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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**Ex-post evaluation of the operation and effects of Regulation (EU) 2016/589 on a European network of employment services (EURES)**

*Accompanying the document*

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**on the operation and effects of Regulation (EU) 2016/589 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets  
(submitted pursuant to Article 35 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589)**

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## Glossary

<i>Term or acronym</i>	<i>Meaning or definition</i>
<b>Cross-border partnership</b>	EURES cross-border partnership means a grouping of EURES Members or Partners and other stakeholders for long-term cooperation in regional structures in cross-border regions.
<b>CV</b>	<b>Curriculum vitae.</b> Summary of an individual’s professional and educational qualifications, experience, additional skills and other information of relevance in applying for a job vacancy.
<b>EaSI</b>	<b>European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (2014-2020).</b> EaSI is an EU-level financing instrument managed by the European Commission to contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy and promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty, and improving working conditions.
<b>ECG</b>	<b>EURES Coordination Group.</b> The EURES Coordination Group consists of representatives of the European Coordination Office and all the National Coordination Offices. It acts as a forum for coordination and exchange of best practice to support the implementation and development of EURES activities.
<b>ECO</b>	<b>European Coordination Office.</b> The European Coordination Office acts as a coordinator, at EU level, to provide horizontal support to EURES National Coordinators, Members and Partners and to facilitate their operations and collaboration.
<b>ELA</b>	<b>European Labour Authority.</b> ELA was established in 2019, following the entry into force of Regulation (EU) 2019/1149, with the aim to facilitate access to information on labour mobility, support the cooperation between EU countries in the cross-border enforcement of relevant Union law, and facilitate solutions in cases of cross-border disputes between national authorities.
<b>EFTA</b>	<b>European Free Trade Association.</b> EFTA is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1960 to promote free trade and economic integration to the benefit of its Member States. It comprises four countries: Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
<b>ESCO</b>	<b>European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations.</b> European multilingual classification aimed at identifying and categorising skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market, education and training. In accordance with Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589, “Member States shall cooperate with each other and with the Commission regarding interoperability between national systems and the European classification developed by the Commission”. The Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1020 establishes that ESCO is this European classification.
<b>EU</b>	<b>European Union.</b> The Member States of the European Union are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (until 31 January 2020).
<b>EURES</b>	Network of employment services and other EURES Members and Partners of the EU-28 countries (UK until 31 December 2020) <sup>1</sup> , Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, and the European Commission. Launched in 1994, the main goal of the EURES network is the support of fair intra-EU labour mobility.  EURES services are delivered through a human network of <b>EURES advisers</b> and online through the <b>EURES portal</b> (European Job Mobility Portal). In the framework of EURES services:

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the Withdrawal Agreement, the United Kingdom is officially a third country to the EU since 1 February 2020. However, the EU and the UK jointly agreed on a transition period until 31 December 2020.

<i>Term or acronym</i>	<i>Meaning or definition</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contact</b> refers to the exchange between a EURES adviser and a jobseeker or employer interested in receiving support through the network. The exchange can be in person, via phone, email or chat. It can cover topics such as general information on EURES, placement support, information on living and working conditions, or cross-border work.</li> <li>• <b>Job application</b> refers to expressions of interest from workers.</li> <li>• <b>Job vacancy</b> refers to offers from employers.</li> <li>• <b>Job placement</b> is effected as a result of a recruitment and placement activity.</li> <li>• <b>Recruitment event</b> is a physical or virtual event bringing employers and jobseekers together to facilitate the recruitment process.</li> </ul>
<b>EURES countries</b>	EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and UK (until 31 December 2020).
<b>EURES mobility schemes</b>	EURES mobility schemes aim to provide support to specific groups of jobseekers and to help fill vacancies in sectors with recruitment difficulties. They are financed under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). For the purpose of this evaluation, the relevant EURES mobility schemes are: <i>Your First EURES Job</i> , <i>Reactivate</i> , and <i>Targeted Mobility Scheme</i> .
<b>EURES Regulation</b>	Regulation (EU) 2016/589 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2016 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, and amending Regulations (EU) No 492/2011 and (EU) No 1296/2013
<b>GDPR</b>	Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).
<b>Labour market imbalances</b>	Imbalance between supply and demand in the labour market, which can be driven by underlying skills mismatches, but can also be caused by other conditions.
<b>Mobile workers</b>	For the purpose of this evaluation, mobile workers are defined as employed citizens who reside in a EURES country other than their EURES country of citizenship.
<b>NCO</b>	<b>National Coordination Office.</b> NCOs are designated by Member States “to ensure the transfer of available data to the EURES portal and to provide general support and assistance to all EURES Members and Partners on their territory, including on how to deal with complaints and problems with job vacancies, where appropriate in cooperation with other relevant public authorities such as labour inspectorates” (Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589)
<b>PES</b>	<b>Public employment services.</b> In EU countries, public employment services (PES) are the organisations, as part of relevant ministries, public bodies or corporations falling under public law, that are responsible for implementing active labour market policies and providing quality employment services in the public interest.
<b>PMS</b>	<b>Performance Measurement System.</b> The PMS is a performance monitoring tool that comprises a set of jointly defined indicators that measure the performance and the activities of the EURES network, providing a basis for evaluating its functioning. (Article 32 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589, and Commission Implementing Decision 2018/170)
<b>Programming Cycle</b>	EURES harmonized programming. In accordance with Article 31 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589, the national coordinators are responsible for drawing up annual work programmes for the EURES activities in their national network, and provide activity reports after completion of their work programme.
<b>Skills mismatch</b>	For the purpose of this evaluation, skills mismatches refer to misalignment between shortages and surpluses in skills. Skills mismatches can be horizontal (by field of occupation) or vertical (by educational attainment). Skills mismatches can be one of the causes of labour market imbalances.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Staff Working Document provides the ex-post evaluation of the operation and effects of the EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589<sup>2</sup> as foreseen in its Article 35. The Regulation reformed the existing EURES network (*e.g., improved transparency, enlargement of the network, better service provision*).

EURES<sup>3</sup> is a European network of 219<sup>4</sup> organizations across the EU and EFTA Member States committed to facilitate fair labour mobility. These organizations are described as Members, when they offer all the labour mobility services defined in the EURES Regulation, and Partners, when they can only offer part of those services<sup>5</sup>. All Public Employment Services are Members of the network.

The mobility services of EURES help the European Union to deliver on the promise of free movement of workers, by providing transparency about vacancies and supply of labour across the Union.

The EURES network exists since 1994, well before the EURES Regulation<sup>6</sup>. The network puts in practice the provisions about freedom of movement for workers of Articles 45 TFEU and 46 TFEU. In particular, as per Article 46 TFEU EURES ensures close cooperation between national employment services and facilitates the achievement of a balance between supply and demand in the employment market.

While free movement of workers is one of the basic freedoms of the European Union, it is also economically important. Six Member States<sup>7</sup> register less than one million workers and another 11 Member States register between one and five million workers. These rather small labour markets can not be considered self-sufficient in advanced and complex economies. In addition, the remaining 10 Member States with bigger labour markets benefit from an exchange of work force across national borders.

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<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU) 2016/589 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2016 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, and amending Regulations (EU) No 492/2011 and (EU) No 1296/2013. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/589/oj>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eures>

<sup>4</sup> Figures reported by EURES countries at the end of 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Article 12 of the EURES Regulation defines that Members have to contribute to the pool of vacancies and CVs, and provide support services to employers and jobseekers. Partners only have to fulfil one of these three tasks. This allows, for instance, Unions and Chambers of Commerce to participate in the network, since while a Union could provide support and contribute to the pool of CVs, while it is unlikely that can provide job vacancies; and the opposite for a Chamber of Commerce.

<sup>6</sup> Regulation (EU) 2016/589 replaces the EURES relevant parts of Regulation (EU) No 492/2011, which codified Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community.

<sup>7</sup> Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, Luxembourg and Slovenia

Furthermore, free movement of workers is an important instrument to promote European cohesion. Already the possibility to move freely throughout the Union provides incentives to lagging regions to modernise and increase their attractiveness and it offers to regions with booming labour markets the possibility to attract additional workers.

Considering the positive external effects of mobility, public intervention in this area is necessary, also to keep it positive avoiding to distort it into brain drain. This concerns the coordination between areas with surpluses and shortages, practical involvement in the matching process as well as a good understanding of administrative hurdles in exercising mobility rights (recognition of professions, access to the social security system, ensuring that claims can be transferred across systems, issues linked to taxation or housing), so to overcome them.

Indeed, the employment guidelines<sup>8</sup> highlight the importance of ensuring assistance to jobseekers, supporting labour-market demand and the mobility of workers. Recent analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 disruption also concludes<sup>9</sup> that job-search assistance will be more important than ever to ease transitions and foster inclusive growth.

EURES is a key instrument to achieve this. EURES is the only mobility service that covers all kind of jobseekers and employers, in all EU languages, in all the countries of a large economic region, as an integrated service, both online via the EURES portal and face-to-face via the network of more than 1000 EURES advisers. EURES services are for free<sup>10</sup> for employers and jobseekers.

Currently, EURES activities are based on the EURES Regulation and six implementing acts<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Guideline 6: Enhancing labour supply and improving access to employment, skills and competences), “Policies should aim to improve and support labour-market participation, matching and transitions.... Member States should aim for more effective and efficient public employment services by ensuring timely and tailor-made assistance to support jobseekers, supporting labour-market demand and implementing performance-based management. ... The mobility of learners and workers should be promoted with the aim of enhancing employability skills and exploiting the full potential of the European labour market.” <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32018D1215>

<sup>9</sup> Labour Market and Wage Developments in Europe - Annual Review 2020, p. 31, ISBN 978-92-76-27014-0, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23268>

<sup>10</sup> Article 21 of the Regulation considers the possibility to request limited fees for the services to employers.

<sup>11</sup> Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2017/1255 of 11 July 2017 on a template for the description of national systems and procedures to admit organisations to become EURES Members and Partners.  
Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2017/1256 of 11 July 2017 on templates and procedures for the exchange of information on the EURES network national work programmes at Union level.  
Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2017/1257 of 11 July 2017 on the technical standards and formats required for a uniform system to enable matching of job vacancies with job applications and CVs on the EURES Portal.  
Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/170 of 2 February 2018 on uniform detailed specifications for data collection and analysis to monitor and evaluate the functioning of the EURES network.  
Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1020 of 18 July 2018 on the adoption and updating of the list of skills, competences and occupations of the European classification for the purpose of automated matching through the EURES common IT platform.  
Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1021 of 18 July 2018 on the adoption of technical standards and formats necessary for the operation of the automated matching through the common IT platform using the European classification and the interoperability between national systems and the European classification.

The EURES ex-post evaluation is required by article 35 of the Regulation: *By 13 May 2021, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions an ex post evaluation report of the operation and effects of this Regulation. That report may be accompanied by legislative proposals amending this Regulation.*

Therefore, the **scope of this evaluation** is not the EURES network (e.g., *provision of trans-national mobility services*), but the operation and effects of the EURES **Regulation** (e.g., *improved transparency, better matching, enlargement of the network*). Accordingly, the evaluation will not question essential elements of EURES (e.g. the relevance of EURES), but the equivalent questions for the Regulation (e.g. the relevance of the Regulation). However, since the Regulation and the functioning of EURES are closely linked, it is not possible to evaluate the Regulation without also looking into the functioning of the broader EURES framework.

The evaluation includes:

- the description of the implementing process and status;
- the analysis of the Regulation operation and effects in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU-added value;
- an assessment of strengths and weaknesses; and
- lessons learnt.

The geographical coverage encompasses all countries of the EURES network in the 2016-2020 period – the EU-27 countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The ex-post evaluation refers to the period since 2016, year of adoption of the Regulation, even though some obligations and the implementing acts only entered into force in the following years<sup>12</sup>. For comparison purposes, the evaluation also looks into the situation before the Regulation.

While the major part of the work looks back at the effects of the EURES Regulation in the last four years, the evaluation also includes a forward-looking element when analysing potential areas for further development, taking into account the upcoming transfer of the European Coordination Office (ECO) role to the European Labour Authority (ELA)<sup>13</sup>.

## **2. BACKGROUND TO THE INTERVENTION**

### **2.1. Description of EURES and its objectives**

The European Commission set up the EURES network through a Commission Decision on 22 October 1993, based on Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 on freedom of movement for workers

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<sup>12</sup> The articles concerning the provision of CVs and vacancies (Article 12(3) and Article 17(1) to (7)) only apply from 13 May 2018. Article 19(3) concerning the use of harmonized European classification (ESCO) for vacancies and CVs will apply as of 7 August 2021. In addition, six implementing acts were adopted in 2017 and 2018.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ela.europa.eu/>



within the Community. EURES started operating in 1994<sup>14</sup>, as a network of national employment services and other organisations currently known as EURES Members and Partners. EURES started its operations with the aim of enhancing mutual cooperation based on national interests and needs, and raising awareness about job opportunities and vacancies in other countries.

Since 2011, EURES underwent reforms to reflect changes in the market for recruitment services and new mobility patterns, and to improve its performance. This reform process led to the EURES Regulation in 2016.

The main objectives of the reform were: improved transparency of the network and services delivered; better matching between labour demand and supply through an increase of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal; the enlargement of the network through the admission of new EURES Members and Partners; and the development of minimum standards for the provision of support services.

The Regulation defines (Article 1) **EURES as a framework for cooperation to facilitate the exercise of the freedom of movement** for workers within the Union. EURES is a service available to all workers and employers across the Union (Article 4), contributing to voluntary mobility and helping the integration of the labour markets (Article 6).

The **intervention logic** of EURES, summarised below and described in annex III, derives from the need to fulfil its **general objectives** as set out in Article 6 of the Regulation:

- a) facilitating the exercise of the rights conferred by Article 45 TFEU and by Regulation (EU) No 492/2011;
- b) implementing the coordinated strategy for employment and, in particular, for promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce as referred to in Article 145 TFEU;
- c) improving the functioning, cohesion and integration of the labour markets in the Union, including at cross-border level;
- d) promoting voluntary geographical and occupational mobility in the Union, including in cross-border regions, on a fair basis and in compliance with Union and national law and practice;
- e) supporting transitions into the labour market, thereby promoting the social and employment objectives referred to in Article 3 TEU.

EURES builds its actions along the following **specific objectives** defined in the EURES Regulation Impact Assessment<sup>15</sup>:

- To achieve a nearly complete pool of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal;

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<sup>14</sup> **EURES: the story so far - Matching jobs and skills in Europe for 15 years**, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2009, ISBN 978-92-79-11665-0

<sup>15</sup> SWD(2014) 9 final “Impact Assessment Accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European network of Employment Services, workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets”

- To enable the EURES portal to carry out automated matching between job vacancies and CV's in all EU languages, and understanding skills, competences, occupations and qualifications;
- To make available basic information on labour opportunities and conditions abroad to any jobseeker or employer;
- To assist any interested person with matching, placement and recruitment;
- To support Members and Partners through information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses and the co-ordination of actions across Member States.

**External factors** influencing the intervention include labour market imbalances (e.g. overqualification rate<sup>16</sup>, job vacancy rates<sup>17</sup> and labour shortages<sup>18</sup>) and barriers to mobility (i.e. recognition of competences, language and administrative barriers, limited transparency of information<sup>19</sup>).

The EURES network relies on two essential **inputs**: the EURES Regulation; and the resources (human, infrastructure, and IT services) financed by the Member States with their own sources, or by the EaSI programme in the case of EU actions<sup>20</sup>.

The **activities** performed with these inputs are support services of four types:

- General support services for all jobseekers and employers (provision of information, matching of CVs and job vacancies, support to the recruitment processes, and post-recruitment assistance)
- Specific support services in cross-border regions or for defined target groups (e.g. younger jobseekers); provided via the EURES mobility schemes and cross-border partnerships.
- Self-service support services via the EURES portal.
- Coordination and internal support (e.g. networking events to share best practices, monitoring activities).

These activities are expected to lead to the following **outputs**:

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<sup>16</sup> The over-qualification rate increased from 21.7% to 22.1% for the EU-28 between 2014 and 2018. Eurostat's experimental indicator on vertical skills mismatches, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/experimental-statistics/skills>

<sup>17</sup> The EU-28 average job vacancy rate was 2.2% at the end of 2018, while it was 1.5% in 2014. Eurostat, Job Vacancy Statistics (JVS). The same rate was above average, in particular, in the Czech Republic (5.5%), Belgium (3.5%), Germany (3.1%), the Netherlands (3.0%) and Austria (2.9%).

<sup>18</sup> Increasing numbers of firms declared to experience labour shortages (European Business Surveys, several years). In 2014, about 10% of central European countries and 15% of eastern European countries declared to have experienced labour shortages. In 2017, 16% and 40% respectively.

<sup>19</sup> Evaluation study, p. 571, annex III.b - Comparative analysis of the labour market

<sup>20</sup> An evaluation of the EaSI programme including the EURES axis is currently prepared and will be available by 31 December 2022, according to Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013 of 11 December 2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI").

- well informed and supported employers and jobseekers, with special attention to those with specific needs (e.g. young jobseekers, cross-border employers);
- practical services for jobseekers and employers (e.g. contacts, placements);
- a complete pool of vacancies and CVs in the EURES Portal; and
- stronger internal coordination of the network.

At the level of the expected **results**, the aim is to achieve smooth, effective and fair labour mobility within EURES countries, more accessible intra-EU labour mobility opportunities, and better integration of labour markets. Overall, these results contribute in the Union towards easy, fair, voluntary, secure and free of discrimination labour mobility, favouring transitions into a labour market with more and better jobs (**impacts**).

The Regulation does not define targets for these expected results and impacts. Their achievement levels are therefore assessed via the specific and operational objectives defined in the EURES Regulation Impact Assessment<sup>21</sup> as detailed in 2.2.2. *Points of comparison*.

### **EURES structure**

The Regulation defines that EURES services are delivered through two complementary **channels**: the EURES advisors' network, consisting of EURES staff across the network, and the EURES portal with a number of online service tools available.

- The backbone of EURES are the **Members and Partners**, which include Public Employment Services on national and regional level (142), but also social partners, universities, private employment services or other organizations that have undergone an admission procedure, a total of 23 Members and 54 Partners. They are tasked with the operational activities and they provide the network of more than 1000 EURES advisers.
- At the national level, EURES is organised by the **National Coordination Offices** (NCOs), generally linked to either the Public Employment Services or the Ministry of Labour, act as coordinators of the national EURES network, communicate with the European Coordination Office (ECO) and provide performance monitoring data and additional information.
- At the European level, the **European Coordination Office** (ECO), hosted by the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission, and being transferred to the European Labour Authority (ELA), provides horizontal support to the NCOs. It provides the EURES portal, IT support and helpdesk services, training programmes for EURES staff, information and communication activities, analyses of labour mobility flows and labour market conditions within the EU, and facilitation of networking and mutual learning events.

Together, the NCOs and ECO constitute the EURES Coordination Group (ECG), which has a coordinating role concerning the activities and the functioning of the network.

### **EURES services**

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<sup>21</sup> SWD(2014) 9 final "Impact Assessment Accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European network of Employment Services, workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets"

The key EURES services can be summarised as follows:

### A.- EURES portal

The European Job Mobility Portal is developed and maintained by the European Coordination Office and consists of a number of central elements: database of job vacancies and CVs, information on labour mobility (e.g. living and working conditions, hints and tips for employers and jobseekers), overview of EURES services, contact details of EURES staff, and a helpdesk. In addition, there is an internal section of the Portal, accessible to national coordinators and EURES staff for monitoring, planning and overall coordination and exchange of information within the network.

### B.- Support services to jobseekers and employers

The general support services provided by EURES Members and Partners include matching and placement activities, and the provision of information and guidance. While these services are provided in all EURES countries, the exact portfolio and way of implementation differ, corresponding to national practices and labour market needs. In particular, the format (e.g. one-to-one counselling, events), way of delivery (e.g. online, on-site) or focus (e.g. sectoral approach, general labour market approach) can differ. The main EURES performance indicators<sup>22</sup> in this regard are summarised as follows:

*Table 1 : Key EURES performance indicators. Source: EURES harmonised reporting (PMS)<sup>23</sup>.*

Indicator	2016	2017	2018	2019
Individual contacts between EURES staff and workers	791 101	696 514	2 305 490	3 344 368
Individual contacts between EURES staff and employers	113 694	111 636	194 186	194 789
Job placements facilitated through the EURES Portal or staff	N/A	N/A	84 580	83 360
Recruitment events attended by EURES staff	N/A	N/A	23 315	11 159

In addition to these general support services, a number of EURES countries provide specific support services. Around two-thirds of the EURES countries organise post-recruitment activities, which include mainly information and guidance on tax and social security issues. In some cases, support services to families of a recruited employee or language training are also provided. Specific support services targeting youth and linked to apprenticeships and traineeships are implemented unevenly across the EURES countries, as detailed in section 5.1.3. *Alignment with needs of target groups.*

<sup>22</sup> Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/170 defines 16 performance indicators to monitor and evaluate the functioning of the EURES network.

<sup>23</sup> Data for 2018 and 2019 based on the harmonised reporting (PMS) introduced in 2018, while 2016 and 2017 is covered by the previous voluntary system, with a response rate of around 60% and some missing countries. As a result, the numbers before 2018 are substantially lower.

### C.- Mobility schemes and cross-border partnerships

As a complement to the overall services described in B, three main mobility schemes (*Your First EURES Job*, *Reactivate*, and *Targeted Mobility Scheme*), managed by the European Commission, aim at reaching specific groups of jobseekers (aged 18-35 years or 35 and older) and at helping companies to fill vacancies in sectors with skills needs. At the end of 2019, *Targeted Mobility Scheme* started to operate while 10 461 jobseekers and 3 007 employers had registered in *Your First EURES Job* and *Reactivate*. The main sectors in which placements were realised are Human health and social work, Information and communication, Education, Transportation and storage<sup>24</sup>.

In addition, information, placement and recruitment services tailored to frontier workers and employers in cross-border regions are implemented within the framework of EURES cross-border partnerships. Nine partnerships received an EaSI grant in 2018 and 11 in 2019. Eight grants were awarded to cross-border partnerships for 2020 and 2021.

### D.- Internal support and coordination

The work of the EURES network is enhanced by a number of support and coordination activities by ECO. This includes organisation of coordination meetings (five meetings a year), mutual learning events and working groups on selected topics, provision of a regular training programme<sup>25</sup>, reports on occupational and geographic labour mobility<sup>26</sup>, technical guidance, templates supporting the implementation of various aspects of the Regulation, and the internal section for online coordination in the EURES portal.

**EURES financial approach** has evolved in the last years. Until 2015, EURES was financed both at EU and at national level through annual grants deriving from a specific EU budget line. Since 2015, EURES countries are charged to secure their own budget. **The EURES Regulation does not provide any financial support.** Therefore, the **budget**<sup>27</sup> for EURES actions has to be provided from other sources, which are different at EU and national level:

- At EU level, the EURES axis of the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) finances (during the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020) the horizontal

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<sup>24</sup> Your First EURES Job and Reactivate monitoring reports. An analysis of placements is available in section 5.2.3. *Effectiveness of EURES mobility schemes and cross-border partnerships*.

<sup>25</sup> ECO provides the Common EURES Training Programme and professional development for the EURES staff of Members and Partners. The training activities are based on the training programme for EURES comprising a consolidation phase followed by the EURES Academy. Every year, ECO provides an average of 70 training sessions, attended by around 1 500 EURES staff.

<sup>26</sup> For instance, the *Annual Reports on Intra-EU Labour Mobility* publicly available, providing updated information on labour mobility trends in EU and EFTA countries; and the internal annual *Performance Measurement System Joint Analysis Reports*, providing only to the EURES network an overview of the activities, results, and trends as reported by the National Coordination Offices in their national analyses.

<sup>27</sup> EURES budget is detailed in annex III (Methodology), section b. Cost-effectiveness analysis / EURES budget.

support activities, such as the development and maintenance of the EURES portal, the common training programme, communication, analytical and network activities. EaSI also funds specific projects such as the cross-border partnerships and the mobility schemes, which are managed by EURES members and partners but funded after calls for proposals launched by the European Commission. The annual EURES budget under EaSI is public as Commission Implementing Decision<sup>28</sup>.

- EURES countries contribute their resources to the network as they consider appropriate. The financial resources derive from three main sources: national budgets, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the EURES axis of EaSI only for the specific projects mentioned above<sup>29</sup>. The composition of the budget and its volume differ therefore from one EURES country to another.

## 2.2. Baseline and points of comparison

### 2.2.1. Baseline

Following the mandate of Article 35 of the EURES Regulation (*By 13 May 2021, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions an ex post evaluation report of the operation and effects of this Regulation*), **this evaluation compares the status quo with the situation in 2016, a priori linking any change to the EURES Regulation** and its implementation. However, it provides also a wider perspective introducing additional comparative elements.

Therefore, the reference scenario for this evaluation would be a situation without the EURES Regulation, so to be able to assess to which extent the Regulation has achieved the expected targets identified in the Impact Assessment.

The EURES legal framework<sup>30</sup> prior to the EURES Regulation encouraged Member States to introduce reforms, such as opening up the network to Private Employment Services. It was however, the prerogative of Member States to introduce such reforms depending on their political interests. At the same time, the European Parliament launched a request for annulment of this legal framework with the European Court of Justice, arguing that the Commission had overstepped its implementing powers<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> All EaSI annual work programmes and amendments are available at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?advSearchKey=easi+annual+work+programme&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=1307&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0>

<sup>29</sup> The EURES axis of EaSI supports specific projects awarded following calls for proposals: Targeted Mobility Schemes the adoption of the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations classification, etc.

<sup>30</sup> Commission Implementing Decision 2012/733/EU of 26 November 2012 implementing Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the clearance of vacancies and applications for employment and the re-establishment of EURES.

<sup>31</sup> Case C-65/13, application from the EP in accordance with Article 236, third paragraph TFEU, registered by the ECJ on 8.2.2013 as nr 927137, requesting for annulment of the Commission Implementing Decision 2012/733/EU.

In this context, the first two policy options defined in the Impact Assessment<sup>32</sup> provide a scenario for the potential consequences **in the absence of the EURES Regulation**:

- Policy option 1 (No new action) would have created legal uncertainty, delaying any further reform of the network. The cooperation between Member States as regards intra-EU labour mobility would have continued on a bilateral basis.
- Policy option 2<sup>33</sup> (minimal amendment of the regulation) would have provided legal certainty but would not have introduced clearer and stronger obligations to Member States, who would have cooperated depending on their potentially shifting political interest in mobility.

Under any of these two policy options, the Impact Assessment found it difficult that the aforementioned specific objectives could be reached. It concluded:

- I. The accomplishment of the following two objectives would depend exclusively on voluntary efforts by Member States, thus even falling behind what was then the status quo:
  - To achieve a nearly complete pool of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal.
  - To enable the EURES portal to carry out automated matching between job vacancies and CV's.
- II. The following two EURES objectives could have been fulfilled, depending on individual efforts and according to national needs, thus consistency across the EU could not have been achieved:
  - To make available basic information on the EURES network to any jobseeker or employer.
  - To assist any interested person with matching, placement and recruitment.
- III. Finally, one objective could in principle have been achieved in the absence of the EURES Regulation:
  - To support the network through information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses and the co-ordination of actions across Member States.

However, as under these options, the ‘on-boarding’ of additional Members and Partners was quite unlikely, the information exchange would have happened only among Public Employment Services, missing the opportunity to collect additional information from private partners in an extended network.

### **2.2.2. Points of comparison**

Mobility is a right, not an obligation or an aim to be encouraged. Also, support to mobility is not an exclusive competence of a particular organization. Therefore, the Regulation defines EURES as a non-exclusive but far-reaching service open to all workers and employers across the Union interested

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<sup>32</sup> SWD(2014) 9 final Impact Assessment, p. 47, chapter 5 “Description of policy options”. The option retained was policy option 4, consisting of policy option 3 (Modernising and strengthening EURES, via sharing of CVs and vacancies, with automated matching) plus EU wide partnerships with Private Employment Services.

<sup>33</sup> Option 2 was defined as ("Lisbonisation"): “Amending Regulation 492/2011 to introduce a legal basis for conferring powers to the Commission on EURES in conformity with the Lisbon Treaty and subsequently launching a new Decision in accordance with the amended basic act”.

in cross-border labour mobility. The Regulation does not define EURES either as an adjustment mechanism to economic shocks or regional disparities. Coherently, the Regulation neither does define specific targets for EURES placements nor prescribes privileged target groups, which would be incompatible with the universal right for free movement and its voluntary scope. However, a comparison is needed in order to assess the success of the EURES regulation. Two points of comparison can be considered for the purposes of this evaluation:

- the specific and operational objectives defined in the Impact Assessment.
- benchmarking EURES against similar services.

The following table lists the specific and operational objectives defined in the Impact Assessment, with mention of the section of this evaluation that covers their analysis:

*Table 2 : Comparison points considered in the EURES Impact Assessment*

Point of comparison	Section
<b>Specific objectives</b>	
To achieve a nearly complete pool of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal	5.2.2. The EURES portal as a matching place
To enable the EURES portal to carry out automated matching between job vacancies and CV's, in all EU languages, and understanding skills, competences, occupations and qualifications	5.1.2. Adaptability to a changing context
To make available basic information on the EURES network to any jobseeker or employer	5.2.1. Provision of services to employers and jobseekers
To assist any interested person with matching, placement and recruitment	5.2.1. Provision of services to employers and jobseekers
To support the network through information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses and the co-ordination of actions across Member States	5.1.1. Relevance for intra-EU labour market mobility
<b>Operational objectives</b>	
75% of the job vacancies published by employment services in the EU are accessible through the EURES network (i.e. a target for the increase in number of vacancies shared on the EURES Portal)	5.2.2. The EURES portal as a matching place
The exchange of CV's on the EURES portal is done on the basis of sharing of CV's available at national level (i.e. a target for the increase in the number of CV's shared on the EURES portal)	5.2.2. The EURES portal as a matching place
There is a uniform standard for job vacancies and CV's that is applied by all organisations participating in the EURES network (i.e. a target for consistent application of standards for transparency of labour markets and automated matching)	5.1.2. Adaptability to a changing context
All job seekers and employers soliciting the assistance of an organisation participating in the EURES network are informed about mobility support services available at national level, and, when requested, provided with an offer for further assistance (i.e. a target for a consistent application of mainstreaming)	5.2.1. Provision of services to employers and jobseekers



EURES is not the only provider of trans-national job matching. However, research shows that **there are no similar services that can be used as proper benchmark.**

There are no **public job matching services** comparable to EURES. A study<sup>34</sup> compiled in January 2021 jointly by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM) identifies only three state-facilitated digital technology platforms, in addition to EURES. These three platforms have helped to increase transparency, fair labour mobility and reduce recruitment costs. However, their features are limited compared to EURES. These platforms focus on digital provision for migration clearance checks, without job-matching features. Human interaction is very limited, provided by private recruitment agencies following their own business agendas.

**Private hiring platforms and matching on social media** can serve as a point of comparison, but only for the EURES services provided in the portal. These private platforms allow their customers to build a profile with their résumé or company description, including job offers; to review other customer's profiles; to facilitate networking; and to match jobs with vacancies. However, these platforms work most often only in English, for a fee for the recruiting companies, and exclusively online in self-service mode for jobseekers.

Both the most known private and public recruitment platforms that could be compared to EURES are purely virtual. According to the ILO-IOM study *“digital technologies are not a panacea, and they can only be effective when rigorously complemented by strong legal and policy provisions on the ground that fully uphold labour rights and by proactive follow-up mechanisms by States, employers, and other relevant migration stakeholders [...] Private job sites exist to make a profit, and thus often do not include low-skilled or low-paid jobs. Governments can fill this gap by sponsoring job boards specifically targeting low-skilled or low-wage work.”*

**International head hunting companies** offer multilingual face-to-face services, often with some on-line support. These companies offer services for a fee and are devoted to highly qualified professionals who need little or no support to find jobs. In fact, most often their customers are the companies that need to recruit scarce highly-paid professionals in niche sectors. Recruitment packages are provided by the recruiting company and include benefits helping relocation such as finding accommodation and schooling. These services are not comparable to EURES, whose customers belong to all sorts of qualification levels and employers.

Currently, EURES is the only international mobility service that covers all kinds of jobseekers and employers, for free, in their own languages, both face-to-face and online, in a large economic region.

In any case, the aim of EURES is not to compete or replace private or public employment services, but to facilitate that they complement each other, becoming part of the network.

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<sup>34</sup> The three platforms identified beyond EURES are EPS (Republic of Korea), Musaned (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), eMigrate (Republic of India). Promoting fair and ethical recruitment in a digital world: Lessons and policy options, International Labour Organization (ILO) and the UN International Organization for Migration, 2021. <https://rocairo.iom.int/publications/promoting-fair-and-ethical-recruitment-digital-world-lessons-and-policy-options>

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION / STATE OF PLAY

The implementation of the EURES Regulation is advancing<sup>35</sup>. Organisational, communication and monitoring aspects have been fully implemented throughout the network, but some other implementation areas, highlighted below, experience delays<sup>36</sup>.

The implementation status of the main aspects of the EURES Regulation is summarised below:

- The **broadening of the network** happens at a slow pace. While all EURES countries have established or started preparing an admission system<sup>37</sup>, at the end of 2020, only half of them have reported to have admitted new Members and Partners.
- The transparent **exchange of job vacancies and CVs** between national databases and EURES is still to be completed: All EURES countries have set up a system for transferring job vacancies, but seven Member States are not transferring yet CVs through the single coordinated channel.
- The work towards an **automated matching** on the EURES portal is ongoing but pending on the mapping of national classification systems to the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification by the deadline (7 August 2021). In parallel, the EURES portal was updated with new search functionalities and design.
- The templates to enable **harmonised planning and performance measurement** across the EURES network are in use since 2018 by all EURES countries. The activities are planned and monitored through the Programming Cycle, a harmonized planning tool that provides a yearly overview of the planned (“*work programmes*”) and implemented (“*activity reports*”) activities of the EURES network at national level. The overall performance of EURES is measured through the Performance Management System (PMS). The PMS was introduced in 2018 and, so far, not all EURES countries provide all reporting data with the appropriate quality<sup>38</sup>.

Therefore, for substantial parts of the Regulation implementation efforts are still ongoing. This has to be assessed, taking into account that:

- The adoption of the Regulation did not complete the legal framework for EURES. Six additional implementing acts were to be adopted in 2017 and 2018. Furthermore, the provision of CVs and vacancies by EURES Members entered into force on 13 May 2018, and the harmonized classification allowing automated matching will enter into force on 7 August 2021, after the deadline for this evaluation.

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<sup>35</sup> Based on the findings of the First and Second EURES biennial activity reports to the European Parliament and Council, COM(2019) 164 final, COM(2021) 46 final.

<sup>36</sup> On 19 November 2019, the Commission sent administrative letters to the Member States that did not yet comply with the provisions of the EURES regulation, in particular the CV exchange and the admission system. Depending on the planned compliance dates indicated in the replies to these letters, further monitoring and analysis of the implementation, the Commission will consider further actions.

<sup>37</sup> The non-EU EURES countries have not yet started the work on admission as the Regulation was taken over in late 2019 by the EEA Joint Committee and the implementation at national level is under way.

<sup>38</sup> Not all countries provide all the data for the regular internal monitoring (PMS), and many submit it delayed. The annual joint analysis reports in 2018 and 2019 contain input from only 22-24 countries. In addition, cases of extreme outliers can be identified what may question the reliance of the data.

- Some of the essential changes of the Regulation, particularly the transmission of CVs and the enlargement of the Network through national admission systems, required additional legislative adaptations in some Member States. These have been the areas where Member States have acted more reluctantly, particularly after the introduction of the GDPR<sup>39</sup> in 2018, thus slowing the implementation process.
- The implementation was performed without additional resources. The EURES Regulation does not include any budget and Member States have to fund EURES action from their own sources (either national budgets or ESF).

As a consequence, the evaluation comes at a moment when the costs of the reform have become evident, but not all the positive effects are observable yet.

#### 4. METHOD

The evaluation was based on evaluation questions linked to the five criteria defined by the Better Regulation Guidelines (*Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value*)<sup>40</sup>. These questions were broken down into sub-questions as agreed with a group of experts from several Commission services (*Inter-Service Steering group*). The full list of the 30 questions and sub-questions, and the analysis of the criteria built on the intervention logic are described in annex III.a.

Following the Evaluation Roadmap published in July 2019, the evaluation was carried out with the support of a study ('the study')<sup>41</sup>, conducted between December 2019 and November 2020.

##### 4.1. Short description of methodology

The study used a mix of evaluation methods including desk research, statistical analysis, a public consultation, surveys, workshops, case studies and interviews with stakeholders and Member States' officials. It combined quantitative and qualitative data, which were systematically triangulated to answer the evaluation questions. The methodology is explained in annex III to this Staff Working Document.

The study builds on the rich stock of EURES monitoring and internal data, but also on multiple sources, cited throughout the study, such as other existing studies, academic literature and statistical data.

It also includes seven case studies on specific topics: the single coordinated channel, IT platforms / matching and monitoring tools, cross-border collaborations, extension of the network, and support

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<sup>39</sup> General Data Protection Regulation. Regulation (EU) 2016/679 strengthens individuals' fundamental rights in the digital age and facilitate business by clarifying rules for companies and public bodies in the digital single market. The Regulation entered into force on 24 May 2016 and applies since 25 May 2018.

<sup>40</sup> SWD (2017) 350, "Better Regulation Guidelines", tool#47: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Evaluation study: Study supporting the ex-post EURES evaluation and the second biennial EURES report, Deloitte, VVA and FGB for the European Commission, 2020. ISBN 978-92-76-22093-0, [http://publications.europa.eu/publication/catalogue\\_number/KE-02-20-720-EN-N](http://publications.europa.eu/publication/catalogue_number/KE-02-20-720-EN-N)

services to employers and to workers. The case studies covered 10 Member States (Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden).

Input from consultations with a range of actors also contributed to the evaluation. An open internet-based public consultation ran from 31 March 2020 to 30 June 2020. In addition, relevant stakeholders, including employers, jobseekers, national coordinators and EURES Members and Partners were consulted in a targeted way through several fora. Details concerning the consultations and the responses received can be found in annex II.

Member States were consulted through 14 workshops and the meetings of the EURES Coordination Group (ECG) from April to November 2020, as part of the study.

#### **4.2. Limitations and robustness of findings**

Three main limitations of the evaluation should be taken into account:

**The object of the evaluation cannot be determined with precision.**

The Regulation comes on an existing network, making difficult to determine whether changes are due to the Regulation or (also) due to other factors. This problem is reinforced by the deadline of the evaluation, which comes at a moment when the Regulation is not yet fully implemented.

The evaluation has faced **limitations on data availability**.

Since the Regulation and in particular the harmonized Performance Measurement System (2018) entered into force, a multitude of monitoring data is collected. Given this short period of consolidated monitoring requirements, efforts to improve comparability, quality, complete- and timeliness of reporting are still ongoing. This is even more challenging as many Members and Partners consider the data of placements and performance (in particular in combination with financial data) as sensitive. Previously, the EURES countries were using their national monitoring systems, often based on voluntary reporting. Hence, monitoring information from 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 is not comparable.

Concerning financial information, EURES countries provide information about their budgets planned for the following year as part of the Programming Cycle. However, the information is not standardised and also the basis of the cost calculation models differs between Member States. Therefore, each country provides it in a different manner with some of them choosing not to disclose certain details.

Finally, most of the bilateral cross-border flows of workers recorded by Eurostat are not statistically significant or even cannot be disclosed for confidentiality reasons, since it would be possible to identify the individuals given the relative small size of the phenomenon.

**Limitations in the availability of stakeholders for interviews or workshops** also affected the evaluation.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the severe restrictions to mobility, it was not possible to conduct fieldwork for the data collection on the case studies.

Moreover, the administrations of certain Member States initially selected for the case studies, were facing staff shortages because of new emerging national priorities with a different focus than EURES.

Recruiting participants to the workshops was generally difficult due to data protection issues potentially preventing the disclosure of individual contact details by national coordinators.

To overcome these limitations and ensure **robustness** and consistency of the findings, corrective measures were undertaken:

- The unavailable countries were replaced by others, while keeping the overall set of countries analysed coherent, so as to cover all the selected topics.
- The fieldwork was replaced by online interviews and workshops.
- When data protection restrictions prevented sending direct invitations, national newsletters or anonymous mailings were used instead.
- The data was triangulated with several sources of evidence and stakeholders’ opinions from the various consultation activities, where additional questions were included, particularly for national coordinators.
- Two validation workshops allowed stakeholders and experts to provide critical input on the preliminary findings.

When conclusions include uncertainties, because of data limitations, this is highlighted in the text.

## **5. ANALYSIS AND ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

This chapter analyses the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU-added value of the EURES Regulation.

### **5.1. Relevance**

#### **5.1.1. Relevance for intra-EU labour market mobility**

Employment services are, similar to health services, relevant at all times, but their importance and visibility increases in times of crisis.

According to 76% of the respondents to the public consultation, EURES provides **relevant and modern employment services** in line with the needs of European workers and employers, and 85% confirm that EURES contributes to the mobility of workers<sup>42</sup>. This is in line with findings of desk research<sup>43</sup> and the views of EURES national coordinators (23 out of 26 respondents agree<sup>44</sup>) all

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<sup>42</sup> Evaluation study, p. 328, annex II.c Details of the stakeholders’ consultation.

<sup>43</sup> Countries with higher barriers to labour mobility (especially language and administrative barriers, creating difficulties both to work abroad and to receive foreign workers) tended to be also those with worse income or employment prospects, often in conjunction with a large pool of overqualified workers. In these countries, the capacity of matching supply and demand at national level remained far below pre-crisis levels and did not improve tangibly over the evaluation period. Evaluation study, p. 559, annex III.b - Comparative analysis of the labour market, “Barriers to mobility”

pointing to the conclusion that EURES is a relevant tool for the EU to ensure the rights granted in Article 45 TFEU.

**The EURES portal's** objective of “*achieving a nearly complete supply of job vacancies and CVs*” is relevant, particularly in a context of increased use of online recruitment. The automated matching function of the EURES portal responds to the expressed need of employers and jobseekers to reduce transaction costs and the duration of the selection process, resulting in a smooth recruiting process<sup>45</sup>. An automated matching tool does not take automated decisions, but facilitates the task of advisors, or even employers and jobseekers in self-service mode. The matching results are ranked along with transparent details on how the job match was calculated, leaving the final decision to the advisor and the interested customer. Aside to the direct benefit of matching automatically jobs and profiles, an automated matching platform can provide analytics, gap analysis, and reports with insights to improve the matching process.

**The EURES network makes available basic information required by jobseekers and employers' needs and provides support services.** The relevance of these services is confirmed from the case study<sup>46</sup> regarding employers' needs, requiring guidance and recruitment assistance, particularly in an international context. Similarly, jobseekers seek EURES services mostly for information and recruitment support. These services have been found relevant for addressing barriers to intra-EU labour mobility, such as lack of information on job opportunities and working conditions in other EU countries.

The objective “*support the functioning of the EURES network through information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses and the co-ordination of actions across Member States*” has been found to respond to labour market needs. In fact, until the outbreak of COVID-19, job vacancy rates were progressively increasing across the EU, reaching 2.3% in 2019. EURES joint analysis reports show that there are complementary differences in labour shortages and surpluses across Europe, with some exceptions in specific sectors (e.g. healthcare and ICT). For instance, “accountants” and “shop sales assistants” were reported as both in surplus and in shortage in different countries, and “bus and tram drivers” were reported in shortage while there was a potentially complementary surplus of “car, taxi and van drivers”<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Evaluation study, p. 332 (2.1.1 EURES evaluation National Coordination Offices' survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>45</sup> “The online job vacancy market in the EU: driving forces and emerging trends”, Cedefop, 2019, p. 21, ISBN 978-92-896-2864-8, <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5572>

<sup>46</sup> Evaluation study, p. 294 (7 Advice and guidance to employers recruiting abroad), annex II.b Case studies.

<sup>47</sup> A comparison of shortage and surplus occupations based on analyses of data from the European Public Employment Services and Labour Force Surveys - Labour shortages and surpluses 2019, p. 7. European Commission. ISBN 978-92-76-14246-1, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22126>

### 5.1.2. Adaptability to a changing context

The changing context includes 1) changing labour mobility patterns, 2) emerging technologies and recruitment channels and 3) changes in the regulatory context:

The reformed EURES network has shown its ability to adapt to **changing labour mobility patterns**, according to 21 out of 25 national coordinators who expressed their views about EURES' adaptability to changing labour market patterns considered EURES as responsive to labour market changes. The opinion of the respondents to the public consultation is not conclusive<sup>48</sup>.

The stakeholders interviewed in the case studies<sup>49</sup> explain that recently EURES countries started to face similar skills shortages in specific sectors (e.g. healthcare and ICT). To adapt to this new situation, some traditionally sending countries (e.g. Romania), changed their strategic priorities by focusing on attracting foreign employees and providing services to local employers. Indeed, the analysis of the EURES national work programmes shows that half of the countries have been planning their activities based on a thorough assessment of their labour market needs. Specifically, 15 countries in 2018 and 11 countries in 2019 linked the planning of their EURES activities to labour market conditions, in particular the analysis of bottleneck and surplus occupations.

In line with the increasing return mobility<sup>50</sup>, EURES national work programmes show an increasing number of activities tailored to returning workers.

The COVID-19 disruption provides proof of EURES' adaptability. Counselling services and the European Online Job Days were available in virtual format beforehand, and became exclusively digital during the pandemic. As a reference, from 2016 to 2019, an average of 27 job days (both online and onsite) were organized per year, while 20 online job days and 1 mixed online-onsite were organized in 2020<sup>51</sup>. The disruption showed also EURES' vulnerabilities: while countries such as Estonia ensured business continuity of counselling services by shifting to online service provision, in some countries, (e.g. Germany, Ireland) EURES advisers were reassigned temporary to PES national activities.

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<sup>48</sup> Given the deep understanding of the labour market and EURES required to assess this topic, it was not asked explicitly in the consultation. However, their opinion can be assessed indirectly with two specific questions: "EURES provides relevant and modern employment services in line with the needs of European workers and employers?" and "Is there a need to improve EURES and its tools and services in the future?". Respondents equally agree that EURES provides relevant and modern services (76%), but that EURES has to improve (72%). The written remarks provided show that the improvements are requested for the portal or existing services, but not concerning the adaptability of EURES to changing mobility patterns. Evaluation study, p. 328, annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>49</sup> Evaluation study, p. 277 (6 Support to mobile workers), annex II.b Case studies

<sup>50</sup> 2019 Annual Report on Intra-EU Labour Mobility, p.43, HIVA-KULeuven, IRIS Ghent University and Milieu Ltd. Eftheia for the European Commission, 2020. ISBN 978-92-76-15272-9, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&pubId=8242>

<sup>51</sup> The list of past and planned events are public at <https://www.europeanjobdays.eu/en/events>

EURES is in general keeping pace with **emerging technologies and recruitment channels**. National coordinators broadly agree (73%) in their survey that EURES is adapting to the increase in the use of online platforms and social media for job searches and recruitment purposes. However, a large majority (72%) of respondents to the public consultation consider that the EURES portal needs to improve<sup>52</sup>. The analysis of the national activities shows that EURES countries introduce more digital means in offering information and recruitment services. For example, in 2019, around 60% of the European Job Days were hosted exclusively online. The level of adoption of online solutions strongly depends on the national level of digitalisation, which is likely to accelerate as consequence of the COVID-19 disruption.

**Private hiring platforms** and matching on social media can serve as a benchmark for the online EURES services in the portal. These platforms do not provide publicly accessible information on their number of customers, market share or placements, but an overview of well-known online hiring platforms and social media practices shows that they serve the needs of qualified jobseekers that are fluent in English and can handle autonomously relocation and administrative procedures. These platforms mainly target employers looking for specialized profiles and willing to pay to promote their vacancies.

EURES is particularly relevant for employers who can profit from free counselling and advertising, and who are willing to employ transparently, for instance, next to their competitors in the EURES online job fairs. EURES services are also particularly relevant for jobseekers with limited or no fluency in foreign languages, in need for support to upscale or relocate, unable to find information on living and working conditions in foreign countries, and concerned about exploitation and in fair mobility practices.

Furthermore, the legal status of all employers registered in EURES is checked individually, thus providing for jobseekers more protection than those forms of labour intermediation which operate unregistered and unlicensed on social media, favouring undeclared work and poor working conditions<sup>53</sup>.

The EURES portal responds to the trend of using online platforms for job searches. Both employers and jobseekers consistently respond (replies in the range 60% to 84%) that the portal is useful and easy to navigate, has increased employment opportunities and the information provided is of good quality, updated and easy to understand<sup>54</sup>. However, in the written remarks, some of them reported that it could be more user-friendly. Also, the search function still requires manual intervention and a

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<sup>52</sup> The respondents consider (72% agree, 24% no opinion) that there is a need to improve EURES and its tools and services in the future. The written explanations provided to justify this request are often linked to improvements in the portal. Evaluation study, p. 328, annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>53</sup> Tools and approaches to tackle fraudulent temporary agency work, prompting undeclared work; Inga Pavlovaite and Karolina Jakubowska for the European Platform Tackling Undeclared Work, January 2021, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1788>

<sup>54</sup> Evaluation study, p. 431 (2.1.3 EURES evaluation Jobseekers survey analysis) and 462 (2.1.4 EURES evaluation Employers survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.



fully **automated matching** functionality is not yet available. The main limitation is the absence of a harmonized way to encode job vacancies and CVs all over Europe. This limitation will be only overcome when all the EURES countries complete the mapping of their national classifications systems to the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification. The deadline is set for August 2021<sup>55</sup>.

Further than the portal, there has been a major shift between 2018 and 2020 towards the use of social media channels for promoting EURES, with most EURES countries having a social media account. Similarly, ECO opened social media accounts and a video channel, to keep up with the emerging information and communication trends<sup>56</sup>. Further details on media presence are available in section 5.2.5. *Visibility*.

Table 3: Reach of posts on social media channels of EURES countries in 2018 and 2019. Source: EURES monitoring.

Social media channel	2018	2019	Total
Facebook	3 947 673	7 092 504	11 040 177
Twitter	2 119 316	1 265 308	3 384 624
LinkedIn	412 289	1 176 639	1 588 928

To adapt to **changes in the regulatory context**, EURES can rely on three mechanisms: the discussions at the EURES Coordination Group, the exchange of information on labour mobility and the Programming Cycle (harmonized planning). These mechanisms help EURES countries to identify in a timely manner changes and trends with cross-border impact. However, their existence does not necessarily imply a coordinated response from the EURES network, which normally depends on each national network’s strategic focus and priorities. In any case, national coordinators did not observe<sup>57</sup> relevant changes in this context, either hindering or supporting labour mobility.

### 5.1.3. Alignment with needs of target groups

The Regulation requires EURES to be available to all workers and employers across the Union without exceptions<sup>58</sup>, preventing *creaming* and *parking* effects<sup>59</sup>. Indeed, the Regulation mentions as target groups: *any employer interested in recruiting from within the Union* (recital 39), and *all the citizens of the Union who are searching for employment opportunities in other Member States* (recital 46). The Regulation also identifies groups of particular interest: *frontier workers and*

<sup>55</sup> 7 August 2021 according to Article 19(3) of the EURES Regulation and Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1021.

<sup>56</sup> European Commission, Eurobarometer. “Communicating Europe: Where do EU citizens get their news on European political matters?”, [https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/topics/fs7\\_communicating\\_40\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/topics/fs7_communicating_40_en.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Evaluation study, p. 363 (2.1.1 EURES evaluation National Coordination Offices’ survey analysis), annex II.b Case studies.

<sup>58</sup> Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589 “Services under this Regulation shall be available to all workers and employers across the Union and shall respect the principle of equal treatment”

<sup>59</sup> “Creaming” or “cherry-picking” consists in focusing on jobseekers with good labour market prospects. “Parking” means neglecting unemployed jobseekers who are difficult to place.

*employers in cross-border regions* (recital 44), and *young jobseekers/graduated in need of upskilling and reskilling through apprenticeships or traineeships subject to an employment relationship* (recital 8).

Accordingly, both employers and jobseekers are targeted by EURES' national work programmes. The survey<sup>60</sup> of EURES Members and Partners confirms that 76% of respondents target both jobseekers and employers with their services. In addition, EURES countries provide support for specific sub-groups: frontier workers through cross-border partnerships, young people through EURES mobility schemes, and returning workers through targeted information events.

EURES Members and Partners attribute a similar priority to all the proposed groups, except for young workers, whose importance is ranked double by a majority (70 out of 94) of the respondents<sup>61</sup>. The 1 434 respondents of the public consultation<sup>62</sup> also attribute the highest priority to young workers (850 respondents) while cross-border workers or other groups (such as unskilled workers) received less attention<sup>63</sup>.

There are no conclusive figures identifying the **groups that have used most EURES services**. Due to privacy rules, Members and Partners remove personal information (age, gender) from the provided CVs before sending them to the EURES portal, making it impossible to elaborate statistics on the stocks of CVs. In addition, these CVs are not yet harmonized along the European classification (ESCO), creating problems to determine their spread along qualifications or skills. Moreover, neither the employers nor those jobseekers who get a placement have an obligation to report their success back to EURES.

The available statistics<sup>64</sup> from the internal harmonised monitoring show that EURES jobseekers are relatively **young** (those aged 15-34 over 57%, followed by 35-49 at around 25%, and 50+ around 18%)<sup>65</sup>. Jobseekers are predominantly in **higher qualification** levels (slightly more than half of the

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<sup>60</sup> Evaluation study, p. 384 (2.1.2 EURES evaluation Members and Partners survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation

<sup>61</sup> Evaluation study, p. 405 (2.1.2 EURES evaluation Members and Partners survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>62</sup> Public consultation for the European network of employment services (EURES evaluation 2016-2020), <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/11866-European-network-of-employment-services-EURES-evaluation-2016-2020--/public-consultation>

<sup>63</sup> These priorities might reflect a bias by the respondents, who are nearly all (80%) EU citizens (rather than companies or organizations); unemployed or employed but searching a job (69%); and who have in many cases (41%) not worked abroad. In addition, unskilled jobseekers are unlikely to reply to an online consultation, being possibly underrepresented in the sample. The public consultation did not ask information on the age of the respondents.

<sup>64</sup> Internal monitoring data (PMS) 2019 and first semester of 2020; and EURES portal figures at the end of 2020. Public snapshots of EURES figures are available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/eures-apps/cvo/page/statistics>

<sup>65</sup> These results align well with a recent standard Eurobarometer 93 summer 2020: A socio-demographic analysis shows that all categories of the European population primarily see the European Union as a space of freedom and mobility for everyone. However, there are differences in the extent to which respondents declare this view. This association is more widespread among 15-24 year-olds (60%) than among those aged 55 and over (46%), among managers (65%) than

jobseekers have post-secondary or tertiary education, with the spread among these evolving unevenly overtime; around 48% has secondary education). Men and women are equally represented overall, with a slight majority of men. EURES employers are predominantly SMEs, particularly micro- (less than 10 employees) or small- (10 to 50 employees) enterprises, in line with EU reality, with SMEs representing 99% of all businesses and creating 2/3 of the jobs<sup>66</sup>.

The business model of employment services in general is very much based on identifying a job vacancy to which potential candidates can be matched. To implement this demand-based approach and contribute to labour market integration, EURES annual activities are planned, via the Programming Cycle, according to the identified surpluses and bottlenecks in **sectors and occupations** along the European labour market<sup>67</sup>. The analysis, however, confirms that shortages converge more and more, for example shortages of software skills have become omnipresent in the European Union, making increasingly difficult this approach.

**Jobseekers and employers'** needs are mostly related to the presence of obstacles to labour mobility within the EU, such as lack of transparent information, the existence of administrative, language and socio-cultural barriers, and challenges in the first months of moving to another country.

The provision of information and guidance by EURES advisers and the publication of information on living and working conditions in European countries on the EURES portal respond to the lack of transparent information. This information is also relevant in dealing with administrative obstacles. Overall, the information provided on the portal appears to be useful, up-to-date and of good quality both for jobseekers and employers (replies in the range 60% to 84%)<sup>68</sup>. However, jobseekers mentioned examples of additional information that could be included (e.g. more detailed information on rights and obligations, details on taxation and cost of living in each country). This suggests that the current information available can be expanded. In addition, the information presentation could be improved by making it more user-friendly, which was suggested by jobseekers, employers as well as Members and Partners.

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among unemployed people and house persons (45% for both), among people who studied up to the age of 20 and older (58%) than among those who left school aged 15 or earlier (37%) and among those who see themselves as belonging to the upper class (69%) or upper middle class (64%) of society than among those who see themselves as belonging to the lower middle class (47%) or working class (46%). These differences are very similar to those observed in the previous survey.

<sup>66</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes_en)

<sup>67</sup> Analysis on shortage and surplus occupations, December 2020.  
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&pubId=8356>

<sup>68</sup> Evaluation study, p. 431 (2.1.3 EURES evaluation Jobseekers survey analysis) and p. 465 (2.1.4 EURES evaluation Employers survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

Obstacles linked to the recognition of qualifications and language proficiency are addressed to some extent by the EURES mobility schemes, as identified in the related case study<sup>69</sup>. However, EURES general support services do not play a central role at present in this field due to budget limitations.

Post-recruitment assistance is not widely developed across the network and is often provided only on demand. Moreover, EURES advisers have limited scope to work on cultural barriers or influence political priorities.

Looking at **frontier workers and employers in cross-border regions**, overall cross-border mobility is experiencing an upward trend within the EU. As highlighted in the related case study<sup>70</sup>, the persistent differences between social security schemes, tax administration and other bureaucratic processes across borders lead to the need for access to transparent and complete information on living and working conditions in the neighbouring countries. This need is felt by both workers or jobseekers and employers.

The specific labour mobility barriers in cross-border regions, underline the relevance of EURES for this target group. The interviews and workshops organised for the case study show that EURES advisers and cross-border partnerships staff, through the provision of information and guidance, are able to offer correct, detailed and credible information to both jobseekers/workers and employers.

Finally, the specific challenges for **young jobseekers** willing/needing to upskill or reskill highlight the relevance of EURES for this target group. The youth labour market is characterised by relatively high unemployment rates, low quality of employment contracts, and a growing demand for digital and other technical skills. At the same time, a low adaptability of the education systems is observed<sup>71</sup>. To address these limitations, the Council adopted on 30 October 2020 a Recommendation on '*A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee*', aiming to better support youth employment across the EU<sup>72</sup>, in parallel to EURES activities.

EURES advisers, through the provision of guidance and information offer valid support to filling the knowledge gap concerning working conditions abroad and traineeship requirements. Moreover, the EURES mobility schemes provide financial support and respond to the need to gain the skills necessary to gain sustainable access to the labour market. However, apprenticeship and traineeship

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<sup>69</sup> Evaluation study, p. 275 (3 Cross-border collaboration / support services in cross-border regions), annex II.b Case studies.

<sup>70</sup> Evaluation study, p. 216 (3 Cross-border collaboration / support services in cross-border regions), annex II.b Case studies.

<sup>71</sup> “Youth Guarantee in light of changes in the world of work”, Evaluation office and ICON institute for the European Commission, 2018. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1079&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9295>. ILO, 2017. “Rising to the youth employment challenge: New evidence on key policy issues” [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

<sup>72</sup> Interinstitutional File 2020/0132 (NLE). The reinforced Youth Guarantee reaffirms the commitment of the Member States to set up national schemes through which young people can receive an offer of employment, education, traineeship or apprenticeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. The upper age limit of the Youth Guarantee was extended from 25 to up to 29, providing for better inclusion of persons from vulnerable groups, such as NEETs, young women and people with disabilities.

schemes supported by EURES are not widespread across all countries, as often it is not felt to be a priority, and persisting challenges cannot be tackled by EURES staff due to the lack of a European definition and standards, and the heterogeneity of the national legal frameworks.

In addition to the target groups highlighted by the Regulation, the analysis identified two **other groups** of mobile workers, namely **seasonal workers**, whose specific needs became obvious during the COVID-19 disruption, and **returning workers**, a group accounting for 41% of the total of EU-28 movers' inflows in 2019, with an increase of 11% compared to the previous year<sup>73</sup>. These groups are so far only marginally covered by EURES<sup>74</sup> and their needs should be further monitored.

To this end, the **portfolio** of EURES tools and services provides the possibility to target specific needs of jobseekers and employers, adapting in a proportionate way to the evolving labour market needs, as described in section 5.1.2. *Adaptability to a changing context*. These tools and services are seen as complementary by experts and employers<sup>75</sup> and are in line with the requirement of Article 45 of the TFEU to provide support in a non-discriminatory way.

## 5.2. Effectiveness

### 5.2.1. Provision of services to employers and jobseekers

The respondents to the public consultation agree that EURES provides quality **information** on living and working abroad (74%) and in their search for jobs/candidates (78%)<sup>76</sup>. National coordinators, Members, and Partners find nearly unanimously<sup>77</sup> that EURES services, and the information available, raise awareness of intra-EU labour mobility possibilities. These responses suggest that EURES fulfils its objective of making available basic information to any jobseeker or employer.

With regard to the **outreach to jobseekers and employers**, the EURES Impact Assessment sets as an objective for EURES to *provide matching, placement and recruitment assistance to all interested people*, but does not provide a quantitative target. The number of individuals assisted is increasing (performance measurement data shows an increase of 45.1% of contacts with jobseekers between

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<sup>73</sup> 2019 Annual Report on Intra-EU Labour Mobility, p.43, HIVA-KULeuven, IRIS Ghent University and Milieu Ltd. Eftheia for the European Commission, 2020. ISBN 978-92-76-15272-9, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&pubId=8242>

<sup>74</sup> Evaluation study, p. 405, annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation, question "Which of the following target groups do you think EURES should prioritise in the future?"

<sup>75</sup> EURES services complement each other according to 81% of the respondents. Evaluation study, p. 463 (2.1.4 EURES evaluation Employers survey analysis), Annex II.c Results of the stakeholders' consultations

<sup>76</sup> Of those who had an opinion, 78% (871) agree that "EURES offers useful support and information to jobseekers/employers in their search for jobs/candidates" and 74% (761) EURES that "provides quality information on living and working abroad". Public consultation for the European network of employment services (EURES evaluation 2016-2020), <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/11866-European-network-of-employment-services-EURES-evaluation-2016-2020--/public-consultation>.

<sup>77</sup> Evaluation study, p. 340 (2.1.1 EURES evaluation National Coordination Offices' survey analysis) and p. 383 (2.1.2 EURES evaluation Members and Partners survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

2018 (2 305 490) and 2019 (3 344 368)). Stakeholders' opinions suggest that almost all customers seeking support could be assisted even though, occasionally<sup>78</sup>, they indicated that the support services are not equally accessible throughout the network. Some jobseekers claim that they did not receive a response after reaching out to EURES advisers. These dissenting opinions would suggest that despite the overall positive figures, more effort is required. Also, the analysis of national activity reports and stakeholders' feedback shows that support services targeting youth are not equally spread along EURES countries. This is due to the differences in national legislative frameworks for traineeships and apprenticeships, leaving this kind of activities out of the scope of PES in some countries.

Jobseekers and employers are generally satisfied with the recruitment support provided, though the **satisfaction rate** of jobseekers tends to be lower. Concretely, 70% of the jobseekers and 84% of the employers were satisfied with the information and guidance obtained in finding a job/employee abroad<sup>79</sup>. These results are comparable to those of PES<sup>80</sup>. Along all participating countries, most EURES advisers are part of the PES. Therefore, EURES performance is strongly related to national PES performance and to the recognition of the local PES service as a relevant and well-functioning labour market intermediary.

Reasons for high satisfaction are linked to the personalised support provided, while negative assessments are associated with the inability to find a placement. In this sense, satisfaction of EURES customers is related to the effectiveness of the recruitment support provided. The difference in the assessment of jobseekers and employers is aligned with the apparent effectiveness of the support received: 17% of the jobseekers and 67% of the employers attributed finding a new job/employee directly to EURES<sup>81</sup>.

While it is confirmed<sup>82</sup> that EURES recruitment support services result in intra-EU placements, the **number of placements** is probably higher than those reported in the performance measurement

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<sup>78</sup> Evaluation study, p. 272, annex II.b, case study on 'Support to Mobile workers'.

<sup>79</sup> Evaluation study, p. 459 (2.1.4 EURES evaluation Employers survey analysis) and p. 423 (2.1.3 EURES evaluation Jobseekers survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>80</sup> Although there is no aggregate indicator for customer satisfaction across Public Employment Services in the EU, The unweighted average customer's satisfaction levels reported by those PES (between 12 and 20 PES) that provided them in the years 2010-2019 ranges 79-84% among jobseekers and 83-88% among employers. It is also possible to find public information on the level of satisfaction for specific countries. For example, customer satisfaction rates 2.4 over 5 to the German PES and 79% to the French PES. <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/zkm/ergebnisse>, Résultats du Baromètre de satisfaction national 2019 de Pôle emploi auprès des demandeurs d'emploi <https://www.pole-emploi.org/statistiques-analyses/demandeurs-demploi/satisfaction-des-demandeurs-demploi/les-resultats-du-barometre-de-satisfaction-national-2019-de-pole-emploi-aupres-des-demandeurs-demploi.html?type=article>

<sup>81</sup> Evaluation study, p. 423 (2.1.3 EURES evaluation Jobseekers survey analysis) and p. 462 (2.1.4 EURES evaluation Employers survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>82</sup> Internal monitoring, PMS indicator "job placements effected as a result of recruitment and placement activity" along 4 years: 2016 (28 934 placements), 2017 (26 129 placements), 2018 (64 058 placements) and 2019 (76 210 placements).

system, as not all cases of successful recruitment can be monitored by EURES staff or the link between a successful recruitment and EURES support is not always clear<sup>83</sup>.

Combining the results from the performance measurement and estimations based on the automatic customer satisfaction survey of the EURES portal, the EURES network has facilitated at least 84 580 placements in 2018 and 83 360 placements in 2019. The 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports on Intra-EU Labour Mobility<sup>84</sup> estimate that 880 000 persons changed country within the EU to work or find a job in 2018, and 825 000 in 2019. EURES placements therefore correspond to 9.6% of active movers in 2018 and 10.1% in 2019<sup>85</sup>. These **figures are comparable to PES achievements**<sup>86</sup>. They confirm the effectiveness of EURES, favouring transitions into the labour market and therefore contributing to the general objectives of enhancing employment and social inclusion.

Given the transnational nature of EURES, an analysis of the network **effectiveness per country** has to keep in mind the inter-dependencies between countries. Indeed, the success of a country sending jobseekers from sectors with surpluses is determined by the activities in the countries with demanding employers. The increasingly frequent circular mobility – workers move outward and backward to their country of origin – reinforces the network effect. This shows that the beneficiaries of EURES are not the Member States, but employers and jobseekers across the EU.

Still, some measurement at national level is possible and public at the Single Market Scoreboard<sup>87</sup>. The scoreboard shows the performance of EURES countries, but given the inter-dependencies among them, it represents rather their different nature, helping to analyse the impact of the national side in the network.

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<sup>83</sup> Two thirds of the national coordinators who responded to their survey indicated that they are not able to report every placement achieved with the support of EURES. Often EURES advisors are not informed about the end result of a matching process and do not have the resources to follow up individually. Furthermore, jobseekers do not always make the connection that finding a job could be the result of EURES information and guidance provided. While there are chances to follow up outcomes of EURES recruitment projects, it is unlikely when a jobseeker finds a job via the EURES online tools.

<sup>84</sup> 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports on Intra-EU Labour Mobility, HIVA-KULeuven, IRIS Ghent University and Milieu Ltd. Eftheia for the European Commission.

<sup>85</sup> The ratio EURES placements vs mobility inflows is not accurate because some placements could be considered both in the origin and destination country. On the other hand, the placements do not count any placement without proven trace of EURES support (e.g. when jobseekers find jobs via the self-service EURES online tools)

<sup>86</sup> The indicator “*Share of the unemployed who found a job with the contribution of PES*” is based on responses to the question in the Labour Force Survey on the contribution at a point in time of the Public Employment Services to the finding of the respondents’ current job (WAYJFOUND). The values for years 2018 provide an average value of 8% along all EU countries, with a maximum of 15%. For 2019, the average is 7% with a maximum of 17%. In both years, only 7 countries achieved a value higher than 10%. These values must be used with care because of limitations in replies, quality of data and discontinuity of series.

<sup>87</sup> The Single Market Scoreboard is a comprehensive overview on how Member States perform along the different programmes implementing the Single Market. It compiles for these programmes, including EURES, the results that have been achieved, the feedback received and conclusions drawn, providing a basis for future action. Due to the delays in compiling information, the latest publication dates back to 2018, the figures used in this evaluation date back to 2019 and are not yet public. The Scoreboard is accessible at [https://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/scoreboard/performance\\_by\\_governance\\_tool/eures/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/scoreboard/performance_by_governance_tool/eures/index_en.htm)

The overall performance<sup>88</sup> of the EURES countries for the year 2019 is summarised by the scoreboard in the following table (the implementation of the Regulation has still to be completed, as described in 3. *Implementation/state of play*):

Table 4: EURES overall performance for EURES countries. Source: Single Market Scoreboard 2019 (forthcoming)

BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	CH	IS	LI	NO
325	375	275	350	325	375	425	400	450	350	475	400	450	400	400	275	325	425	325	325	425	350	475	500	475	225	375	400	300	200	125	325

The overall performance is calculated based on five sub indicators, rewarding high scores (green) and penalizing both low scores (red) and lack of information (grey):

Table 5: EURES performance along the 5 scoreboard indicators for EURES countries. Source: Single Market Scoreboard 2019 (forthcoming)

	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	CH	IS	LI	NO	
[1]	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
[2]	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
[3]	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
[4]	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
[5]	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	

<b>[1] Compliance with the EURES Performance Measurement System (0-11)</b>	$\geq 7$	4 - 6	$\leq 3$
<b>[2] IT compliance for the EURES Portal (0-2)</b>	2	1	0
<b>[3] Labour market share</b>	$> 50\%$	49-21%	$\leq 20\%$
<b>[4] User satisfaction with EURES services (0-10)</b>	$\geq 7$	4 - 6	$\leq 3$
<b>[5] Job placements vs labour mobility</b>	$> 4\%$	2-4%	$< 2\%$

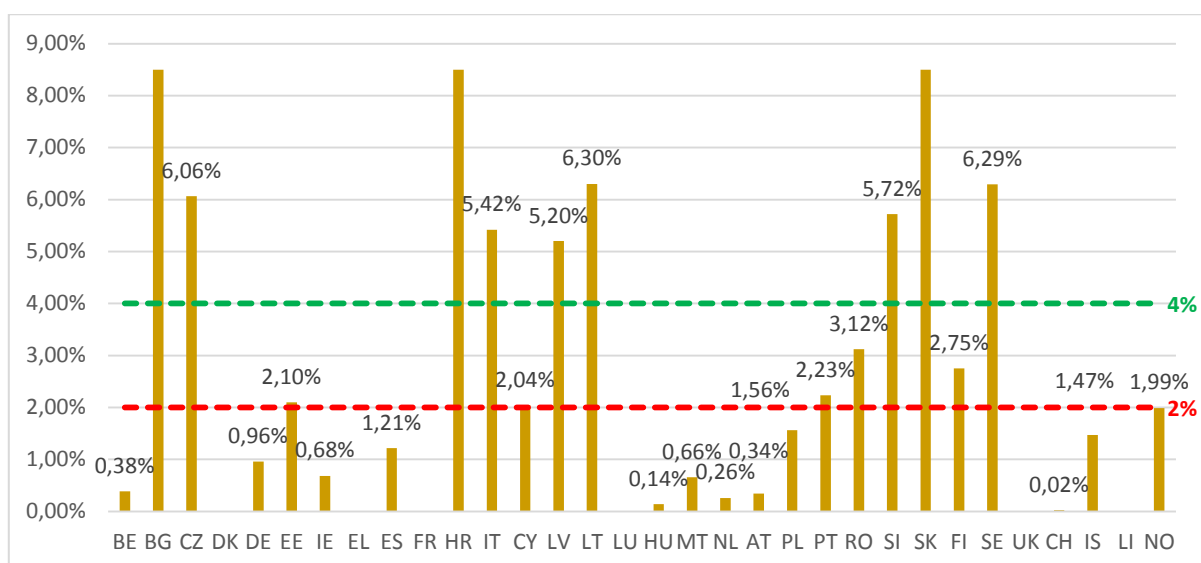
The overall performance Table 4 would suggest that EURES is more effective in 14 countries, while 6 countries would show the least effectiveness. Table 5 shows that *compliance with the performance measurement* system is widely achieved, while only half of the countries score high on *IT compliance* and *labour market share*. The table shows the poorest performances for indicator [5], *Job placements vs labour mobility*. This indicator shows the relative<sup>89</sup> performance of EURES placements compared to the volume of the mobility in each country. The detailed values are shown in the following graph:

<sup>88</sup> The overall performance in the scoreboard is calculated on the basis of the points for 5 indicators: [1] Compliance with the EURES Performance Measurement System, [2] IT compliance for the EURES Portal, [3] Labour market share, [4] User satisfaction with EURES services, and [5] Job placements vs labour mobility. Countries can “earn” 100 points for an indicator marked “green”, 75 points for an indicator marked “yellow”, and 50 points for one marked “red”. The colours on the overall table represent the sum of these scores (400 or higher, 301-399, 300 or less).

<sup>89</sup> Indicator [5] -Job placements vs labour mobility- shows the ratio between the number of people who have found a job through EURES either locally or in another EU country and the country’s net intra-EU labour mobility rate (the sum of inflows and outflows of workers moving from/into the country).



Graph 6: EURES performance for indicator [5] Job placements vs labour mobility for EURES countries. Sources: Annual Report on intra-EU Labour Mobility 2018 and Single Market Scoreboard 2019 (forthcoming) based on EURES harmonised reporting (PMS).



No values displayed for Bulgaria, Croatia, and Slovakia because the ratio of EURES job-finders to the net mobility rate reflected values higher than 100% (due to comparatively higher values of job finders). Ratios of 0% (e.g. Denmark, Greece) are due to missing values of incoming job-finders, or values equal to 0. Data on labour mobility becomes available with a 2-year delay.

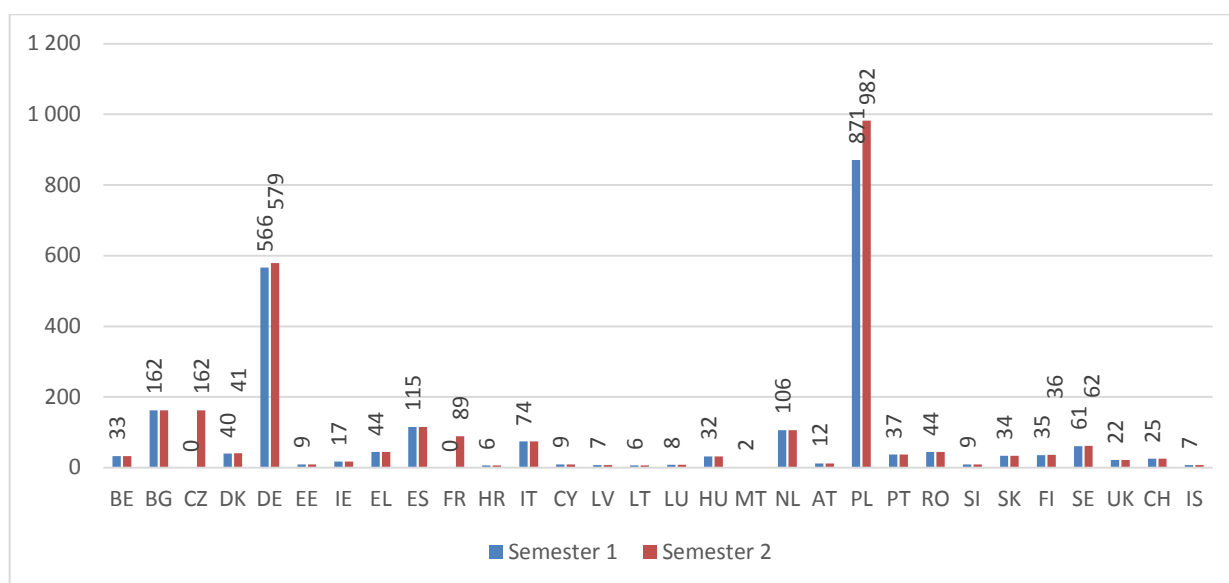
In the country-based analysis countries with consistently big inflows (Germany, UK) or outflows (Poland, Spain) score low. This suggests that a large number of placements happen without the help of EURES when labour mobility is particularly high. This is in line with recent research<sup>90</sup> showing that both national and international movers use public or private employment services only to a certain extent.

No clear pattern can be determined when comparing indicator [5] to national capacities (e.g. number of advisers both in absolute numbers and relative to population<sup>91</sup>, with Poland and Germany having high numbers, Spain intermediate and UK among the lowest). This would reinforce the interpretation that the network effect plays a role over the national capacities.

<sup>90</sup> A recent analysis confirms that job search method is very similar between nationals and EU movers. The method most frequently used was studying advertisements in newspapers, journals or on the internet (63% nationals, 61% EU movers), followed by asking friends, relatives, trade unions, etc. (60% nationals, 54% EU movers), contacting an employer (51% nationals, 42% EU movers), contacting the PES (34% nationals or 33% EU movers) or a private employment service (20% nationals, 19% EU movers). Report on job search methods, Ad-hoc request for indicators (2019), section 1.1. Comparison of use of different methods, HIVA-KULeuven, IRIS Ghent University and Milieu Ltd. Eftheia for the European Commission (Forthcoming)

<sup>91</sup> The number of advisers per million of inhabitants in 2019 for these countries was: 24-Poland, 7-Germany, 3-Spain and 0.3-UK. This figure does not necessarily reflect the availability of EURES services in a given country.

Graph 7 : EURES advisors per country. Source: Single Market Scoreboard 2019 (forthcoming) based on EURES harmonised reporting (PMS)



No data available for Semester 1 for Czech Republic and France and for both Semesters for Liechtenstein and Norway.

The purpose of the performance scoring is to encourage countries to improve their service. So, for instance, if a country does not provide information on performance, it is penalized in the scores without necessarily reflecting a poor actual delivery. Therefore, conclusions concerning the performance based on the scoring should be seen in this context and taken with prudence.

### 5.2.2. The EURES portal as a matching place

The EURES portal facilitates recruitment processes in two ways, following the reform of the Regulation:

- First, it collects CVs and job vacancies from EURES Members and Partners and provides search options to EURES advisers and customers, helping them filter and select relevant vacancies or profiles. This service is incomplete because even though all EURES countries have set up a system for transferring job vacancies, seven Member States are not yet transferring yet CVs to the EURES Portal.
- Second, the portal allows automated matching of related CVs and job vacancies. This functionality will be fully available only when all EURES countries map their national classifications to the European one (by August 2021).

The EURES Impact Assessment defined as an operational objective that “75% of the **job vacancies published by employment services in the EU are accessible through the EURES network**”<sup>92</sup>.

<sup>92</sup> SWD(2014) 9 final “Impact Assessment Accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European network of Employment Services, workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets”, p. 36

While the data on job vacancies obtained from the national level are not fully consistent and complete<sup>93</sup>, estimates based on the aggregate indicators on job vacancies for eight countries that have submitted complete and valid data have been made<sup>94</sup>. According to these estimates, 61% of the job vacancies available at national level were also available in the portal in 2019. The estimated share of vacancies that these eight countries published in the portal ranged from 4% to 80%, most of them at ca. 50%. These figures are comparable to the information of the Single Market Scoreboard<sup>95</sup> and the feedback from national coordinators<sup>96</sup>, where the majority indicate a share of more than 50% vacancies being published in the portal, but 7 countries indicate less than 50%.

The difficulty to collect all national vacancies is a possible explanation why the benchmark of 75% is not met by all EURES countries. The national practices are different from country to country and only some countries require that vacancies are reported to the PES. The broadening of the network with new Members and Partners is expected to increase the number of organisations contributing to the pool of vacancies. So far, only half of the EURES countries have admitted new Members and Partners.

With regard to the quantity of CVs accessible through the EURES portal, the Impact Assessment mentions, *“If all who currently are registered (1.1 million) are to be considered to belong to this group of persons with “firm intentions”, the number of CV’s would be increased with about 1.9 million to 3 million”*<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>93</sup> In principle, all publicly available job vacancies should be made available. A few exclusions are, however, possible according to Article 17 of the Regulation. The difference between the total number of job vacancies made publicly available by EURES Members and Partners and the total number of job vacancies at national level is explained by national networks not having information or access to data regarding all the job vacancies available within their country.

<sup>94</sup> Only nine countries that have submitted data for both *“Total number of job vacancies in your country (MS level)”* and *“Total number of job vacancies made publicly available by EURES Members and Partners”* and for which the number of job vacancies at national level was above the report number of job vacancies transferred to the EURES portal were taken into consideration. The 8 countries included in the analysis are: Denmark, Germany, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia and Norway.

<sup>95</sup> Indicator “[3] Labour market share” shows that the majority (21) of the EURES countries provide more than 50% of the vacancies. Single Market Scoreboard 2019 (forthcoming)

<sup>96</sup> In the replies, 26 countries provided an estimation. 13 countries indicate a share of more than 75%. 6 countries indicate a share between 51% and 75%. 7 countries indicate a share of less than 50%. Evaluation study, p. 357, (2.1.1 EURES evaluation National Coordination Offices’ survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders’ consultation.

<sup>97</sup> SWD(2014) 9 final Impact Assessment, p. 47: *The number of CVs that will be made available for matching at European level is difficult to assess as all PES do not currently have CV databases and as the transfer will always depend of the willingness of jobseekers to make their CVs accessible. Given that the number of workers with “firm intentions” to work abroad has been estimated at around 1,2 % of the workforce, the potential number of CVs from jobseekers (workers) “planning to move in the following 12 months to work in another Member State” could be some 3 million (1,2 % of the 241 million EU labour force). If all who currently are registered (1.1 million) are to be considered to belong to this group of persons with “firm intentions”, the number of CV’s would be increased with about 1.9 million to 3 million.*

The number of available CVs at the portal is below the Impact Assessment estimates. In fact, the actual number of CVs available at the start of the EURES Regulation was much lower than 1.1 million considered as starting point in the Impact Assessment in 2013, for two reasons:

- First, the EURES Portal was migrated to a new technical system in 2014. This required the migration of all jobseeker and employer accounts, which were deactivated. The EURES portal users had to reactivate their account at the first login; however, only 15% of the accounts were reactivated by March 2015. The migration helped to clean up numerous inactive accounts.
- Second, in 2014, only 17% of the registered jobseekers had a published CV.

Since then, the quality of the portal content has been further prioritized rather than the raw figures:

- Every month around 10 800 new jobseekers<sup>98</sup> register in the portal, however EURES regularly removes users from the portal due to GDPR considerations<sup>99</sup> and, recently, also to discard profiles from third-country nationals<sup>100</sup> who cannot access the EU labour market. For instance, 604 622 accounts were deleted in 2020. This is a stricter approach than in 2013, when the Impact Assessment was drafted, leading to 1 million CVs from active jobseekers at the end of 2020 compared to the 1.1 million users (with or without a CV) considered as starting point in the Impact Assessment.
- Every day, EURES Members and Partners transfer new CVs from their national databases to the portal via the single coordinated channel. However, they also use the channel to remove their CVs, for instance when the jobseekers found a job or at the request of the jobseeker. This regular clean-up leads to fewer numbers in stocks of CVs, but of higher relevance.

Table 8: CVs stocks (inserted minus removed) on the EURES portal in the period 2017-2020. The single coordinated channel was launched in 2018. In 2020, 604 622 portal accounts were deleted. Source: EURES harmonised reporting (PMS).

Stocks (inserted minus removed)	2017	2018	2019	2020
CVs from the self-service	287 850	317 562	413 036	123 520
CVs from the single coordinated channel	N/A	321	259 080	964 727
<b>Total annual stock of CVs on the EURES portal</b>	287 850	317 883	672 116	1 088 247

In any case, the number of CVs in the EURES portal reflects the demand of jobs following the business cycle. The evaluation period was marked by “*a continued expansion of the EU’s economy,*

<sup>98</sup> Average from April 2014 to December 2020.

<sup>99</sup> Currently, any account is deleted after 2 years of inactivity.

<sup>100</sup> Since January 2021, accounts from UK jobseekers are also deleted.

*all-time records for high employment and low unemployment*” as confirmed by the analysis in the Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE)<sup>101</sup> in 2019 and 2020, reducing the number of jobseekers and consequently the number of CVs published. The COVID-19 disruption is reverting this tendency, with an increase in the number of CVs published and a reduction of the vacancies, as shown in the following table.

Table 9: Inflows (new insertions) in the EURES portal since the launch of the single coordinated channel (June 2018- December 2020). Source: EURES harmonised reporting (PMS)

Inflows ( <i>insertions</i> )	2018*	2019	2020
CVs	37 285	325 434	835 033
Vacancies	3 640 875	19 702 701	14 035 546

**Private hiring platforms** can be used as a benchmark of the success of EURES publishing vacancies. Job postings in these platforms come from the employers who registered for premium paid features, but also aggregated from company pages, associations, and listings from across the web, including EURES. In the period 2015-2020, the Commission received several complaints from employers and EURES members who published their vacancies in EURES via their national PES and who discovered that months after they had completed the recruitment procedure their vacancies were still published in some of these platforms without permission<sup>102</sup>. One Member State complained that a private online provider had copied all job vacancies from this country and made them available on the private platform.

This confirms that EURES reached the objective of transparency of job vacancies and, often as a bandwagon effect, other online providers use this information for their own business without ensuring the quality and timeliness of the information. While for EURES any further dissemination of job vacancies is in principle welcome, this must be done respecting employers, who do not appreciate being flooded with applications to outdated job vacancies, and jobseekers, who equally deserve respect in their job search. Private hiring platforms can apply to become EURES Members if they respect the minimum common criteria that guarantee minimum standards of service.

The stakeholders tend to agree that the EURES portal increases the quantity of available **employment opportunities**, but in a mixed picture: a slight majority (61%) of employers who

<sup>101</sup> 2019 and 2020 annual editions of Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE), ISBN 978-92-76-08609-3, [http://publications.europa.eu/publication/catalogue\\_number/KE-BD-19-001-EN-N](http://publications.europa.eu/publication/catalogue_number/KE-BD-19-001-EN-N), ISBN 978-92-76-21510-3, [http://publications.europa.eu/publication/catalogue\\_number/KE-BD-20-001-EN-N](http://publications.europa.eu/publication/catalogue_number/KE-BD-20-001-EN-N)

<sup>102</sup> EURES privacy rules do not authorise copying vacancies from the EURES portal. The Commission contacts these companies breaching EURES privacy rules to request fixing the inappropriate publications as well as reviewing their general webcrawling policy. Some of these companies have also requested to cooperate with EURES, which is possible under the Regulation, but most of them do not qualify as Members or even Partners since they do not provide the minimal set of services required.

responded to the survey agreed, compared to only 48% of the jobseekers<sup>103</sup>. This finding is confirmed in the specific case study<sup>104</sup> for employers, who consider as essential the support of EURES advisers and report that the EURES portal enhances their access to more candidates' profiles, while they still find problems with the usability of the portal.

Whether the enhanced access to job vacancies and CVs results in intra-EU placements depends on the extent to which the information is complete, of good quality and up-to-date. In spite of the efforts undertaken to keep the portal up-to-date, this is not always the case according to stakeholders<sup>105</sup>. In particular, job vacancies and CVs occasionally happen to be out-dated, incomplete or sometimes provided only in the national language<sup>106</sup>, which is partially linked to the portal (e.g. lack of mandatory fields), but also caused by incomplete information provided by jobseekers and employers. The critical remarks of stakeholders confirm that further work is required on the portal.

Since the full **automated matching** functionality will not be available until August 2021<sup>107</sup>, it is not possible to assess its effectiveness. However, the experience from Member States shows that the benefits outweigh the costs<sup>108</sup> "*in terms of more regular employment and in terms of more sustainable placements that exhibit longer tenures*". The amount of information used to classify and match CVs and job vacancies rises constantly, taking into account preferences, education, qualifications, competencies, experience, and skills, including soft skills. Consequently, matching demands substantial effort from advisors<sup>109</sup>. While the number of vacancies and CVs can spike following both periods of crisis and growth, the number of advisors is unlikely to increase along demand. Therefore, any solution that reduces the manual matching effort increases the efficiency of EURES advisors, a limited resource, who can devote more time to personal counselling. This is also the viewpoint of European Network of Public Employment Services<sup>110</sup>, and particularly of several

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<sup>103</sup> Evaluation study, p. 430 (2.1.3 EURES evaluation Jobseekers survey analysis) and p. 465 (2.1.4 EURES evaluation Employers survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>104</sup> Evaluation study, p. 287 (7 Advice and guidance to employers recruiting abroad), annex II.b Case studies.

<sup>105</sup> Analysis of the comments by stakeholders, Evaluation study, annex II.c (1.1.4 Concluding questions of the public consultation, 2.1.3 EURES evaluation Jobseekers survey analysis)

<sup>106</sup> The EURES portal provides automated translation of job vacancies for registered users

<sup>107</sup> EURES countries are due to complete the mapping of their national classifications systems to the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification by 7 August 2021 according to Article 19(3) of the EURES Regulation and Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1021.

<sup>108</sup> Christoph R. Ehlert, p. 112, chapter 5.5, "Evaluation of German Active Labour Market Policies and their Organisational Framework", ISBN 978-3-658-08112-6. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-658-08112-6>

<sup>109</sup> Automated matching happens along sets of pre-defined attributes. For instance, the attribute "driving licence" has around 15 variants, while the attribute "competences" has the whole national catalogue of competences (around 15.000) as variants, with the possibility of three different levels of proficiency in every competence. This is hardly manageable manually.

national PES that are using the same tool as the EURES portal for their national automated matching<sup>111</sup>.

The effectiveness of the EURES portal depends also on its visibility among target groups. The consultation<sup>112</sup> results suggest that the portal is one of the most visible EURES instruments: when asked to indicate their interaction with EURES, 65% of the respondents to the public consultation confirmed that they have visited the portal to get information and 61% reported to be registered on the portal. These were the top two options selected among all EURES interactions.

The EURES portal provides information that partially overlaps with Europass and Your Europe portal, as described in section 5.4.1. *External coherence*. Given the importance of clear visibility for EURES, this partial overlap could hinder EURES effectiveness.

### **5.2.3. Effectiveness of EURES mobility schemes and cross-border partnerships**

The EURES cross-border partnerships and mobility schemes complement the implementation of EURES general services defined by the Regulation and contribute to EURES specific objectives by supporting selected target groups, addressing their specific needs and providing financial assistance. These target groups (e.g. young jobseekers, cross-border employers) are a subset of the EURES target groups. Stakeholders consulted (jobseekers, employers and EURES staff) for the case studies<sup>113</sup> often mentioned the financial support available through the mobility schemes as an important service complementing the provision of services by EURES advisers. This is confirmed in both the public consultation and the jobseekers survey, where the jobseekers beneficiary of mobility schemes or cross-border partnerships expressed their satisfaction with the services received<sup>114</sup>. Also, all 18 national coordinators survey respondents<sup>115</sup> who have indicated that they take part in mobility schemes agreed that these schemes support the defined target groups in alignment with EURES. Cross-border partnerships mainly contribute to better awareness of labour mobility potential among frontier workers and employers in cross-border regions.

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<sup>110</sup> A contribution to the strategy ‘The PES role in modernising the labour market and managing structural change – preparing for post COVID-19 challenges’ 2020, p. 4, Key recommendation 2 - investment in IT infrastructure. Ösb consulting and ICON for the European Network of Public Employment Services. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23271>

<sup>111</sup> Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany and Slovenia. EURES provides only trans-national matching, that is, between employers and jobseekers in different countries. Matching between jobseekers and employers within the same country is performed by the national public or private employment services according to national practices.

<sup>112</sup> Evaluation study, p. 325, annex II.c Details of the stakeholders’ consultation.

<sup>113</sup> Evaluation study, p. 257 (Traineeships), 272 (Mobile workers), 289 (Employers), annex II.b Case studies.

<sup>114</sup> Only 18 respondents of the public consultation indicated that they had benefited of a mobility schema or in a cross-border partnership, all of them expressed satisfaction. The jobseekers survey was completed by 115 beneficiaries of these services. Those who had an opinion (55) indicated a level of satisfaction of 87%.

<sup>115</sup> Evaluation study, p. 354 (2.1.1 EURES evaluation National Coordination Offices’ survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders’ consultation.

Performance measurement data shows that all EURES mobility schemes have resulted in intra-EU placements and contacts with employers and jobseekers, thus contributing to EURES specific objectives. A total of 10 300 placements were achieved in the period 2018-2019<sup>116</sup>, around 6% of the EURES total.

The mobility schemes report their performance using a data collection template different from other EURES services. This is due to the reporting requirements from the EaSI programme (providing the funding) and from EURES (defining the services). These separate reporting systems limit the consolidation of results achieved by the mobility schemes and other EURES actions. The 2018 Report on Free Movement of Workers by the European Court of Auditors found it difficult to obtain aggregate outputs and results from the cross-border partnerships and requested improvements of the monitoring<sup>117</sup>. Therefore, since 2019 cross-border partnerships use a reporting template that closely follows the Performance Measurement System of EURES. This facilitates comparability of indicators with other EURES actions.

#### **5.2.4. Effectiveness of EURES internal support and organisational set-up**

The Regulation specifies that the European Coordination Office (ECO) has to provide horizontal **internal support** to the EURES network. The level of satisfaction of national coordinators with the support provided by ECO is high<sup>118</sup>, suggesting that internal support helps the functioning of the network, even though the respondents also saw the need for further activities to be undertaken by ECO. Specific examples mentioned (enhanced communication and promotion activities, alignment of programming and performance measurement cycles, increased flexibility of training programme) imply that there is scope for improving certain support areas.

Evidence from the desk research and interviews with EURES advisers and national coordinators show that **information exchange** on national labour market shortages and surpluses happens at multiple levels across the network:

- EU level, through the annual reports on intra-EU labour mobility and information on labour market conditions provided on the EURES portal.
- Strategic national level, through the integration of labour market trends in the planning of activities. The COVID-19 crisis showed also the power of the network collecting information on challenges in cross-border regions.
- Operational level, through direct contact and exchange of information between EURES advisers.

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<sup>116</sup> Your first EURES Job July 2018 - June 2020 (4 062 placements), Reactivate Oct 2018 - June 2020 (852 placements), cross-border partnerships 2018 and 2019 (5 408 placements)

<sup>117</sup> European Court of Auditors, Special Report, Free Movement of Workers – the fundamental freedom ensured but better targeting of EU funds would aid worker mobility. 2018.  
<https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=44964>

<sup>118</sup> In the survey, 89% of the 27 NCOs who responded, strongly agreed or agreed that the organisation of meetings and working groups by ECO supports the implementation of the EURES. 11 out of the 26 NCO survey respondents (42%) indicated that further activities could be undertaken by ECO.



In the national coordinators survey, 21 of the 25 who replied to this question agreed that the information exchange contributes to a better labour market integration. The case study on Admission system/Extension of the network shows<sup>119</sup>, however, that the information exchange structures are not sufficiently developed yet for the new Members.

Self-reporting by various cooperation projects implemented between EURES countries confirms that EURES Members and Partners **coordinate** their actions. This assessment was also confirmed by 25 out of the 26 respondents to the national coordinators survey who stated that they coordinate their actions. Cooperation activities reported in 2018 and 2019 include cross-border partnerships, participation in mobility schemes, recruitment activities (job fairs, European Job Days), study visits, workshops and information events. All but three countries reported carrying out multilateral recruitment projects in 2018 and 2019.

National coordinators, Members, and Partners agree that the cooperation and information exchange within the network brings better knowledge of labour market dynamics and conditions in other countries, contributing to more targeted and thus, effective, provision of services.

The EURES Regulation introduced important changes in the **organisational set-up** of the network, such as setting up of admission systems for new Members and Partners.

The case study on Admission system/Extension of the network<sup>120</sup> shows that the current organisational set-up is considered appropriate for addressing labour market needs. This is confirmed also by national coordinators (69% or 18 out of 26 national coordinators survey respondents). In particular, broadening the network is perceived as relevant, since it strengthens knowledge exchange about users' needs and labour market developments and thus increases the effectiveness of the network.

While the organisational set-up is considered adequate and all EURES countries have established or started preparing an admission system, only half of them have admitted new Members and Partners. Particularly, non-EU EURES countries have not yet started the work on admission because the EURES Regulation was taken over in late 2019 by the EEA Joint Committee and the implementation at national level is under way.

In assessing the positive effects of admitting new Members and Partners it should be noted that, the effects of the broadening of the network take time to materialise and that not all Members and Partners can contribute equally to the network. The benefits of admitting Members and Partners

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<sup>119</sup> Evaluation study, p. 244 (4 Admission system / extension of the network), annex II.b Case studies.

<sup>120</sup> Evaluation study, p. 244 (Admission system/Extension of the network), annex II.b Case studies.

depends on the national context, as highlighted in the validation workshop<sup>121</sup>. In any case, the Public Employment Services (PES) consider strategic this kind of partnerships<sup>122</sup>.

As regards the specific situation in cross-border regions, stakeholders mention some organisational aspects that limit the ability to provide support by cross-border partnerships. These are mainly linked to the increase in the reporting workload, and the challenge of coordinating a partnership of diverse organisations.

### 5.2.5. Visibility

Increasing the visibility and awareness of EURES is not defined as a specific objective by the Regulation. However, knowing about EURES is a precondition likely to influence the effectiveness of all EURES actions and, thus, the achievement of the EURES objectives. When analysing the visibility of EURES, it should be considered that EURES countries often have limited resources in this regard, as pointed out in the validation workshop.

Performance measurement indicators increasingly show that labour market participants are aware of EURES initiatives (e.g. social media followers<sup>123</sup> of the EURES EU account increased by 9% between 2018 and 2019, and 161% for national accounts. The EURES EU Facebook account is among the top four in the Commission accounts). However, a significant proportion (40% to 50%) of survey respondents across stakeholder groups (National coordinators, Members and Partners, public consultation)<sup>124</sup> assessed EURES as not sufficiently visible. Also, only 30% of the public consultation respondents agreed that EURES is well known among jobseekers and employers. In addition, a small share of jobseekers and employers follow EURES social media accounts. For example, only one in four jobseekers who responded to the survey follows EURES on social media. This limited outreach might be reducing the impact of EURES communication activities. This is in line with the findings of the 2018 Report on Free Movement of Workers by the European Court of Auditors, which indicates that there are opportunities to improve awareness of the EU channels used to provide information to EU workers about their rights.

Performance measurement indicators and examples of communication activities show that both EURES countries and the European Coordination Office have been enhancing their promotion and communication activities<sup>125</sup>. Nevertheless, national coordinators, Members and Partners agree that

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<sup>121</sup> Evaluation study, p. 479 (3 Documentation on the EURES validation workshop), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>122</sup> “Key recommendation 5: PES need to further engage in partnership building to increase their service delivery capacity and quality”. A contribution to the strategy "The PES role in modernising the labour market and managing structural change - preparing for post COVID-19 challenges", Ösb consulting and ICON for the European Network of Public Employment Services, 2020, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23271&langId=en>

<sup>123</sup> In December 2020, the number of followers of EURES accounts was 302 225 in Facebook, 39 791 in Twitter and 60 100 in LinkedIn.

<sup>124</sup> Evaluation study, annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation, all the consultation activities.

<sup>125</sup> EURES was the backbone of the 2018 Commission's high-level campaign #EUMovers, celebrating 50 years of free movement and 60 years of social security coordination. In addition, the 25th anniversary of EURES in 2019 was

further efforts are needed. National coordinators mentioned in interviews several constraints that need to be overcome: limited funding; lack of cooperation with other organisations to reach wider audiences; and absence of a common promotion approach at local, regional, national and European level. The on-going mainstreaming of EURES into the regular PES service offer affects as well the EURES visibility. The case study focusing on apprenticeships and internships<sup>126</sup> observed that some young people knew EURES mobility schemes, but were not aware of the existence of the EURES network, nor that these projects were part of it. This raises questions about the communication of the EURES brand, and hints that paradoxically the further integration and mainstreaming of EURES services into the PES negatively affects the visibility of EURES while at the same time it increases the quality of EURES services.

The importance of cooperation with other organisations (social partners and enterprises) was also highlighted in comments by EURES Members and Partners: 61% of the respondents answered that they coordinate awareness raising activities with other national Members and Partners. However, this also means that the potential of cooperation in this regard is not exploited by 39% of the Members and Partners who responded to the survey.

Feedback from jobseekers and employers suggests that internet search engines and public employment offices are the main points that inform them about EURES for the first time. This is in line with the EURES operational objective from the Impact Assessment to further mainstream EURES services within Public Employment Services (PES). Indeed, feedback from customers from interviews in the case studies<sup>127</sup> confirmed the importance of the PES as a reference point connecting EURES with clients. A specific challenge identified in the case study focusing on employers is the fact that in some countries, due to the organisational structure of PES, public employment offices at regional level are distant from the work of EURES and might not be able to fully understand and communicate its services.

#### **5.2.6. Sustainability and factors impacting effectiveness**

EURES provides a wide range of services implemented in multiple ways. The evaluation does not determine a single factor for success but suggests that **keeping a wide portfolio to cater for the various needs seems the most appropriate approach.**

Stakeholders' feedback does not provide evidence to clearly identifying **differences in effectiveness** between the EURES actions. While national coordinators rate the provision of information and guidance and support in matching as most effective (average grade of 2.35 on a scale of 1 = most effective and 7 = least effective), the opinion of customers differs, reflecting their level of

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promoted with the #EURES25 campaign. #EUMovers produced 35.4 million impressions and the videos were watched 1.5 million times. #EURES25 produced 13.7 million impressions and the videos were watched 1.6 million times. After these campaigns, the number of followers in the EURES social media channels increased by +290K in Facebook, +39K in Twitter, and +54K in Instagram.

<sup>126</sup> Evaluation study, p. 259, annex II.b, section 5 - Apprenticeship/traineeship schemes.

<sup>127</sup> Evaluation study, p. 286, annex II.b Case studies.

satisfaction. Among jobseekers, post-recruitment assistance receives the highest share of satisfaction (91% of 44 survey respondents) compared to 62% of 104 satisfied with work / apprenticeship / traineeship offers. Cross-border information is accorded the highest level of satisfaction among employers.

In addition, according to jobseekers, individual support through EURES advisers is assessed as more effective than services via the portal, while the provision of information and guidance is the most effective service in a cross-border context. Cross-border partnership stakeholders shared the perception that the most needed services, namely, the ones related to the provision of information and guidance, are also the most effective in a cross-border context.

Regarding the mode of implementation, each specific EURES action appears to have its own advantages and disadvantages, which can influence its effectiveness in given situations:

- Recruitment and information events have broader outreach than individual counselling, but can provide only generic information.
- Online events are linked to lower costs and are more accessible, but onsite events facilitate physical contact perceived as vital in the recruitment process.

The interviews with employers provided insight on how the effectiveness of the type of support is linked to the characteristics of clients. For example, participation in a recruitment event is more effective, compared to individual support, when employers have a higher number of vacancies to fill. In addition, it was reported that searching for profiles with more general skills (e.g. bus drivers) is easier on the portal, while identifying profiles with specific expertise is more effective through individual support by EURES advisers. With regard to jobseekers, the analysis did not identify significant differences in their assessment of EURES services depending on individual characteristics.

The **sustainability** of EURES actions refers to long-term duration of the employment relationship. It is achieved by ensuring fair working conditions and a recruitment outcome that is satisfactory to both employers and jobseekers. Employers consulted in interviews and workshops agree<sup>128</sup> that EURES actions are sustainable in the long-term, especially due to the careful pre-selection and consideration of individual preferences in the recruitment process. The survey for national coordinators also confirms (84% agreement) that EURES actions are sustainable in the long-term.

The importance of individual contact and advice for the sustainability of the results achieved suggests that support provided through EURES advisers might lead to more sustainable results, compared to services provided via the portal. In addition, support tailored to individual needs in one-to-one counselling might be more sustainable than support of more general nature provided in events. A stronger focus on post-recruitment assistance and follow up is perceived by national coordinators consulted in interviews as a way to increase the overall sustainability of EURES results.

Based on the feedback from Members, Partners and national coordinators, a number of external and internal **factors** influence the end results of EURES. Factors hindering the effectiveness of EURES

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<sup>128</sup> Evaluation study, p. 288 (7 Advice and guidance to employers recruiting abroad), annex II.b: Case studies.

actions include developments of similar patterns of labour shortages across Europe, preferences of employers to recruit from third countries, differences in EURES structures, limited time and capacity of staff, and low visibility of EURES. Facilitating factors include exchange of expertise across the network, good understanding of target groups' needs and the possibility to provide tailor-made support free of charge.

### 5.3. Efficiency

#### 5.3.1. Cost-effectiveness

Based on available data, an **overall increase in cost-effectiveness** can be observed between 2016 and 2019 along three analysed outcomes: placements achieved with the support of EURES, individual contacts with jobseekers and employers, and number of job vacancies transferred by the national coordinators to the portal. The table summarises the results of the cost-effectiveness analysis:

Table 10: Cost-effectiveness analysis (2019 - 2016, in EUR). Source: Evaluation study.

EURES outcome indicator	2016	2019	Net saving
Cost per placement achieved	473.53	288.10	185.42
Cost per individual contact	13.60	11.88	1.71
Cost per job vacancy transferred to the portal	2.74	1.24	1.50

The cost decreased 39% for placements, 13% for contacts and halved for vacancies. The fact that EURES is now more cost-effective than in the past suggests that the results of its activities are increasingly efficient in relation to the costs. While the overall trend of the evidence is clear, the figures should be treated as indicative only. The cross-time design (rather than comparing between alternative policies), comparability issues (between the different outcomes and across countries), and missing data (e.g. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the calculations) all result in strong but necessary methodological assumptions, suggesting caution in interpreting the data.

The efficiency of the **EURES portal** could be enhanced by improving the portal's tools and by upgrading its matching function. The analysis of available data and feedback<sup>129</sup> on the funding and outreach of the portal confirm that improvements are needed in this domain. Investment in the portal and corresponding services has been increasing every year between 2016 and 2019. However, over the same period, the number of unique visitors to the portal has overall been falling<sup>130</sup>. This is mainly due to the improving conditions in the labour market all over Europe, with decreasing unemployment and therefore a declining number of jobseekers. The COVID-19 disruption should have reversed the trend, but border closures and other restrictions to the free movement of workers further reduced the

<sup>129</sup> Triangulation from several sources, including internal monitoring data, EURES Portal statistics and interviews with the officials in charge of the Portal. In addition, all surveys and the public consultation included questions on user perception of the EURES portal.

<sup>130</sup> Unique visitors' statistics of the EURES portal dropped by 21% between 2016 and 2017, by 8% between 2017 and 2018 and by further 24% between 2018 and 2019.

interest in the portal. In addition, due to GDPR considerations, the Commission changed in 2019 the technical solution to collect statistics in the portal, which creates a discontinuity in the figures, making it more difficult to compare trends. Regardless of the reasons, the increase in funding combined with the drop in the number of visitors to the portal suggests a decrease in cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

The numbers of CVs available from the **single coordinated channel** have substantially increased from 321 CVs in 2018<sup>131</sup> to 964 727 CVs in 2020. The number of job vacancies is steady in the range of tenths of millions<sup>132</sup>. Even though the investments have not increased, it is difficult to determine the cost-effectiveness of the channel because the number of available and thus transferred job vacancies also depends on external factors, such as the business cycle.

Although significant advancements in the use of the single coordinated channel have been made, the use of the tool is not yet fully aligned with the requirements set in the Regulation. Out of 26 national coordinators survey respondents, only three indicated that their countries transfer all of their available job vacancies through the channel to the portal. The case study on the single coordinated channel<sup>133</sup> also shows that some national coordinators are experiencing delays in their transfer that they justify by reasons such as privacy and data protection issues or the impact of COVID-19 on the national priorities of PES.

The table below presents the **results of the cost-benefit analysis** of EURES activities.

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<sup>131</sup> The EURES Regulation (Article 41) delays the need to provide vacancies and CVs by Members and Partners until 13 May 2018.

<sup>132</sup> Inflows (insertions) of 19 702 701 vacancies in 2019 and 14 035 546 vacancies in 2020.

<sup>133</sup> Evaluation study, p. 187, annex II.b, section 1 - Single coordinated channel, chapter 1.3.1 “State of play in the Member States in focus”

Table 11: Cost-benefit analysis of EURES activities

		Jobseekers		Employers		National Administrations	
		Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary
<b>Cost: Transfer of job vacancies and CVs through the single coordinated channel and introduction of ESCO</b>	Economic. One-off and recurring. Compliance cost. Expected.	<b>No costs</b> for jobseekers were detected in relation to the transfer of job vacancies and CVs from national databases to the EURES portal.	N/A	<b>No costs</b> for employers were found in relation to the transfer of job vacancies and CVs from national databases to the EURES portal.	N/A	<b>Medium</b> (NCO Survey, Case study on single coordinated channel) The costs incurred in relation to the transfer of job vacancies and CVs through the single coordinated channel to the EURES portal depended on the already existing infrastructure in each EURES country. The costs incurred in relation to the adaptation of ESCO classification in the systems of EURES countries include expenses for staff training, replacing the old classification in national systems, and related additional workload.	(Estimation based on internal reporting) The number of job vacancies provided by the NCOs to the EURES portal increased from 8 million in 2016 to 14 million in 2020. The number of CVs available from the single coordinated channel increased from 321 in 2018 to 964 727 in 2020.
<b>Cost: Insufficient contribution of the EURES portal and corresponding services to correct matching of job vacancies and CVs</b>	Economic. Recurring. Direct cost. Not expected.	<b>Medium</b> (Jobseeker survey) The EURES portal does not perform full automated matching of job vacancies and CVs, therefore, a jobseeker has to go through the job vacancy offer manually with help of specific filters. However, the filtering function is not sufficiently accurate to provide the desired matches which results in jobseekers having to spend considerable time checking the results.	Unknown	<b>Medium</b> (employer survey) The EURES portal does not perform full automated matching of job vacancies and CVs, therefore, an employer has to go through the CV offer manually with help of specific filters. However, the filtering function is not sufficiently accurate to provide the desired matches which results in employers having to spend considerable time checking the results.	Unknown	<b>Medium</b> (NCO Survey) Due to unavailability of automated matching and unreliability of the filtered search, EURES staff have to match manually job vacancies with relevant CVs and vice versa.	Unknown

		Jobseekers		Employers		National Administrations	
		Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary
<b>Cost: Introduction of the admission system</b>	Economic. One off and recurring. Compliance cost. Expected.	Jobseekers did <b>not</b> incur any costs related to the enlargement of the network.	N/A	Employers did <b>not</b> incur any costs related to the enlargement of the network.	N/A	<b>High</b> Work related to admission, on-boarding, monitoring and working with new Members and Partners caused significant additional administrative workload to EURES staff and resulted in additional workload. Since the EURES Regulation came into force, each EURES country admitted at least their national PES as a Member (in some countries due to internal PES set up it meant admitting even up to 42 PES Members) and half of the countries admitted also non-PES organisations to their network.	Unknown
<b>Cost: Compulsory reporting and monitoring system</b>	Economic. One off and recurring. Compliance cost. Expected.	<b>Low</b> (Desk research) In most countries, a jobseeker is asked a number of questions regarding their profile when interacting with EURES. Questions typically asked refer to jobseekers' level of skills and qualifications, work experience, sector of activity, desired level of seniority, motivation to find a job in another country and expected remuneration.	N/A	<b>Low</b> (Desk research) In most countries, an employer is asked a number of questions regarding their profile when interacting with EURES. Questions asked typically refer to employers' financial and operational capacity, the positions they seek to fill, competences required to fill these positions and proposed remuneration.	N/A	<b>Medium</b> (NCO Survey) The costs incurred in relation to the development of a monitoring system depended on the already existing infrastructure in each EURES country and other national/funding requirements.	(NCO Survey) The majority of surveyed NCOs (62%) believe that the reporting on EURES activities is partially proportional to the effects they achieved.



		Jobseekers		Employers		National Administrations	
		Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary	Qualitative	Quantitative / monetary
<b>Benefit: Increased pool of job vacancies and job applications available</b>	Social. Recurring. Changes in employment. Expected.	<b>Medium</b> (Interviews and workshops) A greater number of opportunities available on the EURES portal.	(Estimation based on internal reporting) The number of job vacancies provided by the NCOs to the EURES portal increased from 8 million in 2016 to 14 million in 2020.	<b>Medium</b> (Interviews and workshops) A greater number of candidates available on the EURES portal increases the possibility of matching with a relevant one.	(Estimation based on internal reporting) The number of CVs available from the single coordinated channel increased from 321 in 2018 to 964 727 in 2020.	<b>Medium</b> (Interviews and workshops) Greater possibility for matching relevant job vacancies and CVs, which leads to increased placement through EURES and higher customer satisfaction.	N/A
<b>Benefit: Placements achieved with the support of EURES</b>	Social. Recurring. Changes in employment. Expected.	<b>High</b> (Interviews and workshops) Better integration in the labour market.	(Conservative estimation based on total EURES budget) A total of 237 713 job placements between 2016 and 2019.	<b>High</b> (Interviews and workshops) Diversification of labour and skills, and improvement of productivity.	(Conservative estimation based on total EURES budget) A total of 237 713 job placements between 2016 and 2019.	<b>High</b> Increased customer satisfaction that has a spill over effect on attracting future clients.	(Conservative estimation based on total EURES budget) A total of 237 713 job placements between 2016 and 2019.
<b>Benefit: Cost-saving generated by EURES activities as opposed to the national level</b>	Economic. Recurring. Cost-saving. Expected.	<b>Low</b> Savings as result of reduced costs are equivalent to additional budget that can be invested in activities benefitting jobseekers.	N/A	<b>Low</b> Savings as result of reduced costs are equivalent to additional budget that can be invested in activities benefitting employers.	N/A	<b>High</b> Savings as result of reduced costs are equivalent to additional budget that can be devoted to further employment support, to other policy objectives or to reduce deficit.	(NCO survey and interviews) Benchmarking of EURES with PES activities has provided evidence that cost of EURES can be interpreted as a small top-up to the PES cost, expanding in a cost-effective manner national to cross-border placements.

EURES staff spend a considerable part of their time providing tailored and specialised services to both employers and jobseekers. If customers are satisfied with the service received, the advisers see the time spent as an investment because a successful support to a customer is likely to create a positive effect on their network of contacts. Taking into account that the EURES brand is still not widely known in the EURES countries, word of mouth is very important in increasing the awareness about EURES services. Therefore, in this regard, the perceived benefits outweigh the costs of the services.

### **5.3.2. The national side of cost-effectiveness**

The overall national cost-benefit of EURES activities grew proportionally to the invested amounts, as shown by comparing three indicators (vacancies, contacts with customers and placements), and their aggregate costs in the period 2016-2019. In this period, the national EURES budget<sup>134</sup> grew from EUR 22.1 million in 2016 to EUR 24.4 million in 2019. The number of vacancies published (from 8 million to 19.7 million), total individual contacts between staff and customers (from 1.6 million to 2 million) and total placements achieved (from 45 000 to 85 000) grew similarly.

Since the EURES Regulation does not provide any financial support and national actions are implemented based on financial resources identified by the EURES countries, there are differences in national budgets and costs. This is not surprising as each of them caters to a differently defined and predominantly national audience in terms of size, skills and needs.

Therefore, while the requirements by the EURES Regulation apply to all countries, the operations are implemented with some divergences. In addition, with the switch from direct funding of EURES activities by the European Commission to national resources and ESF, national labour policies became much more prominent as a decisive factor in allocating budgets to EURES activities.

The benefit of EURES in terms of efficiency of the services provided at national level has been widely recognised by the interviewees. For example, without the financial support provided by the EURES mobility schemes, many of the jobseekers would not be able to accept a job offer in another country.

EURES also benefits to Public Employment Services (PES) as without it, to achieve the same number of placements, a considerable increase in financial and human sources would be needed. Furthermore, due to the small size of many national networks, EURES is a gateway to innovative approaches and processes that could be mainstreamed into the PES and its services. For example, certain IT developments that are first introduced to EURES are then taken up by the PES<sup>135</sup>.

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<sup>134</sup> ESF and national budgets, excluding EaSI contributions, as detailed in annex III (Methodology), section b. Cost-effectiveness analysis / EURES budget.

<sup>135</sup> For instance, mobile phones were introduced in EURES Germany well before they were of common use even for PES managers, EURES Portugal staff trained their PES colleagues during the COVID-19 disruption on the use of online tools which were not yet widespread in the PES but of common use in EURES. Other examples in the Evaluation study, p. 270, annex II.b, case study on 'Support to Mobile workers'

In order to test and quantify the benefits of EURES activities beyond the national level, PES activities were benchmarked with the additional expenditure on EURES by means of a cost-effectiveness analysis. Based on the data available, the calculation was performed for 16 countries<sup>136</sup> for the year 2018.

EURES relies on existing PES structures and benefiting from its initial investment and fixed costs. Therefore, the EURES cost (EUR 219.09) can be interpreted as a top-up to the PES cost (EUR 2 924.70). The additional cost is justified by the need to expand the scope of the activities from national to cross-border placements. It follows that, for a relatively small additional investment as compared to PES, considerable cost-effective results can be achieved through EURES.

EURES activities were also benchmarked to the Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS) for the year 2019. The cost per placement of benchmarked TMS activities is considerably higher than those of EURES, both in aggregate terms (EUR 3 219) and for each of the two individual mobility schemes: Your First EURES Job (EUR 2 917) and Reactivate (EUR 4 294). These figures are indicative of the different scope of EURES and TMS activities. As explained above, EURES costs only include an additional investment over existing PES structures. By contrast, the costs of TMS include the full cost of the programmes and are, therefore, a more precise proxy of what a cross-border placement actually costs. A precise benchmarking is not possible at present time given the limited data availability and the fact that TMS are aimed at target groups with specific needs (e.g. youth, long-term unemployed). However, the comparison of overall EURES costs against TMS reinforces the assessment that EURES is an efficient way to expand PES services abroad.

Table 12: Costs of a placement by PES, EURES or TMS. Source: Evaluation study

Placement costs (EUR)	
Cost of a PES national placement	2 924.70
Combined cost PES+EURES for an international placement	3 143.79
Cost of a EURES international placement for difficult groups (TMS)	3 219.00

Nevertheless, three key elements suggest caution in interpreting the data: There are several *limitations in data availability* and in the comparability of the scope of the EURES, PES, and TMS activities. In addition, EURES but also TMS rely on existing PES structures and therefore should benefit from the initial investment and fixed costs being covered under PES. Moreover, the subset of countries analysed for the EURES-PES benchmark is not necessarily *representative* of the whole EURES network. Lastly, TMS display *overlapping* placements and budget figures with those reported under EURES. Therefore, the comparison of the cost-effectiveness should be considered as indicative only<sup>137</sup>.

<sup>136</sup> Countries included into the sample are: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain

<sup>137</sup> Further details on the analysis, methodology, data collection and elaboration, and limitations in annex III, Methodology.

### 5.3.3. Increase/decrease of administrative burden

From an administrative point of view, the EURES Regulation introduced many new features to which the national networks had to adapt. These included the requirement to expand the national network by admitting new Members and Partners, the introduction of mandatory and more harmonised planning, monitoring and reporting requirements, as well as the obligation to establish a connection between the national job vacancies and CV databases with the EURES portal through a single coordinated channel. The aim of these changes was to standardise processes with a view to reducing the administrative burden on the EURES network.

At the same time, many countries have gone through an internal restructuring of EURES and PES in recent years<sup>138</sup>. This often translated into a reduction in staff numbers and their time that should be allotted to EURES services and activities. This has led to an increased administrative workload on the remaining EURES staff, on top of their expanded areas of operation and service provision.

The fact that the additional tasks have come accompanied by additional workload is confirmed by the majority of the national coordinators<sup>139</sup>. This is caused predominantly by the new requirements set out in the Regulation and to a much lesser extent by accompanying national procedures.

Despite the workload increase, national coordinators overall perceive the new requirements as justified, as consistently concluded in the case studies<sup>140</sup>: They consider that the results produced by the new monitoring system offer a more accurate representation of the national work and the network. Beforehand, EURES countries used incompatible systems that provided incomplete results across the network. The coordinators also agree that a broader EURES network is necessary in order to address changes in a dynamic labour market, and contributes to the achievement of the EURES objectives. The coordinators also recall that before the introduction of the Single Coordinated Channel, the system for transferring job vacancy offers to the EURES portal was much less reliable. It was also much harder to ensure that all the correct job vacancies were displayed to jobseekers when searching for job opportunities.

However, national coordinators also state lack of consistency between the reporting for EURES and internal national reporting systems, which rely on different indicators or use different reporting periods. In some cases, data are not available at national level for specific indicators, especially in relation to the number of vacancies available. In addition, the majority of surveyed national coordinators (20 out of 26 respondents) believe that the reporting on EURES activities is not fully representative of the effects they achieved.

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<sup>138</sup> 2020 Annual report of the European Network of Public Employment Services, p. 17, ISBN 978-92-76-28597-7, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23352&langId=en>

<sup>139</sup> Out of 25 national coordinators responding to the survey, 23 consider that the administrative burden has not diminished with the adoption of the EURES Regulation. Evaluation study, p. 347 (2.1.1 EURES evaluation National Coordination Offices' survey analysis), annex II.c: Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>140</sup> Evaluation study, annex II.b, sections 1 – Single coordinated channel, 2 – IT platforms / Automated matching and monitoring and 4 – Admission system / extension of the network

To increase the efficiency of their efforts, the national coordinators would welcome more interoperability and automated options for the reporting, as well as more synergies between the various reporting requirements. For instance, two different tools for planning and monitoring have been implemented along the different implementing acts. However, planning and monitoring are two phases of the same cycle and these tools could be combined into a single one.

Nonetheless, a large majority of national coordinators (19 out of 24 respondents) believe that the cost of the services and tools provided by EURES is proportionate and justified by their results. The possibility to apply for EaSI and in some instances also for ESF funding, connected to the development of the single coordinated channel and the mapping to the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification, was seen by Member States representatives as beneficial in easing the initial financial burden. The coordinators did not provide suggestions in the case studies for reducing administrative workload concerning the Single Coordinated Channel or the enlargement of the network.

## **5.4. Coherence**

### **5.4.1. External coherence**

The external coherence refers to the coherence of EURES Regulation with other EU level policy measures and initiatives targeting employment and mobility.

The table at the end of this section summarises the legal instruments and policies analysed from the coherence point of view. EURES specific objectives are consistent and often complementary with the activities and purposes of legal instruments in the same field. The analysis does not identify inconsistency in the objectives.

This result is further confirmed by the stakeholders' consultation<sup>141</sup>. More than 90% of EURES Members and Partners that took part in the survey and 20 out of 24 national coordinators agreed that EURES is complementary to other European policies and initiatives. Similarly, more than three-quarters of those who were able to reply to the public consultation agreed that EURES complements other EU policies.

In addition, it is important to assess whether synergies or duplications exist at the operational level between EURES activities and other European initiatives and policies. Synergies were identified with the following initiatives:

- The European Public Employment Services (PES) network focuses primarily on cooperation to improve PES performance and contribute to implementation of employment policies, while EURES activities provide services directly to employers, workers and jobseekers. Thus, there is no overlap in activities.

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<sup>141</sup> Evaluation study, p. 351 (2.1.1 EURES evaluation National Coordination Offices' survey analysis) and p. 379 (2.1.2 EURES evaluation Members and Partners survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

- European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification: EURES countries are in the process of adopting the European classification or mapping national classifications to it, thus moving towards its coherent application.
- Erasmus+: focuses on the provision of training opportunities abroad, which could constitute a duplication with the provision of support services to apprenticeships and traineeships within EURES. However, stakeholders (national coordinators and advisers) consulted identified only synergies in this field, as Erasmus+ opportunities are promoted among EURES clients.
- Euraxess facilitates the worldwide mobility of researchers and it also caters for their career development within the residence country. Euraxess is considering ESCO for internal data encoding and the possibility to export their specialized vacancies to EURES. National EURES and Euraxess centres keep informal contacts.
- Youth Guarantee: aims at securing a smooth transition from school to work and supporting the labour market integration of young European citizens. Within its framework, funding is provided to EURES countries for the implementation of EURES apprenticeships and traineeships, as shown in the case study on the topic<sup>142</sup>.
- Interreg's focus on cross-border and transnational cooperation could potentially overlap with EURES activities in cross-border regions, although the focus of Interreg is not on labour mobility. However, most of the participants to the fieldwork interviews had positive experiences of collaboration with Interreg projects. Some of them mentioned that often Interreg staff refer jobseekers that seek information on cross-border mobility to EURES staff. No duplications in financing have been identified.
- European Social Fund (ESF): ESF funding is implemented based on country-specific Operational Programmes, developed at national and regional level by national authorities and approved by the European Commission. Within the EURES framework, ESF funding can be used for national EURES structures (e.g. staff and IT costs of the PES, which are EURES Members) as well as for transnational EURES activities (e.g. job fairs). A survey among national coordinators was carried out in December 2019 to provide insights about the use of ESF funding. The survey showed that the largest share of ESF funding was used for staff costs, followed by travel costs. Looking into the advantages (e.g. additional resources, long-term planning) and disadvantages (e.g. administrative burden) of using ESF funding, the survey concluded that ESF and EURES are compatible. Furthermore, the analysis concluded that ESF offers funding for essential EURES activities that could be hard to offer at national level without ESF support.

Only two initiatives have been highlighted as impacting the EURES Regulation: the Single Digital Gateway and Europass:

**Europass:** With the revamp of Europass launched in 2018<sup>143</sup> and online since 1/7/2020, users can prepare their CVs and directly upload them to the EURES portal. Through increased interoperability Europass users interested in finding a EURES job can directly access suitable job vacancies on Europass.

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<sup>142</sup> Evaluation study, p. 254 (5.3.1 State of play in the Member States in focus), annex II.b, section 5 - Apprenticeship/traineeship schemes.

<sup>143</sup> Decision (EU) 2018/646 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 April 2018 on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC

Europass officers participate in EURES coordination meetings to discuss and ensure complementarity with the EURES portal. However, national coordinators stress the risk of confusion for jobseekers and employers as to which portal to use, since both have a job search function and a section on living and working conditions in other EU countries.

A number of other websites provide information on a range of aspects on labour mobility (e.g. Your Europe website, Moving & Working in Europe; and national EURES websites), which leads to potential overlaps. This can create confusion among EURES customers, and thus limit the quality of service provision. Moreover, they lead to additional administrative costs at EU level for the maintenance and update of the same information on multiple websites. Therefore, further work is needed to eliminate duplication of information to citizens and businesses on EU webpages, as required under the Single Digital Gateway Regulation as of 12 December 2020.

**The Single Digital Gateway (SDG)**,<sup>2</sup> established by Regulation (EU) 2018/1724<sup>144</sup>, and integrated into Your Europe portal, will provide one access point to information about the living and working conditions in the Member States.

Commission officials in charge of the SDG also participate in EURES coordination meetings to present the progresses on its implementation and to discuss its impact on EURES. However, the national coordinators consulted stressed the risk of duplication in performance measurement activities and in some sections of the EURES portal.

In annex III of the SDG Regulation, EURES is listed as one of the assistance and problem-solving services that should be part of the Gateway as of 12 December 2020. Article 24 of the Gateway Regulation requires the competent national authorities and the Commission to ensure the collection of statistics of users' visits to webpages accessible through the Gateway. In addition, providers or managers of the networks of assistance services have to collect statistics relating to the use of the service (the number, origin and subject matter of requests, and of their response time). While the current Performance Measurement System for EURES collects most of this information, the reporting requirement concerning the response time remains to be added.

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<sup>144</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/17 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 October 2018 establishing a single digital gateway to provide access to information, to procedures and to assistance and problem-solving services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012. The Regulation aims to facilitate access of citizens and businesses to information, procedures, and assistance and problem-solving services that they need in order to exercise their rights in the internal market

Table 13: Coherence matrix

Main field(s)	Directive/Regulation	Year	Link with EURES specific objectives
Single Digital Gateway	<b>Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 establishing a single digital gateway to provide access to information, to procedures and to assistance and problem-solving services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012</b> <b>Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1121 on the collection and sharing of user statistics and feedback on the services of the single digital gateway.</b>	2018	The Regulation established the Single Digital Gateway - online platform to provide a single point of access to information, procedures and assistance services for citizens and businesses who want to get active in another EU country. The provision of information and assistance constitutes a valid supporting tool for intra-EU labour mobility and complements the information provided on EURES portal on living and working conditions. The Gateway Regulation specifies that information already available on the EURES portal and provided by Member States should be used to cover information aspects of the Single Digital Gateway. Regulation 2018/1724 also defines a performance statistics to be collected (e.g. response time and visitors to websites), which should be added to the performance indicators collected by EURES.
Euraxess	<b>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions COM (2012) 392 - A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth</b>	2003	Euraxess ( <a href="https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu">https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu</a> ) started in 2003 on the basis of open cooperation under the European research area (ERA) framework, without a specific legal framework. It is a specialised action focusing on researchers and scientists with a worldwide scope, covering 42 countries. Euraxess facilitates the international mobility of researchers but it also caters for career development within the residence country. Its tools include a European portal, national portals and physical offices.
EUROPASS	<b>Decision (EU) 2018/646 on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC</b>	2018	The Decision aims to support the transparency and understanding of skills and qualifications across the EU. Synergies and cooperation between the Europass and EURES portals could reinforce the impact of both services, as mentioned in the Decision. While the objectives of the Decision to enhance transparency do not contradict the EURES objectives, as discussed above there are certain overlaps in the implementation of both portals.
Freedom of mobility for workers; integration of labour markets	<b>Directive (EU) 2018/957 amending Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services</b>	2018	The Directive aims at reinforcing the protection of rights of posted workers within the EU, hence complementing and supporting EURES goal of facilitating labour mobility, of which posted workers are an important component.
Freedom of mobility of workers	<b>Directive 2014/54/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement</b>	2014	Both EURES and this Directive have the support of intra-EU labour mobility as a core goal. Among the activities identified by the Directive are the transparency of information on labour mobility, hence it can be considered coherent with EURES specific objective of enabling access to information to all the interested users.
Freedom of mobility for workers	<b>Directive 2013/55/EU amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications</b>	2013	This Directive is aimed at the operational implementation of the principle of freedom of movement of workers within the EU included in the TFEU, by facilitating and allowing the recognition of professional qualifications within the EU as stated in recital 4 <i>“For the purposes of strengthening the internal market and promoting the free movement of professionals while ensuring a more efficient and transparent recognition of professional qualifications, a European Professional Card would be of added value”</i> . This goal is complementary to the EURES specific goals of facilitating the matching between employers and jobseekers across the EU.



Main field(s)	Directive/Regulation	Year	Link with EURES specific objectives
Full employment and social progress	<b>Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") and amending Decision No 283/2010/EU</b>	2013	This Regulation launched EaSI, a funding programme aimed at supporting the European project and goals in the field of sustainable employment, hence linked to EURES ambition of contributing to full and sustainable employment in Europe. In particular, the specific objectives for its EURES axis are <sup>145</sup> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to achieve transparency of labour market information, and</li> <li>• to provide effective services for the recruitment and matching of workers;</li> </ul> and are perfectly complementary to EURES' goals of providing information on labour markets to all interested users. Indeed, EaSI is the main funding tool for EURES horizontal activities.
Full employment and social progress	<b>Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006</b>	2013	This Regulation defined the mission and scope of the European Social Fund, namely to promote high level quality employment and jobs across the EU, with a strong link with EURES goals in the field of full employment and social progress. In particular, among its specific goals, the objective to "facilitate access to employment opportunities" complement EURES specific objective of enabling access to recruitment and matching services.
Integration of labour markets	<b>Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg)</b>	2013	Interreg, by supporting cross-border cooperation also aims at facilitating the integration of labour markets across the EU. Nevertheless, the main focus of Interreg projects is on regional development and integration and not strictly on labour mobility and its main goals are not directly linked to the EURES ones.
Full employment and social progress	<b>Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal</b>	2013	This Regulation establishes the link between the European Regional Development Fund and investment for growth and jobs, the scope of which also includes the investments in sustainable jobs and social progress
Freedom of mobility for workers	<b>Commission Regulation (EU) No 1224/2012 of 18 December 2012 amending Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the coordination of social security systems and Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004</b>	2012	As emerged in the Relevance section above, one of the most important hindering factors to labour mobility is heterogeneity of rules to access social security across the EU, hence coordinating social security is essential to support intra-EU labour mobility. Therefore, EURES is aligned to the goals of this Regulation.
Freedom of mobility for workers	<b>Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on freedom of movement for workers within the Union</b>	2011	This Regulation aims at facilitating and supporting the freedom of movement of workers across the EU, in line with EURES goals.

<sup>145</sup> European Commission, 2017. "Mid-term evaluation of the EU programme for employment and social innovation – EaSI. Framework Service Contract VC/2013/0083. Final Evaluation Report".

#### 5.4.2. Internal coherence

The internal complementarity of the reformed EURES network has been assessed from three different perspectives: EU-level activities, internal national organisation and EURES activities across the network.

Looking into the **EU-level activities**, nearly all the Members, Partners and national coordinators that participated in their surveys agreed that EURES tools are complementary with each other<sup>146</sup>. The surveys and interviews with jobseekers and employers also highlighted synergies between the general support services to employers and jobseekers and the mobility schemes. The EURES mobility schemes provide financial support and additional resources for specific target groups to complement the advice provided by EURES advisers. Such specific support (e.g. financing of language courses, travel costs) is not available through the EURES general services, but is an important element to support labour mobility. EURES cross-border partnerships are often delivered in areas where EURES advisers are also providing specific support services in cross-border regions and, while in most cases they are integrated into the cross-border partnerships, resulting in coordination and cooperation, it is however not always the case.

The **internal organisation of the individual EURES countries** shows a different picture.

National Members and Partners work together to achieve EURES goals, but sometimes have different interests, priorities and ways of working, especially due to the differing nature of private and public organisations. This creates difficulties in the monitoring and planning activities by national coordinators and can lead to incoherencies. For instance, private Members can charge fees to employers, differently from the services provided by EURES staff within the Public Employment Services.

Stakeholders' feedback suggests that there could be differences in the quality of service provision along countries, which could also be linked to the political priority accorded to EURES at national level. When asked about the degree of standardisation of EURES services provision across the network, half of the Members and Partners participating in the survey rated it as good, and 35% rated it as neutral.

Concerning the coherence between **EURES activities across the network**, the majority of EURES countries collaborate with each other in the implementation of recruitment projects. In particular, in 2018 and 2019, all but two EURES countries reported cooperation in recruitment activities with other countries and all but three countries reported carrying out multilateral recruitment projects. In addition, 25 out of the 26

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<sup>146</sup> Evaluation study, p. 352 (2.1.1 EURES evaluation National Coordination Offices' survey analysis) and p. 399 (2.1.2 EURES evaluation Members and Partners survey analysis), annex II.b Case studies.

national coordinators replied in the survey that they coordinate their actions across the network. The assessment of 2019 national work programmes highlights that national coordinators peer reviewed actively each other plans, which allowed them to identify mutually interesting target sectors and events.

However, the coordination could be further enhanced. Both national coordinators and Members and Partners<sup>147</sup>, despite identifying the benefits of cooperation, pointed out that the different financial resources available in each of the EURES countries may lead to different chances to quickly react to changes in the labour markets and technological context and to adapt the provision of services. Similarly, the allocation and availability of human resources may affect the quality of services provided within the network. Finally, also national employment policies, such as on the prevention of brain drain may be different from EURES priorities and could influence the provision of services.

## **5.5. EU added-value**

### **5.5.1. Effects of EURES operations that would not have taken place without EU intervention**

EURES is the only international mobility service that covers all kind of jobseekers and employers, in their own languages, in all the countries of a large economic region. Therefore, there is no baseline scenario or counterfactual situation to quantify the Regulation contribution on intra-EU labour mobility. A comparison base is proposed in section 2.2. *Baseline and points of comparison*.

As the free movement of workers is a founding principle of the EU, labour mobility would have happened also in the absence of the EURES regulation, and even in the absence of the EURES network. However, the evaluation suggests that there is potential for additional labour mobility to happen and help reduce imbalances across the EU. Hence, the evaluation focuses on the additional fair intra-EU labour mobility facilitated as consequence of the Regulation, especially for EURES customers.

In this context, the added value of EURES is widely recognised by the stakeholders consulted, though, notably, more by Members, Partners, and national coordinators and less by jobseekers and employers. EURES actions contributed to achieving results, especially for those users living in countries with high barriers to mobility<sup>148</sup>, promoting labour market integration.

The **EURES portal** is the only online platform providing access to all sorts of vacancies and CVs throughout the entire Union, and offering information in all EU languages. Approximately 50% of the jobseekers, more than 60% of the employers and around 80%

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<sup>147</sup> Evaluation study, p. 363 (2.1.1 EURES evaluation National Coordination Offices' survey analysis) and p. 389 (2.1.2 EURES evaluation Members and Partners survey analysis), annex II.b Case studies.

<sup>148</sup> Evaluation study, p. 585 (Step 3 - Added value of EURES - Self-reported counterfactual), III.b: Comparative analysis of the labour market.

of the Members and Partners that replied to their surveys<sup>149</sup>, found that the portal increased employment opportunities and, thus, facilitated the matching between job supply and demand for its users.

When asked about the various **EURES support services** available, a significant proportion of jobseekers responding to the survey<sup>150</sup> deemed them essential to achieve certain outcomes. This applies especially on obtaining post-recruitment assistance (47%), finding an apprenticeship or traineeship abroad (36%) and receiving work/apprenticeship offers in line with their skills (33%). In addition, over 21% of respondents believed that they probably would not have found a job abroad without EURES.

These views are also confirmed in the case study on support services to jobseekers<sup>151</sup>, where the provision of reliable information was deemed as central to facilitate and support labour mobility, in particular fair mobility. In addition, the provision of training and post-recruitment assistance is considered as a unique characteristic of EURES that provides jobseekers with vital support in building their careers and that cannot be found anywhere else.

Employers have a more positive view of the contribution of EURES compared to jobseekers; however, the number of total replies collected is much smaller. According to the survey results<sup>152</sup>, employers deem post-recruitment assistance, finding apprentices/trainees and accessing a wider selection of candidates as the most useful EURES services to achieve outcomes that would not be possible otherwise. Moreover, from the more in-depth analyses of employers' responses, it appears that EURES support not only made it easier and quicker to obtain any of the outcomes but, in many cases, it was actually a determining factor. These results are in line with the feedback received from employers interviewed in the case studies<sup>153</sup>.

The **EURES cross-border partnerships and mobility schemes** facilitate labour mobility across Europe according to the case studies<sup>154</sup>. The financial support provided through these services has been deemed essential for the users to take the decision of

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<sup>149</sup> Evaluation study, p. 392 (2.1.2 EURES evaluation Members and Partners survey analysis), p. 431 (2.1.3 EURES evaluation Jobseekers survey analysis) and p. 465 (2.1.4 EURES evaluation Employers survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>150</sup> Evaluation study, p. 418 (2.1.3 EURES evaluation Jobseekers survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>151</sup> Evaluation study, p. 276 (6 Support to mobile workers), annex II.b Case studies.

<sup>152</sup> Evaluation study, p. 455 (2.1.4 EURES evaluation Employers survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>153</sup> Evaluation study, p. 294 (7 Advice and guidance to employers recruiting abroad), annex II.b Case studies.

<sup>154</sup> Evaluation study, p. 232 (3 Cross-border collaboration / support services in cross-border regions), annex II.b Case studies.

working abroad. The case study on cross-border partnerships shows that, while certain results concerning the provision of information would have been obtained in any case, the enhanced cooperation in cross-border regions deriving from EURES allowed to achieve higher quality of information and to build a network of experts in labour mobility issues.

Stakeholders' feedback from the interviews and workshops shows that **EURES general support services** strongly contributed to the exchange of labour market information and statistics across the network. Thus, it enhanced collaboration between countries on labour mobility issues, providing an overarching framework for intra-EU cooperation. This is further confirmed by the replies to the survey, where approximately 60% of Members and Partners agreed that EURES contributed to more coordinated employment strategies. Overall, it emerged that EURES countries, especially in cross-border regions, would have collaborated in any case. However, the EURES Regulation, by providing a legal framework for the establishment of the network and by introducing legal obligations, lead to better results than in a situation without EURES.

EURES contributes and ensures, in particular through its direct services to jobseekers, fair mobility as agreed in the **European Pillar of Social Rights** that was the subject of a joint proclamation by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission at the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, in Gothenburg on 17 November 2017 and further elaborated in the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights on 4 March 2021. The Pillar emphasises the need to put people first in order to further develop the social dimension of the Union, including by ensuring fair treatment for all in the Union labour market through modernised rules on posting of workers, and by further improving cross-border enforcement of Union law.

### **5.5.2. Comparison to bilateral or multilateral cooperation**

The EURES Impact Assessment concludes that, since co-operation across countries presupposes a common framework, the EURES objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by Member States alone. This is also confirmed by Members and Partners (95% out of the 93 respondents), national coordinators (22 out of 26 respondents) and the respondents of the public consultation (87% out of the 1144 who replied to the question)<sup>155</sup>, who agreed that EURES achieves results additional to the ones that could be achieved at national level.

While EURES advisers and national coordinators interviewed believe that bilateral or multilateral cooperation in the field of intra-EU labour mobility would have existed also without EURES, they agree that the cooperation has been enhanced by the Regulation. This opinion is also supported to some extent by the results of the survey of Members and Partners, where 77% of those who had an opinion agreed that EURES facilitates

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<sup>155</sup> Evaluation study, p. 328, 355 and 380, annex II.c: Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

better cooperation<sup>156</sup>. While a quantification of the additional effects achieved through EURES is not feasible with the available data, it could be concluded, based on stakeholders' feedback, that EURES provides added value compared to less structured multilateral or bilateral collaborations in three areas:

- I. European-wide network and provision of an **overarching framework** for cooperation:
  - The Regulation facilitates not only cooperation designed at European level, but also enhances bilateral cooperation. The Regulation added value does not lie in initiating the collaboration but rather in providing an overarching strategy for it<sup>157</sup>.
  - In addition, in cases of diverging interests of Members and Partners, the Regulation has created a platform to discuss and learn from each other, which in the long-term results in bringing various interests and ways of working closer together.
  - The provision of a common vision and principles also appears to increase the motivation of EURES advisers, as it enhances their feeling of belonging to a community that acts towards a common goal.
  
- II. Promotion of **fair labour mobility** conditions:
  - The EURES Regulation (Annex I) sets minimum common criteria that have to be respected in the service delivery by all Members and Partners. It was highlighted in the interviews with stakeholders from countries that have admitted private organisations that these minimum criteria lead to more awareness among private organisations about the concepts of non-discrimination and fair mobility<sup>158</sup>. In this context, stakeholders from the countries interviewed mentioned that the EURES network is perceived as a label for quality of services and transparency of information. However, the evaluation did not gather evidence on mechanisms developed by national coordinators to monitor whether newly admitted Members and Partners conform to fair mobility.
  - EURES advisers inform jobseekers about the standards of working conditions and wages in other countries, helping jobseekers recognise conditions in vacancies that might be below accepted standards<sup>159</sup>. In some instances, EURES advisers mentioned that they perform background research on companies to validate their job vacancies.

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<sup>156</sup> Evaluation study, p. 402 (2.1.2 EURES evaluation Members and Partners survey analysis), annex II.c Details of the stakeholders' consultation.

<sup>157</sup> For instance, Members organize exchanges of good practice without the support of ECO but under the EURES framework: EURES Cross-border Partnerships handbook for the transfer of good practices (2019), <https://www.eures-andalucia-algarve.eu/wp-content/uploads/eures-buenas-practicas-ingles-v5-interactivo.pdf>

<sup>158</sup> Evaluation study, p. 244 (4 Admission system / extension of the network), annex II.b Case studies.

<sup>159</sup> Evaluation study, p. 227 (3 Cross-border collaboration / support services in cross-border regions), 262 (5 Apprenticeship/traineeship schemes) and 277 (6 Support to mobile workers), annex II.b Case studies.

- The transfer of the EURES coordination role to the European Labour Authority (ELA) is expected to reinforce fair mobility by bringing together under the same umbrella support to mobility and legal enforcement.

III. **Exchange of information** on labour mobility flows and labour market conditions: The Regulation imposes legal reporting requirements on the Members and Partners of the network (e.g. information on activities, work programmes, information on national, regional and sectoral labour supply and demand). The exchange of this information is essential to address changes in the labour market and to face increasing labour market imbalances.

The COVID-19 disruption also showed the Regulation added value over pure bilateral arrangements. The overall structure of EURES facilitated the collection of information on challenges in cross-border regions during the disruption, and the European Online Job Days continued<sup>160</sup> thanks to their relative autonomy from national resources. The disruption equally showed EURES fragility: in the most stressful moments of the crisis, some countries reassigned temporary their EURES advisers to PES national activities. This highlights the importance of having a European coordinator independent from the national priorities.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1. Relevance

The EURES tools and services defined in the Regulation are generally considered as relevant to address intra-EU labour mobility needs, although to different extents. The **support to jobseekers and employers** is generally well suited to address obstacles to intra-EU labour mobility such as lack of transparent information and administrative barriers. Tackling language barriers, facilitate the recognition of qualifications or post-recruitment assistance are services not widespread throughout the network, therefore EURES support is considered less relevant in these areas. The **EURES portal** is seen as relevant to address information gaps and to provide access to a large pool of job vacancies and CVs, thus responding to the difficulties that employers are facing in finding profiles with relevant skills.

The Regulation makes EURES a public service available to all workers and employers across the Union without exceptions, preventing *creaming* and *parking* effects (i.e. “cherry-picking”). Whereas private hiring platforms and matching on social media mainly target qualified customers that pay for their services, are fluent in English and can handle autonomously relocation and administrative procedures without personal counselling.

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<sup>160</sup> In 2020, 20 online job days were organized despite the pandemic, as described in section 5.1.2. *Adaptability to a changing context*

The actual use of EURES depends on which individuals would like to exercise their right of free movement. The available evidence suggests that EURES addresses to a wide extent the needs of employers and jobseekers facing obstacles to labour mobility within the EU, particularly in cross-border regions, as well as younger jobseekers or jobseekers with higher qualifications. Recent developments make returning and seasonal workers increasingly **relevant groups** whose needs should be further monitored by EURES. The in parts unpredictable evolution of the labour market would favour keeping the current wide portfolio of EURES tools and services to cater for the various needs of different existing or arising challenges. This corresponds well to the “raison d’être” of public employment services that at all times are responsible for implementing active labour market policies and providing employment services in the public interest.

Overall, the reformed EURES network has been able to adapt to **changes in the implementation context (i.e. labour mobility trends, technological advancements, COVID-19 disruption)**, albeit depending on national strategies and priorities. Three main mechanisms provide a platform for EURES countries to identify changes in the implementation context: exchange of information; participation and discussions in EURES Coordination Group meetings; and the harmonized programming (Programming Cycle). However, these mechanisms have so far not ensured that the network addresses the identified changes in a coordinated manner. For example, only half of the countries adapt services and activities based on a thorough assessment of the labour market conditions. In another instance, while recruitment events such as European Online Job Days continued being implemented despite the COVID-19 disruption, EURES support services in some countries had to be interrupted because of reallocation of resources following shifts in national priorities, impacting the availability of the network as a whole.

## 6.2. Effectiveness

The **EURES services** defined by the Regulation and provided through the portal, advisers and mobility schemes result in intra-EU placements and promote fair working conditions and higher awareness of intra-EU labour mobility opportunities. However, the fact that the enlargement of the network, the full exchange of CVs and the automated matching are not fully implemented yet reduces its overall effectiveness. EURES is estimated to contribute to around 10% of the cross-border placements. This is in line with the PES share in their national context.

There is no evidence that EURES is more effective in particular countries over time. The network seems collectively more effective than the sum of the national contributions because the inter-dependence of **national labour markets** makes EURES national success dependent on the support of EURES in other countries.

Target groups and needs of employers and jobseekers evolve with the business cycle. EURES tools and services have provided flexibility to adjust to these changing needs. This apparent proportionality of the EURES **toolbox** together with the short time span



since the Regulation and subsequent implementing acts are in place, suggests that the set of tools and services should not be recalibrated.

Despite an improvement in monitoring, separate reporting systems and **data limitations** still prevent a precise benchmarking of EURES allowing a more complete effectiveness analysis. A better monitoring providing richer data in longer series on the use of EURES tools and services by different target groups, along countries and at specific phases of the recruitment process would allow an optimal and continuous recalibration of the EURES toolbox.

**EURES support services** provided by EURES advisers are overall assessed as of high-value, good quality, and leading to sustainable results, as they are tailored to individuals' needs. However, there are differences in the quality of service provision across the network, which can be explained by differences in resources available at national level. In addition, national differences in the legislation leave traineeships and apprenticeships out of the scope of PES in some countries, limiting the ability of EURES to support younger workers with employment opportunities.

**EURES mobility schemes and cross-border partnerships** complement the EURES support services by supporting selected target groups.

While the **EURES portal** increases the access to job vacancies and CVs, its effectiveness is expected to further increase once a fully automated matching will be in place and the interface will be more user-friendly. In addition, not all national vacancies are available on the portal yet.

The **organisational structure** of EURES as defined by the Regulation, enlarging the network and mainstreaming EURES services within Public Employment Services (PES), is largely suitable to support intra-EU labour mobility effectively. The admission of additional Members and Partners enhances knowledge exchange and the provision of services to more customers. However, the level of services delivered by the various Members and Partners depends on their individual interest, which might have a negative impact on the quality of service across the network. Mainstreaming EURES services into the PES increases the quality of EURES services but reduces the visibility of EURES.

EURES is not **visible** enough among labour market participants, which reduces its effectiveness. In this regard, employers appear less aware of EURES compared to jobseekers. Recent communication and promotion activities have raised awareness of EURES but their effects were hampered by funding constraints, limited cooperation across stakeholders and lack of a common approach regarding the promotion of the network.

### **6.3. Efficiency**

The available information suggests that cost-effectiveness of EURES has increased since the introduction of the EURES Regulation (from 2016 to 2019). Benchmarking of EURES with Public Employment Services' (PES) activities has provided evidence that

the cost of EURES can be interpreted as a small top-up to the PES cost, expanding in a cost-effective manner the scope of the activities from national to cross-border placements. Benchmarking of EURES to Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS) reinforces this interpretation. EURES efficiency seems more determined by the network effect than by national aspects.

Although the investment in the **single coordinated channel** and the **EURES portal** is considered proportionate by the national coordinators, the benefits are not completely visible yet. This is underlined by the fact that countries currently do not transfer all the available vacancies through the channel. Important efficiency gains are expected from the full implementation of the automated matching between vacancies and jobseekers' profiles, to be completed once Member States integrate the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification.

The EURES Regulation brought new **administrative requirements**, including: the request to expand the national network by admitting new EURES Members and Partners (and, therefore, the need to develop new admission procedures and in some instances also new legislation); mandatory and more harmonised monitoring and reporting requirements (which meant developing new procedures and tools); and the obligation to establish a connection between the national job vacancies and CV databases with the EURES portal through a single coordinated channel. The Regulation did not provide additional resources to implement these changes. In addition, the need to avoid overlaps with related EU initiatives require increasing coordination efforts. As a result, the administrative workload has increased. While the benefits of a more consistent and better functioning network are expected to outweigh the costs of these changes, the network will commonly explore ways of simplification and administrative workload reduction.

#### 6.4. Coherence

With regard to **external coherence**, the analysis of the objectives and actions of other European initiatives found that, to a large extent, the EURES regulation is complementary and consistent with such initiatives in supporting labour mobility, full employment and integration of the labour markets. Synergies between EURES activities and other European initiatives are in place, such as Erasmus+ (e.g. promotion of Erasmus opportunities by EURES staff), Interreg (e.g. provision of additional advice in cross-border regions), and ESF (e.g. funding EURES staff that would not be available otherwise). However, for the following two tools, the evaluation recommends a better and closer cooperation:

- the Europass portal (which also has a job search function);
- the Your Europe portal (which also provides information relevant to mobile workers).

With regard to **internal coherence**, the EURES services and tools defined by the Regulation have been developed in a consistent manner, with particular synergies emerging between EURES general support services and mobility schemes. The majority of EURES countries coordinate their activities across the network, especially on recruitment projects, although to a lesser extent on promotion and communication

activities. While the objectives of all EURES actions are coherent and no overlaps were found in their implementation, EURES Members that are part of a cross-border partnership and the national EURES network face reporting overlaps. Furthermore, differences in financial and human capital resources available to EURES countries can lead to inconsistencies in the quality and type of services delivered. At national level, there is also a potential risk of inconsistencies between Members and Partners, especially between public and private organisations that are characterised by different priorities and ways of working.

### **6.5. EU added value**

Overall, the stakeholders consulted recognised the EU added value of the EURES regulation, as Member States alone could not have achieved the current level of EURES service provision. This refers especially to the provision of information and post-recruitment assistance, the support services to apprenticeships and traineeships, and the mobility schemes and cross-border partnerships.

The scale of EURES actions is relatively small, covering approximately one tenth of the total intra-EU labour mobility flows. Therefore, it is not possible to conclude that its actions are the only way to support intra-EU labour mobility in general. However, the evaluation findings show that the EURES regulation resulted in quicker or better outcomes for customers who used EURES services, contributing to labour market integration.

The EURES regulation provides an overarching framework and common vision for the collaboration and coordination of EURES countries in the field of labour mobility. It also ensures and promotes the protection of fair labour conditions and standards. The exchange of information on labour mobility and markets would have not happened in a structured way and with the same level of coordination without EURES.

The COVID-19 disruption also showed that overall structure defined by the Regulation facilitated the collection of information on challenges in cross-border regions during the disruption, and that the relative autonomy of the European Online Job Days from national resources allowed the continuity of this service.

### **6.6. Lessons learnt**

The conclusions of this evaluation lead to lessons learnt that could be considered for actions improving the implementation of the Regulation. All these suggestions would require initiatives at both European and national levels that can be implemented without changing the legal framework. The Commission could use the opportunity of the regular reporting foreseen in Article 33 of the Regulation to complement the information of this evaluation when the EURES reform has had time to materialize in full.

The lessons learnt include:

**Complete the implementation of automated matching.** All Members and Partners should ensure the transfer of job vacancies and CVs to the EURES portal, and complete the mapping or adoption of the European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification, to facilitate better matching results.

**Align EURES, Europass and Your Europe portals.** The European Commission and the European Labour Authority could contemplate performing an analysis of potential overlaps of information and services provision on Your Europe portal (implementing the Single Digital Gateway Regulation), the Europass portal and the EURES portal.

**Strengthen communication to ensure EURES visibility.** The European Coordination Office could develop a new communication strategy achieving unified communication at all levels (regional, national, EU), identifying additional communication channels, defining targeted communication actions, linking communication outputs to EURES outcomes, and raising the visibility of the EURES portal among search engines.

**Enhance the quality of service delivery.** The European Commission and the European Labour Authority could consider supporting the harmonisation of the minimum level of quality of services across the network, particularly post-recruitment assistance.

**Improve and simplify monitoring and data collection.** The European Commission and the European Labour Authority in cooperation with the National Coordination Offices could further integrate the programming and monitoring processes, improve and simplify data collection, and streamline monitoring deriving from EURES, the Single Digital Gateway, and the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).

**Strengthen enlargement efforts.** The National Coordination Offices could enhance their efforts in identifying, attracting and admitting new Members and Partners. The European Coordination Office could facilitate the process with guidance, support and knowledge exchange.

## **I. ANNEX - PROCEDURAL INFORMATION**

### **Lead Directorate General (DG), Decide Planning/Commission Work Programme (CWP) references**

The Directorate-General (DG) for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) is the lead DG for the ex-post evaluation of the operation and effects of Regulation 2016/589 of the European Commission and the Council on a European network of employment services (EURES), following article 35 of this Regulation.

The evaluation is identified with roadmap reference Ares(2019)4609873 and agenda planning PLAN/2019/5596.

### **Organisation and timing**

The evaluation started with the publication of the Evaluation Roadmap<sup>161</sup> and was carried out with the support of the Inter-Service Steering Group (a group of expert officials from several Commission services) chaired by DG EMPL to which the following DGs had been invited: DG Education and Culture; DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs; DG Regional and Urban Policy; and the Secretariat-General. The first one declined to participate. The group met six times:

- 01/10/2019 - evaluation roadmap and terms of reference for the external study
- 28/01/2020 - inception meeting for the external study
- 15/06/2020 - draft interim report of the external study
- 14/10/2020 - draft final report of the external study
- 03/11/2020 - written consultation on the draft final report of the external study
- 14/12/2020 - draft Staff Working Document (SWD)

### **Exceptions to the Better Regulation Guidelines**

The Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines<sup>162</sup> were followed to carry out the evaluation without deviations.

### **Consultation of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB)**

The evaluation was scrutinized by the RSB on 03/03/2021, which issued a negative opinion with recommendations that were addressed as follows:

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<sup>161</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/11866-European-network-of-employment-services-EURES-evaluation-2016-2020>

<sup>162</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines.pdf>

Board's findings	Modifications
<p>(A)</p> <p>The report does not clearly explain the scope and purpose of the evaluation and what success should look like at this point in time.</p>	<p>The evaluation has been reviewed integrally to make clear that it addresses Regulation (EU) 2016/589 (the EURES regulation) and not the EURES network, as required by article 35 of the Regulation. Specifically, sections <i>1. Introduction</i> and <i>2.1. Description of EURES and its objectives</i> define clearly the scope and purpose of the evaluation.</p> <p>Since the Regulation is only a means to improve the functioning of EURES, the outcomes of the reformed network are explained throughout the report. Particularly, section <i>2.2.2. Points of comparison</i> provides benchmarks to measure the actual success of the reform undertaken by the EURES regulation.</p>
<p>(B)</p> <p>The report does not analyse if EURES is useful for all sectors, qualifications and target groups and if all services and features are effective and still relevant. It does not sufficiently discuss how emerging private labour matching services affect the added value of EURES.</p>	<p>Response to finding (A) clarifies the scope and purpose of the evaluation.</p> <p>Section <i>2.1. Description of EURES and its objectives</i> has been redrafted to clarify that the Regulation defines EURES as a public service to facilitate freedom of movement and available to all workers and employers across the Union, without exceptions, avoiding creaming (cherry-picking) effects. Taking into account this context, section <i>5.1.3. Alignment with needs of target groups</i> has redrafted to analyse the actual coverage of different groups.</p> <p>The main services and features introduced (broadening of the network, exchange of job vacancies and CVs, automated matching and harmonised planning and performance measurement) have been further explained and their effectiveness and relevance discussed, particularly in sections <i>5.1.1. Relevance for intra-EU labour market mobility</i>, <i>5.2.4. Effectiveness of EURES internal support and organisational set-up</i>, <i>5.2.2. The EURES portal as a matching place</i>, and <i>5.1.2. Adaptability to a changing context</i>.</p> <p>The relationship between EURES and private employment services is clarified in</p>

<b>Board's findings</b>	<b>Modifications</b>
	sections 2.2.2. <i>Points of comparison</i> , 4.1.1. <i>Adaptability to a changing context</i> and 5.2.2. <i>The EURES portal as a matching place</i> .
(C) The conclusions do not make balanced use of all available evidence and the views of all stakeholders.	The assessment and conclusions have been reviewed to ensure that all the stakeholders' views have been taken into account along the evaluation.

<b>Board's recommendation</b>	<b>Modifications</b>
(1) The report should clarify upfront the intended level of ambition of EURES' actions in border-crossing labour mobility. It should explain that the Regulation's various components are not yet fully implemented and the limits this might pose on the evaluation. The report should also better introduce the scope and purpose of the evaluation. It should clarify the implications for the evaluation that it was designed to focus more on the EURES Regulation than on the EURES network/services.	Sections 2.1. <i>Description of EURES and its objectives</i> and 2.2.2. <i>Points of comparison</i> have been redrafted to clarify how the Regulation defines EURES as a service with broad goals but without pre-defined targets, to facilitate voluntary mobility and open to all workers and employers across the Union. The limited implementation and its impact in the evaluation are explicitly described in sections 3. <i>Implementation/state of play</i> , 5.1.2. <i>Adaptability to a changing context</i> , 5.1.3. <i>Alignment with needs of target groups</i> , 5.2.2. <i>The EURES portal as a matching place</i> , 5.2.4. <i>Effectiveness of EURES internal support and organisational set-up</i> , and 5.3.1. <i>Cost-effectiveness</i> . The scope and purpose of the evaluation have been clearly defined in section 1. <i>Introduction</i> , to clarify that the object is not EURES, but the EURES Regulation, describing the implications. This is also highlighted in 2.2.1 <i>Baseline</i> . Response to finding (A) also clarifies the scope and purpose of the evaluation.
(2) The report should clarify the underlying intervention logic. It should specify what EURES was supposed to have delivered by now and acknowledge where expected results as outlined in the intervention logic have not been achieved.	The intervention logic has been redrafted in section 2.1. <i>Description of EURES and its objectives</i> , simplified (moving elements to the annex) and complemented with section 2.2.2. <i>Points of comparison</i> , providing benchmarks to measure the actual success

Board's recommendation	Modifications
	<p>of the reform undertaken by the EURES regulation.</p> <p>Chapter 5 provides additional information on achievements or lack of achievements particularly in sections <i>5.1.2. Adaptability to a changing context</i>, <i>5.1.3. Alignment with needs of target groups</i>, <i>5.2.2. The EURES portal as a matching place</i>, <i>5.2.4. Effectiveness of EURES internal support and organisational set-up</i>, and <i>5.3.1. Cost-effectiveness</i>.</p>
<p>(3)</p> <p>The report should give a more balanced account of all stakeholders' views. While it prominently reflects the views of the national co-ordinators, the analysis should explore in more detail also the dissenting views and particularly the experiences of jobseekers and employers who have used EURES services.</p>	<p>The assessment based on stakeholders' views have been reviewed along the evaluation. Specifically, any assessment based on national coordinators is contrasted with at least one additional source, except when the coordinators are the only stakeholder (e.g. administrative burden).</p>
<p>(4)</p> <p>The report should more clearly assess the relevance of EURES for different target groups, sectors and qualifications. It should identify which target groups have mostly used EURES' services and discuss how the situation is likely to evolve. The report could explain to what extent young people and medium- to high-skilled job seekers are expected to use EURES over social media or web-ads. It should also analyse whether EURES is more relevant for some groups than others.</p> <p>The report should assess whether EURES is considered equally effective across the EU labour market given that the extent of supporting services and the share of vacancies in the EURES portal vary significantly across participating countries.</p>	<p>Response to finding (B) clarifies that EURES services are not discriminatory and open to all workers and employers across the Union.</p> <p>Under this context, section <i>5.1.3. Alignment with needs of target groups</i> analyses the coverage of different groups, and section <i>5.2.1. Provision of services to employers and jobseekers</i> has been complemented with analysis along national data.</p>
<p>(5)</p> <p>The report should critically discuss and substantiate whether a fully automated matching would increase the number of placements and better explain if the expectations for an increased labour market integration are justified.</p>	<p>The evaluation clarifies that the automated matched will not be available before August 2021 but that the experience from Member States using these technologies shows its benefits. To these end, chapters <i>5.2.2. The EURES portal as a matching</i></p>



<b>Board's recommendation</b>	<b>Modifications</b>
<p>It should look into the reasons for the continuously decreasing number of unique EURES portal visitors.</p> <p>The report should also analyse more prominently how EURES compares to its private competitors.</p>	<p><i>place</i>, and <i>5.1.2. Adaptability to a changing context</i> have been enriched.</p> <p>The decreasing number of unique visitors, linked to the evolution of the labour market, is analysed in section <i>5.3.1. Cost-effectiveness</i>.</p> <p>Section <i>2.2.2. Points of comparison</i> clarifies now that EURES is not intended to compete with other private or public employment services, but how the evaluation uses them as a benchmark, particularly in sections <i>4.1.1. Adaptability to a changing context</i> and <i>5.2.2. The EURES portal as a matching place</i>.</p>
<p>(6)</p> <p>The report should better explain the introduction and modification of EURES components during the evaluated period. It should critically assess whether they have been equally successful.</p> <p>It should better examine whether the profile of EURES users is in line with the intended comprehensiveness of the services. The report should discuss whether EURES remains proportionate in its current form, and whether the scope of its actions or target groups could merit recalibration.</p>	<p>The main components introduced (broadening of the network, exchange of job vacancies and CVs, automated matching and harmonised planning and performance measurement) have been further explained and their level of achievement clearly stated, particularly in sections <i>3. Implementation / state of Play</i>, <i>5.2.4. Effectiveness of EURES internal support and organisational set-up</i>, <i>5.2.2. The EURES portal as a matching place</i>, and <i>5.1.2. Adaptability to a changing context</i>.</p> <p>The document explains that no single EURES tool or service stands out but that the current wide portfolio seems appropriate to cater for the various groups' needs and their future evolution in sections <i>5.1.1. Relevance for intra-EU labour market mobility</i>, <i>5.2.6. Sustainability and factors impacting effectiveness</i> and <i>6.2. Effectiveness</i></p>
<p>(7)</p> <p>The report has identified a number of shortcomings in data collection and standardisation of reporting. It has also identified potential burdens associated with new reporting requirements imposed by the Regulation and information overlaps with other EU initiatives. The report should summarise these findings in the conclusions and discuss whether there is</p>	<p>Section <i>5.3.3. Increase/decrease of administrative burden</i> has been redrafted and the conclusions in section <i>6.3. Efficiency</i> and the lessons learnt (<i>6.6.1. EURES portal in the digital age</i>, <i>6.7.2. Planning and monitoring</i>, <i>6.7.3. Working in an enlarged network</i>) have been complemented accordingly.</p>

<b>Board's recommendation</b>	<b>Modifications</b>
any potential for simplification and administrative burden reduction.	
(8) The executive summary should be revised and give a more balanced account of the evaluation. It should provide all critical aspects, elaborate further on the lessons learned and provide convincing answers to the five evaluation criteria.	The Report of the operation and effects of the EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589 has been drafted taking into account this suggestion. The Report is accompanied by this Staff Working Document, which therefore does not include an executive summary according to the better regulation principles.

The reworked evaluation was scrutinized again by the RSB, which issued a positive opinion on 19/05/2021 with recommendations that were addressed as follows:

<b>Board's findings</b>	<b>Modifications</b>
(1) The report does not sufficiently assess EURES services' effectiveness across participating countries and it does not explain clearly which EURES services are most effective.	Sections <i>5.2.1. Provision of services to employers and jobseekers</i> and <i>5.1.3. Alignment with needs of target groups</i> have been adapted to better address EURES performance along the participating countries, to recall its link to PES performance, and to clarify the complementarity of the services portfolio.
(2) The report does not adequately discuss why EURES remains proportionate in its current form and whether the scope of its actions merit recalibration.	Sections <i>5.1.3. Alignment with needs of target groups</i> and <i>6.2. Effectiveness</i> have been redrafted to better explain the proportionality of the services portfolio and the lack of evidence supporting the need for a recalibration at this stage.

<b>Board's recommendation</b>	<b>Modifications</b>
(1) The report provides evidence on the performance and use of EURES services across participating countries. Based on this evidence, it could further discuss EURES services' effectiveness in these labour markets.	Section <i>5.2.1. Provision of services to employers and jobseekers</i> has been adapted to discuss EURES performance along the participating countries.
(2) The report argues that (a) the cost of the services and tools provided by EURES remains proportionate and (b) the	Sections <i>5.1.3. Alignment with needs of target groups</i> and <i>6.2. Effectiveness</i> have been redrafted to clarify the argumentation

<b>Board's recommendation</b>	<b>Modifications</b>
investment in the single coordinated channel and the EURES portal is considered proportionate by the national coordinators, although the benefits are not completely visible yet. The report should be clearer about which EURES services are the most effective and substantiate the argument (including from an efficiency point of view) that “the current approach of providing a wide portfolio to cater for the evolving needs of the labour market remains proportionate”.	on proportionality of the available portfolio of services. The present approach provides flexibility to adapt to changing labour market needs, covers reasonably employers and jobseekers overall needs and fulfils the obligation of EURES to provide a universal service. Considering the short period in which the new regime is fully operational, a recalibration would be premature.
(3) The report should explore more the dissenting views of stakeholders and not use only those, which back up the findings of the evaluation.	The report has been reviewed to give more prominence to dissenting opinions.
(4) The conclusions should discuss how to address the data limitations found in this exercise to allow for a more complete effectiveness analysis in the future (e.g. in relation to how far EURES has been used by different target groups).	The most important data limitation encountered during the evaluation was the short time span since the Regulation and the according monitoring arrangements are in place. Section 6.2. <i>Effectiveness</i> has been redrafted to clarify the impact of the data limitations identified and the suggested improvements.

### **Evidence, sources and quality**

An external study was carried out by Deloitte, VVA and FGB<sup>163</sup>.

The study applied a mix of evaluation methods including desk research, statistical analysis, a public consultation, surveys, workshops, case studies and interviews with stakeholders and Member States’ officials.

The EURES coordination group, gathering Member States representatives, was regularly informed of the study development and findings.

According to the quality assessment of the study done by the Inter Service Steering Group, the study was conducted in line with the related Request for Services and the agreed inception report, with adaptations for interviews and workshops due to the COVID-19 disruption. It includes all agreed

<sup>163</sup> Study supporting the ex-post EURES evaluation and the second biennial EURES report, Deloitte, VVA and FGB for the European Commission, 2020. ISBN 978-92-76-22093-0, [http://publications.europa.eu/publication/catalogue\\_number/KE-02-20-720-EN-N](http://publications.europa.eu/publication/catalogue_number/KE-02-20-720-EN-N)

components and is based on relevant qualitative and quantitative data, although the data to support efficiency analysis was limited. The analysis and conclusions are sound while methodology and limitations are clearly outlined. The lessons learnt outlined are relevant.

## II. ANNEX - STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

### 1. Consultation strategy

#### 1.1. Objectives

This Synopsis Report outlines the consultation activities organised to evaluate the EURES Regulation and presents the main findings.

To ensure transparency and involve the stakeholders, the process followed the standards and methods set out in the Better Regulation guidelines. The various consultations have followed the roadmap and consultation strategy. The **roadmap**<sup>164</sup> of the evaluation itself was published on the Better Regulation website and open for public feedback between 16 July 2019 and 13 August 2019<sup>165</sup>. The seven contributions received were overall positive towards labour mobility and the need for EURES. They provided suggestions to improve the consultation process, such as topics to evaluate, which were addressed in the consultation tools.

#### 1.2. Consultation stakeholders, methods and tools

The stakeholders targeted by the consultation activities were individuals or organisations that had:

- an interest in or received services provided by EURES;
- expertise in the subject; and
- run or been involved in running EURES actions.

The table shows the stakeholder groups targeted through the consultation activities:

Type of stakeholder	Interest
Private citizens (including Jobseekers/workers); Companies/employers	They can provide feedback on the services received, whether they corresponded to their needs, and how they could be improved.
ECO officials; DG EMPL; Other Commission officials	The European Coordination Office (ECO) provides the background for specific decisions taken during the implementation. DG EMPL can assess whether EURES activities targeted the needs of the labour market. Other DGs and agencies may assess how EURES contributed to areas related to the labour market.
NCOs staff	National Coordination Offices (NCOs) oversee the implementation of EURES at national level.
EURES Members and Partners	EURES Members and Partners provide an insight into EURES activities and their coherence with other national and international policies.
Public and Private Employment Services, Public Authorities, Employers' and trade associations, Academic institutions, Civil Society/NGOs	Other stakeholders provide insight of their experience with EURES. They can compare services provided by EURES with similar services from other Employment Services.

<sup>164</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/11866-European-network-of-employment-services-EURES-evaluation-2016-2020>.

<sup>165</sup> Feedback on the roadmap: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/11866-European-network-of-employment-services-EURES-evaluation-2016-2020/feedback?p\\_id=5704929](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/11866-European-network-of-employment-services-EURES-evaluation-2016-2020/feedback?p_id=5704929).

The figure illustrates the type of consultation tools used per category of stakeholders.

*Overview of consultation tools per stakeholder group*

	Consultation tools					
	Ad hoc Interviews	Fieldwork Interviews	Field workshops	Online survey	Open Public consultation	Validation and COVID-19 workshops
Private citizens (including Jobseekers/workers)		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Companies/employers		✓	✓	✓	✓	
ECO officials	✓				✓	✓
DG EMPL	✓				✓	✓
Other Commission officials					✓	✓
NCOs staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EURES Members and Partners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Employment Services		✓	✓		✓	
Private Employment Services		✓	✓		✓	
Public Authorities					✓	
Academic institutions					✓	
Employers' associations					✓	✓
Trade associations/unions					✓	✓
Civil Society/NGOs					✓	✓

### 1.3. Stakeholder participation

The total reach of the consultation activities is shown below.

Type of stakeholder consultation		Timeframe	Number of responses/ consultation activities carried out
Public consultation		March – June 2020	1 434
Online survey	Jobseekers	May – June 2020	2 055
	Employers		164
	Members and Partners		96
	NCOs	May – September 2020	26
Case studies	Interviews	April – September 2020	76
	Workshops		12
Ad-hoc interviews		March – September 2020	2
Validation workshop		September 2020	1
COVID-19 workshop		October 2020	1
<b>Total individual responses</b>			<b>3 853</b>
<b>Total workshops</b>			<b>14</b>

*Stakeholder participation*

No ad-hoc contributions outside of the consultation context or campaigns trying to influence the responding participants in their feedback were detected. The public consultation and the online surveys were advertised through the EURES portal and newsletter. This had an impact on the responses to the online surveys for jobseekers and employers as many respondents indicated that they interacted with EURES online via the portal so could provide feedback only on its functionalities and not on other services. To balance this, the case studies focused on gathering feedback from EURES staff, and jobseekers and employers who benefitted from individualised support.

## 2. Results of the consultation

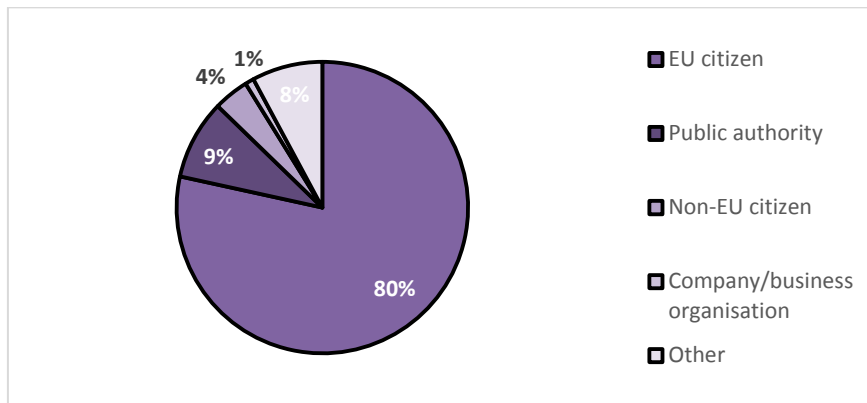
This part presents the results of the completed consultations per consultation activity.

### 2.1. Public consultation

The public consultation focused on audiences with no or minimal knowledge of EURES but there were also questions for those with knowledge of EURES. The questionnaire comprised closed and open questions. It provided information on EURES for those unfamiliar with it.

The graph shows the distribution of the 1 434 respondents into stakeholder categories. The majority of ‘Other’ respondents identified themselves as EURES Advisors, EURES Staff or an employee of their national Public Employment Service.

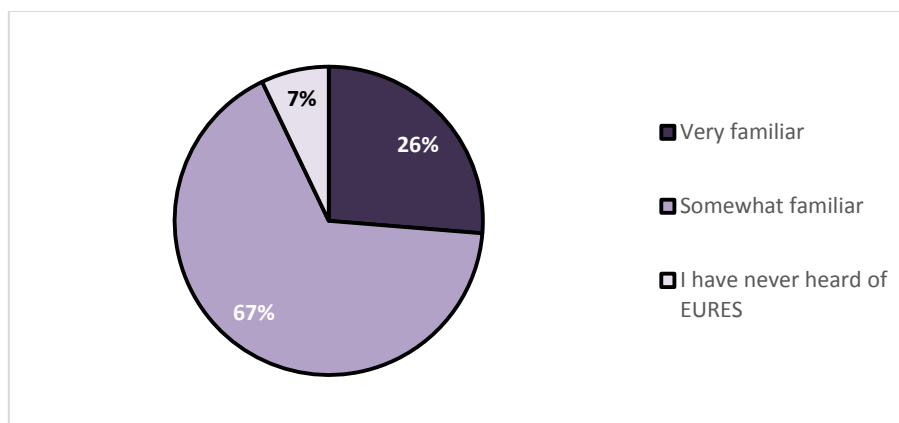
Category of respondents (n=1 434)



From the 1 326 respondents who indicated they originated from one of the 32 EURES countries; most responses came from Italy (29%, 380) and Spain (28%, 373). Given that more than half of the responses came from only two relatively similar countries in socio-economic terms, they have been interpreted with prudence and triangulated with other findings to ensure representativity.

The extent of familiarity with EURES is provided in the graph below.

How familiar are you with EURES? (n=1 434)

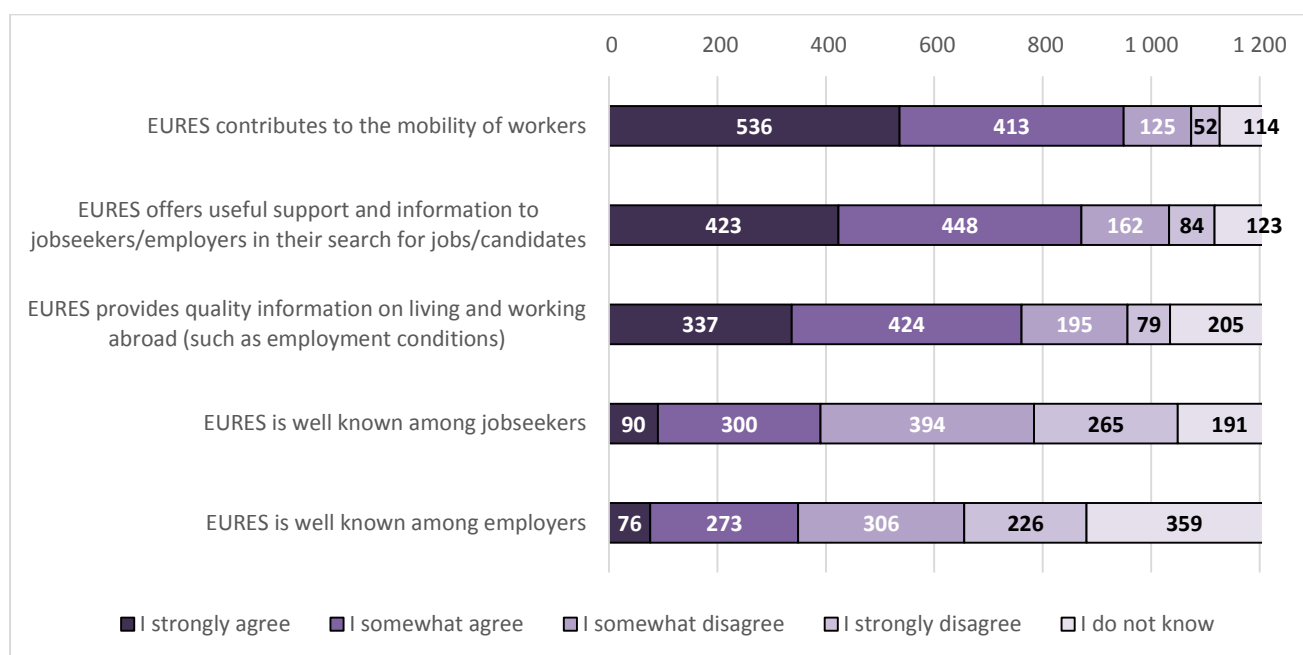


More than two thirds of respondents agreed (68%, 836) that EURES provides **relevant** and modern employment services in line with the needs of European workers and employers. Only 23% (277) disagreed with this statement and 10% (127) had no opinion.

The respondents tended to agree that EURES is **effective** in contributing to the mobility of workers (76% (949) either strongly agree or somewhat agree) and providing useful and quality information (70% (871) either agree or strongly agree). At the same time, a considerable number feels that it is not well known among jobseekers (53%, 659) and employers (43%, 532), as it is not visible enough.



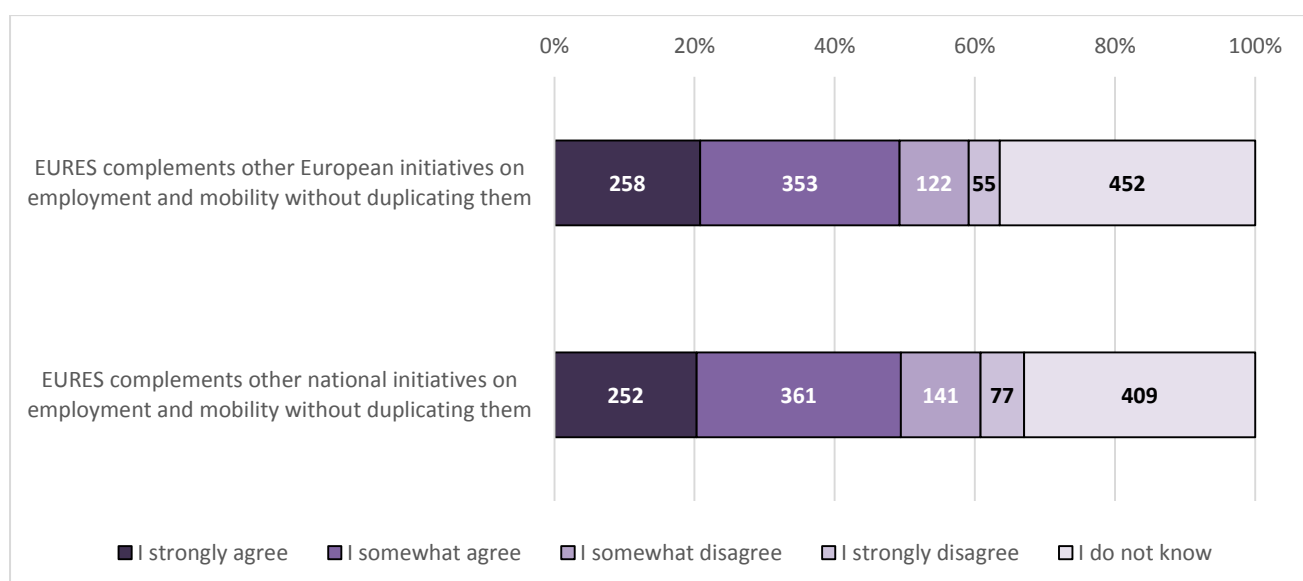
Agreement with statements on the effectiveness of EURES (n=1 240)



In terms of **efficiency**, 45% (601) of the respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that EURES achieves the best possible results given the resources invested; 18% (241) of respondents disagreed with this statement, 9% (118) strongly disagreed and 28% (378) did not have an opinion.

For **coherence**, about half of the respondents (49%) agreed that EURES complements other European (611) and national (613) initiatives, 14% (177) and 18% (218) of the respondents correspondingly (strongly) disagree that EURES complements other EU and national initiatives. About one third were unsure about EURES’s complementarity with other EU (36%, 452) and national (33%, 409) initiatives.

Agreement with statements on the coherence of EURES (n=1 240)



When asked about the **EU added value** of EURES, three quarters of respondents agreed (43% (536) strongly, 32% (391) somewhat) that more can be done with EU resources than just national ones to promote mobility and jobs.

72% (956) see the need to improve EURES, its tools and services, 4% (53) did not see such a need, while 24% (326) did not know. More than 1 200 respondents provided suggestions for improvements. The majority concerned: (1) the EURES website and mobility portal (modernising and improving their user-friendliness); (2) the EURES staff (more upskilling and training for EURES staff); (3) cooperation and visibility (increase the visibility of EURES and expansion of the network).

Overall, the respondents see free movement of workers positively. However, there were some respondents for whom the free movement of workers is not always a positive thing. They believe that free movement of workers leads to decreasing wages for certain jobs in their countries. Similarly, few respondents expressed a concern that the benefits of labour mobility are not straightforward and are not well known to the majority of Europeans. They believe that more should be done to familiarise the EU citizens with the advantages of moving abroad, as well as with employment opportunities in other countries. This is in line with responses of the online surveys and also the case studies where respondents felt that in this area EURES could step up its efforts to ensure that European citizens and businesses are informed about their rights connected to the free movement of workers.

While all contributions were taken into account from statistical point of view, about 1% (15) of contributions to the open questions were not usable as they contained inappropriate language through which the respondents expressed their frustration either with a specific employment or EURES service or individual national labour policies. Four of these inputs were marked as inappropriate for using hate language or specific insults to specific groups or EURES Members.

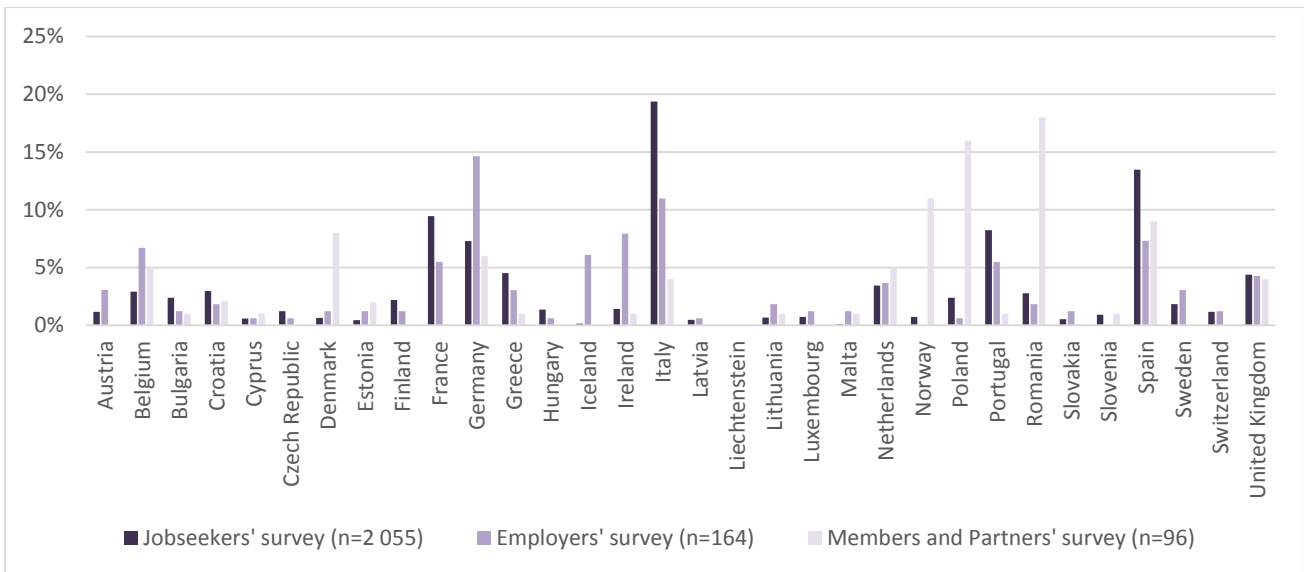
Twenty-eight (2%) respondents submitted additional suggestions, most often unusable for the purposes of the consultation: a proposal on how to turn waste into energy, company promotion material, registration certificate of an EU citizen in another EU Member State, 23 CV, a note discussing limitations of free movement between Italy and Switzerland, a screenshot from the portal in German showing need to improve the portal's search function.

## **2.2. Online surveys**

Four online surveys were launched for stakeholders particularly involved with EURES, which addressed broad target groups: (1) National Coordination Offices; (2) employers/companies; (3) jobseekers/workers; (4) EURES Members and Partners. The surveys contained closed and open questions. The questionnaires were aligned with the public consultation to ensure coherence and avoid duplication.

The graph provides an overview of the responses to the online surveys per EURES country. The NCO survey is not included to maintain anonymity as one response per country was collected.

*Overview of residence per survey*



The overview of survey results is provided below.

### 2.2.1. Respondent profiles

Most **jobseekers** stated to be either unemployed (39%, 796) or employed but looking for a new job (35%, 712). The majority were male (64%, 1 305) between 30 to 49 years old (32%, 663). A large majority held a university level degree (72%, 1 601). Responses were mostly provided by jobseekers from Italy (19%, 398), Spain (13%, 277), and France (9%, 194). This is similar to the residency profile of the respondents in the public consultation, however, in this survey the respondents were spread a bit more equally among the responding countries, i.e. the top 2 countries make up only 32% as opposed to the 57% in the public consultation. Given that the survey was promoted through the EURES portal, the representativeness of the profiles is also aligned with those who are registered on the portal.

In the **employers'** survey, micro companies formed about one third of the respondents (33%, 54), followed by small companies (24%, 40). The most mentioned NACE sector of activities was 'S. Other service activities' (14%, 23). The country with the most employers responding was Germany (14%, 24), followed by Italy (11%, 18) and Ireland (8%, 13). This is partially aligned with the profiles of those who are registered on the portal as there the most employers come from Germany, Netherlands and France.

**Members and Partners** from 20 countries answered the survey. Most were from Romania (18%, 17), Poland (16%, 15) and Norway (11%, 11) which are some of the countries with the greatest number of Members and Partners in their network. Majority identified themselves as Members (78%, 75) of the national EURES networks, only 21% (20) were Partners.

Out of the 32 **National Coordination Offices (NCOs)**, 26 answered the survey.

### 2.2.2. Relevance

From 460 **jobseekers** who used EURES services, 57% (258) indicated the lack of job opportunities in the country of residence as the main reason to use EURES services; 55% (251) of jobseekers use EURES services due to better working and salary conditions in another country; and 43% (194) use EURES services as moving to work abroad would help them improve their foreign language skills.

Among the 128 **employers** who visited the portal or are registered on it, 62% (78) agree it increased employment opportunities, while 18% (23) disagree with this statement. Some employers commented that EURES offered them good matches for their job vacancies and were able to find good new employees or trainees. Others mentioned that the search did not produce good matches due to poor filter options.

**Members and Partners** believe that EURES helps addressing the current needs of jobseekers (92%, 84) and employers (81%, 75), offers relevant support and guidance to jobseekers (94%, 87) and employers (85%, 78), and increased employment opportunities for jobseekers across Europe (93%, 85).

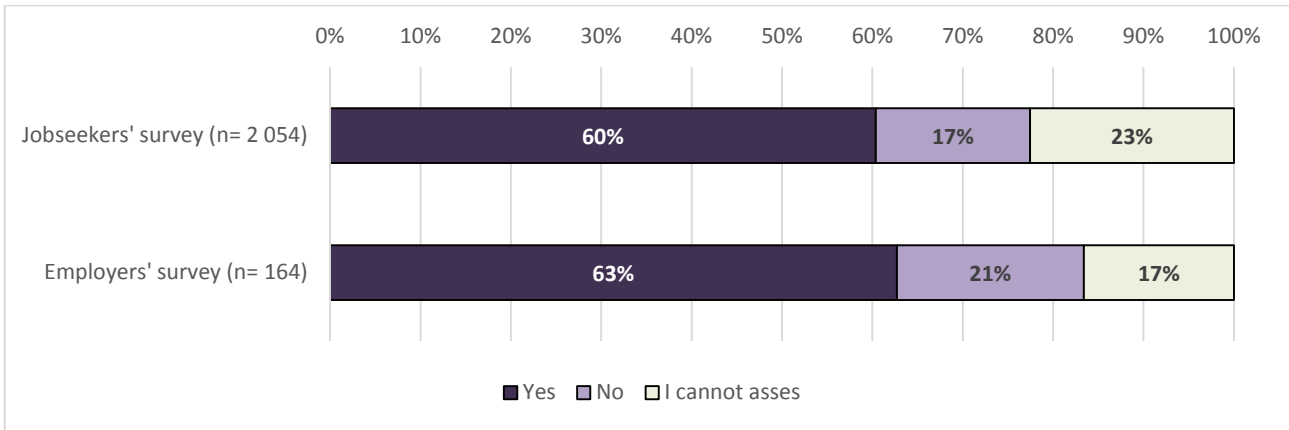
From the 26 **NCOs**, 23 agreed that the objectives of the EURES Regulation are aligned to the needs and problems of the intra-EU labour mobility; 21 agreed that EURES objectives and tools have been responsive to the changes on the labour market. With the exception of three respondents, all agreed that EURES targets the correct audience in order to achieve its objectives.

### 2.2.3. Effectiveness

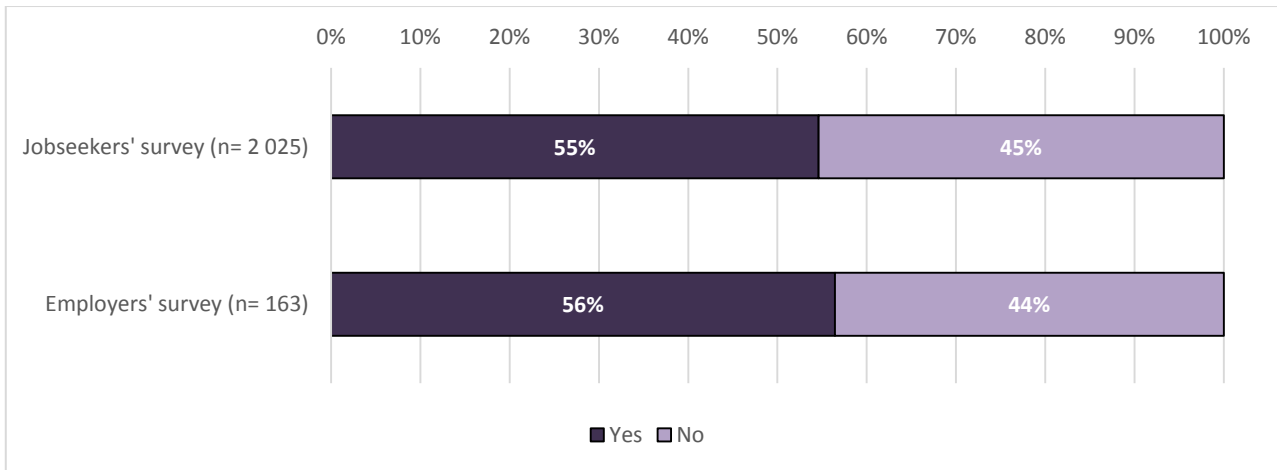
Among the 1 868 **jobseekers** who use the portal, 48% (905) (strongly) agree with the portal contributing to increased employment opportunities, 24% (447) (strongly) disagree and 28% (516) have no opinion. 69% (1 287) of the respondents (strongly) agree that information the portal provides is easy to understand, 25% (476) (strongly) disagree and 9% (105) have no opinion on the question. 55% (1 106) of the respondents think it is easy to find out about EURES and the various services while 45% (919) do not think so. 63% (1 288) of respondents would recommend EURES to other jobseekers but 21% (431) of respondents would not, of these majority assigned it largely to unsuccessful job search on the Portal.

Slightly more than half (56%, 92) of **employers** think it is easy to find out about EURES and the services it provides, while 44% (71) do not think so. The majority of respondents (60%, 99) would recommend EURES to other employers, while 17% (28) would not recommend EURES. Nearly one quarter (23%, 37) was undecided on this. The alignment on this question between the employers' and jobseekers' respondents is visible in the graph below as is the agreement of whether it is easy to find information about EURES.

Would you recommend EURES to other jobseekers/employers?



Do you think it is easy to find information about EURES and the services it provides?



Nearly all **Members and Partners** believe that EURES is effective in informing jobseekers (97%, 91) and employers (88%, 81) about mobility, helping jobseekers find employment (93%, 87) and employers find candidates (85%, 78), and is effective in matching employers with jobseekers (84%, 75).

All **NCOs** agreed that EURES contributes to labour market transparency by ensuring relevant information is available to potential applicants and employers. 18 respondents agreed that the promotion and communication activities of EURES help make it a widely known brand among jobseekers and employers. 15 respondents agreed that labour market participants are aware of EURES services and tools, while 8 respondents (strongly) disagreed with this statement. 19 respondents agreed with EURES tools being effective in matching labour supply with demand across Europe. 24 respondents agreed that EURES mobility schemes effectively contribute to its objectives.

#### 2.2.4. Efficiency

From the 365 **jobseekers** who indicated receiving guidance on finding a job abroad, 32% (219) responded that they would have found a job without the help of EURES, with 29% (104) indicating

that it would have taken more time; 18% (63) of the respondents believe that they would probably not and 7% (25) that they would definitely not find a job without EURES.

From the 62 **employers** who indicated having received guidance in finding employees abroad, 37% (23) responded that they would have been able to find the correct candidates but not as quickly; while 24% (15) said that they would probably not have been able to find the right candidates without support from EURES. Yet, 19% (11) of employers said they would have been able to find employees even without the help of EURES. This is because they see the EURES database as containing very few good candidates with the necessary skills for their job vacancies and the filters on the portal as showing too many irrelevant candidates.

From the 34 **Members and Partners** who indicated that they use the EURES portal for matching, 26 (76%) think that automated matching function will save them time in comparison with manual matching and searching once it is fully implemented, while 8 (24%) are not convinced of that.

22 **NCOs** agreed that costs of EURES services and tools are justified by their results. However, 23 found that the administrative burden has had increased compared to the previous Regulation. Nearly half of the respondents (12) think that there is a scope for more efficient use of the EURES resources, while 10 do not know.

### 2.2.5. Coherence

Similarly to the public consultation, some **jobseekers** (2%, 41) drew similarities with the Erasmus initiative and its brand, from which they feel EURES can learn.

The vast majority of **employers** (81%, 58) who received EURES services believe that EURES services are complementary, while 19% (14) disagree. This is also aligned with the feedback received through the public consultation and the case studies.

99% (90) of **Members and Partners** believe that the consistency of the activities and target groups of the initiatives they participate in is good or very good. Only one respondent said it was poor.

Most of the **NCOs** agree that EURES is complementary to other EU (17) and national (20) initiatives and that the EURES tools are complementary (25). However, 11 **NCOs** find that the EURES tools are overlapping with other EU/national level policy measures/initiatives, e.g. Single Digital Gateway, European Labour Authority or Europass.

### 2.2.6. EU added value

The view of **jobseekers** and **employers** is divided on the extent to which they would be able to achieve the same results without EURES as is seen in the efficiency section above.

The **Members and Partners** agreed that EURES complement other European (88%, 81) and national (95%, 87) initiatives on employment and mobility and that more can be done to promote jobs and mobility through EURES than with national resources only (95%, 88). This echoes, albeit slightly less strongly, the feelings of the public consultation respondents.

Among **NCOs**, there is agreement that EURES has produced effects that would have not taken place without EU intervention (22) and that they have more reached groups (23).

### 2.2.7. Summary

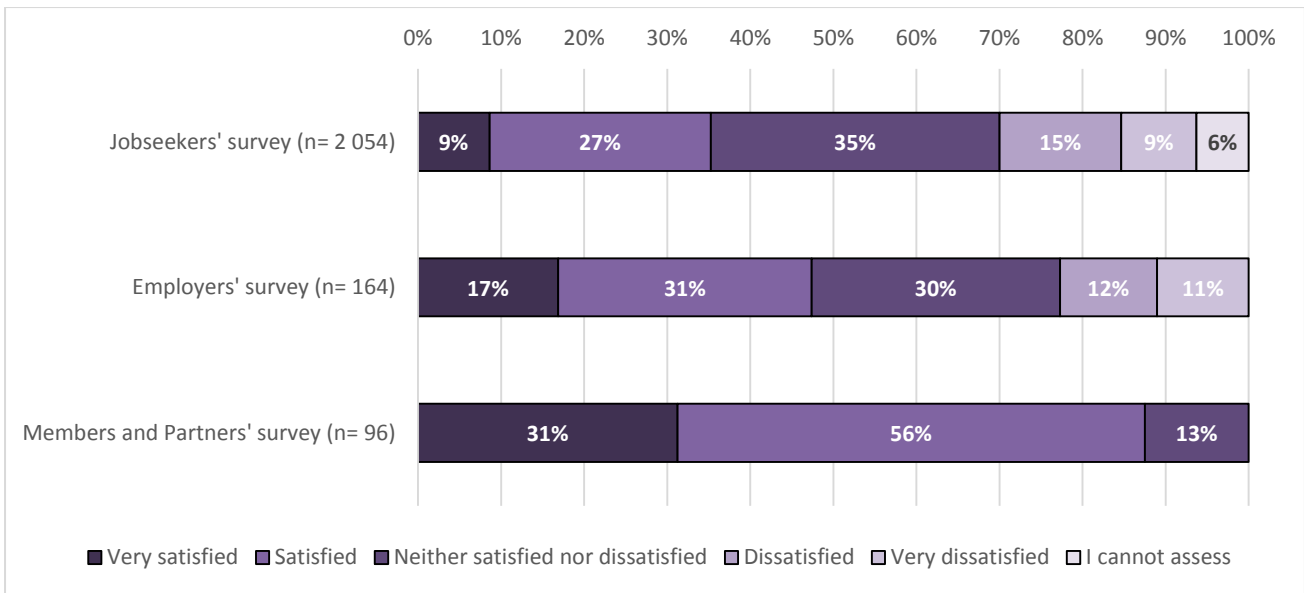
While overall, in the **jobseekers'** survey a considerable number of respondents (35%, 714) is neutral about their experience with EURES, about the same number of respondent are satisfied (9% (177) very satisfied and 27% (547) satisfied) or dissatisfied (9% (186) very dissatisfied and 15% (301) dissatisfied) with it. The dissatisfaction might stem from the respondents not being able to find relevant employment opportunities through EURES or being of an opinion that employers do not use EURES services on a regular basis which results in a poor job vacancy offer. The biggest criticism of the respondents was directed towards the EURES Portal. There the respondents highlighted that it needs further considerable development to be able to keep up with the technical developments. The replies are more positive for specific EURES services. For instance, over two-thirds (70%, 249) of those who received information and guidance in finding a job abroad were satisfied with the service, where 24% (87) were satisfied and 46% (162) very satisfied.

In the **employers'** survey, also about one third (30%, 46) of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with EURES. However, nearly half (47%, 73) were satisfied (17% (26) very satisfied and 30% (47) satisfied). Here, similarly to the jobseekers' survey, dissatisfaction (23%, 36) with EURES stemmed from the inability to find relevant candidates for their job vacancies. This criticism was again mainly focused towards the portal as the respondents did not find little return for their efforts while sifting through the irrelevant results produced by the search function. This is aligned with the sentiments of jobseekers, providing also more positive replies for specific EURES services. For instance, most of those who received information and/or guidance in finding employees from abroad were either satisfied (53%, 33) or very satisfied (34 %, 21) with the service (all respondents except 8).

No **Member or Partner** were dissatisfied or even very dissatisfied with EURES. The majority of the (56%, 54) were satisfied. 5% (5) of the respondents would not recommend to other organisations to join the EURES network with only one respondent providing a reasoning for this which was that due to the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union, the future of EURES within their country is uncertain. Some respondents felt that EURES has undergone many changes in a short period of time which might hamper the objectives of these reforms. Particularly due to the introduction of the European Labour Authority and the establishment of the Single Digital Gateway. Another area where the respondents would welcome more efforts was the development of closer cooperation with the European Coordination Office (ECO) not only for the National Coordination Offices (NCOs) but also for, at least, all EURES Members. This could be done by involving ECO in local meetings of the network to bring in more overarching views and vice versa.

Overall, the direct EURES clients and its service providers seem to be satisfied with EURES or at least neutral about their satisfaction as can be seen in the graph below.

*How satisfied are you with EURES and its services?*



About one third (8) of responding NCOs while viewing their relationship with ECO as good said that they would welcome more interaction and improvement of the relationship. A barrier to a closer cooperation within the EURES network is the way the national networks are set up as it is not always possible to apply the same principles across the network. The internal political pressures were also mentioned as a challenge because of it some countries are only able to offer limited EURES services in some areas. The fact that there is no common consensus on the purpose of the Regulation and its demands for action is also seen as a barrier to a better functioning cooperation. The fact that many EURES countries are experiencing same shortages and surpluses has been highlighted throughout the survey particularly with regard to a shortcoming of EURES being able to come up with a unified approach towards this issue.

### 2.3. Case studies

The seven case studies were used to gather more qualitative feedback on EURES. The majority of interviewees were selected among EURES staff as they have experience of the introduction and impact of the EURES Regulation. Overall, no major differences between countries were identified across the case studies.

In terms of **relevance**, the respondents agreed that in recent years the network has adopted digital tools that accompany one-on-one counselling sessions such as webinars and European Online Job Days which help in reaching a wider number of candidates and spreading awareness about EURES. The jobseekers and employers appreciate the extent of information EURES is able to provide about all topics on working in another country.

The stakeholders agreed that focusing on ensuring fair labour mobility across EURES countries led to the development of a broad network of EURES advisers who are experts in intra-EU labour mobility which contributes to **effective** delivery of EURES services. Post-recruitment services are seen as **less effective** since they are not sufficiently developed across the network.



The new monitoring and reporting requirements of the Regulation are seen as necessary to provide a more comprehensive picture of EURES activities than in the past but they lead to more administrative burden. The fact that not all EURES staff work fully only on EURES activities decreases the **efficiency** of the service provision.

EURES countries are increasingly facing the same skills shortages and surpluses, which is seen as an obstacle needing resolving as this leads to conflicting priorities at national level regarding the promotion of labour mobility. This may affect the **coherence** of EURES service provision across the network. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on national labour markets is yet to be seen. Respondents widely recognised that it would affect national priorities which may lead to taking away resources from EURES to other areas. Similar sentiments were expressed also in the online surveys in this regard.

The main **added value** of EURES is in ensuring fair mobility and free provision of services.

In comparison with the online surveys and the public consultation, the stakeholders consulted as part of the case studies focused more on the services tailored to individuals' needs rather than the services offered through the EURES Portal. Nonetheless, respondents also highlighted the same shortcomings in terms of the search and matching functions and overall user-friendliness of the Portal as in the surveys and the public consultation.

#### **2.4. Validation and COVID-19 workshops**

The validation and COVID-19 workshops gathered key stakeholders and experts in labour mobility to verify the findings of the ex-post evaluation. The feedback gathered was used to fine-tune the final findings. Overall, the participants confirmed the presented findings and further developed some of them.

The greatest insistence is on highlighting better that the different realities of each of the national networks are taken into account when interpreting the findings as it is an **influential factor** when assessing the implementation of the Regulation, particularly with regard to the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Going forward, it is important that the newer EU initiatives (e.g. Europass, Single Digital Gateway) ensure coherence with EURES.

In the COVID-19 workshop, the participants highlighted that EURES managed well the transition to online service provision. As remote working is likely to become more prominent, the European Labour Authority should look into harmonising the national regulations so that EURES can develop this aspect better in the information provision. Nonetheless, the workshop validated the overall results of the consultation showing that despite of the changing context, the results obtained are still relevant.

### III. ANNEX - METHODS AND ANALYTICAL MODELS

The ex-post evaluation of the operation and effects of EURES Regulation (EU) 2016/589 applied a mix of evaluation methods including desk research, statistical analysis, public consultations, surveys, case studies, workshops and interviews with stakeholders and Member States' officials. This annex describes the methodological tools selected to carry out the evaluation.

#### a. Intervention logic

The intervention logic of EURES derives from the general objectives of EURES as set out in Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589:

- f) facilitating the exercise of the rights conferred by Article 45 TFEU and by Regulation (EU) No 492/2011;
- g) implementing the coordinated strategy for employment and, in particular, for promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce as referred to in Article 145 TFEU;
- h) improving the functioning, cohesion and integration of the labour markets in the Union, including at cross-border level;
- i) promoting voluntary geographical and occupational mobility in the Union, including in cross-border regions, on a fair basis and in compliance with Union and national law and practice;
- j) supporting transitions into the labour market, thereby promoting the social and employment objectives referred to in Article 3 TEU.

The intervention logic defines four main challenges:

1. Technology is modifying jobseekers' and employers' behaviours concerning recruitment activities and job searching;
2. The presence of barriers to intra-EU labour mobility limits the exploitation of the opportunities deriving from the free movement of workers;
3. Growing interdependencies of labour markets may negatively affect vulnerable groups and specific regions;
4. Labour market imbalances across European countries may lead to economic losses and decreased productivity.

To properly address these challenges, EURES builds its actions along the following specific objectives defined in the EURES Regulation Impact Assessment<sup>166</sup>:

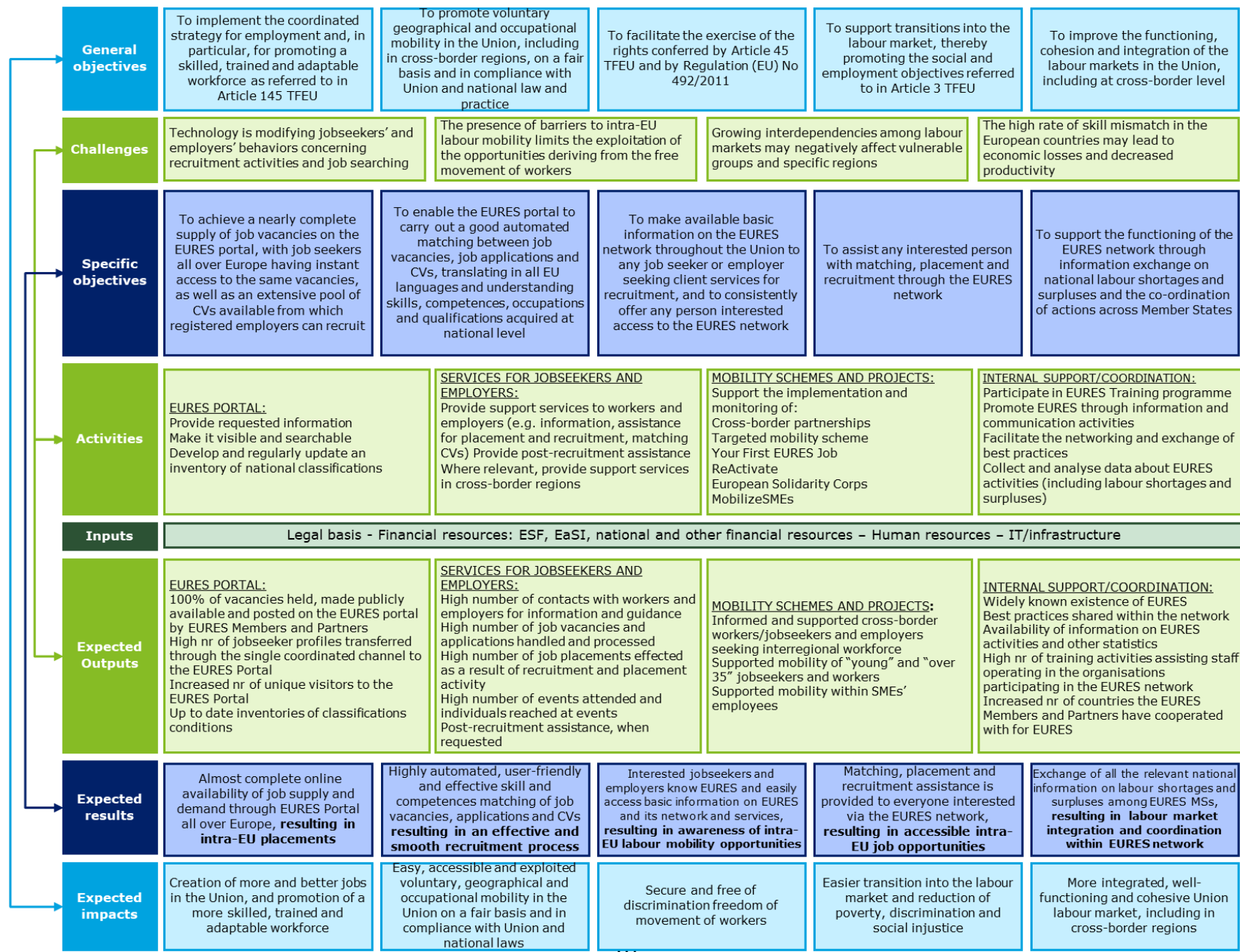
- To achieve a nearly complete pool of job vacancies and CVs on the EURES portal;
- To enable the EURES portal to carry out automated matching between job vacancies and CV's, in all EU languages, and understanding skills, competences, occupations and qualifications;
- To make available basic information on the EURES network to any jobseeker or employer;
- To assist any interested person with matching, placement and recruitment;
- To support the network through information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses and the co-ordination of actions across Member States.

EURES develops activities for achieving these objectives that can be measured via their expected outputs, results and impacts.

The following figure presents the intervention logic of EURES action. A full description of the intervention logic and the evaluation question matrix supporting this intervention logic can be found in annex I of the supporting study.

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<sup>166</sup> SWD(2014) 9 final “Impact Assessment Accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European network of Employment Services, workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets”



The evaluation was based on evaluation questions linked to the five criteria defined by the Better Regulation Guidelines (Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value). These questions were broken down into 30 **sub-questions** in agreement with the Inter-Service Steering group of experts from different Commission services, as follows (*the links to the intervention logic are mentioned in italics*):

### **Relevance**

EQ1: To what extent the needs and problems in the labour market and intra-EU labour mobility (e.g. language and cultural issues, matching supply and demand) and the objectives of the EURES Regulation fit? To what extent are the EURES tools fit for the needs of businesses and job seekers in the digital age? *Related challenges: 1, 2 & 4*

EQ2: To what extent was EURES flexible and able to adapt to changes in the implementation context, notably the evolution of mobility patterns, technological changes, new types of recruitment channels in the labour market, and new regulatory requirements (e.g. those stemming from the single digital gateway Regulation)? *Related challenges: 1 & 3*

EQ3: To what extent were the most relevant groups (e.g. cross-border workers, young people searching for international experience, EU mobile workers) targeted and their most important needs addressed? *Related challenges: 2 & 3*

### **Effectiveness**

EQ1: To what extent the EURES portal contributed to: Facilitating intra-EU placements thanks to job seekers all over Europe having instant access to nearly complete supply of job vacancies on the EURES portal and registered employers recruiting from an extensive pool of CVs available? Effective and smooth recruitment process due to highly automated, user-friendly and effective matching between job vacancies, job applications and CVs, translating in all EU languages and understanding skills, competences, occupations and qualifications acquired at national level? *General objectives 2, 4 & 5; Specific objectives 1 & 2 and related outputs and results*

EQ2: To what extent the provision of services to employers and jobseekers contributed to: 1) increasing awareness of intra-EU labour possibilities by providing relevant information of good quality on job vacancies and living and working conditions throughout the Union to any job seeker or employer seeking client services for recruitment, and by granting any person interested access to the EURES network? 2) improving the accessibility of intra-EU job opportunities by assisting interested people with matching, placement and recruitment? *General objectives 3, 4 & 5; Specific objectives 3 & 4 and related outputs and results*

EQ3: To what extent the EURES internal support and cooperation contributed to EU labour market integration and collaboration across countries by supporting information exchange on national labour shortages and surpluses and coordination of actions across Member States? *General objectives 3 & 5; Specific objective 5 and related outputs and results*

EQ4: To what extent the EURES mobility schemes and projects contributed to achieving the EURES specific objectives? *Specific objectives 1 - 5 and related outputs and results*

EQ5: How visible were EURES actions and the EURES initiative to labour market participants. *Specific objective 3 and related outputs and results*

EQ6: Which types of actions were the most and the least effective and most sustainable, for which groups and in which contexts (e.g. specific cross-border partnerships, specialized targeted mobility schemas)? What main factors had a bigger impact (either positive or negative) on the effectiveness of EURES actions? *Specific objectives 1 - 5 and related outputs and results*

EQ7: How appropriate is the current EURES organisational set-up to meet the current labour market needs, including in cross-border regions? How effective is the mainstreaming of the EURES service delivery within PES and other EURES members and partners, in order to contribute to the objectives? *General objective 1; Specific objectives 1- 5 and related outputs and results*

EQ8: To what extent Member States complied with EURES regulation? How this level of Member States compliance affected the effectiveness of EURES regulation? *General objective 1 and related outputs and results*

EQ9: To what extent the outputs and effects of the EURES actions facilitate: the free movement of workers in the Union? the implementation of a coordinated employment strategy? improve the functioning, cohesion and integration of the labour markets in the Union? promote voluntary geographical and occupational mobility in the Union on a fair basis? support transitions into the labour market? *General objectives 1 - 5 and related outputs and results*

## **Efficiency**

EQ1: To what extent were EURES actions cost-effective (compared over time)? What types of actions were more and less cost-effective? Is there scope for a more efficient use of EURES human/financial/technical resources? Particularly: I. How justified are the running costs of the EURES portal and IT infrastructure in terms of online users and job matches? II. To what extent was direct funding and associated costs proportionate to the benefits generated? III. How timely and cost-efficient were the procedures for reporting and monitoring? IV. To what extent were the costs of final services to stakeholders (e.g. counselling to individual job seekers and business) proportionate to the benefits generated? *Inputs; Expected outputs 1 - 4*

EQ2: To what extent has administrative burden increased/decreased compared to the previous EURES regulation? *Inputs; Expected outputs 1 - 4*

EQ3: Are there significant cost differences between countries in the implementation of the operations? What are these differences related to? *Inputs; Expected outputs 1 - 4*

## Coherence

EQ1: How coherent is the EURES Regulation with other EU policy measures and initiatives targeting employment and mobility at EU level? *All Objectives & Activities*

EQ2: How complementary were the EURES tools and services to each other? *Activities 1 - 4*

## EU added value

EQ1: To what extent did the EURES operations produce effects (quantified to the possible extent) that would not have taken place without the EU intervention? *Impacts 1- 5*

EQ2: How significant are these effects compared to the results obtained by bilateral or multilateral Member State cooperation in this area? *Impacts 1- 5*

### b. Cost-effectiveness analysis

The cost-effectiveness analysis performed for the evaluation is composed of two complementary parts. First, the cost-effectiveness of EURES across time for three indicators (placements, contacts and vacancies). Second, the cost-effectiveness of EURES to two different benchmarks: Public Employment Services (PES) and Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS).

The cost-effectiveness analysis is detailed in annex I of the supporting study, while the full analysis of methodology, results and limitations are provided in annex III.a.

The remaining part of this section describes the selection and operationalisation of the indicators, the logic behind time period under analysis, and the expected results.

#### ▪ EURES budget

The EURES budget has components at EU and national level:

At EU level, ECO is supported by the EURES axis of the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) that provides the financing of the horizontal support activities, such as the development and maintenance of the EURES portal, the common training programme, communication, analytical and network activities. EaSI also funds specific projects such as the cross-border partnerships and the mobility schemes, which are managed nationally but funded after calls for proposals launched by the European Commission.

The annual EURES budget under EaSI is public as Commission Implementing Decisions<sup>167</sup>.

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<sup>167</sup> For instance, Commission Implementing Decision C(2019)7630 final of 30/10/2019 adopts the EaSI 2020 work programme, defining a EUR 23 018 174 budget for the EURES axis. All annual work programmes and amendments are available at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?advSearchKey=easi+annual+work+programme&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=1307&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0>

At national level, the functioning of EURES used to be financed through annual grants deriving from a separate EU budget line, but as of 2015, EURES countries became in charge of securing their own budget.

In this framework, the financial resources used by EURES countries can derive from three main sources: national budgets, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the EURES axis of EaSI for specific projects as the mobility schemes mentioned above.

The composition of the budget and its volume differs from one EURES country to another. The exact breakdown of funding per source cannot be obtained due to imprecise data reporting.

The data on the total annual budgets for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 for each EURES country were primarily obtained from the Work Programmes and Activity Reports of the Programming Cycle. Since this information was not always available in the reports, a corresponding question was added to the NCO survey, thus allowing for data triangulation and adjustment. The aggregate EURES budget at national level is calculated based on the total budget of the EURES countries included in the analysis<sup>168</sup>.

The total EURES budget is displayed in the following table:

*Indicative EURES total budget (in million EUR)*

	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>EURES axis of EaSI</b>	11.6	23.1	24.3	33.8
<b>ESF and national funds</b>	22.1	22.8	23.2	24.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.7</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>58.2</b>

#### ▪ **EURES outcome indicators**

Given the complexity of EURES activities, the numerous changes that occurred over time, and the lack of data availability, it is not possible to define and gather data for one indicator for each EURES action. Therefore, the analysis was restricted to a limited number of key indicators.

These key indicators aim to capture the bulk of the activities and goals performed by EURES, in compatibility with data availability:

- the number of total placements achieved with the support of EURES;
- the number of total individual contacts between EURES staff and EURES users;
- the number of job vacancies provided by the national coordinators to the EURES portal.

The indicators have been selected with precise and distinct rationales:

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<sup>168</sup> The NCO survey was completed by 21 countries. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the aggregate figure because of missing data. The full details are described in section 2.1 “EURES costs” of the Study supporting the ex-post EURES evaluation and the second biennial EURES report, annex III.a – Cost-effectiveness analysis.



- The number of total placements achieved with the support of EURES is one of the key indicators of employment results, which belong to the main EURES operational objectives. In general, the number of total placements achieved with the support of EURES is likely to be underestimated. The main reason for this is the under-reporting, due to the lack of obligation to do so, on the part of jobseekers and employers. However, this indicator is the single most important measure of comprehensive EURES achievements.
  - The number of total individual contacts between EURES staff and EURES users measures the fulfilment of the following objectives: (a) to inform, guide and provide advice to potentially mobile EU workers; (b) to provide advice and guidance to workers and employers in cross-border regions.
  - The number of job vacancies provided by national coordinators to the EURES portal measures how well the system of information sharing works.
- **EURES costs per indicator**

As specified in the Better Regulation Toolbox 57, the cost component of a cost-effectiveness analysis should refer as accurately as possible to the resources disbursed for the specific outcome under analysis. This is necessary in order to make the cost of that outcome comparable to that of a similar programme or to other activities under the same programme. Therefore, for each of the indicators selected, there would ideally be a specific and different subset of the total budget.

Nevertheless, in the context of this evaluation, three main issues emerge. First, the ability to track and gather comprehensive and consistent data across time on the sources of EURES funding is limited. Second, data breakdowns on how the resources are spent, detailing individual activities and specifying quantitative outputs, are rarely available for individual countries. Third, the three outcomes under analysis, that were selected as an operational second-best, as explained above, are horizontal to different EURES activities.

For these reasons, the available data do not allow to estimate a specific budget breakdown for corresponding indicators of EURES actions. Therefore, the only option available was to apply the same cost to all the indicators selected, which is the *total annual budget spent on EURES activities* in each country.

- **Benchmarking EURES**

Public Employment Services (PES) are a natural benchmark for EURES activities. The activities and goals of both PES and EURES are similar, the main difference being the international interest of EURES.

To measure the cost-effectiveness of PES activities, the selection of the indicators is straightforward. The main outcome indicator of PES activities and goals is the total number of job placements in a country in a given year. This indicator is in line and comparable to the corresponding indicator selected for EURES, although possible inconsistencies exist.

On the cost side, following the same logic applied to EURES for purposes of comparability, one indicator is considered: the total national budget assigned to PES activities in each country in a given year. As for the outcome, possible inconsistencies could arise.

Targeted Mobility Schemes (TMS) are also another natural benchmark for EURES activities. As EURES general services, the specialised schemes support international mobility, even though devoted to particularly difficult-to-place groups.

In terms of indicators, the selection follows the same logic as PES. The total number of job placements is a good overall indicator of the activities and goals of TMS, while also allowing for comparability to the main EURES indicator.

On the cost side, the picture is slightly different. In fact, the total budget of all active projects combined is considered, rather than national budgets. This is more in line with the type of activity of TMS, while still allowing for comparability with EURES. Again, for both costs and outcome, possible inconsistencies with EURES exists.

All the potential inconsistencies and limitations are detailed in annex III.a of the supporting study.

- **Time period and sample for the benchmark**

The time period for comparison was chosen based on data availability: years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019.

The inclusion of two years before and after the full implementation of the Regulation (2018) allows to appreciate the effect on the cost-effectiveness of EURES activities.

The choice to exclude further years is due mainly to data availability issues. Before 2016, an average of only 50% of EURES Advisors were filling the monthly EURES Advisors Reports, which were the main data source before 2018. In addition, there was no standard in the methodology of data reporting before, thus creating comparability issues.

As for 2019, while figures are available for EURES, they are not for PES, which will, therefore, be limited to three years (2016, 2017, and 2018) out of which only one (2018) is selected for comparison with EURES based on data completeness. By contrast, 2019 is the first year for which data are reported on an annual basis for TMS. The data for 2020 was not complete at the moment of performing the evaluation.

The aggregate unit costs for both EURES and PES were re-calculated for a sub-set of countries in order to reflect the availability of data in a PES sample. Given data availability, 2018 was selected as the comparison year, as it is the most recent year with the highest data availability. As a result, the calculations could be performed for a sample of 16 countries<sup>169</sup>.

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<sup>169</sup> Countries included into the sample are: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

Regarding the TMS benchmark, the cost per placement of TMS are considered for the year 2019, given that this is the first and latest year for which yearly figures are available. Thanks to the wide data availability, the aggregate figures can be compared to the scope of EURES activities without recalculating the figures for a smaller sample.

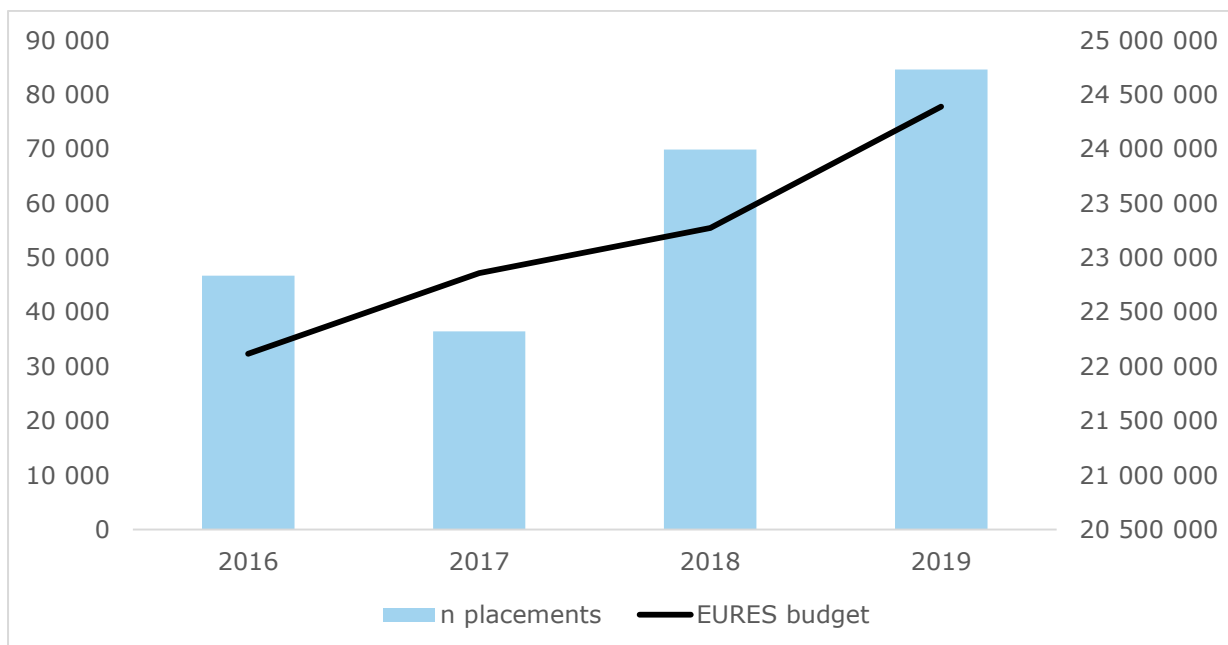
- **Results of the benchmark**

The figures below compare the total estimated EURES costs to the number of placements achieved, the number of individual contacts, and the number of vacancies provided.

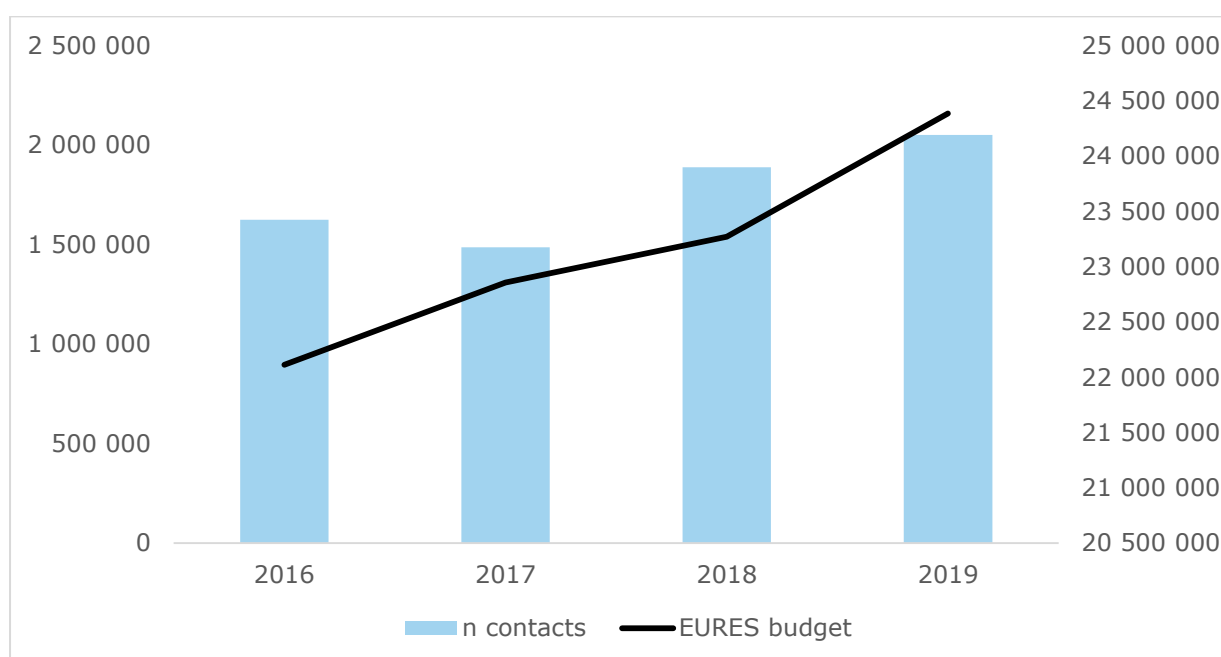
The total EURES budget is considered for the purposes of the cost-effective analysis for the years from 2016 to 2019. EURES budget grows continuously every year from around EUR 22 million in 2016 to almost EUR 24.5 million in 2019.

The figures also show the evolution in the number of total placements achieved with the support of EURES and the number of total individual contacts between EURES staff and EURES users. Both indicators follow a similar path.

*Total EURES budget (in EUR) and number of placements (2016-2019)*



Total EURES budget (EUR) and number of contacts (2016-2019)



The number of job vacancies transferred to the EURES portal grew from 8 million in 2016 to 19.7 million in 2019. The numbers for the intermediate years follow a growing path but their values are not accurate because of reporting changes, particularly in 2018. The 2016-2019 increase is consistent with the upward trend in the number of placements and the number of contacts between EURES staff and EURES users observed.

To sum up, a first comparison between the time trend of the aggregate costs and three indicators representative of the benefits generated by EURES, provides evidence that the benefits grow proportionally to the costs.

After the available data were collected and examined, three ratios were produced, quantifying the unit costs for the three examined outcomes:

Cost-effectiveness analysis (2019 - 2016, in EUR)

EURES OUTCOME INDICATORS	2016	2017	2018	2019	Net saving 2016-2019
Cost per placement achieved	473.53	627.00	332.95	288.10	185.42
Cost per individual contact	13.60	15.37	12.32	11.88	1.71
Cost per job vacancy transferred to the portal	2.74	2.98	N/A <sup>170</sup>	1.24	1.50

The net costs compare the aggregate<sup>171</sup> cost-effectiveness of EURES activities in 2019 to the status quo of 2016. The unit cost in 2019 is smaller than 2016 across the three outcomes, meaning that there has been a net cost saving<sup>172</sup>.

<sup>170</sup> The extent of missing data does not allow calculating a EURES aggregate figure for 2018.

The fact that EURES is now more cost-effective than in the past suggests that the results of its activities are increasingly efficient in relation to the cost and, thus, EURES is increasingly able to deliver satisfactory results.

The benchmark results show that the cost per placement of EURES is considerably and consistently lower than PES, both at the aggregate and the country level. As EURES relies on existing PES structures, and thereby benefiting from the initial investment and fixed costs being covered under PES, the EURES cost (EUR 219.09) can be interpreted as a top-up to the PES cost (EUR 2 924.70). The additional burden over PES is justified by the need to expand the scope of the activities from national to cross-border placements, which entail more complex information and advice activities given the differences in languages and cultures, social security and tax-benefit regimes, and working conditions. It follows that, for a relatively small additional investment as compared to PES, considerable cost-effective results can be achieved through EURES.

*Cost-effectiveness of TMS placements (in EUR), 2019*

Name	Total budget	No. of placements	Cost per placement
<b>Your First EURES Job</b>	EUR 5 030 000	1 724	EUR 2 917
<b>Reactivate</b>	EUR 2 074 000	483	EUR 4 294
<b>Total TMS</b>	EUR 7 104 000	2 207	EUR 3 219

The cost per placement of benchmarked TMS activities is considerably higher than those of EURES, both in aggregate terms (EUR 3 219) and for each of the two individual targeted mobility schemes: “Your First EURES Job” (EUR 2 917) and “Reactivate” (EUR 4 294). In line with these results, the figures available for the whole period indicate that the cost per placement remained on a similar scale across the whole period: EUR 2 503 for Your First EURES Job (February 2015 to December 2019) and EUR 3 096 for Reactivate (November 2016 to December 2019).

These figures are indicative of the different scope of EURES and TMS activities. EURES costs only include an additional investment based on existing PES structures. By contrast, the costs of TMS include the full cost of the programmes and are, therefore, a more precise proxy of what a full investment on cross-border placements actually costs. It’s worth noting that the combined PES+EURES costs are similar to the TMS costs. A precise benchmarking is not possible at present time given the limited data availability<sup>173</sup> and the fact that TMS are aimed at target groups with specific needs (e.g. youth), but this analysis reinforces the assessment of EURES efficiency.

<sup>171</sup> The EURES total is calculated based on the total number of placements and total budget of all EURES countries included in the analysis. Belgium, Germany, and Liechtenstein are excluded from the aggregate figure because of missing data.

<sup>172</sup> Because of methodological reasons explained above, the three figures cannot be added together.

<sup>173</sup> The sample of countries and the years under exam for PES and TMS do not correspond.

Given the nature of the programmes, the above cost figures should be viewed with caution. In fact, placements and budget figures reported under Your First EURES Job and Reactivate schemes partially overlap with those reported under EURES. Nevertheless, the results confirm what was underlined under the first benchmark, namely, that the small investment in EURES activities generates comparatively good results, as shown by the relatively stronger cost-effectiveness.

### **c. Comparative labour market analysis**

The Impact Assessment prior to the adoption of the EURES Regulation identified a range of issues linked to the role played by intra-EU labour mobility, including:

- Great potential of intra-EU labour mobility but insufficient impact on reducing labour market imbalances, with evidence of:
  - persisting unemployment gaps across EU Member States;
  - high job vacancy rates coupled with high unemployment rates;
  - employers indicating difficulties in finding employees with the skills they need.
- Weak mobility flows with respect to international benchmarks and surveys of people declaring firm intention to move.
- Contextual factors such as the ageing workforce likely to compound labour market imbalances due to skills obsolescence.

The aim of the comparative analysis of the evolution of the labour situation throughout the EU in relation to EURES activities is to identify, to the extent possible, factors that (still) have contributed (either positively or negatively) to the effectiveness, efficiency and added-value of EURES-related operations. The comparison needs to be performed against:

- The situation before the EURES Regulation entered into force in 2016;
- A hypothetical situation where there would not be any EURES intervention.

Thus, the task has been structured in three steps:

- Step 1: based on socio-economic as well as labour mobility data, to contextualise EURES implementation through a description and analysis of the evolution of the labour market and labour mobility, with the help of clusters of countries based on their level of barriers to mobility. This helps guide the analysis and paves the way to the next steps;
- Step 2: based on EURES data, to assess EURES implementation in the different contexts, to understand whether this is in line with the evolution of labour mobility needs;
- Step 3: based on survey data, try to understand EURES's specific contribution to its objectives, i.e. what would have happened in case EURES had not existed.

The methodology for the comparative analysis is detailed in annex III.b of the supporting study.

#### **▪ Step 1 – evolution of the labour market and labour mobility**

The first part of the comparative analysis, relies on descriptive statistics of trends in groups of similar countries over time, analysing socio-economic data related to the labour market, existing evidence on the main barriers to labour mobility as well as observed mobility flows.

The analysis of socio-economic data related to the labour market uses clusters of countries grouping together those with similar determinants (push-pull factors) of labour mobility and trends, and with similar levels of barriers to labour mobility. Clustering countries helps the analysis and the understanding of data and trends in relation to the context in which EURES operates, but should not be viewed as creating strict categories of countries. In fact, not all relevant drivers and barriers to mobility are observable (such as cultural barriers) and therefore the clusters are merely used and considered as they simplify and organise the analysis.

Operationally, two macro clusters are built first, based on the level of barriers to mobility identified through a standardised indicator built using three indicators:

- The average percentage of the population being "Proficient" in the foreign language reported as best known in the country<sup>174</sup>;
- The number of other countries or regions where the national language of a country is also an official language (assigning 1 point for each country and 0.5 for each region);
- The alignment of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)<sup>175</sup>, assigning -1, 0 and 1 based on the level of alignment<sup>176</sup>.

The standardised indicator for barriers is built as a weighted average of the three standardised indicators. In fact, foreign language proficiency and geographical spread of the national language are a more precise measure of one of the main barrier to mobility – language. The alignment of the NQF with EQF is not a precise measure, and thus it was assigned a lower weight.

Countries with a score below 0 are considered to have barriers below average (“low barriers”), and those with a score above 0 are considered to have barriers above average (“high barriers”).

Next, four other sub-clusters are built to take into account the level and variation over time of the economic context indicators in relation to labour mobility used: GDP PPP per capita, unemployment rate and vertical mismatches<sup>177</sup>. To build the four clusters, two separate standardised indicators are used:

- The average value over the period 2012-2018 of the GDP PPP per capita, unemployment rate and vertical mismatches for each country;

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<sup>174</sup> Eurostat edat\_aes\_154

<sup>175</sup> National Qualification Framework and European Qualification Framework. Available online at <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/european-qualifications-framework-eqf>.

<sup>176</sup> Based on the categorisation made by Cedefop. It is assigned -1 to countries where the NQF takes a more comprehensive approach and respects countries’ specificities more; 0 to countries where the NQF is mostly influenced by EQF but not completely aligned; 1 to countries where the NQF is closely aligned to EQF, thus facilitating cross-country comparisons of qualifications.

<sup>177</sup> Vertical mismatches indicate the share of individuals who are either underqualified or overqualified for their jobs. In particular, the indicator used for the analysis is the overqualification rate, based on EUROSTAT, available online at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/experimental-statistics/skills>

- The average annual growth rate of the same indicators over the period 2012-2018.

The indicators are assigned weights to reflect the relative importance of each indicator as a driver for labour mobility. Indicators are built in such a way that lower values of the average level indicator correspond to a better than average economic context in relation to labour mobility (i.e. higher GDP, lower unemployment, lower vertical mismatch); lower values of the average annual growth rate indicator correspond to a higher than average improvement of the context.

It should be noted that references to “worsening, improving” are in comparative terms and relate to a few key drivers for labour mobility only<sup>178</sup> rather than the overall socio-economic context.

By combining the barriers indicator and the two indicators of the economic context in relation to labour mobility drivers, one should in principle obtain eight clusters<sup>179</sup>. However, there are no low barrier countries with worse than average socio-economic condition, thus Member States are present only in six clusters. However, to better assess the data a further simplification is needed: it would be impossible to meaningfully test differences among clusters, if these are too many or too much alike. Thus, in the analysis that follows in step 2 and step 3, only four clusters are considered:

*Definitive clustering of countries based on their level of barriers and economic context trends*

CLUSTER	COUNTRIES
<b>HIGH BARRIERS</b>	
<b>Worsening/stable economic conditions</b>	Finland, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Slovenia, France, Italy, Slovakia
<b>Improving economic conditions</b>	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Poland, Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia
<b>LOW BARRIERS</b>	
<b>Improving economic conditions</b>	Ireland, Malta, UK, Germany
<b>Worsening/stable economic conditions</b>	Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway

In fact, among low barriers countries the level of economic context indicators is always higher than average and therefore does not add a relevant dimension to the analysis. Among high barriers countries all countries except Czech Republic<sup>180</sup> and Finland had a level of economic context indicators below average. However, on closer inspection, both of them should rather be considered as average economic context, with values just slightly above the average in mere quantitative terms.

<sup>178</sup> These are also oversimplifications for the purpose of clustering and based on data availability.

<sup>179</sup> 3 dimensions, 2 modalities (above average or below average), thus the number of resulting clusters equals  $2^3 \rightarrow 8$

<sup>180</sup> In addition, despite the low unemployment rate, Czech Republic is a comparatively low-income country, especially in nominal terms, which is not directly used in the cluster for simplicity but might be used qualitatively to re-classify.



So, they have been grouped together with countries with less favourable socio-economic context and high barriers, as their main feature is the presence of high barriers to labour mobility.

### ▪ **Step 2 - EURES alignment with the evolution of labour mobility needs**

The second part makes use of the clusters being created to understand the comparative position of countries with respect to push-pull factors as well as barriers to labour mobility.

In particular, the goal of the second part is to try to understand if EURES implementation shows signs of alignment with the trends identified in the labour market, to gather some insights into its relevance and adaptability.

A selection of indicators from the internal EURES monitoring (PMS) includes:

- Individual contacts with workers;
- Individual contacts with employers;
- Job placements.

The main judgement criteria to assess whether EURES implementation is aligned to aggregated labour market needs is to test whether:

- EURES is covering a higher share of mobility where barriers are higher (both incoming and outgoing) or offering more support (proxied as number of contacts) to jobseekers and employers in the same areas;
- EURES is covering a higher share of incoming mobility in countries with better than average or improving conditions (i.e. mostly low barriers countries with higher than average GDP per capita, lower unemployment, lower vertical mismatch) and a higher share of outgoing mobility from countries with lower than average or worsening conditions.

It should be kept in mind that other factors could be at play in determining EURES's relevance. Results from this trend analysis can also be triangulated with the opinions of jobseekers/employers in the various clusters of countries to identify if any interesting trends appear (e.g. better appraisal of EURES services in countries most in need and with increasing values of EURES output and results).

### ▪ **Step 3 - EURES specific contribution to its objectives**

The third part aims to measure the added value of a EURES intervention. This part of the analysis is based on self-reported counterfactual through survey questions directed at EURES participants –

jobseekers and employers ('counterfactual as self-estimated by program participants' method<sup>181</sup>, CSEPP).

The hypothetical counterfactual questions were included in the surveys, asking jobseekers and employers if in the absence of EURES, the same outcome would have been achieved.

The potential biases associated with this method were mitigated by triangulating different sources of evidence and statistical tests to explore whether significant differences in the opinion of the respondent existed per relevant target group (e.g. by educational attainment, by cluster of country).

#### ▪ **Comparative labour analysis results**

The majority of EURES beneficiaries<sup>182</sup>, both jobseekers and employers, broadly confirm that **EURES made a difference to them**, either by allowing labour mobility which would have not otherwise occurred or by facilitating it.

There is some (statistically significant) evidence that **jobseekers from countries with high barriers to labour mobility attribute slightly higher added value to the support** they received than those in low barrier countries. A statistically significant and positive correlation is also found between the **number of services offered to jobseekers and the probability that they declare to have found a job** thanks to EURES.

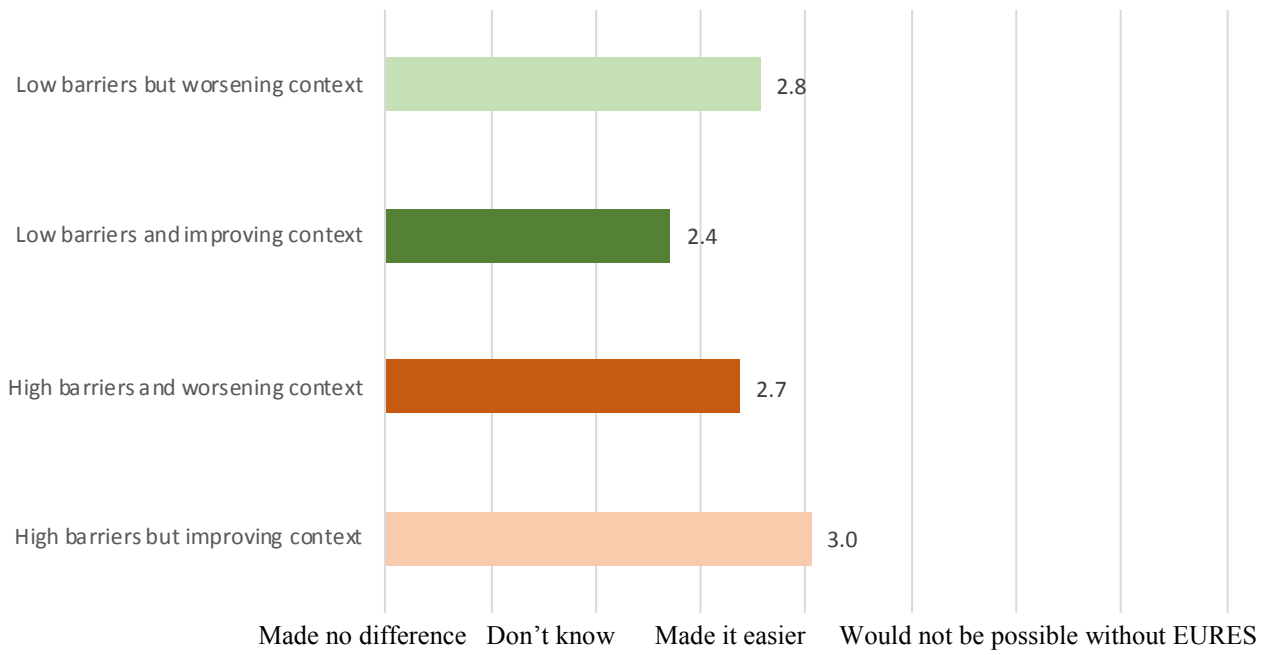
Overall, one in five of the respondents being employed at the time of the survey declared to be so thanks to EURES, which indicates a **significant contribution of EURES** to increasing the chances of jobseekers of finding a job abroad.

In terms of differences between the services, the provision of employment offers (profiles) in line with jobseekers' skills (employers' needs), post recruitment assistance and the development of integration programmes have been considered as those with higher added value.

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<sup>181</sup> A recently introduced approach, denoted as the "counterfactual as self-estimated by program participants" (CSEPP; Mueller, Gaus, & Rech, 2014; Mueller & Gaus, 2015), capitalises on people's ability to think counterfactually (e.g., Roesse & Olson, 2014) and builds on the idea that intervention participants are capable of directly estimating their counterfactual scenario, that is, the state they would have been in after an intervention without having participated. In previous studies it was found that CSEPP worked relatively well for assessing the effects of communicative interventions on various types of self-reported attitude and behavioural intention (Mueller, Gaus, & Rech, 2014; Mueller and Gaus, 2015).

<sup>182</sup> Between approximately 50% to 70%, depending on the form of support they received. Employers, on average, believed EURES made a greater difference to them than jobseekers, although such differences could not be studied statistically, so they should be treated with caution.



The figure shows the different average opinion of jobseekers regarding EURES added value to find a job abroad for the various clusters of countries. The ANOVA test suggests that there is a statistically significant difference in means between these four clusters of countries. Average “counterfactual” opinion of respondents in relation to finding a job or apprenticeship/traineeship abroad after having received information and guidance through EURES – answering to the question: “For “support to finding a job abroad”, could you please specify if the same outcome would have been achieved without EURES support?”

#### **d. Desk research, case studies, public consultation and surveys**

Part of the data collection phase was implemented with a public consultation, as set out in the Better Regulation guidelines, but also on additional targeted surveys.

The public consultation was open to any interested person and was intended mainly on audiences with no or minimal knowledge of EURES. The questionnaire provided information on EURES for those unfamiliar with it.

Four additional online surveys were launched for stakeholders particularly involved with EURES: (1) National Coordination Offices; (2) employers/companies; (3) jobseekers/workers; and (4) EURES Members and Partners. The questionnaires were aligned with the public consultation to ensure coherence and avoid duplication.

Annex II.c of the supporting study describes in detail the stakeholder consultation activities.

In addition to the surveys, a substantial list of legislation, studies and reports was consulted. The bibliography and the full list of questions in the questionnaires can be found in annex I of the study.

Finally, the study included seven case studies, carried out in ten Member States (Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) to investigate specific topics (the single coordinated channel, IT platforms / matching and monitoring tools, cross-border collaborations, extension of the network, and support services to employers and to workers). The case studies are detailed in annex II.b of the study.