



Career Guidance in Europe's Public Employment Services

Trends and Challenges



European Commission

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**CAREER GUIDANCE
IN EUROPE'S PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:
TRENDS AND CHALLENGES**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between 2001 and 2004, the OECD, the European Training Foundation, CEDEFOP and the World Bank carried out extensive reviews of career guidance, looking broadly at related policy and practice in both the labour-market and the education sectors. In 2002, the European PES Network's Expert Group carried out a study on personalised services with a special focus on guidance and counselling, documenting examples of interesting practice in six Public Employment Services (PES). The present study, commissioned by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in October 2004 in collaboration with the Heads of PES Network, sets out to build on the accumulated knowledge of the previous reviews by drawing on the responses of 28 countries—the EU25 plus three EEA countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland)—to a questionnaire survey that was specifically developed to facilitate the identification and examination of the place of career guidance in the Public Employment Services across Europe.

The survey data was complemented by country visits to Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden, in order to provide a qualitative dimension to the study, and to enable a deeper examination of the issues that were foregrounded in the survey. **The key purpose behind the study was to gauge the manner in which—and the extent to which—personalised employment and career guidance services in the European PES have responded to the widely-adopted goal of implementing a personal service approach, identifying the difficulties they have encountered and the innovative responses they have generated.**

The study is guided by a concern with the practical, i.e. it sets out to describe the day-to-day realities of work in the PES with a view to identifying some of the more promising and successful practices, and to make proposals for improvement. The report provides details of the various models of career guidance in use, the processes that are being implemented across the range of EU and EEA countries, the outcomes of PES interventions, the tools and instruments used to attain such outcomes, the level of staff preparation for delivering career guidance services, and the strategies that are in place in order to ensure quality provision.

An understanding of the context in which the PES across Europe provide career guidance services is crucial. The study is therefore careful to locate the survey within the context of the European Employment Strategy (EES), and particularly the European Employment Guideline on prevention and activation. It also draws a link between the latter and the effort to modernise the PES across Europe through the widespread adoption of a personal service model, which gives pride of place to the client, and which strives to guarantee citizens' rights for quality, proximity, personalisation and individualisation of public services. The report further examines the potential of career guidance in contributing to the attainment of the Lisbon targets, particularly in relation to the priorities established by the EES to increase in the adaptability of workers, to attract more people to the labour market, and to increase quality investment in human capital. It is argued that career guidance and personalised employment services have the potential for making such a contribution by advancing lifelong learning goals, by helping to address a whole range of labour market issues, and by supporting efforts to attain social equity and social inclusion goals.

While career guidance services are offered in a range of settings, and there is an overlap in the way that these services are understood in such settings, specific attention needs to be given to the way career guidance is defined within the overall mission of the PES. Here we can distinguish three main categories of activities:

- The first are those activities that fall within the area of ‘**personalised employment services**’, and that have elements of career guidance embedded in them. Employment advisers register and interview clients, and in the process of doing so utilise several guidance-related skills, particularly where efforts are being made to personalise services through client segmentation. While the employment adviser’s work at this level—in relation to the initial interview, personal action planning, and assistance in the job-search process through job-brokering and other means—cover processes and tasks that are largely administrative, they can also have strong guidance elements embedded in them. The report acknowledges the tensions that arise in the mix and balance between administrative and guidance roles, stressing that both elements are critical in the consolidation of career guidance elements within services that have, as their primary objective, the placing of people in employment.
- The second category of activities are **specialised career guidance services**. These are distinguished from the first category by their more intensive and more focused engagement with the client, on the basis of a deeper knowledge base and extended competence. It is noted that the two categories are increasingly becoming blurred, and that this carries with it both opportunities and challenges for career guidance in a PES context.
- A third category of activities considers **other career guidance provision** that the PES may be involved in, including the production and/or dissemination of labour market information, as well as occupational information, and the provision of career guidance services to students.

These three categories of activities need to be considered within the changes in the overall organisational context of the public employment services. One of the key trends that have an impact on the way personalised employment and career guidance services are delivered is **responsibility-sharing**. The study considers three key aspects in relation to this organisational trend. The first is the sharing of responsibility with regional and local employment offices through **decentralisation**. The second is the sharing of responsibility with partners through **joint service delivery**, or through **outsourcing and contracting-out**. In both cases, the different modalities by means of which the process can be organised are discussed in some detail, particularly with a view to identifying how they can improve—or jeopardise—quality career guidance provision. Indeed, a key challenge that the PES has to confront is to find the right balance between, on the one hand, encouraging innovative, flexible and context-sensitive responses in its decentralised mediation between clients and local labour markets, and on the other, maintaining standards across the whole range of providers, thus ensuring that citizens, irrespective of their geographical or social location, have guaranteed access to the same quality of service that they are equally entitled to. The issue of **quality standards** in the attempt to manage the decentralisation process is therefore pivotal, and constitutes the third

aspect considered. The study highlights different approaches to quality assurance across the 28 European countries, pointing to some of the formative experiences in the use of both quantitative and qualitative strategies in this respect.

The change in the organisational context, as well as the paradigmatic shift towards a 'personal service model', has given rise to a number of trends in the delivery of career guidance and career-guidance-related services within Europe's PES. One of the more important is the **increase in the range and depth of services that contain career guidance elements**. This increase in both supply and demand for services can lead to tensions resulting from the attempt to develop personalised approaches while at the same time catering for increasingly large numbers of unemployed in a differentiated manner. Such tensions are particularly accentuated in those contexts where human and material resources have either remained stable or even been decreased. **Europe's PES have developed three key ways to manage these tensions. These include: a resort to partnership and to outsourcing; a shift to self-service modes of delivery; and the introduction of tiering, to provide career guidance in self-access modes and in groups to the majority of clients, reserving to the rest more intensive individual career guidance interviews if and when needed.**

Employment advisers and career guidance staff are at the crucible of most of the transformations taking place in the PES, and their training, competence levels and motivation have a great bearing on the quality and nature of services provided. The study considers PES staff involved in delivery of personalised employment and career guidance services from a variety of angles. First, attention is given to aspects of their **profile, including age, gender and conditions of work**. The focus then turns to the **distribution of career guidance roles** among PES staff, with distinctions being drawn between those systems that have specialised tiers of staff, and those that require their staff to be multi-functional. The implications that such role distributions have for the provision of specialised services on the one hand, and holistic services on the other, are also examined. A third major consideration in regard to staff is **the profile required of career guidance and career-guidance-related personnel at the point of recruitment, as well as the opportunities that such staff have for pre-service, induction and continued training**. While many systems do not provide initial training, and recruitment is often effected on the basis of proxy qualifications, there is a trend for improved induction and in-service professional development opportunities—linked, for example, to the range of tools and instruments that career-guidance-related staff use in delivering services. Details of the modalities for the provision of training are presented, as are examples of commendable practice from a variety of countries. Training gaps are also identified, many of which were signalled by respondents to the survey who felt that expanded roles required the targeting of specific competence development.

In their attempt to modernise their delivery systems, Europe's PES have striven to reach out to a range of clients, giving special attention to those categories that have particularly acute needs for individualised and tailor-made support on the road to employment: these include the long-term unemployed, women returnees, persons with disability, the unqualified and low-skilled, company-closure clients, and customers with a variety of social problems and/or tenuous links to citizenship rights. **The study provides details of the different career guidance models and strategies used to deliver services to such clients.** It also considers the results of client-satisfaction

surveys, which are being used by PES in several countries as an indicator of effectiveness. Despite major improvements in catering for differentiated needs, it is also clear that there are other categories of customers that the PES are finding more challenging to reach. In particular, rising unemployment levels in a tight resource environment are often leading PES to focus narrowly on the unemployed, despite the fact that lifelong career guidance perspectives are adhered to in principle. Swift placement in employment remains a pivotal challenge for the PES, even as they strive to balance this with other career guidance-related goals such as client clarification of occupational strengths and interests, as well as career management and development in a lifelong perspective.

In their attempt to maintain the dynamics of transformation into effective and client-oriented organisations, Europe's PES face a number of important challenges. Four are particularly relevant to personalised employment and career guidance services:

- The first challenge concerns **the need for PES career guidance and career-guidance-related services to be more systematic in the evaluation of their effectiveness.** While there is a strong tradition of critical assessment of PES functions overall, the *targeted* evaluation of career guidance within PES settings needs further attention, even if there are a number of examples of good practice in several countries that could serve to provide models for emulation. A stronger evidence base on the match between career guidance services and policy objectives buttresses claims for improved resourcing. On the other hand, a lack of systematic evidence leads to a situation where the major shifts in the modalities of service delivery—particularly in relation to responsibility-sharing with partners and outsourced agencies—remain unexamined in terms both of efficiency in resource use, and of impact on quality of service.
- A second challenge is to **get the right balance between integrating career guidance elements in the services and activities provided by the PES, while at the same time maintaining specialist services for deeper engagement with clients when this is required.** In many ways this implies the foregrounding of the identity of career guidance within PES settings. In addition, the attempt to deepen career guidance and career-guidance-related services towards a larger range of clients signals the need for more intensive preparation of staff, and for a more careful consideration of the ways in which the administrative and the career guidance roles of providers can be kept in appropriate balance.
- A third challenge arises from the necessity to **open up guidance services within the PES to embrace a more long-term, life-long perspective:** one that is more in tune with the needs of citizens in the emergent knowledge economy. This vision presents enormous resource and training challenges for the PES, but it is likely to be one that it will need to rise to as citizens increasingly move through occupational and training pathways in more complex, non-linear ways. A lifelong perspective on career guidance would entail the PES in stronger collaboration with education institutions and with companies, so that service delivery is experienced by the client in a seamless, holistic way, with community resources being mobilised in support of goals that have, as an outcome, both the private good and the public good.

- Finally, the PES has to **rise to the challenge of addressing key gaps in service delivery**, and to focus on those areas that require further attention and investment in order to facilitate the provision of quality services for all.

The way forward lies in addressing these challenges.

CAREER GUIDANCE IN EUROPE'S PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES: TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

CHAPTER 1: PES AND THE LISBON AGENDA

1.1. Setting the context

1.1.1. The field of career guidance has attracted much policy attention over the past few years. Three major reviews have provided us with an in-depth, detailed and comprehensive picture of career guidance services in both the education and the labour-market sectors. The first review was initiated by the OECD in 2001 and involved 14 countries.¹ It was followed up by studies carried out on behalf of European Commission agencies looking first at career guidance in the then 11 Acceding and Candidate Countries (European Training Foundation), and then in all the 25 Member States plus 4 EEA countries (CEDEFOP). The World Bank, on its part, focused on countries with intermediately developed economies.² All of these reviews used the same survey instrument developed by the OECD, thus facilitating the generation of the most extensive harmonised international database ever on policies for career guidance, covering a total of 37 countries.³ Each review led to the publication of reports that have been widely disseminated (OECD, 2004; Sultana/European Training Foundation, 2003; Sultana/CEDEFOP, 2004; Watts & Fretwell/World Bank, 2004), and which have led to much policy debate in national and supra-national forums.⁴ The link between research and policy implications has been much enhanced by the development of a *Career Guidance Handbook for Policy Makers*, jointly published by the OECD and the European Commission (OECD/CEC, 2004).

1.1.2. The present report, commissioned by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in collaboration with the Heads of PES Network, builds upon these efforts, but has a more specific focus: that of examining career guidance services offered in the labour market sector, and specifically through the Public Employment Services (PES). The European Network of Public Employment Services, which has been operating since the introduction of the European Employment Strategy (EES), and which regularly issues Joint Statements, underlined the role of guidance in PES interventions, particularly in the action-planning process, in its Joint Statement for 2002. DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities accordingly decided to channel Employment Incentive Measure (EIM) resources to support the study

¹ The countries which took part in the OECD review were Australia, Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

² The countries which took part in the World Bank review were Chile, Poland, Romania, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, and Turkey. Poland and Romania had been covered earlier by the ETF, but the World Bank review process, like the OECD one, included country visits.

³ The review process is currently being further extended by the European Training Foundation to cover the West Balkan countries.

⁴ For a synthesis outlining the key outcomes of the reviews as well as the main lessons learned, see Watts & Sultana (2004).

of career guidance, and the way it facilitates the implementation of the EES.⁵ The study, whose purview of countries included the EU 25 together with Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, sets out to identify national-level activities and practices, as well as cross-national trends and examples of innovative approaches in providing guidance services.

1.1.3. The timeliness of the current focus on career guidance services within European PES can be understood in relation to a number of important factors, all of which are inter-linked:

1.1.3.1. The first is the impact that the European Employment Strategy⁶ has had on the PES generally—including personalised employment services as well as career guidance more specifically—since it was first introduced at the Luxembourg Job Summit in November 1997, on the basis of the new provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty. In this context, Guideline 1 of the EES has been particularly influential. The Guideline, stressing as it does prevention and activation, requires Member States to “ensure that, at an early stage of their unemployment spell, all job-seekers benefit from an early identification of their needs and from services such as advice and guidance, job-search assistance and personalised action plans” (2003/578/EC). Based on such an identification, job-seekers should be offered access to effective and efficient measures to enhance their employability and chances of integration, with special attention being given to people facing the greatest difficulties in the labour market. The intervention under this Guideline is normally in the form of an individual action plan for the job-seeker. The action-planning approach includes a range of interventions that include career guidance *per se*, but also elements that may be related to career guidance, such as brokerage, job-search assistance, and referral to active measures such as vocational training and job schemes.⁷ As we shall have occasion to note throughout this report, several PES have modified the scope and methodology of career guidance service delivery in quite substantial ways, in their attempt to take Guideline 1 into account. This is especially

⁵ Cf. EMPL/EIM Committee/006-updated May 2004: Community Incentive Measures in the field of Employment - Committee Meeting of 13 November 2003 - Work Programme 2004. In line with the General Guidelines for the implementation of the activities, as adopted by the Committee: “A survey on guidance activities in the national PES of the enlarged EU will contribute to the further elaboration of the PES service model that is being developed in connection with the specific EG on prevention and activation. Guidance is a discipline that is part of any individual action plan and one that contains the various PES functions into one effective whole (brokerage, job search assistance, referral to active measures like vocational training and job schemes). The survey will allow the collection of systematic data on national PES activities and practices in this area and will be an important source for the national PES when developing their new service models.”

⁶ The EES consists for a large part of micro-level interventions in the labour market, and is the main tool to give direction to and ensure co-ordination of the employment policy priorities to which Member States should subscribe at EU level. Such co-ordination is assured through a number of mechanisms, including the Employment Guidelines, National Action Plans, the Joint Employment Report, and the issuing of country-specific Recommendations. The EES has been revised a number of times since its launch in 1997, and most recently with a view to aligning it more closely to the Lisbon goals of sustained economic growth, more and better jobs, and greater social cohesion, by 2010.

⁷ In some cases, it may also include the monitoring of benefit entitlement; but in this study, such an activity is not considered to be germane to career guidance.

true for many of the New Member States (NMS): while some—such as Hungary and Poland—have invested in career guidance well before accession, thanks to the support of such agencies as the World Bank, it would be true to say that for many, a history of central economic planning and human resource deployment has tended to restrict the relevance of career guidance services, if not rendering it irrelevant (Sultana, 2003). It becomes important, therefore, to examine such developments, and to assess their effectiveness in relation to the three overarching objectives established by the Council in 2003 for the new European Employment Guidelines, in line with the Lisbon strategy: full employment, quality and productivity at work, and strengthened social cohesion and inclusion.

1.1.3.2. Another aspect of the EES which has had an impact on the delivery of employment and career guidance services within the PES is the widespread adoption of the ‘personal service model’, which is embedded in Guideline 1 but deserves further elaboration in its own right. As the report of the Expert Group (2002, pp.10-11) notes, the growth of interest in guidance and counselling within PES is linked to the move “from a more directive approach to a customer-related/service-minded approach”, and to the emphasis on “motivating the customer”, linked to “maximum enhancement of autonomy and empowerment of the customer”. The personalisation of services—which implies the intensification of sensitivity and responsiveness to the specific needs of individuals and groups—is part of a wider effort to modernise the Public Employment Services. This modernisation effort has gained momentum over the past ten years, largely in response to the EES, but also as a reaction to a number of factors in the political and economic environment.⁸ Key among these is the increasingly heterogeneous profile of citizens requiring services from the PES. These include job-seekers, who are embedded in diverse contexts and have diverse needs. They also include workers who are at risk of redundancy, as well as those seeking support in planning their career development. More broadly, they include other categories of citizens—from students through to older workers—who wish to make use of information services in relation to employment and training opportunities, not only at a regional or national level but at a European level as well. The challenge of the personal service model is to

⁸ A document issued by Belgium’s FOREM (2002), reporting on a seminar focusing on ‘Innovations in Public Employment and Vocational Training Services’, identified the following four contextual factors that have had an impact on the modernisation of the PES: [a] the evolution in the function of the labour market, with globalisation, developments in the service economy and the knowledge society radically modifying career paths, making them less linear and more varied, and blurring the distinctions between training periods and employment periods; [b] new patterns in public policy, where the role of public services is being reassessed, where the pivotal issue becomes quality service and client satisfaction, and where active measures, including human resource development, are given priority over passive measures; [c] the opening of the market and increase in the number of service providers, be these PES partners, or for-profit or community-based agencies to which services have been outsourced; and [d] citizens’ behaviour as consumers of services, where individuals are increasingly better informed about their rights, and where their expectations in relation to public services include quality, proximity, personalisation and individualisation of service, as well as transparency and security of the information on the service supplied, and the opportunity to participate in the conception and evaluation of the service.

adjust the offer of services to better respond to user needs, to ensure that the range of services offered are coherent and transparent from the point-of-view of the client, and to find ways of expanding and diversifying services in a restrained fiscal context. It is important to gauge the manner in which—and the extent to which—employment and career guidance services in the European PES have responded to the challenge of implementing a personal service approach, identifying the difficulties they have encountered, and the innovative responses they have generated.

1.1.3.3. A further reason that highlights the timeliness of the present report relates to the progress that the European Union has made in meeting the Lisbon Strategy 2010 target of a 70% overall employment rate. The EU has missed the intermediate employment rate target of 67% for 2005. Against the background of economic slowdown, and at the request from Heads of State at the Spring Council of 2003, the Commission established a European Employment Taskforce headed by Wim Kok. This Taskforce identified four priorities for action of general relevance for Member States: [a] increasing the adaptability of workers and enterprises; [b] attracting more people to the labour market and making work a real option for all; [c] investing more, and more effectively, in human capital; and [d] ensuring effective implementation of reforms through better governance. Career guidance services as well as personalised employment services have a significant contribution to make to the first three of these priorities, even if, of course, they cannot *create* employment. As this report will show, the efforts of the PES in responding to these challenges constitute a veritable thesaurus of interesting practice that can stimulate the development of career guidance services across Europe.

1.1.4. The present report sets out to consider how personalised employment and career guidance services, offered within the context of the PES, can contribute to the attainment of some of the EES goals. The OECD, European Commission and World Bank reviews have already suggested that there are at least three areas in which such services can make a contribution to public policy more generally:

1.1.4.1. They promote *lifelong learning goals* by ensuring an adequate knowledge and skills base to consolidate the competitiveness of national and supra-national entities in the context of economic globalisation. PES staff often play an important role in providing information and guidance to students (through visits to schools, or through hosting young people in information centres) and to adults, encouraging them to engage in education and training courses that lead to competences in high-demand areas, and in these and other ways facilitating the development of tighter linkages between the world of learning and the world of work.

1.1.4.2. They can help address a whole range of *labour market issues*, including the improvement of labour market outcomes and efficiency, and supporting the attainment of economic development goals. Career

guidance services offered through the PES can, for instance, help address labour market shortages, tackle mismatches between labour supply and demand, reduce the effects of labour-market destabilisation, ensure that women have more equitable access to labour-market opportunities, improve labour mobility, help individuals adjust to change and uncertain futures as well as to changes in work patterns, assist active labour market policies by helping reduce individual dependency upon income support, help in reducing early retirement and encouraging active ageing, support the notion of a lifelong career as opposed to a lifelong job, and increase job satisfaction.

1.1.4.3. They also have a role to play in helping governments attain *social equity and social inclusion goals*, by mobilising resources in order to integrate marginalised and at-risk groups into education, training and working tracks. Such groups include young people who leave school without any formal qualifications and who are neither at school nor at work, the long-term unemployed, those rendered vulnerable due to the restructuring of the enterprise they work for, women returners, those living in remote areas, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, immigrants and asylum-seekers, travelling people, prisoners and ex-prisoners, and drug abusers.

1.2. Scope and methodology

1.2.1. This survey sets out to focus on the career guidance and career-guidance-related services offered through national PES, gathering data on the strategies that are being employed to develop improved service models, be it through in-depth individual career guidance, specialised group-oriented initiatives, the use of the new information technologies, call-centres, and in other ways. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which the whole range of clients that the PES has the mandate to cater for is being addressed, whether these are the various categories of the unemployed, and/or pupils and students prior to entering the labour market, and/or adults who are already in employment but who require information and support in their career development. The study is guided by a concern with the practical, i.e. it sets out to describe the day-to-day realities of work in the PES with a view to identifying some of the more promising and successful practice, and to make proposals for improvement. The report provides details of the various models of career guidance in use, the processes that are being implemented across the range of EU and EEA countries, the outcomes of PES interventions, the tools and instruments used to attain such outcomes, the level of staff preparation for delivering career guidance services, and the strategies that are in place in order to ensure quality provision. Several other issues that have emerged from the survey are also documented, where they are considered to be relevant to the overall purpose of the study.

1.2.2. Preliminary details of the scope of the study were presented at a meeting of the Heads of the PES at a workshop organised in Amsterdam on 1-2 December 2004. The proposed methodology for the study was also discussed, with the

Heads agreeing to give their full support to the survey. The methodology entailed three dimensions:

1.2.2.1. First, a literature review of the place of career guidance and career-guidance-related activities in the PES was carried out. The literature review took particular note of transnational studies conducted by the EC, the ILO, the OECD and other bodies. The results of the survey of guidance activities that the PES Network undertook in 2001, in the context of the Partners in Development initiative, were also analysed. Special attention was given to the way global and European changing labour markets are having an impact on the PES. The draft literature review was presented to the PES Assistant Heads at a meeting in Brussels on 8-9 March 2005, and feedback was solicited to identify other possible themes that could be of relevance.

1.2.2.2. [a] Secondly, a questionnaire survey instrument was developed on the basis of the categories and concepts that emerged from the Literature Review, as well as from the relevant responses to the questionnaires used in the OECD, European Commission (ETF and CEDEFOP), and World Bank reviews, and the PPD study. The draft questionnaire was piloted with the PES in Malta and the UK (Jobcentre Plus Head Office), and a full day was spent work shadowing and interviewing employment advisers in Malta to make sure that the relevant data would be captured by the different items in the questionnaire.

[b] The survey instrument went through a number of drafts, with feedback being provided by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, and members of the PES network. The final version of the questionnaire focused on six main areas: Services, Quality, Staff, Clients, Relationships with other Providers, and Gaps and Future Developments. A copy of the questionnaire is included as an Annex to this report. The questionnaire was sent on 4 February 2005 to the Assistant Heads of all the PES in the 28 countries participating in the survey. For Belgium, three responses were solicited, one each from FOREM, ORBEM and VDAB,⁹ so the analysis is based in total on 30 questionnaire responses. PES central offices were asked to fill in the questionnaire, in collaboration with other PES offices in the country—these might be regional or municipal offices, depending upon how the PES delivery system is organised at a local level. Where responses to particular items were incomplete or ambiguous, efforts were made to follow through with supplementary questions, though time constraints did not permit us to do this to the extent we would have liked.

[c] At a meeting in Brussels in 8-9 March 2005, Assistants to the Heads of PES were invited to raise any queries or issues so that these could be

⁹ The three Belgian responses cover the Brussels-Capital Region (ORBEM: *Office Régional Bruxellois de l'Emploi*), Flanders (VDAB: *Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding*) and Wallonia (FOREM: *Formation et Emploi*). These entities represent parity-based regional government bodies, which in 1989 took over the mission of the national employment office (ONEM) regarding the placement of job-seekers.

addressed prior to the submission of the reports. Participants provided us with useful insights into the nature of the problems that might arise in interpreting the responses.

1.2.2.3. [a] Finally, the study also entailed a strong qualitative dimension, with country visits being made to Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden in April and May 2005. The purpose behind the visits was to develop a closer insight into the working of the PES, and particularly to collect more detailed examples of good practice that could serve to illustrate positive and effective implementation of career guidance and career-guidance-related services in the PES context. It was also an opportunity to go deeper into issues that were raised in the country reports, or to gather further information when this was required. Each country visit lasted between 2 to 3 days, and included meetings with policy staff as well as visits to from 1 to 3 PES offices. In most cases, at least one of these PES offices was in an urban setting, and another in a rural or small town setting. The first visit—to Sweden—was made jointly by the two researchers in order to ensure a harmonisation of approach and to ensure that subsequent individual visits could draw from the perspectives of both of us.

[b] Initially the intention had been to choose the countries to visit on the basis of the questionnaire responses, opting for those contexts which were likely to provide us with insights into the implementation of different models of career guidance service delivery, and with some of the more innovative practices that might be worth emulating Europe-wide. This, however, proved to be impracticable for logistical reasons, given that some responses reached us later than expected. The decision was therefore made to choose countries in such a way as to have a fair balance between older and new member states, between countries that have a centralised administrative structure and those that are decentralised, and also between larger and smaller countries (as scale is likely to have an impact on the structure and nature of service delivery).

1.2.3. Quality auditing of the study was ensured in two ways. First, the country visit draft reports were shared with the PES country hosts, so that inaccuracies could be checked. Secondly, the draft version of the final report was circulated within the PES network, to ensure that the representation of systems and practices was accurate and the interpretations fair.

1.3. Definitions

1.3.1. The survey took great pains to define the notion of career guidance that respondents had to keep in mind when answering the survey. This was considered to be important for at least two reasons: first, the continuum of services that include an element of career guidance is very broad indeed within the PES range of services; secondly, it has sometimes been said that Europe is a region divided by a common vocabulary, and perhaps nowhere is this more the case than in relation to career guidance, where the same or similar words

have variable meanings and connotations in different country contexts.¹⁰ A clear definition of what was being referred to by ‘career guidance’ for the purpose of the survey was therefore included in the questionnaire, to ensure consistency in use of terminology:

“For the purposes of this survey, the (interchangeable) terms vocational/career guidance refer to services intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make occupational, training and educational choices and to manage their careers. The services might be on an individual or group basis, and might be face-to-face or at a distance (including helplines and web-based services). They include job placement, career information (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, career education and career management programmes, work search programmes, and transition services.”

1.3.2. This is a broad definition, and similar to the ones adopted in the OECD and European Commission (ETF/CEDEFOP) Career Guidance Policy Reviews. It is somewhat broader than the definition used by the Expert Group (2002), which had adopted the definition of ‘guidance’ proposed in the European Commission’s communication on lifelong learning: “a range of activities designed to assist people to make decisions about their lives (educational, vocational, personal) and to implement those decisions” (CEC, 2001). The group added its own specific definition of ‘counselling’: “a purposeful relationship in which one person helps another to help him/herself and influences voluntary behavioural change on the part of the customer (customer wants to change and seeks practitioners’ help to change)”. It distinguished both of these from the placement function, which is “the task of assigning the job-seeker to a specific job” (*ibid*, p.7).

1.3.3. These differences in definitions highlight the fact that some notions of career guidance are contested, with boundaries being drawn differently depending on underlying philosophies and understanding of the field. A number of observations therefore need to be made before moving on to an analysis of the survey data:

1.3.3.1. In principle, career guidance within PES focuses attention on four distinct facets of the service offered to individuals: [a] the *personalisation* of services, [b] the attention paid to *assessing the individual’s attributes and preferences*, [c] the attention paid to *long-term career strategies*, seeking to assure not only their immediate employment but also their future employability, and [d] the attention paid to helping individuals to develop *personal action plans*. A crucial definitional issue is whether the use of the term ‘career guidance’ is confined to activities where *all* of these elements are evident, or is

¹⁰ Some of the terms used by survey respondents to refer to staff providing career guidance and career-guidance-related services include: pathway guides, employment advisers, mediators, case managers, personal advisers, employment counsellors, personal coaches, job coaches, job counsellors, information coaches, integration advisers, facilitators, vocational counsellors, rehabilitation advisers, vocational guidance psychologists, and employment consultants.

extended to those where only *some* may be present. We have adopted an inclusive approach, but have attempted to distinguish where appropriate between different activities, as outlined below.

1.3.3.2. We propose that career guidance offered within a PES setting can be thought of in terms of three categories: [a] activities that have career guidance *elements* embedded within the core processes applied to unemployed individuals; [b] career guidance *services* available to some unemployed individuals (and, possibly, others too), usually on referral; and [c] *other* career guidance services (e.g. to pupils/students). This survey considered all three dimensions. In our analysis we refer to activities under [a] as ‘personalised employment services’, thus distinguishing them from more elaborate (or ‘deeper’) career guidance services. Drawing this distinction rather than blurring it enables us to be more analytically precise, and to consider the relationship and—where appropriate—the tensions between the two forms of services.

1.4. Organisation of the report

1.4.1. The next few chapters of the report will focus on the data that emerged from the survey and from the country visits:

- Chapter 2 paints the broad picture, presenting the different services offered across Europe’s PES which either have career guidance elements embedded in them, or which can be considered to be career guidance *per se*.

- Chapter 3 provides a detailed consideration of the institutional organisation of employment services in the PES. Here, an outline of the full range of PES services that have a career guidance element in them, as well as the organisational modalities through which the cluster of services is provided, will be set out. Particular attention will be given to trends in decentralising the administration of services to the regional and local level, and to entering into partnerships with other service providers, largely through sub-contracting. The issue of quality standards is also discussed in relation to these trends.

- Chapter 4 considers another set of trends, this time linked to service delivery. Here, the impact of the adoption of the personal service model can be seen in the diversification and differentiation of career guidance services, enabling the PES to reach out more effectively to a wider range of clients. Three key strategies are outlined in this context: collaboration with other service providers, the use of self-service facilities, and the tiering of services. The next two chapters focus on the key players in the career guidance encounter.

- Chapter 5 looks at career guidance and career-guidance-related staff, outlining their typical profile, the roles they undertake, the way they are trained to fulfil these roles, and the tools and instruments they use.

- Chapter 6 looks at clients of the career guidance and personalised employment services offered by PES staff. It provides details of the range of clients that are catered for, and identifies categories of clients that tend to miss out on benefiting from PES career guidance services, outlining the reasons for this. Issues of client satisfaction with services provided, and the tensions that arise in the attempt to meet client needs, are also discussed.

- Finally, the report concludes by synthesising the data generated by the survey in terms of key challenges that Public Employment Services have to

confront in order to be better placed to provide quality career guidance and personalised employment services to European citizens, indicating possible ways forward.

CHAPTER 2: CAREER GUIDANCE SERVICES

2.1. *The place of career guidance within PES*

2.1.1. Personalised employment services (i.e. services that have career guidance elements embedded within them) and career guidance (i.e. services that entail a deeper and more intensive engagement with clients) have a central role to play in enabling PES to reach their goals. This becomes quickly apparent when one considers the four main functions that, according to Thuy *et al.* (2001), can be associated with PES. These are:

- Job broking.
- Providing labour market information.
- Administering labour market adjustment programmes.
- Administering unemployment benefits.

Thuy *et al.* define the third of these (labour market adjustment programmes) as comprising:

- Job-search assistance programmes.
- Training and education programmes.
- Direct job creation programmes.

In turn, the authors define the first of these (job-search assistance programmes) as including:

- Self-help provision.
- Group activities (in the form of job clubs, job fairs and workshops).
- Individual assistance (in the form of vocational guidance and intensive counselling programmes).

2.1.2. Up to the 1970s, the main focus of the PES was on job-broking and, to a lesser extent, on the administering of unemployment benefits; some also provided career guidance services. As unemployment levels across much of Europe deepened, PES increasingly adopted active labour market policies, purposefully engaging in labour market adjustment programmes in order to address the major upheavals caused by mass redundancy and unemployment. Thuy *et al.* (2001, p.73) note that labour market adjustment programmes may set out to correct labour market shortages, reintroduce people to a working environment, overcome social objectives to re-employment such as drug or alcohol addiction, overcome educational barriers to re-employment such as illiteracy or poor numeracy, and overcome employer resistance to recruiting disadvantaged or long-term unemployed people. All of these objectives aim at the same goal: to increase the employability of job-seekers—particularly those who are disadvantaged—and to support them in the move towards employment.

2.1.3. Of the three types of adjustment programmes (i.e. job-search assistance programmes, training and education programmes, and direct job-creation programmes), this report focuses mainly on the first. Job-search assistance

programmes have three elements to them: self-help provision, group activities, and individual assistance. This report gives most attention to the third of these elements, but, as intimated in the definition that we have used for the purposes of the survey, it also considers the career guidance functions embedded in both self-help provision and group activities.

- 2.1.4. It is relevant to point out that when respondents to the survey were asked to identify the sorts of activities carried out by PES staff which they felt might be considered to be career guidance as defined in the survey, the resulting list was very long indeed (see Box 2.1 below). This list does not discriminate between which activities were reported for which country, as the overlaps were substantial. Neither does it discriminate between which activities are *specialised* career guidance services, and which are activities that have career guidance elements *embedded* in them, in line with the definition we used earlier (see para.1.3.4.2).

Box 2.1. Range of career guidance activities reported by PES respondents

- *Assessment / screening* (e.g. of individual attributes, competences, and preferences; of psychological state; of employability; of informal and non-formal learning).
- *Career management planning* (e.g. helping individuals develop a Personal Action Plan; assistance in managing job changes).
- *Individual intensive employment counselling* (e.g. through a case-management approach to employment assistance).
- *Personality development* (e.g. promoting self-esteem in clients; coaching in social skills).
- *Specialised employment counselling* (e.g. addressing problems that are obstacles to re-employment, such as disability, drug/alcohol addiction, homelessness, child-care or debt problems; and offered to particular groups of disadvantaged job-seekers, including, for instance, immigrants, asylum-seekers, ex-offenders).
- *Job-brokering* (e.g. help clients in clarifying what their job aspirations are, and possibly evaluating the likelihood that such aspirations will be fulfilled, given the client's profile and the structure of employment opportunities; creating networks with employers, on a general or sectoral basis; maintaining a talents bank; matching and placing).
- *Job-search assistance activities* (e.g. job-search techniques; job-application training; writing c.v.s; preparing for selection interviews; work tasters; supported induction into employment).
- *Group programmes* (e.g. help in exploring appropriate training paths and options; job clubs).
- *Services offered to students* (e.g. information sessions about the structure of employment opportunities; preventative guidance; working with drop-outs; school-to-work transition guidance; assisting in the use of occupational information).

- *Providing labour market information* (e.g. managing a job information resource centre; managing labour market databases; managing a job bank, or career database; communicating labour market trends to clients; supporting clients in the use of self-service facilities).

2.1.5. For the purposes of this study, most of these activities will be considered and organised within three categories, namely with reference to:

- *Personalised employment services*, and especially the career guidance elements within the processes that PES staff use in working with, in particular, unemployed persons (including the initial diagnostic and action-planning process, and job-search assistance activities).
- *Specialised career guidance provision* to unemployed customers and other clients.
- *Other career guidance provision* (including services for students, and support for career guidance through career and labour market information).

2.1.6. The first two of these categories can be considered as different levels of service. The first—personalised employment services—aims to cater for the needs of unemployed job-seekers, and possibly employed job-changers too, with the PES fulfilling its mission to reach out to be a *mass* public service. Here the activities have an administrative component, but also include elements of career guidance, as we shall see in section 2.2 below. The second category—specialised career guidance services—refers to more intensive career guidance, requiring more time and skilled intervention on the part of the service provider. This service will be addressed in section 2.3. Section 2.4 will consider the third category, of ‘other career guidance provision’, focusing on labour market information as a support to career guidance activities, as well as career guidance services offered to students. Each section will first provide a description of the different services, highlighting, where relevant, key divergences between different countries. It will then identify issues and challenges that are related to the field of career guidance.

2.2. Personalised employment services

2.2.1. The widespread adoption by the European PES of the personal service model (see para.1.1.3.2 above) has led to very similar approaches—with some minor differences—to the ways in which unemployed clients are assisted in the job-search process.

2.2.1.1. In most cases, as we will note in greater detail in subsequent chapters of this report, the clients’ first choice is whether or not to make use of self-service facilities, which gives them access to job-vacancy information and databases, and information about further training opportunities, as well as a variety of occupational information. Electronic storage of data,

alongside the internet, have greatly increased not only the amount of information available, but also the connectivity between different elements of information, and between databases. Some systems also provide tools to support clients in aspects of the career guidance process, including, for instance, such instruments as interest inventories and aptitude checklists that help narrow down and direct the self-directed search. In some countries, the self-service area is ‘animated’ by advisers who have been trained to provide assistance to clients in their autonomous job-search process (e.g. France’s ANPE puts a stress on ‘*accueil active*’).

2.2.1.2. Clients will often require personalised assistance in the job-search process, and may need to register both in order to have access to such assistance, and also to gain entitlement—where appropriate—to unemployment and social-security benefits. The registration process tends to be purely administrative in nature (e.g. as in Finland, Poland and Slovenia),¹¹ with clients providing the required details. This, generally speaking, serves two functions. The first is to build up an initial profile—based on a variety of biographical and work-history information—that can then be used by an employment adviser in order to provide or recommend one or more activities from a whole range of services. The second is to examine the registration details in order for the relevant authorities (which may be, but not always are, PES staff) to make decisions regarding the eligibility of a particular client for benefits. Where the registration is predominantly an administrative process, it is handled by clerical staff, who either fill in the required details on behalf of the client, or ensure that details have been correctly entered. Once the registration is completed, an appointment is made for a meeting with an employment adviser. The delay between registration and such a meeting depends on the demand of clients and the supply of advisers, and can vary between a few days and up to several months in some cases, depending on whether a particular site is a ‘high flow’ or a ‘low flow’ office. In some other countries, such as France, the registration process is conducted directly by an employment adviser, and the assisted job-search as well as the advisory process can be commenced immediately, particularly in offices where the number of clients is low enough to permit this; otherwise, an appointment is made for a follow-up meeting.

2.2.1.3. The interview with the employment adviser is usually a longer meeting—lasting up to 45 minutes in Germany, and an hour in Finland, for instance—and can include an initial diagnostic element (‘profiling’), the setting of goals, the joint development of a plan to attain those goals (‘personal action planning’), as well as job-search assistance in relation

¹¹ In this report, we will often provide lists of countries that exemplify a particular practice, issue or trend. This does not necessarily mean that of the 28 countries and 30 PES systems involved in the survey, they are the only ones to do so. It could also mean either that other countries did not provide data relevant to the issue in question, or that we felt that that practice, issue or trend is particularly strongly represented by the countries we list.

to that plan.¹² Such assistance depends on the range of measures and customised action programmes that a country's or region's particular PES can offer. These often include individual- and/or group-based support in developing job-search techniques, in how to perform in employment selection interviews, in preparing job applications and c.v.s, and so on. Some clients are referred to 'job clubs'. Other programmes directly target the development of work skills, with the adviser referring the client to specialised vocational training programmes designed to improve the client's chances of employment. The adviser may also refer clients to more specialised counselling, a service which we will consider in section 2.3 of this chapter.

2.2.1.4. In line with the personalised service approach, most PES have intensified their attention and responsiveness to differentiated client needs. They have thus increasingly adopted a 'customer segmentation' model (see Box 2.2 below), whereby clients are 'case loaded' in terms of a number of categories, depending on their profile and the type and depth of support they are perceived to need in the job-search process. Customer segments can be modified in reaction to new labour market realities,¹³ and may differ from country to country, but the differences are slight, not least because those who have only recently introduced such practices have emulated the efforts of others that have been working with segmentation for a longer time (e.g. Greece has looked to France and the Netherlands in designing its customer segmentation system).

<i>Box 2.2. Customer segmentation in two countries</i>	
<i>Customer segmentation in Germany:</i> - <i>Market</i> customers, who are expected	<i>Customer segmentation in Finland:</i> - Services for <i>start-up entrepreneurs</i>

¹² The Personal Action Plan (PAP), also referred to as an Individualised (or Individual) Career Plan or an Individualised (or Individual) Career Development Plan, is a recognised strategy aimed at helping clients identify and meet their changing goals, interests and needs in a fast-paced, rapidly changing society. PAP entails clients in a process whereby they identify goals in the job-search process, and strategies to reach those goals. Clients are often encouraged to develop objectives that are SMART, i.e. Specific, Measurable (quantified), Attainable (realistic as well as challenging), Result-focused, and Time-oriented or -bound. In other words, an effective action plan sets out a concrete timetable and a set of clearly defined steps that help the client reach the objectives set. The PAP is distinguished by a process that is ongoing, and bi-directional, meaning that the client can move back to previous steps to gather more information or clarify choices. The process is also marked by joint ownership, where both the client and the adviser have clearly defined responsibilities. The client commits to the implementation of the plan; while the adviser commits to assisting the client in the process, and to provide the resources that may be required. PAPs are usually printed out as documents which bear the signature of both client and adviser. In some cases (e.g. Lithuania), social partners are also included in the development of PAPs.

¹³ For instance, one segment for which ANPE is developing a different service are workers in companies with less than 1,000 employees who are being made redundant (in larger companies there are '*plans de reconversion*' funded by the state). An agreement was reached by the social partners in April 2005 in which a '*convention de reclassement personnalisé*' was articulated. Clients are taken in hand at the moment they are made redundant, and a contract is signed by three parties (the agency in charge of benefit allocation [UNEDIC], ANPE, and the client) under which an individual gets access to a personal adviser for 8 months.

<p>largely to help themselves, making use where appropriate of the PES's internet services and BIZ centres, with little or no personal support: i.e. a <i>let go</i> strategy (around 30% of clients).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Activation</i> customers, who need some personal support, in the form of employment counselling, help with self-presentation, and the like: i.e. an <i>activation</i> strategy (around 20%). - <i>Support</i> customers, who are referred to training courses to extend their vocational skills, or to wage-subsidised jobs: i.e. an <i>invest</i> strategy (around 20%). - <i>Case-managed</i> customers, who are judged as being unlikely to be able to re-enter the labour market until they have solved other problems (e.g. drugs, health, psychological, debt) (around 30%). 	<p>(around 1%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Information services</i> (around 30%) – for those who are job-ready and seem to have a good chance of finding a job fairly quickly. - <i>Job-seeking services</i> (around 10%) – for those needing help in developing their job-seeking skills and other support in their job search. - <i>Vocational guidance services</i> (around 8%) – for those needing advice on education and training or guidance in the choice of occupation and career planning. - <i>Services developing vocational skills</i> (around 24%) – for those needing further training, subsidised employment, or vocational rehabilitation. - <i>Services involving co-operation with other agencies</i> (around 10%) – these include social welfare, health care, mental health services, probation services, and services for ex-offenders.
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2.2.1.5. The allocation to a particular segment determines not only the type of service to be offered to the client, and whether these are to be offered face-to-face or at a distance (e.g. email, or telephone): they may also determine the frequency and duration of subsequent contacts. For instance, in the case of Germany, contacts are both more frequent and longer for activation and support customers (where they are every 2-3 months and last 30 minutes) than for the market and case-managed customers (where they are every 3 or 6 months respectively, and last only 15 minutes). For young people under 25, the intervals between contacts are shorter: they have to be contacted again within 4 weeks of the initial interview (they are in principle guaranteed a job or training place within 3 months). The segment allocation can only be changed after 6 months have elapsed; the action plan, however, may be modified at any time.¹⁴

¹⁴ The definition of the categories in which clients are segmented, and the allocation of resources between them, is significantly influenced by the financial penalty of 10,000 euro which is placed on the *Bundesagentur für Arbeit* (BA: Federal Employment Agency) if it fails to integrate unemployed people into employment within a year. Accordingly, careful actuarial decisions have to be made to balance the costs of particular interventions against the chances of achieving a successful outcome from them within this time-frame.

2.2.1.6. In many countries, personalised employment services are also, at least in theory, available for those already in employment. These clients might want to change their current employment, and would like to use the PES networks and support services. They might also want to benefit from services that are publicly funded, such as vocational training courses. In reality, however, their access to such services tends to be more restricted than in the case of unemployed job-seekers. In some cases, they may be confined to self-service approaches. In a few countries (e.g. Greece), the PES employment offices only provide services for unemployed job-seekers.

2.2.2. A number of key issues and challenges arise when considering the relationship between personalised employment services and career guidance:

2.2.2.1. *The extent to which the employment adviser's role includes career guidance elements.* There are, in principle, at least four career guidance elements in the processes described in para.2.2.1: [a] counselling skills of relationship-building; [b] diagnostic/assessment skills, to define the customer's needs, work experience, skills and qualifications relevant to his or her job-search; [c] skills of making occupational/educational suggestions, based partly on the customer's needs and wishes, and partly on the employment counsellor's knowledge of the labour market and of employers' demands; and [d] skills of supporting action planning. The skills of the employment adviser in these respects are, however, more limited than those of the career guidance specialist, who also has a much stronger theoretical background. Customers requiring more in-depth help can accordingly be referred to the specialist, where such services are available (see section 2.3 below).

2.2.2.2. *The extent to which the procedure is predominantly marked by an administrative logic, or by a concern with providing career guidance.*

[a] This, of course, is linked to the previous issue, and differs from one country to the next, depending on the role assigned to the employment adviser. Sultana (2004, p.56) reports that PES staff are typically overburdened with multiple roles (e.g. Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Slovakia), and the fact that the criterion for evaluation of provision tends to be the rate of successful job-placements of clients skews services towards brokerage and networking with potential employers. Working in what the Czech Republic response to this survey aptly refers to as a 'cumulative function', staff are also involved in channelling the unemployed towards training and re-training tracks, and in many cases they administer income-support schemes for clients. The career guidance function in many European PES 'ends up being muted'. The Expert Group (2002, p.23), too, comment on excessive caseloads and lack of administrative/clerical support as factors that impede the effective delivery of guidance roles.

[b] In some cases, Sultana (2004, p.56) suggests, the effects of such multi-tasking have been heightened by the trend of establishing ‘one-stop shops’: co-locating a range of employment and welfare services so that welfare clients can more readily access the range of services they need (cf. para.6.1.2). In principle, co-location does not necessarily mean role integration. But it can provide opportunities for it. Thus in the Netherlands, Centres for Work and Income are being established across the country, to provide initial one-stop centres for both job-information and benefit-claimant services. Staff come from a mix of employment and social-security backgrounds: the aim is to merge the two roles, mainly through in-house training (OECD, 2004, p.60).

[c] In some countries, a determined effort has been made to ensure a separation between clerical, financial and placement roles, in order to enable advisers to focus on guidance and placement tasks, and to minimise the extent to which they are deflected by administrative tasks. This has been the case in Germany and Ireland, for instance. In France, administrative support teams (*‘Pole Appui’*) were recently introduced to reduce the administrative burden on advisers, which at one time used to encroach rather too much on the more specifically guidance-related aspects of their work. Section 2.3 will consider in more detail the tension between the blurring and the distinguishing of different roles within the PES staff complement.

[d] The focus on the administrative rather than the counselling aspect of the role of the employment adviser can be signalled by the architecture, as it were, of the encounter between PES staff and clients. It is significant, for instance, that in some cases (e.g. Finland, Germany, Slovenia, Sweden), the employment interview takes place in separate rooms, when these are available; in others, advisers and clients are separated by open-plan cubicles (e.g. France, Malta); while in yet others, clients enter rooms which are shared by two or more advisers (e.g. Poland).¹⁵ The extent of privacy could highlight the counselling nature of the encounter between PES staff and clients. On the other hand, some of the staff interviewed during the field visits (e.g. France, Poland, Slovenia) did point out that an open-plan setting can be less threatening for client and counsellor alike. In addition, decisions about using closed or open-plan settings may be linked to cultural norms of respect for privacy.

[e] Another indication is whether the interview takes place over a desk (e.g. in Greece) rather than side-by-side (e.g. in Germany), and whether advisers enter data about the client into the computer while the client is talking (e.g. as they do in Slovenia). Attempts to de-emphasise the administrative dimension in the encounter are often made by advisers who have been trained in client-centred approaches. In France, for instance, some of the ANPE advisers interviewed felt that the computer

¹⁵ There can also be issues of security here, particularly in those countries where the employment adviser has to make judgements about the eligibility or otherwise of the client for benefits. A negative evaluation might lead clients to become angry, or even aggressive.

processing of client data was rather long and laborious and prevented them from maintaining eye contact with clients. They therefore often opted to fill in the profiling form after the client had left, even though this involved them in extra work. Interestingly, the standard ANPE desks extend sideways and open up into a circular top, enabling the adviser to move away from the computer and to interact more openly with the client. Similar efforts to make the encounter more of a counselling than an administrative process by avoiding inputting of client data into the database during the interview were also observed in Greece. However, one could also construe these efforts as having the intention of making the administrative process more effective, in the sense that the generation of an atmosphere of trust enables better information to be collected, leading to better diagnosis, and with the individual being more motivated to implement the outcomes.

2.2.2.3. *The extent to which there is tension between the tendency for career guidance to address longer-term goals, linked to lifelong learning and sustained employability, and the pressures on PES and its employment advisers to focus on short-term goals, seeking to get unemployed individuals into employment (and therefore off benefit) as quickly as possible.* Many countries noted this tension and this pressure. The Austrian response, for instance, pointed out that the goal of quick job placement has become such a policy imperative that it overwhelms any consideration of career guidance in the way this activity is usually understood. In Germany, the principle of social insurance is to minimise the risk of claims, and the extent of claims. This policy, too, tilts the balance strongly in favour of short-term goals: as the German response affirmed, it is not easy to find a place for career guidance within what can be referred to as an ‘insurance logic’.

2.2.2.4. *The extent to which the career guidance role of employment advisers comes into conflict and tension with their ‘gatekeeping’ and policing functions in relation to public resources.* As OECD (2004, p.58) points out, PES are required not only to help individuals make decisions, but also to make institutional decisions about individuals—in relation, for example, to eligibility for income support, or to access to publicly-funded training provision. Where such roles are combined, this can lead to role conflict. French ANPE advisers are expected to signal instances where it is suspected that clients are ineligible for benefits, or that they are not committed to the job-search process. In practice, however, it seems that they rarely do so. Practitioners interviewed in the course of visits to PES offices in Finland and Greece indicated similar reluctance in engaging in ‘policing’. The effect of role conflict on the work of advisers was illustrated in a study of a programme for unemployed young people in the UK (Davies & Irving, 2000). Despite the fact that the programme involved more contact with Personal Advisers (PAs) than had previous provision, many clients felt that PAs did not understand their aspirations and were solely concerned with getting them into work. Respondents frequently described their PAs as ‘pushy’, which was helpful to some but experienced as pressure by others (*ibid*, p.38).

2.2.3. [a] A separate comment needs finally to be made about one aspect of the personalised employment services that we are considering in this sub-section, namely ‘*job-broking*’. Some consider this as related to career guidance. The Employment Incentives Measures Committee, in a statement already cited in footnote 5 above, refers to guidance as a “discipline that is part of any individual action plan and one that contains the various PES functions into one effective whole (*brokerage*, job search assistance, referral to active measures like vocational training and job schemes)” [our emphasis]. In France, ANPE considers job-broking as an integral function of the adviser’s work, and attaches high value to competence in networking with employers. More generally, job-broking represents one of the most central functions of PES, where the goal is to ensure a better link between job-seekers and employers so that vacancies can be more easily filled. It is therefore one of the ways of addressing frictional unemployment, and is today a service offered by several providers (including newspapers, head-hunting agencies, guidance bureaux in post-compulsory educational institutions, and specialised websites).¹⁶

[b] The question remains, however, about the extent to which the function of job-broking is related to career guidance. From one perspective, it could be argued that there is a distinction between guidance on the one hand and job placement on the other—a position that was indeed adopted by the Expert Group (cf. para.1.3.2). ICT has practically automated most of the job-broking service, with vacancies being advertised on a website or teletext, or through telephone or texting services, and with clients having the possibility of accessing the information not only from the PES office, but also from home and elsewhere. In most cases, and at best, advisers provide back-up support to clients who find the new technology an obstacle. In addition, it is difficult to consider job-broking as a career guidance activity when there is a degree of compulsion involved, as when clients—whether in the later stages of the unemployment spell, or throughout—are obliged to accept what the PES considers a ‘suitable job offer’, at the risk of suffering benefit sanctions.

[c] The perspective we adopt in this report is somewhat different. It is clear that in some institutional contexts (particularly the French one, for instance, where the polyvalent roles of advisers are difficult to disentangle) the mediating and matching tasks that are part and parcel of job-broking may have

¹⁶ In addition, personal networks (based on gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, political allegiance, school ties, and so on), as well as professional networks, can play a major part in who gets to know about which vacancies are available where. Not only does the PES have to compete with other providers and sources—indeed, it sometimes co-opts competing sources of information, as when job adverts that appear in newspapers are scanned and included in the PES vacancy register (e.g. Denmark, France, Norway)—but its share of published job vacancies varies greatly from country to country, and is generally smaller than that of some of its competition (Lippoldt & Brodsky, 2002) (for data on this from our survey, see para.2.4.3.1). In many European countries, employers are obliged by law to register their vacancies with the PES, but it has proved notoriously difficult to enforce such provisions, to the extent that France has recently preferred to repeal the obligation. The more successful the PES is in attracting vacancy registrations, and the more efficiently it liaises with employers, the more there is a chance for it to compensate for the information and network deficits that some of its disadvantaged clients might have, providing them with pathways into employment which would not have otherwise been open to them.

elements of career guidance embedded in them, to the extent that some might even justify specific training in this respect. This becomes more clear if we break up the process of job-broking into its constituent parts (cf. Thuy *et al.*, 2001, p.43). Job-broking can be viewed as including: interviewing job-seekers and registering information about them; liaising with employers either generally and/or in relation to specific sectors in order to canvas actual and potential job prospects; registering job vacancies and posting them on real or virtual display boards (often on the basis of the International Standard Classification of Occupations); appraising job vacancies and job-seekers with a view to obtaining a good match; liaising between employers and job-seekers; and providing job-search assistance. Certainly, much of this is administrative in scope. But advisers may also need to help clients in clarifying what their job aspirations are, and even making a judgement as to the likelihood that such aspirations will be fulfilled, given the client's profile and the structure of employment opportunities. Viewed in this broad sense, job-broking can be said to include elements of career guidance.

2.3. Specialised career guidance provision

2.3.1. [a] In principle, employment advisers in most—though by no means all—PES can refer their clients to more intensive career guidance services. Such a decision is made on the basis of the profile of the customer, as indicated in para.2.2.1.3 above, where career guidance is one of a range of services that can be offered directly by the PES, or by agencies to whom the service has been outsourced. Specialised career guidance services can be considered to be a form of intensive and focused engagement with a client, often on a one-to-one basis, in which a trained counsellor learns about the individual's educational and work history, and his or her abilities, aspirations and aptitudes, and helps him/her to explore the structure of labour market opportunities, as well as training and educational pathways that could lead to such opportunities.

[b] Specialised career guidance staff may or may not use diagnostic tests which help clients clarify their interests and aspirations. They are required to have an in-depth knowledge of the labour market, including detailed understanding of the requirements for different occupations. They are also expected to have access to—and ability to interpret—labour market information as well as occupational databases, including statistical data on trends in employment sectors. Career guidance staff are skilled in establishing a good relationship with a broad range of clients, and have sound interpersonal and communication skills. Where they are not themselves psychologists, they can make an informed judgement as to when to refer a client to such psychologists (if available), who may be licensed to carry out specific tests, or to engage in deeper psychological processes. Most importantly, career guidance counsellors at their best have a sound theoretical understanding of their field, drawing on the insights provided by several disciplines—including sociology, philosophy, economics, and law, as well as psychology—in a holistic, inter-disciplinary manner, and constantly engaging in the critical reflective practice which is the hallmark of any profession.

[c] In the context of the PES, career guidance staff may also refer clients to counselling services that focus on dealing with specific personal or contextual situations which constitute an obstacle to employment. Such problems can include disabilities, addiction, homelessness, a history of incarceration, child-care or debt problems, and so on. Counselling of this sort is often outsourced to specialised agencies.

[d] Box 2.3 below provides one example of the criteria on the basis of which one national PES, that of Finland, distinguishes between different functions associated career guidance services. These range from the more ‘deep’ services (guidance) to the tasks which require a less intensive engagement with the client (information and advice).

Box 2.3. Distinguishing between ‘guidance’, ‘advice’ and ‘information’ in the Finnish PES

	Guidance	Advice	Information
Goals	To promote the client’s ability to improve his or her life by means of a dialogue. The goals are based on the preferences expressed by the client.	To give the client advice about a proper procedure to meet his or her needs.	To provide the client with the information he or she needs.
Linkages to information	A number of different options and the various interpretations of them are emphasised.	The advice is based on expert knowledge.	The required information is based on facts.
Role of the client	The client is actively involved in the decision-making process. The rationale of the whole process is based on the goals and interpretations of the client. The client is the best expert on his or her own life.	The client expects to receive help to solve his or her problem with the advice of an expert. The client asks for help and receives advice. The client decides whether to act according to the advice.	The client seeks information in response to his or her need. The client utilises the received information.
The role of the professional	The professional empowers the client and avoids delivering ready-made solutions to the client’s questions.	The professional is an expert in the evaluation of different options. The professional has more knowledge on the matter. The professional must make sure that the advice reflect the expert knowledge and that the client understands the content.	The professional provides the client with the information requested. The professional guarantees the validity of the information.
The nature of the dialogue	The dialogue generally has many phases and the structure is loose. The progress of the dialogue is influenced by the	The structure of the dialogue is based on the client’s request for advice and the response of the professional. In	The dialogue is usually based on the questions of the client and the answers of the professional. Generally

	initiatives of the client and the theoretical approaches of the professional. The completion of the guidance process might need more than one session.	some cases the professional might be proactive in giving the advice. The dialogue can sometimes be short, but can entail a longer process with sequenced individual tasks.	the conversation is quite short. On the other hand, sometimes there is a need for more detailed information. Due to this, the structure and the length of the dialogue varies.
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2.3.2. [a] OECD (2004) notes that in some countries, there has been a trend for career guidance activities to be integrated into more broadly-based roles. This trend had already been evident some time earlier in the UK, where the Occupational Guidance Service, set up in 1966, was abolished in the early 1980s. Price (2000, p.202) records that the guidance service was viewed as producing less tangible outcomes than the placing service and its role was regarded as difficult in the deepening recession of the time; “but the clinching argument for abolition was that resources were better deployed in giving small amounts of direct advice and placing assistance to many people than more intensive guidance to a few people”.

[b] More recent examples noted by OECD (2004) include Denmark, where the roles of guidance counsellor and placement officer have become blurred. Placement officers may offer some basic guidance, and guidance counsellors may be involved in developing individual action plans. Previously the guidance counsellors sat to some extent outside the organisational culture; now, however, they are more integrated into it. It is a culture which is strongly focused on serving the needs of the labour market and on leading to a concrete outcome: entry to employment or education and training. The training for the guidance counsellor role is conducted in-house, as part of the general training programme for PES staff. It comprises a two-week course on top of the basic three-month initial training. This is a reduction from the former training pattern. It seems, then, that the role of the guidance counsellor within the service has changed to some extent from a professional to an organisational role (*ibid*, pp.58-59).

[c] In other countries, too, the main training provided for employment service staff is administrative rather than career guidance training. Even in Germany, where career guidance constitutes a separate occupational category within the PES, with its own separate training arrangements, only around one in five of those in career counsellor roles within the PES have in the past been trained on the three-year undergraduate courses at the PES’s own *Fachhochschule* in Mannheim. Most of the rest have been on generic three-year courses in public administration in the *Fachhochschule* and then after work experience in the PES have undertaken relatively short six-month courses in career counselling. This means that their training as counsellors has been more limited, and that they have tended to approach it within an administrative mind-set (*ibid*, p.59). This structure is currently undergoing changes, leading towards the possible merging of the two degrees (see Box 5.4 in Chapter 5).

2.3.3. [a] In some countries, however, career guidance services remain more strongly ‘bounded’, maintaining a more distinct separation of roles. This is the case, for example, in Finland, where vocational guidance services within PES are particularly well-developed. OECD (1996a) reported that vocational guidance services were available in two-thirds of Finnish employment services, with a staff of around 250 psychologists (our survey found a similar figure). These services were widely used by young people as well as by adults, complementing the work of student counsellors within the school system. Both groups were highly qualified by international standards (OECD, 1996b). Responses to the present survey suggest that some countries have resorted to separating services in order to facilitate a more enabling environment to offer services to specific client groups. An example is Luxembourg, which has set up a special department—‘*Service d’Accompagnement Personnalisé*’ (SAPDE)—that is autonomous and free from the pressure of finding immediate placement for the clients it services. Slovakia, too, has started to distinguish between vocational guidance and career information services, with a view to creating more space for individual and group counselling. Further countries where separate career guidance services remain in place include not only Germany (see above) but also Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia (Sultana, 2004, p.56). In Poland, for example, each of the 373 area labour offices has a unit staffed by career counsellors which provides career information and counselling services (Watts & Fretwell, 2004).

[b] In some other countries, training provision for those in career guidance roles is being enhanced. Thus in Ireland, nearly eight in ten of the employment service staff who provide career guidance have had at least some form of guidance training. They can undertake a part-time university course in adult guidance over a twelve-month period, with their tuition fees and release time for course attendance being paid for, and with salary increments for those who successfully complete the course. A goal has been set for increasing the number of staff who have such qualifications (OECD, 2004, p.60). As we will note in greater detail in section 5.5 below, responses to our survey suggest a trend towards the introduction of specialist training in a number of countries. This is the case in Hungary, for instance; and also in Malta, which has, for the first time, offered its staff diploma-level training in career guidance, in the form of a three-semester course which it has commissioned from the island’s university. Further countries (such as Austria, Czech Republic, Iceland and Portugal) have made training mandatory, while others (e.g. Cyprus) are increasingly aware that competency profiles cannot be simply developed on the basis of experience at work.

[c] Another means of bounding career guidance services is to contract them out to external agencies. In general, however, contracting-out of employment services does not necessarily result in more bounded career guidance services (see para.3.3.6). In a study of the use of market methods to run core public services, based on research on welfare-to-work policies in Australia, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the UK (four countries which have been among the boldest such reformers within the OECD), Considine (2001) concluded that however the service was structured and whatever the staff

involved were called (whether ‘advisers’, ‘job coaches’, ‘case managers’, ‘mediators’ or ‘consultants’) they all had “the same primary duty—to prepare people on social assistance for finding work and to oblige them to undertake any activity deemed helpful to that end” (p.34). Contracting-out resulted in services being defined more tightly in terms of outcomes and targets. Although a greater range of strategies were now possible, “the objective of the work effort is ever more narrowly scripted” (p.36). Thus “the contract with the job seeker was not often based on his or her preferences and seldom did the contract aim to improve substantive skills or address major job barriers” (p.178). Interestingly, Considine’s study made no explicit reference to career/vocational guidance or employment counselling.

2.4. Other career guidance provision

[A] Labour market information

2.4.1. Generally speaking, labour market information (LMI) includes statistics on registered unemployed (broken down by age, education levels, health condition, gender, and special client groups), the number of registered vacancies, sector-specific data, labour market trend reviews, and forecasts of skills requirements (often based on surveys of employers). It can also include wage and salary data, and information about training providers, potential employer lists, conditions of employment, and so on. The *range of activities* in which PES engage that relate to LMI, as well as the *extent* of such engagement, varies widely across Europe.

2.4.2. The *use* to which different LMI is put also varies. Often, the information is used by ministries and national policy-makers to aid macro-economic planning. It can also be of use to employers’ and workers’ organisations, educational and vocational training planners, career guidance services, and the wider public. Employment services use LMI to support the planning of PES activities in relation to fluctuations in labour market supply and demand. Sometimes this information is synthesised and packaged in such a way that it can contribute to career guidance, making it available in more user-friendly formats to the employment advisers, and increasingly to clients as well.

2.4.3. PES may perform one or more of three roles in relation to LMI (cf. Thuy *et al.*, 2001):

2.4.3.1. *Producing LMI as a by-product of its other functions.* One of the key PES functions is the registration of both job-seeker and vacancy information, and keeping track of successful placements of clients in such vacancies. As a result of such activity, PES can provide useful data on the changing labour market situation in terms of demand and supply, even if such data are highly dependent on the share of the PES in the vacancy market. The breadth of such information will therefore tend to differ significantly between a country such as Finland (whose market share of published job vacancies fluctuated between 60% and 71% in the period 1994-2004), Germany (48.5% for 2004), Slovenia (34% for

2004), and others where the average share falls below 30% (see footnote 16).

2.4.3.2. *Acting as the main organisation responsible for producing primary labour market statistics.*

[a] This is the case with several countries in Europe, where the PES plays an important if not a central role in the collection, organisation, analysis and dissemination of labour market information (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia). Indeed, many PES have their own specialised research unit, at central and/or regional levels, involved in the production of labour force surveys, employer surveys and ‘employment barometers’ and in the forecasting of employment trends (e.g. Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Slovenia).

[b] In other cases, however, the responsibility for producing LMI lies with institutions that are separate from the PES, such as national offices of statistics, labour directorates, and ministries of planning (e.g. Estonia, Cyprus, Luxembourg).

[c] A mix between the two approaches is also possible, with the PES focusing on producing primary labour market information, but then outsourcing specific elements to external bodies (e.g. Belgium-VDAB collects LMI on its own, or with the help of specialised research institutes; Greece outsources to affiliated companies; Austria produced the raw data, but outsources its analysis for the purpose of labour market development studies to an external provider, and also outsources studies concerning the labour market situation in specific regions or localities). Where such outsourcing is resorted to, the PES sometimes maintains the role of quality auditor, ensuring comprehensiveness and reliability (e.g. the Netherlands).

2.4.3.3. *Acting as analyser, synthesiser and distributor of value-added LMI.*

[a] In this case, key issues include [i] whether career guidance services are identified as one of the main customers for such LMI, and [ii] how, and by whom, the LMI is integrated into more general career information. The PES is often the key interface between the production of LMI and its packaging and delivery to interested users, and the dissemination of such LMI is seen as enhancing transparency (e.g. the Netherlands): the latter is one of the key principles underpinning the Employment Service Convention mandate for the PES in the area of LMI. Many PES bind themselves to delivering LMI at regular intervals (e.g. monthly labour market reports in Sweden; monthly and quarterly reports in the Czech Republic; twice a year in Switzerland).

[b] In many countries, special units analyse labour market statistics to extract information that is of relevance to the task of career guidance workers, and to package it in user-friendly ways. France’s ANPE, for

instance, has a special set of publications for this purpose, and also uses the intranet to ensure that its advisers are constantly up-to-date with developments in the patterns of employment opportunities. Other units are involved in producing—or commissioning the production of—resources that are of use to PES clients. These include career information sheets, as well as supportive material—such as videos, DVDs, internet-based video-clips, and so on—that give users a qualitative feel for the work that each occupation represents, as well as providing them with useful indicators about employment opportunities in particular sectors. Open-access websites with LMI are transforming the PES role in this area, both in making such information more readily available, transparent, and easily up-datable, but also in enabling much of it to be used in a self-service mode. This makes it possible for staff to devote more time to tasks where personal contact is necessary.

[c] Access to LMI is also often provided by PES to other sites where career guidance is offered (such as schools and private employment services). PES may also make such information available via career information centres, that are either attached to the PES (as in Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia) or at least partly independent of them (e.g. the ‘Infoteka’ in Sweden).

- 2.4.4. Survey responses identified a number of challenges for PES in relation to LMI. First, the trend towards decentralisation (see section 3.2) has created some problems in the collection and consolidation of databases. In some cases, there is no unified vacancy database that can give an overall picture of labour market demand, thus limiting the purview of the job-broking process (e.g. Latvia). In other cases, the LMI is fragmented, and therefore not easily accessible (e.g. Belgium-FOREM is attempting to address this challenge by integrating all LMI in a single, web-based database).
- 2.4.5. A second challenge for PES in this area is to develop the capacity to analyse and make use of LMI for career guidance purposes. As the Slovenian response notes, it is much easier to produce LMI than to analyse it in relation to PES service goals and develop effective ways of using it.
- 2.4.6. Beyond LMI, PES often play an important role in developing and disseminating career information in broader terms, including occupational descriptions and their links with educational pathways. Some tools incorporating such information are outlined in section 5.6. In Germany, for example, the BERUFEnet system covers occupations, fields of study, and training programmes. These are rated on around 100 dimensions: the same framework is applied to all three. For occupations, some labour market information is included, in the form of factual trend data on qualification level, sectoral distribution, and unemployment level and characteristics; no projections are made on future supply and demand. The relationships between field of study and occupation tend to be narrow (e.g. history as field of study is linked to historian); no graduate destination is included (apparently because this is no longer collected systematically). Occupations within BERUFEnet are rated in relation to subsets of a list of around 6,000 competences. These

cover a mix of core competences, technical competences, and soft skills (personal/social attributes); only the first two of these categories are matched against the occupations. The ratings were developed by a private provider, based on expert judgement and consultation. There are also links from the competences into KURS (a database of training opportunities), indicating training that will develop the competences. In Finland, an innovative 'Work in the Future' programme is being designed to enable users to visualise possible new structures and features of work in 15/20 years' time: this programme will be available on the internet from 2007.

[B] Services for students

2.4.7. In several countries, PES also makes an important contribution to career guidance provision in educational institutions. This may be indirect and limited—as when labour market information, occupational profiles, trends in vacancies and so on are made available. But often it is direct and more substantial, as in the following examples:

2.4.7.1. In some countries, PES staff visit schools and higher education institutions in order to give talks and present information about the labour market, including the structure of employment opportunities, as well as to advertise the kinds of services that PES offer and which pupils might need to make use of when they leave school (e.g. Belgium-VDAB, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia).

2.4.7.2. In other national contexts, PES manages career information offices which are open to pupils on an individual and/or group basis, with PES staff providing support in the use of resources (e.g. CIPS in Slovenia; BIZ in Austria, Germany, Luxembourg).

2.4.7.3. PES staff also sometimes run programmes (on their own, or in collaboration with others) with early school-leavers and drop-outs (e.g. Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, Slovenia, Switzerland). Often the assumption here is that institutions that are separate from the school are more likely to be accepted by those who have experienced problems at school.

2.4.7.4. In some countries, PES career guidance staff are involved in running work-related programmes with students, involving work skills development (e.g. Latvia), work shadowing, work tasters and work experience, and the management of work-based learning in apprenticeship schemes (e.g. Malta).

2.4.7.5. In Slovenia, PES staff work with gifted students, and manage a guidance service that helps determine who should get scholarships. Some of these scholarships are also reserved for promising students from poorer socio-economic backgrounds.

2.4.8. Survey responses as well as country visits highlighted a number of challenges in relation to PES provision of career guidance services to schools. One

important challenge relates to those countries where high levels of unemployment lead PES to focus their energies more exclusively on what they consider to be their primary clients, the unemployed. The generalisation and intensification of personalised service provision results in greater demands on staff time; in a context where staff complements are not augmented, other services which are considered to be more marginal to the PES mission are reduced or abandoned. Increasingly, then, we note a tendency for PES services to schools to decline (e.g. Cyprus, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia), so that the *preventive* guidance function of PES diminishes in favour of *curative* or *remedial* guidance. In Norway, the PES used to offer career guidance to school pupils and to others, and the previous Employment Act formally required it to “provide vocational guidance to those who need it”; the new Employment Act no longer specifies this requirement. With the rise in unemployment in the mid-1980s the service to schools was withdrawn, and since then career guidance has almost entirely disappeared as a separate service. This trend is not, however, visible across the board. Latvia, for instance, has decided to increase its services in order to reach out to school pupils, to higher education students, and most particularly to students from the vocational education sector. In Germany, links between the BA and schools are formally defined through an agreement with the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in the *laender*. This has recently been revived to include more attention to the identification—even two years prior to formally leaving school—of young people at risk of becoming unemployed, so that more effective help can be given to them.

- 2.4.9. Another challenge arises from a difference in the approach to career guidance between PES staff and guidance personnel in schools—a difference that has been reported by several countries both in the present survey, and in the other career guidance reviews carried out by the OECD and the European Commission (which included career guidance in the education sector). While guidance staff in schools tend to emphasise open choice, PES staff tend to focus rather more on the opportunity structures available and to stress ‘pragmatism’ and ‘realism’ in decision-making. The tension between the two approaches can limit cross-sectoral collaboration, yet is potentially a creative force in an area which, of its very nature, attempts to bridge the world of learning and the world of work.

CHAPTER 3: TRENDS IN SERVICE ORGANISATION

3.1. Organisational development and restructuring

3.1.1. The delivery of career guidance within the context of PES—whether we refer to personalised employment services, to specialised career guidance, or to other related services—has been much marked by the often substantial changes in the institutional organisation of the PES over the past decade or so. The prevalence of change—and often deep change at that—has been signalled in practically all the 30 responses to the survey, though for some the changes are more recent than for others. Many of these changes are not unique to the PES. Rather, they are part of a broader movement in the strategic—not to mention ideological—re-thinking of public services generally, and are subject not only to changing needs and economic, social, political and cultural challenges, but also to trends in the design of organisational responses to such needs and challenges. In this chapter, two closely connected trends in service organisation in the PES across Europe will be considered: responsibility-sharing [a] through decentralisation, and [b] through partnership in service delivery and outsourcing. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the way in which standards are being promoted and adopted in this ‘new’ organisational climate in order to ensure quality across the regions/localities, and among service providers.

3.2. Responsibility-sharing through decentralisation

3.2.1. One form of organisational restructuring which may affect career guidance services is decentralisation. A review by OECD (1998) indicated that at least nine European countries (Belgium-Flanders, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK) were at the time involved in decentralising PES services to regions and provinces and in the use of local management for the design and implementation of employment policies (see also OECD, 2003; Sultana, 2004). The present survey confirms this trend, with respondents noting a tendency for more autonomy to be allocated to the regional and local offices (e.g. Portugal, Slovenia, Spain). In France, traditionally one of the more centralised countries in Europe, the shift towards decentralisation was reinforced by legislation enacted as recently as 2004.

3.2.2. The arguments in favour of decentralisation are, in many ways, persuasive. There is a growing recognition that labour markets change rapidly, that this change has regional/local dynamics and specificities, and that PES clients are diverse, with their varied needs being influenced by the structure of employment opportunities available in their locale. Strong centralised management of such complex and variegated realities and needs has increasingly been deemed to be inappropriate. Instead, more and more autonomy and decision-making power are being devolved to the regional and local offices on the grounds that, in principle, they are more aware of—and in a better position to respond to—the specific needs of clients in that locality. Generally speaking, then, central management has progressively allocated more discretion in decision-making—and in the use of financial resources—to

the regional and local levels of management, so as to provide a more adequate organisational environment for the development of prompt, appropriate and innovative strategies in response to the often context-bound challenges they have to confront. This innovative capacity is captured nicely by the Dutch, who call their PES staff ‘local entrepreneurs’. Central management, in most cases, remains responsible for providing a policy framework for service delivery, and for facilitating vertical and horizontal communication within the organisation. For local, regional and central PES staff—including those providing personalised employment and career guidance services—such change has major implications for their role and professional identity. The countries whose PES have remained somewhat centralised are, understandably, the small territories of Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta, and even in these cases there is a tendency to give some autonomy to the local offices.

- 3.2.3. The degree of relative autonomy from the ‘centre’ will vary from country to country, and is captured by the distinction the French draw between ‘*déconcentration*’ (partial devolution of powers) and ‘*décentralisation*’ (which is broader and more systemic in nature) (see Box 3.1). In some countries (e.g. the Czech Republic), the process of decentralisation is partial in scope. In others (e.g. in Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain) it is more extensive and deeper, with possibly the most decentralised PES systems being those of Denmark, Italy and Poland. In a decentralised context, regional and/or local offices can enjoy a greater or lesser degree of autonomy in the organisation of services, in making decisions about the way offices are run, in the recruitment of personnel, in the training of staff, and in the way funds are used. The relationship between the three levels of central, regional and local offices is managed differently in different national contexts. In Poland, for instance, there is no direct link between the three levels, but overall coherence is aimed for by stipulating operational rules in detail. In the Czech Republic, France and Ireland, there are regular meetings between the managers of offices at the three levels.

Box 3.1. Decentralisation and career guidance services in France

ANPE is engaged in a process of ‘*déconcentration*’. Some elements are still decided at the central level: this could include deciding the standards for local offices—ranging from the colour and type of furniture that can be used in the self-service area and by the employment advisers, to the workbooks and guidebooks used in job-search workshops. Terms of reference are established in the calls for tender, thus ensuring a high degree of uniformity and similarity of standards across the whole country. Other powers are devolved to the level of ‘*région*’ and ‘*département*’: the latter, for instance, decides on how a budget will be allocated for different schemes and measures and among the different local agencies under its care, but always within the framework set by the national agency, and on criteria that have been set centrally. At the same time, the specificity of the local structure of occupational opportunities—i.e. the character of a particular ‘*bassin d’emploi*’—is given a great deal of importance. At the local level, for example, decisions can be made as to who to outsource guidance services to, though again this has to take place within the parameters set by the centre and the regional

directorates. At the regional level, the Director analyses the way things are going in relation to the budget two or three times per year, and adjusts accordingly.

According to some of the central and regional PES managers interviewed, the process of devolution presents ANPE with several challenges. One of these concerns how far the Agency can retain its historical identity as a *national* public service while become more and more '*déconcentré*'. Another challenge is to find ways of working more closely with local authorities, even if they do not always have competence in employment matters. The co-ordination between the different offices at the different levels is also a major challenge, and several strategies have been put in place to encourage both vertical and horizontal communication between the ANPE network. Meetings are held on a regular (often bi-monthly) basis between directors of local offices, between the 22 directors of regional offices, and also with the headquarters. There are intranet facilities to help communication. In addition, ideas developed at the grass roots are presented annually at the 'Innovations Forum' ('*Forum des Initiatives et Innovations*')—organised at both inter-regional and national level—with prizes (money and certificate of recognition) being given to best practices. Another concern is that, in the progressive devolution of powers, it has sometimes proved difficult to find the right balance between what should remain at the discretion of the centre, and what should be decided at the sub-centre levels. In some cases, the centre does not leave enough margins of flexibility to the region, while sometimes it gives the regional and local levels too much responsibility, beyond that which is within the competences of the advisers (e.g. having to deal with the management of property rental agreements in relation to the employment-office building). One idea being floated is that there needs to be another management level located at the interstices of the central and regional authority, through the establishment of an inter-regional body.

3.2.4. Given the fact that several countries have experimented with different degrees of decentralisation for a number of years now, the survey also captured some of the disadvantages of such organisational restructuring. Watts & Fretwell (2004, p.18), in their study of guidance in intermediately developed countries, had already pointed out that while decentralisation can result in stronger local ownership and customisation of services, it can also produce some difficulties in the employment and career counselling field. Similar conclusions were reached by OECD (2004) and Sultana (2004). From the survey responses, it became evident that a number of challenges are linked to decentralisation, which certainly cannot be considered a panacea for addressing some of the more enduring problems with service delivery. Some of these challenges are outlined below.

3.2.4.1. Decentralisation can impede the development and dissemination of national labour market information (see para.2.4.4), and the harmonious development of services in the interests of labour mobility.

3.2.4.2. Decentralisation can also lead to the development of 'deep differences' in service provision between the regions—a concern that was raised by two of the more decentralised PES systems in Europe, those of Italy and Poland. While opinions are divided on the matter, interview data suggest that some managers of Polish employment offices were concerned about the swing from a centralised to a decentralised system. Some felt that this had weakened the national dimension of the system, that local office were working independently from each other and the National Labour

Office, and that as a consequence service delivery standards differed between one office and another, and lines of responsibility were not clearly drawn. Others felt that such issues would be addressed once nation-wide standards were adopted, since these would promote uniformity of service delivery across the country, and once managers developed a network of offices. Such initiatives were already appearing in some ‘voivodships’ or regions, and in one case a forum for 38 directors had been set up. At a higher administrative level, 13 of the 16 ‘voivodships’ had agreed to set up an association—a bottom-up initiative which had received the full support of the Ministry, where a major rethinking about the benefits of unbridled decentralisation was under way.

3.2.4.3. Decentralisation can render the management of services more complex and less transparent, even if it has embedded them more firmly in local government. Indeed, in this regard, but also in relation to increasing outsourcing and partnership in service delivery at the local level, several respondents (e.g. Belgium-FOREM, Belgium-VDAB) pointed out to the need for a ‘cartography of services’, as a mechanism to maintain a semblance of a system that is clearly visible, identifiable and bounded.

3.2.4.4. In some cases, as the Portuguese response suggests, decentralisation can weaken the capacity for central management to such an extent that it becomes difficult to manage an innovative project on a national scale.

3.2.5. [a] The critical reflection on how to find the right mix between strong and determined policy steering on the one hand, and the devolution of responsibility to enhance prompt and innovative responses to context-sensitive issues on the other, seems to be common to many European PES. Such critical reflection has also been triggered off not only by decentralisation practices *per se*, but also because decentralisation is often linked to other organisational developments, such as service delivery through partnerships and through outsourcing (to be considered in section 3.3 below).

[b] Several country responses (e.g. Belgium-FOREM, Hungary, Sweden) have indicated that they have taken measures to bring about more coherence at the national level. Ireland, for instance, has established the National Employment Service, integrating the two strands of the FÁS Employment Service and the Local Employment Service within one service structure, in the belief that this would “benefit client groups, allow for greater coherence, and bring a sharper focus to existing delivery arrangements”; the Central Support Unit ensures greater consistency in service delivery through standards, guidelines, procedures and policies, but maintains regional responsibility for operational delivery through a matrix-management structure. In several countries, a similar ‘central office’ supports local offices in implementing nation-wide standards (as in Finland, the Netherlands and Portugal). In Belgium, FOREM has the role of co-ordinating various labour market actors, ensuring coverage and consistency in service provision. The trend towards increased uniformity to ensure national standards has also been strongly signalled by Finland and Sweden, among others. The UK—one of the first European countries to

embrace decentralised management structures—is also moving towards tighter reporting back to the centre.

3.3. Responsibility-sharing with service providers

3.3.1. A major shift can be observed in the institutional culture of the PES over the past decade or so. It has moved away from being a largely self-sufficient organisation, to one that sets out to develop and manage specific relations with other agencies in the delivery of services. Such institutional relationships can be marked by *collaboration* (through partnership agreements), *devolution* (through outsourcing or even privatisation of specific functions), and/or *competition* (with private employment agencies). Thuy *et al.* (2001, p.145) suggest that there are three key factors that have contributed to this shift. The first is the increasing influence of economic liberalism and globalisation, which has challenged the role of the public sector, and has made a case for increased competition in order to ensure efficiency. The second is that the labour market has become so complex that no single service provider can possibly deliver the range of expertise required. Finally, it has become increasingly clear that the issues of unemployment and social exclusion cannot be considered in isolation from wider social and economic problems, and that therefore a whole platform of organisations and operators need to work together in order to develop integrated solutions in a holistic manner.

3.3.2. Our survey indicates that the pressures to collaborate, to devolve, and in some cases to compete with other career guidance providers are felt across the PES in Europe. Responses suggest that:

3.3.2.1. Funding restrictions lead to drives for more efficient service delivery, through the pooling of resources and joint initiatives where partners can contribute depending on where their specific strengths lie (e.g. Portugal, Sweden). This is particularly true when trying to deal with specific client groups. In Portugal and many Swiss cantons, for instance, the policy decisions to reduce early school-leaving and to seek to integrate young people without any qualifications have entailed closer partnerships between the PES and the education sector. In Greece, the specific needs of women returners have required the development of an integrated programme that has brought together several partners.¹⁷

3.3.2.2. In many cases, collaboration with partners becomes inevitable where the ranks of the unemployed swell, but staff resources are insufficient (e.g. Austria, Slovakia), or become depleted due to the policy decision to reduce personnel in the public-service sector (e.g. Poland). Shortage of

¹⁷ The move towards more efficient use of national resources through collaborative service provision has been embedded in legislative measures in some countries (e.g. Germany, Italy, Slovakia). Italy's recent PES reform law, for instance, envisions the PES as a strategic organiser of the labour market. The law requires service providers to collaborate to provide services in an integrated manner, and the PES is allocated the role and responsibility of promoting such integration and collaboration in the labour market.

skilled staff also leads to building partnerships with specialised providers, as in Italy, for instance.

- 3.3.2.3. The increasing acceptance of the notion of lifelong career guidance entails the development of an integrated system which permits continuity of service, and therefore collaboration between different providers throughout the client's life span—a point made forcefully by Finland and Iceland.
 - 3.3.2.4. Decentralisation and devolution of power to local employment offices (see section 3.2) provide an impetus to the development of partnership-based initiatives, as local actors feel empowered to join forces to address challenges in relation to which they have had first-hand experience (e.g. Greece).
 - 3.3.2.5. Some evaluations that PES have carried out of career guidance services have indicated that such services would be strengthened if there was a stronger collaboration with partners (e.g. Norway). Similarly, the OECD and European Commission guidance reviews (see para.1.1.1) have strongly affirmed the importance of collaboration between partners in the provision of career guidance services, and some of our survey responses refer to this, with some even setting up, or planning to set up, a National Guidance Forum in their respective countries (e.g. Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Malta, Slovenia) (see para.7.4.5).
 - 3.3.2.6. For the New Member States, EU accession has had a major impact on the institutionalisation of co-operation and partnership in PES service delivery with other stakeholders and community-based organisations. As several countries pointed out (e.g. Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia) funding from the EU (e.g. European Social Fund projects) generally requires that the PES collaborate with others. However, the development of partnership also falls within the logic of the overall modernisation of PES, which most of the NMS are involved in.
- 3.3.3. This section will provide a brief overview of how these pressures to collaborate and share the responsibility of service delivery are expressed in institutional terms. The impact such organisational practices have on career guidance service delivery will be considered in more detail in Chapter 4.
 - 3.3.4. According to Thuy *et al.* (2001, p.126), four models of competitive service delivery have been introduced by PES in different countries: [a] *privatisation*, where a former public function is moved permanently into the private sector and becomes self-financing; [b] *contracting-out* (or outsourcing), where the delivery of a former public-sector function is the subject of private-sector competition, though it continues to be supported wholly or partly from public funds; [c] *market-testing*, which is like contracting-out except that the existing public-sector provider competes against other bidders; and [d] *vouchers*, which enable the client or customer to shop around between suppliers.

3.3.5. Several countries have only recently allowed private employment agencies (PREAs) to be set up. This is the case for Greece for instance, where PREAs were only permitted by law in 1999. In the Belgian region covered by ORBEm, as well as in Poland, PREAs were only permitted to be established in 2004. Some PES have reported privatising *aspects* of their services. A case in point is Denmark, which has privatised activities for the unemployed. Belgium's VDAB has privatised 'merit services' for employers, in relation to the processes of selection, recruitment, and finding temporary work.

3.3.6. [a] By far the most common model adopted by many of the PES in Europe in relation to the provision of career guidance services is outsourcing in either of its two versions as described in para.3.3.2 above: contracting-out and market-testing.¹⁸ A clear trend towards an increase in contracting-out was reported by several countries, including Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. Not all sub-contracting is competitive in the sense indicated in para.3.3.2. Some services can be offered in *partnership* with non-governmental organisations, or with not-for-profit associations. Partnerships can be formed at a central office level, as in the case of Belgium's VDAB, or at a local employment office level.

[b] The volume of outsourcing differs from country to country: from little or nothing in Cyprus, Estonia, Iceland, Malta and Poland, to 90% of services in Switzerland. In France, the principles of '*co-traitance*' (partnership) and '*sous-traitance*' (outsourcing) are relatively new, but by 2004, there were already agreements with 4,800 providers spread all over the nation. The volume of outsourcing can vary not only from country to country, but also from region to region in systems that are decentralised. A factor that can limit the extent of outsourcing is the lack of availability of trained staff outside the PES, a factor mentioned by Cyprus and Portugal, among others.

[c] Contracting-out may represent an institutional response to a increase in demand for services—a demand that has not always been accompanied by an increase in human and material resources. Such increase in demand is not only quantitative, but also qualitative, in the sense that PES have to cater for a broader range of client needs. Much of the contracting-out goes in the direction of specialised services that work with specific client target-groups, and is motivated by a desire to ensure that those closest to these groups deliver a service that is timely and both customer- and context-sensitive. Italy and Malta, for instance, outsource services for clients with disability, while Ireland, Italy and Slovenia outsource services to early school-leavers. Germany outsources services for clients who have multiple problems, and who are hard-to-place. OECD (2001, pp.59-60) and Thuy *et al.* (2001, p.127) suggest that contracting-out is more often used for such activities as training (including group guidance-related programmes like job clubs), than for core placement and intensive-assistance functions. However, the range of services

¹⁸ The only reference to a voucher scheme was made by Germany, where the Job Aktiv-Law of 2002 introduced a placement voucher system which allowed the outsourcing of placement services to private providers of the client's choice, a process that requires close collaboration between the PES and its partners.

which our survey responses indicate that PES contract out, and which have a greater or lesser career guidance element embedded in them, is broad. It includes:

- *Client assessment*—the Czech Republic, for instance, has outsourced some of its ‘balance diagnostic centres’ (see footnote 23) to external agencies, while the Netherlands has contracted-out its ‘accreditation of prior learning’ exercise. Finland, on its part, outsources the assessment of clients’ working capacity and ‘start-up mapping’.
- *Job-search training*—as in Finland and Slovenia. Sweden buys such services from private companies in order to cater for clients in the activity-guarantee programmes.
- *Personal action planning*—Belgium’s VDAB, for instance, has outsourced 3,000 pathways for its long-term unemployed clients.

[d] In most—but by no means all—of the cases reported in the survey, the agencies to whom services are outsourced have to follow regulations and standards established by the PES. Ireland and Slovakia, for instance, set quite stringent standards, while in the UK providers have to meet the Matrix quality standards. Spain requires that any agency which leads PES-outsourced activities, whether targeting individuals or groups, should follow the technical guidelines approved by the PES. One of the minimum conditions that Spain specifies is that when tendering to provide a service, the agency must clearly indicate the methods and tools to be used for carrying out the activity, the qualifications of the personnel and the way in which they have been recruited, and the resources available to implement the activity.

3.4. Maintaining standards

3.4.1 The sharing and devolution of responsibility—both when this concerns the regions, and when it concerns private service providers—raises a number of important issues. A central one is how the quality of personalised employment and career guidance services provided or sub-contracted by PES is to be assured. OECD (2004, p.132-135) points out that, in the past, quality has often been presumed to be assured through administrative controls and through specification of the qualifications required by staff. But it argues that this is too limited, particularly where staff qualifications are quite weak or variable. It notes that service-delivery standards can be of four types:

- Generic standards applied to a wide variety of activities, of which career guidance is only one (e.g. ISO, EFQM, TQM).¹⁹
- Standards developed specifically for a particular sector (e.g. PES) which includes guidance among its range of activities.
- Standards developed specifically for the career guidance field, with an accreditation procedure to enforce them (as with the Matrix standards in the UK).

¹⁹ For the application of such standards in PES, see Thuy *et al.* (2001, pp.129-131) and Expert Group (2002, p.15).

- Voluntary guidelines developed for the career guidance field, which services can adopt and apply if they so wish (as in Denmark).

3.4.2 Survey responses indicate that Europe's PES have drawn on all these strategies in an attempt to find a positive balance between *flexibility* and *congruence*—i.e. in ensuring that access to range and quality of services does not substantially differ between locales, to the detriment of specific groups of citizens. However, it is also clear that there are many countries (e.g. Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece, Iceland, Malta, the Netherlands) which have not yet introduced standards in relation to their career guidance services, or quality-assurance mechanisms to ensure that such standards are kept. Nevertheless, many of these countries are either planning to introduce such measures, or are in the process of piloting them. A case in point is that of the local employment services in Greece. Here the PES has recently launched a project that aims at establishing a system for assessing its work performance. The project focuses on an analysis of its functions, procedures and activities, and on the design of qualitative and quantitative performance indicators.

3.4.3 Where standards have been set, they have generally been established *centrally*, with local and regional PES offices as well as partner organisations being required to conform. Some countries have articulated *common minimal standards* (e.g. Austria, Estonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the UK), which all PES offices as well as partner organisations are required to attain. Sometimes these standards are embedded in a legislative framework, as in Italy. Increasingly, attempts are being made by different PES to aim for ISO standards in service delivery (e.g. Latvia, Malta, Slovenia). In France, outsourcing agencies have to be certified, calls for tenders specify criteria, and increasingly the principle of 'payment by results'—for instance, how many clients find a job, and remain in that job for more than 6 months—is being used.²⁰ In some cases (e.g. Denmark, Switzerland) standards are set by the local or regional employment service authorities, and results are evaluated at that level, through either internal or external auditing.

3.4.4 As noted in para.3.4.1 above, the approach to quality assurance can be *comprehensive* and/or *targeted*.

3.4.4.1. In the *comprehensive* approach, generic aspects related to standards of services are focused upon. These can include general rules of service provision which are made available to all staff (e.g. in office manuals, or on an intranet), be they involved in career guidance or not (e.g. Estonia, Spain). Such general rules typically specify the format, content and criteria for successful service provision, as well as providers' and clients' rights and obligations. Slovenia's employment services are in the process of introducing *general* ISO organisational standards, but these are not deemed sufficient to ensure quality and effectiveness in the field of career guidance.

²⁰ The 'payment by results' strategy raises an important concern, namely that organisations will work more readily—or exclusively—with the easier-to-place clients. In the UK, Job Centre Plus has countered this by imposing clients on partner organisations.

3.4.4.2. In the *targeted* approach, the focus is on specific aspects of service, and this could include career-guidance-related activities. In Austria, for instance, quality standards are in place regarding the updating of career-related information, gender-fair labour market information, the minimum time to be allocated per client during an interview, and the appearance of the room in which individual guidance interviews are held. Ireland has ensured that its careers database ('Careers Directions') meets WAI3 standards. Slovakia has established standards relating to the quality of its labour market information. Spain has developed a detailed list of technical specifications for several dimensions of the career guidance process, identifying the methods that can be used in delivering each dimension, the minimum qualifications required by staff in each case, as well as the minimum time and resources that need to be allocated. Systematic basic quality standards for all PES services, including guidance services, have been defined in the service-product project of the Finnish Ministry of Labour in 2001 (see Box 3.2 below).

Box 3.2. Finnish quality standards for guidance service products

In 2001, Finland's Ministry of Labour established criteria for quality standards for its service products. These standards are mainly used as a basis for client follow-up studies and staff training in client services. The criteria of the standards are:

Vocational Guidance and Career Planning: Quality Criteria

- Client feedback sufficiently good on the chosen scale.
- The client gets the help he or she seeks or is assigned to other services.
- The client is capable of making career decisions.
- Client decision-making is progressing on the basis of the feedback given.

Personal Vocational Guidance: Quality Criteria

- Access to guidance service within a reasonable time (as defined by the employment office).
- Flexible appointment.
- The client has a correct and realistic view of vocational guidance.
- Individual co-operation plan.
- The client gets the help he/she needs.
- The co-operation partners and the sending party have a correct and clear view of the vocational guidance and career-planning services.
- If necessary, the client is assigned to other services.
- The continued plan for the client has been made.
- Registrations in the URA data system have been made.
- Client feedback is sufficiently good on the chosen scale.

Training and Vocational Information Service: Quality Criteria

- The availability of the service.
- The authenticity, up-to-dateness and coverage of the information.
- The clearness and intelligibility of the information.
- A pleasant and peaceful service environment.
- Client feedback is sufficiently good on the chosen scale.

Job-Seeking Services: Quality Criteria

- The duration of the job-seeking shortens.
- Client feedback sufficiently good on the chosen scale.

- The information on the job-seeker has been gathered on a wide basis and entered correctly into the URA data system.

Job-Seeking Services: Quality Criteria

- The vacancies are filled within ____ days (e.g. a yearly set goal).
- The unemployment spells shorten by an average of _____ (e.g. a yearly set goal).
- The proportion of persons who have been placed in the open labour market grows (e.g. a yearly set goal).
- Client feedback is sufficiently good on the chosen scale.

EURES Employment Service: Quality Criteria

- Inclusive access to the service.
- Sufficient and up-to-date job information.
- The terms of employment of the notified workplaces comply with the labour legislation of the country.
- Inquiries are answered within a month.
- The applications are checked in accordance with the criteria set by the employer before being sent abroad.
- The applications of those applicants only who have realistic possibilities of placement are sent abroad.
- The assignment is administered in the way agreed upon.
- The success of the applications is monitored.
- The information on living and working conditions on the Internet are up-to-date. The information is updated each year.
- The international network of EURES advisers is skilled and functioning well.
- Client feedback is sufficiently good on the chosen scale.

3.4.5. Most countries—including those that have no formal systems of quality assurance in place—give attention to the safeguarding of standards through the recruitment of staff with what are considered to be the appropriate pre-service qualifications, or, as in the Netherlands, with the required competency profile. As we outline in more detail in Chapter 5, the certification required is often not directly linked to guidance—whether the recruits are involved in providing personalised employment services, or more intensive career guidance. In many cases these prospective PES staff present proxy qualifications which are assumed to indicate knowledge and skills related to the career guidance field. Because of this, several countries provide continued professional development opportunities to career guidance staff through induction and in-service training (e.g. Estonia, Portugal, Slovenia), and through the monitoring of counsellors (e.g. Portugal, Slovenia, Spain). Such monitoring is often not merely evaluative in scope, but is also intended to identify and document innovative practices in the regions, with a view to giving them visibility and, where appropriate, to generalising them.

3.4.6. Some countries try to ensure quality across the different regions through control over the service-delivery process itself. One way of doing this is through the articulation of national operational guidelines and ‘work procedure manuals’—i.e. standard procedures that must be respected when completing specific tasks (e.g. Ireland, Malta, Norway, Portugal) (see Box 3.3). Slovakia has established a procedure that standardises the work of vocational counsellors as they develop an individual action plan with their

clients. Estonia has regulations regarding the procedure to be adopted when a complaint is to be reported, and how the complaint is to be processed. Lithuania has established standards regulating the input made by counsellors, on the basis of a synthesis of the outcomes of the OECD, European Commission and World Bank reviews of career guidance. In some of these cases, the quality of operational procedures is audited (e.g. Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain). In Ireland, for instance, the PES operates within an externally accredited quality system, with progress being made towards achieving an accredited Human Resource Quality mark ('Excellence Through People').

Box 3.3. Norway's operational guidelines for the ARENA case-management system

In Norway, the quality-assurance programme currently consists of the following phases:

1. *Outline of job-seekers' needs*
Here the manner in which job-seekers are received and channelled to the appropriate service is briefly described.
2. *Information, counselling and job-hunting at the job centre*
Here the job centre's primary goal is described, as well as the case managers' tasks at the centre.
The job centre shall be equipped with electronic equipment, enabling job-seekers to locate available positions and providing them with an electronic tool. Job-seekers will also be able to write their job applications there and receive general guidance in seeking work and finding suitable educational options and occupations. In addition, they will have access to information on Aetat's other assistance programmes.
3. *Registration, skills mapping and job-hunting*
Here the service provided in an initial, comprehensive interview with the job-seeker is described.
The primary goal of skills mapping and job-hunting is to get job-seekers into jobs as soon as possible. In addition, information and counselling concerning the labour market is provided.

[ARENA, the new case management system, makes it possible to match job-seekers with available jobs based on their skills, thus making the placement function more efficient. Matching is also a useful tool in the counselling of job-seekers who need remedial training. Through matching, the job-seeker can get an overview of the labour market, in terms both of his/her current skills and of those that the applicant plans to acquire.]
4. *Supplementary information and counselling*
Many job-seekers require remedial initiatives before they can actually apply for work. Here there is a description of the assistance and routines that are relevant in a clarifying and planning phase prior to an action plan. The action plan is a document that states the occupational goal of the job-seeker; it also specifies which initiatives will be implemented in achieving this goal.

[ARENA provides functionality for action plans. The system will also soon be invested

with a function that will help to shape and document guidance and counselling activities.]

5. *Follow-up*

This phase provides routines for how often and in what manner job-seekers are to receive follow-up by Aetat. This applies solely to job-seekers who are actively searching for work and applicants who are in a remedial training programme.

[This process is an integral part of ARENA. It is unnecessary to check the manuals to find out what to do.]

3.4.7. The other side of establishing standards is to ensure that the objectives for which they were set—namely, improved service delivery—are in fact attained. This raises the issue of monitoring of services, be it at regional or local level, or of those that are provided by partner or contracted agencies. Several countries (e.g. Cyprus, Estonia, the Netherlands) reported that they do not evaluate effectiveness of service provision, while others (e.g. Slovakia, Sweden) have only started doing so recently.

3.4.8. In a number of countries, the strategy to ensure standards in provision while allowing space for local dynamics and initiatives has been to steer by means of target agreements and ‘management by objectives’ established by the Head Office, rather than by administrative regulation. In this way, common outcomes are centrally decreed, but the ways of attaining them are left to the locale. This has been the case with Austria, Belgium-VDAB, Germany and Latvia. In Finland, the Ministry of Labour supervises the regional offices through ‘management by results’, legislation and negotiations; regional offices, on their part, supervise local offices. Greece has recently introduced monitoring of compliance with the personalised approach and with the procedure for personal action planning. In Belgium, FOREM sets output indicators for each region, and the results are then investigated by the Management Board.

3.4.9. The auditing of attainment targets is generally based on either quantitative or qualitative indicators, though increasingly a mix of both approaches is being adopted.

3.4.9.1. *Quantitative criteria:* In this case, the success or otherwise of a PES is evaluated in terms of the numbers of clients handled, and its ability to place clients in training programmes and jobs. Other often-used quantitative criteria include:

- the number of long-term unemployed that are seen per fixed period of time (e.g. per month);
- the length of time a client remains in a job after s/he has been placed by the PES;
- the number of personal action plans that are developed;
- the range of counselling strategies used;
- the waiting time for a personal interview with an employment or guidance officer;

- the amount of time that elapses before employers get a response to their training offer;
- the number of clients as a proportion of school-leavers;
- the share of people who have participated in active measures connected to labour market support;
- the number of unemployed after a fixed period of labour market training;
- the number of unemployed after a fixed period of receiving employment subsidies;
- the number of group-based guidance activities;
- the number and proportion of clients integrated in vocational education and training.

3.4.9.2. *Qualitative criteria*: Here, other issues than placement are taken into account, with the evaluation focusing largely on client satisfaction with services received. Such client-satisfaction surveys have become quite common, and several countries reported their use (e.g. Austria, Belgium-FOREM, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland), while others will be implementing them in the near future. Many of these surveys consider PES services in a comprehensive manner. In some cases (as in Finland, for instance), career guidance is specifically targeted; the outcomes of some of these surveys are presented in Chapter 6 (section 6.4). Some use client-satisfaction surveys in conjunction with other methods: Belgium's VDAB, for instance, uses a comprehensive arsenal within its EFQM approach that includes both client-satisfaction surveys and 'balanced scorecards'.²¹

²¹ The 'balanced scorecard' is a recent approach to strategic management developed in the early 1990s by Robert Kaplan (Harvard Business School) and David Norton. The approach enables organisations to clarify their vision and strategy and translate them into action. It provides feedback around both the internal business processes and external outcomes in order to continuously improve strategic performance and results. The balanced scorecard suggests that the organisation be viewed from four perspectives: the learning and growth perspective, the business process perspective, the customer perspective, and the financial perspective. The notion is to develop metrics, collect data and analyse the organisation in relation to each of these perspectives.

CHAPTER 4: TRENDS IN SERVICE DELIVERY

4.1. A changing scenario

4.1.1. The previous chapter has highlighted the ways in which Public Employment Services across Europe have modified—and sometimes radically changed—the way they organise and manage the service. Three key issues were raised that have an impact on the institutional modality of the PES in general, and to the delivery of personalised employment services and career guidance in particular. These were the sharing of responsibility through decentralisation as well as through partnership, and the rise of a culture of standard setting and evaluation in order to assure the quality of services. This chapter examines some of the main trends in the delivery of personalised employment services and career guidance services within this changing organisational environment.

4.1.2. Respondents to the survey identified a number of changes in the delivery of personalised employment and career guidance services. These can all be linked to a change in the underpinning philosophy and approach, particularly in relation to the adoption of activation and a new service model, in many cases inspired directly by the European Employment Strategy (the background for which has been outlined in Chapter 1). The shift in philosophy has been flagged in various ways. In several cases (e.g. Czech Republic, Greece, Finland, France, Hungary, Slovakia, Spain) career guidance, and elements related to it, have been re-defined. Spain, for instance, reports a move towards a social constructivist model²² in service delivery, emphasising the active role of the client, and the supportive role of the employment adviser and career counsellor as tutors, facilitators and mentors. Similarly France has started referring to clients as '*chercheurs d'emploi*' (job-seekers) in lieu of '*demandeurs d'emploi*' (job-claimants), signalling the construction of customers and PES staff as co-active partners in pursuit of a shared outcome. In some cases, such changes have even warranted the drafting of new legal provisions (e.g. the Czech Republic, Italy, Slovakia). Shifts to a personalised approach to service delivery have led to many changes, including:

- The restructuring of PES office space to ensure better guidance provision, with 'deepening services' being offered in separate rooms (e.g. in Austria, Belgium-VDAB, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Poland, Slovenia).
- The introduction of a range of innovations in the methodology used in personalised employment and career guidance services, including 'personal action planning', and also related methodologies such as

²² Social constructivism emphasises the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and in constructing knowledge based on this understanding. A main tenet of social constructivism is the conviction that reality is constructed through human activity, i.e. it does not exist prior to its social invention. Individuals create meaning through their interactions with each other and with the environment in which they live. Within the general framework of social constructivism, the approach to career and career decision-making adopts a holistic and interactive stance. In other words, career planning and actions represent an integral part of people's life experiences, and career experiences become meaningful when they are perceived and constructed in people's life contexts.

portfolios (e.g. Belgium-ORBEM, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands), as well as other tools that are useful for assessment and follow-up guidance-related activities.

- The implementation of specialised programmes aimed at special target and at-risk groups (e.g. individual action plans for at-risk groups in Cyprus and Estonia; pilot projects to provide specialised career guidance services to persons with disabilities in Estonia).
- The development of innovative strategies to offer services to clients who are hard to reach, either because they live in geographically remote areas (e.g. Poland's mobile information centres), or because they live on the margins of mainstream society (e.g. Slovenia's work with unqualified early school-leavers).
- The broadening and intensification of provision, particularly in relation to unemployed adults, even if this has meant limiting services to other categories of clients, including those who are still in formal education and training, or those who are already in employment. This lies in tension with the declared intention of a number of respondents that they would like to invest more, in principle, in curative rather than preventive guidance.

4.1.3. Other than the influence of the EES, particularly in relation to activation, and the adoption of the new service model, a number of other reasons can be cited to account for such changes. Certainly, the pressure of increasing numbers of unemployed is having a major effect in several countries, as has already been intimated above. As we shall note in later sections in this chapter, unemployment can both *drive* developments in career guidance, and *limit* them. Another factor that has brought about some changes in the delivery of personalised employment and career guidance services are notions of lifelong career development, which have major implications for extending services to a very broad range of clients. New information technologies have opened up a wide range of opportunities for innovative delivery of services, including self-service approaches. Finally, it is clear that some of the changes are also driven by the availability of EU support for career guidance activities, with funds coming through ESF, PHARE, Leonardo da Vinci, and Academia, among others. It is important to note that for the New Member States, changes in the way career guidance is delivered have tended to be more dramatic and fast as a result of the impact of the run-up to accession in May 2004. In most there is an accelerated process of PES modernisation, particularly in those Central and Eastern European countries where the labour market was previously subject to central regulation.

4.1.4. In the following sections we will focus on some of these changes, looking in particular at the trends in range and depth of services, and at three of the strategies that have been used by European PES to manage such trends: outsourcing, tiering of services, and expansion of self-service.

4.2. Trends in range and depth of services

4.2.1. [a] All the factors identified in the previous section, which can be grouped together within the context of the overall modernisation of PES and the adoption of the personalised service model, have had an important impact on the overall profile of personalised employment and career guidance services in the portfolio of services offered by the PES in Europe.

[b] Several countries (e.g. France, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal) reported a foregrounding of this portfolio. In some (e.g. France, Slovakia), the career guidance field has seen developments in related legislation or in specific conventions of practice, requiring more specialised and expanded services. Other survey responses signalled an increase in financial investment in career guidance activities (e.g. Belgium-FOREM, Belgium-VDAB, Ireland, Portugal, UK). This has been especially true of the New Member States, which have often benefited from European Union funding in this regard. Resources from the European Social Fund have supported career guidance service development in Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and Slovakia, among others. PHARE funding has supported Hungary's career guidance implementation strategy, and has helped the Czech Republic develop career-guidance-related website facilities. Leonardo da Vinci funding has also been critical for the implementation of several career guidance projects, including facilitating the establishment and consolidation of European networks of National Guidance Forums.

[c] Other countries have implemented institutional reform to ensure career guidance delivery: examples include Hungary, which is setting up Vocational Guidance Centres in every county; and Malta, which (like Iceland) is creating a special division to focus on career guidance, and in addition is establishing posts for career guidance specialists, distinguishing this role from that of employment officers.

[d] In other cases, we can see an extension of the range of services that are either specifically focused on career guidance, or are related to it. The developments here are myriad, ranging from the establishment of 'balance diagnostic centres' in the Czech Republic²³ and the setting-up of call-centres in Sweden, to the launching of new 'employment service centres' in Finland, the introduction of an enhanced skills-specific advisory service in each Jobcentre Plus in the UK, and the extension of the network of 'job shops' in Belgium's VDAB. Important, too, is the fact that for some countries, the sheer number of clients that receive some form of career-guidance-related service

²³ The Czech response defines 'balance diagnostics' as a "demanding, specialised counselling activity leading to the client's further orientation in relation to his/her career orientation, based on an assessment (balancing) of his/her current education, personal and professional experience on the one hand and expectations for further professional growth, influenced by the real possibilities of the labour market on the other. In essence, balance diagnostics is a long-term counselling process, preceded by a comprehensive assessment of the person's skills and potential in relation to his/her prospective professional career."

has increased exponentially, as the example of France (see Box 4.1 below) suggests.

Box 4.1. Expansion of service delivery in France

The implementation of the '*Plan d'Aide au Retour à l'Emploi*' (PARE, or 'Support Plan for the Return to Work') and the '*Plan d'Action Personnalisé*' (PAP, or 'Personal Action Planning') has been supported by significant supplementary funding, so as to ensure follow-up interviews every six months, and to reinforce the supportive accompanying services directed at clients during the different phases of the PAP.

The relevant statistics give an idea of the order of change that PAP has entailed: in 2000, the number of initial interviews within the '*Nouveau départ*' scheme was 1 million; in 2003 and 2004, the number of PAP interviews were 7 and 7.2 million respectively.

The number of schemes that involve intensified support has increased from 318,000 in 2000, to 81,000 in 2003, and 865,000 in 2004. For the latter year, one job-seeker out of every two benefited from one or more services (such as competency testing, intensified support, and so on). In total, 2,719,500 service provisions were delivered by ANPE in collaboration with 4,800 partners, of whom 3,500 were from the private sector.

4.2.2. A further aspect of the increase in the range of services refers to the inclusion of a European dimension in the delivery of career guidance. All Europe's PES, including the NMS, have introduced EURES services, often at both central and regional levels, and have trained EURES officers and advisers who are in charge of managing a platform of information about vacancies across Europe. In some cases, as in VDAB in Belgium, EURES vacancies have been mainstreamed into the general database. EURES advisers are often also responsible for managing transnational co-operation projects and for disseminating outcomes, for organising information campaigns on living and working conditions in other countries in the EU, and for promoting sectoral vacancies in their countries among potential job-takers in other EU member states (e.g. Ireland and the UK have held recruitment campaigns for specific work sectors—such as in transport and in catering—in Hungary, Latvia and Malta; while in Cyprus, PES advisers work with employers in order to use the EURES network to tackle labour shortages).

4.2.3. The increase in services has both a demand and a supply dimension. Certainly, as already noted in Chapter 3 (cf. para.3.3.1), the modernisation of the PES has involved a move away from a self-sufficient and perhaps inward-looking organisation, to a more dynamic one which seeks to establish partnerships with others in order to enhance service delivery. It has also involved a different relationship with clients, seeking to develop less standardised and more differentiated responses, attempting to reach out to new client groups, and consequently obliged to make its variegated services more transparent and more readily identifiable by potential customers. Such changes have led to improved capacity for service delivery through partnerships and through subcontracting to specialised agencies, as well as to more innovative marketing

and delivery of services (see Box 4.2 below). Improved marketing, over and above increased unemployment, has also led to an increase in client demand.²⁴ Slovenia's CIPS, for instance, recorded a client increase of 100% in the space of two years; Ireland reported a substantial increase in referrals and an increase in guidance interventions; while Lithuania noted a 1.4 factor increase in the number of unemployed participating in counselling and active labour market measures.

Box 4.2. Examples of innovative marketing and delivery of PES guidance services

Innovative service delivery:

- Use of free-phone (Belgium-VDAB, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Slovenia). In some cases, the facility is merely used to book an interview with a career guidance official (e.g. Italy). In other cases the call service is more extensive (e.g. Sweden's PEPS Information Centre).
- Use of the internet to provide self-service career guidance and information facilities, including the filling in of occupational interest inventories, and the matching of personal profiles with jobs (most countries).
- Use of e-mail contacts with career and information officers (Poland, Slovenia).
- Use of a biometric registration system that enables quick service in registering clients and in the issuing of appointments for interviews with employment advisers or employers (Malta).
- Use of SMS/mobile phone texting to communicate job vacancies (Hungary, Lithuania, Malta).
- Web-cam consulting (Hungary).
- Distance career guidance using video-conferencing facilities (e.g. France, Hungary's e-career initiative, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden).
- Use of TV to disseminate information and 'messages': e.g. TV talk show, including use of the 'reality show' style (in Latvia); TV fiction series (Belgium-VDAB); TV adverts (Belgium-FOREM); TV-based teletext services (Belgium-ORBEM, Switzerland).
- Providing cell-phones and scooters to facilitate access and mobility in the job-seeking process (e.g. Belgium-VDAB, Spain).
- Providing employers with the facility of entering vacancies directly into the PES database themselves (Belgium-ORBEM, Ireland).

Innovative service marketing:

- Career days and fairs (e.g. Greece, Ireland, and several other countries).

²⁴ This to the extent that in cases where staff find it difficult to keep up with demand, some services are purposely *not* marketed any further in order to reduce client flows.

- Street billboards (Malta).
- Targeted marketing campaigns (e.g. in the UK, in ex-offenders' clinics and with Incapacity Benefit customers; in Hungary, with clients with disabilities).
- Website development to make it more accessible, user-friendly and interactive (e.g. Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and several other countries).

4.2.4. The handling of such increases, together with the expansion of the range and quantity of services in career-guidance-related activities, has been facilitated in many cases by ICT, with many countries reporting a quantitative and qualitative improvement of online information about employment opportunities, and open internet access to labour market and occupation-related information. Others (e.g. France, Sweden) have launched call-centres, or are making innovative use of a broader range of communications media, including SMS texting for instance.

4.2.5. In some cases, the expansion of services has led to significant increases in service outlets and staff. In France, the major reform implemented in 2001 led to the tripling of the number of 'supportive accompanying services' delivered, and to a recruitment drive for new employment advisers. Greece has opened 12 new PES offices, renovated 60 others in order to facilitate service delivery, employed 460 new counsellors, and increased staff training opportunities, besides launching a new information management system. Staff increases are reported by Italy, Luxembourg and Malta, with Switzerland boosting its staff complement by 10%.

4.2.6. It is important to note, however, that the increase in the *quantity* and *range* of services may, at times, be detrimental to the *depth* of service provision, particularly in such areas as career guidance, where the relationship dimension between counsellor and client is pivotal to the service. This may be particularly true in a context of high unemployment, so that a question that needs to be raised is whether the nature and extent of PES attention to career guidance is significantly affected by the unemployment rate. In Poland, for instance, where unemployment stands at 18.1%, personal action planning—let alone deeper career guidance encounters—is proving difficult to implement within the parameters of the present counsellor-to-client ratio.²⁵ In Austria, the pressure of unemployment figures has led to considering the withdrawal of AMS staff from the Vocational Information Centres due to lack of resources.

²⁵ One could argue that in principle the role of career guidance is greater when unemployment is low and people have more options to choose between. However, declining or low unemployment rates could also lead to a view that guidance and counselling are not priority activities (as in Cyprus, for instance)—though, as the Expert Group notes, this is a misconception, since 'as unemployment decreases, the work of the guidance counsellor becomes increasingly focused on the more difficult to place unemployed person such as the early school leaver and the long-term unemployed person', and 'interventions for these customer groups are significantly more time consuming and labour intensive than is necessary for the more highly motivated customers' (Expert Group, 2002, p.24).

- 4.2.7. Some countries, however, have opted to invest more in deepening their services, not less, despite the pressure of unemployment figures. Some—including Belgium’s ORBEm and FOREM employment services—have made resource commitments in order to develop personalised solutions for clients. Germany, faced with increasing unemployment levels, has tried to find a balance between reducing some services (including those aimed at students, at clients who need vocational skills, and at those who need intensive case-management due to the severity of the obstacles to employment they face), and increasing and deepening others—in particular, those aimed at customers who require employment counselling. It has, for instance, extended the time allocated to the initial guidance interview from 7 to 15-45 minutes.
- 4.2.8. Europe’s PES have developed three key ways to manage the tension that results from attempting to develop personalised approaches while at the same time catering for increasingly large numbers of unemployed in a differentiated manner. All three will be examined in some detail in the subsequent sections, highlighting the way these developments frame the relationship between activities that contain elements of career guidance, and those that can be deemed to be career guidance activities in their own right. These three strategies are:
- A resort to partnership in service delivery and to out-sourcing. This strategy has been explored from an organisational perspective in Chapter 3. Here it will be examined in relation to impact on services.
 - A shift to self-service modes of delivery, through the development of self-service guidance tools and resources, and particularly through the exploitation of the opportunities provided by the new information technologies.
 - The structuring of service delivery around a tiered model—including a resort to self-service and more widespread use of group methods—in order to reduce pressure on labour-intensive one-to-one guidance.

4.3. Partnership in service delivery

[A] Key partners in collaborative service delivery

- 4.3.1. [a] *The education sector.* A lead partner for many national PES (e.g. Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden) is traditionally the education sector, including the Ministry of Education itself, at the compulsory school level, as well as the universities and further education sector and other educational foundations and institutions, such as INNOVE in Estonia, or the Adult Education Guidance Initiative in Ireland. As already noted (cf. para.2.4.7), the collaboration between PES and educational institutions, even if it is becoming somewhat less extensive, can take a number of forms, including visits by PES officers to schools, visits by students to PES-run career information offices, information sharing, open access to labour market information websites and publications (including occupational profiles), and so on. In many cases, there

is also a strong collaboration with national Euroguidance centres, which form part of the Leonardo National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance, and which are often jointly funded by the Ministry of Education and the European Commission.

[b] A number of the country reports (e.g. Slovakia) highlighted the fact that there is an important continuum between the services offered by the education sector and those offered by the PES, in the sense that the former offer ‘preventive guidance’, while the latter offer ‘curative guidance’. A key justification for collaboration in service delivery between the two sectors is therefore the need to ensure that, as far as possible, fewer individuals become unemployed clients of the PES, since they will have developed career decision-making and career development and management skills prior to leaving school.

[c] Another form of collaboration with the education sector is through engaging the services of specialists from tertiary education institutions. Portugal’s PES, for instance, works closely with faculties of psychology in the development of tools and instruments that can be used during career guidance interviews, as well as in carrying out research. Iceland, on its part, collaborates with staff from the Department of Continuing Education at the local university, while Cyprus and Malta have strong links with a number of faculties in their respective universities.

4.3.2. *The labour market sector.* PES also collaborate closely with various institutions in the labour market sector, whether public or private. Examples of the former include the Ministry of Labour in Austria, the HRD Authority in Cyprus, and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in Ireland. Examples of collaboration with private entities in the labour market sector include trade unions (Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Malta, Spain, Sweden), and employers’ associations and chambers (Estonia, Germany, Hungary). PES also collaborate with private employment services (e.g. Finland, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain).

4.3.3. *The community sector.* Several community-based partners collaborate with PES in career guidance provision. These include youth organisations (e.g. Cyprus) as well as centres that focus on providing information to young people (e.g. Italy’s ‘*Informa Giovani*’, Sweden’s ‘Youth Information Centres’, and Iceland’s ‘Young People’s Job Centres’); a variety of NGOs (e.g. Malta’s ETC works with the National Commission for Persons with Disability and several other community-based agencies; Austria’s AMS works closely with NGOs when it comes to assessment services to special target groups—such as women-returners, migrants and ex-offenders—where very specialised know-how is required); and other non-profit community-based career guidance providers (e.g. Austria, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Sweden), including the churches (e.g. Hungary, Malta). PES also collaborates with municipal authorities and local councils (as in Belgium-VDAB and in Germany), and with professional career guidance associations, as in the case of Ireland (with the Institute of Guidance Counsellors), Slovakia (with the Association of Supervisors and Social Counsellors), and Iceland (with its

Guidance Counsellors' Associations). In a less professional context, the media too is often referred to as a PES partner in the marketing of services and in the dissemination of career-related information (e.g. Belgium-VDAB, Malta).

- 4.3.4. *Other ministries.* In many cases, other ministries and government departments collaborate with PES in providing career guidance services to target groups. These typically include social services (e.g. Iceland, Malta) and health services—the latter including both physical and psychological services (e.g. Finland, Luxembourg, Slovakia).

[B] Forms of collaboration

- 4.3.5. Survey responses indicated that collaboration can take one of two forms: it can be on an *ad hoc*, project-by-project basis, involving one or more partners, depending on the nature of the project; or it can be the outcome of a more or less *formal agreement* in relation to a targeted outcome, or to outcomes that are the result of the provision of a range of services. There are several examples of the formal approach. In Greece, for instance, a policy is in place with a view to encouraging PES collaboration within the framework of local integrated approaches; Latvia has established Consultative Councils in 2004 in order to ensure social partner dialogue in relation to employment services; and Poland's PES signs agreements with partners in order to address specific regional and/or local problems (including the monitoring of workers who are about to be made redundant, and the development of special support towards target groups, such as workers on former state-owned farms, and former soldiers). Box 4.3 provides other examples of similar agreements.

Box 4.3. Examples of agreements facilitating collaboration in service delivery

- Belgium-FOREM's *Carrefour Emploi Formation* functions on the basis of a multi-disciplinary partnership, and is made up of guidance advisers coming from different organisations—including FOREM, NGOs, and the education sector—in such a way as to optimise the guidance process and to facilitate networking for the most efficient use of resources for the benefit of the client. Belgium-FOREM also concluded a co-operation agreement in July 2004 in relation to the programme of 'Accompaniment of the Unemployed'. This agreement entailed partnerships with all Walloon players in the career guidance field, in an effort to ensure that more job-seekers could be catered for. A further motive behind the agreement was to facilitate the sharing and transfer of expertise and methodologies.
- Belgium-ORBEm has developed an electronic Network of Local Employment Platforms. Partners have access to ORBEm's databases, and the intention is to improve the service towards clients and to ensure that the different actors complement each other's work. In Finland, the PES has set up new employment service centres which function as joint service points for local authorities, bringing together employment offices, municipalities, the social insurance institution (KELA) and other service providers that offer a variety of rehabilitation and activating services to clients, including life management and job-search skills.
- In January 2003, Ireland's FÁS put into place a 'High Support Process', which uses

multi-agency teams with representatives from the Health Boards, the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Department of Health and Children, the Department of Education and Science, as well as Probation and Welfare and others in order to address personal, non-vocational barriers to employment (such as drug abuse, literacy, numeracy and so on) (see also Box 6.2 in Chapter 6).

[C] Areas of collaboration

4.3.6. Survey responses suggest that key areas for collaboration between PES and its partners include:

4.3.6.1. Information sharing, particularly in relation to labour market data (e.g. Belgium-VDAB, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Switzerland), or further training opportunities—as in the case of Finland, where the PES collaborates with trade unions in providing information about adult training. This information sharing can have an interactive dimension: such as in the case of the Netherlands which, like Finland, France, Poland and Sweden for instance, organises an ‘exchange floor’ in its PES premises where employers can meet candidates for vacancies. Hungary and Malta, on their part, report that they co-ordinate ‘employers’ forums’, while PES officials in Denmark and Slovakia hold regular meetings with partner service providers. Some have shared databases (e.g. Belgium-VDAB). Others jointly compile and publish labour market information (e.g. Estonia, Sweden).

4.3.6.2. Sharing of tools and resources, whether print or web-based (e.g. Austria, Germany, Portugal), and jointly developing career guidance methods (e.g. Estonia).

4.3.6.3. Sharing expertise (e.g. Portugal’s PES career guidance staff help higher education students develop job-seeking skills), and training opportunities in specific areas related to career guidance (e.g. Austria, Estonia, Iceland, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden).

4.3.6.4. Joint activities (Cyprus, Iceland [on job developments for youth], Slovakia), including joint participation in European-funded projects (Slovenia). Many PES participate in careers days and fairs in schools and further and higher education and training settings (e.g. Austria, Estonia, Greece, Portugal, Slovenia). Some formalise such collaboration through joint agreements (e.g. Lithuania, Slovakia).

4.4. Shift to self-service

4.4.1. Generally speaking, and across all countries, the survey responses indicated a major shift towards self-help services. Some countries—such as Finland, for instance—have introduced an ‘e-strategy’ policy in order to facilitate the blending of self-help strategies into their portfolio of services. Few responses failed to flag major developments in the self-service area, and these generally declared that there were plans afoot to do so (e.g. Cyprus, Italy, Malta). Most

have made a major investment in developing, adapting or adopting ICT and software that facilitate access to career, labour market and further education and training information and guidance in self-help mode. Examples include:

- The development of self- and career-exploration packages, such as ‘Career Directions’ (e.g. Austria, Belgium-VDAB, Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania).
- Web-based job-search facilities (e.g. Estonia, Ireland’s ‘Job Bank’, Norway).
- Web-based registration, integrating the possibility of entering one’s c.v. (e.g. Denmark, Ireland, Malta, Norway) or constructing a ‘personal skill register’ (e.g. Luxembourg) on line. Some PES also give users the possibility of creating their own domains, so that they can better ‘market’ themselves (e.g. Greece, the Netherlands).
- The use of call-centre technology, which can range from a simple free phone number in order to access information (Belgium-VDAB, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Slovenia), to a more in-depth engagement in a distance counselling interview (e.g. Poland, Sweden’s PEPS Information Centre).

4.4.2. There are several reasons that account for the shift to self-access modes of career guidance service delivery. As already noted in section 4.2 above, one key reason is the increasing number of clients that PES staff have to deal with—both because unemployment has been on the rise in many of the countries, but also because PES have generally become more successful in marketing their services and in attracting and reaching out to clients. In a context of fiscal and resource constraints, the shift to self-service modes of provision enables officials to tier their services in such a way as to provide intensive one-to-one or group sessions only when needed. Self-service has also become more feasible due to opportunities that new ICTs provide, enabling, for instance: self-registration and profiling via computer terminal or internet; diagnostic instruments such as interest inventories and self-assessments of work values and skills; education, training and career databases on CD-ROM and internet; labour market trends; and vacancy-list programmes, such as the one to be found in ANPE offices in France—‘*Mise à Disposition électronique des Offres*’ (MADEO). The internet has vastly improved the ability of the PES to reach out to larger numbers of clients, although issues related to the digital divide between categories of clients, and their relative ability to engage in a self-service mode, need to be addressed (see para.4.4.6 below).

4.4.3. Other reasons for the rise in popularity of self-access modes of service delivery include the fact that the shift to a personalised service model in the European PES requires intensive work with at-risk groups. Self-service frees up PES staff from catering for autonomous clients, enabling them to focus on those groups that need more support and more personal guidance. In this regard, several PES staff pointed out during the visits to offices in different countries that the profile of the unemployed had changed over the past few years: there were now more highly educated (and young) people who were using PES services, and these ‘screenagers’—as one respondent referred to

them—were generally computer-literate and had more competences in managing information on their own.

- 4.4.4. Examples of the application of these approaches can be found in practically every country. In Norway, for example, Aetat has developed a range of self-help tools, many of them web-based. These include: an interest inventory, a career choice programme which offers self-assessments of interests, work values and skills, plus an occupational matching facility and help with job-seeking (*'Veivalg'*), and a career learning programme (*'Gradplus'*) adapted from the UK and addressed mainly to higher education graduates. In addition, the Aetat helpline centre provides a telephone service for job seekers and employers. In the Czech Republic's PES, Information and Counselling Centres are specifically equipped to encourage self-service access to print-, video- and computer-based resources, as are Slovenia's CIPS and the BIZ centres in Austria and Germany. In France—as in Finland and Germany, for instance—self-service is one of four key services that ANPE counsellors propose to clients, depending on the clients' profile, 'distance' from employment, and capacity for self-directed action. The share of self-service tends to be reduced as the duration of the client's unemployment lengthens. This is clearly visible from the statistics in France, where 42% of clients have used self-service at the time of registration (when the first PAP is drawn up), but this drops to 26% after six months of registering (PAP-2); by the time they have been unemployed for 2 years (i.e. PAP-5), only 5% make use of self-service facilities.
- 4.4.5. The shift toward self-help services has been facilitated through the reorganisation of PES office space in order to encourage access to resources. Many countries (e.g. Hungary, Ireland, Slovenia, Sweden) provide an open information area where clients have access to computer terminals, printers, fax, photocopying facilities, and telephones. France has made a major investment in this regard, with a radical restructuring of its offices which started in 2001 and should be completed in 2005. Others have started implementing plans to have standard, well-equipped, self-service zones (e.g. Iceland, Portugal, Slovakia). Some have re-designed their floor space into 'zones' (most notably Austria, but also Italy and Norway).²⁶ Box 4.4 provides an example of the design features of an office that is structured to facilitate self-service.

²⁶ Finn *et al.* (2005) note that the physical design of PES offices shapes the interactions that take place within them and the extent to which a social environment is created for job-seekers that can improve their self-esteem and encourage their focus on finding a job. They report that the UK has taken more account of such considerations than Germany, for instance. OECD (2004, p.62) indicates that a few countries have also sought to use such redesign as a means of attracting more employed customers. Thus in the Netherlands, in marketing the new Centres for Work and Income, greater emphasis is being placed on the employed group than on the unemployed. Benefit claimant services are kept to the back of the centres. An electronic vacancy databank using a touch-screen approach includes not only directly notified vacancies but also other vacancies taken from press advertisements. Other career information resources include free web and telephone access. Staff are available to provide brief personal help where it is needed. Similarly, in Norway, the public employment service's centres are being redesigned to include state-of-the-art amenities that are attractive and accessible: welfare-claimant services operate discreetly behind screens at the back.

Box 4.4. Design features of a FÁS Employment Services Office

Standard facilities

- Porter/security guard station (where appropriate/necessary)
- Reception desk
- Wheelchair-friendly toilets
- Seating/waiting area
- Self-service area
- Touch-screen kiosks
- Up-to-date newspapers
- Self-assessment tools, e.g. Career Directions
- Work area with seating and desks
- Vacancy noticeboards (incl. EURES)
- Library of relevant job market information/brochures
- Telephones
- Photocopiers
- Fax machines
- PC with printer for CV preparation / cover letters
- Staff offices – open-plan
- Interview rooms
- Dedicated interview/screening room for guest employers
- Dedicated display area in main office for guest organisation/employer
- ‘Guide to services’ leaflets available on entry for first-time visitors

Types of office users / visitors

- First registrants
- National Employment Action Plan clients
- Call-backs
- Self-service users
- General enquiries
- Colleagues
- Guests

General features / design principles

- Easy access to offices for all clients
- Bright, spacious and comfortable environment
- Comprehensive directional signage in operation
- Kiosks and PC access (standing only, to discourage prolonged use)
- Interview rooms with glass panelling, for security reasons
- Telephone, fax and photocopying facilities placed away from staff working areas
- Seating for service users located a sufficient distance from interview rooms to avoid overhearing
- Booking system in operation for guest organisation / employer display area
- Consistent corporate identity (signage, carpets, furniture)
- Information officer circulating on office floor where appropriate

Office flows

- Client to be directed to appropriate service area as efficiently as possible
- Office layout to discourage congestion at entrances and in self-service areas
- Self-service facilities designed to discourage prolonged use (e.g. no seating at PC facilities)
- Distinct entrance and exit locations

4.4.6. Despite the advantages associated with the shift to self-service, there are also some concerns in relation to the provision of career information and guidance. A major one is that self-service without the provision of support and guidance by expert staff may not be, in itself, a professionally sound solution. Many

PES users do not have the literacy, digital or otherwise, to be able to navigate data bases, fill forms, and manage complex information on their own (see para.6.5.2.6). Accordingly, several responses to the survey—including Belgium-ORBEM, Belgium-VDAB, Finland, Germany, Hungary and Ireland—highlighted the fact that they support the client in the use of self-service resources. France, for instance, trains its front-desk employment advisers in what ANPE refers to as ‘*accueil active*’. Other clients may live in remote areas where access to the internet is not widespread. Related to these concerns is the fear that reduced budgets, staff and resources may lead to a situation where offices increasingly rely on self-help, pushing the onus on clients to administer their way out of unemployment.²⁷

4.5. Tiering of services

4.5.1. One way of addressing the PES resource issues raised in this chapter in relation to direct individual customers is through tiering of services. A common model is to define three levels of service (as in Austria, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK):

- Self-service, through use of resource centres and websites.
- Group-based services and/or brief staff-assisted services. The group-based help may include job clubs, sessions to help clients acquire self-confidence and motivation, and sessions on job-seeking (e.g. CV and selection-interview coaching) and other employability skills.
- Intensive case-managed services, including individual counselling.

4.5.2. The way the tiering is implemented may vary: in some PES, it may be applied to all clients; in others, it is confined to unemployed clients. An example of the latter is Germany, where unemployed adults are required to have an interview with a placement officer to estimate their chances of reintegration into the labour market, and to assess what help they need: in some cases they are then expected to find a job on their own by using the service’s do-it-yourself information facilities; others are provided with brief help or are given help in groups; yet others are referred to a counsellor for more intensive help (OECD, 2004, p.80). This approach is similar to the one adopted in Greece, Italy and the Netherlands, for instance.

4.5.3. The precise definition of the levels, the groups to whom they are applied, and where career guidance is located within them, may vary across countries. Finland’s approach to the tiering and ‘deepening’ of guidance services is shown in Box 4.5 below. Another example of tiering comes from Sweden, where a four-level model is applied to all clients:

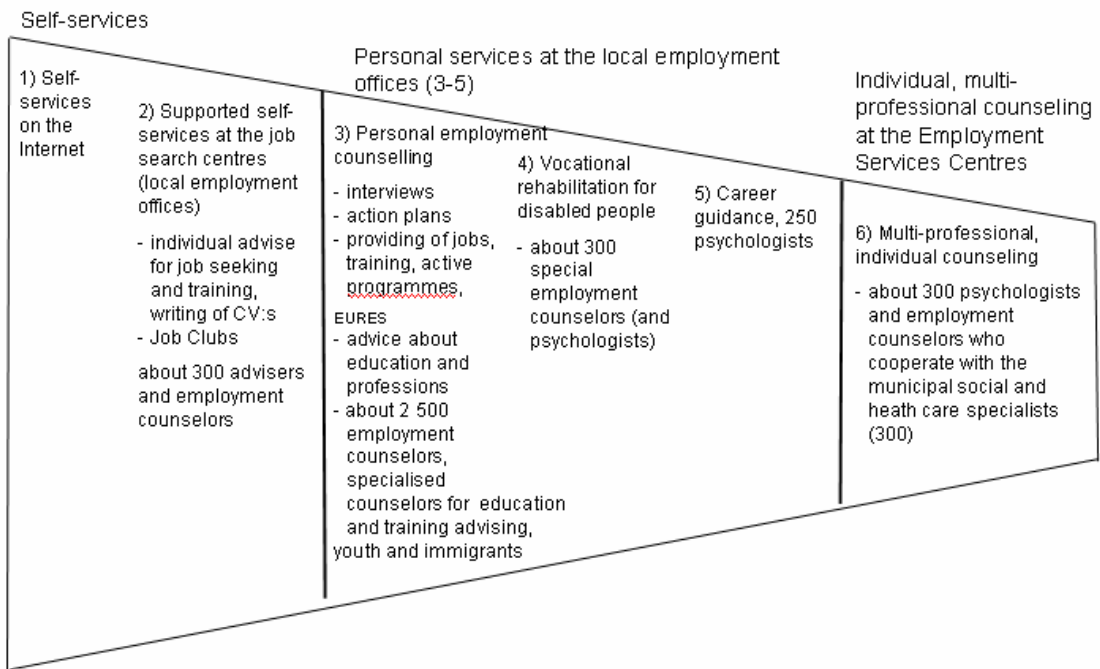
- Self-service, via the Internet.
- Staff-supported information service, via customer work-stations in PES offices and call-centres at national and regional levels.

²⁷ This represents an important and significant ideological shift, signalling that the responsibility of the providers is to make a service available, leaving it up to the ‘client’ or ‘user’ to access it. The problem with such an approach is that it assumes a level playing-field for all, and ignores the social and other attributes that individuals have, which may facilitate or impede access.

- Individualised services, including job-search assistance and career guidance.
- Intensive assistance over a period of time, including vocational rehabilitation and other forms of case management.

Box 4.5. Tiering and deepening of services in Finland

Deepening service levels according to the needs of the PES customers



CHAPTER 5: STAFF

5.1. PES staff: a context

5.1.1. Several chapters in this report have highlighted the fact that the PES in Europe have evolved and in some cases even changed radically over the past two decades. There have been changes in mission, roles and functions, with the PES integrating new challenges beyond job-broking and the administration of unemployment benefits, and taking on—or greatly extending their involvement in—fresh responsibilities, including those for professional provision of personalised employment services and career guidance services. PES have had to transform their organisational and institutional culture, in response to new ways of conceptualising public services, and to new ways of reaching out to clients so that services are transparent, timely, appropriate and customer- and context-sensitive. Management structures and staff functions, roles and responsibilities have changed greatly as services have become more decentralised, more flexible, more targeted, and delivered in collaboration with a myriad of partners from both the public and private sectors. The labour market has become more complex and more unpredictable, requiring constant innovation and creativity not only in responding to new situations and challenges, but in predicting and planning for potential future scenarios. All this has happened—and is happening—at a historical conjuncture where unemployment seems in some countries to be a long-term structural reality, and where expectations for quality services and for prompt and tangible results are often high and funding and resourcing levels low.

5.1.2. PES staff are, necessarily, at the crucible of such transformations. For some, the reality of providing employment services has changed much since they were recruited. Others find themselves in situations for which they have not necessarily been prepared, and have to develop competences on-the-job in order to deal with the many demands made on them. Many—including most of those we interviewed in the seven country visits—maintain high levels of motivation and a spirit of public service in the face of, and despite, daunting challenges, including unrealistic client-to-adviser ratios. This chapter sets out to provide a profile of two categories of PES staff: those providing personalised employment services; and those providing specialised career guidance services. It will not always be possible to discriminate between the two categories of workers, given both the nature of the data available, and also because the boundaries between the two categories either do not always exist, or are drawn differently in different country contexts. Other than a brief outline of the profile of the ‘typical’ employment adviser or career guidance counsellor, attention will be given to two key areas: training (whether pre-service, induction or in-service); and methodologies used in service delivery (including instruments and tools).

5.2. Staff profiles and conditions of work

5.2.1. Details regarding the age and/or gender of career guidance staff for several countries are missing, with many survey responses indicating that, either due to the dynamics of decentralisation or for other reasons, the relevant statistics

were hard to obtain or not available at all. Where responses indicated numbers in relation to either age or gender, two key patterns emerged: [a] that, as the OECD, ETF and CEDEFOP reviews had indicated, career guidance is a largely feminised profession²⁸; and [b] that it is a ‘greying’ one. Both patterns have implications for occupational identity, the way the occupation is defined, the social status it enjoys, and the salaries it can command. Details in relation to both phenomena are presented below. An example of a detailed country response—in this case, Germany—is provided in Box 5.1.

- [a] *The majority of career guidance staff tend to be women.* This is the case, for instance, in Austria, Belgium-FOREM, Belgium-VDAB (64% of all relevant PES employees), Estonia, Finland (80-90%), Greece (78%), Hungary (60%), Italy (65%), Latvia (92%), Lithuania (82%) and Norway (65%).
- [b] *The majority of career guidance staff tend to be middle-aged or older.* This is the case for Belgium-FOREM, Belgium-VDAB, the Czech Republic (average age: 50+ years), Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia (average age: 43.6 years), Lithuania (average age: 43.8 years) and Norway. For those countries where relevant data are available (e.g. Belgium-VDAB), it is clear that the ‘greying’ of the profession largely relates to males, indicating that in these countries recruiting patterns have changed over the years in favour of women.

Box 5.1. Staff in career guidance and counselling and in the placement services in the German Local Employment Agencies

Vollzeitäquivalente - BA-Gesamt zum 15.12.2004 - "aktiv" full-time equivalent, "active staff", 1512.2004	Struktur	Gesamt total	Arbeitsvermittlung/Arbeitsberatung/A-Teams i.e.S. Placement staff		Berufsberatung/Berufshilfeberatung einschlt. BIZ Vocational Counsellor for young people		Reha/ISB - Integration Guidance, counselling and placement for disabled and handicapped (vocational rehabilitation)		Hochschulteam/Teams Akademische Berufe Higher Education Teams	
			Arbeitsvermittler Placement Officer (BA degree)	Arbeitsberater Employment Counsellor (BA degree)	Counsellor (BA degree) for youth up to grade 10	Counsellor (Master degree) for higher education	Counsellor and placement officer (BA degree) for all age groups and for unemployed	Placement Officer (BA degree) for unemployed academics	Counsellor (Master Degree) graduates/ students/	
Total (Full time equivalent)		18,187	9,866	1,599	2,656	619	3,056	0	244	147
<i>Geschlecht - Gender</i>										
male	8,134	3,847	941	1,241	345	1,544	0	129	87	
female	10,053	6,019	658	1,415	274	1,512	0	115	60	
<i>Age Structure</i>										
16-20 Jahre	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
21-25 Jahre	846	790	4	16	1	35	0	0	0	
26-30 Jahre	1,549	1,256	31	99	11	147	0	5	0	
31-35 Jahre	1,681	1,118	103	204	28	217	0	6	5	
36-40 Jahre	2,530	1,471	224	340	44	406	0	35	10	
41-45 Jahre	2,801	1,497	266	425	87	493	0	20	13	
46-50 Jahre	3,380	1,519	382	617	125	646	0	56	35	
51-55 Jahre	3,366	1,418	371	591	159	706	0	78	43	
56-60 Jahre	1,682	680	184	285	122	346	0	31	34	
61-65 Jahre	351	116	34	79	42	80	0	13	7	

Note: Statistics are for professional staff only, and do not include management or administrative categories

²⁸ These surveys indicated that this was even more the case in the education sector.

- 5.2.2. The survey also tried to get a snapshot of aspects of the conditions of work of those involved in career guidance in the PES. While the data are not extensive, it is significant that, despite the increase in stress related to the job, most countries (e.g. Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the UK) did not report any major turnover of staff. Staff movements were mainly limited to transfers between sections and divisions within the PES, either due to re-organisation (as in Latvia), or due to the application of new systems (as in Germany). One of the reasons given for such stability was the fact that in many cases, employees enjoyed civil servant status, the durability of which was in itself an attractive feature of their work. This is not true for all countries, and in some countries the status is at risk. In Germany, for instance, new recruits in the future will not have civil servant status, and their terms of employment will be the same as employees in private-sector organisations. The rationale for these changes appears to be to produce a more open and flexible organisation, with more scope for external recruitment as well as internal promotion. A number of senior managerial staff and technical staff have already been recruited from outside, to bring in a wider range of skills and ideas.²⁹
- 5.2.3. A number of countries did note that trained staff were leaving the PES. Many of these are employees from the New Member States, where salaries in the PES tend to be low compared both to the average wage, and to opportunities that are available in the private sector. Examples of this phenomenon were reported by Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia. But the same tendency also applies in some respects to Finland, for instance, which annually loses about 10% of its vocational psychologists due to uncompetitive salaries. The introduction of private employment services in many of the NMS is also creating new opportunities for trained staff, who might start off with the PES, but who eagerly seek employment in the more rewarding private sector. This may be exacerbated where heavy caseloads and unrealistic client-to-staff ratios (cf. footnote 36) lead to high stress levels, which was mentioned as an issue in several responses.

5.3. Distribution of career guidance roles among PES staff

- 5.3.1. There are three basic approaches to the distribution of roles among PES staff:

5.3.1.1. Systems which have *specialised tiers of staff*, starting with those categories which provide services that are largely administrative but have elements of career guidance embedded in them, to those which deal with deeper counselling interventions. A typical example here is that

²⁹ These changes seem likely to have a significant influence on the place of career guidance within the PES in Germany. In the past vocational counselling was defined as a professional role, which had a respected position within a strongly-bounded organisational structure. Now, it is increasingly being defined as a set of tasks, within a more flexible but also more target-driven organisational structure. The emphasis on professional content has been replaced by an emphasis on business processes linked to organisational goals.

provided by Belgium-FOREM, Estonia, Finland³⁰ and Hungary, for instance, where clients first meet with employment advisers, and are then referred to career guidance staff for deeper, specialised services if necessary. In most cases, the deeper levels of service are provided by specially trained staff, often graduates who have a different status within the staff hierarchy. In some cases (e.g. Finland, Switzerland) such graduates are all psychologists. In others, they have normally specialised in psychology or in related areas like sociology or educational studies; often it is only those with a background in psychology who can administer and interpret tests (e.g. Poland). The tiering of staff is sometimes clearly visible when services are zoned, with initial services offered in an open-access or semi-private area, and deeper services delivered in private rooms (e.g. Austria, Belgium-VDAB, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Poland, Slovenia). Staff tiering has implications for the strength or otherwise of ‘bounding’ of career guidance activities, as has already been noted in para.2.3.3.[a].

5.3.1.2. Systems which require staff to play *a broad set of roles*, that includes giving job and training-related information, profiling, drawing up an employment action plan, case management and guidance (France, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, Norway). Not surprisingly, reports from countries where this system prevails often note that staff tend to suffer from a role-overload—though this is not always the case (cf. Box 5.2, which relates to France, where the notion of ‘polyvalent advisers’ has been strongly developed). In order to manage such a situation, a country may decide to structure the use of staff time in relation to the different services they handle. In Greece, for instance, job counsellors are expected to dedicate 70% of their time to personalised services, and 30% to seeking vacancies.

Box 5.2. The polyvalent adviser in the French ANPE

In the ANPE, all advisers are expected to be ‘polyvalent’ (multi-functional). In other words, they all have to manage three different roles: [a] administration (which includes organising job and further training information); [b] networking with employers; and [c] interviewing clients and assisting them in the job search. This polyvalency is considered to be a strength, because it is thought to lead to a holistic approach where the adviser: has a foot firmly planted in both the demand and the supply side of the labour market; is

³⁰ The way role segmentation works out can be clearly seen in the Finnish case. Here, as part of an evaluation project carried out in 2001/02, definitions were produced on information, advice and guidance within the employment services, in terms of goals, linkages to information, the role of the client, the role of the professional, and the nature of the dialogue (see Box 2.3 in Chapter 2). In these terms, all staff provide information; employment counsellors, education and training advisers and vocational guidance psychologists all provide advice; but only vocational guidance psychologists provide guidance. On the other hand, it is recognised that employment counsellors and education and training advisers also need to have some guidance skills in order to provide their advice: in other words, there are some guidance elements in the *process* of what they offer, even though guidance is not the *outcome* of their offer.

more likely to enjoy job satisfaction since there is more variety; and can be deployed more flexibly. There does not seem to be a problem with role overload, as advisers tend to see the different roles as complementing one another.

Each aspect of the job is allocated a set proportion of the adviser's time, depending on the time of the year and the economic conjuncture (e.g. the nature and intensity of activity changes when a hotel is opening in the district). Typically, advisers spend:

- One half-day minimum out of the office, marketing services or visiting employers.
- Four half-days minimum with job-seekers (first personal action planning interview, plus follow-up interviews).
- Two to three half-days '*traitement technique*', dealing with job offers.
- One half-day every fortnight in '*accompagnement*' with the caseload of job-seekers.
- Any remaining time to be spent in team meetings, helping out in the '*Zone de Libre Accès*', and in the '*Pôle Appui*'.

Advisers in different local offices specialise in networking with particular employment sectors, depending on the local structure of the labour market (e.g. hospitality industry, or construction). These are called '*équipe professionnelles*'. Each adviser has a '*portefeuille d'entreprises*' (a caseload of enterprises) and a client caseload. Normally advisers have a caseload of 6 to 7 clients (at any one time) to whom they offer intensive '*accompagnement*' (around 2 interviews per month, together with regular telephone contact), but many others whom they deal with in the initial interview for the purpose of developing a personal action plan (around 15-20 clients per adviser).

Because of this polyvalent approach to personalised employment services, ANPE has modified the profile that it is looking for when recruiting advisers. The preferred profile in the 1970s and 1980s was a recruit with a background in psychology. Since 2004 this profile has not been considered to be ideal, as psychologists are perceived to be rather less knowledgeable about the world of work, and not to network so well with employers. The recruitment policy—implemented by external agencies on behalf of ANPE, but with ANPE representatives on the boards—emphasises knowledge of labour markets, ability to work in teams, and dynamism in reaching out to employers in order to get job offers and to place clients. The client interview is considered to be more a pedagogical/educational process than a 'psychological' one.

5.3.1.3. Both systems can include a *referral service*, where clients with specific profiles and needs are referred to specialised counsellors. These can be PES employees: Austria, for instance, has specialised youth counsellors; Slovakia has staff who specialise in group work; while Finland and Sweden have specialist counsellors in rehabilitation services. Norway has a referral service where clients with specific profiles and needs are referred to specialised counsellors: the Aetat Centre for Vocational Rehabilitation provides services to job-seekers with reduced working capacity (for example, difficulty in concentrating, or visual and hearing problems); Aetat employment counselling staff provide targeted support for unemployed people experiencing particular obstacles and restrictions in relation to work and training. Referrals are also commonly made to specialist agencies to whom the service is outsourced: Germany often outsources intensive job coaching. In the UK, Jobcentre Plus advisers

carry out the initial screening and skills diagnostic work, but refer clients to contracted providers for more in-depth guidance. An interesting variant of this outsourcing strategy is that with some client target-groups, and with them alone, the whole range of services is provided by the same counsellor. A case in point is that of the German PES, where counsellors for disabled persons manage the whole process of vocational rehabilitation and vocational re-integration, including aspects related to financial assistance.

5.3.1.4. We can also find *the two different approaches in the same country context*. This may be due to a number of reasons:

- [a] In some systems, regional and/or local offices may have a degree of autonomy in recruiting and deploying staff, and in implementing different models of service in response to varying labour market situations (e.g. Lithuania, Poland).
- [b] Different employment offices sometimes have to provide services under different conditions dictated by size. Thus, smaller offices, often in remote or rural areas, may have a smaller complement of staff than larger offices in urban areas. As a consequence, they have to fulfil a larger range of roles, including registering the unemployed, managing benefit allowances, and providing other labour exchange services besides the more personalised employment services, including career guidance or elements of it (e.g. Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta).
- [c] Some projects—such as those funded by ESF or PHARE or Leonardo da Vinci—entail the provision of specialised services by staff who have been specifically trained within that project (e.g. Poland’s transnational guidance project, and its distance counselling project).

5.3.2. A major distinction that needs to be drawn between PES systems concerns their level of responsibility for administering unemployment benefit. Many systems differentiate these two roles. Belgium’s VDAB, for instance, leaves the Federal Employment Agency to manage benefits. In Ireland, it is not FÁS that determines eligibility, but the Department of Social and Family Affairs; while in France it is UNEDIC. In other systems—such as that in Poland—PES staff may have a greater or lesser role in determining whether a client qualifies for unemployment benefit, or in deciding when a client is no longer eligible for such benefit, such as when s/he refuses employment offered (e.g. Germany, Norway). A variant of this is when systems require employment advisers to contact the authority in charge of benefits in order to signal cases where, in their professional opinion, the client should no longer be a benefit recipient (e.g. Finland, France).

5.3.3. Within PES, as already noted (e.g. sections 2.2.2.2[c], 2.3.3[a] and 5.3.1.1), some countries have underscored the difference between the administrative and the counselling elements by clear separation of roles. Country cases

illustrating this include Portugal and Slovakia, where PES career guidance staff are not involved either in making decisions about who is entitled to unemployment benefits or in placing clients into jobs. In Germany, in the services catering for the under-25s, a distinction is drawn between career guidance staff on the one hand and placement staff on the other. In some countries, such distinctions are either being contemplated or introduced. Malta, for instance, is introducing a ‘career guidance’ grade, distinguishing it from the ‘employment officer’ grade.

5.3.4. The dynamics of the separation or integration of roles—including those referring to staff categories that provide personalised employment services, and those that provide career guidance *per se*—has at least two important aspects to it when considered from the point-of-view of the provision of a career guidance service marked by quality. In these two respects, outlined below, decisions regarding the following options in role integration or role separation have implications for the way career guidance is conceptualised within a PES context.

5.3.4.1. A first consideration concerns the fact that role separation allows for a greater degree of *specialisation* in service delivery, while role integration allows for a more *holistic* service delivery—which, some claim is more satisfying for both the providers and the recipients of the service. The latter claims have been made, for instance, by France (cf. Box 5.2 above), and also by Norway, whose staff are involved in a whole range of activities that include job coaching, job placement and individual guidance, and which like France considers such a range of responsibilities positively. Other countries—such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland and Malta—note that, where there is no differentiation, the resulting role-overload leads to a tendency for less focus to be placed on career guidance, and more on job-seeking and job-matching.

5.3.4.2. A second consideration entails decisions regarding on the one hand the separation of *non-guidance elements* from career guidance service delivery (as discussed in paras.5.3.2 and 5.3.3 above), and on the other the *integration of guidance elements* in services which are normally considered to be more administrative in nature than counselling services as such. Once again, decisions made in regard to both options have important implications for the way career guidance is considered as an activity within the PES context.

5.3.5. It naturally follows that those systems which do not have a strongly segmented distribution of roles (e.g. Cyprus, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland) found it difficult, if not impossible, to indicate the number of PES personnel dedicated wholly, or mostly, to career guidance. The difficulty was even greater for those countries with a decentralised administration system (e.g. Denmark, Italy, Poland, Spain). For the countries that did provide approximate figures, the pattern seems to be that those staff focusing wholly or mostly on career guidance represent a small proportion of the total complement of PES personnel—a pattern that is largely to be expected. To take Belgium-FOREM, for instance, there are 40 full-time equivalents

dedicated wholly to career guidance, while there are 227 ‘career assistance advisers’, whose role encompasses career guidance elements but much else besides. Similarly in Hungary, over 200 PES staff provide career guidance, while close to 550 are in ‘inter-linked’ jobs; in Slovakia, 442 are entirely dedicated to career guidance, and 758 have other duties besides guidance; while Italy’s ‘guesstimate’ is that 25% of its 11,000 staff are mainly or partially focused on guidance.

5.4. Staff recruitment

5.4.1. The requirements for recruitment as an employment adviser or career guidance counsellor with the PES differ from country to country, making the task of identifying trends and patterns a difficult and approximate one. Furthermore, as already intimated in para.5.1.2 above, the boundaries between the two categories, where they exist, are drawn differently in different national contexts. The task is made even more complicated by the fact that, where decentralisation has occurred, its dynamics lead to situations where (as noted above in para.5.3.1.4) differences in recruitment requirements might differ between one region—or even one office—and another *within* the same country. In Finland, for instance, decisions about recruitment are taken at a local office level, and a psychology degree is required only of vocational guidance psychologists; while in Switzerland, a psychology degree is required of all counsellors, but the cantons can define the competences that candidates must have. Similar situations apply to strongly decentralised countries like Denmark and Poland.

5.4.2. Generally speaking, however, a number of points can be made about the qualifications that are required from the two categories—i.e. career counsellors and employment advisers—at the point of entry:

5.4.2.1. It is common for higher qualification levels to be expected from counsellors than advisers, the principle being that the deeper the level of career guidance services that staff will be offering, the *higher* and—in some cases, but by no means all—the *more specialised* the certification required. In Slovakia, for instance, vocational counsellors are expected to have a university degree in the area of the humanities; while those providing career information are accepted on the basis of a secondary education certificate, though increasingly many have a degree as well.

5.4.2.2. We note a tendency for the field to be increasingly staffed by graduates, even at the level of employment advisers. This is a function of the widespread phenomenon of credential inflation, with candidates presenting a higher level of qualification than that formally required by a particular job category. Slovenia, for instance, asks for 3 years of post-secondary education—a level similar to that required in France, where advisers need to have a BAC+3. Both of these countries report recent trends for candidates to have higher-level studies behind them. In some cases, this has led the PES to ratchet up standards at the recruitment stage. Latvia, for instance, has decided that all its guidance-related employees must have a first degree by 2010, whereas at present only

54.2% have studied up to that level. The trend for career guidance to become an ‘all-graduate profession’ is already quite pronounced in some countries. In Italy, for instance, 61% of counsellors have specialist degrees in such areas as occupational psychology, as well as in sociology, education and social work. As can be observed in Box 5.3, certification requirements in Spain are also high. This is irrespective of the category of staff involved in providing specific guidance services, which are, in this case, outlined in relation to a range of specifications.³¹

Box 5.3. Summary chart of the technical specifications to carry out career guidance activities in the PES in Spain

ACTIVITY	Methods/ Instruments	STAFF REQUIREMENTS	Physical areas & materials	Duration of the services
Individual counselling (TI)	Individual action Methodological handbook Guidance methods of the other actions	Degree (preference in Psychology, Pedagogy or similar), with training and/or experience in personal interviews, professional guidance and knowledge of motivation techniques and communication. As well as graduating in Social Work, with experience credited in the teaching of IOBE actions in previous exercises.	Office (minimum 10 m ²) Documentation of the User: Technical Guides to the BAE, DAPO and TI Actions	6 hours maximum over a maximum period of 6 months
Development of personal aspects for employment (DAPO)	Group action (8-12 users) Phase 1: 2 sessions Phase 2: 3 sessions Phase 3: 1 session Technical Guide (DAPO)	Degree in Psychology and/or Pedagogy, with experience in: interview techniques, direction and animation of meetings, techniques of motivation and communication.	Room (recommended: 42m ²) Documentation to the User (DAPO)	Phase 1: 6 hours (3hours per session) Phase 2: 9 hours (3 hours per session) Phase 3: 3 hours (1 session)
Group for job-seeking (BAE-G)	Group action (8-12 users) Technical Guide (BAE)	Graduated in Law, with experience in professional direction, communication and work with groups.	Room (recommended: 42m ²) Documentation to the User (BAE-G)	24 hours (6 sessions of 4 hours each)
Workshop in interview training (TE)	Group action (10-15 users) Techniques: BAE-TE Guides	Higher degree preferred in Psychology, Pedagogy or Sociology. Graduated in Social Work, Teaching, Social Educator, or any other degree with the required abilities and knowledge.	Room (recommended: 45m ²) Documentation to the User (BAE-TE)	24 hours maximum (8 sessions of 3 hours); minimum 12 hours
Information and motivation for self-employment (INMA)	Group action (10-15 users) Techniques: Guides on Information and Motivation for Self-Employment	Law, or, preferred degrees in Economics, Enterprise Sciences, Social Work, or Labour Relations.	Room (recommended: 45m ²)	3 hours

³¹ The relevant information is shaded.

Assessment of business projects (APE)	Individual action Technical Guide: Advising on Enterprise Projects	Preferred degree: in Economics, Enterprise Sciences, Social Work, or Labour Relations.	Office (recommended: 10m ²) Documentation to the User (APE)	5.5 hours
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5.4.2.3.[a] What is considered to be a ‘relevant’ qualification again varies from country to country, but the degrees that feature most in survey responses are in psychology, education, sociology, social work, and economics—and to a lesser extent in public administration, law and HRD studies, as well as political science. In some cases—in Hungary and Spain, for instance—what may be considered ‘relevant’ is strictly and formally defined. The point that needs to be made here is that these degrees are *proxy qualifications*—in other words, they are *perceived* to provide a grounding in the knowledge base and skills that a guidance counsellor needs in order to carry out his or her work in a competent manner. Such qualifications *may*, of course, provide this grounding, but often they may fail to contribute to the development of specialised skills, and as importantly, to the shaping of those personal qualities and characteristics that make a counsellor fit for the job.

[b] Some countries try to get around this at the recruitment stage. Estonia, for instance, requires experience over and above formal qualifications, and will only recruit candidates who, besides having a university degree or a higher-level professional qualification, have spent one year doing counselling. Most countries have also invested a great deal of effort in the offering of additional opportunities for professional development at the point of recruitment (induction training) and/or in-service training.

5.5. Staff training

[A] Initial training

5.5.1. In most cases, staff providing career guidance services—even when these concern deeper interventions—have not received specialised training prior to recruitment. Indeed, several countries (e.g. Estonia, Slovenia) reported that their universities or research institutes do not offer specialised degree- or diploma-level certification in career guidance. Those that do include Germany (which has a specialised 3-year degree, a Masters-level course, and a six-month modular training track—see Box 5.4), Iceland, Malta (which offers a diploma-level course at the local university), Norway (which has three university colleges that offer further education programmes equivalent to 30 ECTS), and Switzerland (which requires a degree in psychology and also specifies that the candidate must have followed a specialisation in educational and vocational guidance within that degree).

Box 5.4. Training of PES guidance staff in Germany

In broad terms, recruitment and initial training for PES guidance staff are at three levels:

- *Assistant level.* This takes place largely at age 16-20, with a three-year training programme linked to the 'dual system' (on-the-job training combined with college-based study). Around 1,500 staff are recruited at this level each year, of whom around 25% subsequently proceed to the professional level.
- *Professional level.* The training at this level takes place at the Federal Employment Agency's *Fachhochschule* in Mannheim (which also has a satellite location in the east of the country). Traditionally this has consisted of three-year courses leading to bachelor degrees in vocational counselling or public administration (the latter includes placement and social-insurance administration). Around 900 students entered these courses each year, including 300 recruited from the assistant level. Now, however, only around 300 are recruited directly on to the three-year courses; the 300 or so promoted from the assistant level enter a more flexible modular training programme, as does a new stream of recruits into this level who have university degrees: the modular programme is designed to last 9 months. The modular programme is based on a 5x5 matrix, with counselling as one of the columns (the others are placement, work with employers, social insurance, and administration/leadership): every student has to take some courses in all columns, but with opportunities to 'go deeper' in some than in others. In the light of this, the existing distinction between the two bachelor degrees may disappear, enabling more flexible role design in response to policy decisions.
- *Higher professional level.* This includes leadership roles, and professional psychological and medical roles. Entrants at this level have to have university degrees or professional qualifications.

The new modular training structure covers not only the provision of the *Fachhochschule*, but also that of the leadership training centre in Nurnberg (which focuses on higher-level training) and that of the 10 regional training centres (which focus on lower-level training, mainly at assistant level). All of these are residential centres: most of their courses are a week or so in length. Their roles include development of new concepts and training of trainers; their staff also carry out on-the-job training within local employment offices. The whole structure is co-ordinated by the BA's *Bildungsinstitut*. The regional training centres have provided some coaching and training support for the introduction of the new systems. Little attention has so far, however, been paid to counselling skills: the focus has been on the new procedures and models.

- 5.5.2. There is a trend, however, for specialised training in career guidance to be increasingly offered within the PES context. Such training has recently been introduced in a number of countries (e.g. Hungary, Malta), and in some cases has been made mandatory (e.g. Austria, Czech Republic, Iceland, Portugal) (see para.2.3.3[b]). Other countries, like Cyprus, are planning to go down the same route. In the UK, the accreditation of Jobcentre Plus advisers is currently the object of research.

- 5.5.3. In those countries where specialised training does exist, PES staff who follow such courses do so *after* they have become employed as employment advisers or career guidance officers, so that in point of fact this is *initial* rather than *pre-service* training. In Malta, for instance, the recently introduced diploma-level course has been taken up by employment advisers who are already in post. In Ireland, the certificate-level course offered by the National University of Ireland in Maynooth has been specifically designed in collaboration with FÁS for Employment Service officers, for whom this is a minimum qualification; after three years of on-the-job experience, officers can proceed to the diploma-level course (see Box 5.5).

Box 5.5. Training of PES guidance staff in Ireland

In Ireland, all Employment Service Officers must follow a *Certificate in Adult Guidance, Theory and Practice* as a minimum qualification. The course has been developed by the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, in collaboration with FÁS. The course aims to address the needs of those working in a guidance capacity with unemployed adults. It introduces people to models of labour market guidance, and explores the theoretical principles which underpin good practice.

The course:

- Provides participants with an understanding of labour market services at local and national level.
- Familiarises participants with theories and approaches to adult guidance and counselling.
- Provides an opportunity for participants to develop increased self-awareness.
- Develops participants applied skills in adult guidance.
- Provides a forum for practitioners to explore models of good practice.
- Explores the relationship between unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion.

After working for at least three years with FÁS, and after having obtained their Certificate in Adult Guidance, Employment Service Officers can apply to follow a *Diploma/Higher Diploma in Arts: Adult Guidance and Counselling*. This two-year course is also run by the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, and is designed to serve as an accredited training for people working with adults in a guidance setting, providing information, advice, and placement services. The course provides participants with the skills and knowledge to understand, in particular, the effects of social exclusion and marginalisation on the individual and on groups, and helps them to become familiar with appropriate interventions and strategies. It aims to develop participants' critical awareness of their professional role by:

- Developing their knowledge of the theoretical field of adult guidance and counselling.
- Facilitating the development of a critical awareness of issues of marginalisation and exclusion, as these relate to employment and unemployment.
- Enabling participants to develop the key skills and competences involved in working with clients and employers.

Many FÁS and LES officers have graduated with this diploma/higher diploma.

[B] Induction training

5.5.4. Given the lack of specialised pre-service training programmes, many countries offer a mandatory in-house induction course. Responses indicate that this is a widespread practice across Europe, and applies to, among others, Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Ireland. The length of the course varies greatly: from a 6-month course in Portugal, to a 1-week induction course in Spain, a country which tends to rely heavily on operational manuals for each type of service (see Box 5.3 above). Induction courses typically cover a range of areas that address both administrative concerns—including, for instance, labour market regulations, legislation, IT systems, and networking with partner agencies—and professional concerns and competences, such as awareness of the range of clients and their needs, learning how to conduct an interview, and becoming familiar with the concept of quality in service delivery. Box 5.5 below provides an example of an induction course which is aimed at all categories of staff involved in guidance service delivery.

Box 5.6. Induction programmes for guidance staff in Belgium-VDAB

Belgium's VDAB offers a common induction programme for all PES employees, so that each is familiar with the same core of knowledge about the institution, and each is aware of the others' role within the network of services offered. This is then followed up with specialised training for the different groups, according to competency profiles they are expected to develop. Thus 'pathway advisers' follow a 12-day course with modules that include the use of ICT to draw up personal client dossiers, client-centred interviewing, screening techniques, pathway counselling diagnosis, and skills in drawing up action plans. The modules for 'career guidance advisers' overlap, but in their case the course lasts 15 days, and places a stress on critical self-reflection as a tool for professional development. All junior advisers go through a career guidance process themselves and a 6-month supervision period by a senior adviser. The initial training programme includes methodologies in coaching and counselling, the use of tools and conceptual models, learning how to work with enterprises, and improved knowledge of the labour market and the world of work.

[C] Continuing training

5.5.5. Continued training is, as Thuy *et al.* (2001, p.140) note, particularly vital in a PES context where the pace of change has been rapid, and where the changing nature of the organisation and the re-design of its services and delivery methods are bound to have important implications for the core competences that staff are expected to have. In their study, Thuy *et al.* (*ibid.*) note a highly significant investment in continued training—something which was borne out by the present survey. Responses indicated that all PES feel driven to give increasing attention to staff training, due to frequent organisational changes, a much more diversified customer base, and developments in the methodology adopted by PES in response to service models. The Netherlands, for instance, is planning to set up its own training academy, while Cyprus has incorporated an investment in continued training opportunities as part of its overall strategy

to modernise its PES. Lithuania has decided to dedicate around 1.1% of the employed wages-fund to the training of its labour exchange staff. Practically all countries reported an intensification of the overall level of continued training provision in areas that are directly or indirectly linked to career guidance, including:

- improving knowledge of the labour market;
- job-seeking counselling;
- developing skills to facilitate individual and group guidance sessions;
- learning how to use interest inventories;
- performing 'balance diagnostics' and the accreditation of prior learning;
- leading job clubs;
- learning new guidance approaches (e.g. socio-dynamic counselling; constructivism and the contextual explanation of careers; solution-focused interviewing; group-based career guidance using cognitive-behavioural approaches);
- learning methods in personnel recruitment and evaluation;
- handling customer segmentation;
- building relationships and networks with employers;
- organisational reforms and use of new IT systems;
- time and project management.

5.5.6. As a result, most PES offer a whole range of courses, often short and modular in nature. In most cases these do not lead to formal certification. Many short courses target the improvement of career guidance and counselling services for special target groups, in order to better serve clients with disabilities, with health problems, who are suffering from addictions, or who are in crisis, and those who have other serious obstacles to placement into work. Many courses are offered in-house, using largely internal expertise, with occasional inputs from invited guest lecturers. Much of the training is delivered during the staff's regular working time, and targets PES staff specifically, though some countries (e.g. Estonia, Malta) report that occasionally joint training sessions are organised for career guidance staff from both the PES and the education sector.

5.5.7. In many cases the courses appear to be *ad hoc*, organised in response to emergent needs or availability of expertise. In other cases there are more formal training structures, with set programmes that are offered on a regular basis. In Slovenia, for instance, training is provided internally by a small team of PES instructors, which was established as a result of a PHARE project that set up the first career centre in Ljubljana, and which has been running 2-4 day workshops since 1998. ANPE in France has a highly sophisticated system of competence-based training at both central and regional levels. Similarly, Finland's PES has a very extensive staff training programme, which is managed by the Labour Institute based in Jyväskylä (see Box 5.7). In Belgium, ORBEM takes stock of its training needs in relation to goals that have been targeted, and develops an annual training plan indicating priorities to guide its personnel's development; staff members can take up to 5% of their working hours to follow training. Ireland's FÁS requires all staff—including those involved in the delivery of

guidance services—to prepare a ‘personal development plan’ at the beginning of every year, within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards, and competence requirements.

Box 5.7. Two approaches to PES guidance staff training

Finland’s training programme at the Labour Institute in Jyväskylä:

The programme comprises: induction training; joint courses for all three roles (employment counsellor, education and training adviser, vocational guidance psychologist) on employment policy and related topics; specialist courses for the different roles; and a series of further training courses available on an optional basis. Most of the courses last 2-4 days; some consist of several training events interspersed with web-based training. The total contact hours are at least 32-34 days for employment counsellors and for education and training advisers, and at least 29-31 days for vocational guidance psychologists—though in practice, staff may not undertake some of these programmes until several years after they have been in post. In addition to this training programme, a ‘breaker’ programme has been introduced for all employment-office client-service staff and office managers in a number of regions, covering 12 days over 3 years. This has focused on teamwork and on organisational as well as staff development, connected with the PES service reforms and the development of service quality and efficiency.

Enhanced training in Hungary:

In an effort to ensure that the new service model of PES is operationalised with adequately trained career guidance staff, Hungary launched a two-year postgraduate course for 20 of its staff members in February 2005. The course leads to a degree in employment consulting, and is delivered through 3-day seminars organised three times every term. Courses are led by the Department of Theoretical and Applied Psychology of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Szent István University, Gödöllő. The main topics covered during the course include: theory and practice of job and career guidance, personality assessment, personality development, life-course planning, career knowledge and career planning, economics and labour market skills, pedagogy, sociology, sociology of various strata, and computer-aided and Internet-based guidance.

5.5.8. Other staff development opportunities are provided less formally through the organisation of structured meetings that enable staff from different local and/or regional offices to share their experiences and examples of interesting practice. This is the case, for instance, in Estonia, Lithuania and Poland, with some noting that participants found such seminars more useful than formal training courses. One country—Estonia—has reported extending this to include a case-analysis supervision methodology, ensuring that the sharing of experience and expertise becomes institutionally embedded through mentoring. France’s ANPE has established a much-appreciated ‘*Forum des Initiatives*’ at both a national and regional level, where good practice is showcased, and even rewarded with certificates of achievement and prize money. Increasingly, such sharing of professional practice as well as continued staff development is organised on IT platforms. Not only are some

courses delivered on-line—as in the case of the ‘Atene’ programme in Norway, or Finland’s basic training course for client service staff—but internet facilities are used (e.g. in Portugal) to animate on-line discussion about specific career-guidance-related themes, with the central office setting key readings to start off the debate, and then inviting counsellors to contribute comments, experiences and further readings. Austria uses intranet facilities for similar purposes.

- 5.5.9. Survey responses also indicate that a substantial amount of staff development is linked to special projects funded by the European Commission. Such projects often entail a training component, and have strong added value in that they encourage and facilitate cross-border collaboration and experience-sharing between partner countries. They frequently also include practical deliverables, such as training manuals—as in the case of projects in which Hungary and Poland took part. An example of training impact in Slovenia has been outlined in para.5.5.7. Another example is a project organised with EU support in different regions in Italy, which aimed to support the development of counselling and assistance services for women entrepreneurs. In this case, training for participants included information sharing, service analysis and organisation, experimentation through service modelling, and the preparation of a ‘guide to the services supplied’ and a ‘tool kit’.

[D] Further training needs

- 5.5.10. Despite major investment in staff training, practically all responses to the survey signalled areas which respondents felt required further attention. The data here can be organised around four main areas:

[a] Improved understanding of the world of work, and of labour market trends (e.g. Belgium-VDAB, Malta, Slovenia).

[b] Specific training in career guidance methods and models, including training targeted to staff who have previously received no formal training in career guidance (e.g. Portugal, Sweden), or who, due to changes in the roles performed, require re-training. Topics here include:

- group guidance skills (e.g. Germany);
- training in the use of new tools and methodologies (e.g. Iceland, Sweden, Slovenia);
- training in the accreditation of prior learning (e.g. the Netherlands) and in drawing up a ‘skills balance profile’ (e.g. Italy);
- training in entrepreneurship counselling (e.g. Greece).

[c] Re-training and continued training in order to be able to implement service models in career guidance delivery, as well as the EES. Topics here include:

- learning how to co-operate with partners, including those based in the local community (e.g. Slovenia);
- training in multi-professional team-work (e.g. Finland);

- methods of activating and motivating the unemployed, and in handling difficult job-seekers (e.g. Malta, Slovenia);
- training in the use of portfolios (e.g. Belgium-VDAB);
- training in providing guidance for lifelong education and training (e.g. Czech Republic);
- training in providing guidance to target groups with special needs (e.g. clients with mental illness—Iceland; clients with addictions—Iceland; clients with learning difficulties—Finland);
- given the increased demands on staff, training to cope with heightened stress levels, and to manage and avoid burn-out (e.g. Hungary).

[d] Training in the use of ICT that supports the career guidance process, and in the delivery of computer-assisted career guidance services (e.g. Germany, Slovenia).

5.6. Tools and instruments

5.6.1. A final consideration of staff in the context of PES personalised employment services and specialised career guidance provision addresses the issue of the use of tools and instruments that facilitate career guidance work. Such tools and instruments have increased in range, sophistication and application, though some time-honoured classics are still widely used, including Holland's Self-Directed Search. Survey responses indicated that, typically, career guidance personnel use:

5.6.1.1. *Tests, checklists and screening instruments* that help clients clarify their occupational (and further education and training) interests and preferences, their aptitudes, and their language proficiency (e.g. in countries like Belgium where many jobs require mastery of two languages). Some of these instruments are more *formative* than *summative* in scope,³² as in the case of portfolio guidance strategies used by Belgium's VDAB, or the workbooks that Estonia uses to structure the way first-time employees explore their abilities and the world of work, and to maintain investment in training. Many of these instruments are pen-and-paper-based, though increasingly they are also available on-line, with many allowing completion on a self-service basis (see Box 5.7 for an example). Finland, for instance, has 20 computerised tests available for clients on the PES intranet site; some of these tests need the support of a career guidance counsellor/psychologist to help the client interpret the outcome.

³² By this we mean that the purpose behind the test is to help the user explore and reflect in structured ways, rather than necessarily to point towards a definite direction. Summative instruments tend to be used in client-segmentation procedures: a case in point would be the new electronic tool developed by Greece, which facilitates the classification of the unemployed according to four levels of support, thus allowing OAED services to develop more targeted policies. Persons ranked at the first level are job-ready; those ranked fourth are in need of intense and constant support to enter the labour market; while those ranked at the second and third levels are at risk of long-term unemployment.

Box 5.8. Range of guidance tools used by Germany's PES

Key tools used to support individual counselling and placement services:

- 'Work Package'—a comprehensive questionnaire for unemployed and other job-seekers to prepare for first interview.
- Profiling ('*Standortbestimmung*'), a tool used by the placement officer to assess the customer's present situation along four dimensions: motivation/commitment; abilities and aptitudes; specific individual barriers for placement; and specific labour market constraints.
- Virtual Job Market (VAM), a comprehensive self-service internet platform for job-seekers and employers, to match job offers and job demands. Employers as well as job-seekers (including applicants for apprenticeship training places) can manage their complete recruitment and application process through the VAM. The VAM is connected with a number of private job machines as well as with the internal IT-placement tool of the PES (www.arbeitsagentur.de → Stellen-, Bewerberboerse).
- Job-Robot and links to other job machines, job fairs etc.
- Various diagnostic tests administered by the Psychological Service of the PES to support counselling, if and when necessary—these are often used in the context of vocational rehabilitation of disabled or handicapped people or other persons who are difficult to place.
- Various assessment and test tools used by external institutes and service providers which can be involved in the placement process.

In the context of guidance and counselling for school-leavers and young people looking for their first career choice or their initial vocational education and training, a number of diagnostic and self-assessment tools are used:

- 'Vocations and Interests' ('*Interesse: Beruf*'), a career-choice programme to match interests and occupations, available on the internet (www.interesse-beruf.de or www.machs-richtig.de/english) and in the BIZ information centres.
- 'Explorix', a self-assessment tool based on Holland's SDS, available as a paper-and-pencil test and online [www.explorix.de], designed to support self-help as well as to assist the guidance practitioner in the counselling process.
- 'Career Choice Test' (*BWT—Berufswahltest*), a professional diagnostic instrument on abilities and interests of school-leavers, administered by the PES.

A number of other test instruments may be used in individual cases.

5.6.1.2. *Tools that provide information about the job market, and opportunities for further education and training.* This information is presented in directories, employment guides, handbooks, career brochures, employment 'barometers' indicating vacancy trends, and so on. Many are print-based, but increasingly the information is made available through electronic media, with the PES website acting as a portal. Some integrate video-streaming to provide a qualitative feel of the different job profiles being explored by the client. In the strongest cases, information about employment opportunities, occupational profiles and client potential are integrated holistically in one package. A case in point is Poland's computer-based Counsellor 2000; or the CD-ROM and web-

based toolbox made available by Belgium-ORBEM, containing tests, job-search tutoring (e.g. preparing CVs, sitting interviews), and so on. ORBEM also uses IBIS to register job-seekers and vacancies. This tool contains three different databases (job-seekers, vacancies and employers) that are interconnected. The updated version of this system permits staff to have a clearer vision of the professional past of the job-seeker and the different actions (s)he undertakes. In Ireland, FÁS has developed a careers database 'Career Directions' with information on over 720 careers. The package has an interest inventory, which can be used to match clients to suitable careers. It is available on CD or on a website (www.careerdirections.ie). The website has recently been developed to meet WAI3 standards.

5.6.2. The survey suggests that there are at least five issues that should be highlighted with reference to the use of tools and instruments by PES career-guidance-related staff:

5.6.2.1. In principle, the range of tools and instruments used by career guidance staff is dependent on the level of their training. In a number of cases, it is only those who are licensed as psychologists or as vocational guidance counsellors that are permitted to use and interpret tests. Elsewhere, the most often-used tools are variants of career interest inventories, many of which do not require the user to have any lengthy specialised training.

5.6.2.2. There is a trend towards an increased use of such tools and instruments, and for these to be accessible for self-service. However, the shift to open access to tools and instruments can create problems for clients who do not find adequate support from trained staff in order to interpret the results of such tests.

5.6.2.3. There is a lot of borrowing and adaptation of instruments from other countries. The most popularly used instrument is the Self-Directed Search developed by Holland in the USA. However, versions of the UK's Adult Directions are also commonly used (e.g. in Slovenia). In addition, tools developed by Canada and France are fairly widely used, with the range of influence being linked to linguistic compatibility. Luxembourg, for instance, uses an assessment model of employability developed by Sherbrooke University in Quebec, plus software for employability assessment from France.

5.6.2.4. There is an increasing tendency for countries to develop their own tools and instruments (e.g. Poland, Portugal), particularly as copyright costs become more onerous.

5.6.2.5. With the availability of the EURES and the PLOTEUS portals, there is an increasingly European dimension to the search for vacancies, labour market information, as well as for education and training opportunities.

CHAPTER 6: CLIENTS

6.1. At the service of the client

6.1.1. Previous chapters have made reference to the fact that the PES modernisation process has entailed several changes in relation to clients. Users of personalised employment services and career guidance services might have noticed one or more of the following improvements:

- that services are more transparent and recognisable, and have exploited the benefits of ICT to make them more accessible;
- that they are more differentiated according to client situation and need;
- that they empower, activate and support rather than encourage dependency;
- that they are delivered in a timely and professional manner;
- that they are flexible and adapt quickly and responsively to labour market transformations, possibly even foreshadowing them;
- that they are effective mediators in the complex interplay between demand and supply of labour, networking efficiently with employers, and providing reliable labour market information in a user-friendly and timely manner;
- that they maintain a good balance between serving the general public, and innovatively and effectively catering for the specific needs of disadvantaged target groups;
- that they work well with other providers, so that service delivery is experienced by the client as a seamless, holistic experience, where community resources are mobilised in support of goals that have, as an outcome, both the private good and the public good.

6.1.2. In this context, a more recent development in the PES attempt to ensure ease of access to services should be noted. This is integrating services in ‘one-stop shops’, making related services available to the client at the same place (see also para.2.2.2.2[b]). Many PES (e.g. Lithuania, Slovakia) have moved towards the concentration of services in one place, or are moving in that direction (e.g. Italy—which has introduced ‘multi-task counters’; Finland; France—which is piloting *Les Maisons d’Emploi*, a version of the UK’s Job Centre Plus; Latvia; Norway—which is planning to integrate its Labour Market Services with the National Insurance Service to constitute a new Public Employment and Welfare Service (NAV); Poland). Co-location of services has become government policy in the Netherlands (where 25 out of 130 offices have been transformed into one-stop shops thus far), in Greece (which reports that 73 out of 116 offices offer integrated services), and in Belgium-VDAB (where the corresponding figure is 120). The Czech Republic has stipulated co-location in its new Employment Act. Where it has proved difficult to co-locate the full range of services (e.g. where space does not allow this, or where a particular service has been contracted out), some countries reimburse client travel costs to facilitate access (e.g. Slovenia, UK).

6.1.3. Co-location of services is a further example of the implementation of the personal service model, which takes the client as the point of departure as well

as the point of destination. In this chapter, personalised employment services and career guidance are considered from the perspective of the client. It first focuses on the range of clients that the PES are catering for, giving particular attention to those categories that have traditionally been hard to reach. Guidance models and strategies used to deliver services to such clients are described. The chapter then considers the extent to which clients express satisfaction with services received. It concludes by noting the tensions and dilemmas that arise in providing personalised employment and career guidance services to clients in a situation marked by high unemployment levels.

6.2. PES clients

6.2.1. PES clients fall into two main groups: [a] citizens who need support in the job-search process, or, less frequently, in developing their career; and [b] employers who turn to the PES for assistance in filling their vacancies. Our survey responses and country visits focused on the first, given that they are the direct beneficiaries of personalised employment and career guidance services; though of course employers are, in many ways, central to the process both as providers of employment (and training) opportunities, and as partners in the delivery of labour market adjustment programmes.

6.2.2. Maintaining a focus on the first category of PES clients, then, we note that the range catered for is very broad indeed. Depending on the different country (and sometimes regional) contexts, clients can include *students* (including specialised services for school drop-outs, for school-leavers and for youth more generally, services for whom were discussed in paras.2.4.7-2.4.9 above), *job-changers* (i.e. clients who are in employment, but who are keen to change their jobs either because they are searching for improved personal fulfilment and job satisfaction, or because they may fear that their present employment is in jeopardy or is more temporary than they wish), and *unemployed job-seekers*. Some PES—including those of Finland, France, Lithuania, Slovenia and Sweden, for instance—provide services to *all* citizens.³³ In some other countries, PES offices are confined—by law (as in Greece), or in practice, due to the number of jobless to be catered for (as in Poland)—to unemployed people. By far the largest group of clients across all countries are adult job-seekers. This group is made up of the general category of out-of-work citizens, to whom PES offer a regular range of mainstream services; but also by several different sub-groups, who are in a range of personal, social and/or other circumstances that constitute an obstacle to employment, and who are catered for by some PES through specialised target activities and programmes. Examples of such sub-groups and of the programmes offered to them include:

6.2.1.1. The *long-term unemployed* (LTU) are one of the most-often-referred-to client groups in the survey responses. Most countries (e.g. Belgium-VDAB, Estonia, France, Germany, Norway, Lithuania, Slovenia,

³³ Some specify the age-range of citizens they commit themselves to cater for. In the case of Finland, for instance, services are limited to those between the ages of 16 and 64, the rationale being that young people have access to vocational guidance at school, while people over 64 are mostly retired and not PES customers any more.

Sweden) highlighted the needs of this specific group, and provided details of the programmes they have implemented to cater for their needs. Some (e.g. the Netherlands, Slovenia) outsource these programmes to agencies that have specialised staff to provide deeper services. Many have developed both group-based and one-to-one services in order to motivate clients whose experience of long-term unemployment has had serious negative impact on their self-image, feelings of self-worth, connectedness with others and resources to construct meaningful lifestyles, leading to a vicious circle marked by isolation and anomie. Box 6.1 provides details of a case-management approach adopted by Estonia in relation to LTUs, as well as other categories of clients with specific difficulties, including those with disabilities and mothers with infants.

Box 6.1. The case-management approach for the long-term unemployed in Estonia

The steps involved in the case-managed approach used in Estonia include:

- The establishment of contact with the client and making an initial evaluation. The kind of support that the client needs is determined. Other primary-level specialists may be involved in the initial evaluation process, including the family doctor, the local-government social worker, teachers, probation officers, and so on.
- The assignment of a case manager to the client.
- The carrying out of an in-depth evaluation of the client's abilities, problems, environment, and resources. An outcome of this evaluation is the production of an individual action plan to help the person into employment.
- The co-ordination of the implementation of the action plan.
- The evaluation of the attainment of objectives.
- The offering of specific services.
- The referral of the person to labour market services and public care services (including rehabilitation services, aid, and so on).

6.2.1.2. *Women returners* to the labour market after an extended absence—often related to child-rearing—are the target of specialised programmes in many countries (including Austria, Belgium-ORBEM, Belgium-VDAB, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania and Switzerland, among others). Germany reports that some local employment offices have established special bureaux for women re-entering the labour market, which have been very successful. On its part, Ireland's FÁS launched the 'Gateway for Women' pilot initiative in 2002, which is aimed at proactively encouraging women to return to the workforce: this initiative supports the Government's commitment to achieving the EU target of a 60% female employment rate by 2010. The Austrian PES has also developed

a career-coaching methodology for women returnees after parental leave. The coaching module involves 5-7 individual face-to-face sessions, each 60-90 minutes long. Here clients are helped to analyse strong and weak points, to work on a long-term professional perspective, to define a professional goal, and to draw up a concrete action plan for implementation.³⁴ While much of this work is curative in nature, some also has a preventive dimension. Malta's PES, for instance, besides running empowerment and computer courses for women returners, has produced a 'Manual for Gender-Sensitive Vocational Guidance', which, among other features, targets both boys and men to share in the domestic responsibilities of the home. Special programmes for *lone parents*—who are often, but not always, women—are also often devised by PES (e.g. Ireland, Poland).

6.2.1.3. *Persons with disability* are also increasingly identified as target clients for specific career-guidance-related programmes in many—though by no means all—PES in Europe. Ireland, for instance, caseloads those with disabilities in order to offer them more intensive rehabilitation guidance. Deeper guidance provision is also made available to such customers in Finland, Lithuania, Norway, Slovakia and the UK. *Health-impaired clients* are also recognised as a distinct category requiring specialised assistance in countries such as Germany, Hungary and Sweden. Slovakia has even developed a special action plan in regard to this category, on the grounds that clients who have been out of the labour market for an extended period of time because of a serious health impairment require a personalised approach co-ordinating personnel from labour, social affairs and family offices, and more intensive efforts to address their unemployment problems. This action plan includes a range of activities, such as: vocational advice regarding suitable job selection; information about local, national and international job vacancies; information about offers of participation in work exchanges and selection procedures; free access to the vacancy information system; access to special services delivered by counselling and information centres for health-impaired citizens; appraisal of personal background, abilities and vocational skills; and individual and group information activities. Hungary, for its part, has used PHARE and its national Labour Market Fund to establish a national system of Rehabilitation Information Centres within the organisational framework of the PES in order to cater for the special needs of clients with reduced work capacity.

6.2.1.4. Some services are focused on the needs of clients whose links to citizenship rights may, for a variety of reasons, be somewhat tenuous, and who therefore may suffer disadvantages in the job-search process. Several countries reported developing special career-guidance-related activities direct at *immigrants* (e.g. Belgium-ORBEM, Belgium-VDAB, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden), and at *travelling people* (e.g. Ireland, Hungary). Lithuania, for instance, launched a 'Integration of Roma into

³⁴ Significantly, a service that was intended to be a standard offer to all women who asked for it when it was first launched in 2000 is now being offered only on a limited basis, given that increasing unemployment has stretched the resources of many employment offices in Austria.

the Lithuanian Society Programme' in 2000, even though the Roma community in this case is a small minority group made up of only around 2,600 people (or 0.08% of the total population). Since most Roma people lack formal basic education and cannot acquire a profession or engage in business, this integration programme started in 2002 by offering the opportunity for special career consultations, as well as training opportunities to support pathways into employment. In Belgium, one of ORBEm's divisions—'Service Intervention Directe Employeurs' (SIDE)—has developed an original methodology to combat discrimination against *refugees*. It starts from the needs of employers and firms, analysing the profile demanded by the company in detail, as well as the company culture and its working conditions. This information is used to adapt the profile of refugee job-seekers (and the low-qualified) so that they can apply for vacancies in a way that gives them improved chances to be successful.

6.2.1.5. A number of services are focused on the needs of clients whose main obstacle to employment is lack of skills, either because they are *unqualified*, or because they are *low-skilled*, or because the skills that they have are *obsolete* and no longer required. In the latter category one could also include *older workers*, who in addition to obsolete skills, have the additional disadvantage of being perceived as difficult to train, or as having little motivation to re-train—an issue that was raised by Belgium-ORBEm, Belgium-VDAB, Finland, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia. Several countries (e.g. Estonia, Belgium-ORBEm, Belgium-FOREM, France, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Switzerland) made reference to one or more of these groups, and while in most cases the response has been either provision of, or referral to agencies that provide, skills training programmes, other career-guidance-related approaches have also been put into place. These include a variety of schemes that recognise informal and non-formal learning, an activity which is increasingly associated with the repertoire of competences that career guidance can offer (OECD, 2004, p.63). In the Netherlands, where the recognition of prior learning and work experience is outsourced, the formal validation of informally acquired competences is one of the key priorities that the PES sees for the future. In France, 'Plateformes de vocation' have been developed, whereby young people without qualifications or work experience are assessed to gauge what natural abilities and capacities they have in relation to jobs that are available on the market, particularly in labour shortage areas. These young people are placed in work-like situations where specific innate skills such as dexterity are tested, and employers conclude that an individual can be trained in a short time in order to perform a particular job. This so-called '*recrutement par simulation*' draws on the diagnostic skills that occupational psychologists and career guidance specialists possess.

6.2.1.6. Some services address the needs of *company-closure clients* who are soon-to-be-unemployed due to imminent lay-offs and redundancies. Some PES (e.g. Austria, Belgium-FOREM, Estonia, Ireland) have developed specialised personalised employment services and career

guidance activities specifically for this group. Lithuania, for instance, sets up mini-labour-exchange services in enterprises where mass lay-offs are being planned. In Austria, AMS mobilises guidance services for employees in large enterprises who receive a notice of separation as a result of structural changes. Such workers can receive unemployed benefits for up to four years, a right which is embedded through collective agreements and which supports individuals in the quest for a new start in their occupational life. The AMS programme for the newly-redundant usually starts with a number of orientation weeks, where clients are helped to prepare individual career plans. These career plans have to be approved by AMS staff. The implementation phase, which can last up to four years, generally includes re-training that is funded by the client's previous employer and/or by the regional government.

6.2.1.7. Beyond these sub-groups, there is a wide range of clients with social problems. These include those with *addictions*, for whom some countries (e.g. France, Germany, Malta, Poland, Slovenia) organise a mix of personal and career counselling, as well as personalised employment services, often in collaboration with other agencies. They also include *prisoners* and *ex-offenders*. Here, too, some PES (e.g. Belgium-FOREM, Ireland, Latvia, Malta) have developed targeted programmes. Lithuania, for instance, promulgated a scheme in August 2003 aiming at the integration of convicted persons into the labour market. The scheme provides for general measures directed at correctional facilities, with a view to raising the awareness of those to be released, and providing them with the necessary consulting services and information about the current situation on the labour market. As a result of this scheme, one in every three persons of the 5,300 previously imprisoned persons registered with the local labour exchanges was placed in employment in 2003. Belgium's VDAB has also developed a special programme for inmates, including workbooks and resources for scenario building. In Italy, some regions have developed a new category of guidance counsellor referred to as '*facilitatore*'—a person whose role it is to 'facilitate' access of clients suffering from all sorts of *social disadvantage* to the labour market. Ireland too has developed a special programme targeting persons needing 'high support' (see Box 6.2 below).

Box 6.2. The High Support Process in Ireland

In January 2003, FÁS introduced a new High Support Process (HSP) to assist National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) clients who are experiencing personal barriers to employment. Multi-agency teams were put in place, comprising representatives of the health boards, education authorities, probation and welfare services, etc. to address such non-vocational barriers as drug abuse and literacy/numeracy. A budget of €1.2m was assigned for 2003. Features include:

- Participants utilising the HSP are assigned to FÁS Employment Service officers/LES (Local Employment Service) mediators under a caseload management system.

- FÁS Employment Services officers/LES mediators provide support as appropriate. Such support is arranged in consultation with external agencies such as the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Department of Health and Children, and the Department of Education and Science.
- A total allowance of €2,200 (maximum) per person is available to resource the relevant intervention.

In 2004 the process was extended to operate nationwide, thereby extending the process to a greater number of clients. A budget of approx €1.3m was allocated for the HSP in 2004.

6.3. Unreached clients

6.3.1. Despite the attempts to provide services in response to—and in anticipation of—client needs, the responses to the questionnaire suggest that PES are finding some of these targeted customers difficult to reach. There are a variety of reasons for this. These are outlined below, each being followed by one or more examples of effective responses on the part of PES, where details of these were available.

6.3.1.1. Some fall, as it were, below the ‘radar’ of visibility that the PES uses to scan needs. These include clients who are unemployed, but who are not receiving any unemployment benefit and who are not registering—a category of persons that was highlighted in the reports by France and Norway, among others. Other examples of ‘invisible’ clients are graduates and highly qualified individuals that tend not to use the PES, which is often associated with services for low-qualified unemployed—a factor that was mentioned by Cyprus, Germany and Greece, among others. In some countries, improved self-service career-related information and guidance-support tools have been made available for these groups. Others (e.g. France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden) have re-designed their employment offices and the flow of clients through them in such a way as to mitigate the stigma that might have been associated with them in the past.

6.3.1.2. Other clients are visible, but difficult to reach, often because they are remote in geographical and/or social terms. Some clients live in isolated regions of a country, where access by road or even the internet highway is difficult. In response to this, some countries have developed special distance-counselling facilities. A case in point is Hungary, which has introduced web-camera-based consulting in some counties, offering clients paying a visit to an office in the countryside ‘face-to-face’ contact with the employment counsellor located at an urban centre without having to travel there. Similar facilities have been developed in Poland and Sweden. Other clients live on the margins of mainstream society, and either cannot be reached due to strong cultural and other barriers, or do not want to be reached, considering their situation to be the result of a choice in favour of an alternative lifestyle. Such groups include some

travelling people, as well as a variety of sub- and counter-cultural communities and movements.

6.3.1.3. Similarly difficult to activate in employment terms are clients who have little if any interest in changing their unemployed status. These include individuals who accumulate a number of benefits due to the fact that they suffer from multiple disadvantages. This can lead to a situation where there is little if any financial incentive to work—an issue that was referred to, for instance, in the reports by France, Hungary and Ireland. Others are simply unwilling to work. Several PES (e.g. Austria, Belgium-FOREM, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands) noted that such groups did not constitute a priority, and for some of these countries the challenge of responding effectively to the needs of those clients that *do* want to work is so overwhelming that little if any attention is paid to those unwilling to work. Other countries, on the contrary, have developed specific strategies. Iceland has targeted measures aimed particularly at youth who slide into a more-or-less permanent status of unemployment because they give up their job-search too early. Several countries—among them Norway, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland—have intensified policing measures, making eligibility to benefits subject to evidence of active job-search forays, and even to involvement in community work.³⁵ Others—including Cyprus, Germany, Ireland, Portugal and Slovakia—report that they have invested rather more in career-guidance-related activities, including rigorous action planning, in order to activate and support clients.

6.3.1.4. There is a range of different categories of clients who, while within the reach of PES initiatives and targeted services, are extremely difficult to place because their situation renders them unattractive to employers, even when subsidised employment schemes are in place. These categories typically include: [a] those with health impairments (e.g. Luxembourg, Slovakia); [b] the low-qualified, low-skilled and illiterate (e.g. Belgium-FOREM, Belgium-VDAB, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia), including those who dropped out of school early (e.g. Hungary, Lithuania, Slovenia); [c] those who are not mobile; and [d] immigrants,

³⁵ OECD (2001, p.22) indicates that such coercion may involve some mix of a number of obligations (enforced if necessary through benefit sanctions): to participate in detailed interviews; to supply information and agree to an action plan; to accept a suitable job offer; to undertake independent job search; and/or to participate in a labour market programme. OECD notes that there is a trend towards greater levels of compulsion, sometimes confined to later stages in the unemployment spell, but sometimes throughout (*ibid*, p.26). A recent comparative study in Britain and Germany (Finn *et al.*, 2005) concluded that the stricter benefit regime in Britain had resulted in more of the unemployed being put in touch with jobs and employment advice, so contributing to the marked UK decline in unemployment levels. On the other hand, it also noted that undue stress on, and imposition of, sanctions might result in passive compliance rather than active engagement with employment assistance, as well as consuming the time of advisers, distracting them from the task of employment assistance (see also the discussion in para.2.2.2.4 above).

who may not have the language competences required (e.g. Belgium-VDAB, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg).

6.3.1.5. Finally, a potentially large group of clients that PES in many European countries are failing to reach are the *already employed*, a category that includes *job-changers*, for instance, but also those who require career guidance and labour market information in relation to their wish to engage in *further career development*. Many countries recognise the need for PES to be actively engaged in providing services to this varied category of potential clients, particularly in the context of the new knowledge economy with its constantly changing skill requirements. The re-design of services and premises noted in para.6.3.1.1 above may be designed in part to attract such clients. However, many countries also admitted, through their responses to the survey, that given the major demands being made on their services by the unemployed, those in employment did not constitute a priority group (e.g. Norway); in a few countries (e.g. Greece), the PES employment offices do not cater for them at all. Belgium's VDAB was among those who signalled more substantial activities in catering for the career guidance needs of the employed (see Box 6.3 below), though it noted the challenges associated with this, particularly since many employers tend to associate such services with turnover and a loss of valuable employees.

Box 6.3. Career guidance for those already in employment: a Belgian initiative

VDAB provides career guidance to employees through one-to-one personal coaching, or through group sessions—normally 8 sessions of 1.5 hours each. Candidates can pay for the service using training vouchers. VDAB also provides client-centred guidance services to career transitions in enterprises, where the aim is to coach employees, individually or in groups, to plan their career in line with the objectives of the enterprise. Employees are helped in writing their personal development plan.

While career guidance for individuals is offer-based, career guidance provided in companies is demand-based and the employee is guided within the context of the company. The goal of career guidance in a company is to reconcile two dynamic realities—the company and the employee. The career guidance counsellor proceeds through interaction with the key figures in the company. Together they discover what changes their strategic decisions can bring about. The organisation translates these changes to the collaborators' level. The career guidance counsellor coaches the collaborators towards self-development within the new context of the organisation in a targeted form. A personal development plan may enable the employee and the employer to realise the match with their organisation in a meaningful way.

6.4. Client satisfaction

6.4.1. Given the personalised service orientation of modernised PES, it is not surprising that client satisfaction with services provided constitutes an increasingly important reference point in the PES organisational culture. Thus

client-satisfaction surveys have become quite common (see para.3.4.9.2). While many of these surveys consider PES services in a comprehensive manner, in some cases career guidance is specifically targeted. A case in point is Finland: details about the approach used there are presented in Box 6.4 below.

Box 6.4. Finland's survey of customer satisfaction with career guidance services

A customer feedback survey on the main PES services—including career guidance—is carried out regularly in Finland, with the most recent one being completed in 2004. Survey results help to identify and disseminate best practice, and are systematically used at all levels of the organisation for strategic planning and improvement of service standards (scores are available for each activity in each employment office). In the 2004 survey, Finland's PES carried out a telephone survey of 23,000 clients. Of these, 3,000 reported on their experience of career guidance, using a five-point scale (where 1=very poor, 5=very good). The focus was on:

- the appointment process and the telephone service;
- individual guidance;
- the usefulness of the career guidance service;
- the contrast between the service expected and that received;
- the general quality of the service overall.

Career guidance clients expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the confidentiality of the guidance process, the sensitive manner in which personal data was processed, and the overall quality of discussions with the vocational guidance psychologist. They were less satisfied with the co-operation between services, the information on guidance services, and the help and encouragement they received in the process of making career choices.

6.4.2. A few other countries reported the outcomes of such client satisfaction surveys. In Hungary, for instance, the PES carried out an evaluation of 20 of its offices. The report indicates that job-seekers want to see more vacancies advertised, want access to more information (especially self-service information), and hope for a broader range of services. Employers want the Hungarian PES to provide them with more information about the labour market, about subsidy schemes, and about the legislative framework governing employment. Norway notes that the outcomes of the latest annual user survey, while generally positive given that 70% claim to be satisfied with the services provided by Aetat, nevertheless indicate a slight dip on previous years, attributable to the considerable number of clients coming into contact with PES officers. Switzerland, on its part, notes that 33% of clients feel somewhat sceptical about the usefulness of the services received.

6.5. Tensions in servicing clients

6.5.1. Survey responses indicate that in their efforts to provide personalised employment and career guidance services to a broad range of clients, PES staff encounter a number of tensions and dilemmas that arise directly from

their work with clients. These largely result from the dual role that the institution they work for has to fulfil: [a] on the one hand, to help clients clarify where their occupational strengths and interests lie, and to open up pathways into jobs that use these strengths and satisfy these interests; and [b] on the other hand, to place clients into employment as quickly as possible—even if at times this entails overcoming client reluctance to work, or to work in jobs that are less satisfactory for them.

6.5.2. A common dilemma relates to the tension—reported in many of the country responses—between [a] the largely liberal background and training of persons coming through training in psychology and psychology-related courses which encourage humanistic, client-centred perspectives—an approach and philosophy that are in principle in tune with the renewed emphasis on personalised service models within European PES—and [b] the realities of severely restricted labour market opportunities. One way of articulating this tension is by saying that tight labour markets pit the client-centred ethic against the job-placement imperative. From the perspective of the client, however, this tension can be transcended somewhat by the argument that employment—even if initially in a job not specifically aspired to—often opens the door to improved material, social and psychological well-being. Related tensions in providing guidance services can surface at particular junctures in the process of service delivery, such as:

6.5.2.1. When clients are referred to services against their wishes, and clients only accept the referral in order to safeguard access to benefits—a point made by Austria, Iceland, and Ireland, among others.

6.5.2.2. When job-placement targets (in terms of numbers overall, but also in addressing skills bottlenecks) and deadlines established at a political level put pressure on employment officers and careers advisers to shepherd clients into employment that is not of the client's choosing—a dilemma highlighted by Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden.

6.5.2.3. When the time that can be allocated to the guidance interview is so short that advisers feel they are processing rather than guiding individuals—a concern expressed by survey respondents from Belgium-VDAB, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Norway and Portugal.

6.5.2.4. When the human and other resources made available by the institution lead to a situation where advisers cannot provide what they consider to be a professionally adequate personal guidance package. This is particularly acute in those cases where employment advisers—rather more than career counsellors—have unrealistic staff-to-client ratios,³⁶ a factor referred to by practically all the countries involved in the survey.

³⁶ It is somewhat difficult to establish comparative staff-to-client ratios, as it was not always clear from the data provided whether respondents were referring to staff providing personalised employment services or professional career guidance services. With that caveat, the staff-to-client ratios *reported* ranged from 1:87 in Norway and 1:130 in Finland, to 1:3,070 in Hungary. Other data provided were 1:250 (UK); 1:300 (Spain); 1:338 (Ireland); 1:350 (Malta and Germany); 1:1,261 (Portugal); 1:2,056

- 6.5.2.5. When the need to give priority to target client groups leads to a situation where other clients have no access to services, or have to obtain them from elsewhere (as in Belgium-FOREM, VDAB, Portugal)—occasionally at a cost (as in Switzerland).
- 6.5.2.6. When self-service and self-help tools and resources (see section 4.4) replace rather than supplement and complement the interventions of careers advisers, particularly in relation to clients experiencing functional, digital or other forms of illiteracy—a concern expressed by Belgium-VDAB, Slovenia and Sweden, among others.
- 6.5.3. Finally, a key issue in relation to clients refers to the tension that exists between a model of personalised employment and career guidance services which positions the client as a passive recipient of services, akin to a *medical model* where PES staff are viewed as experts treating patients, in contrast to a model that is based on *empowerment*. There are thus two different and contrasting philosophies underpinning personalised service models. This was most clearly articulated by three responses to the questionnaire. Belgium-VDAB respondents emphasised their shift from an ‘expert’ testing and assessment approach to a self-assessment, reflective and empowering approach based on dialogue with the client. The Norwegian and Spanish responses similarly noted that their work with clients was based on a conviction that the unemployed must be considered as persons with resources, not just with problems. According to this view, the challenge for counsellors is to act as facilitators who aim to help clients understand and overcome the difficulties that appear on the way to employment. A systemic theoretical framework is accordingly adopted which approaches job-seeking as an interactive process between professionals and unemployed people in a given social context. The meaning changes that take place in the relationship among the elements of the system are understood from the theoretical perspective of social constructivism (cf. footnote 22 above). Techniques drawn from the ‘solution-focused’ approach³⁷ are proposed as a means to motivate and maintain job-seeking behaviour. In summary, Norwegian and Spanish career guidance staff apply a methodology with a solution-focused intervention where training goals, attitudes, locus of control and self-efficacy are given due importance within an overarching social constructivist framework.

(Estonia); and 1:926 and 1:341 for employment adviser and career counsellor respectively in Slovakia. Some have decided to reduce the ratio—a case in point is Germany, which is aiming to reduce it from 1:350 to 1:200.

³⁷ The Solution-Focused Model is a brief therapy approach developed over the past 20 years at the Brief Family Therapy Centre in Milwaukee. It is based on goals, whose qualities facilitate efficient and effective problem management. It uses a specialised interviewing procedure to negotiate such goals. Goals must be: salient to the client rather than the therapist or treatment programme; small rather than large; described in specific, concrete and behavioural terms; described in situational and contextual rather than global and psychological terms; stated in interactional and interpersonal rather than individual and intrapsychic terms; described as the start of something rather than the end of something; described as the presence of something rather than the absence of something; and realistic and immediately achievable within the context of the client’s life. After a goal is negotiated, the model specifies how to use a client’s own unique resources and strengths to accomplish this goal.

CHAPTER 7: CHALLENGES AND WAYS FORWARD

7.1. *Challenges for career guidance within PES*

7.1.1. Previous chapters have pointed out PES achievements in providing personalised employment services and career guidance to clients as well as a broad range of innovative practices. Such efforts and initiatives are deserving of the highest commendation, particularly given the often less than optimal resource environment that Public Employment Services have to operate in, and the increasing demands made upon them. The previous chapters have also indicated some of the challenges that are being encountered across Europe in the attempt to transform service delivery in response to prevailing and emerging economic and social realities, as well as to new approaches in the management of public services. This concluding chapter sets out to synthesise and extend the consideration of such challenges which PES are facing and will be facing in the near future, including attention to the critical reflections made by respondents on the current state of their services, and on the directions in which they wish to move. In outlining these challenges, pointers towards the way forward for personalised employment services and career guidance within PES will become apparent.

7.2. *Proving effectiveness*

7.2.1. It has already been noted that career guidance and career-guidance-related activities in many PES across Europe are the subject of substantial public investment which drives the extension of the range of services and the depth at which they are offered, thus contributing to the effort to respond to the European Employment Strategy and to implementing a personal service model. As the German response to the survey noted, such investment in a tight resource environment can only be maintained or augmented if policy-makers are persuaded that targeted returns in relation to inputs are attained. In this regard, the OECD report on career guidance and public policy (2004, p.126) notes that “strong and systematic evidence is needed to assess the match between career guidance services and policy objectives, but also to assess the need for new or expanded services, and the value that those who provide funds are getting for the funds invested”. This study has suggested that while there is a strong tradition of critical assessment of PES functions overall, the *targeted* evaluation of career guidance within PES settings needs further attention, even if, as we shall see below, there are a number of examples of good practice in several countries that could serve to provide models for emulation. In addition, and as noted in section 6.4 above, a number of countries carry out customer-satisfaction surveys. Such surveys are a necessary but not sufficient basis for a comprehensive evaluation of services. Other evaluation activities are somewhat limited, and often insufficiently robust to support claims for improved resourcing. Equally crucial is the fact that due to major shifts in modalities of service delivery—as noted in earlier chapters in this report—the need for evaluation in terms both of efficiency in resource use, and of impact on quality of service, is accentuated rather than mitigated.

- 7.2.2. Few of the survey responses indicated any major assessment of career guidance and career-guidance-related activities in the two years preceding the study. No such review has been carried out, for instance, in Cyprus, Estonia, Iceland, Malta, the Netherlands and Sweden. Some reported carrying out major appraisals over the past two years, though they may not have necessarily targeted career guidance *per se*, but looked instead at career guidance-related activities within the context of the whole broad range of services offered by the organisation. Other respondents to the survey noted that there were plans to focus on evaluating career guidance in the near future. A number of other countries reported carrying out evaluations very recently, but indicated that the results of the study were not yet available.³⁸ All in all, one can conclude from the survey that there is a noticeable shift towards a greater interest in the formal evaluation of guidance services. Such a shift may have been further stimulated by the requirements of EU-funded project management protocols, and by the OECD and European Commission reviews of career guidance which have generated widespread debate and interest in benchmarking one's own system in relation to best practice in other countries.
- 7.2.3. In some cases, PES respondents provided some information about evaluations that they have carried out or commissioned. These are presented in Box 7.1 below.

Box 7.1. Examples of evaluations of career-guidance-related activities in PES

- In Belgium, VDAB commissions such external organisations as Ernst & Young, PWC, and a local university's *Hoger Instituut van de Arbeid*, to carry out effectiveness audits.
- In France, ANPE carries out thorough evaluations regularly, covering fixed periods of service, the most recent being that for 1999-2003. In addition to these broad reviews, ANPE has also commissioned targeted evaluations of specific services. One of these focused on the 'econometric effects' of four kinds of services on the chances of clients overcoming their unemployment status. The study found that the service that followed or accompanied clients during their job placement (i.e. '*Accompagnement Emploi*') positively affected the return to employment in the short term; and that the '*Bilans de Compétences Approfondis*' and the '*Accompagnement Projet*', while only mildly successful in accelerating ways out of unemployment, nevertheless did facilitate access to more stable and satisfying employment. The service focusing on '*Évaluations*', however, did not seem to have had an effect either on the return to employment, or on retention of that employment once obtained.
- In Greece, the KPA has carried out an evaluation of the recently introduced personalised approach strategy.

³⁸ This is the case with Ireland, for instance, which has carried out evaluations of the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) preventive programme, as well as its 'High Support Process' and 'Pathways' initiatives, the results of which were not yet available at the time the survey was carried out. Similarly, the report for Spain's evaluation of its guidance services will not be available before 2006; while in Portugal, the IEFP evaluation of the tools and instruments it uses for vocational guidance is still in process.

- In Italy, an annual monitoring survey is carried out.
- In Lithuania, effectiveness surveys are carried out on a biannual basis.
- In Slovenia, an evaluation of the Integrated Counselling, Training and Employment Method (ICTEM), a Leonardo da Vinci-funded initiative that also included Ireland, Italy and the UK, was finalised at the end of 2004. Qualitative and quantitative evaluations showed that programme beneficiaries improved self- and opportunity-awareness, and developed clear career goals as well as career planning and vocational skills. Furthermore, the programme had an impact on increased employability of the beneficiaries and on improved motivation for lifelong learning. Statistical analysis of the data also showed a visible effect in their learning achievement regarding career planning skills. Beneficiaries acquired various skills and knowledge about the labour market and the opportunities it offered, methods of searching for information, methods of self-presentation, and dimensions of self-awareness, including knowledge about themselves, knowledge of opportunities that suited them, and self-efficacy.
- In Spain, two studies have looked at the effectiveness of career guidance in placing clients into employment. One was produced by INEM in 1999; the other was carried out by Guipuzcoa in 2000. The results of a more recent survey will become available in 2006.

7.2.4. A clear recommendation emerging from the present study is the need to build on these efforts at strengthening the evidence base by designing and implementing national—and possibly cross-national, comparative—surveys in order to be better placed to measure the impact of career guidance in PES settings. It must be noted that such research is particularly difficult to do well. As OECD (2004, p.127) point out, “career guidance is often hard to observe directly, it is very diverse in nature, it is often embedded in other activities, and the outcomes it tries to achieve are diverse, diffuse and to some extent idiosyncratic to the needs of the individuals”. Such research is even more challenging if it focuses—as it should—both on quantitative *and* qualitative indicators. Nevertheless, in contexts where expectations in relation to such (reductive) tangible outcomes as successful and lasting placement in employment, and in relation to the quality of service provision, are constantly on the rise, it is increasingly necessary to fund the complex, large-scale research that is required to generate the evidence needed.

7.3. Foregrounding the identity of career guidance

7.3.1. One of the key trends signalled by the survey data is that, due to the personal service model, career guidance elements are becoming increasingly embedded in a broad range of activities conducted by the PES. This is, in principle, a positive development, particularly for those who are convinced that client-centred approaches to PES service delivery are more respectful of citizens, more empowering, and—when adequately underpinned by sound economic and sociological as well as psychological frameworks—less likely to adopt stances that construct clients in deficit terms.

7.3.2. But the survey also leads us to conclude that the embedding of an activity such as career guidance in too broad a range of other activities may have some

negative consequences. The most important of these is that the very *notion* of ‘career guidance’ may become so diluted, and the boundaries with other related activities so blurred, that it becomes difficult to identify, define, and hence train for or—as noted in para.7.3.1—even to evaluate. In other words, ‘embedding’ may lead to a situation where the institution in which career guidance is practised disregards the fact that this activity is constituted by a discrete set of practices supported by a knowledge base and a range of competences that have been systematically developed over a century of professional experience, and reflective research on that experience. Needless to say, this discrete activity which we are referring to as ‘career guidance’ will be shaped differently in the different contexts in which it is exercised, so that, to take just one example, career guidance in educational settings will overlap with, but also be substantially different from, career guidance in PES. In other words, our understanding of career guidance depends on the context in which it is nested. The everyday realities of the PES context are marked, as we have repeatedly noted in this report, by such factors as time constraints, pressure of client numbers and hugely variegated client needs, and the imperatives of swift job placement.

7.3.3. A clearer foregrounding of the identity of career guidance within PES would lead to a greater concern with ensuring that all those involved in this work have the required knowledge base, the interpersonal skills, the ethical foundations and the technical competences that the work requires. This is particularly important given the increasingly broad remit of those involved in both personalised employment services and specialised career guidance services, where the attempt to reach out effectively to an extensive range of clients in situations that are complex in nature requires a thorough preparation. Not only is the remit broader when compared to PES in the past, but it is also more challenging. This is both because the external environment is often less than encouraging, and because effective service delivery often requires a congruent, holistic, client-focused way of working together with a wide range of other professionals. In addition, as several survey reports and our country-visit data suggest, PES staff are challenged by clients who are increasingly well-educated, increasingly well-informed about their rights, and have increasingly high expectations from public services.

7.3.4. Country responses to the survey indicated concerns about the identity of career guidance in PES settings, and the philosophy underpinning it. These were not self-centred musings. On the contrary, they reflected the response of principled actors caught within the tensions of providing personal and professional services under the pressure of tight organisational outcome deadlines—tensions that are not easily reconcilable. Some expressed their sense of frustration in this respect by reminding us that “career guidance does not, and *cannot*, create jobs!”³⁹; and that it was often rather difficult to “achieve harmonisation between the goals of finding work quickly” and of “realising an individual vocational project”. Others noted resignedly that high unemployment levels have led to a situation where “there is a clear priority to

³⁹ Possibly hinting at the obvious fact that PES are very vulnerable to political scapegoating, with policy-makers exporting blame for high unemployment from the more intractable economic realm to other realms, including public services such as schools and PES.

get people into work rather than provide serious career guidance”. Yet others underscored the need to shift to different models of conceptualising career guidance, and to re-examine the roles of service providers and service recipients in this process.

7.3.5. It is interesting to note, for instance, that among the aspirations for career-guidance-related services expressed by survey respondents, we find that some (e.g. Sweden) highlighted the need for career guidance to have a more distinctive professional role. Other statements were that professional standards in relation to personalised services were difficult to maintain unless there was institutional support for deeper career guidance provision (e.g. Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland); and that personal action planning and attention to individual attributes and preferences could not be guaranteed unless there was a sound understanding of what this entailed in service terms on the part of the organisation (e.g. Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Poland, Slovakia, Spain). Some (e.g. Belgium-VDAB) noted a significant shift from administrative-type responsibilities towards more client-centred, communicative, competency-type profiles, suggesting that important reshaping dynamics are taking place within employment advisory roles. Respondents (e.g. Cyprus, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden) also flagged the need for more training in order to be in a better position to fulfil the multiple and expanding demands in a more professional manner. Some (e.g. Cyprus, Hungary, Slovenia) reported finding themselves in situations of having to use new methodologies—such as group guidance skills (e.g. Belgium-FOREM, Hungary, Estonia, Sweden) and profiling methods (e.g. France, Finland)—often within the context of strict quality-auditing procedures, but without sufficient preparatory training, or support in finding the right balance between different methodologies, to enable them to address the right target-groups with the right tools.

7.3.6. A recommendation stemming from this report is therefore that PES leaders and practitioners should respond to this need to articulate, more clearly than has hitherto been the case, an *identity* for career guidance services within PES: one that is in tune with the demands that are being made on it both by forces external to the organisation, and by internal forces. In this articulation of identity, issues of staff competence and roles, and of quality in service delivery, will assume increased prominence. Staff training is particularly critical here. Chapter 5 provided examples of the range of creative modalities by means of which PES staff are supported in the development of the appropriate competences. What is clear from these examples is that there is not just one route into career guidance, but rather that a range of pre-service, induction, in-service and continued training can all contribute in different ways in the building up of a competence profile that can respond to the needs of PES clients.

7.4. Implementing lifelong access to career guidance

7.4.1. A major challenge that the PES in Europe have to face is that presented by the knowledge economy, and the implications it may have for the way citizens move through occupational and training pathways in complex, non-linear

ways. It also increasingly has implications for the nature of work available, with the growth of part-time and temporary jobs as well as self-employment having major implications for the field of career guidance and employment services.⁴⁰ As the Norwegian response put it: “The challenge for guidance services today is no longer to help the user find one specific occupation, but to provide each citizen with his or her own ‘career engine’ so that they are able to meet shifting demands in the labour market.” In this regard, Thuy *et al.* (2001) note that in the new knowledge economy, with its constantly changing skill requirements, there are large numbers of highly educated people who form a new market for jobs and the labour market (p.xvi). They suggest that “the PES has potentially an important role to play as the gateway to lifelong learning, helping people to review the direction of their careers, helping them determine what learning would benefit them and steering them to appropriate institutions or learning packages”. Such guidance “could be achieved through well-designed computer systems but highly trained counsellors are needed as well”. They add: “We are unable to recommend just how the necessary assistance should be given, but believe that governments would do well to consider seriously the claims of the PES to fulfil this role in relation to the claims of other organizations” (*ibid*, p.166).

7.4.2. Echoing similar views, the Expert Group (2002, p.21) predicted that “eventually, the PES may well evolve towards a total concept of career development and planning for the customer, no matter what his/her status is”. Similarly, OECD (2004, pp.70-71) suggested that consideration should be given to integrating PES guidance services more closely into lifelong learning strategies in general and strategies for lifelong access to career guidance in particular. These services could then be transformed into well-publicised career development services for all, helping people to sustain their employability and respond flexibly to change.⁴¹ The Expert Group (2002, p.20) commented that extending guidance and counselling services to employees and their employers—by which it presumably meant supporting employer-based guidance services as well as direct service delivery to employees—would require an adjustment of methodologies (“such as career orientation/guidance with portfolio, assessment and certification of competences, etc.”) and would place “a huge strain on scarce resources as the potential demand from this customer group is infinitely more substantial than available resources could possibly satisfy”.

7.4.3. The present survey makes it clear that few PES have the capacity yet to take up this lifelong guidance challenge. Some countries *have* set up programmes to develop career guidance services for employees, but in several cases have

⁴⁰ As the Greek response to the survey rightly points out, the overwhelming focus on placing people into employment may deflect the PES from creating jobs through imparting skills and offering counselling and support in relation to entrepreneurship.

⁴¹ OECD (2004, pp.70-71) suggested that a strong model could, for example, be developed by bringing together the respective strengths of the career information centres (BIZ) in Germany with the innovative capacity of the public employment service (Aetat) in Norway, including the design quality of the latter’s walk-in services, the user-friendliness of its website, its inventive range of web-based tools, and its plans to set up a callcentre for information on learning and work.

done so largely outside the PES. In France, for example, all employees have a legal right, every five years, to a skills assessment (*bilan de compétence*); separate centres have however been set up to implement the scheme (Bartlett *et al.*, 2000, ch.6). Belgium's VDAB, as indicated in para.6.3.1.5 above, may very well be at the forefront of PES innovation in the area of lifelong guidance. In most countries, however, the priority is the reduction of unemployment figures at all costs. This political/institutional imperative leads to a situation where, despite a commitment in principle to supporting lifelong career development, career guidance and career-guidance-related staff end up catering only, or mainly, for the unemployed, at the expense of those already in employment. Such concerns were expressed by several respondents, including all three Belgian PES, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Malta, Norway and Switzerland. Some indicated their resolve to broaden their focus: Ireland, for instance, is planning for the next FÁS Statement of Strategy (2006-2009) to reflect the need for the provision of guidance for people in employment, particularly those who are low-skilled and low-paid; the National Guidance Forum, of which FÁS is a member, has also identified this as a key area to be addressed. Denmark, on its part, acknowledges the long-term wisdom of focusing on the career guidance needs of those already in employment, and of giving particular attention to those at risk of unemployment, highlighting especially the emergent needs of the low-skilled and other high-risk groups in sunset industries, with whom preventive guidance should be a policy priority.

7.4.4. Linked to this is the trend for PES to diminish its services to the education sector. High unemployment rates and increasing demands in relation to job-seekers have led to a concern for retrenchment which focuses largely on curative rather than preventive career guidance. The OECD, ETF and CEDEFOP reviews have all indicated that there is much value in cross-sectoral collaboration; indeed, the European Commission has, on the advice of its Lifelong Guidance Expert Group,⁴² supported National Guidance Forums through the funding of activities that could create a Europe-wide network of such forums (see paras.3.3.2.5 and 4.2.1[b]). Career guidance, as a service, gains its strength from straddling both the world of learning and that of work. Each sector has much to offer to the other; as the Czech respondents put it, "guidance is the most democratic and least forceful instrument to bring labour market considerations into the educational sphere". The development, with partners, of a *system* of lifelong career guidance is therefore still very much a challenge and an agenda for Europe's PES, as much as it is for the education sector and for enterprises. All three sectors need to find ways of working together in order to ensure that clients experience the flow of services in as seamless a manner as possible throughout life.

7.4.5. Clearly, then, a recommendation from this report is the need for personalised employment services and career guidance services in PES to reflect on the lifelong dimension of their work, and to develop new strategies and modalities for working in partnership with others in order to reach out both to those who

⁴² The European Commission's Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance was established in December 2002 to provide policy development support for its Education and Training 2010 work programme.

are still in formal education, and to those who are already in employment. Needless to say, the collaboration of both the education sector and enterprises is a critical factor in such an endeavour. The relevance and usefulness of PES personalised employment and career guidance services will necessarily increase if such services respond to their citizens' need for a seamless, transparent, readily available structured support as they navigate their way through educational, training and occupational pathways in their lifelong search not just for economic survival, but also for meaningful and fulfilling productive activities. The implications for such broadening of roles in order to take on a lifelong perspective are many and, as OECD (2004) has rightly noted, would need careful consideration in the light of current demands and pressures on PES. Specific considerations include: [a] implications for the costs of public employment services; [b] implications for the obligation of public employment services to ensure that the unemployed are able and willing to quickly return to work; [c] whether an expanded role should include access to in-depth assessment and personal advice, as it does in Denmark, Finland and Germany; [d] if so, whether this should be free or charged for, whether it should be available only to certain target groups, or whether it should be available by referral to other agencies; and [e] implications for staffing, including recruitment, qualifications and training.

7.5. Addressing gaps

- 7.5.1. Over and above the broad concern with the lack of systemic continuity of career guidance services from a lifelong perspective, there are also concerns in relation to country-specific gaps in service delivery. Despite the range of initiatives and innovations reported, it must be stressed that there are significant disparities between different countries in their capacity to provide comprehensive guidance facilities, leading to significant *service gaps*. As noted in detail in Chapter 6 above, some client groups—among them the more needy—are not being sufficiently catered for. In some countries, by their own admission, the early identification of those most likely to become long-term unemployed, as well as the development of specific services for them, is under-developed (e.g. Finland, Greece, Hungary, Malta): hence the increasing interest in 'profiling' strategies and different profiling models signalled by many of the respondents to the survey. In addition, many countries have not yet developed specialised career guidance services that take into account the specific needs of clients with either high (e.g. Latvia, Sweden) or low (e.g. Ireland) qualification and skills profiles, those with disability (e.g. Greece, Iceland), or those with addictions (e.g. Greece, Latvia). Other countries are becoming increasingly concerned that a focus on clients with extensive needs has diminished services to more regular clients—the 'general public' that the PES is also, in most cases, duty-bound to serve.
- 7.5.2. In addition, several countries are somewhat constrained in their access to resources. This *resource gap* can be discussed in relation to staff and to materials. Italy, Portugal and Slovakia, among others, have signalled the need for more career guidance staff. In other cases, the number of career guidance staff with sufficient training—and who can therefore provide a service which is marked by a purposeful and skilled application of a body of knowledge and

competences, along a set of quality criteria established by a community of trained practitioners—is severely restricted. Such a training gap needs to be addressed if career guidance is to be provided in a professionally sound manner. In some contexts (e.g. Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Slovakia), there is a dearth of tools—including those that are web- and IT-based—which can facilitate career-guidance-related work. In several cases, too, the extent of labour market data and of occupation-related information, and their availability in forms that are meaningful to clients, are still severely restricted, as are self-service resources that could potentially take some pressure off staff so that they could deal more fully with the needs of special client groups (e.g. Estonia).

7.5.3. A third category of gaps that needs to be addressed by European PES is that which relates to organisational capacity. Such *quality gaps* arise from the re-organisation dynamics that we have described at some length in Chapter 3, whereby responsibility-sharing and new forms of PES government may have outpaced the strategic implementation of quality-assurance protocols that should have accompanied them. While some countries (e.g. Belgium-VDAB, Greece, Ireland, Norway) aspire to improving the range of partners and the quality of partnership in service delivery, others (e.g. Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands) are particularly preoccupied by the need to develop service-delivery standards, or by the desire to ensure that the services provided by different partners are assembled together for ease of access in a one-stop-shop environment (e.g. Denmark).

7.5.4. A final recommendation from the study is therefore that these three sets of gaps – service gaps, resource gaps, and quality gaps – should be addressed.

7.6. Conclusion

It is clear that the European Employment Guidelines have had an impact on personal employment and career guidance services in several European countries, as the PES try to respond to the injunction to activate young people and adults before they reach six and twelve months of unemployment respectively. This report has attempted to provide an overview of where services currently are, outlining key trends and issues. It has also attempted to identify the challenges that different countries—with their distinctive histories, institutional cultures and resources—are having to face. In doing so, we have highlighted strategic responses and innovations, as well as examples of interesting practice. We hope that this exercise adds value to the European search for successful employment strategies, and that it will inspire readers in the quest for improved policy solutions to commonly experienced concerns. If this report contributes to the clarification of the issues at stake, and to the identification of the policy options that are available in ensuring access to improved career guidance services for the clients of the Public Employment Services, then it will have served its purpose.

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SURVEY

of Vocational Guidance Services in the Public Employment Services
on behalf of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Background: Between 2001 and 2004, the OECD, the European Commission and the World Bank carried out three overlapping Career Guidance Policy Reviews involving a total of 37 countries. The exercise has helped place career guidance higher on the public policy agenda than ever before. The three reviews looked at the broad range of guidance services offered in different settings. The present survey, commissioned by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, and designed by Ronald Sultana and Tony Watts, builds on the findings of the earlier reviews, as well as on the 'PES Partners in Development' project completed in 2002, by focusing exclusively on career guidance and information services offered in national Public Employment Services of the enlarged EU. The study is listed as one of the objectives of the 2004 Work Programme of the Community Incentive Measures in the field of Employment. Iceland, Norway and Switzerland are also being included in the survey.

Aim of the Survey: The aim of this study is to contribute to the further elaboration of the PES service models that are being developed in connection with the specific EC Employment Guideline on prevention and activation. It is also concerned to address other career guidance activities carried out by PES. By eliciting responses that focus on **the day-to-day guidance-related work of the PES**, this survey will serve to identify successful and promising practices, and will provide evidence on which practical proposals for improvement can be based. It will therefore be an important source for PES when developing their new service models.

Defining Vocational / Career Guidance: For the purposes of this survey, the (interchangeable) terms vocational/career guidance refer to services intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make occupational, training and educational choices and to manage their careers. The services might be on an individual or group basis, and might be face-to-face or at a distance (including helplines and web-based services). They include job placement, career information (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, career education and career management programmes, work search programmes, and transition services. [*Note: It is important to work through the responses with this definition of guidance in mind. For this reason, the definition is repeated at the bottom of the first page of the questionnaire*].

Completing the Questionnaire: Preliminary information about the survey was shared with PES Heads at their Amsterdam meeting on 2/3 December 2004. At that meeting, the Heads promised full support and active collaboration in providing the information that the survey seeks to gather. The questionnaire is being sent out to the Assistants to the Heads of PES, and while these are responsible for filling in the

responses and returning them, they will in all likelihood need to consult others to acquire the information that is being requested. In completing the questionnaire, please note that:

- [a] While countries are not expected to undertake original surveys or research, it is important to give as complete an answer to each question as possible.
- [b] Your responses to individual questions need not be lengthy. In general, please try to limit responses to each question to no more than one page. Additional information can be provided in Annexes.
- [c] Respondents should feel free to provide additional information, over and above the questions asked, where they feel that this would be helpful in increasing understanding of their national arrangements. This too can be provided in Annexes.
- [d] Where the information needed to answer a question is not available, please indicate this in your response.
- [e] Where possible, please provide copies of key documents, particularly those in English or in French.
- [f] Where countries have devolved management of PES to regional or local level, it will be important for the information provided to reflect differences between regions or localities, as well as differences that might exist between policies and practices adopted by the national government and by regional or local governments.

Deadlines: Please return the completed questionnaire and additional material you wish to append by **23 March 2005**. Both electronic and hard-copy versions are required. They should be sent to: Professor Ronald G. SULTANA, Director, EMCER, University of Malta, Msida MSD 06, MALTA. E-mail: ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt

Following the analysis of the survey material, visits will be carried out in April/May 2005 to Public Employment Services in seven countries, with a view to developing a closer insight into their working, and collecting more detailed examples of good career guidance practice. The report of the study will be written and submitted to the Commission by July.

Organization of the Questionnaire: The PES Guidance Survey is structured around six main headings:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| (1) Services; | (4) Clients; |
| (2) Quality; | (5) Relationships with Other Guidance Providers; |
| (3) Staff; | (6) Gaps and Future Developments. |

Since these areas are interlinked, a degree of overlap when addressing the questions in the different sections is probably unavoidable. Cross-references can be used where appropriate.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: SERVICES

1.1. Please list the sorts of activities carried out by PES staff do which might be considered as career guidance (as we are defining for the purposes of this survey).*
(Examples could include: the organization and updating of career information, addressing students in schools, leading guidance groups, providing one-to-one and/or group interviews, helping individuals develop personal action plans to find employment, assessing individuals' attributes and preferences, providing guidance in the workplace, working with community-based guidance providers, etc.).

1.2. What changes have there been in the models/approaches used to structure the delivery of career guidance services in your PES in the past two years?

1.3. Has there been a net increase or reduction of career guidance activities in your PES over the past two years? What forms has this trend taken? To what do you attribute it?

1.4. Has there been a tendency to allocate more or less funding to career guidance services within the PES over the past two years? Please provide specific details where possible. What reasons were used to justify the change? What impact has it had on the nature and extent of the services provided?

1.5. To which career guidance activities does your PES wish it could dedicate more time? What is keeping it from doing so?

1.6. How are the physical areas dedicated to information and guidance in your PES offices organised? Have the offices been re-designed over the past two years? If so, how has this shaped the interaction with clients?

(For instance, are there areas set out for different aspects of the service? Is the layout designed primarily to meet the needs of the unemployed, or of adults in employment too? Is there an information area – which could include computer terminals – dedicated to client self-service?)

1.7. What part do self-help modes of service delivery play in the overall provision of career guidance services in your PES? Please provide details of such modes of delivery, and information about any recent innovations in this area, including the use of ICTs (e.g. website facilities, callcentres).

1.8. Please provide a list of the key tools and instruments that your PES uses in its career guidance services.

(Examples could include: aptitude tests, job interest check lists, group guidance methods, etc.)

* For the purposes of this survey, the (interchangeable) terms vocational/career guidance refer to services intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make occupational, training and educational choices and to manage their careers. The services might be on an individual or group basis, and might be face-to-face or at a distance (including helplines and web-based services). They include job placement, career information (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, career education and career management programmes, work search programmes, and transition services.

1.9. What are the key innovations/initiatives that have been introduced in your career guidance services over the past two years?

(If you have detailed documents about these initiatives, please include them as Annexes).

1.10. What are the key tensions and dilemmas facing the career guidance services provided by your PES? How are they being addressed/resolved?

(Examples could include: the tension between pressure to place the unemployed into whatever jobs are available, and to help them fulfil their career aspirations; the tension between providing customer-oriented services and policing unemployment benefit; the tension between catering for the guidance needs of the unemployed, and of employed people seeking to change jobs or develop their careers; the tension between providing self-help service opportunities, and an enhanced personalised service; the tensions caused by organisational issues relating to privatisation and decentralisation).

1.11. Describe in detail any key developments in the institutional organisation of your PES which have involved or affected its career guidance services.

(Examples could include: privatisation, outsourcing, decentralisation, voucher systems, etc).

What motivated such developments? What impact have they had on service delivery?

1.12. Describe the linkages between the different regional or local offices of the PES, in terms of the organisation and delivery of guidance services. In what respects do these offices have autonomy, and in what respects are they expected to conform to national standards? What are the key challenges in maintaining a coherent but flexible network of PES offices? What strategies have been developed to meet these challenges?

1.13. What is the role of the PES in relation to Labour Market Information?

(For example, does the PES produce LMI as a by-product of its other functions? Is it the main organisation responsible for producing primary labour market statistics? Does it act as an analyser, synthesiser and distributor of value-added LMI?)

Do your PES career guidance services have adequate Labour Market Information at their disposal, to inform clients' decisions? What forms does this LMI take? How is it collected? In what forms is it made available for career guidance purposes? How might it be improved?

1.14. Does your PES include a European dimension in its career guidance and placement services, in order to facilitate European mobility? Does it employ EURES Advisers? Are there examples of good practice, or of noteworthy results, that you can report on in this respect?

1.15. What are the key challenges that are being met in responding to the European Employment Guidelines which have a direct relation to your PES career guidance services?

(For example: ensuring that at an early stage of their unemployment spell, all jobseekers benefit from an early identification of their needs and from services such as advice and guidance, job search assistance and personalised action plans; that all young people have a new start before reaching six months of unemployment; of promoting active ageing; of facilitating women's participation in the labour market; of developing entrepreneurship; etc.)

Section 2: QUALITY

2.1. Are quality standards established and monitored in relation to your PES career guidance services? If so, please outline the content of the standards and how they are used.

2.2. On the basis of what criteria is the effectiveness of the PES career guidance services evaluated? How is quality audited in these and/or other terms?
(Examples of criteria could include: swiftness in placing clients in the job market; duration of client in that placement; client satisfaction surveys, etc.)

2.3. Has a formal evaluation of some or all of the PES career guidance services been carried out in the past two years? What were the main outcomes? What areas of career-guidance-related services have been targeted for improvement?

Section 3: STAFF and RESOURCES

3.1. In the most recent year for which data are available (please specify), how many full-time-equivalent staff employed by the PES focused (a) wholly, (b) mainly or (c) partly on providing career guidance?

3.2. If readily available, please provide a gender and age breakdown of these PES career guidance staff.

3.3. What is the staff-to-client ratio in the career guidance services? What sorts of issues does this give rise to? How is your PES dealing with these issues?

3.4. Is there a high job turnover among some or all of the staff involved in your PES career guidance services? If so, give details, and suggest reasons to account for it.

3.5. Describe how the different aspects of your PES career guidance services are distributed among PES staff.

(Example: Do the PES staff involved in delivering career guidance services have distinct occupational roles and functional responsibilities? If so, on which career guidance activities do they focus (one-to-one counselling, job coaching, etc.)? Are staff involved in providing career guidance also involved in (i) providing job placement services and (ii) determining eligibility for unemployment and/or other benefit payments? If so, does this give rise to any problems? How are these problems addressed?)

3.6. Is a range of employment and welfare services being offered in one-stop shops (i.e. where a number of services are available at the same site), in order to facilitate client access? If so, what proportion of your PES offices are located in such one-stop shops? What impact has this co-location of services had on the tasks that career guidance staff undertake?

3.7. What proportion of PES staff involved in delivering guidance services have a specialized qualification in career guidance? Please provide details of these qualifications.

3.8. Has any qualification or other requirement been introduced by your PES over the past two years, when recruiting staff to deliver career guidance services? Please provide relevant details.

3.9. What opportunities do PES career guidance staff have for in-service training? Please provide examples of such in-service training opportunities, detailing themes addressed, competences targeted, and modes of training delivery.

3.10. What other career guidance training needs do PES staff have, which have not yet been addressed?

3.11. Which of the career guidance staff training initiatives that your national PES has organised do you feel is an example of good practice that European counterparts can learn from? Please provide details.

(Attach relevant documentation as an Annex)

Section 4: CLIENTS

4.1. Give a brief description of the key categories of clients to whom your PES provides career guidance services. If some services are confined to particular categories, please give details.

(Examples of categories of clients could include: unemployed, long term unemployed, current and recent school-leavers, early school-leavers and out-of-school youth, employed adults wanting to change jobs, persons with disabilities, women returnees, older workers, migrants, etc.)

4.2. Are there categories of clients you are less successful in reaching than others? Why is this so?

4.3. To what extent are unwilling-to-work clients a challenge for PES career guidance services? If so, what strategies have been developed to address this challenge?

4.4. Please highlight any innovative strategies your PES has developed to market its services to individuals and/or to reach out to specific client groups.

(Documentary evidence/details can be attached as Annexes)

4.5. Please give examples of any specific guidance models you have developed to address the needs of particular categories of clients.

(For example, with out-of-school youth, or to extend career guidance services to employees?)

4.6. How many individuals have used each of your main career guidance services in the last year for which records are available (please specify the year)?

(Please include evidence on the level of take-up of self-help modes of guidance service delivery.)

Section 5: RELATIONSHIPS with other GUIDANCE PROVIDERS

5.1. With which other career guidance services does the PES collaborate in delivering its career guidance services?

(Examples could include: schools, private employment services, social services, NGOs, community-based providers, trade unions, employers, etc.)

5.2. What forms does this collaboration take?

(E.g. joint training; PES staff quality-auditing other providers; structured information sharing; consolidated databases regarding education, training and career information; etc.)

5.3. What recent factors and/or trends have influenced the extent and nature of collaboration between the PES and other career guidance providers?

5.4. Does the PES outsource any of its career guidance and information services? If so which, and to whom? What issues, if any, have arisen in this context?

Section 6: GAPS and FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

6.1. Given the increasing attention to lifelong learning and career development, what gaps are there in the provision of career guidance services in your PES? What steps is your PES taking to address these gaps? What further steps would your PES like to make to address them?

6.2. What other general or specific points would you like to make about the provision of career guidance and information services in your PES, which you feel have not been covered in your answers to the previous questions?

6.3. What recommendations and proposals would you like to make regarding the future development of PES career guidance activities in your country?

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