

# Towards a European Pillar of Social Rights

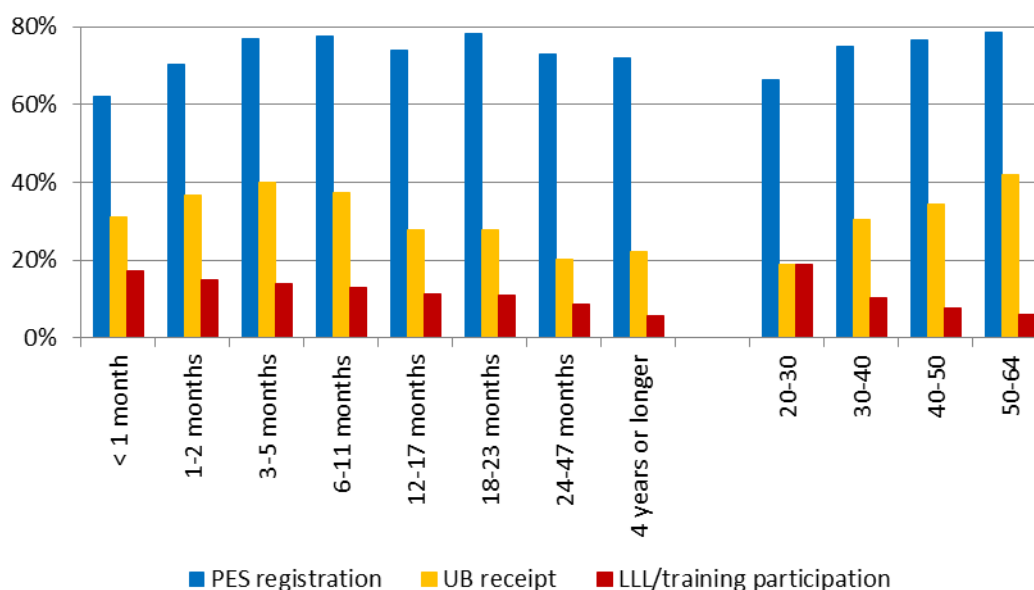
## SECURE PROFESSIONAL TRANSITIONS

Working lives are becoming more and more diverse, frequently comprising various jobs and forms of employment as well as career interruptions and changes. Labour market demands are fast-changing, and linked to technological changes. Adequate and targeted support for secure labour market transitions to enter work, to return to work and to enter new occupations or obtain new skills is central to a dynamic labour market. Active labour market policies, such as counselling, training or active job search, can help to increase the employment opportunities for jobseekers and to improve their matching with jobs.

### Challenges

Support for transitions between jobs and for regular re-skilling and up-skilling throughout the working life has become essential but is not yet reflected in levels of participation in lifelong learning. Adult education and vocational training systems still lag behind the dire need for re-skilling due to technological change and globalisation. An estimated 12.5% of unemployed people are participating in occupational education and training (see also the fiche on Skills and lifelong learning).

**Figure 1: Public Employment Services registration, unemployment benefit coverage and participation in lifelong learning (education and training) by age and unemployment duration, 2014**



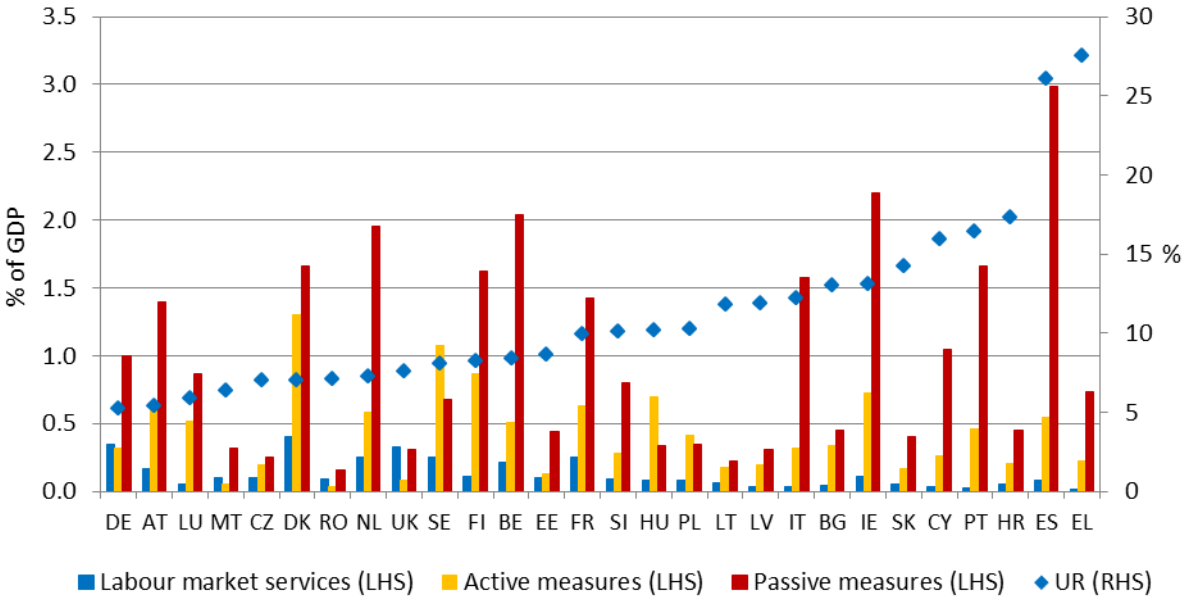
During the recent economic crisis, the Public Employment Services have faced a severe increase in the numbers of registered jobseekers. Early, targeted intervention as soon as a person becomes unemployed to secure faster

transitions between jobs, remains a challenge in half of the Member States. However, although expenditure on Active Labour Market Policies increased in most Member States over the crisis period, the amounts spent were not necessarily enough to restore the pre-crisis levels of activation.

Indeed, in half of the Member States regular activation rates were higher in 2008 than at any point since.

Furthermore, some social protection entitlements, such as occupational pensions, unemployment benefits or training entitlements cannot always be easily transferred when changing jobs nor validated when becoming self-employed.

**Figure 2: Expenditure on labour market services, active and passive measures (% of GDP), 2013**



### Situation at EU level

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union sets out that the Union shall implement a vocational training policy and shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between the Member States. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union specifies that everyone has the right to education, including free compulsory education, and access to vocational and continuing training. The EU Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States<sup>1</sup> call for improved labour-market matching and support for sustainable labour market transitions.

Four Council Recommendations<sup>2</sup> promote conditions for and key elements of lifelong learning while the Europe 2020 Strategy includes a twofold headline target on reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10% and having at least 40% of 30 to 34 year-olds with tertiary education.

The EU Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States<sup>3</sup> call for the improvement of labour-market matching and support for sustainable transitions, including from school to work.

<sup>1</sup> Council Decision (EU) 2015/1848 of 5 October 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Recommendation of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC); 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2008/C 111/01); 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving (2011/C191/01); 20 December 2012 on the Validation of NFIL (2012/C 398/01).

<sup>3</sup> Council Decision (EU) 2015/1848 of 5 October 2015.

Under EU social security coordination rules, an unemployed person who is entitled to contributory unemployment benefits can request to receive these while searching for a job in another Member States for a period up to three months (with a possible prolongation up to six months). Supplementary pensions should be paid to all those entitled under such schemes in all Member States.

## Situation in the Member States

Public Employment Services support the matching of supply and demand in the labour market through information, placement and active support services at local, national and European level. The effectiveness of such services varies widely across Member States, partly due to the very different capacity to deliver quality services, aligned to the needs of employers.

Most Member States have a lifelong learning strategy. However, these strategies are sometimes conceived for a limited duration. In a few Member States the right of access to formal education is extended (at least for certain groups) beyond compulsory school-leaving age. Statistics show that highly qualified adults receive around 45% of all training hours, medium qualified people receive about 42% and low-qualified people receive only 13% of all hours. Adults who are unemployed or inactive in the labour market are half as likely to participate in learning as employed adults.

A few countries have introduced changes to ensure the better portability of rights in the case of labour market transitions, for instance retaining part of an unemployment benefit while receiving a start-up grant. In France, an individual training account set up in 2015 encourages the use of training entitlements for validation and training purposes.

## International dimension

The right to employment services provision is covered by the European Social Charter which includes the commitment to establish or maintain free employment services for all<sup>4</sup> and provides for vocational guidance services.<sup>5</sup> Job transitions are further supported by ILO Convention 168 on Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment, 1988. It protects workers and their family against loss of employment and income, by means of both unemployment insurance and active labour market policies. A Recommendation (N°148) on paid educational leave also supports professional transitions. A number of ILO instruments cover employment services.

Many ILO instruments - as well as the revised European Social Charter - require Member States to provide vocational training linked to employment, including lifelong learning, with a strong focus on gender equality.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> European Social Charter, part II, article 1.3. It is a Council of Europe treaty which was adopted in 1961 and revised in 1996.

<sup>5</sup> ILO Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No.88), complemented by the ILO Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181) and its accompanying Recommendation (No.188).

<sup>6</sup> Training and upskilling are more particularly covered by the Vocational Guidance Recommendation, (N°87), the Human Resources Development Convention (N°142) and Recommendation (N°195), and the Vocational Training Recommendation, (N°117).