

Enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES)

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The Commission presented a report on the application of Decision 573/2014/EU on enhanced cooperation between public employment services (PES).

As a reminder, in May 2014, Decision No 573/2014/EU established the **European network of public employment services** as a platform for closer cooperation between these organisations. The network includes PES from all EU Member States, Norway and Iceland, as well as the European Commission.

This report assessed the extent to which the network has contributed to the achievement of the stated objectives of the decision and has accomplished its tasks to date. It also examined how the network has implemented the process of connecting performance comparisons with mutual learning. The PES benchlearning system aims to improve PES performance in addressing European labour market challenges.

Implementation of the decision: the report noted that the Decision has been **successfully implemented** to date. In its formalised structure, the network has proven to be effective in supporting national PES in the various challenges they face. At the same time, it encourages **cooperation** in order to tackle common issues together to further the aims of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The network focused its activities on the eight objectives set out in the Decision. In particular, it has contributed to the measures taken by the Union to implement policies that **help people furthest from the labour market find work**, especially young people and the long-term unemployed and people with disabilities.

The network has also tackled new challenges, such as the **refugee crisis**. In 2016, it highlighted four aspects that are of particular importance for the integration of refugees and asylum seekers: language, skills and qualifications, partnerships and institutions, and employers.

The network has also worked to:

- ensure that initiatives to **create decent and sustainable work** are effective by contributing to the consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- establish specific technical assistance to help PES improve their ability to match jobseekers to job offers. The network has been involved in a number of initiatives, including the Partnerships between Employment Services (PARES);
- take part in several initiatives to promote the exchange of information between PES on **skills shortages** and to learn from innovative practices;
- propose **closer coordination with the European Employment Services Network (EURES)** in order to address the issue of supporting the increased voluntary geographical and occupational mobility of workers;

- contribute to the initiative on the **European Solidarity Corps**, which aims to offer young people from all over Europe the opportunity to volunteer or engage in work experience, for example in the form of employment or in the field of solidarity, in their own country or in another Member State.

Benchlearning: this innovative method that PES was the first to introduce into the network aims to help each PES to improve its performance through comparisons and peer-based institutional learning.

The report stated that benchlearning has proved to be a **positive innovation**. The exercise highlighted a number of inspiring practices in some Member States as well as areas where PES can focus their business development.

The **willingness of its members to collaborate**, share good practice and participate in learning events demonstrates their shared desire to constantly improve and ultimately provide a better and more effective service for all people across Europe.

As the cycles of benchlearning develop, PES will be able to continually improve their organisation and the services they provide to the public.

In accordance with the Decision, the network is to run until 31 December 2020. A further report will be published before the Decision expires. Looking ahead, the 2017 work programme has a full schedule of activities to further the objectives and needs of PES. Such activities will continue throughout the network's existence.