



BEUCITIZEN
BARRIERS TOWARDS EU CITIZENSHIP

A Report on the transposition of EU guidelines and directives in the most recent 27 National Reform Programmes

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number	partner name	People involved
1	UU	Trudie Knijn, Mara Yerkes
3	UNIZG	Josip Šipic



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AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE DELIVERABLE

The central aim of this deliverable is to identify possible trends EU member states' social policies in relation to a number of important citizenship issues. The broader objective of WP9 is to study the relationship between the effects of discrepancies between respective civil, political, social, and economic citizenship rights and obligations of European and non-European citizens as family members moving across borders. Within this project, we have identified four themes to focus on: care for the elderly, non-national care workers, the reproductive rights of family members and mobile youth. For this deliverable, we have evaluated (i) the 2013 National Reform Programmes of those 23 member states that had National Reform Programmes available and in the English language (exceptions include France, Portugal and Romania) and (ii) the 2014 National Reform Programmes for Croatia and Ireland who did not have a 2013 document. The analytic perspective used in this evaluation has been the policy-scientific approach of Leeuw (2003).

The current deliverable contains a first short description of EU guidelines and a descriptive summary of member state discourses on these four themes. Utrecht University has coordinated the task and one partner has contributed by delivering an analysis of the 2014 Croatian National Reform Programme. The working process included several steps:

- Desk top research to select relevant themes for the analysis.
- Reading and coding all of the Europe 2020 documents and 2013 National Reform Programmes for any information on care for the elderly, non-national care workers, reproductive rights of men and women (including migrants) and mobile youth.
- Coding each of these themes into relevant sub-themes related to citizenship rights.
- A draft version of this report was discussed at the bEUcitizen conference in Istanbul, Turkey in late June/early July 2014. WP9 members provided comments on this report at that stage.
- Additional data was collected for Croatia, which joined the EU in 2013 and produced its first National Reform Programme in 2014. Additional data was collected for Ireland, who had not produced a 2013 National Reform Programme. The 2014 National Reform Programmes of both Croatia and Ireland are included here.

DISSEMINATION

Mara A. Yerkes and Trudie Knijn presented the paper "Youth on the Move: tensions between EU and national level policies" on 5 September 2014 at the European Social Policy Analysis Network (ESPAnet) conference in Oslo, Norway.

INTRODUCTION

Each year, the European Commission coordinates its economic policy during the European Semester. As part of this process, the EU provides each member state with a number of guidelines in relation to economic policy and meeting the targets set out in the Europe 2020 campaign and the Flagship Initiatives. Member states outline their progress towards meeting these goals in annual National Reform Programmes (NRPs). The NRPs are intended to show what has been done to meet these targets.

This document contains the analysis of the NRPs, organised around the four themes: care for the elderly, non-national care workers, the reproductive rights of family members, and mobile youth. Within each document, any mention of these themes was coded for analysis and then organised around sub-themes centred on potentially important subjects from a citizenship rights perspective. Coded data are presented by page number and subject (sub—theme) number. The subject numbers are related to each of the four themes and are listed under these themes. If no subject number is given the information is believed to be relevant for all subjects. A forward slash “/” between pages or numbers means that information can be found on multiple pages or that information is relevant to multiple subjects. A dash “-” between pages or numbers means that information can be found on pages x through z or on subjects q through t.

Not all NRPs discuss each of the four themes. If there is no discussion of the topic whatsoever, ‘No information’ is listed. However, in some cases, there is evidence of a ‘counter argument’, meaning that a related topic was discussed. For example, several countries do not discuss youth mobility. They do, however, discuss other issues related to youth, such as youth unemployment. Such counter arguments are included below. In relation to counter arguments, annotations were truncated to provide the necessary information only. The page number can be used to look up the full quote / specific policies/ measures etc.

For care of the elderly, the relevant subjects include: time, services, cash for elderly care, informal vs. formal care, public vs. private care, the availability, quality and affordability of facilities, policies aimed at reconciling work and elder care, care leave, payment for care / care allowances, statistics on informal elder care, pension credits for time spent on elder care, the accuracy of the data on elder care leave, including any changes that have been introduced since a given year, data on the take up rates of elder care provisions, information relating to elder care work by care workers, information on elder care in relation to migration and the rights of migrant care workers. An analysis of these subjects at a later stage of the project will demonstrate possible tensions around (de)centralisation tendencies, the integration and expansion of elder care services, reductions in elder care services, the growing demand for care workers and attention for reducing poverty among the elderly.

For non-national care workers, the relevant subjects include: the need for non-national care workers, information on contracts for non-national care workers, the duration of their stay, payments to non-national care workers, their work rights (EU vs TCN), their access to welfare, any variation in criteria across different forms of workers (skill differentiation etc.), and their professional status. Given the little information on non-national care workers, we have also included information on possible ‘counter arguments’. These include text that focuses on non-national workers, not related to care, text focused on migration/immigration, not related to care workers and text focused on care workers, not related to non-national workers. At a later stage of the project, we will highlight that most member states are discussing integration programs for migrants and attracting key (e.g. highly-skilled) workers yet no discussion of legal protections or rights appears to be taking place. In addition, there appears to be a downgrading/levelling off of professions in some countries, including sector-specific policies such as nursing.

The information on the reproductive rights of men and women (also in relation to migration) has been coded around the following subjects: diverse family formation (e.g. regulations or discussion on marriage, divorce, widowhood, registered partnership and cohabitation) and fertility, including regulations or discussions on

childbirth (IVF, fertility treatments), career breaks (for care of children), adoption, abortion and parental support (care facilities, tax breaks, etc.). At a later stage of the project, the analysis will focus on tensions between reproductive rights and member states' efforts to increase fertility with or without attention for reproductive freedoms.

Lastly, the data presented on mobile youth includes the following subjects: family formation (often delayed because of late access to work etc.), transitions to adulthood (including the availability and affordability of housing, regulations or discussions on cohabitation), access to education, access to employment (excluding the broader discussion of youth unemployment), access to welfare, and youth mobility in relation to migration. During the course of the analysis it became clear that the topic of youth mobility was not widely being discussed in the NRPs. We cluster related discussions into two subjects. First, a counter argument whereby little or no discussion of mobile youth takes place but with a focus on youth (un)employment. This subject excludes any general discussions of youth in relation to education (e.g. NEET, vocational education). Second, a counter argument: including texts on mobility in general, not specifically in relation to youth. Only brief quotes are included for these counter arguments. Mobile youth will be the final subject of our ongoing analysis, which will, later on, articulate their position as newcomers on the labour market and will consider member states' recognition or absence of attention to this group's right to family formation within their home country and abroad.

While this document provides an informative look at these four themes in the European member states in 2013, caution should be taken when interpreting the overview presented here. First, national policy plans as presented in the NRPs represent a snapshot of the current political discourse. The NRPs in each country can change significantly from year to year dependent upon the political parties in power or the policy themes on the European and/or national agendas. The discourses evident in the NRPs are also representative of possible contradictory motives, such as whether and to what extent current governments respond to EU guidelines and directives, the national agendas of governing parties and the ways in which policy issues are 'framed and understood in these countries at the moment these plans are written' (Knijn and Smit, 2009: 501). Third, the themes central to this analysis, while urgent social issues, are not equally represented in the Europe2020 agenda and goals. As a result, the discussion of these themes in some NRPs is limited.

Nevertheless, the NRPs *do* offer a valuable source of information on how current member state governments approach EU guidelines and objectives. This initial analysis can then be used for more in-depth analysis at a later stage. In particular, the NRPs, while not strictly comparable across EU member states given the issues noted here, provide a current framework of these issues across the member states for any given year. This framework suggests a number of trends *may* be occurring across countries. For example, within the theme of mobile youth, the analysis of NRPs suggests that most member states show little to no policy attention for mobile youth. However, several member states are focused on internationalisation efforts more broadly, primarily within higher education. Another example can be found in relation to non-national care workers. This group of workers is absent from most NRPs, yet several member states discuss national integration efforts for migrants with effects for migrant care workers. To what extent comparable trends are visible across the member and exactly *how* these themes are approached within countries is an issue for further analysis. The analysis of the 2013 NRPs provides a useful starting point.

1 CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

1. In terms of time, services, cash, informal vs. formal, public vs. private
2. Availability, quality and affordability of facilities
3. Reconciling work and elder care
4. Care leave
5. Payment for care / care allowances
6. Informal elder care (statistics)
7. Pension credits for period spent on elder care
8. The accuracy of data on elder care leave; and changes introduced since (YEAR)
9. Data on the take up rates of elder care provisions
10. In relation to care workers
11. Migration: rights of migrant care workers
12. Counter argument: some discussion of care, but only in relation to childcare not elder care; see reproductive rights, supporting parenthood

Austria

P6 – 1

Care targets and financial targets have been defined, and at the same time a monitoring system will be introduced in order to ensure that the attainment of these targets is measurable.

P10 – 1

Discussion of EU country-specific recommendation No4:

“Take steps to reduce the effective tax and social security burden on labour especially for low income earners with a view to increasing employment rates for older persons and women given the need to counteract the impact of demographic change on the working population. Shift the tax burden in a budgetary neutral way, towards real estate taxes, and environmental taxes. Reduce the high gender pay gap and enhance full-time employment opportunities for women, in particular through the provision of additional care services for dependants.”

P10 – 2

In 2013 measures from the **Charter on the Compatibility of Family and Career** will be implemented.

P10 – 1

In addition a diverse range of tailored audits for enterprises, universities, municipalities and nursing facilities will help to counteract the shortage of skilled labour as well as the effects of demographic change.

P12 – 4/10

In the summer of 2011, the National Council passed the **Care Allowance Reform Act 2012** and the **Care Allowance Act** as a necessary step toward promoting **(full-time) employment opportunities for women** as well as administrative reform, a client-friendly reform of care allowance administration and funding, and ensuring a needs-appropriate development and expansion of care allowance services in long-term care. In this context, the federal government now has exclusive responsibility for care allowances, and execution has been concentrated among seven providers. Around half of all persons requiring care purchase various services using

their pensions and care benefits; these services range from mobile support services at home to daytime care and stays at nursing homes. Provincial and local governments contribute to funding these services and are also responsible for planning and ensuring the availability of these offers. In order to support the provincial and local governments in funding social care services, the federal government established a care provision fund in 2011. The fund is endowed with a total of EUR 685 million until 2014, and until 2016 another EUR 650 million will be made available, with 2/3 of the funds coming from the federal government and 1/3 from the provincial and local governments. Since the diverse challenges in the caregiving sector require viable as well as sustainable solutions, a special working group was set up in order to develop proposals. All relevant stakeholders were involved in the opinion-making process. The working group finished its work last December and presented its final results to policy-makers. In the course of 2013, these recommendations will be the subject of intense negotiations in order to improve caregiving offerings, to enhance the attractiveness of geriatric nursing professions and to optimise funding. Finally, these results will be incorporated into an amendment to the Care Allowance Act.

Belgium

P29 – 1

The authorized and subsidized social integration services have been strengthened, as well as the childcare services, the support services for the elderly and disabled persons.

P87 – 1

Increase in childcare and adult care service provision in order to encourage reconciliation of the work/life balance: in order to meet the end of regime requirement given to Europe in the framework of State aid for trade, there will be three separate systems regarding APE (Job Promotion Support) positions: commercial, non-commercial and local authorities. With regard to this, a new decree for the commercial sector is being developed and should be adopted in 2013. The aim of this new decree is to support small businesses when they create their 1st, 2nd and 3rd employment positions and to facilitate financial aid for certain target groups including those aged 50 and over, those under 30 and those having been without work for over 2 years.

Bulgaria

P9 -1

In 2013, significant progress is expected in terms of energy sector liberalisation, promoting employment through job creation and easing the hiring of unemployed job seekers, improvements in social services delivered to children and the elderly, and support for investments in SMEs and innovative enterprises.

P20 - 1

In 2012, the number of social services provided to the elderly grew to 543 (162 specialised institutions for the elderly and 381 community-based social services), and the number of people covered by those services reached 18 707. A National Strategy for Long-Term Care will be drafted in 2013, aimed at expanding the social service network by launching new community-based social services for long-term care, deinstitutionalisation of care for the elderly and people with disabilities, and promoting synergies between health and social services (*Measure CSR3-E4*).

P44 – 1

The process of deinstitutionalisation of childcare will continue (*Measure CSR3–E3*), and a similar approach will be used in the provision of social services to older people with the adoption, in 2013, of the National Strategy for Long-term Care. Activities relating to the de-institutionalisation of childcare and long-term care activities will be co-financed with funds from the state budget and from the European Structural Funds in the next programming period (2014-2020). It is envisaged to implement measures for improving access to social and health services, as well as strengthening and supporting the process of deinstitutionalisation, through investment in social and health infrastructure, including the construction of social housing (*Measure NT5-1*).

Croatia

P24 – 1

With respect to the care for the elderly and disabled, the reform of social welfare system is aimed at changing the model of financing social services to allow equal access to the network of social services to all service providers under same financing conditions. Services will be financed in accordance with a determined methodology for the calculation of service prices, and the previous (generalised) financing model according to expenditures will be abolished.

P59-60 – 1

Care for the elderly is defined as one of eight strategic areas of activity in the Strategy on Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in Croatia (2014-2020), the fundamental document that should provide a systematic and common approach of all relevant stakeholders in tackling poverty and social exclusion. Drafting of the Strategy started in the second half of 2013 and is now in its final phase.

Cyprus

P12 – 1

Decrease old people's poverty (see reference on CSR 5) and improve their well-being (long-term care).

P12 – 1

In order to prevent and minimise the risk of children's poverty and support female employment, the government continued the **subsidisation of social care services within the framework of family and employment reconciliation**. The measure, which was officially launched in February 2012, includes the reimbursement of part of the cost of care services for children, older people and persons with disabilities. Women who find a job may apply for a subsidy for the cost of care services for their family dependants for a period of up to 18 months. The benefit is €260 (maximum amount) monthly, for childcare, and €200 (maximum amount) monthly for the care of older persons or persons with disabilities. In 2012, 49 women were approved to receive subsidisation. A total of €49.157,10 was spent in 2012 and the Budget for 2013 is €0,5 mln.

Czech Republic

P46 – 1

A National action Plan Supporting Positive Ageing 2013- 2017 was prepared and approved in February 2013 by the government to address the issues of ageing of the population due to the demographic development. The

Action Plan is a basic strategic document for addressing the issues of seniors and ageing population. The priorities include: [...] (5) High quality environment for the life of seniors; (6) Healthy ageing; and (7) Care for the eldest seniors with reduced self-sufficiency.

P46 – 1

In the sphere of professional care for seniors, the government will try to inter-relate home-provided health, social and other services. An analysis of information and communication technologies and services of assisted life for seniors will be prepared as part of the support to the development and use of assistance technologies, which can improve the quality of life and independence of seniors, and a draft solution of such services will be presented.

Denmark

No information

Estonia

P16 – 2

A significant hindrance to the participation in employment is **the burden of care** that may be caused by taking care of children as well as of disabled and elderly family members. Therefore, special attention should be paid to reducing the withdrawal of the workforce from the labour market due to long-term illness, incapacity for work, disability or caring obligations and improving independent coping, incl. by providing special-purpose welfare and support services. Investments in **the living environment and support services of disabled and elderly people** allow improving the access of both their own as well that of their family members to labour market services and to the labour market itself.

Finland

P49 – 1

The new act on services for older people will enter into force in July 2013. A further goal is to expand family centre activities, increase home care services and develop low-threshold services. A report on the overhaul of social welfare legislation will be completed in summer 2012.

Germany

P7/9 – 1/4

EU Council recommendation:

[...] Continue the growth-friendly consolidation course through additional efforts to enhance the efficiency of public spending on health care and long-term care [...].

The social insurance system for long-term care has run a surplus for the past few years as a result of the increase in contributions and favourable economic conditions (310 million euros in 2011; 100 million euros in

2011). By the end of 2012, the insurance fund had financial reserves of approximately 5.5 billion euros, or the equivalent of 2.9 months' expenditure.

As part of its reforms to long-term care insurance, the contribution rate was increased slightly from 1.95 percent to 2.05 percent as from 1 January 2013 to finance planned improvements in benefits. Therefore additional receipts will initially exceed additional expenditure in the years ahead. The Federal Government has also introduced state subsidies for private supplementary cover for long-term care, effective from 1 January 2013. These subsidies are an important means of helping to ensure sustainable financing of long-term care services.

P19 – 1

Demographic changes mean that organisational rethinking and adjustments are required, both among companies employing an increasing number of older workers and also among the institutions that provide services to an ageing population.

P26 – 1

In addition to the quantitative goal set out as part of the Europe 2020 strategy, the Federal Government is also working towards several qualitative goals to reduce the risk of poverty. These goals include improving the participation of disadvantaged children and young people in social and cultural activities, promoting the integration of people with a migration background, fostering social inclusion of people with disabilities (cf. Item 47 ff.), developing a demographically sustainable and viable health and long-term care policy, and preventing poverty among the elderly.

Greece

No information

Hungary

No information

Italy

P47 – 1

The path to recovery must be accompanied by policies that are mindful of social investment. In particular, the new Government will have to address the issue of how to finance spending on the network of local social services and programmes. More specifically, it must favour social and educational services for babies and toddlers, care services for disabled and non-self-sufficient elderly people, and local programmes to fight against poverty as well as residential services for frail elderly people.

Latvia

P69 – 1

In order to improve access to health care services for all citizens, health care of chronic patients and timely diagnostics of diseases, the measure to involve second nurse in family doctor offices was continued in 2012. Since 2013, a new quality assessment system of family doctors and extra payment to family doctors for timely detected malignant tumours has been implemented. The development of day-care hospitals and home care services was continued by improving their availability and expanding the range of services. For example, since 2012 the range of home care services includes medical rehabilitation services for stroke patients after being hospitalized and for children receiving palliative care. In order to improve efficiency of in-patient health care institutions and foster efficient use of state budget resources for health care, the development of patient observation or monitoring services in hospitals was launched in 2012 – since 2012, an additional payment is paid to university and multi-profile hospitals for patient observation, i.e. for treatment and observation at emergency department up to 24 hours.

Lithuania

P10 – 1/5

Underpin pension reform with active ageing measures.

The Programme for the Development of Competencies of Employees Working in Social Service Agencies and Integral Assistance Development Program were approved in 2012 for the implementation of the National Strategy of Overcoming the Consequences of Ageing. When implementing the latter program, the pilot projects intended for elderly and disabled people were carried out in 21 municipalities, also, methodological assistance was being provided to family members looking after the disabled and elderly people. In 2012, the development of the medical rehabilitation services for elderly people as well as of ambulatory care services provided at home was carried out, dialogues with organizations representing elderly people were held, other activities were being implemented.

P40 -1

In order to increase the accessibility of social services, a programme for the development of integrated support intended for the achievement of the breakthrough in the provision of services of integrated care and social services for the elderly and disabled people in their homes was prepared. In the implementation of the said programme, pilot projects providing for the implementation of integrated assistance models in more than a third of all municipalities will be carried out.

P69 – 1

The European Economic and Social Committee expressed its opinion on the issue of gender equality in Europe 2020 Strategy, offering to include the aspect of gender equality and develop the policy of equality, increase participation of women in labour market, improve the quality of care services for the dependent people, reduce the problem of pay gap;

Luxembourg

No information

Malta

P54 – 1

Active Ageing Policy

In relation to the drawing up of an Active Ageing Policy, this task is currently under auspices of the Parliamentary Secretary for Rights of Persons with Disability and Active Ageing which falls under the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity. The fact that the new Government has appointed a Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Active Ageing underlines the importance Government is going to give to this issue. The Office of the Parliamentary Secretary is currently in the process of reviewing and expanding an existing work-in-progress Strategy which, previously, fell under the responsibility of an ad hoc Inter-Ministerial Committee, set up under the stewardship of the former Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community Care. Malta's policy on active ageing is based on the three principles of participation in society, employment, and independent living - in line with the Guiding Principles for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, annexed to the Council Declaration on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between generations (2012): The way forward. The policy is a priority matter for Government and will form part of Malta's efforts to sustain the continued well-being of older persons, as well as implementing strategies that improve their quality of life. The preparation of this Policy is at an advanced stage and a draft should be shortly presented for Ministerial consideration, followed by public consultation with relevant stakeholders and the general public. The Policy is scheduled to be launched in October 2013.

It will build on existing measures, programmes and actions in the area of active ageing, by proposing further initiatives aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the pension system, increasing employability in later life, improving healthy life expectancy, ensuring social participation and social inclusion, as well as addressing independent living to enable more older persons to 'age in place'. The Policy will act as a catalyst for maximising health life expectancies for women and men, reducing dependency levels through the implementation of health promotion and disease prevention, and providing further opportunities for physical activity in later life. Initiatives that build on sustainable principles, and which seek to provide adequate incomes in later life and strengthen the financial autonomy of older people will also be included. Furthermore, work is underway on a Strategy on Dementia as well as a National Health Strategy with a focus on increasing efficiency and health system performance monitoring.

P72 – 3

Family-friendly measures in the public sector:

[...]

Responsibility Leave: Employees may avail themselves of unpaid responsibility leave to take care of dependent elderly parents, sons/daughters, or spouses, for a period of one year, renewable yearly.

[...]

Urgent Family Leave: Employees may avail themselves of 16 hours from their vacation leave entitlement as urgent family leave in cases of sickness or accident which require the immediate presence of the employee.

Leave for a special reason: Employees may avail themselves of a maximum of 30 days special leave without pay for a special reason, including any special family-friendly reason, in any period of 12 months. Flexi-time: Employees may be granted permission to work on a flexi-time system, so long as the number of working hours

is satisfied. N.B. Unpaid leave entitlements are subject to an overall maximum aggregate of eight years unpaid leave, whether the unpaid leave is taken at a stretch or interrupted by periods of resumption of duty.

Family-friendly measures in the private sector:

Some private sector entities are adopting family-friendly measures, among which one finds:

- Telework;
- Unpaid parental leave;
- Special leave on humanitarian grounds;
- Flexible hours;
- Examinations leave plus study leave for related to work subjects;
- Examinations leave for apprentices;
- Maternity and adoption leave.

P157 – 4

€300 Grant per annum to pensioners over 80 who live independently in their own home

In 2012, Government announced a senior citizen grant which is payable to all elderly persons 80 years and over who are still living in the community. The first payments of this grant were issued in March 2012. A total of 13,385 persons benefitted from this grant in 2012. The payment of this grant will also be paid in 2013 where it will also be extended to persons aged 78 and 79 years. In 2014, it will also be paid to persons aged 75 to 77 years.

P159 – 4

Measure to assist the Spouses of Residents in State Financed Residential Services

Where a resident of a State Financed Residential Service is a married person whose spouse remains at home and is not in receipt of a pension, assistance or allowance in her own right, a 60% deduction of the rate of benefit, pension, bonus, assistance or allowance from the entitlement to such resident is directly paid to the spouse who remains at home. In 2013, the deduction will be increased from 60% to 70% or to the equivalent rate of the Old-Age Non-Contributory Pension, whichever is the most beneficial to the spouse that remains at home.

[...]

Independent Living

The main objective of this measure is to provide for an independent environment which will sustain a person's ability to live as independently as possible, either in their own home or in accommodation with carers on site. This ongoing scheme started in 2012 and will provide an independent environment to around 30 – 40 households, Non-Government Organisations or caring organisations, costing €60,000.

The Netherlands

P10 – 1/5

Reform of long-term care

In the Coalition Agreement, the government presented a wide range of measures to improve the sustainability of funding for long-term care. Like its predecessor, this government's aim is to develop a more tailored system of health care, with more care being provided closer to home. The proposed measures will yield savings of approximately 3.5 billion euro. As a result, despite the growing demand for care, spending on long-term care is not expected to rise in the period 2013- 2017.

Various measures have already come into force on 1 January 2013. For example, care for patients in the two lightest categories of intramural care (care intensity packages (ZZP) 1 and 2) has been transferred to outpatient care, the target group for the personal health care budget has been limited and funding of geriatric rehabilitation has been transferred to the health insurers (total savings of 0.7 billion euro). The financial assets of patients will also weigh more heavily in determining personal payments for intramural care. As a result, clients will be charged a higher personal contribution, which will generate additional income of 80 million euro a year.

Various new measures announced in the Coalition Agreement are currently being fleshed out in consultation with municipalities, health insurers, health providers and other stakeholders. The government plans to strike large parts of long-term care, such as personal assistance and care, from the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act (AWBZ) and add the bulk of the means to the municipalities (*gemeente fonds*). In addition, activities of a curative nature, such as long-term mental health care and home care by district nurses, will be transferred from the AWBZ to the Health Insurance Act (Zvw). The number of people receiving intramural long term care will be further reduced by treating more new patients in the care intensity packages 3 and 4 at home. This will leave a clearly defined core AWBZ scheme for the elderly and the handicapped who require intensive intramural care, amounting to roughly a third of the current AWBZ. Finally, the budget for municipalities to finance household help will be reduced and payments by patients will be further increased. The Chronically Ill and Disabled Persons (Allowances) Act (*Wet tegemoetkoming chronisch zieken en gehandicapten*) (Wtcg) will be repealed. The effect of these measures is described in a policy letter "*Hervorming langdurige ondersteuning en zorg*".

Poland

P45-46 – 1

The provision of high quality services is required to support actions aimed at increasing employment, including support and social integration services, childcare services and care services for other dependent persons (the disabled, the elderly), health services, educational services and housing support. However, the problem of poverty and social exclusion does not necessarily have to be directly related to the issue of unemployment. In Poland, families with dependent children, especially the large ones, as well as representatives of other social groups are also at risk of poverty. It is thus appropriate to take action to strengthen support for families with dependent children, especially those in a relatively difficult financial situation, to continue support for families which find it difficult to fulfil their care and educational roles, as well as to take action to ensure housing for the poorest families.

P47 – 1

In August 2012, a Governmental Programme for Social Activity of the Elderly for 2012–2013 was adopted. Its main objective is to create conditions for dignified ageing through social activity, which remains strictly related to the gradual increase in retirement age. The Programme is based on four priorities: education of the elderly, social activity supporting solidarity within and between generations, social participation of the elderly and services for the elderly. Under the Programme, organisations acting in the public interest receive co-financing for implementation of programmes for the elderly in the above mentioned areas. Over 420 organisations received funds under the first edition of an open call for proposals. In 2012, the amount of PLN 20 million was allocated for implementation of the Programme.

P51 – 1

The main objective of the Governmental Programme for Social Activity of the Elderly for 2012–2013 is activation of the elderly, which in the long run will contribute to counteracting social exclusion of the elderly, by increasing their share in lifelong learning, giving them the possibility to have an impact on shaping the activities targeted at the elderly at the local and national level, promoting cooperation between generations, as well as by developing social services for the elderly. The systemic component of the Programme provides for developing a long-term policy for the elderly in Poland by September 2013.

Timetable

Implementation of projects selected in the second edition of call for proposals – **by the end of 2013**

Financing

PLN 40 million was allocated in the State budget for implementation of this

Programme in 2013.

Slovak Republic

No information

Slovenia

P29 – 1

A proposed act regulating the activity of long-term care and insurance for long-term care will be prepared by the end of 2013. It also envisages a definition of the contribution which will have to be paid not only by the population in active employment, but also by the population not in active employment; by combining all funds for long-term care in one place and introducing other changes, this will ensure the financial sustainability of the long-term care system. The purpose of the act is to enable the development of a uniform and comprehensive system of long-term care and contribute to reducing the risk of poverty among the elderly. The act will combine health care and social security services into a single system, while priority in the provision of services will be given to those provided at a beneficiary's home or in the local environment. A special emphasis will be put on prevention, early rehabilitation and the use of ICT.

Spain

P22 – 1 [Emphasis in original]

An **in-depth reform was carried out of the Long-Term Care Service** in July 2012, to **rationalise and modernise the services offered, and to guarantee its sustainability**. The measures include: the process of evaluating situations of long-term care and services provided was modified and simplified; the retroactive nature of the payment of financial benefits was revised; public-private collaboration was boosted; the entry into the system of beneficiaries with a lower level of care required was delayed; and the system of registering non-professional carers in the Social Security system was reorganised (CSR 1.4.31, 1.4.32 and CSR 1.4.33). With the application of these measures, expenditure has been reduced by 599 million euros in 2012, with an additional reduction of 1.11 billion in 2013 and 571 million in 2014.

P49 – 1

Discussion of long-term care, not explicitly discussing elder care

The **reform of the Long-term Care System** aims to rationalise the system of long-term care and guarantee its sustainability. To this end, numerous measures were approved in 2012, with a significant budget impact in 2013 of 1.11 billion euros (CSR 1.4.32 and CSR 1.4.33). The following reforms are planned in this respect in 2013:

-Preparation of a draft Royal Decree on financial resources and contributions by beneficiaries towards benefits under the System for Autonomy and Long-term Care, which includes a 5% additional increase in contributions from beneficiaries towards the cost of services, with a gradual implementation of this over a period of 3 years. The savings through this measure will amount to 339 million euros in 2013.

-Two Royal Decrees are planned in 2013 to adapt benefits to the real needs of dependents and prioritise professional services above financial benefits, as well as to regulate the benefits provided under the system, with a saving of 489 million euros.

Sweden

No information

United Kingdom

No information

2 NON-NATIONAL CARE WORKERS

1. Need for
2. Contracts
3. Duration of stay
4. Payments
5. Work rights (EU vs TCN)
6. Access to welfare
7. Variation in criteria across different forms of workers (skill differentiation etc)
8. Professional status
9. Counter argument: focus on non-national workers, not related to care
10. Counter argument: focus on migration/immigration, not related to care workers
11. Counter argument: focus on care workers, not related to non-national workers

Note: in general, some countries discuss non-national workers, but there is no specific focus on non-national care workers in any of the NRPs.

Austria

P25 – 8

A study conducted by Danube University Krems indicates that one-third of the Austrian citizens born outside of Austria are employed at levels below their qualifications. Education and training received outside of Austria has been recognised for only one in five persons with an apprenticeship certificate from abroad, one in four persons who completed a vocational school abroad, and only one in three persons with an academic upper secondary education or academic degree from abroad. This means that valuable know-how is wasted. In order to make better use of the previously existing **qualifications and skills of immigrants**, an interministerial working group drafted a plan for “Points of contact and additional measures for the recognition of qualifications earned abroad” in the first half of 2012. The implementation of these measures began in January 2013 with the establishment of four low-threshold regional points of contact for persons who have questions regarding the recognition and professional use of their formal qualifications from abroad. For approximately 3,000 persons each year, these information, advising and support activities in the recognition or evaluation process should facilitate labour market integration in a manner appropriate to their qualifications.

P26 – 8

As of 1 July 2011, Austria introduced a **criteria-based immigration system (“Red-White- Red Card”) for workers from non-EU countries**. The objective of this system is to attract those “key” workers and skilled workers who are urgently needed on the labour market but cannot be recruited from the available labour supply (with due attention to the development of the Austrian labour market and economy). Since June 2012, persons with especially high qualifications, non-EU graduates of Austrian universities and other key workers as well as skilled workers in shortage occupations can receive the Red-White-Red Card. After a review of the situation on the labour market, shortage occupations will be defined in an ordinance issued by the Federal Minister of Labour in agreement with the Federal Minister of Economy.

P26 – 1

The Skilled Labour Ordinance of 2013 comprises 24 shortage occupations, including electricians, metalworkers, joiners, mechanical engineering technicians, wood machine operators as well as certified nurses.

P36 – 10

Headline target no. 1, Employment, no. 4, Education, and especially **no. 5, Combating poverty and social exclusion** in the NRP are mainly addressed by the **ESF programmes** “Employment” and “Convergence Phasing-Out Burgenland”, which are geared toward the groups mentioned under these targets such as older persons, youths, persons from migration backgrounds, and women. For the education target, for example, immigrants and school dropouts are provided with support in acquiring qualifications and skills for the sake of integration into the labour market as well as adult education in the interest of lifelong learning.

Belgium

P9 – 10

Little discussion of non-national care workers. Some discussion of migrants in general, such as the EU recommendation (#5):

Pursue the initiated reform of the unemployment benefit system to reduce disincentives to work and strengthen the focus of employment support and activation policies on older workers and vulnerable groups, in particular people with a migrant background.

However, there is no reaction from Belgium on this point at this stage in the NRP.

P17 – 10

Specific groups have more difficulties on the labour market. This is the case for workers over 55, young people, persons with disabilities and persons from foreign descent.

P19 – 10

Newcomers will enjoy specific guidance in the framework of an integration pathway that has been approved at the end of 2012 en that provides training –language training in particular– and socioprofessional guidance.

P19 – 1

Next to regional mobility (cfr. 3.4.4) a reinforced international mobility is equally important. Flanders uses the EURES network more intensively to recruit engineers, ICT specialists and nurses, and participates to different sectoral employment fairs and job datings. Moreover, a portal website has been developed on which European job seekers can register.

Bulgaria

No information

Croatia

No information

Cyprus

P8 – 9 / 10

The global character of the economic crisis and the fact that some countries were hit more severely than others caused large migration flows between member states, including Cyprus as well. Cyprus experienced a disproportional inflow of EU workers (mainly low skilled or unskilled) who were attracted by the good employment situation and the sound economy of Cyprus. This resulted in unfair competition between domestic and external workers, uncertainty, phenomena of exploitation of workers and substitution of domestic workers by foreigners. Despite the enhancement of inspection mechanisms, undeclared and illegal work is still at high levels as a consequence of the crisis.

It is worth mentioning that in 2011, one in every five persons of the labour force was non-Cypriot. Similarly, 29% of the unemployed persons were also non Cypriots. Even during 2012, with the country's economy experiencing such downturn, from the analysis of the labour market statistics it appears that such inflows of EU workers continued, even though at a lesser extent.

P13 -10

Integration of Migrants: The National Action Plan 2010-2012 for the Integration of Third Country Nationals legally residing in Cyprus, has been completed and will be evaluated in order to adopt a renewed National Action Plan covering the upcoming two years 2013-2014. The 2010-2012 National Action Plan covers eight Priority Pillars, including Information, Employment, Education, Health, Housing, Culture, Participation and Assessment and have been partly funded by the Solidarity Funds of the EU (Integration Fund), by the European Social Fund and also by national funding.

P13 – 10

On reducing access to welfare

Modification of the subsidy schemes to asylum seekers and other foreigners so as to minimize the abuse of the system.

Abolition of any subsidy to foreigners in cases they refuse to work in sectors and periods where employment is permitted.

P21 – 10

Low-skilled migrants (see also Mobile Youth)

Even though Cyprus has the second best most highly qualified labour force among EU27, with 34,5% having tertiary education, the economy faces chronic competitiveness problems relating to the specialisation in low-skilled, low-technology sectors, making extensive use of low skilled labour, mainly from third countries, whereas many young university graduates remain unemployed/underemployed.

Czech Republic

P50 – 9

Skilled labour force is one of the prerequisites for competitiveness and business success of employers. It is a necessary condition for investments, because it provides for the transfer of knowledge, development of innovations and introduction of new technologies, and it results in the creation of new jobs. Unless sufficient

skilled labour force is available, investors leave for the localities where such labour force is available. The possibility to employ key workers from abroad also is an important factor, which plays its role with regard to the inflow of investments. Considering the openness and character of Czech economy, the government adopts such measures, which lead to an efficient migration policy that can reflect economic needs of the Czech Republic. Those are especially elimination of administrative obstacles in applying for entry, residence and work permits in the Czech Republic and facilitation of conditions for the entry and residence of key personnel and specialists from third countries. The government's efforts should result in the quick, economic and transparent acquisition of skilled experts from abroad for the Czech labour market.

Specific reform measures for 2013

- New Legal Regulation of the Entry and Residence of Foreigners in the Czech Republic
- Three draft legal acts will be submitted to the government by 30 April 2013: Act on Entry and Residence of Foreigners in the Czech Republic, Act on Free Movement of EU Citizens and their Family Members, and Act on State Border Protection. The acts are expected to come into force during 2014.

P68 – 9

In 2012, the government approved the framework for new legislation, which aims inter alia to streamline the system of economic migration and to take into account the demand for foreign labour. The objective of the new legislation is to create simpler, more compact and more user-friendly legal standards. The consultation document also covers a new system for economic migration, which would introduce new types of dual work permits in the area of the migration of foreign labour. A pilot project has also been launched, entitled Accelerated procedure for intra-corporate transferred employees of foreign investors.

Denmark

P11 – 10

Country-specific recommendations: Take further steps to enhance long-term labour supply by reforming the disability pension, better targeting subsidised employment schemes (the 'flex-job' system) towards people with reduced work capacity, and improving the employability of people with a migrant background.

P46 – 10

Strengthening of integration activities (2012). These include a better reception of newly arrived foreigners, taking into account the overall family situation. At the same time, a national integration barometer will be introduced, which has clear integration targets with a view to promoting the social inclusion of refugees and immigrants, including areas such as employment, education, income support and citizenship.

Estonia

P05 – 10

The decrease in population will take place primarily in the working-age population (15-64-year-olds); and in 20 years, according to Eurostat estimates, Estonia will have more than 100,000 fewer working-age people. At the same time, the relatively high share of non-citizens sets clear limits on Estonia's possibilities to import labour, this being the route utilized by several other European Union member states to increase the size of the workforce.

P12 – 9/10 [emphasis in original]

Due to internationalization, in coming years more emphasis will have to be placed on organizing education for children with an immigrant background, based on the objectives of integration. It will be important to take into consideration the ethnicity of the new immigrants and increase in the cultural diversity. **The availability of an international general education is the prerequisite for highly qualified workers coming to Estonia to work.**

The most important reforms planned in this field are optimizing the network of general educational schools and more clearly separating basic schools and upper secondary schools, fully implementing the basic school and upper secondary school state curricula, increasing the quality of vocational education and its conformity to the labour market needs, and expanding the possibilities afforded by international general education (including implementation of IBO curricula) in Tallinn and Tartu and creating an European school.

Finland

P30 – 10

Integration and employment of immigrants

In 2012, the Government approved the central government integration programme. Increasing immigration presents development needs to public services while the significance of special integration measures increases. The integration programme is a comprehensive and concrete action programme, in which the needs of immigrant population are taken into account at all policy levels, especially in employment, education, housing and social and health services. Special focus areas of the programme include promotion of employment of immigrants and support provided for immigrant children and young people as well as families and women. Employment will be promoted especially by improving integration training. In addition to training, immigrant families are supported also by developing early childhood education as well as social and health services. Implementation of integration policy is promoted by the establishment of an integration centre of expertise. It aims to support the competence of local parties in the promotion of integration and employment. The centre collects and disseminates information and good practices and supports the work NGOs. EUR 2 million will be allocated for the centre of expertise activities.

P40 – 10

With regard to youth unemployment, attention should be paid in the young people who are in risk of becoming entirely excluded from the labour market. Improving immigrant employment can help to ease somewhat prolonging work careers even in short term. [...] In 2012 and 2013, the aim is: [...] to improve the labour market situation of the most socially excluded young people.

P49 – 10

According to a survey published in 2012 on the health and wellbeing of immigrants, there are considerable differences between various immigrant groups. According to the survey, there is an urgent need of mental health services, health education know-how, health promotion and rehabilitation. The situation of immigrants will also be improved with education projects to be implemented in different parts of the country. In 2012, funds reserved for trial projects were used to increase studies by immigrants and supporting early childhood and basic education.

Germany

P19 – 10

Facilitating qualified immigration

83. A smart immigration policy is another prerequisite for ensuring the supply of skilled labour in Germany. The Federal Government realigned its immigration policy last year with the Act to Implement the EU Directive on the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for the Purposes of Highly Qualified Employment with a view to attracting skilled workers to the country. This law makes immigration easier for non-EU skilled workers with academic qualifications as of 1 August 2012 (cf. Item 127). In doing so, the Federal Government took full advantage of the flexibility afforded by the Directive with the EU Blue Card system.

84. The Act to Improve the Assessment and Recognition of Professional Qualifications Acquired Abroad and the relevant *Länder* legislation serve to expedite and simplify the process for assessing and recognising foreign vocational credentials. The aim is to ensure that the labour market sufficiently leverages the skills and qualifications of individuals living in this country and that their integration is facilitated. Information on this topic has been published by the Federal Government through various Internet platforms. It has also intensified its efforts abroad to recruit talented professionals for the German labour market.

P25 – 10

In addition to these regulatory instruments, new and innovative measures for integrating the long-term unemployed are being developed at all levels of government in Germany. Many of the approaches under investigation include measures aimed at specific target groups, such as lone parents, young people and older people, people with a migration background or people with health problems. At Federal level, programmes like the following are aligned with this goal: *Perspektive 50plus*, the ESF-funded competition for ideas *Gute Arbeit für Alleinerziehende* aimed at lone parents, and the ESF pilot scheme for community employment (*Bürgerarbeit*).

P26 -10

In addition to the quantitative goal set out as part of the Europe 2020 strategy, the Federal Government is also working towards several qualitative goals to reduce the risk of poverty. These goals include improving the participation of disadvantaged children and young people in social and cultural activities, promoting the integration of people with a migration background, fostering social inclusion of people with disabilities (cf. Item 47 ff.), developing a demographically sustainable and viable health and long-term care policy, and preventing poverty among the elderly.

P28-29 – 10

From the Action Plan 2012: *“This year, the Federal Government will make it significantly easier and less bureaucratic for foreign workers to migrate from third countries. For example, the salary threshold above which highly skilled foreign workers are permitted to settle in Germany without delay has been lowered considerably. In addition, the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act comes into force on 1 April 2012.”*

127. To attract skilled workers to the country, the Federal Government realigned its immigration policy last year with the Act to Implement the EU Directive on the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for the Purposes of Highly Qualified Employment (cf. Item 83). Since April 2012, the *Act to Improve the Assessment and Recognition of Professional Qualifications Acquired Abroad* is also in force. This law expedites and simplifies the process for assessing and recognising foreign vocational credentials (cf. Item 83).

[...]

The German economy needs skilled workers with academic and professional qualifications from other countries. With this in mind, the Federal Government plans to allow skilled workers who have vocational training that has been acquired abroad and is equivalent to German vocational training, to take up employment in Germany if there is a need for their skills.

Greece

No information

Hungary

No information

Italy

P8 – 11

In order to improve the efficiency and the transparency of the public healthcare system, the territorial assistance was reorganised, and new rules were introduced regarding the careers and professional status of physicians.

P29 – 12

Some 11 of the 23 measures in the area of ‘employment and pensions’ are contained in the ‘Fornero Law’ (Law no. 92/2012): the regulatory measures that govern contracts, simplify labour disputes and promote professional training do not entail any financial effects. The most significant effects come from the provisions for the new social safety nets referring to cases of involuntary unemployment. In addition to the ‘Fornero Law’, two other measures should be noted, neither of which entails charges to the public budgets: the first relates to the fight against undeclared work, while the second concerns the blue card to facilitate the entry of highly qualified foreign workers.

P37 – 11

The reform of the National Health System (NHS). The overhaul of the healthcare system includes: i) a reorganisation of community – based health facilities; ii) the introduction of more transparent procedures for choosing managers and heads of hospital departments; iii) the growth in private investment in cooperation with the public sector; iv) new rules on the professional status and career advancement of physicians; v) a review of the national pharmaceutical handbook as well as deletion of obsolete drugs.

Latvia

P67 – 10

Eliminating discrimination threats and stereotypes, as well as fostering participation of civil society
(responsible institution – MC)

The aim is to ensure support measures making it possible for the groups of population at risk of social exclusion, including Roma, third country nationals of a different culture, religion, language and ethnical origin and persons excluded due to poverty and regional remoteness to take active part in all aspects of life of the European society. In order to achieve the aim, different forms of civil participation are strengthened and promoted, as well as any kind of discrimination is limited.

In 2011, the *Guidelines of National Identity and Society Integration for 2012–2018* were approved providing measures to strengthen civil society and develop different forms of participation, to limit any type of discrimination, development and implementation of a third country citizen policy and measures for implementing Roma integration.

P67-68 – 10 In relation to return migration:

In order to facilitate the link to the Latvian diaspora abroad and encourage Latvian people to return to the fatherland, a working group for the development of the return migration support measure plan was established in August 2012 with an aim to identify the existing and develop new targeted measures to create a favourable environment of return migration. In 2013, the work on development of certain return migration support measures to be included in the *Return migration support measure plan for 2013–2016* is being continued.

Lithuania

No information

Luxembourg

P19 – 9

Cross-border workers and non-national workers:

In this context, it is appropriate to emphasize the specific nature of Luxembourg's job market. In the first place, the labour pool is not limited to national borders, but includes a large part of the Greater Region²⁰. The supply of available labour in neighboring countries, the cross-border workers, will have a significant impact on Luxembourg's ability to meet the objectives the country will be setting, in view of the variables present when preparing statistical results. According to the latest consolidated data from September, 2012, the percentage of cross-border persons employed in Luxembourg is 43.7%. Of these, cross-border French residents account for 49.4% and 21.6% of the total labour force. Belgian and German residents account each for 25.3% of total cross-border workers. The change in the number of cross-border persons with a job in Luxembourg is even more explicit. They have increased by 79.4% between 2000 and 2012, while over the same period overall employment increased by 46.3%. This explains in large part why the strong increase in employment in Luxembourg has not been accompanied by a drop in unemployment. While domestic employment grew by 7.9% between 2008 and 2012, unemployment surged by 61.5% over the same period. Secondly, immigration is very strong in Luxembourg and therefore has a major impact on demographical changes. Between 2001 and 2012, the foreign resident population grew by 41.7%, while the native Luxembourg population grew by only 6.4%. Thus between December 2011 and December 2012 alone, the working population grew by 2.7%

Malta

No information

The Netherlands

P11 – 10

European Council recommendation:

Enhance participation in the labour market, particularly of older people, women, and people with disabilities and migrants, including by further reducing tax disincentives for second-income earners, fostering labour market transitions, and addressing rigidities.

P13 – 9

Zero-hour contracts will no longer be allowed in the health care sector.

Poland

No information

Slovak Republic

No information

Slovenia

P27-28 – 9

Discussion of care workers, not non-national care workers per se

Accessible and quality health care

The public health care system in Slovenia is based on the principles of solidarity and wide accessibility. Since the onset of the economic crisis, the gap between the health needs of the population and health care financing options has increased significantly. The problem of financial sustainability of the health care system is caused by:

-inefficiencies in work organisation and the public health service network, which reflect historical circumstances and individual interests at the local and state level;

[...]

Spain

P22 – 11 [Emphasis in original]

An **in-depth reform was carried out of the Long-Term Care Service** in July 2012, to **rationalise and modernise the services offered, and to guarantee its sustainability**.

P62 – 7/8

2.4 Law on Professional Associations and Services

Within the framework of the Draft **Bill on Professional Associations and Services**, which is expected to be passed in the first half of 2013, obstacles to the access and exercise of a large number of professional activities will be eliminated. The Bill lays down a general regulatory framework for access to and exercise of professional activities.

First, it sets out the **common or cross-cutting conditions** that have to be respected by all regulations affecting access to or exercise of the different professions. The general principles will be freedom of access and exercise of professional services. The limitations to this general principle must respond to the principles of necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination (AGS 3.2.21 and AGS 3.2.24).

Restrictions based on professional qualifications for access to an activity may only be required by law (State or regional), provided that it is necessary for reasons of the general interest (reserves of activity) and, in those cases where such a qualification required is a university degree or a higher vocational training degree, the requirement must be included in State law. A positive list of reserves of activity will be established for reserves of activity based on degrees and higher vocational training degrees, which means that the rest of reserves of activity of this kind which are not in the list will be tacitly abolished.

The obligation to register with a professional association may only be imposed on professions requiring a degree and by national law, in cases where it is more efficient for the associations to supervise the activity than for the public authorities (a positive list of obligations for membership of associations will be established, while the rest will be tacitly abolished). Membership of other professional associations will become voluntary.

Obviously, in coherence with the Law Market Unity Guarantee, access to a professional activity will enable the operator to exercise the activity in the whole of Spain, and no additional requirements may be demanded by other Spanish authorities. The government will have to prepare and maintain online access to a list of all the professions regulated in the country, the requirements for accessing them, the cost of joining the corresponding association, where appropriate, etc.

The Bill includes a new framework for professional associations²⁹, clarifying the regimes of obligatory and voluntary associations and adapting their rules of operation to current reality (AGS 3.2.23).

Sweden

P4 – 10

More people in work

Continued efforts to improve job opportunities for those with a weak foothold in the labour market, particularly young people and those born outside Sweden, are of the utmost urgency. A central component in this process entails assuring a high level of quality throughout the education system. In the Government's view,

strengthened driving forces to work and lowered entrance thresholds into the labour market are effective ways of increasing employment. Where budgetary scope allows, the Government wants to further strengthen the in-work tax credit and raise the lower bracket for national income tax.

P15, 20-21 – 10

3.3 Recommendation regarding measures to improve labour market participation among young people and other exposed groups

[...]

The Government's policy focuses on continuously following-up and improving the labour market situation for groups with a weak foothold in the labour market. Young people, older people, people born outside Sweden, those with at most a lower-secondary education and those with disabilities entailing decreased work capacity have a poorer labour market situation than the population as a whole. The Government's policies are a combination of measures to stimulate supply and demand for labour and to stimulate the matching of job-seekers and vacancies.

[...]

People born outside Sweden

The Introduction Act has been in place for slightly more than two years and participants are now beginning to leave the programme. Among other things, the reform includes the introduction of a state individual benefit, 'the introduction benefit', strengthening the incentives for both women and men to participate in activities and to work while also taking part in introduction activities. The Public Employment Service is involved from an early stage and is tasked with coordinating various measures to hasten newly arrived immigrants' introduction to working and community life and drawing up an introduction plan.

It is important that measures offered to new arrivals are appropriate and adapted to the target group. For this reason, the Introduction Act reinforces the process of preparing for working life with two new measures. One is the introduction of a practical base year for people above 30 with at most nine years of education. The base year consists of work training that can be combined with vocationally oriented language studies and suitable theoretical studies. The second new measure consists of work training for those in need of additional coaching. Under certain conditions, those who coordinate work training are eligible for compensation for the additional costs incurred.

The target group is growing with conflicts such as that in Syria, meaning that Sweden is experiencing an inflow of refugees and family reunification migration. Consequently, the Public Employment Service's administrative appropriation for expenditure associated with newly arrived people has been increased.

P25 – 10

Sweden's national targets

To strive for a level of employment well above 80 per cent for women of 20–64 years of age by 2020. The increase is mainly to be achieved among groups with a weak foothold in in the labour market, such as young people and people born outside Sweden, as well as by counteracting long periods without work. The difference

in the level of employment between women and men is to decrease through an increase in the level of employment among women.

P30 – 8

Development of care professions, not specifically related to non-national care workers

According to the Government's view, the continued development of medical, dentistry, nursing, Master of Engineering and Graduate Engineer programmes is a priority. This is decisive in securing the future skills supply in these areas. Fully built out, the engineering initiative is expected to amount to SEK 152 million in 2018.

P33 – 10

Planned parental benefit reform

The Government aims to present a bill whereby it would be possible to save at most 20 per cent of the total 480 days of parental benefit until after the child's fourth birthday. Furthermore, the Government intends to raise the upper age limit for parental benefit withdrawals from 8 to 12. The announced proposals form part of the measures planned to improve the opportunities for newly arrived women born outside Sweden to establish themselves in the labour market. The current design of parental benefit means that parents of children born outside Sweden are allocated parental benefit retroactively. This means that the parents of a child that arrives in Sweden at four years of age are allocated parental benefit for 480 days, that is, the same number as when a child is born. However, the protracted withdrawal of parental benefit when the child is older could counteract the ambition that newly arrived parents born outside Sweden should take part in employment preparation activities that can bring them closer to the labour market.

P58 – 10

Integration of people born outside Sweden

The Omstart web portal

Omstart (Re-Start), a web portal operated by the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco) and its member associations, is aimed at academics with foreign degrees who have not yet established themselves within their professional or educational field in Sweden. The portal gathers everything from general information on the Swedish labour market to specific information that is important for individual professional groups.

The Recruitment Bazaar

For a number of years, several of the parties have participated as co-hosts of the Recruitment Bazaar in Stockholm, which was visited by some 15,000 people in 2013. At the bazaar, which is aimed at people born outside Sweden, they can meet employers recruiting employees and find information on how to start a company, information on tertiary-level studies and other education in the County of Stockholm and information on how to get their foreign degrees and diplomas validated. Saco holds training interviews and provides information about the Swedish labour market.

Guest membership in trade unions for citizens of third countries.

Unionen, a trade union within the central organisation TCO, offers guest membership to those having secured work permits to work in Sweden and who are citizens of countries outside the EU/EES and Switzerland. This provides the same benefits as for other members but differs in being limited to at most one year and in fees being lower than for ordinary membership. Being a guest member entitles the individual to advisory services and, after three months, the right to representation in negotiations.

Mentoring programmes and introduction guides

Several Saco associations have mentoring programmes for newly arrived academics. In the programmes a newly arrived academic will be paired with a colleague in the same profession. The objective is for the immigrant academic to expand his or her professional network and gain improved self-confidence in his or her career efforts. The Swedish Medical Association has started an introduction guide activity. The aim is to shorten and improve the road to obtaining a Swedish medical licence.

P66 – 10

The Skåne Regional Council also runs the *Export Sales Programme*, which targets companies in the region in all sectors that want to strengthen their international marketing efforts and their competitiveness by bringing in export sales interns. The export sales training programme is aimed at academics born outside Sweden who lack a foothold in the labour market and aims to increase employment and encourage more companies in the region to increase their competitiveness by drawing benefit from the skills of people born outside Sweden.

United Kingdom

No information

3 REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS OF MEN AND WOMEN (ALSO IN RELATION TO MIGRATION)

Note: Includes discussions of work-life balance, childcare, etc. Elder care discussions are included under ‘Care for the Elderly’

1. Diverse Family Formation
 - a. Marriage
 - b. Divorce
 - c. Widowhood
 - d. Registered partnership
 - e. Cohabitation

2. Fertility
 - a. Childbirth (IVF, fertility treatments)
 - b. Career breaks
 - c. Adoption
 - d. Abortion
 - e. Parental support (care facilities, tax breaks, etc)

Austria

P10 – 2e

Country specific recommendation #4 [...] Reduce the high gender pay gap and enhance full-time employment opportunities for women, in particular through the provision of additional care services for dependants.”

The compatibility of family and career is among the most important economic and socio-political concerns. It affects not only families but also enterprises, organisations and institutions as well as society at large and all stakeholders have to bear responsibility for this issue. In 2013 measures from the **Charter on the Compatibility of Family and Career** will be implemented. In addition a diverse range of tailored audits for enterprises, universities, municipalities and nursing facilities will help to counteract the shortage of skilled labour as well as the effects of demographic change.

P12- 2e [emphasis in original]

The **increase in the number of childcare places** has made another contribution to enhancing **(full-time) employment opportunities for women**.

P13-14 -2e [emphasis in original]

In the summer of 2011, the National Council passed the **Care Allowance Reform Act 2012** and the **Care Allowance Act** as a necessary step toward promoting **(full-time) employment opportunities for women** as well as administrative reform, a client-friendly reform of care allowance administration and funding, and ensuring a needs-appropriate development and expansion of care allowance services in long-term care. In this context, the federal government now has exclusive responsibility for care allowances, and execution has been concentrated among seven providers. Around half of all persons requiring care purchase various services using their pensions and care benefits; these services range from mobile support services at home to daytime care and stays at nursing homes. Provincial and local governments contribute to funding these services and are also responsible for planning and ensuring the availability of these offers. In order to support the provincial and local governments in funding social care services, the federal government established a care provision fund in

2011. The fund is endowed with a total of EUR 685 million until 2014, and until 2016 another EUR 650 million will be made available, with 2/3 of the funds coming from the federal government and 1/3 from the provincial and local governments. Since the diverse challenges in the caregiving sector require viable as well as sustainable solutions, a special working group was set up in order to develop proposals. All relevant stakeholders were involved in the opinion-making process. The working group finished its work last December and presented its final results to policy-makers. In the course of 2013, these recommendations will be the subject of intense negotiations in order to improve caregiving offerings, to enhance the attractiveness of geriatric nursing professions and to optimise funding. Finally, these results will be incorporated into an amendment to the Care Allowance Act.

The **increase in the number of child care places** has made another contribution to enhancing **(full-time) employment opportunities for women**. A look at the development of child care coverage rates among 3, 4 and 5-year-old children over the last ten years reveals substantial increases in all three age groups. The child care coverage rate among 3-year-olds rose from 57.8% in 2001 to 80.2% in 2011. This rate for 4-year-olds showed an increase from 88.3% to 94.2%, and among 5-year olds the rate climbed from 89.7% to 96.3%. The coverage rate for children under 3 years old likewise showed a substantial increase from 8.4% (2001) to 19.7% (2011), or even 21.8% including qualified child-minders. Especially since 2008, it has been possible to expand child care offerings, in part thanks to the initial funding provided by the federal government. In the years 2011 to 2014, the federal government will make a total of EUR 55 million in subsidies available for child care, and the provincial governments will co-fund these efforts with matching contributions. For the years 2012 to 2014, subsidies in the amount of EUR 15 million per year are available. The focus of these expansion efforts is on child care offerings for children under 3 years of age, promoting qualified child-minder offerings, and extending opening times during the year. Accordingly, the provincial governments are allowed to use no more than 25% of the subsidy for 3 to 6-year-olds, but up to 100% can be used to fund care for children under 3 years of age. By the end of 2014, the child care coverage rate in that group is expected to increase from 22% to 28% (including qualified child-minders). In this way, Austria plans to gradually approach the EU's Barcelona target of 33%. As the Barcelona target for 3 to 6-year-olds has already been exceeded in Austria (90.3% coverage, resp. 92.6 % including qualified child-minders), childcare places in this segment will only be funded in order to close regional gaps in childcare. The federal funds are also intended to extend opening times. In particular, support is being provided for full-day and flexible childcare arrangements which are compatible with full-time employment on the part of parents.

Additional stimuli to promote female employment have been provided by the Austrian federal civil service with its model of a **"paternity leave month" for public servants**. Since January 2011, employment law for all male public servants has provided for the possibility of taking four weeks of unpaid paternity leave during the maternity protection stage. From the beginning of 2011 to 31 December 2012, 452 fathers took advantage of this opportunity, 268 of them in the year 2012 alone. Many provincial governments have followed suit with similar regulations. In the course of a relaunch (fall 2012) of the paternity leave campaign originally started in 2010, an advising tour on paternity leave will travel throughout Austria in the first half of 2013. In 2012, workshops were held to provide businesses with training with regard to paternity leave.

The programme to promote the involvement of women in trades and technical professions (Frauen in Handwerk und Technik, or FiT) launched in 2006 was extended until 2014. The purpose of the programme is to enable women to take part in non-traditional educational paths and to complete at least an apprenticeship in those areas. Broadening the range of professions for women is intended to help counteract segregation on the labour market. Moreover, the programme "Re-Entering the Workforce with a Future" (Wiedereinstieg mit Zukunft) and the modular training programme "Systematic Competence" (Kompetenz mit System; cf. NRP 2012) are designed to make it easier for women to re-enter the workforce after family-related career breaks. At the end of 2012, the pilot project offering specific vocational and training centres for women (Frauenberufszentren, originally launched in April 2010) came to an end. Given the positive evaluation results

the programme received, this centres for additional qualifications and the promotion of gender equality will be expanded throughout the country.

Belgium

P28 – 2e

The aim of these measures is to ensure that all children have an adequate standard of living, which entails paying particular attention to children's housing, supporting parenthood, guaranteeing care facilities, high-quality training and education for every child, and combating health inequalities and abuse.

P67 – 2e [emphasis in original]

The Government of Flanders also considers it extremely important to keep working towards a good **work-life balance**. In this respect the measures regarding **childcare** take a prominent place. The Flemish Parliament Act on the Childcare of Babies and Pre-schoolers was adopted by the Flemish Parliament on 20 April 2012. In order to meet the large demand for childcare, the Government of Flanders wants to continue to invest in childcare provision. An increased provision was also entered explicitly as an objective in the Flemish Parliament Act. Within the budgetary possibilities of the Government of Flanders two phases are planned: (i) By 2016, a provision for at least half of the children under three years is to be created.(ii) As of 2020, it should be possible to provide qualitative and affordable childcare to each family that requires childcare within a reasonable term and a reasonable distance. As long as no childcare is available yet for each child, priority will be given to those children who require the care the most. The Flemish Parliament Act provides additional efforts for vulnerable families, so that childcare becomes affordable for them as well. Licensed organisers of childcare for babies and pre-schoolers, for instance, will receive an additional grant from Kind en Gezin to realise childcare duties that support vulnerable families, such as fighting poverty in families and realising access for those families. Finally, given the fact that the Flemish Parliament Act mentions the affordability of childcare for parents, further investments will be made in childcare with an income rate. However, there will also still be childcare facilities that charge a free rate which is not income-related. Childcare with grants for places where an income-based rate is paid will also have to follow certain rules of priority when allocating those places. Flanders also makes efforts to eliminate the career gap between men and women. This should result in a **Flemish action plan for combating the career gap** in 2013.

P77 – 2e

Within the context of the Marshall Plan 2.Green, several measures are implemented aiming at a better work/life balance through improvement of local services such as childcare and care for individuals. It is a matter of removing one of the obstacles to investing in a professional career, in particular for women, but also to generate employment. Firstly, through employment support mechanisms, employment in these structures is perpetuated and strengthened (see section 3.4.1). Secondly, investments in crèches (call for project proposals forecast for 2013) and care homes (53 projects) are increased. Regarding crèches, the Government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation is working on the "Cigogne 3 (Stork 3)" plan.

P87 – 2e [emphasis in original]

Increase in childcare and adult care service provision in order to encourage reconciliation of the work/life balance: in order to meet the end of regime requirement given to Europe in the framework of State aid for trade, there will be three separate systems regarding APE (Job Promotion Support) positions: commercial, non-commercial and local authorities. With regard to this, a new decree for the commercial sector is being developed and should be adopted in 2013. The aim of this new decree is to support small businesses when

they create their 1st, 2nd and 3rd employment positions and to facilitate financial aid for certain target groups including those aged 50 and over, those under 30 and those having been without work for over 2 years.

Bulgaria

P19 – 2e

These include the introduction of a simplified procedure without any income-related eligibility criteria for one-off assistance payment for school students: for a child with one surviving parent, and for children with long-term disabilities and also for the monthly child allowance until completion of secondary education, but not later than the age of 20, and monthly benefits for raising children until they are one year old for children with one surviving par-ent¹⁸. The amendments include: For a child who has completed his/her secondary education before completing his/her 18th year, provided the remaining eligibility conditions are also met, a monthly allowance shall be paid until he/she reaches the legal age. For a child, until completion of secondary education, but not later than the age of 20, it shall no longer be required to present a certificate from a school in order to be eligible for a monthly allowance

Croatia

No information

Cyprus

P12 – 2e [emphasis in original]

Provide accessible and affordable child care services and other services:

In order to prevent and minimise the risk of children's poverty and support female employment, the government continued the **subsidisation of social care services within the framework of family and employment reconciliation**. The measure, which was officially launched in February 2012, includes the reimbursement of part of the cost of care services for children, older people and persons with disabilities. Women who find a job may apply for a subsidy for the cost of care services for their family dependants for a period of up to 18 months. The benefit is €260 (maximum amount) monthly, for childcare, and €200 (maximum amount) monthly for the care of older persons or persons with disabilities. In 2012, 49 women were approved to receive subsidisation. A total of €49.157,10 was spent in 2012 and the Budget for 2013 is €0,5 mln.

Furthermore, the **subsidisation schemes for child care programmes** operated by local authorities and NGOs continued throughout 2012 and will also be continued in 2013. The aim of these schemes is to enhance the expansion of available child care services at a lower cost and within their 2013 priorities the Schemes include the subsidisation of programmes for the most vulnerable/deprived persons.

Czech Republic

P12 – 2e

“Take additional measures to significantly increase the availability of affordable and quality pre-school childcare.” In response to this recommendation, the government approved several measures which will lead to a significant increase in availability of affordable quality pre-school facilities and reconciliation between family and work life. a) In August of 2012 the government approved the outline of the Act on Children’s Group. Then aim of this act is to broaden the childcare services supply for children from six months to mandatory school age. The draft act defines the conditions for provision of these services by introducing a new type of childcare service – the children’s group. b) In November of 2012 the government approved (and published in the National Qualification Framework) requirements for professional qualification of a childminder for children up to the mandatory school age. This extends the number of persons who may care for children in a children’s group. At the same time, qualification requirements for another qualification – childminder in children’s corners - were published in the National Qualification Framework. c) The new legislation will include also family-friendly tax measures in the form of tax deductions for employers who provide childcare for their employees and in the form of discount on income tax for parents, who pay for childcare services due to their return or entry to the labour market. The tax measures under preparation will support all types of childcare services. The draft act has already passed through the inter-service consultation procedure and will be submitted for discussion to the government during the first half of 2013. Once approved, it will be submitted to the Parliament with anticipated entry into force from January 2014. d) Amendment of the Act on State Social Support newly allows flexible drawing of parental allowance, when parents choose parameters of the drawing themselves. The amendment allows drawing of parental allowance also in cases when a child above the age of 2 attends kindergarten or similar facility, regardless to the length of the attendance (attendance of children under two years of age is limited to a maximum of 46 hours per month). e) Last year also saw reforms allowing employers creating company kindergartens. The government will financially support these company or university kindergartens (registration of kindergarten to the school registry), while guaranteeing quality of education provided to children in these facilities. Given the demographic trends it is anticipated that the existing capacity of pre-school facilities will in a few years in principle cover the demand for the age group below 6. The existing types of childcare services, including kindergartens, will continue to receive subsidies from the state budget. Spectrum of service types provided by various entities will childcare service types, i.e. not just those newly introduced. Childcare services are financed also from the European Social Fund (ESF). The Czech Republic intends to continue supporting activities focused on promotion of childcare in order to increase parents’ participation at the labour market during the new programming period 2014-2020.

P46 - 2e

Care for Pre-school Children

Responding to the EU recommendation, the supply of services providing for reconciliation between work and family life will be expanded through a legislative regulation of a new type of services in care for preschool children – children groups. The legal regulation will also include tax measures in the form of tax eligibility of expenses of the employers who provide for care for their employees’ children and income tax discounts for parents who pay for care for their children due to their participation on the labour market. The existing types of childcare services will continue to be supported in the current extent, incl. kindergartens subsidized from the state budget. That means the mixture of types of childcare services provided by various entities will expand. The related tax measures will support all types of childcare services, not only the new ones.

Denmark

P17 – 2e

Implementation of a special employment allowance for single parents

P34 - 2e

The labour supply increase may especially be ascribed to the increase of the general tax allowance, particularly the tax allowance for single parents, increase of the upper tax threshold, as well as the moderate regulation of transfer payments in the years 2016-23, all of which contribute to making employment pay off.

P44 – 2e

Development programme – Day care of the Future: The Government has initiated a development programme in the area of day care, where the goal is to strengthen the well-being and learning of all 0-5 year olds, and where the significance of social heritage is reduced in relation to children's learning and well-being. The focus of the development programme is to produce knowledge about the effect on children's learning and well-being and can therefore also contribute to strengthening academic standards in the primary and lower secondary school.

Estonia

P16 -2e

For the purpose of (re)entry to the labour market after being at home with a baby and reconciliation of work and family life, **the availability of high-quality, affordable and flexible pre-school education and day care services must be improved**. It is also important to support the creation of childcare places according to regional needs. Additional support services (support person, personal assistant, transport, etc.) are required to enable the participation of disabled children in day care and education and the participation of their parents in employment.

Finland

P40 – 2e

In spring 2013, the Government decided to promote consolidation of work and family life with a new flexible child home care allowance. The monthly allowance supports employment and part-time work.

Germany

P11/13 – 1a/2e

European Council recommendation:

Phase out the fiscal disincentives for second earners, and increase the availability of full-time childcare facilities and all-day schools.

Incentives for second earners

52. Married couples can choose whether to be assessed for income tax jointly under the income splitting method or individually. Income splitting gives married couples the option to decide which portion of their income to contribute to the family income and family work, without suffering any adverse tax consequences. It is thus a neutral procedure that does not apply taxation using gender-specific criteria as to which married partner generates the household income. According to the decisions of the Federal Constitutional Court, this procedure is not an infinitely adjustable tax concession, but a sound taxation approach, which is based on Article 6.1 of the Basic Law that requires the special protection of marriage and on Article 3.1 of the Basic Law that governs the economic potential of the married couple.

53. The income splitting method also applies to withholding wage taxes. Thanks to the marginal burden or '*Faktorverfahren*' introduced in 2009, a couple's tax burden can be distributed more precisely in line with each married partner's share of annual income, as part of the withholding wage tax process. This approach can reduce the overall tax burden for married couples with lower incomes who often fall into tax class V and are subject to a relatively high marginal tax rate. Based on the marginal burden, tax deductions are therefore very closely aligned with the overall annual tax liability that accrues over the calendar year. By opting for the marginal burden approach, people can thus avoid having to make high corrective payments in connection with their income tax assessment and also possibly avoid making advance income tax payments (cf. NRP 2012 Item 38).

Expanding day care services for children

54. The Federal Government, the *Länder* and municipalities are pressing ahead with the needs-oriented expansion of day care services for children over one. Since this expansion is making it easier for many parents to combine work and family commitments, it is also helping to increase participation in the workforce. It is the aim of the Federal Government, *Länder* and municipalities to provide needs-based care facilities for the under-threes by 1 August 2013. Recent parent surveys reveal that childcare facilities are now required for 39 percent of all infants nationwide, up 4 percentage points on initial estimates and around 11.4 percentage points higher than the actual rate of provision reported in March 2012 (27.6 percent).

55. The Federal Government is providing investment funds to the *Länder* for the additional 30,000 spaces needed. Each year thereafter it will bear some of the operating costs that have increased as a result. This means that the Federal Government will have contributed a total of roughly 5.4 billion euros to the costs of expansion (investment and operating costs) between 2008 and 2014. As of 2015, the Federal Government's annual share of the operating costs will amount to 845 million euros. The *Länder* are in turn also making 500 million euros of additional investment funds available for expanding childcare facilities; notably financing the bulk of operating costs in the long term.

56. By introducing a 10-point programme, the Federal Government has helped accelerate the expansion of child day care facilities. This programme encompasses all the measures for a range of services to meet requirements and eliminates obstacles to expansion. It also helps businesses to provide options for childcare. In addition to helping increase the number of places, the Federal Government is also providing support to the *Länder* in terms of raising the standard of services and maintaining high-quality childcare in the long term.

P19 – 2e

Improving the possibilities for parents to combine career and family commitments is a central ingredient of the Federal Government's Skilled Workers Strategy. Women represent the largest pool of potential skilled labour in Germany and are the demographic group that can be mobilised most quickly. For this reason, the Federal

Government is promoting a family-friendly working environment and also helping women to return to work. The Federal Government also wishes to enhance family-support services and household-related services.

P25-26 – 2e

In addition to these regulatory instruments, new and innovative measures for integrating the long-term unemployed are being developed at all levels of government in Germany. Many of the approaches under investigation include measures aimed at specific target groups, such as lone parents, young people and older people, people with a migration background or people with health problems. At Federal level, programmes like the following are aligned with this goal: *Perspektive 50plus*, the ESF-funded competition for ideas *Gute Arbeit für Alleinerziehende* aimed at lone parents, and the ESF pilot scheme for community employment (*Bürgerarbeit*).

[...]

The Federal Government is continuing to implement a range of actions to help people balance their work and family commitments, with a particular emphasis on expanding childcare facilities (cf. Items 54 ff. and 80 f.).

Greece

P41 – 2e

Furthermore, a program is launched for the harmonization of family and professional life in order to support access of women in the labour market through Daily Care Centres.

P47-48 – 2a/2e

Birth grants and family benefits are readjusted so as to target families that are most in need. In this framework, a new means-tested “single child support allowance” has been introduced since 01.01.2013 (Law 4093/2012).

As mentioned above, a new “means-tested single child benefit” has been introduced /enters into force on, 1.1.2013 (Law 4093/2012).

Hungary

P18 – 2b/2e

The implementation of the Employer Benefit System – Job Protection Act (18)

The measure helps the most disadvantaged employees keep their jobs and access the labour market, and aims to boost employment. Certain provisions of the Act enacted on 1 January 2013 introduced benefits which are applicable to monthly gross incomes not exceeding HUF 100,000, especially aimed to reduce the employment costs of young people, new entrants to the labour market, persons returning from maternity/paternity leave, elderly employees, permanent job seekers and people with lower qualifications. The entire group of beneficiaries account for around 1 million employees. The benefit gives temporary exemption from or discount on the social contribution tax and the vocational contribution, amounting in total to 28.5%. Since the measure has been recently introduced, no impact analysis has been carried out so far, but based on the first statistical

data available; we can assume the measure is well-targeted. Employers requested benefit for 615,000 employees, more than half of whom are under-qualified, under the age of 25, or above the age of 55.

P19 – 2b/2e

Improvement of women's labour market activity, promoting the reconciliation of work and family (21)

The Government supports women's increased labour market participation through several instruments. It helps the labour market reintegration of disadvantaged women (raising small child/ren, persons over 50 years, young entrants to the labour market, low-skilled and long-term unemployed) with active labour market policies. Furthermore, the Government also facilitates the employment of disadvantaged women by granting benefit for their employers. The START Bonus Programme offered 27% tax refund for employers who employed a disadvantaged job seeker. From 2013 through the Job Protection Act, the Government extended and integrated into the tax system the system of benefits available for employers when employing disadvantaged job seekers, which contributed to the employment of even more disadvantaged women.

One of the greatest obstacles to the return to the labour market of women with small children is the scarce capacity of day-care services for young children and the lack of flexible jobs. In line with the country-specific recommendations for 2012 and within the framework of the regional development operational programmes, 817 new kindergarten places were created in 2012. In addition, the Social Renewal Operational Programme (co-financed by the European Social Fund) announced several calls for applications to facilitate reaching the reconciliation of work and family which also contribute to the establishment of flexible day-care services for children under 3 years. According to the original plans, 2000 new day-care places will be created for children all over the country in 2013. The extension of kindergarten capacities is also in progress with an anticipated 5000 new kindergarten places to be created between 2013 and 2015.

The better reconciliation of work and private life commitments and more flexible employment is also facilitated by the new regulations (e.g. the new Labour Code).

P37-39 – 2b/2e

European Council recommendation:

[Hungary is recommended to] make the taxation of labour more employment-friendly by alleviating the impact of the 2011 and 2012 tax changes on low earners in a sustainable, budget-neutral manner, for example by shifting part of the tax burden to energy taxes and recurrent taxes on property. Strengthen measures to encourage women's participation in the labour market by expanding childcare and pre-school facilities.

[...]

Within the framework of the Job Protection Act, from 2013 employers are entitled to a social contribution tax allowance and a discount on vocation contribution for the preservation of jobs and the expansion of employment of disadvantaged job seekers (under the age of 25, above the age of 55, those returning from child care, those without qualification, permanent job seekers). On a national level employers benefited from the tax relief on social contribution introduced within the framework of the Job Protection Act, which meant HUF 8.1bn after 615,000 individuals in January, and a total of HUF 9.7bn after 653,000 individuals in February; the number of those benefiting from the tax relief is expected to further increase in the rest of the year.

[...]

The implementation of the measures described in the National Reform Programme aimed at **encouraging women's participation in the labour market** is ongoing, mainly financed from EU funds (by expanding pre-school facilities, the popularization of flexible employment types, etc.).

to support the creation of alternative day childcare services; to create day childcare services for companies and institutions (SoROP 2.4.5.);

to expand day childcare facilities for children under the age of 3 years, to expand pre-school facilities;

to improve reconciliation of work and family life, promote flexible forms of employment and local innovative initiatives that improve such flexibility (SoROP 2.4.5);

to strengthen the active labour market programmes to promote the employment of disadvantaged persons, including parents with small children.

to strengthen decentralized active labour market programmes to promote the employment of disadvantaged persons, including parents with small children (between May 2011 and December 2012, approx. 30 thousand disadvantaged women have been involved in these active labour market programmes).

In 2012, 56 thousand disadvantaged persons, including 30.7 thousand disadvantaged women, have been employed within the framework of the START Bonus programme (providing 27 percentage point social contribution tax allowance for the employers). From 2013 this allowance has been implemented in the tax system within the framework of the Job Protection Act, and has been expanded over to more disadvantaged groups. In the framework of the Job Protection Act – to encourage the participation of parents with small children in the labour market – the social security contribution was decreased as of 1 January 2013. For employees returning to or finding another job after the period of the payment of childcare fee, or during or after the period of the payment of childcare benefit and child-raising allowance, the rate of the contributions (social contribution tax and vocational contribution) paid by the employer on the basis of the gross wages is 0 per cent in the first two years of employment (instead of 28.5%) and 14 per cent in the third year (instead of 28.5 per cent) in case of a full-time job with a maximum wage of HUF 100,000 (in case of a part-time job, the maximum wage is calculated in proportion to the hours of work).

P39 – 2b

In the period between May 2011 and April 2015, **decentralized labour market programmes are being implemented** at the National Employment Service, with a frame amount of HUF 113 billion (increased several times) to promote the employment of disadvantaged persons. The implementation staff financed within the framework of these projects work for the NES. Within the framework of the measures, people with low qualification or non-marketable qualification, career starters, people above 50 years of age, people returning to the labour market after a period of receiving child care fee, child care benefit or care allowance, people receiving unemployment benefits or threatened by permanent unemployment (a total of 116,000 job seekers) receive complex, tailor-made support and service package to gain or regain competitiveness in the labour market. The project emphasizes the importance of offering the people involved trainings demanded on the labour market and tailor-made service before receiving wage-type benefits.

Ireland

P27/28 – 2e

Jobless Households

Given the significance of joblessness in lone parent households, current reforms are concentrated in this area. The Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2012, which was enacted on 1 May, 2012, introduced changes to the One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) scheme, which provides for payments to lone parents without labour-market conditionality. These changes reduced on a phased basis the maximum age limit of the youngest child at which an OFP recipient's payment ceases to 7 years of age from 2014 for new entrants and from 2015 for existing recipients.

The reforms aim to provide the necessary supports to lone parents to help them to minimise their risk of poverty and social exclusion. They will encourage more lone parents to participate in education and training, develop their skills set and enter the workforce. Ultimately the aim is to enable lone parents attain financial independence and social well-being for their families.

As previously mentioned, research has also been commissioned to look in greater detail at the data sources on household joblessness, including the extent of transitions in the labour market situation of households over time. The outcome of the research will further inform policy development in this area.

P49 – 2e

Ireland faces a number of challenges in addressing unemployment and high poverty risks, particularly for the long-term unemployed, for in-work families (especially lone parent families) and for jobless households. It is also important to consider the gendered dimensions of inclusive labour markets, not only in terms of female labour market participation and work-life balance, but also in terms of positive outcomes for individuals and for their children. Inclusive labour markets help to create the conditions that ensure that work pays.

P50 – 2e

Lone parents

The age limit of the youngest child at which a One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) recipient's payment ceases is being reduced on a phased basis to 7 years of age from 2014 for new entrants and from 2015 for existing recipients. Transitional arrangements were put in place for the period between 2013 and 2015 – depending on the date that a recipient first claimed the OFP payment. By 2015, the maximum age limit of the youngest child will be 7 years for all OFP recipients. The reforms to the OFP scheme that are being introduced recognise parental choice with regard to the care of young children while, at the same time, having an expectation that parents will not remain outside of the workforce indefinitely. They aim to provide the necessary supports to lone parents, most frequently women, to help them to escape poverty and social exclusion, participate in education and training, develop their skills set, enter the workforce and, ultimately, attain financial independence and social well-being for both themselves and their families.

Last June the Department introduced the Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) transitional arrangement, which caters for OFP recipients who lose their entitlement to the OFP payment, who have a youngest child aged under 14 years, and who are entitled to the Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) payment. These persons are now exempt from the JA conditions that require them to be available for, and genuinely seeking, full-time work. The exemptions from the full JA conditionality will remain in place until a recipient's youngest child reaches the age of 14 years. At this point, should they continue to claim the JA payment, they will be subjected to the full JA conditionality.

P51 – 2e

Considering other groups furthest from the labour market

The Advisory Group's findings/ recommendations will have an important bearing on possible approaches to the reform of working age supports and in turn will assist the Government in considering important elements in the appropriate direction of active inclusion policy and especially inclusive labour markets. This includes the consideration of those groups furthest from the labour market, such as carers, the position of second earners especially in low income households and those with a disability. These groups face a number of additional barriers to entering employment, ranging from individual circumstances, health issues, education and training needs, as well as demand-side issues and ensuring that work pays.

Access to quality services

In 2011, children were 1.6 times more likely to be in consistent poverty compared to adults. In recognition of the higher risks and life-long consequences of child poverty, a new child-specific poverty target has been set in the *Better Outcomes: Brighter Futures - The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020*. The Framework recognises the nested contexts of children's lives in which support for parents to access employment through inclusive labour markets; adequate income support; and access to appropriate and affordable quality services are essential to improving children's outcomes.

P52 – 2e

Childcare supports

Approximately €260 million is invested annually by the Government specifically to support the provision of early childhood care and education through three childcare support programmes – the Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) programme, the Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) programme and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The childcare programmes implemented by the DCYA support the provision of childhood care and education for more than 100,000 children each year and are a key support for working parents.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme provides for a free pre-school year and was introduced in January 2010. Almost every pre-school service (more than 4,300) in the State is participating with up to 68,000 children, or 94% of the eligible age cohort, expected to avail of free pre-school this year.

The Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) programme provides funding to community childcare services to enable them to provide quality childcare at reduced rates to disadvantaged and low income working parents. Parents qualify as disadvantaged or low income on the basis of means-tested entitlements. About 25,000 children each year benefit from this programme in over 900 community childcare services. To ensure that access to subvention funding is not a disincentive for parents to return to employment, the CCS programme allows a parent who is in receipt of the higher level of funding support, and who secures employment to retain that level of funding support until the end of that school year in the same service, and also to have a reduced level of funding support for one further school year following that.

The Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) programme allows low income parents take up training and education opportunities. About 8,000 children each year benefit from this initiative. A new element of this scheme in 2014 allows Community Employment (CE) participants to avail of childcare places. 1,800 part-time subsidised childcare places will be available under this scheme.

Another childcare programme is the **After-school Child Care (ASCC) scheme**, targeted at low-income families with children at primary school, where parents are availing of employment opportunities. It aims to help offset some of the after-school child care costs that are associated with availing of an employment opportunity in a bid to encourage more individuals to take up employment. Places on the scheme are heavily subsidised and are time limited. It is expected that, in 2014, the ASCC scheme will provide 800 subsidised after-school child care places at a cost of €2 million.

Italy

P12 – 2e

With the intention of augmenting flexibility, the Government has established, amongst other measures, greater safeguards for maternity and paternity leave, and new public services (such as professional training and orientation services) to help the unemployed get back to work.

P15 – 2e

Italy has promoted an initiative for the measurement of 'equitable and sustainable well-being' (BES) which was inaugurated by ISTAT and the National Economic and Labour Council (CNEL) in 2010, whose first report was published in March 2013.

The project is aimed at developing a multi-dimensional approach to well-being, capable of integrating (i) the factors of inequality and disparity in the access to resources and (ii) the sustainability. The project identified 12 domains that contribute the most to characterizing the progress of Italian society: i) healthcare; ii) education and training; iii) reconciliation of work and family life;

[...]

The labour domain also incorporates reconciliation with family life. Work is indeed the source of material support, but also of personal realization. Italy has a very high number of individuals who would willingly work, but who are no longer actively seeking employment or are discouraged, including in comparison with other European countries. Income and material resources are, for the most part, the instruments with which the individual manages to support his standard of living. An analysis of material well-being must take into account the value of the services supplied by public institutions which, in Italy, have aided the beneficiaries in coping with decreases in individual income.

P47 – 2e

Reconciling work and family. New measures have been envisaged for women, who wish to go back to work at the end of their maternity leave. To this end, €78 million funds a year have been appropriated for the 2013-2015 period. The measures that have been financed include the introduction of a mandatory paternity leave (in addition to maternity leave) and the provision of economic benefits for women such as baby-sitting vouchers or contributions toward nursery tuition fees. Parental leave shall be paid by INPS, at 100 percent of regular pay and the relevant full social security contributions. A national list of applications shall be drawn up that will take into account the ISEE indicator (ISEE – '*Indicatore della Situazione Economica Equivalente*' is Italy's means-testing indicator); INPS shall also be responsible for monitoring expenditure performance over the three-year period during which the system will be tested.

[...]

P47 – 2e

With a view to favouring women's participation in the labour market, the lifework balance measures that have already been introduced must be strengthened or supplemented by other measures.

P50 – 2e

Increase in tax credits for children. The Government has raised the amount of personal income tax credits for children. In particular, the tax credit for children older than three years has been increased from €800 to €950, from €900 to 1,220 for children aged under three years, and from €220 to €400 for each disabled child.

P77 – 2e

The new 'social card'¹⁸ is intended for families with children in absolute poverty, starting with households who are more marginalised from the labour market. The number of recipient families will be greater (the previous card required households to have a child under three years of age or an elderly member over 65). In order to qualify for access to this programme the ISEE (means-testing) indicator must not exceed € 3,000 – in addition other means-testing methods are used, such as home ownership. With the resources that are available 15 thousand households will benefit from this experimental project.

The new purchase card provides a cash benefit that is higher than the previous monthly benefit (€ 40) plus care services to the individual (social, educational and training services). The amount of the benefit is not the same for all recipients, but scaled up or down depending on the size of the household and the cost of living in the municipalities where the scheme is being tested. The monthly benefit will be € 231 for households with two persons, € 281 for those with three persons, € 331 for four persons and € 404 for households with five or more members.

Unlike the old purchase card, which only Italian citizens were entitled to claim, the new social card is a benefit that also EU and non EU citizens that are long – term residents can claim.

- Monitoring of the use of the existing purchase card shows that in the period from December 1 2008 to 31 December 2012, the € 80 benefit was paid to 935,000 people living in absolute economic distress. Of these, 493,000 are children under 3 and 442,000 are over 65. 70 per cent of recipients live in the South (including Sicily and Sardinia) , 13 per cent in the Centre and about 17 per cent in the North. A total of € 945 million have been paid to recipients.
- The Structural Funds earmark about € 3.1 billion for social inclusion (1.7 billion for the Convergence Regions) as part of a wider set of funds earmarked for social inclusion and services for the quality of life and territorial attractiveness, €1.5 billion from PON '*Sicurezza*' (Safety National Orientation Plan). As regards implementation, programmes rolled out through EFRD mainly concentrate in the South, where investment in social infrastructure prevail, while measures rolled out through the European Social Fund tend to concentrate in the regions of Central and Northern Italy, where there are a higher number of instances of action taken for the social and labour market inclusion of disadvantaged people and for action to promote acceptance of diversity. Expenditure on this priority issue at 31 December 2012 stood at 41.5 per cent (36.8 per cent in the Convergence Regions).

Latvia

P66 – 2e

The aim is to reduce the tax burden on the economically active population and population groups at high risk of poverty (especially families with children and people with low income) and to facilitate their ability to provide for themselves and to escape poverty. As of January 1, 2013:

- The minimum amount of parents' benefit and the amount of childcare benefit from the birth of a child to the age of one and a half year are increased – in both cases the benefit is LVL 100;
- Real estate tax relief is applied to large families (three and more children aged up to 18 years) reducing the amount of real estate tax by 50% of the calculated tax but not more than LVL 300 for residential buildings and land belonging to them.

P68 – 2a/2d/2e

In order to solve demographic issues, the Demographic Affairs Council has been established which focused on the following important issues in 2012: liquidation of queues for pre-school education institutions of local governments, a set of measures to improve mother's and child's health, particularly parents' reproductive health and prevention of abortions, as well as different support measures to reduce the costs of families or increase the income in both the short-term and the long-term. In 2012, the CM approved the *Plan for Improvement of Mother's and Child's Health for 2012–2014* and the *Action Plan for Implementation of the State Family Policy Guidelines for 2011–2017*. One of the main measures involves an increase in financial support for economically active families, for example, raising personal income tax relief for dependants. It is also planned to prepare proposals for a complex approach to solving family housing issues. The action plan also defines a number of measures to ensure access to pre-school education institutions for children aged one and a half years.

In 2013, the principle "money follows the pupil" is planned to be introduced in pre-school education institutions. The plan also envisages implementation of support measures to treat infertility.

In order to improve birth rate indirectly through financial instruments, amendments to the *Law on Real Estate Tax* came into force on January 1, 2013 envisaging application of real estate tax relief in the amount of 50% (but not more than LVL 300) for residential buildings and land belonging to them to persons with three or more children up to the age of 18 years living at the same declared place of residence.

Since 2013, the state funded mandatory social insurance payments for parents taking care of a child up to the age of one and a half years²⁰ have been doubled and the maximum amount or the "ceiling" of maternity benefit, paternity benefit and parents' benefit has been doubled as well²¹.

In order to support parents at the time, when the development child needs constant presence of parents, the childcare benefit and the minimum amount of parents' benefit have been increased. As of January 1, 2013 the childcare benefit for socially uninsured persons from the birth of the child to the age of one year is LVL 100 (instead of LVL 50 previously). The minimum amount parents' benefit paid to socially insured persons from the birth of the child to the age of one year is also LVL 100 (instead of LVL 63 previously). Yet, the amount of childcare benefit for both parents for children aged one year to one and a half year has been raised from LVL 30 to LVL 100. In case of giving birth to twins or more children during one delivery, an additional payment shall be paid to the parents' or childcare benefit, and the amount of the additional payment has been also raised to LVL 100 per month.

P69-10 – 2a/2d/2e

Improving birth rate and social protection measures directed towards families with children (responsible institutions – MW, MEPRD, MJ)

The aim is to ensure and improve the state and municipal support to families with children, as well as to encourage parent participation in the labour market. In order to achieve the target, the following measures are planned in 2013–2014, in addition to the already implemented measures to support and protect families with children:

- To revise personal income tax relief for dependents, considering a possibility to raise the relief; to revise the current conditions for payment of parents' benefit and childcare benefit with an aim to provide state support for improving birth rate and support for families with children;
- To liquidate queues for pre-school education institutions of local governments starting from 2014. The government budget for 2013 allocates co-financing for local governments as of September 1 to cover costs of parents for private service providers in case a local government cannot ensure a place for children aged one and a half year to four years (incl.) in queue for local government kindergarten. As of 2014, it is planned to improve availability of pre-school education service for children with disability. The MEPRD is responsible for the ERDF activity *Development of Infrastructure of Pre-School Education Institutions in National and Regional Development Centres* in the framework of which 44 projects were completed by December 31, 2012, while 7 projects are being implemented, including 14 pre-school education institutions have been constructed or expanded and 58 pre-school education institutions have been renovated or improved, creating 2730 new places for children in pre-school education institutions. The ERDF financing available for this activity is LVL 32.3 million, including the financing of over commitment;
- To develop social work and social services in local governments;
- Providing psychologist consultations to adopters, grove families, guardians, host families, families with children in a crisis situation, children left without parental care as well as by organizing different support groups, to develop services similar to family environment for children in out-of-family care.

Measures to improve health of mother and child (responsible institution – MH)

The year 2012 was announced as the Year of Mother's and Child's Health in Latvia. The *Plan for Improvement of Mother's and Child's Health for 2012–2015* has been developed envisaging certain measures to improve the care for pregnant women and new-borns, infertility treatment and cross-sectoral cooperation in the reproductive health sector. As regards infertility treatment, the plan envisages reimbursing costs of diagnostic tests for infertility, medical insemination procedures/manipulations and infertility treatment medicine from the state budget resources.

Lithuania

P34 – 2e

In 2012, the level of employment (of people aged 20-64) in Lithuania was 68.7%. Recently, this level has been increasing: in 2010, it was 64.4 percent, while in 2011 it accounted for 67.0%. The targeted employment level will be reached through increased employment of women, men, the youth and the elderly, and by facilitating labour market integration for the disabled, people with children and other individuals.

P40 -2e

In 2012, the *National Programme of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2010-2014* was being successfully implemented. 23 measures aimed at the reduction in pay gap, promotion of business, possibilities to combine work and family responsibilities, reintegration of women, especially elderly women and those living

in rural areas, allowing them to remain in the labour market, also, for promoting the social dialogue on gender equality issues were successfully implemented during the said year.

P64 – 2e

In the implementation of the Strategy for Reorganization of Child Care System, child day care centres were funded in 2012 where non-stationary day care services were provided for children and their family members. LTL 7.3 million was allocated for this purpose from the state budget in 2012.

In order to ensure a child's right to grow in a family and reduce the number of children cared for in child care institutions, a tender for the projects of search, preparation, selection, consultation and provision of assistance to guardians (foster parents) was organized in 2012; 25 projects were funded, LTL 570.000 was allocated for the implementation thereof.

P69 – 2e

The European Economic and Social Committee expressed its opinion on the issue of gender equality in Europe 2020 Strategy, offering to include the aspect of gender equality and develop the policy of equality, increase participation of women in labour market, improve the quality of care services for the dependent people, reduce the problem of pay gap;

Luxembourg

P9 – 2b

Lowering of the minimum contribution: The change to be implemented, the reduction of the minimum voluntary contribution level to one third of minimum wage, is intended to encourage contributors to round out their careers if there were gaps due to family issues. At present, the minimum contribution is around € 300. When this law takes effect, it will not exceed € 100. This mechanism is valid for a limited time, as intended by the planners. Persons concerned by the mechanism can take advantage of the reduction for a maximum of five years. The sole purpose of the measure is to make up the contribution period for career workers; it does not increase pension amounts.

P22- 2e

In attempting to facilitate the insertion of women into jobs, it is essential to emphasize promoting reconciliation between professional and family life, for example providing child care services, day nurseries, full-time schooling, etc. Coordination of implemented policies at the inter-ministerial level²³ is essential. In this framework, future discussions should occur between the social partners to provide more diversified models that better accommodate the specific requirements of working men and women who wish to care for their children and that would make parental leave more advantageous to men. To accomplish this, a draft law was put before parliament to ensure a minimal transposition of EU directive 2010/18/EU within the deadline.

P47-49 – 2e

The publication "A look at single parent families" by STATEC illustrates that single parent families are especially exposed to the risk of poverty. In 2010, 45.5% of these households had revenues below the poverty level, while for all households with dependent children, 17.3% of households were at risk of poverty. The reference person for 84.2% of these single parent households is a woman. Full-time work is the most common type of activity: in 60.3% of households with two adults and dependent children, the reference person works at a full-time job, whereas the percentage of full-time jobs in single parent households was only 44.4% in 2011. With regard to

part-time work, this was the case for 29.9% of single-parent households in 2011, compared to only 20.9% of households with dependent children and 4.3% of persons living alone. Of the single family households, the proportion of persons living in low work intensity households reached 16% in 2011, whereas for all households with children, this figure amounted to only 3.2% in 2011. 48

In view of these statistics, three of the four measures under the national objective take on special importance for women and single parent families. Achieving the national objective is supported by the four measures described below, and by measures outlined in the national employment objective. The law on social aid that took effect in 2011 has helped maintain a good performance level for Luxembourg's material deprivation indicator.

[...]

Due to the continued awareness campaign and the increase in the number of socio-education welcome structures for children, SNAS observed a drop of 30% in the number of parents not able to participate in activation measures because of their need to mind their children. A more thorough analysis of the characteristics of the persons still not able for that reason indicates that a high percentage of them, 64%, are women living alone with their children.

Malta

P17 – 2e

Country Specific Recommendation 3: Take steps to reduce the high rate of early school leaving. Pursue policy efforts in the education system to match the skills required by the labour market. Enhance the provision and affordability of more childcare and out-of-school centres, with the aim of reducing the gender employment gap.

P64-73 – 2e

Provision and affordability of Childcare Centres

The National Childcare Unit was created in March 2010 within the Foundation for Educational Services (FES) which falls under the remit of the Ministry of Education and Employment. This Unit currently coordinates the management of the operations of Smartkids Childcare Centres and also co-manages the centres in which government has a public private partnership agreement.

Childcare services are offered to children aged between three months and three years. A personalised service of quality care for all children is offered and special attention is given to children who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The childcare centre coordinators work closely with other professionals and with the families to help ameliorate the families' situation. Regular information sessions/workshops are organised for the service users and the general public.

The childcare centres follow the National Standards for Child Day Care Facilities (2006). The service is not offered on a first come first served basis, but is offered to the families who need it the most. Therefore, all applications are assessed and prioritised accordingly. Family contribution for the service is means tested.

Indeed, the childcare service is not offered on a first-come first-served basis, but is offered to the families who need it the most and to women returning to the labour market. All applications are assessed and priority is given to families which fulfil the following criteria:

- Mother or father trying to re-enter the workforce;
- Mother or father intending to follow a course or start training;

Parents/legal guardians who work within the school college where the childcare centre is situated;

- Children coming from families where primary caregiver/s suffer/s from mental health difficulties, physical impairments, severe health conditions that might affect the child's upbringing;
- Children whose parents or legal guardians do not have a support system;
- Children in foster care;
- Children with educational, physical, medical, psychological and emotional concerns that affect the child's progress;
- Service users referred from social services agencies, residential homes, referrals from speech therapists, occupational therapists, and the Child Development

Assessment Unit amongst others;

- Children from migrant families who need to work;
- Children of teenage parents who need to work or continue their studies.

FES tries to create balance between service users. Although there are the criteria mentioned above and placements are limited, working mothers and service users who fulfil several criteria are given priority.

During 2011, Government Childcare Centres extended their operational hours until 1600hrs so as to be more accessible for working parents.

To date, there are 12 active centres (Vittoriosa, Birkirkara, Qawra, Siāāiewi, Pembroke, Cospicua, Santa Venera, Floriana, Marsa and Qormi, Naxxar and San Āwann). FES is also a partner in the running of three other childcare centres on a Private/Public Partnership situated within three different state schools. The centres are situated in Luqa, Għargħur and Paola [...].

There are also Government-funded centres within the Employment and Training Corporation, the MCAST, the University of Malta and the Water Services Corporation.

Newly-planned projects:

The University of Malta has also started the works to open a childcare centre on the grounds of the Junior College in Msida. In Gozo, there is an ongoing major building project of a new Civic Centre next to the Gozo General Hospital. This will incorporate a childcare centre within the new building. The Nadur Local Council also has a project (presently at MEPA stage) to build a new childcare centre.

The Malta Enterprise also has a number of childcare projects as part of the re-generation of the Industrial Parks in Mosta, San Āwann, Corradino, Hal Far and Xewkija (Gozo). For further information on the Malta Enterprise projects please refer to measure 'Childcare Centres' under Section 4 – Employment..

Private or Church-run childcare centres:

There are 39 private/church-run centres which are registered. All of the childcare centres have to follow the National Standards for Child Day Care Facilities (2006) and the Occupational Standards (2012).

Accessibility of childcare

Public centres:

The operational hours of the Smartkids Childcare Centres are between 0730hrs and 1600hrs.

Private or Church-run centres:

All centres are open from Monday to Friday. These have varying opening and closing times.

Opening times range from 0500hrs to 0900hrs with the vast majority opening between 0700hrs and 0800hrs. Similarly, closing times range between 1215hrs and 1830hrs, though most centres close on the hour between 1500hrs and 1800hrs.

Two centres offer their services 24 hours a day, but the service must be booked in advance.

An additional two centres have indicated the possibility of extending their service beyond closing times, but this must be booked in advance.

Operational hours for all registered childcare centres:

- 23 centres operate between 8.5 and 10.5 hours daily;
- 1 centre operates 12 hours daily;
- 1 centre offers its services for 13 hours daily;
- 2 centres can remain open for up to 24 hours;
- 23 centres only offer their services between 3.5 and 7.5 hours a day. Of these, 6 centres operate between 3.5 and 5 hours daily, while 17 centres operate between 5.5 and 7.5 hours a day;
- 4 centres are open during the weekend (2 open on Saturday only, while the other 2 centres are open on Saturday and Sunday). The 2 centres open on both Saturday and Sunday are open 24 hours, while those open on Saturday only offer their services between 0800hrs and 1300hrs and between 0800hrs and 1400hrs respectively.

Affordability of Childcare:

Currently, public childcare is provided free to families whose income does not exceed €10,000 a year. Beyond that threshold, childcare is subsidised to families with other income brackets [...].

Family-friendly measures aimed at encouraging the use of childcare facilities and thus reducing the employment impact of parenthood:

Current measures include:

- Parents who paid fees for childcare services to centres which are registered or otherwise approved by the Department for Social Welfare Standards or the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education or is a service provided by the Foundation for Educational Services in respect of their children who are below the age of 12, are eligible for a deduction equal to the lower of €1,300 for every child or the amount of fees paid during 2012 upon the filing of the income tax return.
- Through the childcare subsidy scheme, the Employment and Training Corporation offers a subsidy of €1.50 per hour on childcare services availed of by individuals during the period of training offered by the Corporation. The amount of hours eligible for subsidisation are calculated from one hour prior to one hour following the duration of the training course and is available to all individuals having parental responsibilities. In all cases, the subsidy shall only apply for the days and times during which a parent/guardian is attending for an ETC training course.
- To further increase the number of women employees and women returning to work, with effect from the year of assessment 2011, employers can claim a deduction, upon the filing of their income tax return, in respect of expenditure incurred as from 1 January 2010 on the construction of a childcare facility or the acquisition of childcare equipment at the workplace. This deduction is capped at €20,000 and is allowed against the employer's income derived during the year in which the costs are incurred. Any unutilised deduction shall be carried forward to future years.

Planned measures include:

- Families in Malta and Gozo will have the opportunity to send their children to childcare centres free of charge. This project will be carried out with the involvement of the private sector.
- Families who opt to send their children to private childcare centres will benefit from an income tax deduction of €2,000 on childcare centre fees.

Afternoon School Service/Programmes in the Community

FES has been providing an after-school care service – Klabb 3-16 – since October 2009.

The service aims to provide an after-school care service within school structures; to bridge the gap between day school and regular working hours of parents in employment; and to utilise schools after regular school hours. It is a service for school-age children (3 to 16 years old) which runs throughout the year.

The Foundation for Educational Services is offering the Klabb 3-16 service from within sixteen schools, and is planning to open a further 14 new centres in 2013. In total, Klabb 3- 16 service will be offered from 30 localities in Malta and Gozo. Transport will be provided from localities without Klabb 3-16 centre. The service will also undergo an organisational restructure to accommodate and ensure the provision of a quality service. Since opening the centres, uptake has been increasing gradually in all centres. A pattern in the use of service could be observed with use of service starting at around 10-15 children a day and increasing to an average of 25 a day during school days and 200 during the summer months.

New localities are being identified for new Centres to be opened between 2013 and 2015. In the meantime, initial preparatory meetings were held with College Principals and school administrators in order to discuss the setting up and running of the new centres. The procedure for recruitment of full-time staff within the service is also underway.

In order to promote this service to the community and therefore increase participation, various meetings were held with college principals, school administrators and even parents. The launch of a new FES website and the

setting up of a Facebook page aim to raise the visibility of FES and its services. The website offers other services to community members, such as providing information about the service, FAQs about after-school service geared towards parents and employers as well as the option for parents to register and pay online for the after-school service. Facebook, on the other hand, is providing more interaction with people who use FES services, with regular updates and parents posting queries which are instantly responded to by FES staff members.

Accessibility:

The service is offered daily, from Monday to Friday between 1430hrs and 1800hrs during school days; and from 0715hrs to 1715hrs during school holidays. This is open to everyone who would like to make use of this service – be it parents whose children attend public, private or Church schools. Placements in Klabb 3-16 are not limited by the residence of the parent/s. Parents have the flexibility to use the service in any locality which is more convenient for them.

There are no waiting lists in Klabb 3-16.

Parents can register and start using the service when they require.

Affordability:

The Klabb 3-16 service is provided at an affordable fixed rate of €1.20 per hour. In addition to this, there is a subsidy which families can apply for if they fall within the categories, as explained below.

1. A person who attends education and training during the times in which Klabb 3-16 is offered so that s/he can seek employment.
2. A person who is about to enter gainful employment, which takes place during the time of the service.
3. A person who is responsible of another person suffering from serious illness or disability and who would like to enter gainful employment.
4. The subsidy can be offered to those parents who are referred from other agencies or professionals.

[...]

Klabb Sajf:

Klabb Sajf is similar to Klabb 3-16, however this is offered from one locality (Floriana) during the summer and is available to children of public service employees only.

Klabb 3-16 and Klabb Sajf were both made available during summer 2012 with the number of registrations amounting to 1200. The service was provided from Monday to Friday, from 0715hrs to 1715hrs in 8 centres.

Incentives to Attract More Inactive Women to the Labour Force

The introduction of incentives aimed to attract inactive women to enter the labour market are proving to be successful, as a result of which according to the Labour Force Survey (Q4 2012) female participation has increased from 41.1% in 2011 to 45.4% in 2012.

Maternity leave has been increased from 14 to 16 weeks in 2012 and further increased from 16 to 18 weeks in 2013. The extra weeks are payable from public finances with a fixed weekly rate of €160. In addition, employees who were on maternity leave on 1 January 2013 but have commenced the maternity leave before the said date were also automatically entitled to this increase.

As from 1 January 2012, adoption leave has been increased from 5 to 16 weeks. This entitlement has been extended to 18 weeks as from 1 January 2013. As with maternity leave, employees are entitled to their full salary for the first 14 weeks adoption leave. If the employee chooses to avail oneself of leave beyond the paid 14 weeks, the additional 2 weeks as from 1 January 2012 and 4 weeks as from 1 January 2013 will be considered as special unpaid leave and payable at a fixed weekly rate equivalent to the Maternity Leave allowance. Adoption leave may be availed of by both the mother or the father. It can also be shared between them. Adoptive parents may also utilise 1 year unpaid parental leave for each adopted child and a once only career break of 5 years unpaid leave for the same purpose.

A new concept was also introduced whereby in terms of Legal Notice 503 of 2011, employers cannot force pregnant employees to work overtime. Furthermore, employees shall not be obliged to work overtime for a 12-month period, either from the birth or from the effective date of the adoption of their child.

Another measure is being partly undertaken by the Employment and Training Corporation through the INT scheme (Ibda Negozju Tiegħek) which is aimed to assist individuals interested in starting their own business. This initiative includes guidance, training in businesses-related issues and mentoring. Participants who have completed the training programme and presented a viable business plan are awarded an enterprise grant of €2,330. In order to encourage further uptake of this scheme, since February 2012, the financial grant was increased from €2,330 to €5,000. This scheme is offered to male and female clients. Between January and December 2012, a total of 33 persons applied to receive training and mentoring in this area, of which 15 were women.

Moreover, training programmes aimed to assist individuals who have a small business or are interested in enhancing their business management skills are also organised.

Publicity campaign to attract more women to the labour market

The project was a campaign (called NISTA) spanning two years which included a 13-week TV series promoting financial independence for women and the greater involvement of men in the sharing of non-remunerated family work. It targeted employers by highlighting the benefits that increased work-life reconciliation measures at work can have for both employers and their employees. The NISTA campaign also included a study which, amongst others, analysed the reason for the low female employment rate in Malta.

The campaign aimed to:

- Increase the female employment rate by promoting the benefits of financial independence for women through formal employment and self-employment; sharing of non-remunerated work at home; and a second income for the family, to achieve a better standard of living.
- Decrease the feminisation of poverty through dependence on the State and/or their spouse/partner where financial matters are concerned.
- Promote a change in the workplace mentality by targeting employers on the benefits and win-win solutions that can be achieved through the introduction of various work-life reconciliation measures in their organisations.

Phase 1 of the campaign was targeted towards the Society in General. During this phase, the existing stereotypes about women and men's roles in the family and at work were challenged. The idea that 'through proper work-life reconciliation, a family can achieve a better balance' was promoted. Such promotion was made through TV and radio spots and billboards. Phase 1 was completed in September 2011.

Phase 2 of the campaign was targeted towards women. During this phase, women were encouraged to consider their re-entry into the labour market. The advantages of becoming more financially independent were highlighted. Phase 2 also addressed the consequences of dependency on state benefits for the whole society. All TV spots were aired.

Phase 3 of the campaign focused on Promoting Men in the Family sphere. This part of the campaign focused on challenging traditional gender roles and more specifically men's roles within the family which are often limited to their bread-winning role with limited sharing of non-remunerated tasks. Therefore, this part of the campaign targeted men through a number of television adverts and testimonials, radio adverts and billboards which promoted the benefits of their greater involvement in the family.

Phase 4 focused on Employers for work-life balance. Employers were targeted through television spots and articles in specific magazines targeted to employers. This campaign aimed to highlight best practice employers who have implemented measures favouring better work-life reconciliation for their employees, and demonstrated the benefits that worklife reconciliation measures have for businesses, thus creating a win-win solution for all involved. Phase 4 has commenced in August 2012 and the planned television programme has been produced and aired.

As to date, the campaign is finished, thus all the phases are completed.

Family-friendly measures in the public sector

Government has been at the forefront of translating its work-life balance commitment into effective family-friendly policy solutions. To that effect, Government aims to foster a better balance between workplace and workforce needs to create a family-friendly work environment which is conducive of social inclusion and employment opportunities for all.

The following family-friendly measures are currently in force in the public sector:

- Maternity Leave: A pregnant employee may apply for maternity leave for an uninterrupted period of eighteen weeks.
- Adoption Leave: Public employees may apply for paid adoption leave for an uninterrupted period of eighteen weeks. In those cases of international adoptions which involve lengthy processing abroad, special consideration will be given for the granting of additional separate periods of unpaid leave, which should not exceed three months in aggregate.
- Breastfeeding Facilities: The conditions of work of breastfeeding employees should be facilitated through the temporary adjustment of the work environment and/or the hours of work. In case of requests for breastfeeding facilities, employees should be provided with adequate, clean and private facilities for the expression and storage of milk. Employees are to avail themselves of a maximum of 1 hour each working day for the expression of milk, without incurring any loss of pay.
- Release to attend ante-natal examinations: Pregnant employees are entitled to time-off without loss of pay or any other benefit to attend ante-natal examinations if these are conducted during office hours.
- Paternity Leave: Male employees are entitled to 2 working days paid leave on the birth of each of their children.

- Parental Leave: Employees who have at least 12 months service are allowed to avail themselves of a maximum of 12 months unpaid parental leave on the grounds of birth, adoption, legal custody, and foster care of children who are under 8 years of age. The period of parental leave chosen may only be taken in one period and may be shared by both parents. The maximum of 12 months unpaid leave may be availed of in respect of each child.
- Career Break: Parents/legal guardians are allowed a total of 5 years unpaid career break to be utilised for the care of a child/children under 8 years of age. The 5 years must be utilised in aggregate, and may be reduced by multiples of three months. If the 5 years are not availed of in one whole period, the outstanding balance of leave may only be taken for the care of another child/children. Unpaid leave from the entitlement of 5 years may be shared once by both parents, for each child.
- Responsibility Leave: Employees may avail themselves of unpaid responsibility leave to take care of dependent elderly parents, sons/daughters, or spouses, for a period of one year, renewable yearly.
- Teleworking: Employees may work on a teleworking arrangement if their job performance, traits and skills as well as the nature of their job are suitable for telework.
- Work on reduced hours: Employees may be allowed to work on a reduced timetable, which may vary between 20 to 35 hours per week.
- Urgent Family Leave: Employees may avail themselves of 16 hours from their vacation leave entitlement as urgent family leave in cases of sickness or accident which require the immediate presence of the employee.
- Leave to accompany spouse on Government-sponsored courses or assignments: A maximum of four years unpaid leave renewable on application yearly, may be granted to public service employees to accompany their spouse abroad on government sponsored courses or assignments.
- Leave for a special reason: Employees may avail themselves of a maximum of 30 days special leave without pay for a special reason, including any special family-friendly reason, in any period of 12 months.
- Flexi-time: Employees may be granted permission to work on a flexi-time system, so long as the number of working hours is satisfied.

N.B. Unpaid leave entitlements are subject to an overall maximum aggregate of eight years unpaid leave, whether the unpaid leave is taken at a stretch or interrupted by periods of resumption of duty.

Family-friendly measures in the private sector:

Some private sector entities are adopting family-friendly measures, among which one finds:

- Telework;
- Unpaid parental leave;
- Special leave on humanitarian grounds;
- Flexible hours;
- Examinations leave plus study leave for related to work subjects;
- Examinations leave for apprentices;
- Maternity and adoption leave.

P109-111 – 2e

New Income Tax Computation

In 2012, Government carried out an important reform of the income tax system in order to make the labour market more attractive to women. Hence, besides the single and joint computations, Malta has introduced a

new category called the “Parent Computation”. This will be eligible for parents supporting children who are not gainfully employed up to 18 years of age and extended to 21 years of age if the children are still in tertiary education [...].

This fiscal measure was introduced through Act V of 2012 enacted on 14 May 2012. This is the Act to implement Budget measures for the financial year 2012 and other administrative measures.

As per Measure ‘Pensioners working part-time for the Government will pay 15% income tax’ above, the effectiveness of this measure can only be effectively gauged in the last quarter of

2013 when the relative tax returns for the year 2012 are processed.

Increase in the Maternity Leave

Details can be found under CSR 3 above.

Increase in the Adoption Leave

Details can be found under CSR 3 above.

Childcare Centres

The construction of three childcare centres in the industrial estates of Xewkija, Kordin and Mosta respectively is part of an extensive programme of upgrading works in various industrial zones. All works are being co-financed by ERDF Funds. The construction tender for the Xewkija Childcare Facility is not awarded yet and as at 5 April 2013, it is at contract signature stage. Works on site are anticipated to start following signature of contract and end 8 months later. The construction tender for the Kordin Childcare Facility was awarded. Works on site started and are anticipated to be completed by December 2013. On the other hand, works on the Mosta childcare centre started in May 2012. It is anticipated that the construction of the childcare centre will be completed by 31 October 2013. The life sciences project at San Āwann is currently at the construction phase at foundations level. It is expected that the childcare centre will be completed as per programme scheduled at 2014.

The childcare centre constructed in Hal Far is almost completed.

[...]

Child Development Centre

The aim of this measure is to develop a regional public child development centre in Gozo. This will provide childcare and related services to children, thus making it easier for females to join the labour market. This proposed project is very much in line with Government’s policy to introduce family-friendly measures and practices to support and facilitate female participation in the labour market as well as to help young families in their various forms to achieve the much lauded balance between work and family life.

The proposed Child Development Centre shall serve three main functions:

- To act as a regional Child Day Care Centre;
- Concentrate all the outpatients services related to child development in one area;
- Promote healthy living practices among children.

This will act as a one stop shop for childcare services and will further contribute to facilitate access to the labour market by women.

In this regard, it is being proposed that a child development centre be constructed in Gozo to provide childcare facilities as well as related services.

The construction of this child development centre is planned to start in May 2013 and is expected to be completed by May 2014. The total budgetary allocation for this project is of €1,500,000.

P116 – 2b

Parenting credits

Parenting credits (for parents born in 1962 or after) have been introduced in Malta following the pension reform changes of 2007. Parents, mainly women, who had career breaks to look after their children, are entitled up to 104 weeks of contribution credits for each child under 6 years of age (4 years in the case of a child with disability under the age of 10) provided they resume work for at least the same number of weeks they are entitled to as credits. In 2013, this measure has been extended to parents born from 1952 to 1961 with such parents benefitting from 50% of the contribution credits awarded to parents born in 1962 or after. In this context, it is to be noted that the contribution period of a person born in 1962 or after and on which a full pension is paid is 40 years as opposed to 35 years for persons born from 1952 to 1961.

P152 – 2e

The proposal concerning single parents whose youngest child is 7 years or over, to be moved from Income Support to Trainees Allowance is still under consideration.

P200 – 2e

Target 1 – Employment

The Maltese Government identifies Employment as one of the key factors that need to be addressed in order to reach the Europe 2020 Targets. The main challenge identified for this priority area is to increase the participation rate in employment by those capable and able to work. This includes women who opt not to work due to family commitments; making work pay; receptiveness to incentives of older workers; ageing population and weak uptake of work-life balance, and availability of childcare. To address its challenges, Malta aims at increasing the participation of women in the labour market, increasing the employment rate of older workers, activating vulnerable groups, improving the employability of the workforce. In this regard, the European Social Fund is a major contributor towards this aim. Various interventions being undertaken seek to encourage women to enter in the labour market. Amongst such interventions one can find Media Campaigns that aim to instil a sense of financial independence in women while at the same time addressing men so as to promote the benefits of sharing paid and non-remunerated work between the family. The aim is to change the idea that women should take the full burden of family and household responsibilities and consequently lead to an increase in female employment rates. Raising awareness by targeting employers is also targeted through ESF. In this regard, one finds interventions that seek to promote greater work-life reconciliation measures at the workplace.

The Netherlands

P12 – 2e

Simplification of child-related schemes

The Coalition Agreement includes an agreement to reform and introduce savings in the system of schemes for children. The current system includes ten child-related schemes, some of which overlap and have contradictory effects. Accordingly, the system as a whole is complicated for parents, difficult to implement and not always logical. Furthermore, it is often not worthwhile for 8 Parliamentary Documents 2012-2013, 29817, no. 98. 12 single parents receiving social assistance to work (the poverty trap). This poverty trap for single parents is mainly due to the fact that allowances for the costs of children are far higher for single parents on social assistance than for working single parents, and the combination of working and caring for children is insufficiently rewarded.

The aim is to simplify the system, increase labour participation and provide income support for those who need it most, so the number of child-related schemes will be reduced to four: two that, together, are designed to provide income support (the General Child Benefit Act and the Child Allowance Act) and two designed to promote labour participation (the income-dependent combination tax credit and the childcare allowance). The effect of these schemes will be to make it financially attractive for single parents receiving social assistance to go to work. The government expects the reforms of the child-related schemes to be enacted in legislation by July 2014 at the latest.

Phasing out of double tax credit

The transferable tax credit for breadwinner families is being phased out over a period of 15 years from 2009. In 2013, the general tax credit for partners without an income will be reduced to two-thirds of that of the primary earners as an incentive to non-working partners to work. For a further explanation of tax measures such as the double tax credit in the reference minimum wage, see section 4.5, 'An adequate minimum income'.

P29 – 1a/2e

An adequate minimum income

The Netherlands has a comprehensive social security system. The main schemes are:

- The General Old Age Pensions Act (AOW) for an income for the elderly;
- The Unemployment Benefits Act (WW) for loss of income due to unemployment;
- The Work and Income (Capacity for Work) Act (WIA) for incapacity for work;
- The Surviving Dependants' Act for loss of income due to the death of a breadwinner;
- Continued payment of salary for employees who are unable to work due to illness;
- The Work and Social Assistance Act (WWB) for people with insufficient income or capital to support themselves and who do not qualify for other benefits.

Poland

P10 -2e

In order to increase the employment rate for women, which is lower than the employment rate for men, the scope of instruments that encourage a better balance between work and parenthood will be broadened. The already existing instruments, such as flexitime and teleworking, will be supplemented with new ones, i.a. teleworking grant and improved access to different forms of child care.

P12 – 2e [emphasis in original]

In 2012, in relation to the implementation of the “Toddler” Programme, commune authorities submitted offers for the total amount of c. PLN 23.9 million and declared that they will create c. 3.2 thousand new small child care places in day care centres and children clubs. Furthermore, at the turn of Q3 and Q4 2012 the amount of PLN 77.1 million from the state budget was earmarked for co-financing current expenditure related to maintaining the places of care for children up to 3 years of age, established under the “Toddler” Programme, as well as maintenance and establishment costs of other places of care for children up to 3 years of age, in particular services provided by the daily carer. In addition, implementation of the new Measure under the Human Capital Operational Programme entitled “Supporting solutions for reconciling career and family life” started in 2012 – this Measure aims at supporting the creation and functioning of day care centres and children clubs and covering costs of care for children of up to 3 years of age if at least one of its parents or legal guardians re-enters the labour market after a break caused by giving birth to a child or rearing children. As a result of carrying out I competition procedure, project co-financing agreements providing for the creation of 166 day care centres and 20 children clubs were signed, and contracts with seven daily carers were concluded. Almost 5 thousand project participants, i.e. parents re-entering the labour market, will be covered by support. Furthermore, non-governmental organization’s activities in the field of ensuring equal opportunities of women and men on the labour market were supported by means of providing co-financing for the implementation of selected projects. Activities aiming at introducing legal changes were carried out in order to:

- Improving availability of child care services for children of up to 3 years of age,
- Introduction of flexitime (the Council of Ministers adopted draft Act amending the Act – Labour Code and draft Act on trade unions),
- Popularisation of pre-school education,
- Introduction of new labour market policy instruments.

The work on the above-mentioned amendments and their implementation will continue in 2013 and 2014.

P13-16 – 2b/2e [emphasis in original]

Persons re-entering the labour market after a break related to rearing a child. The following new instruments supporting the creation of jobs and unemployed persons return to work, including persons re-entering the labour market after a break related to rearing a child, are planned to be implemented:

-grant of up to 6 minimum wages for the creation of a job for unemployed parent or unemployed guardian taking care of a dependant person, which would allow him/her to start teleworking; -activation benefit provided to the employer for employing the unemployed persons sent by the Office who re-enter the labour market after a break related to rearing a child or caring for a dependant person, granted subject to a condition that a particular job will be maintained after the termination of the benefit.

[...]

In addition, using flexitime arrangements will make it easier for the employees to reconcile professional and private life, as well as extend the scope of agreements concluded by the employers and strengthen the employees' representation.

Paid parental leave (MLSP)

The institution of parental leave will be introduced to allow the child's parents to share their parental privileges to a larger extent than has been the case so far.

Planned changes are meant to make it easier to care for small child during the first year of its life by enabling the employee-mother of the child and employee-father of the child to go, as has been the case so far, on a maternal leave and additional maternal leave and to use the new institution of parental leave. Combined duration of this leave will amount to 52 weeks in case of giving birth to a single child, and in case of multiple births it will amount to 65–71 weeks. The possibility of allowing both parents to take their respective leave at the same time is currently being considered.

Introduction of these provisions should increase the father's responsibility for caring for a small child, by allowing him to take the mutually agreed decision on taking a leave after taking into account the personal and work-related situation of a given family.

Timetable

- Expected date of adoption of the draft Act amending the Act – Labour Code and the Act on social insurance benefits paid in cash in case of illness or motherhood by the Council of Ministers – Q2/Q3 2013.
- Expected date of adoption of the Act by the Parliament – Q3 2013.
- Expected date of entry into force – June 2013.

Financing

Assuming that planned amendments will enter into force in June 2013, the estimated maximum increase in expenditure on benefits in 2013 will amount to PLN 497 million, including pension benefits paid from the state budget. The cost of extending the period of maternal leave in 2014 will amount to PLN 1.54 billion if it will be taken by 50% of eligible persons, to PLN 2.16 billion if it will be taken by 70% of eligible persons, and to PLN 2.78 billion if it will be taken by 90% of eligible persons.

Improving availability of child care services for children of up to 3 years of age (MLSP)

The Ministerial programme for the development of childcare institutions for children aged up to 3 years "Toddler" ("Maluch") will be implemented in 2013 in order to improve the accessibility of places in childcare institutions for children up to the age of three. Furthermore, the Act of 4 February 2011 on care of children up to 3 years of age will be amended in order to facilitate the establishment of places in childcare institutions – these amendments will consist in i.a.:

- Reducing the required amount of gmina's own contribution from 50 to 20% of the costs of the implementation of the task when applying for funding from the state budget for the purpose of creating and running childcare institutions,
- Extending the catalogue of entities eligible to apply for funding from the state budget for the purpose of creating and running childcare institutions and entitled to hire day carers, - Allowing persons carrying out farming activity to hire a nanny, whose social and health insurance contributions will be paid from the state budget,
- Establishing a legal basis which would allow the entities hiring day carers to obtain a targeted subsidy from the gmina budget.

Timetable

- The date of adoption of the draft Act amending the Act on care for children up to 3 years of age and the Act on social insurance benefits paid in cash in case of illness or motherhood by the Council of Ministers – 8 November 2012.
- Expected deadline for the adoption of the Act by the Parliament – Q2 2013.
- Implementation of the Ministerial programme for the development of childcare institutions for children aged up to 3 years “Toddler” (“Maluch”) – continuous activity.

Financing

State budget funds earmarked for the implementation of tasks provided for in the Act

on care for children up to 3 years of age in 2013 amount to PLN 101 million, including PLN 90 million for the creation and maintenance of new places in day care centres, children clubs and at day carers'. Implementation of tasks provided for in the Act on care for children up to 3 years is optional for gminas.

Support aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for men and women on the labour market (MLSP)

The above-mentioned changes consisting in establishing flexible working time organisation arrangements, introducing parental leave and increasing the number of places in childcare institutions are meant to create conditions conducive to increasing the women participation in the labour market. In addition, information activities focusing on equalising the chances of women will also be carried out:

- Within the framework of the Competition for Non-Governmental Organisations' Initiatives,
- Within the framework of the project “Equality of men and women in the processes of making economic decisions as an instrument of social change”,
- Continued implementation of the projects under Submeasure 1.3.2 of the Human Capital Operational Programme (HC OP) Projects aiming at promoting equal chances of men and women and reconciliation of professional life and family life and under Measure 1.5 of HC OP Supporting solutions aiming at reconciling the family and professional life (creation of small children clubs, childcare centres and day care centres).

P45-46 – 2e

The provision of high quality services is required to support actions aimed at increasing employment, including support and social integration services, childcare services and care services for other dependent persons (the disabled, the elderly), health services, educational services and housing support. However, the problem of poverty and social exclusion does not necessarily have to be directly related to the issue of unemployment. In Poland, families with dependent children, especially the large ones, as well as representatives of other social groups are also at risk of poverty. It is thus appropriate to take action to strengthen support for families with dependent children, especially those in a relatively difficult financial situation, to continue support for families which find it difficult to fulfil their care and educational roles, as well as to take action to ensure housing for the poorest families.

P47 – 2e [emphasis in original]

Support programmes for certain people receiving care benefits were implemented throughout 2012. Under these programmes, the carers of disabled children who receive a care benefit were entitled to additional

financial assistance from the State budget of PLN 100 per month. In 2012, State budget funds of PLN 105.6 million were disbursed for implementation of these programmes.

Furthermore, a draft of Act amending the Act on family benefits was also prepared in 2012. The Act was adopted by the Sejm on 7 December 2012 and provides for the payment of a supplementary benefit to the care benefit for parents taking care of their disabled child amounting to PLN 100/month between January and June 2013, and as of July 2013 – an increase in the care benefit from PLN 520/month to PLN 620/month.

P49 – 2e

Support for parents raising disabled children (MLSP)

Between April and December 2013, a governmental programme of support for persons entitled to care benefits will be implemented. Following its implementation, persons receiving care benefits (meeting the conditions specified in the Act of care benefits), i.e. those who have not undertaken or have resigned from employment or other gainful activity in order to take care of their disabled child, will receive additional PLN 200/month (regardless of income and other benefits).

Timetable

- On 26 March 2013 the Council of Ministers adopted an Ordinance on the specific conditions of implementing the governmental programme of support for persons entitled to care benefits.

Financing

PLN 176 million was earmarked in the State budget for implementation of the governmental programme of support for persons entitled to care benefits between April and December 2013.

P89 – 2e

Measures aimed at increasing the availability of care facilities for children below 3 years of age

Entry into force of regulations amending the Act on care for children below 3 years of age.

Implementation in 2013 of the “Toddler” ministerial programme to develop childcare institutions for children below 3 years of age – editions 1 and 2.

Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) paying the contributions towards old age insurance, disability insurance, accident insurance and health insurance for about 10 thousand of nannies.

Measures aimed at increasing the availability of pre-school childcare institutions for children between 3-5 years of age

Introducing new statutory solutions for financial support for communes for their tasks related to pre-school education.

P91 – 2e

Launching the “Toddler” programme for 2012 – providing care for children below 3 years of age. PLN 40 million planned to be allocated for the programme in 2012, which should result in an increase in the number of places in early childcare institutions by ca 10 thousand in the years 2012 – 2013.

Slovak Republic

P13 – 2e

European Council recommendation

(CSR4) Enhance the administrative capacity of public employment services with a view to improve the targeting, design and evaluation of active labour market policies to ensure more individualised employment services for the young, long-term unemployed, older workers and women. Ensure the provision of childcare facilities. Reduce the tax wedge for low-paid workers and adapt the benefit system.

P16 – 2e

In order to facilitate employment of women and inclusion of marginalised communities, **kindergarten capacities** have continuously been enhanced, within the constraints of financial possibilities of their founders, in particular for children one year prior to the beginning of their compulsory school attendance. Compared to the 2011/2012 school year, the total number of kindergarten classes increased by 118 - from 7,277 to 7,395. In order to improve education level of marginalised groups, such measures are continuously implemented as the publication of textbooks in Slovak and Roma language and teachers’ training through accredited programmes to further develop their communication and pedagogical skills necessary for the inclusion of marginalised communities.

P37-38 – 2e

Reform of Social Benefits

In order to continue to better target social benefits and positively motivate their recipients to participate in the labour market, the Government will continuously analyse the possibilities of better and more effective targeting of social benefits. At present, the main problem to be tackled in this area is better targeting of the social benefits scheme to supporting those families with children that are, to a large extent, not means-tested. The system will be comprehensively revised in order to simplify the state’s social support in terms of the number of benefits and administrative challenges posed by better targeting. As part of an analysis, the Government will consider administrative costs associated with means-testing and the potential negative impacts on public solidarity with the poorest groups of population, which were likely caused by the departure from the universal principle of supporting families with children.

The new Act on Assistance in Material Need will be prepared to ensure better targeting, a merit-based approach and rewarding schemes for those who are willing to land low-paid jobs or participate in activation schemes. The reform seeks to create a system that would act in unison with ALMPs in order to increase the motivation of social benefit recipients to find a job. At the same time, a more efficient coverage of lowest-income groups of the population will be ensured. The system of assistance in material need will be linked and harmonised with changes concerning active measures of the labour market, social insurance scheme and the system of other social benefits provided by the state.

Balance between employment and parenting

Childcare allowance, financed predominantly from the ESF, will again be used in the 2014 - 2020 programming period. With this allowance, the state pays the parent (or the natural person having custody rights) a portion of expenditures incurred in connection with child care while in employment or in education. In order to make child-care allowance more efficient, the options of increasing the amount and the age limit from three to a maximum of five years of the child's age are investigated. The parents and payers will enjoy lower administrative costs and the provision of parental allowance will be aligned with child-care allowance.

At the same time, it is also necessary to lay the groundwork for increasing the availability of high-quality, sustainable and affordable facilities for child-care services, in particular nursery schools and kindergartens, with a view to expanding the range of child-care providers. Further details concerning the criteria for the provision of financial resources from the Structural Funds with respect to accomplishing the above goal will be specified in the new operational programmes which are being prepared.

Slovenia

P32 – 2e

Measures adopted in 2012 with the Fiscal Balance Act

[...]

- reducing child care benefit to 90% of the basis;
- limiting child care benefit from 2.5 to 2 times the average salary;
- abolishing child benefit for families with higher incomes;
- in the calculation of childbirth benefit and large family benefit, a means test is taken into account;
- reducing the kindergarten fee subsidy for the second child at kindergarten to 30%, while kindergarten remains free for all other children;

Spain

P84 – 2e

Secondly, support will be given to families in difficulties or at risk of poverty through a diversity of measures: providing greater reconciliation between work and family life; fiscal benefits to families with children and special aids to families where child poverty is detected. This will be part of the future **Integrated Family Support Plan**, which is in elaboration process (AGS 4.2.8).

Sweden

P6 – 2e

Cohesion and high-quality welfare

Reducing economic exposure by improving standards for households with weak finances or a considerable burden of support takes a high priority in the Government's fiscal policy. To this end, increases have been made in housing allowances, the large-family supplement, the basic level for parental benefit and the housing supplementary allowance. In addition, taxes have been reduced for pensioners. The government plans to come back with additional proposals regarding a lowered tax for pensioners for 2014, if the public finances allows.

Social assistance reforms

[...]

In addition, it is proposed that the limit for when income from work earned by offspring still living at home and children of school age may be taken into account when assessing entitlement to social assistance be raised from half a base amount (SEK 22,250) to one base amount (approximately SEK 44,500) per calendar year. The Government is setting aside SEK 10 million annually for this purpose. It is suggested that the proposed legislation come into effect on 1 July 2013.

Planned parental benefit reform

The Government aims to present a bill whereby it would be possible to save at most 20 per cent of the total 480 days of parental benefit until after the child's fourth birthday. Furthermore, the Government intends to raise the upper age limit for parental benefit withdrawals from 8 to 12. The announced proposals form part of the measures planned to improve the opportunities for newly arrived women born outside Sweden to establish themselves in the labour market. The current design of parental benefit means that parents of children born outside Sweden are allocated parental benefit retroactively. This means that the parents of a child that arrives in Sweden at four years of age are allocated parental benefit for 480 days, that is, the same number as when a child is born. However, the protracted withdrawal of parental benefit when the child is older could counteract the ambition that newly arrived parents born outside Sweden should take part in employment preparation activities that can bring them closer to the labour market.

Raised housing allowances to households with children

In 2012, the housing allowance for households with children was raised by SEK 1.2 billion, entailing an increase of more than 30 per cent compared with 2011 for an average family. To strengthen the economies of those families with children who have the weakest economic conditions without weakening driving forces to work, the special child allowance was raised in 2012, while the lower limit for housing costs when housing allowances are paid was lowered. For a family with two children, the housing allowance was raised by slightly more than SEK 725 per month. In principle, this increase reaches all recipients of housing allowances, that is, more than half a million people. A major group consists of single parents with children, among whom 35 per cent of households receive housing allowance. At the same time the housing allowance for young people between 18 and 29 years of age was raised by it being made possible to receive compensation for a larger share of housing costs. This increase reaches all young people receiving housing allowance – some 45,000 people to the tune of an average SEK 180 per month.

Increase in the basic level of parental insurance

To strengthen the economies of economically deprived households with children, the basic level of parental benefit was raised from SEK 180 per day to SEK 225 per day. This change in regulations took effect on 1 January 2013. The increase primarily strengthens the economies of young parents who have not yet become established in the labour market and those who do not, for other reasons, meet the requirements to receive

parental benefits at the level of sickness benefits. Of parents aged 20–24, half received basic level compensation in 2011. On the whole, 66,100 parents received basic level parental benefit in 2011, of whom 82 per cent were women. The change in the law means that compensation before tax is raised by 25 per cent.

United Kingdom

P13 – 2e

The Government supports the Country-Specific Recommendations addressed to the UK by EU Heads of State or Government at the June 2012 European Council, which are to:

[...]

- step up measures to facilitate the labour market integration of people from jobless households. Ensure that planned welfare reforms do not translate into increased child poverty. Fully implement measures aiming to facilitate access to childcare services;

P28-34 – 2e [Emphasis in original]

Recommendation 4

Step up measures to facilitate the labour market integration of people from jobless households. Ensure that planned welfare reforms do not translate into increased child poverty. Fully implement measures aiming to facilitate access to childcare services.

3.78 The Government has an ambitious agenda of reform which will modernise the welfare system. It is committed to tackling poverty and welfare dependency; helping people without jobs to find work and support themselves and their families; and ensuring that the most vulnerable in society are protected. The Government considers that work is the best route out of poverty. This section focuses on the main measures adopted in order to tackle:

- worklessness issues;
- child poverty; and
- childcare issues.

3.79 A number of the actions detailed in the sections on employment, skills, education and social exclusion also contribute to the UK's efforts towards reducing worklessness.

3.80 Employment is a reserved power to Parliament under the devolution settlements. However, the Devolved Administrations all have policies which promote economic development and employment. Details of the policies being implemented in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are included in this section.

Labour market situation

3.81 For December 2012 to February 2013, employment increased on year and stands at 71.4 per cent. In the last quarter of 2012, full-time employment reached the highest level since early 2009, with 73 per cent of the employed working full-time, and the number in part-time work falling. Permanent employees make up about 80 per cent of all those in employment. The employment rate for women and for those aged 50-64 is 67 per

cent. Female employment has been growing consistently, in part attributable to the equalising upwards of women's pension age and the introduction of benefit conditionality for the lone parents of older children. Rates increased also for active people with disabilities to 43 per cent for those with work-limiting disabilities and 49 per cent for those with disabilities that limit their day-to-day activities.

[...]

3.87 Worklessness in one parent households with dependent children continues to fall down from some 52 per cent of lone parent households in 1996 to 37 per cent in 2012, which is 2.2 points lower than 2011. About 5 per cent of households with couples with dependent children were workless, reflecting the possibility of sharing childcare responsibilities. Nevertheless, 59 per cent of lone parents with dependent children were in employment. Overall, there has been a general decline in the number and percentage of children living in workless households since 1996. Of a total of 1.75 million children in workless households, 66 per cent lived with a lone parent and 32 per cent with a couple.

3.88 Of all households with dependent children, 13 per cent were workless compared with 21 per cent of households without dependent children. Over one third (41 per cent) of workless households are in fact those of single people without children. Similarly, a greater percentage of people with dependent children were employed than those without: 78 per cent compared with 68 per cent, in part reflecting age differences and retirement. For women in a couple, the employment rate for those with dependent children was higher than for those without: 71 per cent compared with 66 per cent.

3.89 Universal Credit aims to reduce the number of workless households by reducing the financial and administrative barriers to work that exist in the current system of benefits and tax credits. In December 2012, the revised Impact Assessment was published. This reflected changes since the primary legislation was passed, including changes to work allowances (earnings disregards), the Minimum Income Floor for the self-employed and simplification of rates for the under 25 (who if they are without children and without a disability are not entitled to tax credits now but will be entitled to Universal Credit). It is estimated that up to 300,000 more people will enter work as a result of improved financial incentives alone. A further 100,000 may do so by virtue of increased simplicity and a generally smoother transition to work, while additional interventions applying conditionality could result in up to 100,000 more people moving into employment. Moreover, some people who are already employed could be encouraged to increase their hours of work. Universal Credit will, for the first time, introduce "in work" conditionality for those who earn below an earnings threshold equivalent to working full time at the national minimum wage (lower for claimants with caring commitments). This in-work conditionality aims to help strengthen the incentive to increase hours and earnings for those on low incomes. Universal Credit seeks to improve the incentive to enter and work and progress within work by use of a single system for treatment of earnings, with a single taper. Figures are not yet available; estimates on this are indicative at present.

3.90 From April 2013, processes will be tested in selected local authorities, with a phased transfer of different claimant groups and new claims to Universal Credit from October 2013. The transition is expected to be completed at the end of 2017. No-one already on benefit whose circumstances remain the same will lose out in cash terms as a direct result of the move to Universal Credit. These claimants will be given transitional protection to avoid cash loss at the point of change. since the primary legislation was passed, including changes to work allowances (earnings disregards), the Minimum Income Floor for the self-employed and simplification of rates for the under 25 (who if they are without children and without a disability are not entitled to tax credits now but will be entitled to Universal Credit). It is estimated that up to 300,000 more people will enter work as a result of improved financial incentives alone. A further 100,000 may do so by virtue of increased simplicity and a generally smoother transition to work, while additional interventions applying conditionality could result in up to 100,000 more people moving into employment. Moreover, some people who are already employed could be encouraged to increase their hours of work. Universal Credit will, for the first time,

introduce “in work” conditionality for those who earn below an earnings threshold equivalent to working full time at the national minimum wage (lower for claimants with caring commitments). This in-work conditionality aims to help strengthen the incentive to increase hours and earnings for those on low incomes. Universal Credit seeks to improve the incentive to enter and work and progress within work by use of a single system for treatment of earnings, with a single taper. Figures are not yet available; estimates on this are indicative at present.

3.91 In February, a **Universal Credit Local Support Services Framework** was published and will be put in place to help claimants who may require extra support to access Universal Credit, during phase 2 from October 2013 to 2014. By 2014-15 this will be assessed using local authority led pilots, demonstration projects and the Pathfinder exercise. A programme of evaluation will focus on delivery and implementation of the scheme; attitudes and behaviours; impacts and impact measurement; testing and experimentations, and cost-benefit analysis.

3.92 Other benefit reforms include, from April 2013, the Government placing a cap on the total amount of benefit that working-age people can receive so that, broadly, households on out-of-work benefits will no longer receive more in welfare payments than the average weekly wage for working households. The aim is to achieve long term positive behavioural effects through changed attitudes to welfare, responsible life choices and strong work incentives. There will be instance exemptions, for those households which include someone receiving certain benefits related to incapacity or the key in-work benefit. Otherwise, the cap will be initially applied through Housing Benefit and from October 2013 the cap will also be applied to new claimants to Universal Credit including those migrating from existing benefits. There will be robust monitoring from the outset and a full evaluation of the impacts, with a review after one year, to be published in autumn 2014. (‘CPI’) for the tax years 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. The Government wants to ensure that the welfare system remains sustainable over the longer term and the budget is managed appropriately whilst continuing to provide support for those who cannot expect to move into work. Whilst it is not possible accurately to project the trajectory of household earnings, it is likely that in-work families with children will benefit from the steady earnings growth forecast by the Office of Budget Responsibility. Where they are subject to an up-rating, rates of benefits and Tax Credits will rise in cash terms.

3.93 In light of the national economic situation and after this current tax year, certain working-age social security benefits and payments, certain elements of tax credits, and Child Benefit, will be **up-rated by one per cent rather than by prices** (as measured by the Consumer Prices Index (‘CPI’)) for the tax years 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. The Government wants to ensure that the welfare system remains sustainable over the longer term and the budget is managed appropriately whilst continuing to provide support for those who cannot expect to move into work. Whilst it is not possible accurately to project the trajectory of household earnings, it is likely that in-work families with children will benefit from the steady earnings growth forecast by the Office of Budget Responsibility. Where they are subject to an up-rating, rates of benefits and Tax Credits will rise in cash terms.

[...]

Childcare services

3.97 In the UK, childcare is available in various forms, such as early years provision in maintained schools (15 per cent of providers), including Sure Start Children’s Centres which provide integrated services, and providers of full-day or sessional care, which together increased slightly in volume in 2011 compared to 2010. Under current provision and Government support measures, nearly four-fifths (78 per cent) of all families with children under 15 use some form of childcare, according to Survey results. Of these, 63 per cent use formal and 39 per cent

use informal provision, with many using both. As previous NRPs have explained, analysis shows that most parents who choose informal childcare do so because they prefer it.

3.98 The Survey showed that reported take-up of the entitlement to free early education for children aged three and four rose significantly to reach 88 per cent in 2011. Parents with school-age children were most likely (60 per cent) to use childcare for reasons related to their child such as educational or social development, followed by their own economic reasons (42 per cent), for instance so they could work or study, while 19 per cent used childcare to gain more personal time.

3.99 Parents were generally fairly positive about the flexibility of available childcare, with 92 per cent satisfied with the number of free hours available, while just over half (53 per cent) of non-working mothers said that they would prefer to work if they could arrange reliable, convenient, affordable, and good quality childcare.

3.100 **A new scheme to offer tax free childcare to working families** was announced at Budget 2013. Support will be equivalent to the basic 20 per cent tax rate on yearly childcare costs up to £6,000 per child, up to £1,200 per child. To be eligible each parent must be in work, earning less than £150,000 a year and not already receiving support through tax credits or Universal Credit. The scheme will be phased in from autumn 2015. Eligibility will be for children aged under 5 at the outset, extending over time to include children under 12, when support will be open to 2.5 million working families, which represents five times those that benefit from existing provision.

3.101 The childcare element of the Working Tax Credit will become part of the Universal Credit and the 15 hours of free early education for all aged three and four will be extended to 40 per cent of two year olds by 2014, focusing on lower income families. Recently published funding allocations aim to increase simplification and transparency, and ensure as much funding as possible reaches end users. Support for childcare within Universal Credit will be increased, to a level equivalent to 85 per cent coverage of childcare costs for households qualifying for the Universal Credit childcare element, and where a lone parent or both earners in a couple pay income tax. It will be phased in as the childcare element of tax credit moves across to Universal Credit from April 2016.

3.102 In June 2012, the Prime Minister announced a Commission on Childcare⁶⁶ to look at how to reduce the costs of childcare for working families and the burdens on childcare providers. In January, the Government published **More great childcare: Raising quality and giving parents more choice** with proposals to improve the workforce providing early years care, allow high quality providers to offer more places, and to give more choice to parents. Consultations ended on 25 March on staff-to-child ratios for Early Years, to increase places, and on the qualifications that those working in the sector need.

3.103 Draft legislation to extend to all employees the right to request **flexible working** has been published and, subject to Parliamentary process, will enter into force in 2014. This should allow all employees with 26 weeks of qualifying service to request changes to the way they work and so aid a better work-life balance. This extension will increase the number of workers supported under legislation to approximately 20.6 million, from approximately 9.9 million under current rights. A consultation on shared parental leave and pay ends on 20 May.

[...]

3.109 The Scottish Government is legislating, through the Children and Young People Bill, to increase the current entitlement of 475 hours per year of pre-school education for three and four year olds to a minimum of 600 hours per year early learning and childcare for three and four year olds, as well as two year olds who are looked after or under a kinship care order, from 2014. As well as increasing the number of funded hours, the Bill will also seek to increase the level of flexibility of the entitlement, to better meet the needs of young

children and parents seeking to balance their childcare responsibilities with work, study or training commitments.

[...]

Wales

3.112 The Childcare Policy Statement Nurturing Children, Supporting Families,⁷⁵ published in 2011, outlines the Welsh Government's short and longer term ambitions for quality, affordable and accessible childcare in Wales. The Welsh Government is currently working cross-portfolio and with sector stakeholders to develop policies and activity to support the childcare sector. The Out of School Childcare Grant supports local authorities in providing 'wrap-around' childcare out of school hours and in school holidays. The future of this grant in facilitating access to childcare services is currently being assessed. The Welsh Government is also considering new policies underpinning the structure of the childcare market, including childcare workforce and regulation and inspection. These will influence future access to quality, affordable childcare.

P50 – 2e

4.13 Female employment has been growing consistently, which may in part be due to the gradual increase in state pension age for women and fewer women retiring before 65 years of age. Similarly, changes in benefit eligibility for lone parents, the majority of whom are women, mean that more are becoming active in the labour force. Rates increased also for active people with disabilities (although with smaller absolute numbers than for other groups) to 43 per cent for those with work-limiting disabilities and 49 per cent for those with disabilities that limit their day-to-day activities.

P63 – 2e [Emphasis in original]

4.61 Furthermore, the Government continues to **support more lone parents** into work having moved onto Jobseekers Allowance those whose youngest child is five or over. The education system also makes a contribution by ensuring that all children can make the most of their abilities, particularly children from low income families.

P65 – 2e

4.73 The Welsh Government's **Strategic Equality Plan (SEP)**, published in April 2012 and the **Tackling Poverty Action Plan** focus on some of the root causes of poverty. Particularly relevant are the SEP objectives on stronger advice services, on tackling the gender, disability and ethnicity pay gaps, including a focus on increasing the affordability and availability of childcare, on helping 16-24 year olds who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) into jobs and on helping disabled people to live independently.

MOBILE YOUTH (IN RELATION TO MIGRATION)

1. Family Formation
Often delayed because of late access to work (access to work, see below); expensive/ inaccessible housing (Transitions to adulthood, see below);
2. Transitions to adulthood
 - a. Housing (availability, affordability)
 - b. Cohabitation / diverse family formation
3. Access to education
4. Access to employment (excluding broader discussion of youth unemployment; see 7)
5. Access to welfare
6. In relation to migration
7. Counter argument: little or no discussion of mobile youth; focus on youth (un)employment, etc. Only brief quotes included. No inclusion of general discussion of youth in relation to education (e.g. NEET, vocational education)
8. Counter argument: discussion of mobility in general, not specifically in relation to youth

Austria

P14 – 7

Country-Specific Recommendation No. 5

“Continue to implement measures to improve educational outcomes, especially of disadvantaged young people. Take measures to reduce drop-outs from higher education.” [...]

P29 – 8

c. An open labour market for researchers

The international / EU-wide advertisement of scientific/scholarly vacancies at universities has been required by Austrian law since 1 October 2009.

P34 – 7

As gainful employment, education and health are considered key resources for active social participation, the measures introduced by the Austrian federal government address precisely those areas in order to eliminate poverty and the risk of poverty. One especially important area of activity involves children and youths as well as women, as (according to EU-SILC 2011) this target group was/is particularly at risk of poverty and exclusion.

P36 – 7

Headline target no. 1, Employment, no. 4, Education, and especially no. 5, Combating poverty and social exclusion in the NRP are mainly addressed by the **ESF programmes** “Employment” and “Convergence Phasing-Out Burgenland”, which are geared toward the groups mentioned under these targets such as older persons, youths, persons from migration backgrounds, and women. For the education target, for example, immigrants

and school dropouts are provided with support in acquiring qualifications and skills for the sake of integration into the labour market as well as adult education in the interest of lifelong learning.

P18 – 3

Students from non EU countries who are not eligible for equal treatment under the relevant ordinance are required to pay tuition fees in the amount of EUR 726.72 per semester.

P18 – 8

[...] and the **performance agreements for the 2013–2015 period** concluded with the universities include capacity-oriented funding as well as unequivocal statements on cooperation in instruction and research, internationalisation and mobility, transparency (e.g. harmonised cost and performance accounting, HR strategies), large-scale infrastructure planning and the development of distinct profiles and focus areas.

P24 – 7

In Austria's efforts to combat youth unemployment, the "job guarantee" for youths proved to be effective:

Belgium

P9 – 7

Different reductions for different target groups have been adapted (young and elderly workers) and reinforced (first employees) to maximize their employment effect.

P17 – 7

Specific groups have more difficulties on the labour market. This is the case for workers over 55, young people, persons with disabilities and persons from foreign descent.

More in particular, the Belgian authorities are extremely worried about the immediate consequences of the economic crisis and the unfavourable outlook. The situation of young people is a case in point. With this in mind Belgium welcomes the youth guarantee. The regional authorities will make sure that by the 1st of January 2014 all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

P19 – 3

Next to regional mobility (cfr. 3.4.4) a reinforced international mobility is equally important. [...] Finally, Flemish higher education institutions cooperate closely with Asian partners and the international mobility between Flanders and Brazil, Morocco, Turkey and South- Africa will be intensified. [...] Wallonia supports international mobility through the development of language courses and specific scholarships for traineeships or language immersion for job seekers and young people. In 2012 BRIC scholarships have been introduced for higher education students, as well as scholarships for students in the traineeship system (IFAPME).

P21- 8

A collaboration agreement was concluded with the Flanders Scientific Research Fund (FSR) for the period 2012-2016, the main policy objectives of which are: more and better research, more (female) researchers, more international researchers and better research conditions in Flanders.

P23- 3

The Communities are also taking measures to facilitate student mobility by, for instance, financing mobility, agreements with institutions, encouraging internships, quality assurance and the participation of students from underrepresented groups. The measures aim to improve both the conditions to move progressively towards the generalisation of an education period abroad or in a foreign language during education and the integration of higher education into international networks. Moreover, the Brussels-Wallonia Federation is developing links between higher education and companies as a result of alternating training and internships for students and, in particular, future teachers.

P54 – 7

The Government of Flanders makes every effort to tackle the social consequences of the crisis and consequently acts upon the agreement of the European Council (February 2013) with regard to the Youth Employment Initiative.

P56 – 7

The main purpose of the growing training and guidance efforts is, for more and more age categories, to prevent the weak economic situation from resulting in structural and long-term (youth) unemployment.

P64 – 2a

In 2013, funds are made available for the start-up of local or regional networks which are concentrated specifically on young adults. In 2012, the **rent grant** became operational for tenants who are at least 5 years on a social housing waiting list. The following amounts will be reserved for this: 8.76 million euros (in 2012), 8.97 million euros (in 2013) and 8.66 million euros (in 2014). Today, Flanders is working on the establishment of a fund to reduce evictions.

P75 – 3

BRIC grants (Brazil, Russia, India and China) have also been set up for students coming out of higher education or university in September 2012. In 2012, the target of 32 grants was exceeded since implementation, with 40 grants being awarded. At the end of January 2013, 58 courses were already planned. 55 applications were also expected for departures in May or in the second half of the year.

P83 – 8

The DASPA (Mechanism for Welcoming and Schooling New Migrants) Decree of 18 May 2012 that replaces the decree of 14 June 2001 (decree on reception classes) and puts in place arrangements for receiving and schooling newly-arrived migrant pupils. These new, more flexible arrangements aim to provide reception, direction and insertion of migrant pupils, but also to offer school and educational support suited to the learning profiles of the pupils and finally to propose an intermediate stage of schooling of a set period before schooling in an ordinary class. The subsidising of 38 DASPA in primary teaching and of 36 DASPA in secondary-level teaching has been approved for the year 2012-2013, bringing their number up to 74, that is 9 additional sets of reception arrangements.

P84 – 3

From now on the Wallonia-Brussels Federation provides arrangements aimed at favouring the **mobility of students** of higher education. It is a matter of improving conditions, in particular financial and social, allowing a

gradual strive towards the generalisation of a training period in another country and in a foreign language during their studies. This measure must consolidate the integration of higher education of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation into international networks.

P86 – 8

A draft decree, aiming to put in place a **welcome and reception pathway for newly arrived migrants**, was adopted by the Walloon Government in December 2012. The welcome and reception pathway will concern any foreign person who has been staying in Belgium for less than three years and who has a residency permit of over three months, with the exception of citizens of a member State of the EU, of the EEA and Switzerland and members of their families.

P95 – 4

Training: “EXPLORT” and Erasmus Programmes for young entrepreneurs. Among the openings being developed in 2013, there will be particular focus on strengthening large-scale exportation, networking and administrative simplification.

Bulgaria

P16 – 7

Implementation of the National Youth Employment Initiative

The main areas outlined in the National Initiative “Jobs for Young People in Bulgaria 2012 -2013”¹⁰ are to activate young jobless people, improve their competitiveness and facilitate their transition from education to employment. [...]

P32 – 7

Sub-targets: Reduce youth unemployment rate (among 15-29-year olds) to 7% and increase the employment rate of older people (aged 55-64) to 53% by 2020

P35 – 3 / 4

To achieve the national target concerning R&D, measures have been put in place to improve the conditions for professional realisation of young scientists/scholars, support for SME start-ups and implementation of innovative projects, and development of a pro-innovative and research infrastructure.

P49 – 7

Increase employment rate (for people at a working age) and economic activity (with a focus on women, young people, older people, disadvantaged people), including through alternative, distance and flexible forms of employment;

Croatia

P29 – 4

In order to align education with labour market needs, new analytical, process and other capacities will be created for preparation of occupational and qualification standards within the framework of the Croatian Qualification Framework (CROQF) contributing to the competitiveness of Croatia. While the Act on the CROQF was passed in 2013, the Ordinance on the CROQF Register is planned for the second quarter of 2014. In 2014, all information about competences required for performing work on specific jobs will be collected by surveying employers, which will, then, be used to develop specific occupational standards. Sector profiles will also be developed to help determine the demand for occupations in the economy, based on historical data and future needs and demands of the labour market. [...] A new set of occupational standards, qualification standards and education programmes will also be developed aimed at reducing the skill gaps on the labour market thereby improving employability and mobility of the working population. [...]

P30 – 4

In order to strengthen the capacities and ensure more professional service, the CES (Croatian Employment Service) is currently in the process of reorganization which includes expanding its organisation form to include youth centres and career counselling and guidance centres.

P51 – 4

The young and low-skilled workers are struck hardest by the economic crisis, and it is extremely difficult for older unemployed persons to find a job. The youth unemployment rate doubled between 2008-2013 as well and amounted to 35.2%, the third worst rate in the EU, after Greece (48.7%) and Spain (43%).

P53 – 4

The government pays special attention to combating youth unemployment and has accepted a recommendation of the European Commission for drafting the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan contains measures that aim to, once the required capacities are established, give a quality offer of employment, traineeship, action learning, apprenticeship and a continuation of education to each person by the time they are 30 years old. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan includes an analysis of the position of youth on the Croatian labour market, the analysis of the gap between the existing state and the required expansion of the support system for their inclusion in further education or the labour market. Furthermore, the Plan recognises the measures and reforms that will be carried out for the purpose of establishing a quality support system through the cooperation of all institutions and partners acting as stakeholders on the labour market. It also includes the financial allocations of instruments by each specific measure, with a detailed monitoring and reporting system, for both national and EU needs.

[...] The expected result for the short-term period (2014-2015) is primarily to create the capacities in the CES (Croatian Employment Service) and other stakeholders for the implementation of the measures in the Youth Guarantee, and increase the share of youth aged 15-30 taking part in the ALMP measures, traineeship schemes and action learning. A greater share of youth entering self-employment is expected, as well as maintaining or increasing the number of students that take part in apprenticeships, i.e. an overall strengthening of the cooperation of the education system and the labour market. The expected results for the 2015-2017 period refer to a reduction of the overall unemployment rate and of inactive persons aged 15-25, and an increased activity of persons aged 15-30.

P55 – 3

A call for proposals has been put out for NEWFELPRO, a programme for encouraging the mobility of young and experienced scientists in the framework of the Marie Curie/COFUND - FP7 programme.

P59 – 4

The relevance of higher education qualifications in relation to the needs of the labour market shall be increased by the implementation of Croatian Qualifications Framework, as well as by encouraging academic programmes in technical, biomedical, biotechnological and natural (STEM) fields, and in the information and communication field.

P59 – 3

An analysis of the implementation of the Action Plan for Removing Obstacles to Mobility for the period from 2010 to 2012 was drafted and based on the same draft Action Plan for the Internationalization of Higher Education was made.

Cyprus

P5 – 7

In an effort to address the high level of unemployment the Government has recently announced three new schemes aiming to create jobs for about 8000 people, including the youth, with an estimated budget of €30 mln, to be funded primarily through the re-allocation of funds from the ESF.

P5 / 6 – 3

Efforts also focus on addressing the social consequences of the current crisis and to support the most vulnerable, by prolonging the loan–repayment period, protecting debtors that cannot pay by ensuring property ownership, increase the number of students at the public universities to accommodate students that cannot afford to continue their studies abroad and take measures to counter the exploitation of the social system by immigrants.

P8 – 7

Youth unemployment followed the European trend and increased significantly, from 9% in 2008 to 27,8% in 2012 (for the age group 15-24 years). The respective employment rate for this age group went down from 33,8% in 2010 to 28,1% in 2012.

P15 – 3

Promoting transnational mobility:

Establishment of a National Qualification Framework which will include recognition of prior learning procedures.

Implementing EU tools such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) or linking to this the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education.

Increasing participation in EU programs such as the Lifelong Learning Programme that have a strong element of geographical mobility. Encouraging all Technical and Vocational Schools and adults to actively participate in Leonardo da Vinci mobility action for initial and continued training and placements in enterprises abroad (currently only 50% of the technical schools are participating).

Important milestones: Implementation of the EQF, NQF and the ECTS by 2016.

P21 – 7

Youth unemployment in relation to low-skilled migrants (see also Non-national care workers)

Even though Cyprus has the second best most highly qualified labour force among EU27, with 34,5% having tertiary education, the economy faces chronic competitiveness problems relating to the specialisation in low-skilled, low-technology sectors, making extensive use of low skilled labour, mainly from third countries, whereas many young university graduates remain unemployed/underemployed.

Czech Republic

P42 – 7

In spite of considerable progress achieved in the past years, numerous structural problems persist on the labour market, such as the low employment rate of certain groups of population, especially of young people, women or persons in pre-retirement age.

P43 – 7

The growing unemployment rate among young people up to 25 years of age is a very alarming signal. Therefore, the government will take measures to reduce it.

P48 – 3

The reform goals in higher education focus on the following main directions: increasing the quality, diversification, relevance of educational and other activities of higher education institutions; profiling study programmes according to the specific missions of higher education institutions and according to the achieved performance; opening higher education institutions to the international, national and regional contexts and to the needs of various social partners

P49 – 3 / 4

Convergence of the measures with Europe 2020 targets The aim of the measures in this chapter is that the Czech Republic contributes to the achievement of the main objective of Europe 2020 Strategy in the form of increasing the ratio of persons who completed tertiary education. The reform measures are also inter-related with four of the seven predefined flagship initiatives of Europe 2020 Strategy leading to the fulfilment of Strategy objectives. Those are the “Innovation Union” – Improving the general conditions and approach to the financing of research and innovations to strengthen the innovation chain and increase the volume of investments in the entire Union, the “Youth on the Move” – Reinforcing performance of educational systems and facilitating entry of young people to the labour market,

P69 – 8

In the area of human resource development, the government’s main reform activity was the adoption of the RETURN (NÁVRAT) programme to help create favourable conditions for the integration of top foreign researchers and the reintegration of top Czech researchers working abroad back in the Czech Republic.

Denmark

P17 – 7

Reform of the cash benefit scheme. It is important to the Government that all youths receive an education and that youth unemployment is reduced. Therefore, the Government has agreed on a cash benefits reform, the emphasis of which is to help youths obtain an education or find employment.

Youths with no education who have the prerequisites to begin and complete an education must be ordered to do so. Youths with no education must be offered upskilling for the purpose of entering ordinary employment. Youths who do have an education must be helped find employment. The efforts towards youths with weak reading and writing skills will be intensified and systematised.

P17 – 7

Possible deterrent to mobility of attempting to increase completion rate (duration)?

Increase of qualifications achieved through education (April 2013). The reform includes a targeting of the state education grant system, and its purpose is, among other things, to make students complete their education faster, thus increasing the labour supply. The main elements of the reform proposal are:

- Students who begin their tertiary education more than two years after completing the upper secondary education that gives access to the higher educational system will only receive state education grant for the official duration of their study programme.
- In the future, the state education grant will be terminated for students who are delayed by 6 months. This currently happens at 12 months.
- The universities will be obligated to shorten the average course of study by 4,3 months by 2020. If the universities do not reach this objective, their spending allocations will be cut.
- State education grants will only be given to supplementary examination courses at upper secondary level for the so-called “turbo courses”, ensuring that youths begin their education quicker.
- A 5-education cap will be introduced, meaning that youths will only receive state education grant during 5 post-secondary educations.

P23 – 7

One-year continuation of Youth Package II. Youth Package II was agreed in 2009 between the then Liberal-Conservative government and the Danish People’s Party, the Social Democratic Party and the Social- Liberal Party as part of the Globalisation Agreement. With the agreement came the implementation of a number of initiatives aiming at strengthening the effort for more young people getting a job and an education and in the longer term contributing to a better trained and educated work force. The initiatives in Youth Package II are in three areas: the primary and lower secondary school, transition and youth education programmes

P46 – 7

Reform of the cash benefit scheme (2013). It is important to the Government that all youths receive an education and that youth unemployment is reduced. Therefore, the Government has agreed on a cash benefit reform, the emphasis of which is to help youths obtain an education or find employment.

P50 – 7

In April 2013, an agreement was reached on the reform of the cash benefit scheme and student’s grants. It is essential to this reform that cash benefits are abolished for all uneducated people younger than 30 years and replaced with a student allowance approximately equivalent to the Danish student’s grants. Youths however,

who cannot immediately start on an education, will receive an activity supplement and they will thus be granted a total cash benefit corresponding to the amount they were eligible to before the reform. Also, the Danish student's grants system has become better targeted and brings the students quicker and better through the educational system.

Estonia

P8 – 3

In relation to international competitiveness of higher education:

The goal was set on the assumption that in the long term, the primary priority of educational policy is raising the quality and international competitiveness of higher education, as well as increasing the number of higher education student places financed by the state.

P10 – 7

During the economic recession, unemployment has increased more rapidly than average among youth, reaching 32.9% in 2010. Yet youth unemployment started to decrease in 2011, reaching 22.3% and the decline has continued – in 2012 the youth unemployment rate was 20.9%.

P13 – 3 [emphasis in original]

Estonian universities and higher educational institutions compete on the global higher education market, where there is stiff competition for talents. Along with the increase in economic well-being, more young Estonians are studying at universities abroad, and they primarily favour Finnish, German and British institutions of higher education. Promoting student mobility in the interests of obtaining a more diverse education is of key importance. The **supply of competitive higher education** must also be ensured, above all in Estonia. A total of 3% of today's university students spend some time studying abroad. **The target set in the European Higher Education Area is for 20% of graduates to have mobility experience by 2020.**

P14 – 3/4 [emphasis in original]

Supporting internationalization of higher education serves three primary purposes. It creates an opportunity for Estonian students in higher education to widen their horizons, obtain experience studying and living in a different cultural environment and creating contacts, all of which are important components in later working life in an increasingly global world. Also important is "internationalizing at home" – attracting **talents to areas that are important for the Estonian economy** or becoming more active in hiring foreign faculty members to work at Estonian institutions of higher education to give Estonian students who are unable to study abroad an opportunity for contacts with an international environment. For the purpose of better integration of foreign faculty with the work and study environment, they must be provided with better opportunities for the participation in research. Foreign students who leave the country after their studies are also important for Estonian society. They may become "ambassadors" for the Estonian state, culture and economy in their own country, who can contribute to developments in Estonia through their contacts. Thirdly, we should take into consideration that competition and quality in higher education and the academic sphere in general are international. An international comparison is the basis for the quality standard and international mobility creates opportunities for recruiting better employees.

The internationalization of higher education encompasses both the mobility programmes aimed at Estonian students and faculty as well as measures for encouraging foreign students and faculty to come to Estonia. Thanks to the special measures implemented, admissions of foreign students to Estonian universities have

increased in recent years. Continuing the current activities, the goal for 2015 – to admit 2,000 foreign students – is attainable. To do so, it will be necessary to continue to further develop the existing measures and **to make Estonian higher education more attractive to foreign students**. Besides acquiring an education, it will be important to create more possibilities for foreign students **to stay in Estonia to work after graduating from university**.

P14 – 1/3/4 [emphasis in original]

The more active influx of foreign students and faculty is hindered by the current procedures for obtaining visas and work permits, which is relatively slow. There is limited opportunity for family members to accompany applicants and this privilege currently extends only to prospective university students at the Ph.D. level. In addition, the Aliens Act currently in force is interpreted differently in different Estonian foreign representations as well as those of countries representing Estonia. Thus it will be **necessary to revise the current procedures for giving work permits with the objective of making it easier for potential top-level specialists and highly qualified employees to enter the Estonian labour market**. Those processes are linked with the related services that help people adapt to life in Estonia, meet their expectations connected with the settlement of their family members here and contribute in any other manner to the possibilities of their self-realization in Estonia. In the field of higher education, the objective is to significantly increase the number of state-funded student places and to raise the quality of higher education through greater internationalization.

Finland

P24-28 – 7

EU recommendation 3: In 2012–2013, implement the on-going measures to improve the labour market position of young people and the long-term unemployed, with a particular focus on skills development; take further steps to improve the employment rate of older workers, including by reducing early exit pathways; take measures to increase the effective retirement age taking into account the improved life expectancy.

According to the EU recommendation, Finland should pay special attention to improving the labour market situation of young people and the long-term unemployed as well as to raise the employment rate of older workers. Employment of older workers has improved significantly in the 2000s but employment rates in other age groups have remained at the same level. The unemployment rate has gone down in all age groups in the 2000s.

[...]

P40 – 7

With regard to youth unemployment, attention should be paid in the young people who are in risk of becoming entirely excluded from the labour market. Improving immigrant employment can help to ease somewhat prolonging work careers even in short term. [...] In 2012 and 2013, the aim is: [...] to improve the labour market situation of the most socially excluded young people.

P49 – 7

Several reforms supporting employment, improving unemployment security and the level of benefits, such as Youth Guarantee and promotion of employment of people with partial work ability, entered into force at the beginning of 2013.

Germany

P12 – 7

To integrate young people in the labour market, the Federal Government has long been an advocate of targeting young people at the earliest stage possible. This approach reflects the current employment policy objectives of the EU and the Council recommendation of 28 February 2013 on introducing a Youth Guarantee.

P19 – 4

Since 1 January 2013, the Federal Government is promoting the professional mobility of young people in the EU who want to work in Germany through the MobiPro-EU programme.

P23 – 3

The proportion of foreign students in the education system increased from 31.4 percent in 2009 to 33.5 percent in 2010.

P23 – 7

At 8.2 percent in 2012, Germany had the lowest rate of youth unemployment in the EU (22.9 percent on average).

Greece

P12-14 – 7

Youth entrepreneurship (discussed at several points in the NRP, limited to initial discussion here)

The aim of the program is to support business start-ups for youth and women, as population groups that are particularly affected by high unemployment and to shift the necessity entrepreneurship in opportunity entrepreneurship and create new jobs. [...] The “New – Innovative Entrepreneurship” program was launched in May 2011. Call for projects came to an end in November 2011 resulting in 1,170 investment projects. After completion of the evaluation process in June 2012, 439 projects were selected as eligible for funding with a total budget of EUR 63,135 million and of EUR 37.8 million co-funded public expenditure. The programme has entered payments phase in late 2012 and in early 2013. The programme was designed in alignment with the Lisbon Strategy and the Small Business Act priorities. It aims to improve innovation policy design and implementation, for entrepreneurs and SMEs, notably through evaluating and drawing lessons from the EU and past experience. As such, although it evaluates R&D elements and includes organisational and marketing innovation elements, it mainly aims to support the exploitation and commercialisation of new knowledge and new ideas. Scientific excellence was not an obligatory prerequisite for success during the evaluation process. Future actions are planned for a second call for projects in spring 2013, possibly with a higher public expenditure budget. Emphasis will be maintained on the aspect of exploitation and commercialisation of new knowledge and ideas, whereas strong elements of supporting youth innovative entrepreneurship are expected to be included.

P26 – 3

The Ministry of Education, taking into consideration the provisions of the Law on the Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP) (No 3879/2010, art. 26) issued a Ministerial Decision defining the regions as well as the characteristics of the Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP). ZEPs are established in areas where the basic

indicators of school integration (e.g. Synthetic Indicator of wellbeing and development, Indicator of educational level for adults aged between 33 and 43, Indicator of poverty danger, Total Educational Indicator) are low. The same applies to school networks that present high participation of special pupil groups (foreigners, ROMA, minority populations etc.).

P35 – 7

By observing the unemployment rate for different age groups, we notice that the highest unemployment rate is recorded among young people aged between 15 and 24 years; **55.3% in 2012** [48.4% for young men and 63.2% for young women], against 44.4% in 2011 and 22.1% in 2008. High youth unemployment rate is not a new phenomenon in Greece; what is new is the rampant rise to the unprecedented, alarming levels. The youth unemployment rate is more than twice as high as the rate for adults and has significantly increased over the last four years, while no signs of a trend reversal are in sight yet.

Young unemployed people (aged 15-24) averaged 173.5 thousand people in 2012, a 14.4% share of the total unemployed people – according to EL.STAT. data elaboration.

Greek young people in the 15-24 age group exhibit lower activity rates than older people (among the lowest in the EE-27, as young people in Greece do not combine studies with work). The activity rate settled at 29.2% in 2012 and 2011 from 32.4% in 2008 (based on EL.STAT. data).

Young people are strongly overrepresented in part-time employment. In 2012, part time employment among young people aged 15-24 increased by almost 2 pps to 19.5% (against 2011) versus 7.7% for people aged above 15 and 7.3% for people aged above 25. In parallel, youth involuntary part time employment also rose to above 64%, showing that the majority of young part timers have this type of employment because they could not find a full time job.

P39 – 7

The core of the employment policies concern the job maintenance, the rehabilitation of the unemployed, the integration of young people and vulnerable groups into the labour market, the implementation of vocational training schemes, the support of older people as well as the support of sectors affected mostly by the consequences of the crisis.

P45-46 – 7

The unemployed and especially the long-term unemployed as well as the youth (up to 29 years) unemployed constitute key target groups against the risk of severe poverty and social exclusion. [...] Employment policies to face long-term unemployment and youth (up to 29 years) unemployment have been adopted and will reinforce the second pillar of active inclusion strategy.

P55 – 8

MEASURES TO SUPPORT THE GREEK RESEARCH COMMUNITY FOR AN INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMS OF EU (FP7 AND HORIZON 2020) AND TO PROMOTE THE INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH OF GREEK R&D ENTITIES

Effective use of the tools of the European Research Area (ERA) for the coordination of national policies and the financing along with other Member States of R&D programs in selected thematic areas. (ongoing)

Reinforcement of the country's participation in the construction phase of the ESFRI research infrastructures based on a national strategy and roadmap for infrastructures. (ongoing)

Reinforcement of the extroversion of Greek research teams through bilateral and multilateral country agreements on R&D (ongoing). In this context new bilateral R&D agreements are being implemented or expected to be launched in the immediate future, like:

Greece-Israel (EUR 5 million budget)

Greece-China (EUR 15 million budget)

Greece-Germany (EUR 5 million budget)

Hungary

P12-13 – 7

Government is making significant efforts to increase the employment of disadvantaged groups, including young people entering the job market

[...]

Within the framework of the Annual Growth Survey, the Commission recommends the following to promote youth employment:

- to maintain and boost the scope and efficiency of public employment services and active labour market measures (e.g. providing training to unemployed people and "youth guarantee" schemes);
- to facilitate the transition from school to work by promoting traineeships to young people;
- to reform health and safety regulation in cooperation with the social partners in order to reduce the over-protection of employees with indefinite term contracts and to protect and promote the access to the labour market of young people;
- to reform the system of unemployment aids in order to facilitate labour market reintegration (by appropriate training and supporting schemes);
- to further reform educational and training systems and thus create a labour market supply that better reflects market conditions and qualification demands.

P17 – 7

The drop in labour force demand, which was also fuelled by the crisis, had especially detrimental effect on young people intending to enter the labour market: the unemployment rate of young people under 25 increased by 2 percentage points to 28.1% in 2012 compared to the previous year, while their employment rate accounted for 18.6%. The number of registered young job seekers has also increased significantly: 11% of all Hungarian job seekers are given by new entrants to the labour market, which figure shows a 2 percentage point increase in one year.

P18 – 7

The implementation of the Employer Benefit System – Job Protection Act (18)

The measure helps the most disadvantaged employees keep their jobs and access the labour market, and aims to boost employment. Certain provisions of the Act enacted on 1 January 2013 introduced benefits which are applicable to monthly gross incomes not exceeding HUF 100,000, especially aimed to reduce the employment costs of young people, new entrants to the labour market, persons returning from maternity/paternity leave,

elderly employees, permanent job seekers and people with lower qualifications. The entire group of beneficiaries account for around 1 million employees. The benefit gives temporary exemption from or discount on the social contribution tax and the vocational contribution, amounting in total to 28.5%. Since the measure has been recently introduced, no impact analysis has been carried out so far, but based on the first statistical data available; we can assume the measure is well-targeted. Employers requested benefit for 615,000 employees, more than half of whom are under-qualified, under the age of 25, or above the age of 55.

P18 – 7

The implementation of the set of measures aimed at the reduction of youth unemployment (22, 23.)

Several governmental measures are expressly directed at the reduction of unemployment and the labour market reintegration of young people. We plan to introduce, in line with the relevant Council Recommendation, a Youth Guarantee through the utilisation of EU funds of the next programming period.

In order to tackle the tension deteriorating the labour market prospects of young people, improve their labour market conditions, help them find their first job and help them acquire the necessary work experience, we announced the "First Job Guarantee" central labour market programme on 1 September 2012 as a new measure, which is in line with the European Commission's recommendation set forth in the 2013 Annual Growth Survey. [...text continues, not included here.]

P20 – 7

The content of decentralized active labour market programmes has been changed: a significant share of the extra funding is spent primarily on improving the employability and labour market integration of young people, in accordance with the Commission's 'Youth Opportunities Initiative'.

P22 – 7

Concept for enhancing groups requiring special enterprise development arrangements in becoming entrepreneurs (30)

The concept, to be drawn up in 2013, will be aimed at eliminating the barriers standing in the way of the economic activity of women, the young, the Roma and people with disabilities, encouraging these groups to become entrepreneurs and developing businesses that are already ran by members of these groups.

Ireland

this fall, young people now represent 20% of all the unemployed, down from a share of 35% in mid-2008.

Based on current trends and projections, the youth unemployment rate could fall to circa 20% by 2015.

P27/28 – 7

Tackling Youth Unemployment

During the Irish Presidency in 2013, agreement was reached on the Recommendation on an EU-wide Youth Guarantee. Ireland published its Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan in P20 – 7

Ireland's Headline Target: To raise to 69-71% the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64, including through the greater participation of young people, older workers and low-skilled workers, and the better integration of legal migrants, and to review the target level of ambition in 2014, in the context of a proposed mid-term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

[...]

There are positive signs emerging, with employment numbers and the employment rate for 20-64 yr olds increasing quarter on quarter. Between Q4 2012 and Q4 2013 the employment rate rose by 2.5% while employment numbers rose by 56,400. The employment rate for young people aged 20-24 rose from 46% in 2012 to 49% in 2013.

P22 – 7

Youth Unemployment

Overall, the under-25 age group had an unemployment rate of 26.7% in 2013 (35.5% for 15-19 year-olds and 24.5% for 20-24 year-olds) down from 30.4% in 2012. This compares to an unemployment rate of 12% for prime age workers (ages 25–54). About 40% of the young unemployed are out of work for more than one year.

Despite the high rate of youth unemployment, the absolute number of young unemployed people has fallen – from close to 80,000 on average in 2009 to 57,000 on average in 2013. The most recent figures show youth unemployment down by 10,000 year-on-year to 49,000 in Q4 2013.

While some of the fall in the number of young unemployed has been due to the improvement in the labour market it has also partly been a result of demographic developments arising from birth trends in the 1980s and 1990s, the tendency for some young people to stay longer in education rather than seeking work in a depressed market and the impact of emigration. As a result of January 2014. The Plan identifies measures to build on services and initiatives already in place and to increase their impact by tailoring them to address the particular challenges of youth unemployment. Given the fiscal constraints facing Ireland, a gradual implementation approach is being adopted. As a result the Youth Guarantee will be delivered on a phased but continually widening basis. The approach is to prioritise the support of individuals most at risk of long-term unemployment first before dealing with lower risk groups. Elements of this initiative are already being piloted in the Dublin suburb of Ballymun, an area with a particularly high rate of unemployment.

In summary, the national Youth Guarantee will involve:

- Developing the Intreo activation process to ensure earlier and more intensive engagement with young people.
- Delivering opportunities for young people through education and training programmes.
- Earmarking a quota of places/opportunities on employment schemes for young people.
- Varying the eligibility conditions for access to these schemes by young people. (e.g., so that young people can access places/opportunities after 4 to 6 months of unemployment rather than the general requirement of 12 months' unemployment).
- Expanding the number of opportunities currently availed of by young people in the form of internships, subsidised private-sector recruitment, and supports for self-employment.

- Introducing new options for young unemployed people in particular in the area of youth entrepreneurship and international work experience and training.

P33 – 8

An open labour market for researchers

Ireland is recognised as having a very open and transparent system for recruiting researchers. Irish research funding is very open to access by non-national researchers, subject to the research generally being carried out in Ireland). The Euraxess Office in Ireland provides an advisory service to both inward and outwardly mobile researchers and supports the implementation of the Third Country Researchers Directive including through maintaining a database of Hosting Agreements for third country researchers.

P41 – 7

Early school leavers in Ireland are defined as young people aged 16-21 without upper secondary certificate qualifications and who face difficulties in entering the labour market. The Community Training Centres, now operating under the aegis of the ETBs, provide training and related services in a professional, supportive and inclusive manner for early school leavers as part of the joint “Youthreach” initiative with the Department of Education and Skills.

Italy

PV – 7

Much remains to be done in the labour market in order to strengthen active labour policies, increase the participation rate of women and young people in the labour market, promote wage bargaining decentralisation, and reduce the burden of taxation.

P6 – 7

The procedures for designing and building infrastructures have also been streamlined, while the incorporation of a limited liability company with reduced capital has been facilitated for young people under the age of 35.

P8 – 7

Government has paid special attention to Southern Italy. The Government has introduced many policies in the area in order to stimulate employment, including, but not limited to, fiscal relief in favour of disadvantaged workers and incentives for the start-up of new businesses owned by young people.

P9 – 8

With further regard to the aim of improving R&D, a total of 10 per cent of the Fund for Investments in the Scientific and Technological Research (FIRST) has been earmarked for researchers under the age of 40, and a tax credit has been established for the hiring of highly qualified workers to be kept employed for at least three years.

P9 – 3/4

Looking ahead, young people play a crucial role for the country. Italy needs to invest in its talented young people, and thus, social and geographic mobility become the best allies, not only within the country, but also and more importantly, over the broader horizon of the labour market in Europe and worldwide. Whatever limits opportunities for young people translates into fewer social-mobility and growth opportunities for the entire country.

P11 – 7

The reform of the labour and social security system has been developed by considering budget constraints. On one hand, this reform expands the sphere of application of employment benefits to include younger workers, and on the other hand, it enhances the value of apprenticeships as the mechanism for entering the labour market. In so doing, the reform aims to facilitate the transition from education and training to work, laying out apprenticeship programmes that satisfy entrepreneurs and businesses in terms of qualifications and skills.

P12 – 7

An Intergenerational Pact was instituted so that companies can simultaneously offer part-time contracts to older workers, and apprenticeship or full-time contracts to younger people.

P17 – 7

Italy continues to have an average number of hours worked per employee that is above the European average, whereas the participation of young people, women and older workers in the labour market is markedly lower than the European average.

P19 – 7

The rate of participation of young people in the labour market has declined annually by almost one-half percentage point, which is more than double European average. The limited presence of young people in the labour market is nonetheless flanked by growth in number of women and people of age 55 or over participating in the labour market.

P22 – 7

Three distinct transmission channels were considered through the IGEM model. The first regards the measures for growing the flexibility of the labour market. The estimates of a recent European Commission study¹⁰ were used for translating the measures into specific assumptions within the model; such study evaluates the effects on employment of labour market reform designed to provide greater flexibility, along with policies to favour the segments of the work force penalized (young people, women and unskilled workers). On the basis of the results of the aforementioned study, the measures promoting flexibility in the labour market were incorporated into the IGEM simulations, with the projection of a 14-percentage point reduction in the wage mark-up to be realized over 10 years.

P39-44 – 2/3/4/5/6/7

RACCOMANDAZIONE 3. Take further action to address youth unemployment, including by improving the labour-market relevance of education and facilitating transition to work, also through incentives for business start-ups and for hiring employees. Enforce nation-wide recognition of skills and qualifications to promote labour mobility. Take measures to reduce tertiary education dropout rates and fight early school leaving.

The Government has made the fight against youth unemployment a priority, including by improving education and vocational training. The measures adopted aim at favouring the establishment of more stable employment

relationships, by raising the value of apprenticeship as the preferred gateway to the labour market for young people and as a means for countering the improper use of certain types of employment contracts.

[...]

Active labour-market policies. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed at the Unified Conference and in agreement with social partners, the Government issued guidelines for setting up local networks including education, training and employment services directly linked to strategies for economic growth (youth access to work, welfare reform, active aging and the exercise of active citizenship, including by immigrants). In this connection, priority will be given to action aimed at: supporting people's own efforts to attend formal and informal education; ii) recognition of educational credits and certification of acquired knowledge; iii) lifelong use of orientation services.

[...]

While incentives are aimed at favouring the transformation of fixed-term contracts of young and female workers into open-ended contracts, they also aim at favouring the stable employment of young and female workers that have been hired under fixed-term contracts or have joined a partnership contributing work to it.

[...]

The intergenerational Pact. In implementing the Productivity Agreement, signed by the social partners at the end of November 2012, the Government has drafted a decree envisaging the possibility for an elderly worker to move from full time to part time, thus enabling the hiring of a young worker under an apprenticeship contract or under a permanent employment contract. The Regions and Provinces will pay the social security contribution supplement for the elderly worker into INPS, as voluntary contributions for which they will provide the social security agency with a quarterly report.

[...]

The mobility of highly skilled workers in Italy. The so-called 'EU blue card' has been introduced for highly skilled immigrants through the implementation of the EU Directive on entry and stay conditions of citizens who wish to work in highly skilled jobs.

[...]

P45 – 4/7

Overhaul of safety nets. The main novelty in the system of social safety nets is the Employment Social Insurance (*Assicurazione Sociale per l'Impiego -ASpl*). ASpl basically strengthens the unemployment insurance benefit, extending it to younger people, to those who have recently entered the labour market and to categories of workers that so far have not benefitted from it, such as apprentices.

P47 – 4, 7

In order to protect women and young people, the provision envisaging that workers have to pay for the totalization of benefits ought to be abolished, as it penalises workers who are forced to change jobs ever more often.

P65 – 7

Regional agreements to strengthen the relationship between universities and the business sector and innovative projects of a social nature for young people in the South.

P65 – 8

The '*Messaggeri*' project, a tender procedure for the selection of researchers coming from leading research and university education centres abroad, that will work in teaching activities in universities of the South.

Latvia

P11-13 – 7 [emphasis in original]

The EU Council recommends Latvia to take measures to reduce long-term and youth unemployment by fighting early school leaving, promoting more efficient vocational education and training and its apprenticeship component, enhancing the quality, coverage and effectiveness of active labour market policy and its training component and through an effective wage subsidy scheme.

[...]

For the purpose of reducing youth unemployment, the implementation of youth targeted measures was continued in 2012 – support for creation of jobs at employer co-financed by the ESF and support for volunteering in non-governmental organisations. Overall, 2.4 thousand young people were involved in these measures in 2012. The youth had an opportunity to participate also in other active labour market policy measures and about 11 thousand young people were supported in 2012.

[...]

At the same time, youth unemployment can be reduced by encouraging young people to return to the education process, especially to vocational education programmes.

P21 – 3

To promote internationalisation and exportability of higher education a number of measures to make it easier for higher education institutions to attract foreign students were implemented in 2012, for example, granting higher education institutions legal rights to develop and implement study programmes jointly with higher education institutions in other countries and to issue joint certificates, as well as to offer foreign students a possibility to receive the state budget scholarship for studies. In 2013, *Amendments to the Law on Higher Education Institutions* have been drafted and announced in order to expand the possibilities to implement study programmes in the EU official languages at the state-founded higher education institutions.

P22/23 – 8

The work on development of the European level research infrastructure – BIRTI platform for development of competitive technologies in the Baltic region is continued. It is planned to attract the technical assistance facility *Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions* financed by the EU institutions. BIRTI is expected to be implemented in 2014–2020.

Participation of Latvia in research programmes ARTEMIS and Eurostars has been ensured. Support has been ensured for Latvia to participate in the European research and technology development programmes (COST, 7th Framework Programme and EUREKA), bilateral cooperation programmes with Belarus, France and trilateral cooperation programmes with Lithuania and Taiwan aimed at supporting cooperation of scientists and researchers in different fields of research and technology development at the European level, promoting research, development and introduction of innovative civil technologies mainly in small- and medium-sized enterprises.

P42 – 8

The future vision of the state budget financing for science is planned in four key directions:

- Base financing of scientific institutions;
- Participation in the EU and other international programmes, ensuring mobility;
- Financing for fundamental research to be allocated through a tender procedure;
- Maintaining and strengthening capacity to ensure scientific activity.

Base financing of scientific institutions is the direction that is the most financially intensive as it covers both maintenance, reconstruction and modernisation of infrastructure of institutions and the achievement of the defined objectives and tasks, as well as ensuring costs of scientific and research attending staff, including remuneration, and providing co-financing for EU funds and other foreign and international financial instruments and international scientific research projects and other necessary costs.

A major component of scientific activities is international cooperation and participation in the EU and other international programmes, thus not only promoting transnational cooperation, recognition of Latvia and stimulating scientific activities but also serving as a considerable resource for promoting mobility.

P49/50 – 7

In 2012, Latvia continued and improved the active labour market policy measures to improve labour skills and qualification (measure 2.3 of Latvia's commitments within the *Euro Plus Pact*, see also Chapter 2.3), for example:

- Improving and differentiating the career consultation system according to client groups (youth, disabled persons, long-term unemployed, etc.);

[...]

- Promoting youth employment and reducing unemployment.

[...]

Implementing support measures to reduce youth unemployment (responsible institution – MW, MES)

The aim is to develop practical skills of the youth and to foster the possibility for them to find a job successfully by developing and implementing the measures oriented towards unemployed youth (see also Chapter 2.3). [...] Further discussion not included here.

P52 – 3/4

Since 2011, within the Latvian and Swiss cooperation programme *Support for the development of youth initiatives in peripheral or disadvantaged regions* youth may attend regular training with an aim to foster their active participation and development of social competences. The sub-programme *European Voluntary Service* of the programme *Youth in Action* offers young people an opportunity to obtain the first working experience through a volunteering in any of the EU member states, as well as to improve their knowledge by participating in experience exchange seminars and intercultural study visits;

P59 – 3

The number of students in Latvia has been decreasing already for six years. In the academic year 2012/2013 – 94 474 students are studying in the higher education institutions of Latvia, which is by 6% lower than in the previous academic year. In the academic year 2012/2013, the number of students decreased by 28% compared to the academic year 2005/2006, when the number of students in Latvia reached the maximum level. The decreasing number of students over the last four years resulted mainly due to demographic factors (demographic pit), the impact of the economic crisis and economic emigration of the population which witnesses a lower access to higher education due to economic reasons. In the academic year 2012/2013, the number of students studying for state budget financing is 34 854 students or 37% of the total number of students.

P62-63 – 3

Attracting foreign students (responsible institution – MES)

At the beginning of the academic year 2012/2013, there were 3505 foreign students from 81 countries studying in higher education institutions of Latvia constituting 3.7% of the total number of students and is by 29% or 789 students more than in the previous academic year. The forecasts for the share of foreign students in Latvia to reach 3% of the total number of students in 2013 have already been reached.

In 2012, measures were implemented to simplify attraction of foreign students in the higher education institutions, for example, by granting higher education institutions legal rights to develop and implement study programmes jointly with higher education institutions of other countries and to issue joint certificates, as well as to offer foreign students the possibility to receive state budget scholarship for studies. In 2012 – 58 scholarships have been granted for studies and research and 30 scholarships have been granted for summer schools within the available financing.

Measures to promote exports of higher education were implemented on a regular basis. In 2012, the Department for promotion of higher education exportability established in the Academic Information Centre has provided support in the form of information and consultations to higher education institutions for participation in international education exhibitions and international mobility networks, as well as the State Education Development Agency maintains the online website www.studyinlatvia.lv which contains information on the Latvian higher education institutions programmes for foreign students, as well as practical information about studies, scholarships and residence permits, etc. With the national higher education stand *Study in Latvia*, the higher education institutions of Latvia participated in the international education exhibitions in China, India, Turkey and Kazakhstan. A research on possible higher education export market has been conducted and regional directions of exports for the planned exhibitions have been developed in cooperation with higher education institutions.

In order to increase international competitiveness of Latvian higher education and simplify attraction of foreign students and academic staff, including from outside the EU, a range of amendments is going to be introduced to legislation with an aim to eliminate obstacles to attraction of foreign academic staff and students to higher education, including the requirements for language in academic environment, receipt of permanent residence permit and obtaining the status of a permanent resident of the EU and the state fee for examination of the official language proficiency.

Lithuania

P11 – 7

Tackle high unemployment, in particular among youth, low-skilled and long-term unemployed.

The unemployment among youth is being reduced by implementing the action plan approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the focus of which is placed on: 1) the development of working skills of young people with the help of education system; 2) support for young people starting their own business; 3) active labour market policy measures.

P14 – 7

Planned works:

- Reduction of youth unemployment is included into the Government's list of priorities for 2013. A long-term youth employment program reflecting the implementation of provisions established in the European Commission's Youth Employment Package is planned to be prepared;
- The implementation of the programme for intensive long-term assistance for the unemployed and early school leavers aimed at increasing the motivation of socially vulnerable young people will be launched;
- The implementation of the National Youth Volunteering Program, which aims to provide a possibility to acquire competence, gain working skills, help to decide on further education or work, will be started;
- In order to improve the accessibility of vocational guidance and consulting services in local labour exchanges, 10 additional youth labour centres will be established to help young people to be better orientated in social environment and labour market, independently solve their employment issues;
- A Strategy for increased employment is planned to be prepared for 2014–2020, which would be especially focused on youth, long-term and low-skilled unemployed, persons distant from the labour market. [...]

P36/38 – 7

In the implementation of the programme "Increase in labour market participation and employment assistance, particularly to young people", the implementation of forms of apprenticeship training was started. [...]

To prepare a plan for promoting youth employment, which would establish the youth guarantees: include young school leavers into the education system, develop the youth's vocational guidance and career planning systems, develop skills necessary for the labour market, develop youth entrepreneurship and encourage their self-employment, support their first steps in the labour market, develop partnerships by solving youth employment problems;

P50 – 3

It is planned that in 2013 the share of schools of general education using direct online platform of self-assessment of activities will be 5% (it was 0% in 2012); the share of candidates to school leaders who had their competences assessed will be 10% (it was 7% in 2012); the share of students who have studied abroad under the Erasmus programme will account for 3.5% (it was 3% in 2012);

P59-60 – 3/4

Explicit discussion of EU Flagship Initiatives:

5.3. Implementation of Flagship Initiatives of Europe 2020 Strategy

In order to implement the goals of Europe 2020 Strategy, various actions need to be undertaken at the national, regional and EU level. Along with the Europe 2020 Strategy, the European Commission has put forward seven flagship initiatives to catalyse progress under each priority theme: “Innovation Union”, “Youth on the move”, “A digital agenda for Europe”, “Resource efficient Europe”, “An industrial policy for globalisation era”, “An agenda for new skills and jobs”, “European platform against poverty”. Also, the objectives and priorities of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy action plan contributes to the implementation of these initiatives (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/baltic/documents_en.cfm#1).

5.3.2. Youth on the Move

The aim of this flagship initiative is to strive for better results of the European schools of higher education and enhance their international attractiveness, improve the quality of the EU trainings and education at all levels by combining skills and equal opportunities, promoting movement of students and trainees, and to improve the youth employment situation.

More detailed information on investments into education and training systems as well as early school leavers is presented in part IV, Chapters 4.2 and 4.3, information on national qualifications systems by better adapting the acquired skills to the labour market needs – in part IV, Chapter 4.7, information on youth integration into the labour market – in part III, Chapter 3.3 and part IV, Chapter 4.7.

In order to enhance the international attractiveness of the Lithuanian institutions of higher education, the programme for the internalisation of higher education is being implemented.

Measures implemented:

- In 2012, funding was allocated for the preparation and implementation of 17 joint study programmes (LTL 85.61 million of the EU support funds allocated for the Programme for Internationalisation of Higher Education);
- Support is allocated for funding visits of teachers from foreign countries to the Lithuanian schools of higher education;
- In the implementation of decentralized foreign qualification assessment and recognition model and execution of the KAPRIS project (development of the system for academic recognition of foreign qualifications concerning higher education), a publication “Recognition of Foreign Qualifications” was drawn up, also, introductory trainings for the assessors of foreign qualifications were arranged;
- Internet website “Study in LT” is being developed;
- Funding was allocated for 3 projects funded from the EU support funds for the enhancement of the activities of centres of Lithuanistics (Baltic) studies in foreign countries;
- 6 state scholarships of Kazimieras Būga were designated to foreign nationals studying the Lithuanian language in foreign schools of higher education;
- 148 diaspora students and students of the Lithuanian origin studying in Lithuanian schools of higher education received assistance (for the fall semester of 2012–2013 academic year).

Planned works:

- In the first quarter of 2013, support will be allocated for funding the visits of foreign teachers;
- In the first quarter of 2013, the contest for the Lithuanian state scholarships of Kazimieras Būga will be announced;

- In the first quarter of 2013, students of Lithuanian origin and diaspora students studying in the schools of higher education of Lithuania will be allocated support (for the spring semester of 2012–2013 academic year);
- Activities provided for in the project “Development of the system for academic recognition of foreign qualifications concerning higher education” (KAPRIS) will be executed: creation and improvement of infrastructure; adoption of international practices; preparation of methodical tools; development of special professional skills; creation of electronic recognition environment; preparedness of schools of higher education for the implementation of recognition procedure; targeted information on changes in the system;
- Centres of lituanistics (Baltic) studies of foreign countries will perform the activities provided for in projects together with the Lithuanian schools of higher education.

P70 – 7

Although the youth unemployment rate remains quite high, it is gradually decreasing. [...]

Luxembourg

P14 – 7

“Continue efforts to reduce youth unemployment by reinforcing stakeholders' involvement, and by strengthening training and education measures, in particular for those with low education levels, with the aim of better matching young people's skills and qualifications to labour demand.”

In March, 2012, the Government introduced a Youth Employment Action Plan to the social partners and government institutions. The plan includes measures and actions for implementation of a “youth guarantee”, adaption of measures for youth employment, improvements in guidance, developing apprenticeship programs and projects targeting youth without qualifications that are remote from the labour market. Monitoring the action plan will be accomplished in close collaboration with the social partners.

[...]

P20 – 7

The Youth department of the public employment service has also been bolstered to provide better monitoring of young people.

P21- 7

b. Youth measures

The Government embarked upon a series of measures to address the recommendations of the Council to Luxembourg for 2012-2013 to reduce the unemployment rate of young people. These include an action plan promoting youth, the establishment of a Guidance Center, modifications to the Work-Support Contract (CAE) and the Initial Employment Contract (CIE), specifically adapted training for young people with low skills, the “Nudge in the right direction” project, the “CAE Youth Training’ Project”, the public employment service awareness workshops and the establishment of a second chance school (E2C).

[...]

Malta

P15 – 7

The key measures intended to address the employment target include the Employment and Training Corporation's (ETC)'s Active Youth for Employment Programme which is aiming to increase the employability of young people by helping them make informed choices through personalised jobseeker services, increased access to information about services available, training courses and the labour market. Other measures promote youth entrepreneurship, offer specialised training for disabled persons who need further pre-employment training and on-the-job training with a view of integrating them in employment and offer support for youth voluntary work.

P104 – 7

The Youth Employment Programme (YEP) was an ESF-funded programme which aimed to increase the employability and labour market integration of young people, particularly disadvantaged young jobseekers and also those in precarious work who would benefit from further training and from greater knowledge of their rights and responsibilities at work. [...]

P112 -113 – 7

Active Youth for Employment Programme

The Active Youth for Employment Programme aims to:

- Increase the employability of young people and facilitate labour market integration of youth;
- Help youth make informed choices through personalised jobseeker services, increased access to information about services available, training courses and the labour market;
- Equip youth with the motivation and skills needed to enter, retain and progress within work. [...]

P115 – 7

Embark for Life Programme

This programme envisages the integration of young people into the labour market. It empowers young persons in acquiring skills, which would enable them to get into mainstream education and/or employment, with the ultimate aim to live independently and lead a more quality life in the community.

Development of a Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy including an Action Plan for Malta – 2013-2018 [...]

P125 – 8

Internationalisation Scoping Exercise

Research activities are intrinsically international in nature, leveraging on collaboration between different knowledge centres, common issues of concern and the need to avoid duplication of efforts. Given the small size of Malta's research community and its limited resources, the importance of international cooperation is

even more pronounced. Hence, this measure aims to identify opportunities for Maltese researchers to be engaged in international cooperation opportunities. The exercise started in October 2012 and is expected to be completed by end 2013. The budget allocated for this measure is €150,000.

P127 – 3/8

Open labour market for researchers: Malta's efforts to increase its researcher capacity through scholarship grants and investment in infrastructures stem from Malta's wish to build a thriving labour market for researchers, with a healthy circulation of Maltese researchers doing work abroad and foreign researchers undertaking research in Malta. The link between capacity building and an open labour market for researchers is clear – implementing initiatives to create an open labour market for researchers without investment in local capacity building increases the risk of brain drain. Grants for postgraduate studies awarded to Maltese students are portable, enabling the student to pursue their studies abroad. Recruitment of researchers at the University of Malta and in the public sector is open, transparent and based on merit. Indeed, while no Maltese organisation has formally endorsed the Charter and Code, the principles enshrined in these documents are in practice largely observed. Open calls for applications at the University of Malta are publicised on the Euraxess portal through a link to the University of Malta's website.

P150 – 7

Support for Youth Organisations

This measure aims to enable Aāenzija šġħašagħ to give financial assistance to youth organisations to deliver projects and initiatives for young people and also to enhance their capacity to deliver such programmes and initiatives. Youth organisations have been providing non-formal and informal programmes for young people across a wide spectrum of activity but a lack of financial resources and capacity among such organisations has hindered the expansion of such projects and initiatives. [...]

P152 – 7

Youth cafés and Youth Centres (Hubs)

This measure aims to provide youth cafés and other centres where young people can meet and learn in a safe and friendly environment and access services overseen by qualified youth workers. [...]

P182-183 – 3/4

Youth on the Move

The EU flagship initiative 'Youth on the Move' offers a work experience abroad to apprentices in vocational training and to university students. The popular TV presenter Frank Zammit has been nominated as Malta ambassador for this initiative. Through this initiative Malta is aiming to improve education and training systems at all levels and to promote stronger policy efforts to improve youth employment. This initiative also facilitates local youth mobility both for learning purposes and work experiences.

The National Youth Employment Strategy 2015 builds upon the key messages of this flagship initiative. This Strategy aims to design a holistic framework that yields both immediate and long-term returns. The National

Youth Employment Strategy 2015 focuses on the inter-relatedness and the inter-dependency of both economic and social factors and the development of a number of measures to address the challenges posed by macro- and micro-constraints. These constraints are mainly the result of the natural heterogeneity of young people and the fluctuating nature of labour market realities. These limiting realities have led to the formulation of a Strategy having multiple policy objectives focusing on the diverse needs of the targeted clients.

Thus the groups that the National Youth Employment Strategy 2015 is targeting include not only young job-seekers and inactive youth but also young people who are already in the labour market. This is because this Strategy is aiming to provide a second chance to young people who would have left school earlier and thus these youths would be able to avail themselves of re-training and up-skilling opportunities.

The priorities which the National Youth Employment Strategy focuses on incorporate the supporting of youths to complete formal school education by encouraging educational attainment and the formal validation of any training received. This Strategy also seeks to put into place structures to facilitate the successful reintegration into education, training or employment of young people who are disengaged or at-risk of being disengaged. This will be achieved by providing the learning tools which ascertain that young people are equipped with the necessary employability skills and then ensuring the sustainability of young people's entry into the labour market by addressing temporary, precarious and informal work arrangements.

Thus the initiatives proposed in this Strategy are split into five main categories:

- Renewed Youth-Centred Investment;
- Early Intervention and Prevention;
- Facilitating Transition between Education, Training and Employment;
- Equal Access and Opportunities to Education, Training and the Labour Market;
- Sustainability of Jobs

This Strategy is acknowledging that the entry patterns into the labour market and the choice of transition from school to further and higher education is dependent on a number of variables. These include the level and type of qualifications, skills and competencies attained through formal schooling and training; the learning experiences in compulsory education; each individual's familial environment and aspirations; the support services in place including guidance and counselling services and any active labour market programmes in place. This Strategy will thus be putting in place measures to address as wide a range of eventualities as possible.

The targets by which it can be determined whether the National Youth Employment Strategy 2015 is effective or not are measurable and include the reduction of absenteeism in compulsory education and the increasing of the participation rate of young people pursuing further and higher education. Closely tied with the success of this Strategy is the reduction in the rate of early school leavers and the concomitant increase in the participation rate of adults continuing with lifelong learning experiences. Measures are also to be put in place to increase both the educational attainment of students at the different levels of the education system (starting from the early years and going on to the post-secondary sector) as well as efforts to increase participation in non-formal activities coupled with an increase in the validation of such activities. Other planned initiatives include an increase in the breadth and number of apprenticeship and traineeships schemes that are available together with a reduction in the incidence of precarious and informal work. These measures will thus lead to a reduction in the unemployment rate of young people and a corresponding reduction in the NEET rate.

Malta's national Public Employment Service (the Employment and Training Corporation) has a number of programmes which focus specifically on young people. These range from personal action plans, employability programmes and work exposure schemes to traineeships, apprenticeships, and training courses. In order to further assist young people, the Public Employment Service has allocated Youth Champions as part of its

internal operating structure whose role it is to develop and provide youth oriented motivational seminars, newsletters, school interventions and other youth initiatives in areas including soft skills and job hunting skills (including CV and Interviewing skills) for graduates and unqualified school leavers as well for youths with social problems. Moreover, in 2012, the Employment and Training Corporation has worked in collaboration with education providers responsible for compulsory schooling, further and higher education, and second-chance education to encourage young people at risk of becoming NEET to engage in an educational or employment programme. This initiative included a personalised follow-up for all young people who finished compulsory education without sitting for their matriculation exams and several activities targeted at this cohort. A number of young people have successfully enrolled in one of the programmes promoted.

P184 – 7

Long term unemployed participants, including youths, are given the opportunity to further their skills, improve their employability and prospects of employment by carrying out 30 hours of community work per week for a period of 6 months and in return have their income increased up to 75% of the minimum wage. [...]

P201 – 7

Furthermore, the Employment Aid Programme assists disadvantaged persons, including inexperienced young jobseekers, inactive women, older persons, persons with disability and the long-term unemployed, to enter in the labour market. This is being achieved by facilitating access to employment through financial assistance and upgrading skills through work experience. Through this scheme, employers receive part of the wage costs as a subsidy with the aim of increasing employment levels of these vulnerable groups. As a result of this intervention, as at the end of 2011, 901 disadvantaged persons were retained in employment.

In order to increase employment levels of young people ESF is also funding other initiatives which seek to increase the employability and labour market integration of young people, particularly early school-leavers, through further training, actions such as career guidance, psychological services, occupational Therapy Services and Outreach Services. [...]

The Netherlands

P13 – 7

Participation of young people Although the level of unemployment among young people in the Netherlands is relatively low in European terms, the rising youth unemployment demands action. The government has opted for a dynamic approach to be carried out jointly with the social partners, municipalities and educational institutions that consists of measures aimed at preventing and tackling youth unemployment.

[...]

P18 – 8

Dutch research policy will also contribute to the development of the European Research Area (ERA), the planned open European area where researchers, knowledge and technology can circulate freely. In its Communication on the ERA, the European Commission requested member states to undertake a number of actions,¹² many of which are already addressed by Dutch policy.¹³ For example, the Netherlands already has competitive research financing, as requested by the Commission, through the funding provided through the NWO (which, as previously mentioned, will be increased further), and has had a system of international visitations for years. Other examples are the fact that all vacancies in the Dutch academic world are published on the international website *Academic Transfer* and a large number of Dutch universities have requested the

"HR Excellence in Research" logo from the European Commission, to identify them as institutions that provide a good and stimulating working environment. The ministries of Education, Culture and Science and Economic Affairs promote gender diversity in the senior ranks of companies, organisations and institutions through the Talent to the Top Foundation, among other things, and a substantial share of the 150 million euro in additional funds will be used for participation in European collaborative projects. Given the autonomy of the research institutions in the Netherlands, the government will take further steps to develop the ERA in consultation and collaboration with the institutions (and, where relevant, the private sector).

P26 – 3

Student loan as possible barrier to mobility?

The government plans to introduce a loan system for new students, also starting in the 2014- 2015 academic year. Under the new system, students (and parents) will be required to pay more towards the costs of their upkeep. Loans will be made available on favourable terms, to be repaid according to the student's ability after graduation. Studies by the CPB and the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) suggest that the effects of this measure on the number of enrolments of new students will be small. Furthermore, the supplementary grant for students with parents with a lower income will be retained. The proceeds from the introduction of the student loan system will be invested in the quality of education.

Poland

P4 – 7

The NRP 2013/2014 update includes the priorities provided for in the *Annual Growth Survey 2013*, confirmed in the European Council Conclusions of 14–15 March 2013 on fiscal consolidation, actions to curb unemployment, in particular among youth, support for economic growth and competitiveness on the single market and reduction of regulatory burdens.

P9 – 7

Taking these challenges into account and bearing in mind the current demographic processes which will cause the population of working people to shrink after 2020, it is necessary to activate social groups which up to this point were not sufficiently represented on the labour market, in particular youth, women, persons over 50 and disabled persons. Furthermore, in order to curb the growth of unemployment rate it is necessary to introduce instruments supporting companies facing financial difficulties in maintaining the current level of employment. High unemployment rate among young people (in 2012 the annual average unemployment rate among youth (15–24) calculated in line with LFS methodology amounted to 26.5%) is frequently related to difficulties in making a transition from education to employment. The situation of this group requires taking measures which would make it easier for them to find their first job, on the one hand, and measures aiming at improving competences and qualifications acquired within the education and training system, so that they correspond with the employers' skills needs. It is especially important to introduce conditions allowing universities to strengthen practical aspects of education and to adjust courses of study to the needs of the labour market, as well as to create modern education programmes to address the challenges of innovative economy.

P11 – 7

Implementation of the "Young people on the labour market" programme, which provides for several measures in the field of professional activation of persons under 30, began in 2012. Under this programme funds from

the specific budget provision of the Labour Fund were used to co-finance special programmes implemented by the Labour Offices. 150 Poviats Labour Offices received support – which amounted to PLN 64.8 million – for the implementation of special programmes addressed to people under 30 years of age. In 2012 these activities covered nearly 10 thousand people. Furthermore, under the above-mentioned programme, pilot project entitled “Your Career – Your Choice” was launched in order to develop and test new labour market instruments addressed to the unemployed under 30. Young unemployed are offered the assistance of a tutor, who, on the basis of individually designed plan, determines the actions which need to be taken in order to facilitate the entry on the labour market. On the basis of such a plan young people receive support from the Labour Office – i.a. in the form of bills for internship in a particular workplace, as well as bills for training courses, education in a vocational school and post-graduate studies. The project is implemented by the selected Labour Offices from June 2012 until the end of 2013.

P13 – 7

Young people under 30 years of age The following instruments facilitating young people's entry onto the labour market are planned to be introduced:

Fund and the Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund for employers who will employ an unemployed person under 30 sent by the Office for the period of 12 months; An exemption from the employer's contribution to the Fund for employers during the period of 6 months as a result of paying social contributions for the unemployed under 30 sent by the Office, who were employed for the first time, by the prefect; Enabling the unemployed under 30 to apply for a preferential loan for starting a business activity during the period of 24 months from obtaining their diploma, which will cover up to 100% of the costs of the undertaking, but no more than the amount equivalent to 20 average wages.

P21-22 – 8

Another cycle of the “Top 500 Innovators” programme was carried out – 80 employees of Polish scientific bodies and employees of technology transfer centres responsible for commercialising the results of scientific research have completed an internship and training programme at the US universities classified at the top of the Shanghai ranking: Stanford University and University of California in Berkeley, which allowed them to raise their competences in the field of strengthening relations between science and economy, managing scientific research and commercialising its results. The programme equips its participants with unique competences which allow them to carry out innovative research, focusing on the needs of commercial customer, with the assumption that the research product will be eventually introduced on the market.

P51 – 7

Counteracting social exclusion of the young (MLSP/VLC)

The task will be delivered as a result of implementation of four VLC systemic projects: “VLC as a provider of labour market services”, “New perspectives”, “New perspectives 2” and “Youth Skill Academy 2”, which aim at:

– professional activation and social integration of young people aged 15–24 at risk of social exclusion by training, on-the-job training, career guidance and job placement services, as well as preparing and disseminating information regarding the labour market;

[...]

P91 – 7

Fostering employment among the two outermost (the youngest and the oldest) groups experiencing difficulties on the labour market - by preparing a pilot programme for the benefit of the youth, and by the implementation throughout Poland, pursuant to the regulations in force, of programmes targeting specifically the young ("30 minus") and the older workers ("50 plus"); the total value of programmes - PLN 100 million.

Slovak Republic

P4 – 7

In order to enhance employment, measures to support employment of young people and increase efficiency of active labour market policies were approved. Changes in the education sector concentrated on quality improvements and better linking of the education sector with labour market requirements.

P10 – 7

With respect to the labour market, three components deserve attention. The first one is the *employment rate of young people* which considerably fell between 2001 and 2011 and has moved downwards from the EU-15 average even more. However, it is more than offset by their increased participation in tertiary education which will have a positive impact on labour productivity in the future. The second important component is the *employment rate of older people* which considerably lags behind the EU-15 average, despite having increased due the increase in retirement age. The third component is the *unemployment rate* which remains relatively high in spite of its considerable decrease in the recent years.

P10 – 3

An amendment to the Act on Tertiary Schools was adopted to improve the internal education quality assurance system, implement changes in part-time studies, tighten rules on the award of assistant professor and professor titles and encourage cooperation between Slovak tertiary schools and high-quality tertiary schools abroad. Changes made in the vocational training system have reinforced the means to coordinate vocational education and training to better match the needs of the labour market.

P13-15 – 7

(CSR4) Enhance the administrative capacity of public employment services with a view to improve the targeting, design and evaluation of active labour market policies to ensure more individualised employment services for the young, long-term unemployed, older workers and women. Ensure the provision of childcare facilities. Reduce the tax wedge for low-paid workers and adapt the benefit system.

The reform in the active labour market policies, introduced under an amendment to the Act on Employment Services, has cancelled programmes with a marginal or negative contribution to public finances. Eleven of the existing programmes will be cancelled while another seven will no longer be legally claimable. The spare administrative capacities will be used to provide professional and counselling services to disadvantaged (marginalised) job seekers (young people, the long-term unemployed, etc.) on an individual basis and to improve the quality of assessment of active policies which would be targeted more effectively. An increased emphasis will be placed on promoting the employment of marginalised job seekers.

[...]

P15-16 – 3

The amended Act on Tertiary Schools has been in force since 1 January 2013. The amendment is primarily aimed at creating legislative conditions to facilitate solutions to urgent problems with the quality of tertiary schools in Slovakia. They involve issues related to the internal education quality assurance system, part-time studies, enhancing the quality of tertiary school teachers and encouraging cooperation between domestic tertiary schools and high-quality tertiary schools abroad.

Box 3: Amendment to the Act on Tertiary Schools

From 2013 on, the tertiary schools are required to prepare and implement their internal education quality assurance systems. These quality assurance systems should be prepared in compliance with the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. The purpose is to underline the role that tertiary schools themselves play in assuring the quality of education they provide in compliance with formalised rules and pre-set procedures. The quality assurance systems and their implementation will be assessed by the Accreditation Commission in the upcoming comprehensive accreditation of activities performed by tertiary schools. In order to enhance the quality of part-time study programmes, the amendment to the Act on Tertiary Schools has changed the approach to full-time and part-time study programmes so that they better correspond to what is commonly known as full-time and part-time study abroad. With effect from 1 January 2013, tertiary schools are only allowed to submit accreditation applications for part-time study programmes in the form corresponding to the new structure of credits under which a lower number of credits per year is required which, in turn, extends the standard duration of a part-time study programme. The scope of study programmes for part-time students should be the same as of those provided to full-time students; the only difference should be the scheduling of study programmes which should allow part-time students to work in regular employment alongside their studies. The quality of tertiary schools should also be enhanced by reinforcing their international cooperation. In addition to changes in the provisions on joint study programmes, public tertiary schools will also be permitted to charge a tuition fee for study programmes provided in other than the official state language. The schools are expected to use this opportunity and take the necessary steps for their self-promotion abroad to help them attract foreign teachers as well as students.

P31 – 3

Based on the report on the implementation of the Concept of further development for tertiary schools in Slovakia for the 21st century, a new concept for the years 2013 - 2020 will be prepared in consultations with representative bodies of tertiary schools and trade unions representatives. The new concept should cover five areas for development – (i) providers of tertiary education, (ii) tertiary education system and access to tertiary education, internationalisation of education, (iii) employees of tertiary schools, creative activities at tertiary schools, academic rights and freedoms, academic ethics, (iv), quality assurance system, funding of tertiary schools, information systems in tertiary education and (v) internationalisation as a cross-sectoral issue, other auxiliary issues, issues of special concern. The concept in the form as discussed by the Slovak Government will serve as the basis for the preparation of a new act on tertiary schools.

P34-35 – 7

The labour market has been one of the key challenges in Slovakia's economy in the long term. In comparison with other EU Member States, Slovakia's employment rate is quite low, in particular as regards young job seekers, older people and women, while the unemployment rate is high – mostly driven by high numbers of the long-term unemployed. Hitting the 9 percent mark, the long term unemployment rate is among the highest in the EU-27. This is primarily due to a high youth unemployment rate and the long-term unemployment of low-skilled workforce.

Youth unemployment in Slovakia is among the highest in the EU, reaching more than 32% in 2012. When considering the number of young people in education, the inactivity rate of people under 25 years of age (i.e., those who are not in education, employment or training – the so-called NEET) represented 13.8% in Slovakia in 2011, which is still more than the EU-27 average and the V3 countries average (12.9% and, respectively, 11.1%), albeit the difference is smaller. In general, youth unemployment is influenced by a mismatch between the skills and the needs of the labour market, as well as insufficient demand for labour force.

P36-37 – 7

Promoting youth employment

As one of the countries facing the lowest youth employment, Slovakia underwent EC's evaluation procedure in order to be able to reallocate EU funds for tackling youth employment. In addition to other ALMP instruments, the system also includes two projects³ ("Boosting job creation" and "Promoting the employment of jobless in local government") under the Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion which are financed from the ESF and focus primarily on promoting the creation of jobs for applicants up to 29 years of age. [...]

Slovenia

P27 – 7

Knowledge and creativity

Measures in the area of education will be directed towards:

[...]

-more flexible transitions from education to employment and to increase the mobility of pupils, students and experts and the rotation of teachers to and from advisory institutions and universities; [...]

P29 – 7

For this purpose, it is implementing the project 'New Career Prospects', to promote the employability of unemployed and self-employed people up to the age of 37 by including them in the implementation of music and performing arts programmes of public institutes established by the state.

P44 – 7

Coverage of student work

The implementation of the Fiscal Balance Act determined a new amount of concession fee for student work (raised from 12 to 23%) and a new allocation that ensures that most of the funds are earmarked for scholarships. Student relief on personal income tax was reduced by a quarter in 2013. By raising the concession fee, student work is becoming less competitive than regular forms of work, which indirectly contributes to reducing segmentation in the labour market. We will proceed with systemic changes of student work within the social and civil dialogue soon.

P45 – 3

In addition to the data on the situation and trends in higher education and the labour market, long-term projections of the development of Slovenia and its labour market must be considered in the creation of enrolment policy and in structuring the annual invitation to enrol in higher education institutions. The ministry responsible for education will implement the measures stated in the Resolution on the National Programme of Higher Education 2011–2020:

a) short-term measures:

- promotion of internationalisation,
- improving the quality of higher education;

P46 – 7

Life-long career orientation must be ensured for all groups of working age population, i.e. the school-age youth, employed and self-employed, and unemployed. [...]

P51-52 – 7

Employment of young people

The issue of the employment of young people is being resolved by intensifying specific active employment policy measures intended for young people i.e. those who dropped out of school and those who want, or who in order to improve their employability must, acquire additional education (project learning for young adults, institutional training, training for life success, formal education, national vocational qualifications) or want to undergo training (on-the-job training, encouragement to employ job seekers in the field of social protection).

[...]

Spain

P8 – 8 [Emphasis in original]

Measures to boost the internationalisation of the Spanish economy: A new system of visas and residence permits is planned to attract talent and investment from abroad; and a Spanish strategy for internationalisation will be developed within a defined time-frame.

P16 – 7 [Emphasis in original]

With respect to **incentives for recruiting young people**, the impact of the measure will be positive on jobs and consumption in the first year (0.2% and 0.1%, respectively), while investment will initially fall by 0.13% due to the substitution effect. In the following years, investment will recover, boosted by increased employment. In the long term (2023) an increase in GDP of 0.13% and employment of 0.33% is expected, with the GDP increase being the result of increased private consumption (close to 0.2%).

P28-30 – 7 [Emphasis in original]

The training and apprenticeship contract aimed at people aged under 30 has been developed, in order to encourage the employment of **young people** through the possibility to combine vocational training and paid work, while at the same time laying the foundations for a system of **dual vocational training**, which will be further developed throughout 2013 (CSR 5.1.4 and CSR 5.2.9).

[...]

P31 – 3 [Emphasis in original]

In the area of university studies, work has already begun on future reform designed to **boost the competitiveness, excellence and internationalisation of Spanish universities** (CSR 6.2.19). A proposal to reform the legislation on a variety of issues will be presented in 2013, such as the rationalisation of the map of university degrees, a review of the system for accessing various categories of university teaching, and the incorporation of more foreign teachers and students into Spanish universities.

P32 – 7 [Emphasis in original]

As well as the various measures adopted to boost vocational education and training and to improve employability, above all for young people as a group particularly affected by unemployment (CSR 5.2 and CSR 6.2), a number of measures lie within the specific scope of this recommendation aimed at **improving the situation of people in or at risk of social exclusion, by improving their chances of employment**:

[...]

P37-38 – 7 [Emphasis in original]

The Annual Employment Policy Plan 2012, which has constituted the framework for the **coordination of the different national and regional public employment services** (CSR 5.2.6). The Plan sets out the following priority objectives:

1. Reduce the rate of **youth unemployment**.

[...]

The measures related to the European Commission's "**Youth Opportunities Initiative**" have been implemented through a new **training and apprenticeship contract** and a system of **dual vocational training**, which will be supported by a 2013-2015 Implementation Strategy (CSR 5.1.4 and CSR 5.2.9). The development of dual vocational training is part of the **Strategy for Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment 2013-2016**, which has already been launched and which includes a wide variety of other measures aimed at fostering the employment of young people through **training and education**, through the promotion of self-employment amongst the young, as well as through several **hiring incentives for young people with little or no work experience** (AGS 4.1.6).

P41 – 3/7

A further set of measures is also being adopted to contribute towards the objectives mentioned. These include: a programme such that young unemployed people who abandoned compulsory education may take it up again (CSR 6.2.8); a new form of part-time work for people to combine work and training (CSR 6.2.10); a new training contract to obtain a vocational training diploma or a professional certificate (CSR 5.1.4); enhanced access to vocational training through online possibilities (CSR 6.2.15); a review of the contents of the different diplomas and vocational training certificates to adapt them to new professional realities and needs of the productive sectors (CSR 6.2.17 and 6.2.18); the implementation of a plan to boost lifelong learning (CSR 6.2.16); a policy to improve the efficiency of scholarships (CSR 6.2.20); and a reform of university legislation in order to boost the excellence, competitiveness and the internationalisation of the university system (CSR 6.2.19).

P58-59 – 4/8

Discussion of internationalisation (not mobility per se)

The Draft **Bill Supporting Entrepreneurs and their Internationalisation** will be passed in May. The aim of the Bill is to create a favourable environment for entrepreneurship and promote the internationalisation of business projects. The Bill is aimed at favouring the creation of companies and also to promote their growth, development, innovation and internationalisation through a variety of measures: [...]

P61 – 4/8

A new, flexible system of visas and residence permits, valid across the whole of Spain, is planned to attract talent and investment. It will be applied to foreigners who invest in business projects that create jobs, carry out investment of a significant social or economic impact, or make a significant contribution to scientific or technological innovation (AGS 3.2.17).

P65 – 7/8

Other measures that may help improve the results in education and training are as follows: a programme of grants allowing young unemployed people who left compulsory education early to return to it (CSR 6.2.8); a new form of **part-time work** aimed at people who want to **combine work with training** (CSR 6.2.10); a new **training and apprenticeship contract** that gives people the chance to receive an occupational training diploma, and the establishment of a **dual vocational training** system (CSR 5.1.4 and CSR 5.2.9); a **new system of training for workers and the unemployed** with the aim of promoting competences and detecting the priorities of productive sectors (CSR 5.2.8); the provision of access to vocational training studies through **online education** (CSR 6.2.15); a **revision of the contents of the different occupational training diplomas** to adapt them to the new occupational realities and needs of the productive sectors (CSR 6.2.17 and CSR 6.2.18); the implementation of a plan to boost **lifelong learning**; the efficiency increase of the policy of scholarships and financial aids for studies (CSR 6.2.20); and a future reform of university legislation to boost the **excellence, competitiveness and internationalisation of the university system** (CSR 6.2.19).

P79-81, 83-84 – 7

Active labour market policies: a new strategy aimed at improving employability, in particular of young people.

[...]

P96 – 7

Sustainable integration in the labour market of young people who are unemployed or without education or training.

[...]

As well as these thematic objectives, a specific axis within all the programmes will be included dedicated to **initiatives for young people**, as Spain is giving key importance to the application of the Youth Guarantee through its own Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Strategy.

Sweden

P4 – 7

More people in work

Continued efforts to improve job opportunities for those with a weak foothold in the labour market, particularly young people and those born outside Sweden, are of the utmost urgency. A central component in this process entails assuring a high level of quality throughout the education system. In the Government's view, strengthened driving forces to work and lowered entrance thresholds into the labour market are effective ways of increasing employment. Where budgetary scope allows, the Government wants to further strengthen the in-work tax credit and raise the lower bracket for national income tax.

P9-10 – 7

Effects of measures associated with recommended measures to improve labour market participation among young people and other exposed groups [...]

Other measures to increase demand for those with a weak foothold in the labour market include lowered employers' contributions for young people and seniors. [...]

P15-19 – 7

3.3 Recommendation regarding measures to improve labour market participation among young people and other exposed groups

The recommendation regarding employment policy agrees well with the Government's policies and the measures it has undertaken. The Government's principal objective is to take Sweden towards full employment by reducing exclusion. The Government shares the view expressed in the recommendation that labour market participation needs to be improved, particularly in terms of the level of employment among young people and other groups with a weak foothold in the labour market. Counteracting long-term unemployment and increasing employment among these groups is one of the most important challenges facing the Government over the next few years. For this to be possible, the labour market must become more inclusive and flexible.

The Government's policy focuses on continuously following-up and improving the labour market situation for groups with a weak foothold in the labour market. Young people, older people, people born outside Sweden, those with at most a lower-secondary education and those with disabilities entailing decreased work capacity have a poorer labour market situation than the population as a whole. The Government's policies are a combination of measures to stimulate supply and demand for labour and to stimulate the matching of job-seekers and vacancies.

Since 2011, discussions have been taking place between the Government and the social partners, known as the tripartite discussions, aimed at finding shared solutions to the remaining problems. The Government's objective with the discussions is to identify measures to reduce equilibrium unemployment and increase lasting employment, particularly by improving job opportunities for people with a weak foothold in the labour market. Three areas have been in focus:

- establishing a new path into the labour market for young people through work introduction agreements,
- providing improved opportunities for realignment in the labour market, and
- introducing a system of central government support for short-term employment in periods of deep economic crisis.

[...]

P22 – 4/8

Special efforts will be made in the period 2013–2016 to recruit top-level international researchers to Swedish seats of learning and to allocate funds to prominent young researchers.

P25 – 7

Sweden's national targets

To strive for a level of employment well above 80 per cent for women of 20–64 years of age by 2020. The increase is mainly to be achieved among groups with a weak foothold in the labour market, such as young people and people born outside Sweden, as well as by counteracting long periods without work. The difference in the level of employment between women and men is to decrease through an increase in the level of employment among women.

P36 – 3/4/8

An open labour market for researchers

With the aim of enabling the recruitment of top-level researchers to Sweden, the Swedish Research Council will be allocated SEK 250 million for 2013–2016. These funds are to be used to set up a programme for the recruitment of internationally prominent researchers, enabling them to move their research to Sweden and to the relevant seat of learning that has applied for the funds.

The Committee for Circular Migration and Development appointed by the Government has proposed a number of measures that could contribute to students and post-graduates from third-party countries choosing to come to Sweden to study. Since this is a matter of some urgency, the Government intends to return to the matter of possible measures.

P46 – 7

The Government agency involved, the Swedish ESF Council, is of the opinion that all quantified goals regarding skills development for the employed will be met at the end of the programme period. With regard to efforts related to people who are very detached from the labour market, the authority believes that all quantified goals will be met, except the goal for the long-term unemployed. The goal for young people, which has been changed from at least 5,000 to at least 15,000 participants, has already been met before the end of the programme period. Through 2012, just over 39,000 young people began their participation.

P60-61, 64-65 – 7

Integration of young people in the labour market

Work introduction agreements

SALAR and the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union have reached an agreement regarding two new forms of employment: training and introductory employment, and work introduction employment. [...]

P67 – 7

Local examples

Second Chance School is a project initiated by the European Commission to combat youth unemployment. The project is aimed at young people of 20–30 years of age who lack school grades and qualifications and therefore risk exclusion from the labour market. Second Chance School is being operated in several municipalities around Sweden, including Malmö, Linköping, Norrköping and Lycksele.

United Kingdom

P13 – 7

The Government supports the Country-Specific Recommendations addressed to the UK by EU Heads of State or Government at the June 2012 European Council, which are to:

[...]

-continue to improve the employability of young people, in particular those not in education, employment or training, including by using the Youth Contract. Ensure that apprenticeship schemes are taken up by more young people, have a sufficient focus on advanced and higher-level skills, and involve more small and medium-sized businesses. Take measures to reduce the high proportion of young people aged 18-24 with very poor basic skills;

P17 – 2a/7

Supporting home ownership

3.24 The availability of high loan-to-value (LTV) lending has seen a sharp reduction in the wake of the financial crisis. This has made it significantly more difficult for credit worthy households to become home owners. The average deposit now makes up 79 per cent of a First Time Buyer's annual income compared to 36 per cent in the early 2000s, while the number of first time buyers has fallen to its lowest rate in 25 years from an average of around 470,000 a year in the early 2000s to 220,000 in 2012.² The owner occupation rate for those aged between 25 and 34 fell from 67 per cent in 1991 to 43 per cent in 2010-11.³

3.25 The Funding for Lending Scheme (FLS) is already helping address these problems. Bank funding costs have dropped markedly since the FLS was announced, reflecting both the impact of the scheme and wider global developments. This has been reflected in the prices and availability of loan products to UK households. Recent statistics from the Council for Mortgage Lenders show that January 2013 saw the best start to a year for mortgage lending volumes since 2008.

P22-27 – 7

Recommendation 3

Continue to improve the employability of young people, in particular those not in education, employment or training, including by using the Youth Contract. Ensure that apprenticeship schemes are taken up by more young people, have a sufficient focus on advanced and higher-level skills, and involve more small and medium-sized businesses. Take measures to reduce the high proportion of young people aged 18-24 with very poor basic skills.

3.49 The Government is committed to ensuring that young people stay attached to the labour market and engaged in society and has therefore embarked on an ambitious programme of measures aimed at:

- improving the employability of young people through the Youth Contract, work experience provided by the Jobcentre Plus Offer and the Work Programme;
- increasing the number of apprenticeships available to young people; and
- improving their skills.

[...]

P51-53 – 7

9 per cent of all youth who are not students are unemployed (672,000), which is a lower rate than after previous recessions in 1993 (12 per cent) and 1984 (14 per cent) show that of the employers who are recruiting, just under two thirds have taken on a young person in the previous year. Just over half of those recruiting for higher skill jobs have taken on a young person. [...]

P69-70 – 8

Discussion of internationalisation and broader issues of mobility related to research

The European Research Area

4.83 The UK has already made significant progress in the five priority areas identified for implementing the European Research Area ERA. The UK is widely recognised as having an effective national research system with an open labour market for researchers from the EU and beyond. On transnational co-operation, it is participating in 9 (out of 10) Joint Programming Initiatives, with a leading role in at least three of these.

[...]

International Engagement

4.92 The Government has continued to strengthen research and innovation links with countries outside the EU. As an example, in April 2012, the Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on innovation collaboration with China which provides a platform for the UK to work with the Chinese Government on understanding and addressing the barriers to collaboration, and putting in place new collaboration opportunities. The dialogue with key Chinese innovation bodies has increased significantly and the UK has also signed an official level MoU to continue to increase the impact of the annual Policy Dialogues. This will enable more UK businesses and universities to establish innovation partnerships that can drive expansion and accelerate innovation.

CONCLUSION

This deliverable has provided a report on the transposition of EU guidelines and directives in the 2013 National Reform Programmes (NRPs) of 25 of the 27 EU member states. Desk top research was used to select four relevant themes: care for the elderly, non-national care workers, reproductive rights and mobile youth. Following, all of the Europe 2020 documents and 2013 National Reform Programmes were read and coded for any information these themes. The information from the NRPs on each of these themes has been presented here. In this concluding section, we reflect critically on this report and discuss the limitations of our approach before discussing emerging trends across the EU member states and the next steps in future analysis of these trends.

LIMITATIONS OF OUR APPROACH

As noted in the introduction, there are a number of limitations to the approach used here. Three particular issues affect any conclusions to be drawn from this report. First, the analysis presented here is representative of the *current* political discourse in the EU member states. In other words, this is a highly topical analysis and the results should not be seen as necessarily representative of how these issues have been approached across time within each country. Second, possible contradictory motives can affect what is presented in the NRPs in 2013. National governments have their own motives for why they do respond to EU directives and guidelines as well as *how* they respond. Whether and how they choose to respond can be indicative of their own political agendas but can also reflect the framing of these topics within national cultures and discourses. Lastly, the themes discussed here are not, to an equal degree, key themes within Europe2020. Therefore the absence of a discussion of these themes in some cases may not mean there is a lack of national attention for any given theme. Rather, it could reflect the lack of attention for this theme within the NRP. Member states differ significantly in their approach to the NRP, the length of the NRP submitted to the EU and their discussion of the four themes central to this report. This variation needs to be taken into consideration when interpreting this report.

FURTHER ANALYSIS

While there are limitations to the approach used here, the analysis of the NRPs provides an insightful base of information on how member states appear to be approaching the four themes of care for the elderly, non-national care workers, reproductive rights and mobile youth. Our report shows a number of emergent tensions that require further investigation.

First, in regards to care for the elderly, the analysis presented here suggests tensions could be emerging around (de)centralisation tendencies, the integration, expansion or – in contrast – the reduction of elder care services, the growing demand for care workers and attention for reducing poverty among the elderly. Second, in relation to non-national care workers, it appears that most member states are discussing integration programs and are attempting to attract key (e.g. highly-skilled) workers. Yet the analysis does not show a discussion of legal protections or rights of migrant care workers, certainly not of those who work in the private homes of the elderly. In addition, there appears to be –an intention to - a downgrading and/or levelling off of professions and professional qualifications in some countries.

Third, the analysis of reproductive rights, also in relation to within EU mobility, reveals that some member states are attempting to stimulate fertility. These efforts can create tensions between the desire to improve fertility and individuals' reproductive freedoms. Further analysis is needed to determine to what extent member states intent on improving fertility give attention to these issues, and what gender-effects will be. Fourth, the theme of mobile youth shows several possible emerging tensions. The position of –mobile- youth as newcomers to the labour market means tensions can arise in both their home country and abroad in relation to family formation rights, but also in relation to access to education and employment.

For example, we have currently started working on a more in-depth investigation of possible tensions arising between EU guidelines and member state approaches to mobile youth. Our further analysis of this topic takes as its starting point the significant gap between EU goals of improving mobility among young Europeans to work, study or volunteer abroad and the absence of youth mobility discussions in the national reform programmes. The analysis reveals that European member states are currently prioritizing youth unemployment and related topics, such as youth employment, youth entrepreneurship and transitions from school to work. In those member states where mobility is being discussed, three dominant themes emerge: internationalisation (of education), individualization (of educational responsibility) and facilitation (of return migration). The extent to which and how these themes are discussed across the member states differs.

During the remainder of the project, our analysis will focus on looking at these four themes more in-depth. We will continue to investigate emerging tensions through further desk research (e.g. assessing existing research and data on these topics), through discussions with WP9 country experts on these topics (e.g. to validate or refute our findings) and through cooperation with other work packages on the project, where data from these WPs can be used to validate or refute our findings.