# Free movement of workers: integrated European employment market EURES. Report 1998-1999

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The development of EURES over the two years covered by this report - 2000 and 2001 - has demonstrated the role EURES has already played and will continue to play in delivering some of the key objectives outlined in the Action Plan. This report reflects also the recommendations made by the European Parliament in its report of 31.05.2001 on the activities of the EURES network during 1998 and 1999. In particular, it shows the relation between the EURES activities and the European Employment Strategy, providing statistical data on labour mobility, reports on developments concerning the EURES cross-border partnerships, and gives some indications of the work to be done in relation with enlargement. The Commission has also supported the analysis of the importance of occupational and geographical mobility for meeting the growing demand for scientist and researchers in a knowledge based society. When endorsing the Commission's proposal for the creation of the European Research Area, the Lisbon European Council, asked the Commission to take the necessary steps to reduce obstacles to the mobility of researchers in Europe. The implementation of the Strategy in favour of Mobility in the ERA proposed in response, is in full synergy with the Action plan for Skills and Mobility, and a series of actions aiming at creating a favourable environment for the mobility of researchers are developed in cooperation with EURES. During these two years, the objective of integrating the EURES services into the wider range of services offered to job seekers and employers by the EURES partners, and particularly the Public Employment Services (PES), was furthered. An increasing number of the staff in the partner organisations have become aware of the EURES services and can now provide the public with the first round of information. The importance of the EURES IT platform is underscored by the fact that more than half of the PES in the EEA have integrated their IT systems with that of EURES by 2001, which has enabled a significant increase in the number of job offers exchanged. The CV-search database, enabling citizens to advertise their CVs at European level, was launched in 2001 as a pilot project. It should be mentioned that the EURES web site which contains the databases mentioned above, as well as information on living and working conditions, is already one of the Commission's most frequently visited web sites. Despite the progress shown in the report below, serious challenges remain for both the Commission and for the partners in the EURES network. Much work needs to be done over the coming period in order to meet the challenges set by Commission's Action Plan, the European Council, Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. The review of the rules governing EURES was announecd in the Commission Social Policy Agenda of 28 June 2000. In order to take careful account of the views of the keys actors on the network in relation to the renewal process, key orientations have to be taken into account. Such as: - to underpin occupational and geographic mobility in line with the European Employment Strategy and enhance the EURES' services and products by mainstreaming EURES into PES activities. - to consolidate and strengthen EURES as a key tool to support the free movement of workers and the integration of the Europeanlabour markets, to monitor mobility, and to inform citizens about the relevant EU/EEA legal provisions. - to refocus the role of the Commission and to strengthen the programming tools so that the Commission could concentrate on strategic impulse and overall coordination, whereas most operational decisions would be taken by the EURES members and partners. - to give EURES a more flexible set-up, that can be easily adjusted to new technological and other relevant developments. - to introduce better tools for monitoring and evaluation of the activities. - to provide EURES with a structure that will remain manageable with a larger number of member countries after EU enlargement.