 and 2018, before decreasing again in 2019.

Figure 1. Percentage change in the number of registered unemployed, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, with PES ordered by change in the 2017-2018 period



Source: Annual PES Benchlearning Data Collection.

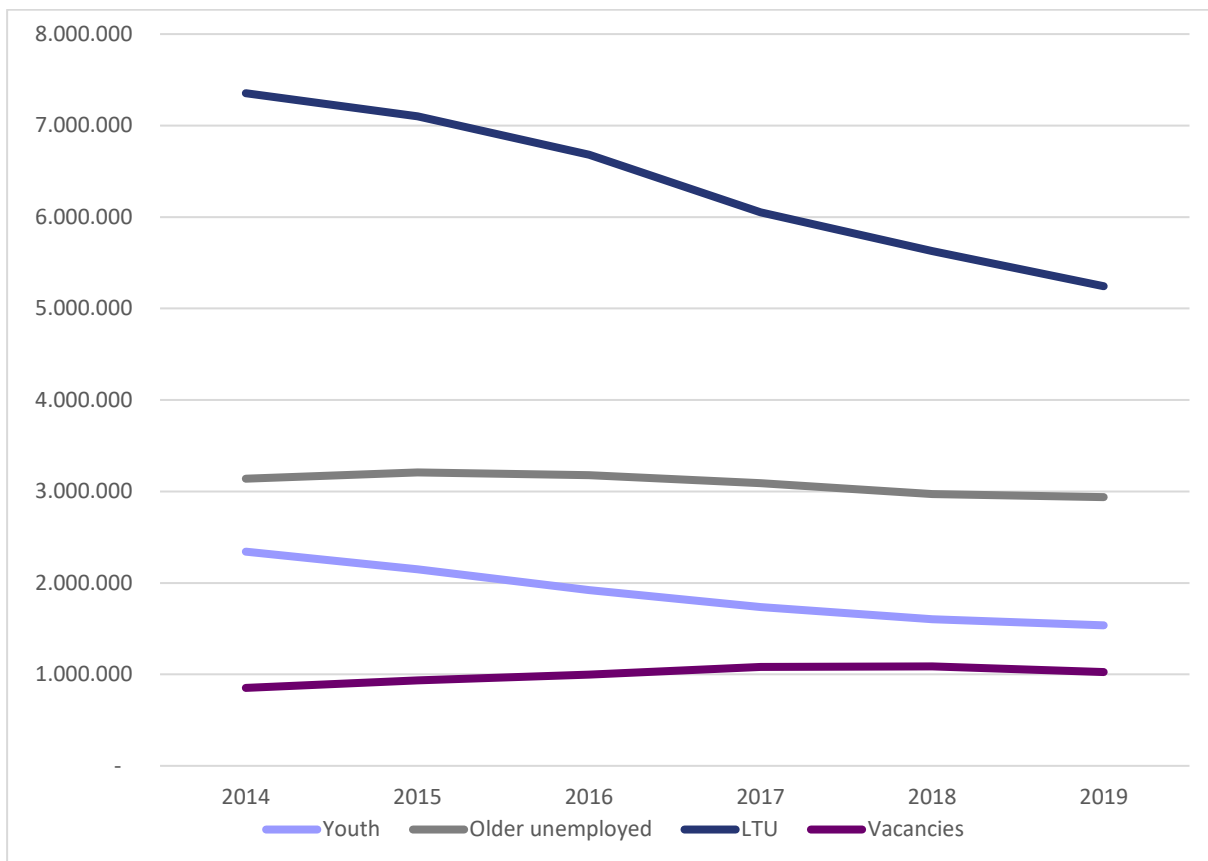
Note: Average monthly 'stock' of the registered unemployed compared on an annual basis, who are available for the labour market and who are, or who should be, looking for a job, excluding those on an active labour market measure. No data are available for IT.

Not only was the number of registered unemployed decreasing since 2015, target groups such as young people, older people and the long-term unemployed (LTU) also profited from the recovering economy. However, similar to the overall development described above, this trend became less pronounced in 2018 and then weakened considerably in 2019. For youth, the annual decrease went from -7.6% between 2017 and 2018 to -4.2% from 2018 to 2019. For older unemployed, the decrease slowed from -3.9% to -1.1%. Only the number of LTU continued to decrease in a similar fashion (-7.0% and -6.8% for 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 respectively).

Vacancies reported to PES, on the other hand, have been increasing since the crisis of 2008/2009, but this increase became very small (0.4%) between and 2017 and 2018 and turned to a decrease of -5.5% in the 2018/2019 period¹¹.

Figure 2 compares the development of different groups of the registered unemployed and the vacancies for 22 PES, where all relevant data are available. The number of registered unemployed by far outweighs the number of vacancies reported to the PES. The gap between the numbers of unemployed and the number of vacancies was shrinking, but this development seems to be on the verge of coming to standstill.

Figure 2. Number of registered unemployed by target groups and vacancies reported to PES, 2014-2019



Source: Annual PES Benchmarking Data Collection.

Note: Based on the data for 22 PES – no or insufficient information is available for CY, CZ, EL, IE, IS, IT, NL, NO and RO.

¹¹ 30 PES, no information for IT.

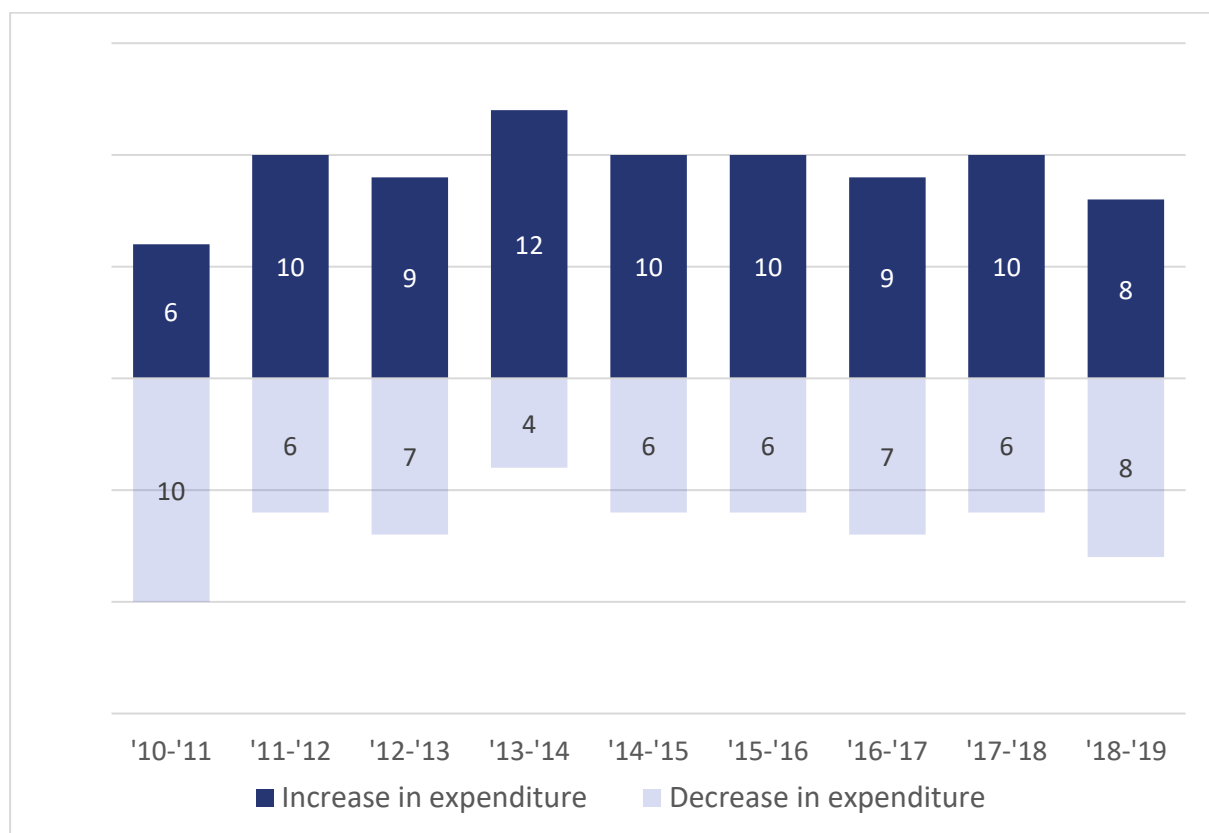
4. PES INTERNAL RESOURCES

4.1. PES financing and annual expenditure

To ensure comparability across PES, the financial comparisons in this section do not include expenditure on unemployment and other benefits or *pro forma* expenditure¹². Overall, total expenditure, excluding these two categories, hardly changed between 2018 and 2019, with a 0.2% increase for the 16 PES where these data are available for the past 10 years.

In addition, almost equal numbers of PES increased or decreased their expenditure between 2018 and 2019, in contrast to the relatively high number of PES with increasing expenditure during the previous period.

Figure 3. Number of PES reporting changes in total expenditure, excluding benefits paid and *pro forma* expenditure, 2010-2019



Source: Annual PES Benchlearning Data Collection.

Note: Information for 16 PES. No information – or insufficient information – is available for BE-Actiris, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, CY, DE, EL, ES, HU, IE, IT, MT, NL, NO, PL and RO.

Figure 3 shows that in the longer-term an upward trend in expenditure between 2010 and 2014 was followed by a fairly stable period. The most recent development could suggest further stabilisation or a turn for the worse. More insight can be gained by examining a larger group of PES that only provided the more recent data (2017-2019).

Looking at the 22 PES where information is available for the past three reference years, the increase between 2018 and 2019 amounts to 2.0%. For these 22 PES, five PES saw

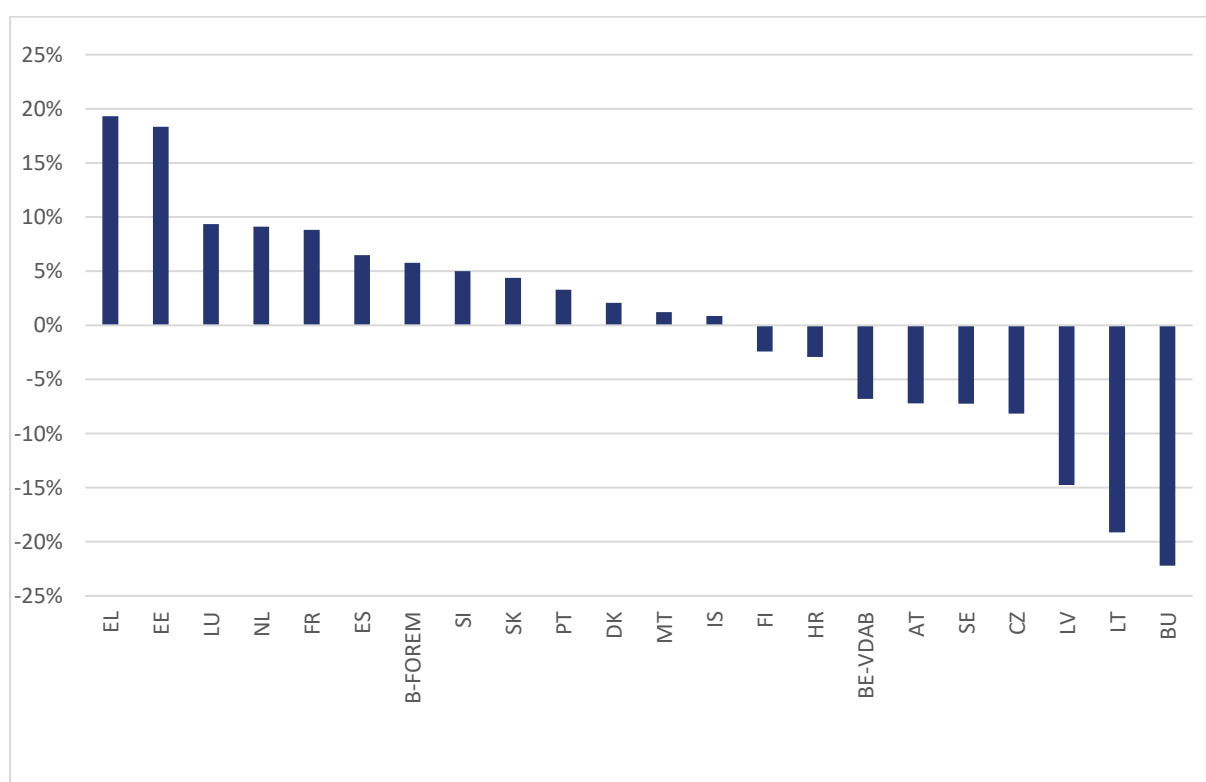
¹² Expenditure items that feature in the PES budget but are transferred to other organisations without any involvement in their further spending.

their expenditure decrease between 2017 and 2018, while eight PES suffered a decrease between 2018 and 2019.

The growth in expenditure contradicts the negative scenario, while the COVID-19 measures implemented in 2020 may further strengthen PES budgets and staff. Still, the relatively high number of PES with decreasing budgets warrants a further examination of the expenditure in individual PES.

Figure 4 shows the variations in developments across individual PES. An expenditure increase from 2017 to 2018 often changes to an expenditure decrease the following year, and vice versa. Exceptions to this pattern are six PES with continued expenditure increases over the past two years (BE-FOREM, DK, EE, IS, MT and SK) and two PES with repeated decreases of their expenditure (LT and SE).

Figure 4. Percentage change in PES expenditure, excluding unemployment benefits and *pro forma* expenditure, 2018-2019



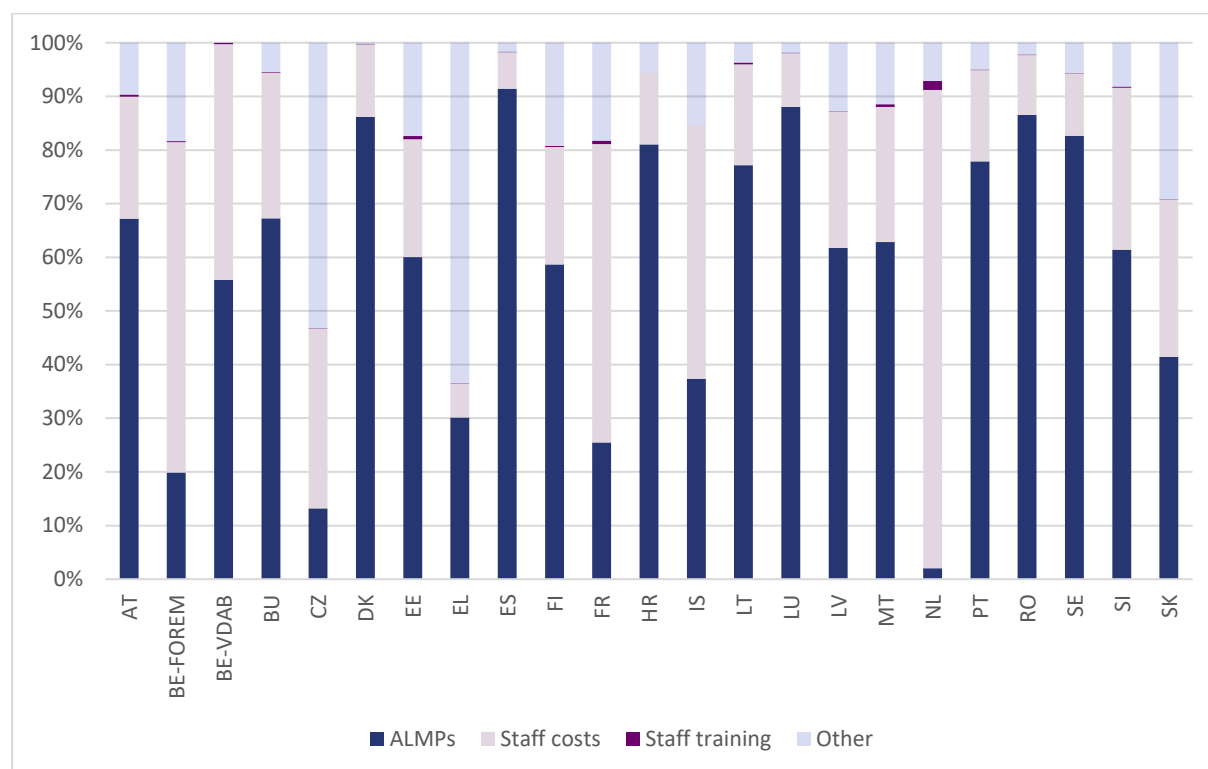
Source: Annual PES Benchlearning Data Collection.

Note: Information for 22 PES. No information – or insufficient information – is available for BE-Actiris, CY, DE, HU, IE, IT, NO and PL. In Romania, ESF-financed expenditure was included in the budget for this year, which rendered the data from previous years not comparable.

Looking at the type of expenditure by PES¹³, the average of the share spent on certain items is a telling indicator. After excluding benefits and pro forma expenditure, PES on average spent 58.1% on ALMPs, 28.0% on staff costs, 0.2% on staff training, and 13.7% on 'other' expenditure. All in all, the division of expenditure across categories remains more or less the same over time.

¹³ i.e., the 23 PES where information on the various expenditure items in 2019 is available, excluding benefit payments and *pro forma* budget items from the analysis.

Figure 5. Expenditure by item in 2019 as a percentage of total expenditure, excluding benefit payments and *pro forma* budget items



Source: Annual PES Benchmarking Data Collection.

Information for 23 PES. No information – or insufficient information – is available for BE-Actiris, CY, DE, HU, IE, IT, NO and PL.

A comparison of PES with responsibility to PES without responsibility for the administration of benefits (Table 4) shows that the share of the budget spent on ALMPs also differs between PES within each group. In other words, PES responsible for benefits do not spend a smaller or larger part of their budget on ALMPs than PES that do not bear this responsibility once benefits are excluded from the comparison. The following table provides information on the division of expenditure between various budget items.

Table 4. Expenditure by item in 2019 as a percentage of total expenditure, excluding benefit payments and *pro forma* budget items, for PES with differing responsibilities on benefit administration

	ALMPs	Staff costs	Staff training	Other
PES with no responsibilities for benefit payments				
BE-FOREM	20%	62%	0%	18%
BG	67%	27%	0%	6%
FI	59%	22%	0%	19%
LT	77%	19%	0%	4%
LV	62%	25%	0%	13%
MT	63%	25%	1%	11%
NL	2%	89%	2%	7%

	ALMPs	Staff costs	Staff training	Other
PES only responsible for unemployment benefits				
FR	26%	56%	1%	18%
HR	81%	13%	0%	6%
PT	78%	17%	0%	5%
RO	87%	11%	0%	2%
SI	61%	30%	0%	8%
PES responsible for unemployment benefits as well as other benefits				
AT	67%	23%	0%	10%
CZ	13%	34%	0%	53%
EE	60%	22%	1%	17%
EL	30%	6%	0%	64%
ES	91%	7%	0%	2%
IS	37%	47%	0%	15%
LU	88%	10%	0%	2%
PES only administering other benefits				
BE-VDAB	56%	44%	0%	0%
DK	86%	13%	0%	0%
SI	41%	29%	0%	29%
SE	83%	12%	0%	6%

Source: Annual PES Benchmarking Data Collection.

Information for 23 PES. No information – or insufficient information – is available for BE-Actiris, CY, DE, HU, IE, IT, NO and PL.

4.2. Human resources

4.2.1. Total staff numbers and developments between 2014 and 2020

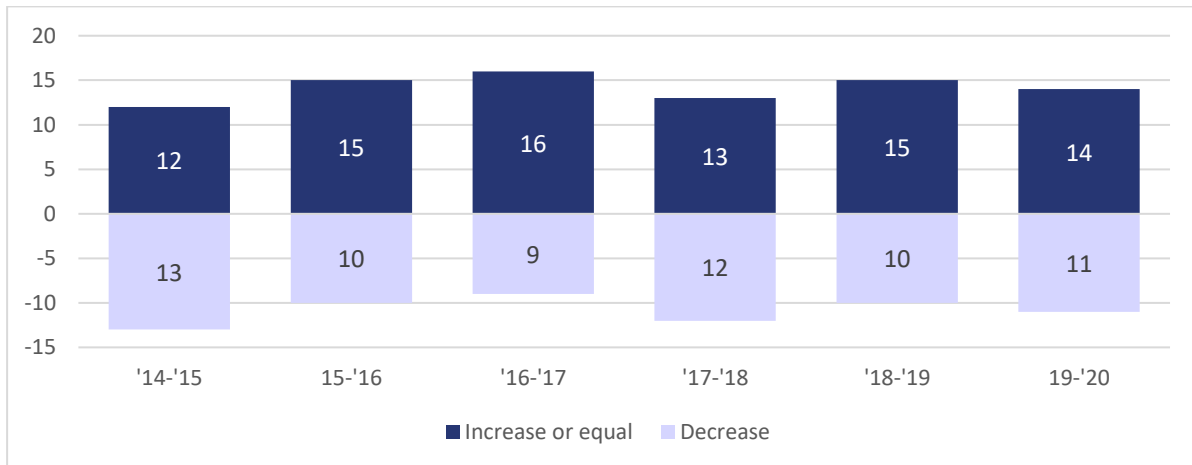
Information on total staff numbers is available for 25 European PES, excluding IE and PL where not enough data were available, in addition to the four PES where data could not be included in this report. Collectively, the total PES staff, measured in Full-Time Equivalents (FTE)¹⁴, has now been decreasing for four years. The decline between April 2019 and April 2020 was, at -0.5%, somewhat lower than in the previous years¹⁵.

In spite of this overall trend, the number of PES with increasing staff numbers over the past 12 months remains higher than the number of PES with decreasing staff numbers (as depicted in Figure 6). The reason for this is that countries with either decreasing, or stable, staff numbers include the largest PES.

¹⁴ Full-Time Equivalent is a unit of account used to express the size of a workforce. The concept is used to convert the hours worked by several part-time employees into the hours worked by full-time employees. It is calculated as the ratio of the total number of paid hours during a period (part-time, full time, and contracted) to the number of working hours in that period (Monday to Friday).

¹⁵ In previous year 0.2% decrease occurred between April 2016 and April 2017, followed by 1.2% and 1.4% decrease in the subsequent two years.

Figure 6. The number of PES experiencing an increase or a decrease in staff (in FTE) between 2014 and 2020 (30 April)

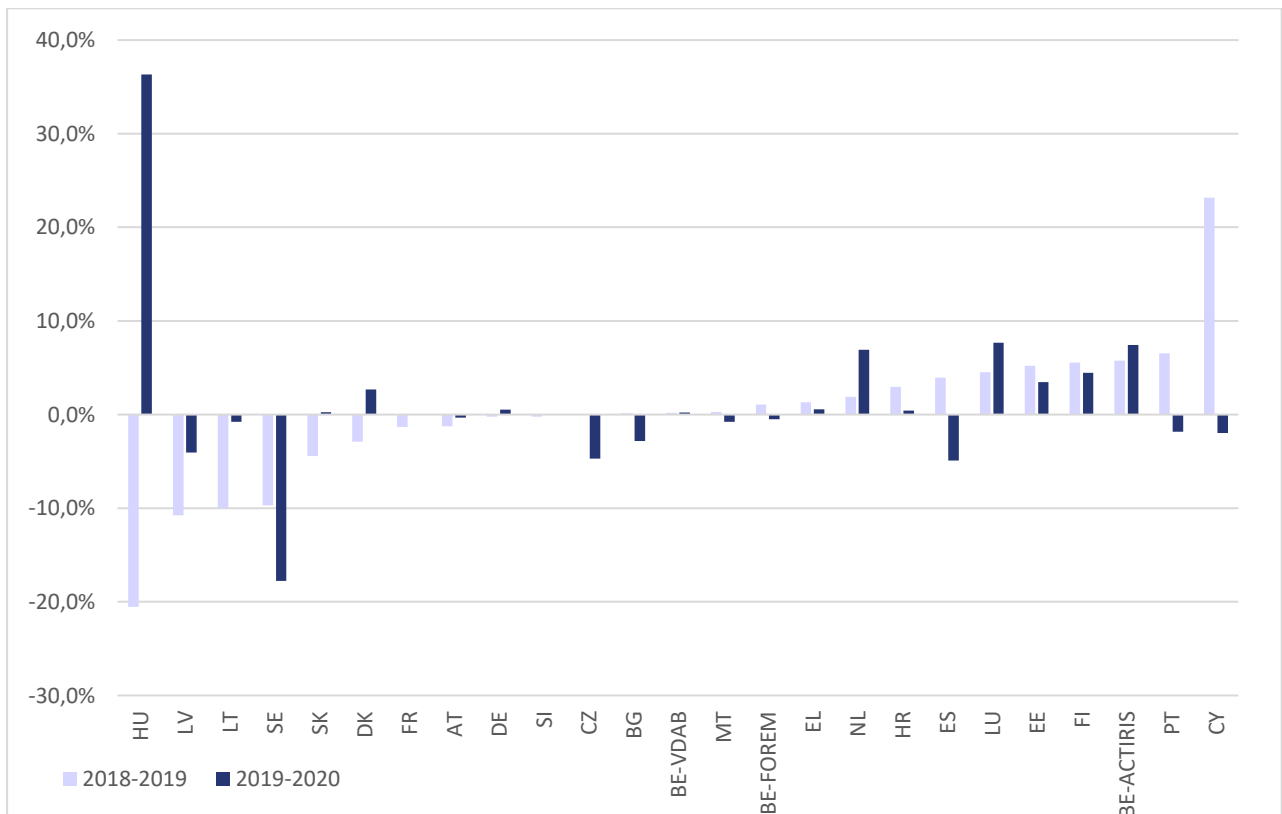


Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaires, 2015-2020.

Note: Based on 25 PES, no information – or insufficient information – is available for IE and PL. All data refer to 30 April or the closest date to this date where data were available.

More or less equal numbers of PES saw their staff decreasing or increasing from 2018 to 2019, as well between 2019 and 2020 (Figure 7). The number of PES whose staff numbers kept increasing or decreasing during these two consecutive periods was, curiously, virtually the same as the number of PES that saw growth being replaced by decline (or vice versa).

Figure 7. Percentage change in the number of staff April 2018 – April 2019 and April 2019 – April 2020



Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaires, 2018-2020

Note: Information for 25 PES, no information – or insufficient information – is available for IE and PL. All data refer to 30 April or the closest date to this date where data were available.

Somewhat unsurprisingly, COVID-19 affected staffing policies in 2020. Only four PES planned to decrease their staff numbers, compared to 12 PES that experienced staff decreases in 2019. These were BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, and the Bulgarian and German PES. In Latvia, a planned decrease was abandoned in view of the increasing amount of work created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main reason for staff decreases is a desire to increase efficiency and deal with budget decreases. Often these decreases are part of a longer-term process, such as the staff reduction approved for the period 2020-2024 by the new Flemish Government in 2019, and a commitment to avoid increases in back-office staff in BE-FOREM. In Germany, the decreases are the result of a PES strategy of consistent task reviewing, the prioritisation in all departments and fields of activity, an intensification of IT support for processes, and concentration on the PES' core tasks. In the case of Bulgaria, it involved the release of staff at the end of the envisaged nine months of employment under the 'Career Start' programme.

Of the 12 PES that planned staff increases in 2020, in five of them the increases were directly related to the need to manage the increased inflow of unemployed people resulting from COVID-19.

Table 5. Reason for planned staff increases in 2020

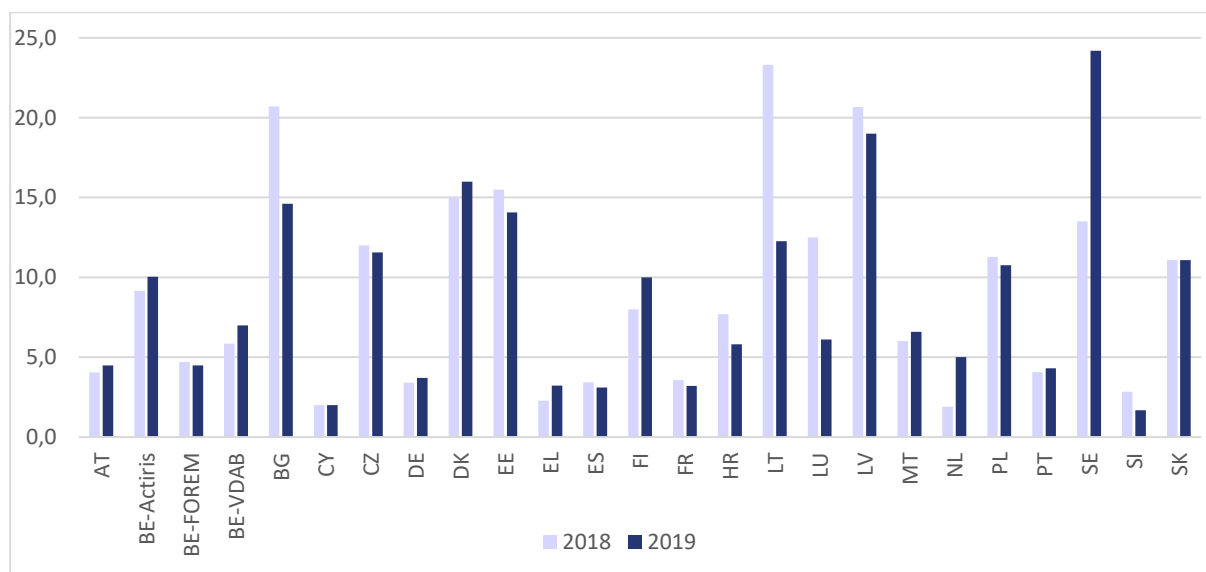
PES	Reasons
AT	Increasing unemployment rate due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
BE-Actiris	The decisions were to be made later in 2020, so details were not yet available at the time of the data collection.
EE	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that led to an economic crisis and an increase in the number of registered unemployed, the number of staff dealing with jobseekers is expected to increase accordingly, as needed.
EL	New staff are expected to be hired to cover existing PES needs.
ES	Giving interim staff permanent contracts, calls for services, public employment offer, consolidation and stabilisation processes.
FI	Increased demand for services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
FR	2 800 recruitments to support youth and jobseekers.
LU	Specialised counsellors (case managers), IT-staff and internal (re-) organisation.
NL	This year, the PES will hire 300 more FTE to manage the increased inflow caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
PT	As foreseen in the previous year, precarious workers will be integrated in the organisation through the program of extraordinary regularisation of precarious employment in Public Administration (PREVPAP).
SE	The unemployment rate is increasing due to the effects of COVID-19.

Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire, 2020

Note: no information was available on the reasons for staff decreases in CY.

4.2.2. Staff turnover and the changing deployment of staff

Contrary to the previous years, overall PES staff turnover rates (i.e., the proportion of total staff leaving the PES in a given year) decreased in 2019. In the 25 PES where this information is available, the average staff turnover rate decreased from 9.0% in 2018 to 8.6% in 2019. The number of PES with higher staff turnover in 2019 almost equalled the number that had lower staff turnover the year before.

Figure 8. Overall staff turnover in 2018 and 2019


Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaires, 2018 and 2019.

Note: no information or insufficient information for HU and IE. Staff turnover is defined as 'the proportion of total staff leaving the organisation over a set period of one year for whatever reason' (including retirement, leaving voluntarily, redundancy, etc.).

Four PES report changes in the allocation of their staff related to COVID-19: BE-Actiris temporarily already upgraded their call centre and the Cypriot PES prepared for changes in their staffing policy to deal with the digitalisation of services. In Spain, 1 000 temporary employees from the COVID-19 programme joined the PES in 2020, with the possibility of appointing 500 more temporary employees. In Slovenia, the PES implemented a re-allocation of part of the staff on the basis of temporary organisational orders to cope with new COVID-19 pandemic-related tasks. At the same time, changes in staff volume and deployment related to budget considerations, adjustments in PES services or a focus on specific targets groups continued. A recent overview of measures taken by PES can be found on the EU PES Knowledge Centre website¹⁶.

Table 6. Planned changes in deployment or allocation of staff for 2020

PES	Explanations
BE-Actiris	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the call centre has temporarily been upgraded.
DE	In both legal systems (unemployment insurance and minimum income benefit for jobseekers), employment opportunities – jobs, not staff – are gradually (over several years) redirected according to need.
EL	Changes are expected to take place in order to cover existing PES needs pending the implementation of the new organisational chart.
ES	In addition to the discharges in 2020 due to retirement, merit-based competitive selection and others, 1 000 temporary employees from the COVID-19 programme have joined in 2020, with the possibility of appointing 500 more temporary employees.

¹⁶ <https://www.pesnetwork.eu/2020/09/08/new-pes-network-covid/>. On 14 May 2020, the Network also organised a PES Mutual Learning Webinar on capacity planning measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PES	Explanations
HR	Due to an increased scope of work in the Active Labour Market Policy Department, some employees from the Employment Mediation Department were allocated to the Active Labour Market Policy Department.
LU	Additional PES staff were temporarily allocated to the PES' 'employment maintenance' department after a significant increase in applications for short-time work.
SI	Employees have permanent work contracts for individual employment posts, but due to the pandemic and the extraordinary anti-COVID-19 measures, some of the staff were reallocated to work on pandemic-related tasks, after new, temporary organisational decisions.

Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire, 2020.

Note: No information is available for LV and SE. For NL, there are no definite plans yet, but staff normally working with employers will possibly be assigned to help out with services for jobseekers, due to the increased inflow of jobseekers.

4.2.3. Dedicated employment counsellors for tailored support

For most PES, the share of front-line staff¹⁷ was similar to the year before (April 2019), with a slight increase observed for 18 out of 24 PES. The average share of PES staff directly in contact with, and dealing with, clients at the end of April 2020 amounted to 65.9%¹⁸. Most of the PES have more than 50% of staff working in the front office, while ten PES have above 70% (AT, BG, CY, FI, FR, HU, LT, NL, SE and SI).

As before, the PES with responsibilities for benefit payment on average have a lower share of their staff working directly with clients, which is partly explained by the fact that the administration of unemployment benefits requires more back office work. The difference is more pronounced this year than for 2019. This is caused by the exclusion of some PES with relatively low shares of front office staff amongst PES not administering benefits. The opposite was true for PES that *are* responsible for benefits.

Table 7. Proportion of front-line staff with different responsibilities for benefits, April 2020

No responsibility for benefits	%	Only Unemployment Benefits (UB)	%	UB and other benefits	%	Only other benefits	%
BE-Actiris	62.6%	DE	28.6%	AT	76.0%	BE-VDAB	65.3%
BE-FOREM	52.3%	FR	74.9%	CZ	45.7%	SE	78.3%
BG	81.8%	HR	58.7%	EE	60.1%		
CY	91.9%	PL	38.5%	EL	49.7%		
FI	92.0%	PT	34.5%	ES	66.7%		
LT	80.7%	SI	72.3%	LU	67.6%		
LV	81.3%						
MT	67.0%						
NL	69.7%						
Average	76.4%		55.8%		61.0%		71.8%

Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire, 2020.

Notes: Information for 24 PES, no information or insufficient information on DK, IE, IS, IT, NO, RO and SK.

DE: Placement officers and counsellors in SGB III (total without employer service).

HU: All the local staff members are generalist, but different front office roles exist.

MT: This figure does not include persons seconded out of the PES, or staff who are on maternity/paternal leave, or on a career break, or unpaid leave.

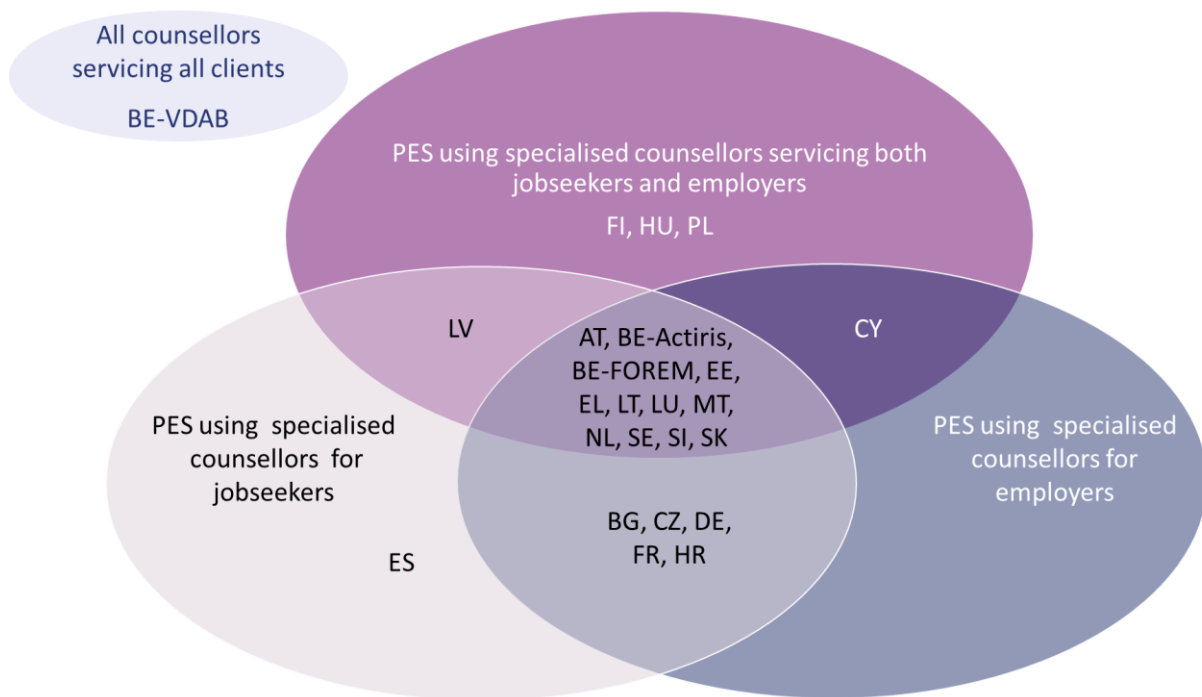
¹⁷ Front-line staff in PES carry out roles relating to matching, counselling, advising, and training etc.

¹⁸ Based on the data for 24 PES. No information or insufficient information is available for DK, IE, IS, IT, NO, RO and SK.

Front-line staff can be assigned to work with all clients or all visitors, but a majority of the PES also assign teams or staff office workers to specific groups. An exception is BE-VDAB (Flemish PES) that does not assign specialist front office staff to specific groups. It is part of the PES’ strategy that all counsellors work in a specific sector and work for all clients within their particular sector. In Hungary, all local PES staff are generalist, but based on the new PES organisation model introduced by McKinsey in 2019, four new front-line staff roles were defined: a) employers’ agent, b) segmentation officer, c) guidance officer, and d) case manager.

The typical model in PES for providing targeted front office services is to use specialised counsellors for specific groups, particularly jobseekers or employers, as well as counsellors dealing with both groups. It is rare for PES to have counsellors only servicing both jobseekers and employers, while at the same time not having counsellors who only service either jobseekers or employers. This is the case in three PES (FI, HU and PL). Similarly, only a small group of PES assign counsellors to *either* jobseekers or employers, but not to the two combined (BG, CZ, DE, FR and HR).

Figure 9. Front-line staff targeting specific groups, April 2020



Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire, 2020.

Note: 24 PES, no information or insufficient information on IS, IT, RO, NO, as well as DK, IE and PT.

5. ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES USED BY PES

5.1. Recent developments in ALMPs

5.1.1. Overview of changes in 2019

The introduction of new ALMPs was reported by 17 PES, and 14 PES reported amending existing ALMPs to better respond to labour market conditions in 2019. These numbers are smaller than in 2018 (22 and 20, respectively). In addition, 11 PES both introduced new ALMPs and also made changes to existing measures. Seven PES saw no changes at all in their ALMPs (Table 9). The average number of new measures per PES introducing new measures (3.4), and the average number of measures altered by PES that made these changes (3.2), is higher than the number reported in 2019 for 2018.

Table 8. New ALMPs introduced or existing ones modified in 2019

PES	New	#	Modified	#	both	Neither
AT	Y	2	N	n/a	0	0
BE-Actiris	Y	1	Y	1	1	0
BE-FOREM	Y	1	Y	1	1	0
BE-VDAB	Y	4	Y	8	1	0
BG	Y	5	Y	10	1	0
CY	Y	1	N	n/a	0	0
CZ	N	n/a	Y	1	0	0
DE	Y	3	Y	1	1	0
DK	Y	9	Y	2	1	0
EE	Y	1	N	n/a	0	0
EL	Y	5	Y	4	1	0
ES	Y	4	Y	1	1	0
FI	N	n/a	N	n/a	0	1
FR	Y	2	Y	2	1	0
HR	Y	2	Y	3	1	0
HU	N	n/a	N	n/a	0	1
IE	N	n/a	N	n/a	0	1
LT	N	n/a	N	n/a	0	1
LU	N	n/a	N	n/a	0	1
LV	Y	2	N	n/a	0	0
MT	N	n/a	Y	2	0	0
NL	N	n/a	N	n/a	0	1
PL	N	n/a	N	n/a	0	1
PT	Y	2	N	n/a	0	0
SE	N	n/a	Y	2	0	0
SI	Y	2	Y	7	1	0
SK	Y	12	N	n/a	0	0
Totals ('yes' or numbers)	17	58	14	45	11	7

Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire, 2020.

Note: n/a = not applicable.

For new ALMPs in 2019: no new measures or no information available for 14 PES (CZ, FI, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, RO and SE). For ALMPs-modified in 2019: no measures modified or no information available for 17 PES (AT, CY, EE, FI, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO and SK).

5.1.2. *Target groups for new measures*

Whereas in previous years young people and the LTU were the most important target groups for new measures, in 2019 almost one third of the new measures (31%) were aimed at assisting difficult-to-place or vulnerable groups. This was almost twice as many as measures targeting youth (16%). Compared to previous years, measures addressing groups *with specific skill* levels also became more important, their share in 2019 equalling that of the new measures targeting the LTU (12%). Also, the same percentage of new measures targeted people with disabilities or people suffering from chronic diseases, as new measures targeted to employers (9% in both cases).

Three PES introduced specific measures for the self-employed: for people who had terminated their business activity (EL), people with reduced work ability (BE-VDAB), or people who have used a 'self-employment subsidy' in the past (HR). Regional or sectoral programmes were launched in two countries. Greece introduced measures for workers formerly employed in retail in the Attica region and in 10 other Greek regions, while in Croatia a new measure was created for workers employed in eligible sectors in the manufacturing industry with open-ended work contracts. Other groups targeted by new measures in 2019 include students (BE-VDAB) for example, and single parents with small children (SK).

The Danish and the Spanish PES introduced measures aimed at institutions. One Danish measure developed a permanent platform to share information about different kinds of disabilities, aimed at jobcentres, public sector employers and private employers. A second measure targets municipal jobcentres and aims to strengthen the function of the so-called 'key-persons' that are the central figure for the employment measures for people with disabilities, concerning case reviews, knowledge about disabilities, advising colleagues etc. In Spain, regulations were put in place for the financing of state-level training plans, aimed at the development of functions related to social dialogue and collective bargaining.

It should be noted here that almost one in five measures uses multiple criteria for determining access to the measure. A new Bulgarian programme for post-employment counselling and mentoring targets the LTU, young people, people without or with a low-level education and qualifications, unemployed people from ethnic minority groups (in particular, Roma), unemployed people with various addictions or who have served a prison sentence, as well as inactive and 'discouraged' people.

5.1.3. *Changes in existing measures*

The changes in existing measures consist of (1) making additional target groups eligible, (2) budget increases or project extensions, and (3) higher compensation for participation. The last category includes, for example, reductions in employers' contributions or increases in subsidies (BE-VDAB, ES, HR and SI) and an apprenticeship subsidy (EL). The duration of activities under existing ALMP measures increased only in France and Malta (see the example of Malta in the text box below).

Two adaptations based on experience gained in practice in Malta

As of 1 April 2019, in order to make participation in the Work Exposure Scheme more practical and attractive to both employers and prospective trainees, a change in respect of the maximum placement time came into effect. Previously, 240 hours had to be spread over 12 weeks with an average of 20 hours of on-the-job training per week, whereas under the new system the maximum number of placement hours in a given week had risen to 40 hours. The 240 hours threshold within the maximum period of 12 weeks still applies.

Following feedback from both employers and past participants in the traineeships programme, in order to encourage take-up of the Scheme, as of 1 April 2019, a change in respect of the maximum duration of the traineeships came into effect. Previously, the traineeship could last 14 to 16 weeks, while after April the maximum duration was reduced to 12 weeks. 282 hours are used for on-the-job training, while 18 hours are to be spent on off-the-job training. The maximum duration of on-the-job training in any given week is 40 hours.

5.1.4. Types of measures

The main types of newly introduced measures are employment incentives and packages of different types of actions (Table 9). This reflects the emphasis on the introduction of measures for the more vulnerable groups described above. In terms of existing measures, most changes in 2019 concerned training measures, followed by employment incentives, continuing the trend observed in 2018.

Table 9. Types of new or amended ALMPs in 2019

ALMP type	New ALMPs	%	Amended ALMPs	%
1.1. Client services, including 1.1.1. Information services, 1.1.2. Individual case management	9	15.5%	6	13.3%
2. Training	11	19.0%	20	44.4%
4. Employment incentives	18	31.0%	10	22.2%
5. Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation	0	0.0%	1	2.2%
6. Direct job creation	2	3.4%	2	4.4%
7. Start-up incentives	1	1.7%	1	2.2%
Other (mostly combinations of types of measures)	17	29.3%	5	11.1%
Total	58	100%	53	100%

Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire, 2020.

Note: The types of ALMPs are based on the harmonised classification used in the EU LMP database. Category 3: 'Job rotation and job sharing' has been integrated into category 4 in the LMP classification and is therefore not included as a separate ALMP type in this table.

For new ALMPs in 2019: no new measures or no information available for 14 PES (CZ, FI, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, RO and SE). For ALMPs-modified in 2019: no measures modified or no information available for 17 PES (AT, CY, EE, FI, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO and SK).

5.2. Deployment of active measures for specific client groups

This section explores the types of ALMPs that the PES deploy when working with various target groups. These include the measures discussed in the previous section.

Information services and individual case management are for the first time included in the Table below. Together with training and employment incentives, they are the type of

measure most often used for all target groups, except refugees. For the latter group, PES typically deploy information services and training.

Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation are often applied when working with people with disabilities and are amongst the least used for other groups. In contrast, PES rely relatively often on direct job creation measures for the LTU.

Table 10. Types of measures primarily used for target groups in 2020

ALMP type	Young people	Long-term unemployed	Older workers	People with disabilities	Refugees
(1.1.1) Information services	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE, and SI (24)	AT, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE, and SI (23)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, and SI (23)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE, and SI (24)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, FI, FR, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE, and SI (21)
(1.1.2) Individual case management	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE, and SI (21)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE, and SI (23)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, and SI (20)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE, and SI (22)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BG, DE, DK, EE, FI, FR, IE, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE, and SI (17)
(2) Training	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, and SI (25)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, and SI (25)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-VDAB, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, and SI (23)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-VDAB, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, and SI (24)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SE, and SI (22)
(4) Employment incentives	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SE, and SI (23)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SE, and SI (23)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, and SI (22)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-VDAB, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SE, and SI (23)	BE-ACTIRIS, BE-VDAB, BG, DE, DK, EE, FI, HR, IE, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SE, and SI (16)

ALMP type	Young people	Long-term unemployed	Older workers	People with disabilities	Refugees
(5) Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation	CZ, DE, ES, FI, HU, IE, LV, and SE (8)	AT, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, LV, SE, and SI (12)	CZ, DE, DK, FI, HU, and LV (6)	AT, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, PT, SE, and SI (20)	CZ, FI, IE, LV, and SE (5)
(6) Direct job creation	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BG, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, HR, HU, IE, LU, LV, PL, PT, SE, and SI (17)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SE, and SI (20)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BG, CZ, EL, HR, HU, IE, LU, LV, PL, PT, and SI (13)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EL, HR, HU, IE, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SE, and SI (17)	BE-ACTIRIS, BG, CZ, HR, IE, LU, LV, PL, PT, and SE (10)
(7) Start-up incentives	BE-ACTIRIS, BE-FOREM, BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, and SE (19)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BG, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, and SE (18)	AT, BE-ACTIRIS, BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LU, LV, NL, PL, and PT (17)	BE-ACTIRIS, BG, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, and SE (18)	BE-ACTIRIS, DE, EE, FI, HR, IE, LU, LV, PL, PT, and SE (11)

Source: responses to PES Capacity Report questionnaire 2020.

Note: no information or insufficient information on IS, IT, NO, RO and SK.

Note: The types of ALMPs are based on the harmonised classification used in the EU LMP database. Category '3: Job rotation and job sharing' has been integrated into category 4 in the LMP classification.

6. TARGET SETTING

6.1. Strategic targets in PES

Twenty-two PES defined strategic targets for 2020, for example in their annual business plans. The number of reported targets varied from three in the Czech Republic, Denmark, and Finland, to 18 in Germany, the Netherlands and Slovakia. In total, the 22 PES set 224 targets.

Twenty-one PES included targets for specific groups. These refer in particular to young people and the LTU. Employees and people with disabilities are the two other target groups most often specifically addressed. The surge in new measures developed for vulnerable groups (section 5.1) is not matched by targets for 2020. Only four PES (AT, CY, MT and SK) included targets for vulnerable groups in their strategy.

Table 11. Selected characteristics of strategic targets set by PES for 2020

PES	Targets per PES	LTU	Employers	Youth	People with disabilities
AT	7			1	
BE-FOREM	4			1	
BG	11	1			
CY	6	1		1	
CZ	3		1		
DE	18	1	1	1	
DK	3	1			
EE	17		1		1
EL	12		1	1	
FI	3				
FR	11	1			
HR	15	1		1	
HU	6	1		1	
IE	4	1			
LT	6			1	
LU	8		1		
MT	17	1	1	1	1
NL	18			1	1
PT	16			1	1
SE	13	1	1	1	1
SI	7	1			
SK	18	1		1	
# PES	22	12	7	13	5

Source: responses to the PES Capacity Questionnaire, 2020.

Note: Author's classification of targets based on the responses from 22 PES. No information, or insufficient information, for: IS, IT, NO and RO, as well as BE-Actiris and BE-VDAB (targets set but to be confirmed), ES, LV and PL.

6.2. Types of targets set

The number of PES with performance targets in their strategy focusing on the employment situation increased compared to 2019. For 2020, 19 out of 22 PES (86%) included this type of target. Eight PES, some overlapping, included other types of performance targets. For 2019, only 15 out of 24 (63%) set employment-related performance targets.

Twelve PES set targets relating to their internal work processes. The German and the French PES are both examples of this.

Germany and France – monitoring internal processes

The German Service Index for Operational Services takes into account three key indicators on the provision of services in Book III of the Social Code.

1. The 'Proportion of timely approvals of unemployment benefit I' describes the rapid processing of applications in the interests of customers to ensure their 'livelihood security' (i.e., ensuring their basic needs are looked after).
2. The 'misjudgement rate' reflects getting correct decisions on benefits according to the law. The sum of the avoidable objections is related to the sum of approvals and completed reclaims.
3. The 'Customer Satisfaction Operative Services (OS)' measures the customer survey results for employees for insolvency benefit and unemployment benefit.

The target is to achieve 100%. The results are published in the middle and at the end of the year.

The French PES 2020 strategy uses three indicators to monitor their internal processes.

1. The rate of legally valid decisions on requests submitted for benefits (compliance rate, target 96%).
2. The rate of unemployment benefit entitlements notified within 21 days
3. The length of the recruitment process for vacancies submitted to Pôle emploi (-4 days compared to 2019).

There will also be an indicator for the rate of overpayments, though due to COVID-19 no target has yet been set.

Table 12. Types of targets set by PES for 2020

PES	Outputs	Results (work)	Results (other)	Process
AT		1		1
BE-FOREM	1	1		1
BG	1	1		1
CY	1	1		
CZ	1	1		
DE	1	1	1	1
DK	1		1	
EE	1	1	1	
EL	1		1	1
FI		1	1	
FR		1	1	1
HR	1	1		1
HU		1	1	
IE		1		

PES	Outputs	Results (work)	Results (other)	Process
LT		1		1
LU	1			1
MT	1	1	1	1
NL	1	1		1
PT	1	1		
SE	1	1		1
SI		1		
SK		1		
# PES	14	19	8	12

Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire, 2020.

Note: Author's classification of targets based on the responses from 22 PES. No or insufficient information for: IS, IT, NO, and RO, as well as BE-Actiris and BE-VDAB (targets set but to be confirmed), ES, LV, and PL.

6.3. The impact of COVID-19 on strategic objectives and targets

At the time when PES agreed their objectives and targets for 2020, COVID-19 was still a reality happening mostly elsewhere in the world. In the course of 2020, it hit the EU and the dramatic impact of the virus and the measures taken to combat it became visible. Labour markets were heavily affected, and PES were required to deal with an upsurge in the influx of unemployed jobseekers.

It is to be expected that this would affect the objectives and would require an adaptation of the expectations regarding the outcomes of PS policies and actions.

At the time of the survey – first half of 2020 – nine PES said they had adapted their objectives to the new situation (BE-Actiris, BG, CY, CZ, HR, HU, LU, LV, and SE). Two more PES (BE-FOREM and EE) were considering such changes and planned to discuss them later this year. Some other PES drew attention to new measures without reporting a change in objectives, such as AT, DK, and PL.

6.3.1 Objectives

Supporting employers, private companies and employment in general

The main new objectives formulated by PES relate to companies and workers. As the Austrian PES described it: 'the new overwhelming objective is processing short-time work'.

Supporting companies and protecting existing employment has become a key objective for PES.

After Hungary entered lockdown in mid-March 2020, the inflow into the PES register became stronger. The primary aim of the national government was to maintain companies' capacities. The Hungarian PES became the contact point for firms participating in a new national programme that included possibilities for short-time work schemes and a wage subsidy for employees in research, development and innovation.

In many PES, new measures were introduced that were perhaps more a reflection of new *priorities*, rather than necessarily new or 'explicit' *objectives*. The Bulgarian PES is one of the few PES that reported a formal revision of its strategic framework; this included its first strategic objective. Maintaining the employment of employees was added as a specific objective within the overall strategic objective of the PES being 'an effective intermediary in the labour market for everyone'. A short-time work scheme was introduced to limit the

negative socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for enterprises and the self-employed directly affected by the state of emergency declared by the National Assembly on 13 March 2020.

Most of the PES offer some form of short-time work schemes. The Czech PES introduced two new programmes to achieve this. Besides its Antivirus Programme offering financial support to companies, the Czech PES also introduced its Outplacement Programme which supports both the re-employment of people in a 'collective redundancy' and also people who have suffered 'regular redundancy'. In Poland, the PES implemented a range of policy measures, primarily of a financial nature, to cushion the COVID-19 effect:

1. co-financing an employee's remuneration costs and an employee's social security contributions with the private employers;
2. co-financing the cost of conducting business activity with private employers;
3. a loan to cover the costs of business activity;
4. co-financing the costs of remuneration and social security contributions for employees of non-governmental organisations;
5. protection of workplaces.

A number of PES also offer other types of assistance. BE-Actiris increased support and guidance to employers. The PES also sought to review their employment supports and further expand partnerships in the context of the economic crisis. The Danish PES launched different policy measures to support business recruitment.

Some sectors have clearly been hit harder than others and it made sense to prioritise such sectors. At the time the data were collected for this report, the issue of seasonal work arose in several countries. Latvia aimed to support employers whose workload had increased during the crisis as a result of COVID-19, but also explicitly when additional labour was needed due to the start of seasonal work. The Latvian PES planned a campaign on seasonal work, including agricultural work, to address and bring together both employers and jobseekers. The PES also aimed to encourage employers to register seasonal vacancies with the PES and to offer them suitable candidate selection services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Croatian employment service initially focused entirely on two measures, while other active labour market policy measures were temporarily suspended. As well as the more general job preservation subsidies, the Croatian PES focused on the pre-existing 'Permanent seasonal worker' measure. This offers financial support to seasonal workers in the period they are not working to ensure that employers still have access to a workforce when they need it again.

Protection of vulnerable groups and preventing long-term unemployment

Besides the objectives related to companies and workers, at least five PES changed their priorities to deal with the impact of COVID-19 on the unemployed.

The Swedish PES increased their focus on ensuring that unemployed people receive unemployment benefits without delays caused by PES. BE-Actiris aimed for a holistic, inclusive and non-discriminatory approach of services in order not to exclude the most vulnerable in this crisis. The PES also concentrated on the upskilling/reskilling training of jobseekers to meet new needs on the labour market and increased subsidised employment contracts to create more employment. The Danish PES also directed part of its efforts at skills upgrading, with a view to preventing long-term unemployment. Similarly, the Swedish PES aimed to prevent long-term unemployment by increasing its focus on early intervention measures.

The prevention of unemployment is sometimes targeted in a regional context. One of the specific objectives foreseen in the strategy of the Bulgarian PES is the 'reduction of regional and structural imbalances in labour supply'. Under this objective, the Bulgarian PES redirected more financial resources to providing temporary employment for the increased number of unemployed. BE-Actiris accelerated the implementation of innovative employment policies with a view to contributing to the achievement of 'territories with zero long-term unemployment'.

Digitalisation

COVID-19, and the measures taken to combat the virus in particular, have posed extraordinary challenges for organisations such as PES, on teleworking and the provision of online services.

The Luxembourg PES said that COVID-19 had reinforced the digitalisation of services provided by the PES. BE-Actiris aims at ensuring a digital transformation of services that combines digital and physical service delivery (phygital) to remain accessible and inclusive for all client groups. In Croatia and Hungary, the pandemic boosted the introduction of online registration applications for clients. All communication in their mediation between the unemployed and employers was done via e-mail or by phone in Croatia. The main future challenge in Hungary will be to digitise business procedures/operations, digitise services aimed at their clients and working to strengthen their clients' abilities to use services delivered through e-channels. The example of Hungary also shows that the impact of COVID-19 on digital service provision may well exceed the duration of the crisis. The Hungarian PES set digitalisation as a priority during this crisis but expects this process to continue after the crisis. The PES expects the emphasis in the future to be on the further transformation of the CES (the Hungarian PES) towards digitalisation and the training of clients to use e-services.

6.3.2 Targets

At the time of the survey, seven PES had adapted their targets to the new situation (AT, BG, CY, CZ, LU, SE and SI) and two PES planned to do so. BE-VDAB is currently adjusting their targets for 2020, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and uncertainty about the developments in the labour market. The Latvian PES plans to revise the targets related to the performance indicators in their 2020-2022 Operational Strategy by including indicators that are set in the Branch office performance indicators and indicators from their Employers Strategy.

The following table provides an overview of the changes made at the time of the survey.

Table 13. Changes in PES 2020 targets related to COVID-19

PES	4.2.3 What changes?
AT	The agreed objectives are still important and valid, but the targets (figures) are no longer achievable. Controlling the agreed labour market targets became part of the monitoring done for this year; the results are no longer determining the staff bonus in 2020.
BG	Objective 1. The Employment Agency – an effective intermediary in the labour market for all people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining the employment of at least 120,000 people working in the economic sectors most affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Objective 2. Improving the quality of the labour force and reducing regional and structural differences in its supply. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The natural value of the 'number of jobs' indicator has been changed from 1 000 to 2 000. The financial resources increased from BGN 4.7 million (EUR 2.35 million) to BGN 6.3 million (EUR 3.15 million).

PES	4.2.3 What changes?
CY	<p>Participation of registered unemployed people aged 15-29 and over 50 in individualised counselling (number of IAPs – Individual Action Plans) as a percentage of the total number of unemployed people aged 15-29 to be reduced to 10%, 3% of which to be GMI (Guaranteed Minimum Income) recipients.</p> <p>Participation of registered unemployed with duration of unemployment more than six months in individualised counselling (number of IAPs) as a percentage of total registered unemployed with duration of unemployment more than six months to be reduced to 6% (2% of which to be GMI recipients).</p>
CZ	Targets accompanying two new programmes in response to COVID-19
LU	Increase the efficiency in the handling of demands and payments related to the short-time working scheme.
SE	<p>Target levels were changed, and the following new targets were introduced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of young unemployed that have been unemployed for more than 90 days without being offered a labour market programme will not increase. • The proportion of delayed programme decisions for the Job and Development Programme, the Introduction Programme or the Youth Guarantee Programme will not increase. • Share of the PES Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for products and building blocks in the registration process that achieve set target should not decrease. • The number of participants in labour market programmes at private providers of support and matching shall increase substantially. • The proportion of the unemployed that have an individual plan within 30 days will increase. • The proportion of people unemployed for 3-12 months who participate in a labour market programme will increase. • The proportion/share of the unemployed who do not have education at upper secondary level (Swedish gymnasium) that start labour market programmes directed towards study motivation or counselling will increase.
SI	<p>The values of certain targets were changed due to the situation in the labour market*.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of the LTU who will find employment in 2020 – target 6 400. • Share of long-term unemployed included in ALMP programmes – 25%. • The share of transitions into employment within six months of registration as unemployed – 52%. • The share of job vacancies notified to the ESS where employers also require active recruitment support (active mediation – referrals of candidates) – 58%. • The number of registered unemployed who should find employment in 2020 – 51 000. • The share of transitions into employment six months after the completion of training programmes – 40%. <p>*The situation in 2020 was uncertain, so estimations of short-term labour market trends were difficult to predict.</p>

Source: responses to PES Capacity Questionnaire, 2020.

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