



Upskilling unemployed adults (aged 25 to 64):

The organisation, profiling
and targeting of training provision

EEPO Review

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European Employment Policy Observatory Review

**Upskilling unemployed
adults (aged 25 to 64):
The organisation, profiling
and targeting of training provision**

European Commission

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Unit C.1

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List of abbreviations

aES	Adult Education Survey
Afpa	National Association for Adult Vocational Training – Association nationale pour la formation professionnelle des adultes
ANQEP	National Agency for Qualification and Professional Education
AVETAE	Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
BTEA	Back to Education Allowance
CES	Croatian Employment Service
CFWL	Competences for working life
CIE	Contrat d'initiation à l'emploi
CNQ	National Qualifications Catalogue
COCOF	Commission Communautaire Française
CPAS	Public social assistance centres
CSR	Country-specific recommendations
CVT	Continuous VET
DIISP	Integrated Measure for Socio-professional Integration – Dispositif Intégré d'Insertion Socioprofessionnelle
DLO	Department of labour offices
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
EEPO	European Employment Policy Observatory
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ETC	Employment and Training Corporation, Malta
IAG	Information, advice and guidance
IAP	Individual action plan
ICT	Information and communication technologies
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
Isfol	National Institute for Educational and Vocational Training
JSSP	Jobseekers Support Programme
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLE	local labour exchange
LMP	Labour Market Programme
LTU	long-term unemployed
NFQ	National Framework of Qualification
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NVAEO	National Vocational and Adult Education Office
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
OISP	Socio-professional Integration Bodies – Organismes d'Insertion Socioprofessionnelle
OPCA	Organisme paritaire collecteur agréé
PES	Public employment service
PMTIC	ICT Mobilising Plan – Plan Mobilisateur TIC
POEC	Preparation Operationelle pour l'Emploi Collective
POEI	Preparation Operationelle pour l'Emploi Individuel
RIS	Social integration income – revenu d'intégration sociale
SEA	State Employment Agency
SEV	Hellenic Federation of Enterprises
TES	Training for employment subsystem – subsistema de formación para el empleo
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
VET	Vocational education and training
VLTU	Very long-term unemployed

■ Key policy messages

This review presents an in-depth analysis of funded training provision across Member States aimed at raising the skills of adult unemployed persons (25-64) with low levels of qualifications or inadequate basic skills. The review describes the funding, the institutions responsible for governance and the implementation of training programmes. It maps and provides detailed information of the set-up of training interventions and measures provided to unemployed adults throughout the 33 EEPO countries. The review also explores lessons from comparative analysis, drawing on evaluation findings, highlighting effective design features and considers the role of the European Structural Fund (ESF) in supporting training for unemployed adults. Finally, it outlines the challenges training programmes need to overcome and presents a set of recommendations.

Review conclusions:

- Although training measures are essentially compensatory interventions, they have the potential to **support labour market efficiency** and are an appropriate **response to structural unemployment**.
- In a climate of increased unemployment, training courses need an appropriate **mix of generic and vocational skills**, and should **target** low skilled and long-term unemployed adults.
- Training measures with more positive evaluation results tend to be **well tailored** to the job-seeker's potential; meet (local) employers' skills need; lead to formal vocational qualifications; are smaller in scale; and target specific disadvantaged groups and particular occupations.
- **Vocational training** has significant positive effects for jobseekers with low levels of educational attainment.
- **Individualised approaches** are key to effective training.
- **Self-selection approaches** (allowing individuals to choose their training path) appear to work better, than decisions solely made by PES caseworkers.
- **Decentralised training provision**, delivered by a wide range of education providers, including non-profit organisations, enhances opportunities for tailored provision and practical training orientated towards labour market needs.
- **Integrated approaches** and **institutional cooperation** are important for those groups who face multiple employment barriers, in which information and guidance play a central role.
- Schemes which provide **experience that is as close as possible to working life** tend to be more effective.
- **Employer involvement** is important and the most successful schemes combine institutional training with practical training, mirroring a real job and workplace environment.
- Training providers not only help learners to develop knowledge, skills and competences and to gain working experience, but also work at the interface between learners and employers, and often function as labour market intermediaries, so **this intermediary function of training providers should be supported**.
- The system of **individual action plans** provides a useful mechanism for focusing interventions most effectively and speeding up the activation process.
- **Guidance and follow-up** for leavers from training, especially for those considered distant from the labour market and facing multiple employment barriers, is needed, with a view to keeping them on a lifelong learning pathway.
- **Targeted learning opportunities for unemployed people** can have a positive impact on improving progress towards the EU benchmark of 15% adult participation in learning.

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1. Introduction

Adult training ⁽¹⁾ aims to provide compensatory learning in basic skills which individuals may not have acquired earlier in their initial education or training (such as literacy, numeracy); it aims to give access to qualifications not gained, for various reasons, in the initial education and training system or to acquire, improve or update knowledge, skills or competences in a specific field: this is continuing education and training. The main challenge that adult training needs to address is helping adults, and especially unemployed adults, to adequately adapt to changes in the labour market due to demographics, globalisation, economic conditions and technological advancements, and to do this throughout their working life.

In order to improve the provision of training for adults at risk, it is necessary to better understand how training and learning opportunities for unemployed people are designed and delivered in different Member States, as well as the impacts of these different approaches. Furthermore, while the overall state of the economy is an important factor in determining changes in the levels and flows to and from long-term unemployment, it is also important to assess the role played by training provision in affecting these flows.

This review performs an in-depth analysis of funded training provision for unemployed adults, aged 25 to 64, with a specific focus on programmes targeted at returning them to employment, and raising basic skills or the skills of individuals with low levels of educational qualification.

A brief reminder of terminology is warranted, as outlined in Cedefop's Terminology of European Education and Training Policy glossary (Cedefop, 2009a):

Formal learning is learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (e.g. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.

Informal learning is learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal

learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.

Non-formal learning is learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. In some countries, the entire sector of adult learning falls under non-formal learning; in others, most adult learning is formal.

1.1. Scope of the review

Drawing mainly on information contained in country articles prepared by experts in the 33 countries covered by the European Employment Policy Observatory (EEPO), this review describes the funding, responsible institutions for governance and the implementation of training programmes. It further provides a mapping and detailed information of the set-up of training interventions or measures provided to unemployed adults throughout the 33 EEPO countries. The review also explores lessons to be drawn from comparative analysis, drawing on evaluation findings, highlighting effective design features and considers the role of the European Structural Fund (ESF) in supporting training for unemployed adults. Finally, it outlines the challenges still encountered by training programmes and presents a set of recommendations.

1.2. European policy context

1.2.1. Training in the European semester

Lifelong learning, including vocational education and training (VET) and adult learning have been the object of recommendations in the context of the European semester ⁽²⁾. Between 2011 and 2014, country-specific recommendations (CSRs) promoting the development of vocational and adult learning in the wider context of developing a skilled workforce were issued for

⁽¹⁾ Adapted from Cedefop 2009a.

⁽²⁾ The European Semester is the annual cycle of economic and employment policy coordination at the European level. During each European Semester, the European Commission analyses the fiscal and structural reform policies of every Member State, provides Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs), and monitors their implementation.

10 Member States (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Spain, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, and Slovakia). Most of these CSRs date back to 2011 and have built on one another in subsequent years. A total of 15 CSRs relating to vocational education and training have been issued since 2011, covering various aspects of the education and training offer, such as work-based learning, skills mismatch issues, and lifelong learning. As such, they have some crossover with CSRs that focus on early school leaving, public employment services, youth and higher education.

In both Belgium and Cyprus, recommendations for reforms have focused on providing more opportunities for work-based learning. The development of lifelong learning has been the focus of recommendations and reforms in Malta and Poland. A number of East European Member States (Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary and Slovakia) have been encouraged to improve the labour market relevance of their respective education and training systems through improving the quality of the educational content.

The outstanding challenges faced by Member States in this policy area are in fact closely linked to challenges in other policy areas, such as the development of educational systems to prevent early school leaving and the modernisation of public employment services (PES). Overall, developments suggest that Member States are responding well to one of the most critical objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. Through a variety of reforms, important steps have been taken in the Member States to improve the labour market relevance of education and to create stronger links between educational systems and the world of work.

1.2.2. The participation of low-skilled unemployed in training

Low-skilled adults are more likely to be unemployed, less likely to take part in training and are over-represented among the group of long-term unemployed.

Eurostat data show that from 2008 to 2013, EU-27 unemployment rates generally appeared to be levelling out; the same could be said for older workers, for women and, to some extent, for young people. However, rates for people with low educational qualifications (ISCED 0-2) continued to rise, reaching almost 20%.

There were around 25 million unemployed adults aged 25-64 in the EU in 2011 (Labour Force Survey — LFS). Of those, around 10 million were low-qualified (ISCED 0-2), 11 million had medium qualifications (ISCED 3-4) and around 4 million had a high qualification (ISCED 5-6). Low-skilled unemployed people are over-represented among the long-term unemployed, many of whom work in declining occupations and sectors.

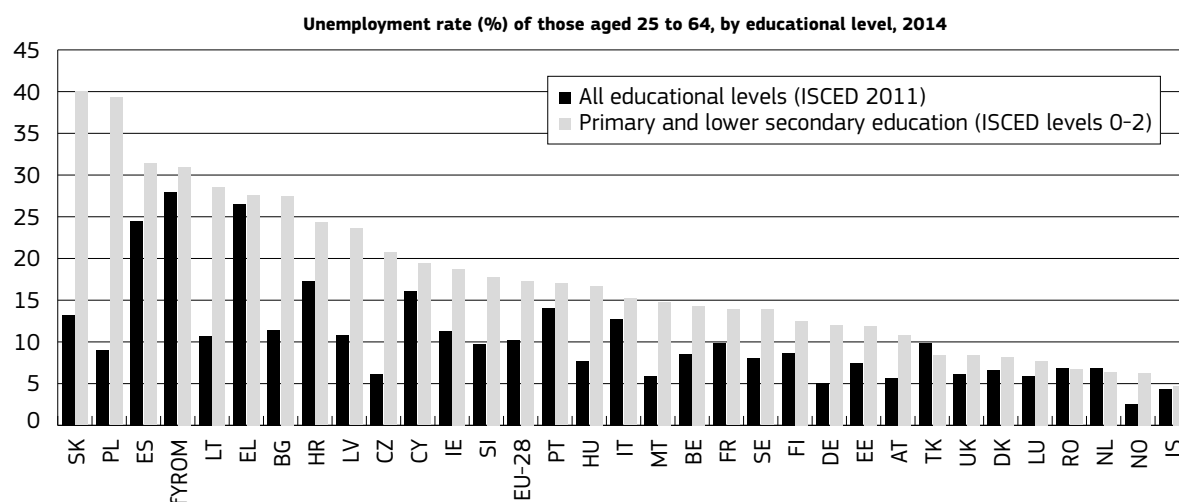
Furthermore, the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) (EC DG EAC, 2013b), highlights that:

- 20% of the EU working age population has low literacy and numeracy skills;
- 25% of adults lack the skills to effectively make use of ICTs;
- the high-skilled are progressing well through adult learning, but people with low proficiency are easily caught in a 'low skills trap' as they are less likely to participate in learning activities;
- education and skills increase employability: this represents a challenge for the one in four unemployed who has low literacy and numeracy skills.

Low-skilled workers are more likely to be unemployed

The chart below shows that to a greater or lesser extent, lower skilled adults face higher unemployment rates than the average in all countries covered by EEPO. However, Slovakia and Poland are two of the countries with the lowest share of adults who have not completed upper secondary education.

Figure 1.1 Adult unemployment rate (%), by educational level, 2014



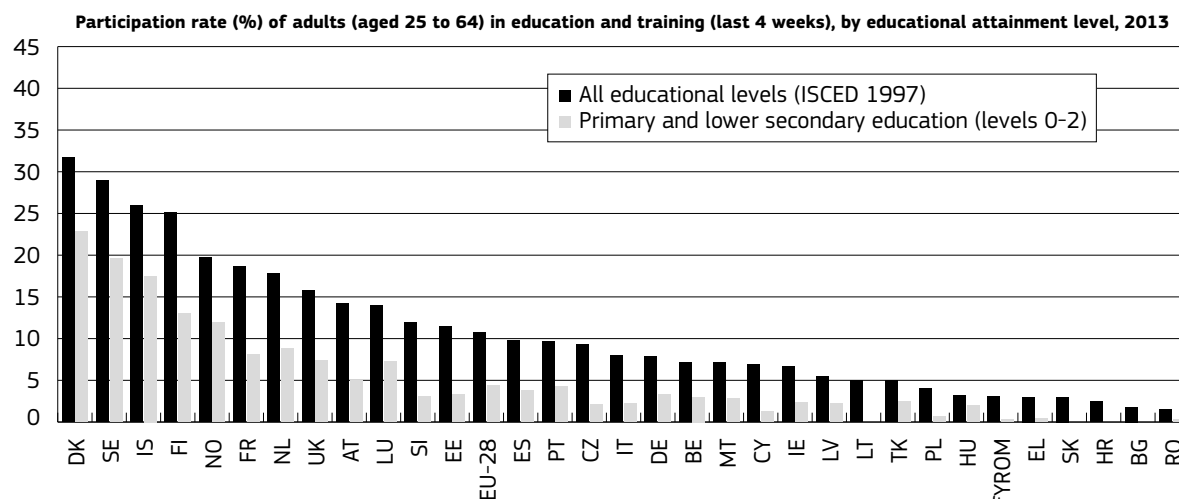
Participation in lifelong learning/continuing training is likely to be lower for the low skilled, while the employed are more likely to access non-formal learning than unemployed people

The PIAAC study (EC, DG EAC 2013a), shows that usually learning during adulthood was found to be undertaken by young adults and highly educated individuals as opposed to older adults or adults with lower skills. Furthermore, there is divergence between participation in education and training by age group. Less than 6% of all 55-64 year olds participated in education and training in 2013, compared to nearly 17% of 25-34 year olds. PIAAC also found that people who are employed were more likely to access non-formal learning

activities compared to unemployed people (45% compared to 23% respectively). Moreover, the access rate in non-formal training is fifteen times that in formal training (38% as opposed to 2.4%), with strong variations across countries.

As illustrated in the chart below, in 2014, for the EU-28, just 4.4% of adults with low qualification levels (ISCED 0-2) participated in education and training, compared to 10.7% of all adults. This would seem to indicate that those who need education and training most in order to return to employment have the least chance of getting it. This is a particular problem for those unemployed people whose lack of basic literacy or numeracy skills prevents them from accessing more job-specific training.

Figure 1.2 Adult participation rate (%) in education and training, by educational attainment level, 2014)



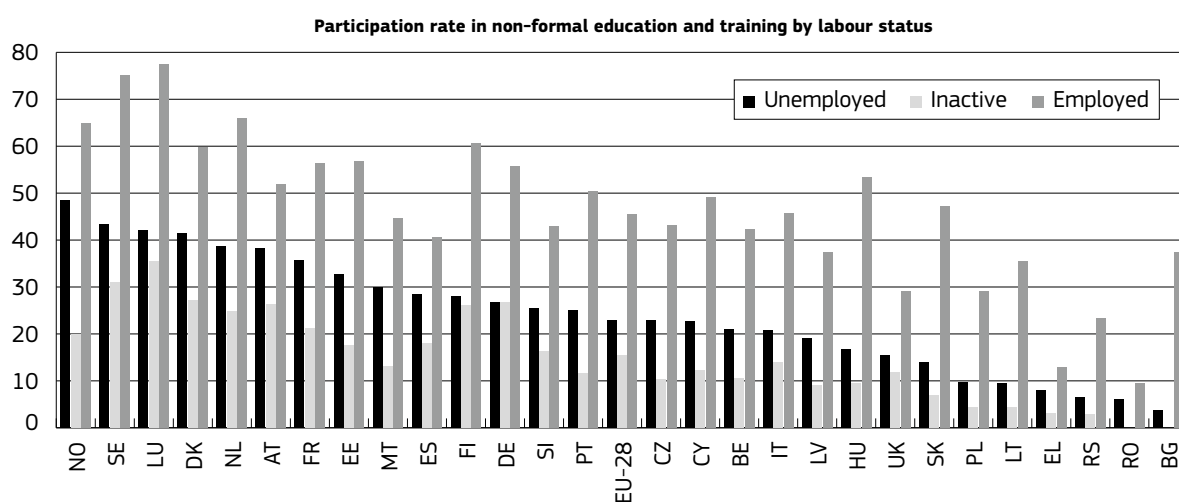
Source: Eurostat, trng_ifse_03.

Participation of unemployed people in training: is training for unemployed adults sufficient?

Based on statistical data from the Adult Education Survey (AES), the figure below illustrates participation in non-formal education and training by unemployed and inactive people (the data are not disaggregated for the long-term unemployed (LTU) and the very long-term unemployed (VLTU)). The chart is based on data for 2011, the latest year for which data are available, and shows that in the best of cases (Norway, Sweden, Luxembourg and Denmark),

less than half of unemployed people participated in non-formal education and training that year, while at the other end of the spectrum, less than 20% of unemployed people participated in ten countries (Latvia, Hungary, UK, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia). It emerges that training for unemployed adults is probably not sufficient, at least in some countries such as Lithuania, Greece, and Bulgaria, where small proportions of unemployed people take part in training despite these countries facing some of the highest unemployment rates for low-skilled adults in the EU.

Figure 1.3 Participation rate in non-formal E & T by labour status, (2011 data)



Source: Eurostat, [trng_aes_103].

NB: A blank value indicates that data were unavailable for this group. Data not available for this year for Croatia, Ireland and Turkey.

2. Governance of training

This chapter describes the context, the governance system of training provision for unemployed people, and the framework in which interventions are set. It describes the amounts and sources of

funding, the institutions responsible for governance and implementation of training, as well as the selection and control of the main providers of training.

Key findings

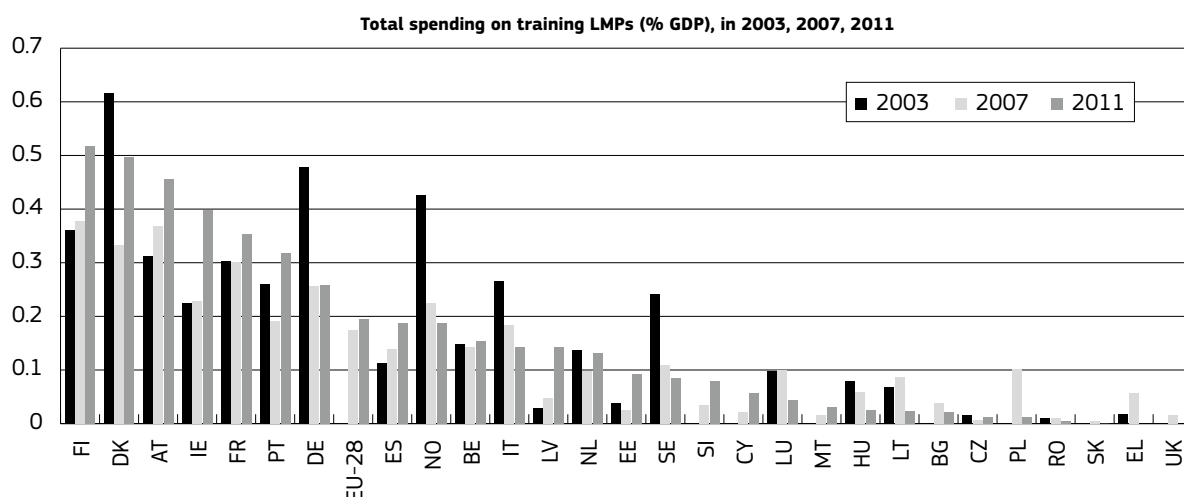
- There is a trend away from central state control and towards decentralisation.
- Institutions responsible for providing training to unemployed adults include national training bodies, PES, education and vocational institutions, private training companies, employers, voluntary and community organisations and social partners.
- Social partner responsibility in training unemployed people is increasing in some Member States.
- In the majority of countries, more than one body shares the responsibility for the management and implementation of training for unemployed people but there is room to improve coordination between bodies.

2.1. Funding amounts and sources

The two charts that follow illustrate the amount that each country invests in training, as a percentage of GDP and amounts spent by training participant, respectively. Four countries (Finland,

Denmark, Austria, and Ireland) had the highest proportions of spending on training in 2011, at 0.4% of GDP or more. In terms of highest spending per participant, the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway), together with Greece and Luxembourg spent over EUR 15 000 per training participant.

Figure 2.1 Total spending on training LMPs (as% of GDP)



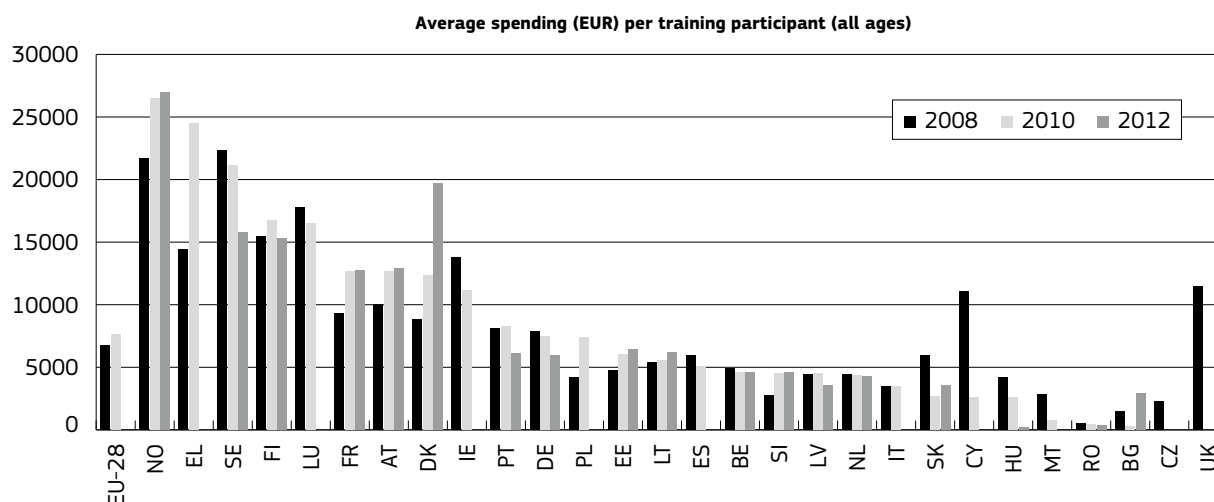
Source: Eurostat, Imp_expsumm.

NB: A blank value indicates that data were unavailable for this year.

Expenditure on labour market policies (LMP) is limited to public interventions which are explicitly targeted at groups of persons with difficulties in

the labour market: unemployed people, employed people at risk of involuntary job loss and inactive persons who would like to enter the labour market.

Figure 2.2 Average spending per LMP training participant



Source: Eurostat, Imp_exsum and Imp_partsum.

NB: A blank value indicates that data were unavailable for this year.

2.1.1. Funding sources

The table below summarises the institutions with budgetary responsibility and some of the sources of funding for training in different countries.

Table 2.1 Key budgetary responsibility and sources

Type of institution	Country
Ministry for Employment	BG, DE, IT, AT, UK, NO
Ministry for Education	BG, DE, IT, FYROM
Other central government (e.g. Ministry of Economy)	CZ, DK, FR, CY, HU, SI, SK, SE
PES	DE, ES, FR, NL, PL, SI
Regional and local authorities	BE, DK, DE, ES, FR, NL, SI
Employee & employer insurance contributions / Social partner training funds	IE (Jobs Fund), ES (worker contributions), LT (Employment Fund), LU (Employment Fund), HU (National Employment Fund), PL (Employers' Labour Fund)
Unemployment Insurance Fund	EE, AT, RO, IS
European Social Fund	A key role in: BG, CZ, EL, IT, CY, LT, HU, PL, RO A role in: BE, DK, DE, EE, ES, FR, IE, AT, PT, SE, SI, SK

Source: Main sources of funding as outlined in the EEPO review country articles

In a number of countries, funds are distributed at the level of national ministries.

In Austria, the UK and Norway, the Ministry for Employment has prime responsibility, whereas in Germany the Ministry of Education and Research plays a role. In Italy and Bulgaria, both ministries are involved, reflecting the different strands of adult education in the country. France has a multi-level structure involving different sources of funding. In 2012, 366 141 training courses were financed by regions, 144 175 by Pôle Emploi (the PES) and 52 944 by the state. Some training actions are still managed and partly financed by the state or by the European Social Fund (ESF).

Regional and local authorities are also important sources of funding in Belgium and Denmark.

In Belgium, the organisation of training is a community power ⁽³⁾, except in the French-speaking area where the Wallonia-Brussels Federation has transferred its power over vocational training to the Walloon Region and to the French Community Commission (Commission Communautaire Française — COCOF). The regions and communities are also

⁽³⁾ The top level of the Belgian state is made up of the Federal State, the Communities and the Regions. The Communities are based on language: i.e. the Flemish, French and German-speaking communities.

supported in their training efforts by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the ESF. In Denmark, the cost of active measures is financed jointly by the national government and the municipalities, which collect their own local taxes. There is a complex scheme of reimbursement by the state of the various costs borne by the municipalities for different kinds of benefits and costs of active programmes. In general, the government reimburses 50% of the costs of education and training.

The ESF is noted as an important source of funding in some countries, potentially creating an implicit central budget deficit for those years when ESF funding will not be available (see Section 4.5 for more details on the role of the ESF in supporting training)

Social partner training funds and employee/ employer insurance contributions feature. For example, in Ireland, following the change in government in March 2011, the new government launched the Jobs Fund, which is financed by a 0.6% levy on private pension funds and is designed to raise EUR 1.88 billion over a 4-year period.

2.2. The roles of institutions in governance and delivery of training

2.2.1. National policy frameworks and priorities

The priorities and key target groups of national policies for training unemployed people vary widely, and few countries focus explicitly on low-skilled, unemployed people. Priorities for training unemployed people range from an emphasis on certification (France), through increasing skills levels (United Kingdom) to a recently enhanced focus on the low skilled (Denmark and Spain).

In France, the national policy framework is very much structured by the last two training reforms (2009 and 2014). The last reform put in place the personal account for training (Compte Personnel Formation CPF). More recent reforms have tended to emphasise the notion of ‘certification’ of training actions, which contributes to increased employability for unemployed people.

The UK Work Programme started in 2011 with the aim of being an all-encompassing support framework for unemployed people, with the emphasis on customising activities to the needs

of the individual and raising skills levels to at least ISCED Level 2. The government’s reshaping of funding for training has meant a reduction in adult training and a switch to ensuring that as many people as possible acquire Level 2 qualifications. This has inevitably meant that more resources have been switched to raising the achievements of youth, especially in the light of high levels of unemployment among young people — levels that in the UK, are more persistent than among adults.

In many countries, training for unemployed people is part of more general employment frameworks. For example, the rules for granting public support for unemployed people in Poland are set by the Act on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions. In Bulgaria, the training of unemployed adults is one of the main actions for implementation of the upgraded employment strategy 2013–2020. In Romania, the current Unemployment Insurance Act adopted in 2002 provides for training of unemployed people, as one of the main services to support their labour market reintegration. In Iceland, as unemployment has traditionally been very low, the need for active labour market measures has in the past not been regarded as very pressing. However, that has changed as a result of the economic recession, when unemployment increased. Consequently, employment measures were developed that included training provision. Turkey did not have a formal national employment policy framework until 2014, when it published its first national employment policy.

In other cases, training for unemployed people is linked more closely to education policies (e.g. Croatia, Greece, Malta). For example, Finland’s Government Programme (2011–2015) focuses on addressing existing educational inequalities.

2.2.2. The role of national ministries and public bodies in governance

As might be expected, national employment bodies often have a role in strategic governance and oversight of training for unemployed people (e.g. in Cyprus, Hungary, Portugal), but in many cases more than one body shares responsibility for training. For example, in both Italy and Portugal, vocational training comes under the Ministry of Labour (which sets the minimum service and regulation levels and provides most of the funding), while adult education comes under the Ministry of Education (responsible for the programming and structure of the system).

As already indicated in the literature (Cedefop, 2013), national policies tend to remain too fragmented in their approaches, with insufficient crossovers and joint policy thinking between the relevant ministries and national institutions responsible for employment policy and education and training. A number of examples are highlighted in the EEPO country articles: in Hungary, the framework of training provision for jobseekers is prepared chiefly in the ministry responsible for employment policy matters, currently the Ministry of National Economy (MNE), but the Ministry of Interior (planning, coordinating and supervising public works) and the Ministry of Human Capacities (coordinating vocational rehabilitation of unemployed people with disabilities) also play a role. The MNE is also responsible for the creation of a strategic framework for employment policy, operational programmes, associated action plans and for projects too. In Ireland, the responsibility for training initiatives rests with a number of organisations and departments, including the Department of Social Protection (JobBridge, Back to Education Allowance), the Department of Education and Skills (Springboard), the Further Education and Training Authority (SOLAS) (responsible for Momentum) and the Education and Training Boards (what used to be FÁS training centres have become part of the Education and Training Boards after FÁS was disbanded).

In a move towards improved coordination, the recent (March 2015) reform of Spain's training for employment subsystem (TES — *subsistema de formación para el empleo*) aims to increase the effectiveness of the system and improve its quality; to situate it in a less intricate juridical framework and promote more strategic multi-annual planning; to link training content with labour market needs; to increase the diversification of courses and training providers; and to implement a sound monitoring and evaluation system. Although the move has come late, the economic crisis has been taken as an opportunity to implement deep changes in the way training for employment is provided in the country.

In some countries there is a trend away from central state control and towards decentralisation. In France, the state maintains an overall supervisory role of the national training system for unemployed people, but governance is increasingly at the regional level. In Poland, the characteristic feature of the PES organisation is a high level of local authority self-governance and independence, which results in a decentralised model of governance, implementation, selection and control of major providers of training.

2.2.3. Delivery models

Different national approaches to providing training for unskilled adults largely depend on each country's wider policy context and national priorities (encompassing the concern to promote adult learning, the priority given to linking ALMP to social and economic development issues, or the nature and priority given to addressing any structural issues facing the labour market in different countries). In some countries (such as Denmark, Italy, Romania), unemployed adults are targeted by laws establishing the right to continued learning for employed and unemployed people, although the importance of the legal framework underpinning the provision appears to vary across the Member States. The categories of provision which appeared from the Member States' reports can be summarised into four broad groups of provision:

- **PES-organised provision:** the PES organisation directly provides or uses training from existing supply for unemployed adults, primarily aimed at upgrading existing knowledge or developing new skills to raise employability. In Estonia, for example, labour market training is a form of institutional training, meaning that most of the training time is spent in a training institution (labour market training includes initial vocational training, skills conversion and adaptation training, entrepreneurship training, computer skills training and professional language skills training).
- **Provision within the education and training frameworks:** the PES direct unemployed people to places in the existing education and training system, or fund courses which the unemployed person or a caseworker identifies as meeting their needs (subject to criteria). In Finland, for example, unemployed people aged over 25 are mostly served through competence-based adult VET and liberal adult education institutes. The training is state subsidised and the money is allocated via municipalities. In Iceland, the Directorate of Labour relies on various education providers, including both the state-run education system, i.e. upper-secondary schools and universities, as well as providers within the Icelandic adult education system. These programmes/courses are not specifically designed for unemployed individuals, but provide a selection from which they can choose.
- **Specially commissioned provision:** the local PES offices organise training from a

range of external providers (which is specially developed through a commissioning process rather than procured from the existing supply). In Hungary, for example, there are three main types of providers: vocational school-based training (in the case of certified vocational education); regionally integrated training centres; for-profit and non-profit providers of certified, accredited or general training (Observatory and TKKI, 2013).

- **Partnership arrangements:** in some Member States partnerships have involved the employment offices and actors such as local authorities, foundations and associations, trade unions and employer organisations in the provision of specific services, including training for unemployed people (including long-term unemployed), as well as for other groups of individuals in unemployment that were previously harder to reach or out of reach for the employment services. In Belgium's Wallonia, Socio-professional Integration Bodies (Organismes d'Insertion Socioprofessionnelle — OISP) provide training for adult learners to encourage the

development of general skills. They form part of the Integrated Measure for Socio-professional Integration (Dispositif Intégré d'Insertion Socioprofessionnelle — DIISP), which aims to coordinate public and private training providers. To obtain approval, an OISP must sign a partnership agreement with Forem, the public employment and training service in Wallonia. There are 90 OISPs approved in Wallonia, which can be either non-profit undertakings or public social assistance centres (CPAS).

The balance of provision varies between Member States. As an example, in Sweden during the period 2008-2011, a state-owned educational provider was responsible for about 30% of total training; around 60% of the labour market training courses were provided by private companies; while municipalities, folk high schools and universities were in charge of the remaining 10% (Swedish Agency for Public Management, 2012).

The strengths and challenges emerging from the different arrangements are considered in the table below.

Table 2.2 Review of different delivery approaches

Approach	Strengths	Challenges
PES delivered provision	Integrated to PES services, link to job search	Focus on short employability measures
Provision within 'mainstream' education and training frameworks	Wider range of options available, including accredited courses Link to other interventions, e.g. job placement	Quality tends to rely on the framework of (accredited) providers, which might be lacking.
Commissioned provision (usually locally organised provision)	Opportunity for flexibility in provision Tailored to needs of groups / individuals Could link to the national frameworks of accredited qualifications Link to other interventions e.g. job placement Individualised approaches are evaluated highly	Information on training programmes not sufficiently promoted to jobseekers, who often learn about training activities only by accident The planning of relevant scope of training at the local level does not always follow standardised criteria (Borik and Caban, 2013). Flexibility of provision may depend on procurement regulations
Partnership arrangements	Means of tapping expertise and resources	Requires strong coordination efforts Usually depends on external funds

The institutions responsible for providing training to unemployed people include a wide variety of national and regional training bodies, local authority agencies, the PES, social partners, private adult training providers, individual employers, as well as voluntary and community organisations, while usually training is provided by a mix of organisations.

For example, in Spain, provision is in the hands of accredited training centres since the reform of 2015. This has substantially diminished the weight of social agents, both trade unions and employers associations (eliminating their *de facto* former monopoly). In addition to accredited private training centres, training provision included in programmes

aimed at improving the employability of long-term unemployed are also developed by NGOs specialised in the assistance of specific collectives.

The institutions responsible for the management and implementation of training are listed in the table below.

Table 2.3 Institutions responsible for management and implementation of training

Type of institution	Country
National training bodies	BG, DK, DE, EL, HR, LV, LU, HU, PT, UK, FYROM
PES	BE, BG, CZ, DE, ES, FR, HR, CY, LT, LU, HU, MT, NL, AT, PL, PT, RO, SK, FI, SE, UK, TR, RS
Regional and local public authorities	BE, DK, IE, ES, FR, IT, LU, NL, FI, NO
Social partners	BG, DK, CY, LU, HU, IS

National training bodies play the key role in the management and implementation of training for unemployed people in several countries. For example, in the UK, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) researches the provision of training for unemployed adults to identify practices that are both effective for learners and helpful in supporting providers.

Quality assurance bodies include:

- In Greece, the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Career Guidance (EOPPEP) licenses lifelong learning centres and is responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive national system for the accreditation of non-formal education and informal learning, lifelong learning service providers, occupational profiles, programmes, and adult educators' competences.
- In Portugal, the National Agency for Qualification and Professional Education (ANQEP) is responsible for coordinating the professional training and education offer (including quality control), managing the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC) process, for competences acquired during working life, and the orientation of its beneficiaries to the adequate education and training offers that complete their certified competences) and the National Qualifications Catalogue (CNQ), plus other qualitative aspects of vocational education and training (VET).

The PES also plays a key role, either in the quality assurance of training (e.g. DE, ES, UK) or by being the main body responsible for management and implementation of training (e.g. BE, FR, NL, AT etc.). For example, in Austria, for each qualification and training programme, a federal guideline is provided by the federal PES office. The guideline defines the target groups, the administrative procedures, and how to calculate benefits for training participants. The PES offices in the nine provinces are responsible for implementation, taking into account regional labour market conditions. In Croatia,

the Employment Service (CES) and the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE) work together: the CES provides training for employment and professional rehabilitation, and the AVETAE is responsible for monitoring vocational and adult education, approving new vocational and adult education programmes and licensing new vocational and adult education institutions.

Regional and local public authorities are often important actors.

- In Ireland, a major overhaul of the administration and delivery of many upskilling programmes took place during 2014, when the Education and Training Boards took over responsibility for the management of training delivery.
- In the Netherlands, reintegration activities are decentralised to a large extent to labour market regions and municipalities. PES and municipalities cooperate within the framework of 35 labour market regions, covering the whole country.
- In Finland, the 15 regional centres for economic development, transport and the environment (ELY centres) steer and supervise the activities of the employment and economic development offices (TE offices). The ELY centres are also responsible for the managing and tendering of labour market policy (LMP) measures, including competence development services (career counselling, preparatory training, work experimentation, education and wage subsidy). Also, in the recent ongoing 'municipality experiment', the participating (61) municipalities are responsible for long-term adult unemployment issues and for organising rehabilitation, training and employment pathways on their own account.

Social partners are playing an increasingly significant role in some countries:

- In Denmark, the social partners have a strategic role: they are represented on the new structure of eight regional employment councils, and play a

role in preparing the national list specifying which training courses unemployed people can follow (with the Ministry of Employment and Ministry of Education).

- In Cyprus, new 2-year training initiatives (PSIVET) are integrated with social partners through an Advisory Board and a Programme Council (though not specifically designed to train unemployed people, this provision caters for individuals who would otherwise have been unemployed).

The social partner role supporting training for unemployed people in close cooperation with the

PES, is illustrated in the examples from Lithuania and Austria below.

In Lithuania, the most significant practice of training for unemployed adults has been chosen as an example reflecting cooperation between PES and social partners that ensures successful training-to-work transition, creates conditions for ongoing improvement and actualisation of training contents in accordance with changes in real jobs, and provides more opportunities for trainees to undergo traineeships close to real jobs (possibly, in the company of the potential employer).

CASE STUDY

Gas and electric cutter and welder of metal training programme ⁽⁴⁾, Lithuania

Short description: Formal continuing VET training programme; range of occupations accessible — the holder may weld simple constructions, and various items and parts manually and by applying arc and oxyacetylene welding; the holder may also perform arc and oxyacetylene cutting of parts from steel with a low carbon concentration; ISCED 2.

Target group: Non-qualified youth and unemployed people with metal processing qualification (lower-secondary level of education completed).

Number of participants: 32 unemployed people per year (2014). In September 2014, a cooperation agreement was signed between Vilnius local labour exchange (LLE) and Linpra, the Engineering Industries Association of Lithuania. In 2014, the organisation employed 17 jobseekers registered with the local labour exchange and signed 17 trilateral vocational training and employment agreements.

Duration of programme: 13 weeks.

Total budget: EUR 64 160 (approximately EUR 48 120 or 75 % from the ESF).

Qualification delivered: Gas and electric cutter and welder of metal.

Actors involved in the provision of training and their role: The LLE signed a cooperation agreement with the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists, which has Linpra among its members. During annual employer surveys on the need for skills, the LLE revises and updates the demand for welders and, where such demand is high in individual companies, signs annual agreements with the relevant companies. These oblige the LLE to train the necessary number of welders, and the company to admit trained unemployed persons to work. Representatives from the companies which are parties to the cooperation agreement are often invited to the commissions for final assessment. Representatives of metal-processing industries often agree to provide their production premises for practical training under this vocational training programme.

Summary of evaluation findings: Implementation of this programme involves wide-ranging and active cooperation between the LLE and the social partners. This creates preconditions for: a) frequent trilateral training and employment agreements which, in turn, ensure very high post-training employment rates (up to 100%); b) regular actualisation of training programmes in accordance with the needs of employers; c) ensuring high-quality practical skills.

The example of labour foundations in Austria is also highlighted below in view of the extensive

evaluation evidence available, with very positive results (particularly re-employment rates). This has been important as a measure focusing on upskilling for people newly unemployed from declining sectors and is an example of good cooperation and governance in the design and implementation of training for unemployed adults.

⁽⁴⁾ For further details, see the Lithuania EEPO review country article and the LLE activity report, 2014, available at http://www.ldb.lt/Informacija/Veikla/Documents/LDB_2014%20metu%20ataskaita_web.pdf, page 7, and <http://www.vjdrmc.lt/suvinintoju-kursai.html>

CASE STUDY

Labour Foundations ⁽⁵⁾, Austria

Short description: Labour foundations are a form of institutional training. In general, they are created through the initiative of the social partners at company or regional level, for two main reasons. First, if one large company – or several companies in a certain sector or region – is in economic difficulties and mass lay-offs seem inevitable (*outplacement type*). Secondly, if there is a great need for certain skills, *inplacement foundations* offer upskilling programmes to unemployed workers, followed by job entry once the programme is completed, while they also offer appropriately trained workers to meet employers' special skills bottlenecks. Another option is *target group foundations* which are launched by collective bargaining entities of employers and employees (Austrian Economic Chamber and Austrian Trade Union Federation) to address specific economic difficulties of different target groups. For example, the *Inplacement Foundation 45+* in the Province of Styria, aims to cover vacancies of Styrian enterprises through workplace training of unemployed people aged 45 years and over. To reach the objectives, several instruments are implemented, where qualification measures form the core. The concrete basis for qualification measures is an individual training plan, based on a profound assessment and orientation. The plan is signed by all parties (participant, foundation management, and future employer, where applicable) and must be approved by the PES. Participation in the measures agreed in the plan is mandatory.

In summary, labour foundations programmes are a highly developed measure. They are cost-intensive, but effective. Compared to other measures of the ALMP, they can hold companies accountable for labour market policy, too, and thus relieve public budgets. The instrument is based on the principle of partnership, as the establishment of a foundation follows an agreement between the social partners. Foundations aim to formally upgrade qualifications or support workers in re-qualification efforts. The instrument supports individually tailored measures, including those of longer duration (such as university study). So participants can get the qualification for occupations in demand (e.g. white-collar jobs) or gain a higher educational attainment. The re-employment rates are evidence of the success of this instrument.

Target group: Registered unemployed whose jobs have become redundant due to restructuring or economic difficulties. Most participants are low or medium-skilled.

Number of participants: The total number of participants increased especially in 2009 (+ 38 percentage points compared to 2008) and has remained stable at about 12 000 persons since 2011.

Duration of training: Most participants choose training of relatively long duration: the average duration in 2012 was 523 days, i.e. 17 months. Around 49% of participants stayed in a foundation for a period of 1-3 years, and 7% for more than 3 years.

Funding source: The costs are covered by the PES (Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich).

Types of skills (or qualification if relevant) delivered: The participation in a wide range of qualification/training measures is possible — from upskilling of existing knowledge, to apprenticeship examinations or participation in qualifications of longer duration (schools, colleges or university studies).

Summary of evaluation findings: Several evaluation studies have been carried out in recent years. One main indicator is the re-employment rate of former participants. Results show very positive effects. According to the evaluation evidence, directly after completion of a foundation 44% of participants are employed (excluding marginal part time, apprenticeships, subsidised employment); 3 months later the rate is about 60%; and 1 year after completion, the re-employment rate has risen to 75%. Other measures do not reach this high reintegration rate. For example: for training measures, the re-employment rate 1 year after is around one-third; in socio-economic enterprises the figure is around 20%.

For example, in Spain, provision of adult training is in the hands of four stakeholders: employers and workers' representatives, third-sector organisations and private training providers (which have to be specifically authorised or accredited by the regional employment services). Worker and employers'

representatives play a major role as training providers. The labour market reform establishes that accredited training providers may participate directly in the design and provision of training programmes, something which had exclusively been in the hands of workers and employers' representatives. With this measure, the de facto monopoly of trade unions and employers has been broken.

⁽⁵⁾ For further details, please see the Austria EEPO review country article.

3. Mapping of the programmes and measures available to upskill and reskill unemployed adults

This chapter will map the key LMP measures/interventions through which the training opportunities (programmes) are provided to unemployed adults

throughout the 33 EEPO countries. The chapter explores the extent to which training provision is targeted at the needs of more disadvantaged groups.

Key policy messages

Vocational training for unemployed people is important to combat the mismatch between labour demand and supply:

- The content of training for unemployed adults can include (further) vocational training, employability support, 'second chance' education, basic skills for the disadvantaged and employer-specific provision.
- Most Member States have some local/regional input into the design of training.
- Practical training is important since it helps reduce the gap between what is learned and what is needed for a job.

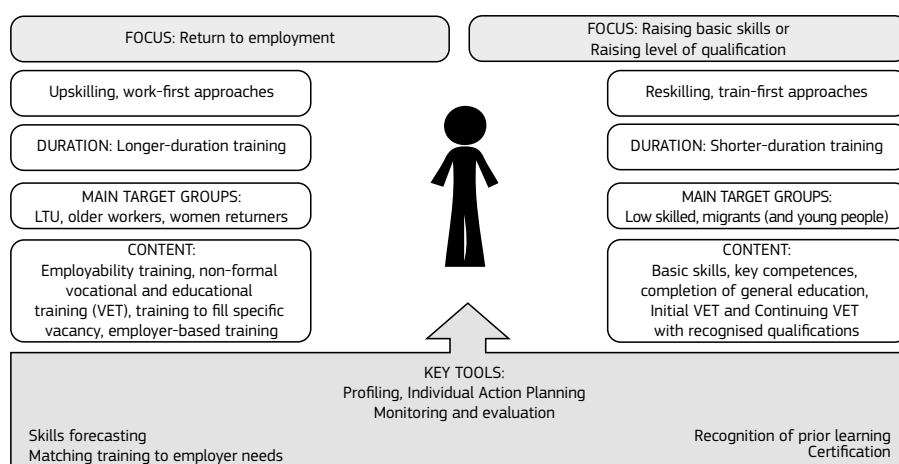
Relatively few national policies focus explicitly on training for low-skilled unemployed adults. Priorities for training unemployed people range from an emphasis on certification (FR), through increasing skills levels (UK) to a recently enhanced focus on the low skilled (DK and ES). Broadly, training programmes for this group comprise those targeting all unemployed and targeted provision for specific groups.

- There is often overlap in the target groups for training measures, with some individuals facing multiple disadvantage (low-skilled, LTU, older workers etc.).
- When measures specifically target the low-skilled unemployed, their focus is more often about increasing the level of skills or the level of qualifications of the targeted persons and less often about return to employment. Measures typically focus on enhancing basic skills or increasing levels of qualification.

The chart below outlines the key approaches followed. A key distinction is whether there is potential for measures to increase the level of skills in general, their level of basic skills or the level of

qualification of unemployed people, or whether they focus primarily on training for return to work. The table below summarises the key features of the two approaches, albeit by making generalisations.

Figure 3.1 Mapping of training for unemployed low-skilled adults



3.1. Content of training

3.1.1. Different provision is designed to meet different objectives

When thinking about the content of training for unemployed adults, it is probably useful to distinguish between:

- **further vocational training** (which includes measures by which vocational knowledge and skills are assessed, maintained and extended or adapted to technical developments). In Germany, the provision is mainly vocationally oriented and the length of the measures varies greatly, depending on whether or not the training leads to a recognised and certified occupation (550 days on average vs 114 days) (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2013b). In some cases training is provided as a complement to other active labour market policies (ALMP) (e.g. re-employment bonus, measures to integrate disabled workers); for example, in Luxembourg ALMP can be accompanied by training schemes, which are flexible and often tailor-made, if required
- **special provision for unemployed people to enhance employability** (i.e. designed to provide the range of knowledge and skills considered most likely to maximise the chances of unemployed people in the labour market). In the UK, most training options for unemployed people are from menu-driven systems, such as the Work Programme (in Great Britain) and Steps to Work (in Northern Ireland). In these, the emphasis is on preparing the client through job-ready skills, including basic skills (with information and communication technologies (ICT) now recognised as a basic skill) and vocational skills, though normally to a low level (Level 2) (reflecting the government's priority to have as many people as possible with Level 2 qualifications)
- **'second chance' education** (i.e. reflecting the established curricula and publicly recognised certification), and particularly suitable for those lacking previous qualifications. The provision may be linked to the prevailing education frameworks. In Germany, a new programme was set in 2013 for 25-34-year-olds without a formal vocational qualification, to engage them in dual VET (full-time, part-time, or within a modularised scheme)

- **provision of basic skills for disadvantaged groups of workers**, often as a pre-requisite for other types of training and education (e.g. literacy and numeracy skills, language skills). In Ireland, there are a number of part-time programmes provided by the vocational education committees that can be accessed by jobseekers, but the initiatives are not specific to them (Community Education; Adult Literacy; Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education (ITABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL))
- **employer-specific provision designed to maximise the person's chances of filling a vacancy or receiving a job offer**; for example, the employer-based 'professionalisation contracts' in France or on-the-job training in Slovenia.

Some Member States take a broad definition of training. Estonia includes 'coaching for working life' in its provision of training interventions (as well as labour market training and work practice). The coaching for working life provision is targeted mostly at the long-term unemployed (while labour market training and work practice are targeted at all registered unemployed and certain disadvantaged employees) and is more of a transition service for entry to other ALMP measures.

3.1.2. Menu-driven approaches to training

Many countries have menu-driven approaches to training. For example, in Italy, the content and the duration of training programmes are particularly varied, depending on regional or sub-regional programming strategies (course duration varies from 20 to 800 hours, on the basis of final learning outcomes; meanwhile the content may be vocational, strongly specialised or focused on basic skills). The same applies to training integrated in employment pathways, whose content and duration will depend on the initial individual profiling carried out by PES or equivalent operators.

Particularly interesting is the training activity operated under the 're-employment endowment' scheme implemented in the Lombardy and Veneto regions (Isfol, 2014), where training is integrated with other employment-oriented services and is generally very short and highly specialised.

CASE STUDY

Re-employment and Re-qualification Endowment programme (2011-2012)

Country: Italy (Lombardy Region)

Short description: The 'endowment system' (*Sistema Dotale*) is used to finance and deliver all the employment and training-oriented interventions following a personalised/individualised model. More specifically, unemployed people are engaged by re-employment instruments implemented through defining a Personalised Action Plan which may alternatively include: a) an integrated employment pathway (where short duration professional training is focused on meeting companies' existing needs); b) a self-employment pathway where training is mainly based on managerial and technical skills for business-start-up.

Duration: 180 days maximum after recipients register their curriculum vitae

Types of skills (or qualification if relevant) delivered: professional and specific skills depending on expected employment; self-employment, managerial, process skills

Summary of evaluation findings: 12 months after intervention, 35% of the recipients were employed; in total, the new employed or those who had succeeded in getting a different job made up 16-17% after 6 months. The figure was 4 percentage points lower for women than for men, and 6 percentage points lower for older people than for young ones. Six months after intervention, the probability that a recipient had experienced a positive change (was employed, in the case of those initially unemployed) was 15%, while the opposite probability (becoming or remaining unemployed) was 40%; this final figure was higher for women and among the over-50s, and was lower for those with a higher educational qualification.

3.1.3. Practical character of training

Literature (De Rick and De Cuyper, 2014) finds that **the most crucial element is the practical nature of the training: first, this reduces the gap between what is learned during the training and what is needed for the job, and secondly it reduces the chances that the jobseekers look for jobs not linked to the training provided.** An internship during the training also makes a difference, because it improves not only the effects of the training, but also the job-search process. In Luxembourg, CIE and CAE contracts, as well as tailor-made training programmes, are identified as particularly important in the reactivation and upskilling of vulnerable jobseekers, as they combine practical and theoretical training under the supervision of a tutor and are centred on a law-based training plan.

In some Member States, such as Ireland, it seems that a shift is currently underway from more institutionally based provision towards more skills-specific approaches, which give greater emphasis to the practical elements. The ESRI evaluation of what used to be FÁS specific skills training (before FÁS was disbanded) demonstrated substantial benefits from high and medium skills training; the majority of FÁS courses were categorised as general or low skilled and had a limited impact on jobseekers' chances of exiting unemployment. While there was a strong emphasis on providing job-specific skills within more newly developed training programmes aimed at upskilling unemployed adults, serious questions remained with

regard to the skills content of legacy initiatives that account for by far the greatest portion of total spending in the area ⁽⁶⁾.

3.1.4. Vocational training to address competition for jobs

Vocational training measures are a particularly important tool for combating unemployment in areas with a particularly high unemployment rate, where the current situation of structural unemployment indicates that labour supply is higher than labour demand. This mismatch increases competition between jobseekers, with the low skilled being particularly badly affected. It is mainly to combat this situation that the use of vocational training has increased markedly in some instances, for example in parts of Belgium. The public authorities tend to adopt a 'job-analysis' approach (Agulhon, 2010; Bruyère and Lemistre, 2010) to vocational training and its relationship to employment. This approach assumes that specific training delivers a number of specialised skills needed for a very specific job. In this respect, the public authorities are pushing jobseekers to acquire those skills. The exemption measures for jobseekers who pursue

⁽⁶⁾ With regard to the BTEA, despite having an annual budget of almost EUR 200 million, the limited evaluation evidence that does exist indicates that BTEA support has no positive impact on a participant's chances of gaining employment, which raises serious questions with regard to the skills content of the programmes undertaken by jobseekers in receipt of this benefit.

training and the identification of critical jobs by regional employment services are a good example of this. Various assessment reports either confirm or reject the validity of this type of approach.

Some provision is designed to meet broader national priorities. The Walloon Government's ICT Mobilising Plan (Plan Mobilisateur TIC — PMTIC) was introduced in 2002 and aims to raise awareness of the new ICT among jobseekers, recipients of the social integration income (revenu d'intégration sociale — RIS) or social assistance, and unemployed jobseekers receiving benefits. PMTIC training is delivered by training providers, such as non-profit enterprises, OISPs or CPASS (Article 5). For each beneficiary, training can be for a minimum of 8 hours and a maximum of 48 hours.

3.2. Duration of training

3.2.1. Length of training makes a difference

The length of participation in training measures can differ widely, depending on the programme, as well as on the individual needs of jobseekers but there is a dilemma between long duration training which often leads to certification and qualification (that would usually not be feasible via short duration training) versus shorter duration training which can have more immediate positive effects in terms of employment.

Monitoring data suggest a tendency for training to be of shorter duration. For example, in Austria, where a range of measures are available, training measures last on average for 81 days. There is a clear focus on measures in the range of one to two months' duration (42%). A further 17% participated in short training programmes (up to 1 month) and around 7% in long-lasting measures (half a year or longer). In Estonia, institutional training under the Labour Market Training scheme (Tööturukoolitus) is limited to one year and in practice two thirds of the training programmes lasted up to 1 month and the majority (93%) were shorter than 3 months in 2010 (Lauringson et al., 2011).

Shorter programmes (below six months, and probably below four months) seem to be more effective for less formal training activity, although longer programmes generate employment gains when the content is skill-intensive (What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth, 2014). In particular, results from Italy suggest that a training duration of 300–600 hours seems to produce better employment results for unemployed adults. Here training content usually covers a wide

range of job-oriented issues, such as practical, theoretical and basic managerial skills linked to local labour market needs and opportunities.

On the other hand, a number of studies question the effectiveness of short-duration provision, mainly from the point of view of whether (despite the positive outcomes of the evaluation studies) training programmes of such short duration can indeed play a major role in upskilling unemployed adults (Crépon et al, 2007, McGuinness et al, 2011).

Longer programmes tend to have more skill-intensive content and are usually the ones leading to the acquisition of qualifications or part-qualifications. Overall, it is hard to generalise on the effectiveness of different types of training, especially since the benefits may depend on how well trained participants are, and the match of content to their existing skills.

Examples of more sophisticated studies with a degree of longitudinal tracking include Holl et al. (2013): unemployed people who took part in long-duration training (between 182 days and 365 days) in 1999 were 'statistically accompanied' from 2000 to 2010 by a progress analysis. This group was compared with two other groups: people who took part in shorter training (between 28 days and 112 days) and people who were not in training at all. In 1999 (the year of training participation), those in longer training found the following situation: 'in comparison with those who participated in shorter training, they had to deal with an additional 184 days of training, were unemployed for 97 days longer, were in employment with full compulsory social insurance for 55 days fewer, which was reflected in annual income from employment of EUR 2 056 less (without social transfers)'. But it only took a few years to gain an advantageous situation: the lost days of employment in 1999 were already made up in 2003; in terms of annual income from employment, the catch-up process only took until 2001. The bonus of longer training compared with shorter training was effective in every single year up to the end of the statistical observation period (2010).

The effects of longer training programmes are positive not only for workers, but also for the public purse: additional training costs are offset by higher savings and additional charges, through less unemployment and a higher income in subsequent years. The current reorientation of training measures in Austria can be seen to be in accordance with the results of the evaluation of Holl et al. (2013).

The research points to the importance of reorienting training more towards higher value-added specific skills training and short-duration programmes aimed at enhancing a claimant's job-search skills.

3.3. Targeting of training

Member States have taken different approaches to the targeting of training in terms of reaching different groups of unemployed adults, depending on the national system and framework. Some training is focused on specific groups of unemployed, such as immigrant workers or workers in certain sectors, while other training constitutes standard programmes for the long-term unemployed (European Employment Observatory, 2012). The approaches include:

- an emphasis on general provision for all (albeit with a concern to prioritise within that, or with

special criteria applying to the participation of specific target groups);

- the development of content and forms of training specifically addressing the identified needs of different target groups (usually those with functional literacy issues or, for example, migrant workers with language needs).

The table below provides an overview of the strengths and weakness of the two approaches. It should be noted, however, that the EEPO review country articles provided varying levels of data on the inclusion of different groups of unemployed adults in the national systems of training, and the existence of evaluation evidence for specific groups tended to be rather weak.

Table 3.1 General provision or targeted approaches towards disadvantaged groups

Approach	Strengths/opportunities	Challenges
General programmes (sometimes with special criteria for the inclusion of disadvantaged target groups)	<p>Provision more widely available</p> <p>Often with potential for flexible provision (e.g. longer duration for disadvantaged groups)</p> <p>Could complement other targeted interventions (e.g. training as a complement to supported employment)</p> <p>Could link to individual action plans (IAPs) and opportunities for tailored provisions</p>	<p>Generally weak monitoring of inclusion of target groups (data suggest low uptake)</p> <p>Few evaluations to assess the benefits for different groups of workers</p> <p>Generally not needs-specific provision (although could include add-ons to meet specific needs)</p>
Targeted interventions for specific target groups	<p>Comprehensive packages of support work well</p> <p>Locally based linking to local conditions</p>	<p>Tend to be externally funded (ESF), raising sustainability questions</p> <p>Inadequate availability of different training programmes at regional level (especially in small regions) may also be relevant</p> <p>In the case of procured services, there is a difficulty with outsourcing services for very disadvantaged groups in defining the desired result and the basis of remuneration for the services provided</p>

A distinction is usually drawn in relation to the existing skills/qualification levels of unemployed people, and schemes tend to be targeted at those with low skill levels. Low-skilled individuals are worse affected by long-term unemployment, since this group tends to be the most adversely affected by structural issues and changing economic conditions.

Training is an important measure that complements other targeted schemes. In some cases, training provision is used to complement other measures for target groups of unemployed

people, although in such cases there tends to be little information on the effectiveness of the various components of the schemes. To an increasing extent, a targeted approach underpins the decision to include certain types of training/training pathways in the national offer. Even in countries such as Austria, where provision of specific training paths is a feature, some of the training programmes are designed for specific groups of unemployed people. However, provision for specific target groups appears to remain relatively small in scale (despite the increasing trend towards targeted approaches).

The following two subsections look in more detail at prioritising certain groups via the general offer and the tailored offer for specific target groups.

3.3.1. General offer

In general, training measures that are specifically targeted at people with disabilities last for longer. Training courses offered in the context of job-search training are usually shorter. Instead, where provision is open to all, there is often an element of tweaking the criteria for different groups facing labour market disadvantage (i.e. in terms of length of training, benefits received, etc.). For example, the successful professionalisation contract arrangements in France usually last 6–12 months, but the duration can be longer for the long-term unemployed or for beneficiaries of active solidarity revenue (maximum 24 months). In Greece, the scheme called Training voucher in sectors of economic activity with obligatory guaranteed employment, applies to all holders of a valid unemployment card, and those who are long-term unemployed, less than 45 years of age, on low family and personal income and with relevant work experience receive a premium.

Where disadvantaged target groups are included in the general offer, there should be strong monitoring of uptake by different groups, so that this approach can go further than a simple signposting and prioritisation of groups for inclusion within the general offer. For example, in the Czech Republic it is up to the PES to make specific decisions for each unemployed person with regard to training, but the Ministry of Labour regularly issues a general directive as to how ALMP should be targeted, i.e. which demographic groups should be prioritised. This example suggests, however, that this approach to targeting can be rather hit and miss: there does not appear to be any ex-post centralised measurement of target groups covered by training (although individual labour offices may track their performance in targeting, this information is not available at the Ministry of Labour).

Provision of training for those farthest from the labour market can be variable and an underemphasised aspect of ALMPs in some countries. At the same time, there is a labour and skills shortage in some occupations, and it is therefore relevant to develop the vocational skills of disadvantaged groups. For example, in Bulgaria, training is only included in some (not all) programmes. The training element was removed from such important programmes as those for people with disabilities, and new employment opportunities for persons aged 50+. In some

cases, training for disadvantaged groups has been distinguished from the general offer due to financing reasons.

Available evidence suggests that there is very little adaptation of education and training activities to the needs of different target groups. In Slovakia, a survey carried out among labour office representatives in 2013 showed that many disadvantaged unemployed people had to be rejected because demand exceeded supply (Keselova, 2013).

Overall, it appears that specific groups of unemployed adults are not especially prevalent among the beneficiaries of training.

In Germany, within the vocational further training of unemployed scheme (the main permanent PES programme, in place since 1998) people with a low level of qualifications, and in particular those with no recognised formal qualifications, are a specific priority group. However, only 10% were 50 years and older, and the share of severely disabled people amounted to less than 3% (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2014c). In Spain, according to CIDEA (2012), social exclusion factors, especially lack of previous educational qualifications, contribute to a decrease in the probability of participation in training for employment activities: while 30% of people with VET skills have never been enrolled in Spain, this proportion soars to 78% among those who have no education diploma (lack of information about the programmes was identified as the main reason for this). The insertion rate of people at risk of social exclusion is slightly lower than for other jobseekers (37% and 46%, respectively) (see country article on Spain for further details).

In some cases, the system is changing along with a narrowing of the focus of the provision, in order to target resources on those with the greatest need for training support. In Denmark, as part of the Danish ALMP, for decades the insured unemployed were entitled to 6 weeks of training and education after a certain spell of unemployment. The choice of education was up to the unemployed person (it had to be offered by a public institution) and this was mainly used by unemployed skilled workers and unemployed people with an academic background (Rambøll, 2011). In a recent reform the target group has been narrowed to include only unskilled and skilled workers. Access to training is now granted from the first day of unemployment, but the choice must be made from a predefined national list specifying which courses may be pursued. This is prepared by the Ministry of Employment, with the involvement of the Ministry of Education and the social partners. The reason for the policy shift was an ambition

to focus the use of the measure more directly on unemployed people with lower skill levels, and to exclude academics and other groups with higher educational levels.

3.3.2. Use of inclusion criteria to support targeting

Setting the inclusion criteria for training in a targeted way is a common method of targeting priority groups. For example, in the Danish context there is detailed specification of the age group to be targeted by a measure and close attention is paid to the risk of deadweight losses in defining other eligibility criteria, e.g. the duration of previous unemployment.

Frameworks in place for the provision of specific training paths for unemployed people with a specific profile are extremely helpful in terms of providing a mechanism by which to target training interventions on certain target groups on the ground.

At the same time, it should be noted that, depending on the nature of the obligations of the PES to elaborate an individual training pathway for all unemployed people, this could be a difficult task in practice. In Spain, a 2007 policy put the focus of training on disadvantaged groups of workers: women, young people, disabled people, victims of gender violence and terrorism, long-term unemployed, people over 45 and people at risk of social exclusion; however, relatively few of these harder-to-help unemployed workers appear to have been included in individual training pathways. For instance, among the 12 908 new participants in the minimum income scheme of the Madrid Region in 2013, just 2 795 were included in individual employment pathways. All participants have to subscribe to an activation engagement, which commits them to accept an appropriate job offer and to participate in active labour market programmes proposed by the PES in their region. However, the coverage of training among these workers is reported to be very low (7% in case of the Prepara Programme participants). Thus the obligation is more theoretical than real, and the link between active and passive labour market policies is still marginal.

Partnerships with specialised private and public service providers can be useful in order to provide better service for people with individual social or

psychological problems (particularly if no specialised staff is available at the PES). In the UK, long-term unemployed individuals (or those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed, such as disabled people, drug users and ex-offenders) are referred to private or voluntary organisations (Tubb, 2012).

Provision for targeted groups of unemployed people at risk of exclusion tends to concentrate on training programmes managed by third sector organisations with expertise in the issues; these are often financed by schemes which include external funding, such as the ESF (in Spain examples include schemes for the Roma population (*Acceder Programme*) and disabled people (*Por Talento Programme*). This raises issues about the extent to which target group-specific approaches are mainstreamed within the national systems of provision — and possibly about questionable sustainability.

Some examples show the fragility of certain types of targeted provision depending on the funding options (including the availability of ESF funding), and the need to make this type of provision attractive to the target groups. The ‘Functional Literacy’ scheme in FYROM was financed by IPA, and once the financing stopped there was no further interest in organising the courses.

3.4. Training provision for specific target groups

When measures specifically target the low-skilled unemployed, their focus is more often about increasing the level of skills and qualifications of the targeted persons and less often about return to employment. On the other hand, measures expressly targeting the LTU, women and older workers more often emphasize return to employment. Of course, this is a generalisation, as the groups often overlap, e.g. older unemployed falling into long-term unemployment, etc.

The table below outlines the number of countries (and training measures in each country) that specifically target low-skilled unemployed adults, LTU, older workers, women, migrants and people with disabilities. The classification in the table was made on the basis of measures identified as significant in the country articles, while there may be some double-counting if measures target more than one disadvantaged group.

Table 3.2 Overview of measures targeting specific disadvantaged groups

Basic skills for the low-skilled	Raise qualification level of low-skilled	Measures only for LTU	Measures for older workers	Measures for women	Measures for migrants	Measures for people with disabilities
BG (2)	AT (1)	BE (1)	AT (1)	AT (1)	BE (1)	BE (1)
CY (1)	BE (1)	CY (3)	BG (2)	BG (1)	BG (2)	BG (3)
DK (1)	CY (1)	DK (1)	DE (1)	EL (4)	DE (1)	EE (1)
ES (2)	DE (1)	EE (2)	FI (1)	HU (1)	FI (1)	EL (1)
FR (1)	DK (2)	EL (1)	HU (1)	MT (2)	HR (1)	HU (2)
IT (1)	EL (1)	FR (1)	MT (1)	UK (1)	IT (2)	IT (1)
HR (1)	HU (1)	FI (1)	UK (1) FYROM (1)	TR (1)	MT (1)	NL (1)
MT (1)	IT (1)	IE (2)		RS (1)	AT (1)	MT (1)
	LT (5)	HU (1)			SI (1)	RO (1)
FYROM (1)	MT (1)	LU (2)			SE (1)	SE (3)
	PT (2)	PT (1)			TR (1)	SI (1)
	FYROM (1)	RO (2)				TR (3)
	NO (2)	SI (1)				RS (1)
	RS (1)	UK (1)				
		TR (1)				
10	20	21	9	12	13	20

A number of countries target low-skilled workers via general measures for unemployed people, often involving vocational courses of relatively short duration. In addition to general measures, many countries (19 countries with a total of 34 measures) have designed **measures specifically targeting low-skilled, unemployed adults**. Broadly, these measures either focus on enhancing the individual's basic skills (including literacy, numeracy, digital skills, host country language skills in the case of migrants, etc.) or on improving their level of qualification, either by helping them to complete general education or secondary VET. Denmark and Germany have measures offering a second chance for adults to participate in dual VET. Denmark also has an initiative offering assessment of prior learning to low-skilled 30+ year olds. The assessment may last between half a day and 10 days and is carried out in schools themselves.

Seventeen of the 33 countries covered by EEPO and included in the EEPO review have programmes that support the long-term unemployed. Across the 17 countries, there were 38 separate training programmes relevant to the LTU. These are programmes that either focus solely on the long-term unemployed LTU or that give long-term unemployed people as one of several population groups targeted by the programme. The above

table shows the 21 measures explicitly targeting the LTU. The remaining countries do not specify the LTU as a distinct target group in their programmes of support. This does not mean that these countries do not support the LTU, but simply that they are not given as a priority group. For example, long-term unemployment is highly correlated with other characteristics, such as low or no skills and qualifications, disability and certain benefits; and so programmes may be targeted at these groups because they tend to be long-term unemployed.

Eight of the 33 countries covered by this review have programmes which specifically support **older workers**. In the main these are programmes which target older workers as one of several population groups. Only two programmes are aimed solely at older workers (Austria — New Skills and FYROM — Improving access to tertiary education for adult population). Older people are defined differently in different countries. Of the 10 programmes aimed at older workers, five define older as 50+, three as 45+, and one programme as 40+ (Malta). One scheme (FYROM) has an age range of 45+ for men and 35+ for women.

In terms of their aims, one of the training programmes was aimed at preventing low-skilled people becoming unemployed, and one was

aimed at helping people start their own business. All other programmes focused on labour market entry of unemployed people through raising their skills and qualification levels. Where outcome measures are available, they identify a positive impact of the programmes but do not differentiate between different target groups.

Several countries also implement training measures specifically for other disadvantaged segments, such as **women, migrants, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities**:

- Women are targeted by 12 training measures from eight countries. In Austria, a training measure aimed at encouraging women to diversify in craft and engineering professions offers beneficiaries the possibility to gain a variety of qualifications (apprenticeships; school-based training courses at technical universities of applied sciences, secondary colleges for engineering, post-secondary colleges). Several supportive measures are also part of the programme, e.g. career guidance, pre-training programme (to acquire basic skills in crafts and engineering), counselling and guidance.
- Migrants are included in the target groups of 13 measures in 11 countries and they often include training programmes to enhance the language skills of migrants in the host country.
- People from ethnic minorities are targeted in Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia and Serbia.
- People with disabilities are targeted by 20 measures in 13 countries. For example, in Sweden, from 2006, a three-stage model comprising three new initiatives for jobseekers with disabilities was introduced: guidance and identification, subsidised employment, and finally employment with the objective of transferring to regular employment; these measures can be combined with participation in a vocational employment training programme with a personal assistant or assistive devices.

Outcomes are influenced by participant variables:

Drawing conclusions in relation to the benefits to workers with different existing skills and qualifications is contested (and outcomes may depend on the suitability of the offer to the target group since the needs of high or low skilled workers are not the same). In Hungary, although there is no evidence of ‘creaming’, the impact of training is much larger on the better educated than on the less educated (O’Leary, 1998). Higher

levels of the recipients’ formal educational have been linked to the achievement of better employment outcomes across a range of different types of provision in Italy.

In cases where general schemes for the long-term unemployed have not evaluated well, schemes for low-skilled workers come out as more effective (European Commission, 2012, in relation to schemes in Croatia and Hungary). Overall there is some suggestion that training achieves better results for the least-skilled participants. Among few quantitative evaluations of ALMP programmes in Croatia, Matković, Babić and Vuga (2012) focused on the effectiveness of the ALMP programmes implemented by the PES in the period 2009-2010. Surprisingly, education programmes on average resulted in reduced probability of employment, compared with control groups, apart from when certain sub-populations were observed: persons without upper-secondary education and persons who entered unemployment from inactivity (rather than from education) showed the best outcomes from training.

Other evaluations suggest that **unskilled workers are more likely to go into jobs following training than skilled workers who take part in training. However, this is contested elsewhere and may reflect specific labour market or other factors**. For example, in Serbia in 2014, the pilot net impact evaluation of four training programmes was conducted within the IPA 2011 Employment Support Project; although the applied methodology probably overestimated the net effects, it is indicative that both of the programmes that targeted (exclusively or partially) unskilled adults showed much stronger positive effects than the two programmes that engaged predominantly skilled unemployed persons (Employment Support Project, 2014). The 2012 RILSA report in the Czech Republic also compared the evolution of the chances of registered unemployed participants with a constructed control group of similar non-participants: in 2009, the highly skilled participants did worse than the highly skilled non-participants. This could easily be the effect of unobservable quality that drives selection into the programme. Similarly, the fact that elementary-educated participants do somewhat better than similarly skilled non-participants is probably down to selection. According to the 2013 RILSA report (p. 77), DLO personnel are largely sceptical about the effect of retraining in the post-crisis years due to the low number of vacancies. DLOs often view retraining as a way of maintaining labour market attachment. Training for lower-skilled groups of unemployed, especially those in regions with high unemployment rates, tends to be more efficient in terms of net effects (Stefanik, 2014).

Evaluations show that training employment outcomes are positively influenced by some variables. In general, **women and older people have been found to have lower rates of re-employment, and recipients who are in receipt of unemployment benefit tend to have higher reintegration rates than inactive participants.** There are variations by age in the proportion of unemployed returning to jobs after training actions. The evaluation of the range of measures in France found that the proportion of older unemployed participants is low (16% in 2013, 10% in 2012), but the proportion in jobs 6 months after is also very low compared to other age groups: only 35% in 2013 (compared to 56% for unemployed aged under 25 years old). This study also showed that there are gender differences in the proportion

of unemployed people returning to work after training: higher for men than for women.

There is some suggestion that **the use of individualised approaches is particularly helpful for some more marginalised groups of unemployed people.** In Estonia, results show that training has been more useful for women, the elderly, persons with a lower level of education and those who have been unemployed for a shorter period of time (Laurinson et al., 2011). However, results from Italy (Lombardy region) in relation to the 2011-2012 Re-employment and Re-qualification Endowment programme suggested that women and older workers have less chance of employment after participating in the programme.

4. Lessons from comparative analysis

This section compares the strengths and weaknesses of different national training policies and approaches with respect to facilitating the employability of unemployed adults, with a focus on matching unemployed people to the right training for them and raising the skills profile of the

low-skilled unemployed. It draws on the evaluation findings in relation to key schemes, with a focus on evaluations which have captured the net employment outcomes. It goes on to discuss features of schemes which stand out as effective in design, and discusses the role of the ESF.

Key policy messages

Although evaluation results on the benefits of training for persons with different skill levels is not conclusive, there is some evidence that tailored training achieves better results for the low-skilled than general schemes:

- Overall, evaluations tend to be relatively unsophisticated and few studies use an experimental design and/or take into account the net effect of interventions.
- It is difficult to compare the relative success of different schemes because the outcomes depend on the mix of target groups and each scheme's objectives.
- Country-specific evidence indicates that interventions which include a package of measures and that combine training with other labour market measures are successful and that a mix-and-match approach may pay dividends.
- Evaluation results tend to be most positive when the training is well tailored to the person's potential, employers' skill needs and leads to formal qualifications.
- Employer-based approaches (i.e. those targeting specific vacancies and on-the-job training placement schemes) generate higher employment outcomes than classroom-based training).

4.1. Strengths and weaknesses of different approaches

Practices are interesting within each country context, as Member States have different starting points and policy priorities. There are different types of training (i.e. ranging from shorter, up-skilling courses and brief employability training interventions to long duration, reskilling courses with a vocational focus), and different delivery approaches (devolved/centralised), as discussed in previous chapters. Different approaches to matching unemployed adults to training (e.g. delivered by PES, procured/voucher based), as well as employer engagement and sector skills approaches are discussed in this section. The advantages and remaining challenges of the different types of approaches are discussed below.

4.1.1. Approaches for directing unemployed people to the 'right' training

The PES has a key role to play, but self-directed training is also important. The route to training for unemployed adults may depend

on whether the training is arranged by the local labour office or individually by the jobseeker. Decisions on training can be underpinned by an individual action plan process, which is important in the effective functioning of the system of training for unemployed adults. It is considered good practice for employment advisers to have responsibility for a specific group of occupations, in relation to both jobseekers and/or employers in order to build up appropriate expertise.

Self-selection of courses is more important in some Member States than in others where the options are narrower. The participant chooses (often via training vouchers) and there appears to be increasing interest in this approach. Different voucher systems or other means of payment of the training costs have been used for some time (in Estonia, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, Latvia, Iceland), and are being introduced in other Member States (e.g. Slovakia). For example, in Greece the authorities have introduced 'training vouchers', in order to help unemployed people seeking continuing vocational training (as well as initial training) exercise more personal choice in relation to time, subject of training and training provider. Further, a new portal (www.step.gov.gr),

became available, aiming at bringing together all currently available opportunities in the fields of lifelong learning, vocational training and access to employment. However, lack of general awareness of these types of individualised schemes is an issue. There is also a suggestion that the voucher approach makes the administrative burden somewhat heavy on managing education providers.

The internet is also contributing to increased self-selection in training. In Austria, for the self-selection of appropriate training courses, PES customers find the continuous training

database on the PES website, which includes about 70 000 training offers provided by about 3 000 training institutes. In France, according to a recent survey conducted by the Ile de France regional council on unemployed people's access to training, in 40 % of cases access is through the PES, but in 35 % of cases it happens through the internet.

The table below summarises the strengths and weaknesses of PES-directed training, self-selected training and training underpinned by an individual action plan.

Table 4.1 Approaches directing unemployed people to training

Approach	Strengths	Challenges
Direction by PES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritises unemployed for inclusion according to needs (e.g. based on profiling, a hard-to-employ unemployed person may have priority over jobseekers with better chances in the labour market) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The selection process of applicants interested in training is often non-transparent and dependent on subjective factors (Borik and Caban, 2013). - Caseworker might signpost a client on the basis of the supply of provision, rather than client needs - Mechanisms for profiling and matching are not always adequate - Staff to unemployed ratios are an issue for the effectiveness of matching processes
Individual Action Planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services are provided based on the individual needs of unemployed people - Opportunity for matching to other provision (i.e. taking into account the specific hindrances that individuals face) - Can be linked to sanctions, in case of failure to comply with the IAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource intensive for PES, where IAP prepared by case manager in cooperation with unemployed people person - Effective matching could be limited by resource issues - The jobseeker needs to articulate clearly his/her employment plans
Participant chooses (includes voucher schemes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourages autonomy of unemployed people - Some evaluation results indicate that participation in voucher-based training has stronger impact on future employment and incomes than procured training (Lauringson et al., 2011) - Helps to reduce regional differences in availability of education - Can be used to purchase training that corresponds to the specific needs of unemployed people - Targets disadvantaged groups (e.g. older workers, immigrants) and can help increase their participation in adult education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of schemes and benefits needs to be addressed - Can create higher administrative burden for the PES to manage training providers - Duration of training is usually limited

4.1.2. Making training relevant to the labour market

It is clear from the country articles that a main challenge is the design of training measures which provide skills that are in high demand among employers (and/or relevant to meet the future needs of the economy). A further challenge to the national framework is to address mismatches on the labour market through training schemes. In some countries, the employer role is relatively underdeveloped. The general trend appears to be towards sustainable models of building employability that will remain relevant over time (i.e. linking training to labour market forecasting approaches, or training being embedded in the national qualifications frameworks).

Local adaptation to needs and trends

In many Member States, although training programmes are delivered through national projects prepared at the central level, territorial labour offices adjust the offer of training courses to regional and local conditions. In Sweden, the administration and organisation of training is a combination of centralised governance (PES headquarters) regarding the selection and procurement process of training providers and a decentralised decision process at the local PES offices regarding the allocation of participants to the various training programmes and the choice of training providers adapted to local labour market conditions. The coordinating unit at PES headquarters serves as a link between the central procurement unit and the local PES offices, and in cooperation with industry councils, the coordinating unit also evaluates and ensures that the content of training corresponds to the requirements of the labour market. (*Statskontoret*, The Swedish Agency for Public Management, 2012). In Slovakia, labour offices are required by law to prepare regional labour market analyses and forecasts, and a multiparty committee for employment issues, formed within each labour office, decides about local priorities in terms of activation policies, including training needs.

The key issue is the extent to which the provision is flexible enough to respond to the intelligence. In Slovakia, available research studies conclude that training programmes are unable to respond flexibly to regional labour market needs, owing mainly to burdensome procurement rules (Keselova, 2013; Stefanik, 2014).

Moreover, evaluation of training for unemployed people shows that the match between

training and future jobs is unlikely to be exact. A report assessing vocational training conducted by Bruxelles Formation shows that in 56% of cases there is a specific link between the first job and the training pursued, whereas 26% of first jobs have no link with the training pursued. A key issue for the training system is where the upskilling provision does not lead to occupational upward mobility. In Austria, for example, surveys have shown that only about half of the participants in qualification measures are more satisfied with the new job after upskilling. Many of them do not see any connection between training and a successful job search. This points to problems with the way training for unemployed people currently operates: the training offered needs to be based upon a sound assessment both of the needs of the labour market and of the skills profile of each individual.

Focus is on linking to employers' requirements

Member States are working to link training for unemployed adults to current and future employment opportunities, either directly through customised schemes, with specific employers in mind, or indirectly based on labour market forecasts. Targeting of provision to jobs is particularly apparent in Belgium, where the public authorities tend to adopt a job-analysis approach (Agulhon, 2010; Bruyère & Lemistre, 2010) to vocational training and its relationship with employment. This approach assumes that specific training delivers a number of specialised skills needed for a specific job. The choice of the specific sectoral content of the educational programmes presupposes some information about the specific bottlenecks to be expected of the future labour market, and points to the need for flexibility of the adult education system in order to adapt to the changing patterns of demand for qualifications.

In general, employer-centred provision tends to be based on somewhat 'reactive' schemes, designed to respond to companies' immediate labour market demands. This generalisation often even applies to the provision that directly involves employers. For example, the traditional approach to training unemployed people in France reflects a focus on returning unemployed people to employment as quickly as possible in jobs. In general, the measures have been designed to reach this objective with little sectoral focus, and the '100 000 preferential training programmes' plan launched by President Hollande in 2013 and now conducted by regions follows the same logic by identifying a training path for unemployed people in order to answer the local recruitment

needs of companies ⁽⁷⁾. Other similar approaches which respond to vacancies at employers include the Bridge to Employment (Northern Ireland), by which the job centre advisers work with employers to identify their job-related skills needs and then provide customised programmes for suitable jobseekers, who are guaranteed an interview

on completion of their training. This approach is called a 'matching approach', because it tends to match vacancies and the skills of unemployed people. However, it is increasingly being argued that this approach tends to diminish sustainable return to employment, maintaining and developing employability and security for career paths ⁽⁸⁾.

Table 4.2 Strengths and weaknesses of different employer-focused approaches

Approach	Strengths/opportunities	Challenges
Matching approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responds to actual vacancy - Puts unemployed trainee and employers together (e.g. through guaranteed interview) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult to have a clear view of companies' future needs - Tends to lead PES counsellors to impose training actions on unemployed people ⁽⁹⁾ - Tends to foster return to work in sectors different from those of the training programme, suggesting challenges around matching. In that situation, positive effects of training actions are drastically decreased
Consultation and local adaptation (tends to be local level)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Success depends on flexibility of provision, which may be constrained by procurement rules - May rely on external funding, e.g. ESF (sustainability issues)
Employer responsive provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates preconditions for training and employment agreements which boost post-training employment rates - Actualisation of training programmes in accordance with the needs of employers - Helps to ensure practical skills elements - Contributes to higher post-training employment rates and concurrently ensures the ability to adapt the content of training programmes to the needs of real jobs, i.e. improvement of vocational training quality (Lithuania) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depends on employer engagement/incentives - Employer-specific skills may not be transferrable
Training delivered by employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good evaluation results (see below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depends on employer engagement/incentives - Issues re monitoring and assuring quality need to be addressed
Sector-based approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meets labour market needs or supports structural change based on forecasting future jobs - Helps to ensure practical skills elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Danger of habitual support in view of strong lobbyists

⁽⁷⁾ In France, more and more emphasis is being put on certifying training programmes, as shown by the training reform of March 2014.

⁽⁸⁾ The orientation process is key to this: employment actors, when orienting unemployed people towards training programmes, have a responsibility to make sure that the programme is in line with a viable professional project.

⁽⁹⁾ The proportion of people giving up before the end of the programme is 6 percentage points higher in that case (16% against 10% when training actions are not imposed).

There were numerous examples in the country reports of consultation with employers (notably in Nordic Member States but also elsewhere). At the local and regional level, there are additional opportunities to involve social partners in the selection and content of vocational and educational training. The extent of involvement of social partners and employers appears to be dependent on local conditions and contacts/ networks between local PES offices and local employers and trade union representatives.

4.1.3. Employer-based approaches

Engaging employers in the frameworks of training for unemployed adults has been addressed in a number of ways, ranging from: targeting training on specific vacancies; use of internships with

training; on-the-job training placement schemes; and formal adult apprenticeship delivery models. Programmes that bring employers and prospective employees into reasonable matches are considered generally very useful in a number of countries, and have some advantages, as described in the table below. Theoretically, once someone has acquired some job experience and has trained to apply his or her education in the workplace, the prospects of continued employment with the same or a different employer should be much improved. The evaluation results suggest that this can lead to higher employment outcomes.

The main challenges are around putting in place adequate incentives for employers, providing regulated training provision, and not generating big bureaucracy.

Table 4.3 Review of different models of employer-based approaches

Approach example	Strengths	Challenges
Insertion measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insert the LTU into a professional working environment - Can include support with training actions, e.g. validation of field experience and social support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They encompass training actions, but the emphasis of those actions is not on training
Placement of unemployed tertiary graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appears to address a real need (unemployment among graduates) - Supports unemployed and employers (a good match between the education of the applicant and the business/organisational environment is sought) - Can be linked to certification (a certificate of training and work experience was granted upon graduation) - Participation is usually incentivised through payment of a wage ⁽¹⁰⁾ - Can build on existing skills and competences (on-the-job training relevant to the applicant's education and work experience) - Employment outcomes appear promising ⁽¹¹⁾ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short-term measure in response to labour market conditions - Has not made any inroads into unemployment among tertiary education graduates

⁽¹⁰⁾ Paid EUR 125 per week minus 7.8 % employee social insurance contributions; 9.8 % employer contributions to social insurance covered.

⁽¹¹⁾ The percentage employed is higher if the hosting firm/organisation is in the private sector (given hiring restrictions in public sector under the Memorandum of Understanding); 80 % of participants state that the match between their education and the placement is good.

Approach example	Strengths	Challenges
Internships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Placement component of the programme is designed to provide relevant work experience, and as such may facilitate on-the-job training - Participation could be incentivised (e.g. Ireland's JobBridge National Internship Scheme: the wage incentive takes the form of a weekly EUR 50 top-up paid to the participant in addition to his or her social welfare payment) - Meets a need of many recent vocational school graduates who have little work experience (company training) - Allows companies to learn about a prospective hire and may thus facilitate hiring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on practical company-specific skills (may not be transferrable) - Could be seen as compensatory measure after vocational school graduates have fallen into unemployment: an alternative approach might be to support schools to sufficiently cooperate with employers to raise their employment outcomes
Work practice schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improves the knowledge and skills of unemployed people and gives them an opportunity to gain practical experience - Organised by the employers in a real work environment - Based on a formal contract with obligations to ensure proper supervision/quality assurance procedures ⁽¹²⁾ - Evaluation shows a significant positive effect on the employment status and income levels of the participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment effect is negative in the first few months of practice, which is likely to be the result of the so-called 'locking-in effect'.
Employer training allowances for taking on unemployed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training is directly linked to a job - Helps companies to finance training before establishing a job position - There appear to be better return-to-work rates for beneficiaries on these training programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expensive to administer - Tend to concern relatively few people
Combining employment with training (working contract of part time in a company and part time in a training centre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combines employment with formal training - Usually provides training leading to a certificate - Usually offers long-term training over 6-12 months (duration could be higher for long-term unemployed or disadvantaged) - Evaluation suggests that this measure has good results in terms of insertion into the labour market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mainly applies to young people rather than adults - Based on established systems to identify, implement and monitor the training and employment contracts - May be limited by employer demand
Matching training to vacancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responds to labour market needs - Represents a notable direct collaboration between employers and the PES 	
Specific skills matching with skills shortages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aims at giving unemployed people the opportunity to be trained for a job identified as lacking candidates in a specific territory - Based on cooperation between the range of actors at local level in design and implementation - Some suggestion that the measure is not so costly compared to e.g. putting in place 'professionalisation contract' with employers - Could be used to complement other measures - Could enhance professional coherency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mainly a pre-recruitment measure - Does not tend to provide direct obligations to hire - Relies on having options for quality provision - Appears to attract mainly people close to the labour market with a stable professional path before entering the programme

⁽¹²⁾ Labour Market Services and Benefits Act 2014.

Approach example	Strengths	Challenges
On-the-job training schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employer relevant: types of skills depends on the job - Enables the acquisition and enhancement of knowledge, skills and competences related to the concrete job - Offers opportunity to unemployed persons to present their skills to potential future employer - Chance to learn and get work experience, increasing employability and updating skills - Focused on practical workplace training - Probably high employment rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tend to be relatively short-term schemes to bring workers and companies together
Labour Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotes self-activity and responds to local needs (founded through the initiative of the social partners at company or regional level) - Can respond both to potential mass lay-offs and the need for certain skills, as well as offering appropriate training for workers to meet employers' special skills bottlenecks - Focused on development and implementation of individualised processes in the labour market (e.g. career reorientation, upgrading of skills, targeted qualifications) - Participation in a wide range of qualification /training measures is possible (upskilling, apprenticeship exams, or longer studies) - Several instruments can be implemented, with qualifications as the core part, e.g. vocational reorientation, job search, internships etc. - Participants have individual training plan, based on profound assessment and orientation, and case management by the Foundation - Evidence suggests re-employment rates are higher than with other measures - Involves companies in labour market policy and thus relieves public budgets - Qualification for occupations in demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A very cost-intensive instrument compared to other labour market measures (but probably more effective) - Cannot be financed by the ESF - Most participants choose longer-duration measures (average duration was 17 months cf. Sozialministerium, 2014)
Adult apprenticeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows significant positive employment effects for adults who come from unemployment. - Increases general income levels for the unskilled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible displacement of young apprentices - Requires economic incentives for employers to take in adults - Monitoring shows gender imbalances (though corresponding to the distribution of vocational education in general) - Declining proportion of adult apprentices coming from unemployment benefit in DK (30% in 2001 to 18% in 2011)

4.2. Evaluation findings

This section considers the results of evaluations of training interventions for unemployed adults — with a focus on the evidence around the employment outcomes. The availability of evaluation evidence is variable, and there are a number of challenges to rigorous evaluation.

4.2.1. What are the outcomes of the training

Key measures of success are usually related to the employment outcomes: getting a job, time taken to get a job and sustainability of employment, although other outcomes (such as effect on qualifications, income) might also feature. This can be measured by positively testing employment circumstances over time, or by tracking any returns to the unemployment register over time (the latter is often the easiest approach for the PES). Evaluations based on questionnaires tend to include the participants' perceptions of the training and perceived benefits and shortcomings.

A recent evaluation of the professional status mobility of participants in further vocational training in Germany shows that participation in further vocational training, compared to non-participation, helped to avoid downward mobility. The study shows that further vocational training had a strong positive effect on the probability of transition into the craft-specific labour market (upward mobility); and additional analysis of the respondents' subjective evaluation of their new job (compared to their old job) confirms the results (Deeke and Baas, 2012) ⁽¹³⁾. The France country article notes that the effects of training actions are large, and should be considered not only in terms of direct return to work. Engaging in a training programme helps unemployed people to keep active, to enlarge their professional network by meeting new people, to acquire transversal skills and to regain their self-confidence. In this example, it is believed that, even if there is no direct link between a training programme and fast return to work, it certainly contributes to increase employability levels and reduce inactivity traps.

The short-term results do not always represent the actual picture, since participants

in training actions initially have fewer possibilities to integrate themselves into the labour market (Saez, 2004). For example, evaluation results from Austria suggest that the re-employment effect of training measures is rather modest in the short term: directly after participating in a training measure, only 16% are employed (including subsidised employment). But this quota rises significantly in the following year, with the re-employment rate at 42% one year after completion. In general, the employment results tend to be more positive in the medium and long terms. Thus, it is suggested that evaluation over the medium term is especially needed in relation to on-the-job training (Card et al., 2010; Kuddo, 2009).

Some national experts identified other issues, indicating that the effects in terms of qualification levels are also worthy of investigation. For example, in Bulgaria it was noted that the data do not provide any analysis of how often the same unemployed person goes on training courses and the subject matter of the courses. The 'over-consumption' of qualifications is entirely possible: at the same time, this means that other unemployed people have been deprived of access to vocational training (there may be the potential to pass through various successive training courses in connection with short-term subsidised employment, but not to secure sustained employment based on upgraded vocational qualifications).

Overall evaluation studies tend to be relatively unsophisticated; few studies use an experimental design that measures a counterfactual, and few take account of the net effect. Even fewer evaluations are able to tell us about the role of different elements in generating positive outcomes, or in relation to different sub-groups of unemployed workers. Furthermore, there is little information on the cost-effectiveness of training programmes (i.e. the cost-benefit for public finances). In general, training can be a more expensive measure than other ALMPs.

4.2.2. Overview of evaluation results

A recent report on a systematic assessment of 71 impact evaluations of employment training internationally (What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth, 2014) found that almost half of the evaluations reviewed (35) had positive effects; another third (22 evaluations) showed mixed effects (partially positive) while only nine studies found no positive effects of training and a further five studies found negative impacts. Many studies which include an experimental design (i.e. comparing against a 'control' group)

⁽¹³⁾ The authors compare the occupational position before unemployment with the occupational position after unemployment in respect of the level of qualification. The empirical analysis is based on longitudinal data of further vocational training participants and unemployed non-participants from panel surveys collected in the context of accompanying research for the ESF-BA-Programme (Supplement to SGB III, German Social Code Book III, from 2000 to 2008 by the European Social Fund).

have supported the view that training increases employment probability, including early research by O'Leary (1998), which showed that participants in retraining had a 10 percentage point re-employment advantage over a control group at the end of the 1990s, robust to using different methods of calculation and different outcomes (Hungary). A report in Belgium, which evaluated different types of exemption measures for jobseekers who pursue training, using a control group approach to test the probability of employment after 12 months (matched by region, age, period of unemployment, education level), suggested that all training had a positive impact on reducing unemployment (ONEM, 2013). In Italy counterfactual impact evaluations are rare but, where implemented ⁽¹⁴⁾, typically show positive impacts, with recipients' employment rates being 10-15 percentage points higher than those of non-recipients.

It is clear that in many cases the training framework for unemployed adults is considered generally to perform well, even though the absence of analysis of the counterfactual makes the net effects hard to identify, and the lack of follow-up studies means there is limited evidence on the extent of permanent reintegration back into employment; plus the effects in terms of upskilling workers are rarely measured. **In broad terms, the results in the country articles which have captured the rate of employment of participants in training in the period following training suggest that these can range from as low as around 20% to as high as 80%, depending on the nature of the programme and the target groups (and different time periods/measures used).**

In Italy, the National Institute for Educational and Vocational Training (Isfol) established a national framework to collect relevant information to assess outcomes from ESF training interventions for unemployed people. The training is locally driven and leads to heterogeneity in course architecture. Six months and 12 months after the conclusion of training, recipients' employment rates vary from 20% to about 61%, according to the region under consideration; but the majority of regions (Tuscany, Piedmont, Marche, Liguria, as well as the Autonomous Provinces of Bolzano and Trento) have rates of between 40% and 60%.

It is hard to compare the relative success of different schemes because the outcomes depend on the objectives of the schemes and the issues faced by the target groups. In some countries the access to labour market

training seems to be rather limited, as training is provided only if the reason for not finding a job is the lack of specific knowledge and skills and if there is a demand for those skills in the local labour market.

4.2.2.1. Rates of reintegration into employment vary widely

The main training programmes for unemployed adults have been found to achieve rather high levels of employment in Slovakia (73% of participants in the main training programme for jobseekers (§46) were in employment at least once during the 24 months following the end of the intervention) (Borik and Caban, 2013), and Germany (62% of those who undertook training measures under the unemployment law (Social Code III), according to PES monitoring (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2013b). The latter scheme had a large share of long-term unemployed (31% for the year 2013). Measures in France vary for different groups: more than 50% of unemployed following a training action entered employment six months after the training course in 2013 (similar results in 2012 and 2011) ⁽¹⁵⁾. The best results were for the AFPR and Preparation Operationelle pour l'Emploi Individuel (POEI), with a rate of 79% (against 48% for AIF and 37% for AFC). For the Preparation Operationelle pour l'Emploi Collective (POEC), the proportion reaches 50% (and 49% for unemployed involved in Regional Council training actions).

Training interventions have emerged rather poorly from evaluations in some Member States. In Greece a series of studies (Kanellopoulos 2005, Efstratoglou, K. 2006, Efstratoglou A. 2007 and KANEP-GSEE 2013) on training for unemployed people (pre-crisis) suggested that the impact of training on enhancing employability is generally low. Recent results of detailed tracking in Bulgaria in 2014 were also disappointing: 47% of individuals found employment after participation in training. However, it was short-term employment (a year or less), within the period 2011-2014. Moreover, the trained persons worked in low-paid jobs and most probably performed labour functions that require low qualifications. It must be concluded that training was of no great importance in terms of changes in the employment positions of the target groups. Moreover, even where the system of training is considered to be

⁽¹⁴⁾ In northern and central regions and specifically in Lombardy, Marche, Tuscany, Liguria, Piedmont.

⁽¹⁵⁾ IGAS criticised the Pôle Emploi on the study sample, which took into account only persons receiving unemployment benefit, so that a large proportion of unemployed people accessing training programmes were not considered. According to IGAS, if the sample had taken account of all unemployed people (including those not receiving unemployment benefits), the proportion would have declined from 50% to around 30% of beneficiaries in jobs after training actions.

working effectively, such as Hungary, because of the small scale of interventions or other factors, the overall impact of training measures was low.

A recent report in Hungary (Csoba and Nagy, 2012) finds that much of the re-employment advantage of training is due to selection.

Similarly Sirovátka et al. (2014), drawing on 2010 data and using exact matching to construct the control group, show that the favourable position in terms of job outcomes could easily be due to the changing nature of selection into retraining (conditional on demographics) during the crisis years. However the study methodology used can be criticised ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Galasi, Nagy and Lázár (1999), in a pairwise comparison of participants in different ALMPs in Hungary, found that the advantage of training over the (contemporary) public works programme comes almost entirely from programme effects.

Recent poor evaluation results in FYROM have been associated with deficiencies in the information on skills needs, low training quality, and the fact that the curricula for the training as developed by the VET Centre and the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) do not match the exact skills required by employers (in future the training will be provided by verified and licensed companies (rather than secondary schools)).

4.2.2.2. Different types of training show more or less value-added

Some countries have undertaken evaluations of the range of measures and offer comparative data on the implications for unemployment of training for unemployed adults. The advantage of this approach is that it can draw on the administrative data. For example, Hazans and Dmitrijeva (2013) combined State Employment Agency (SEA) and State Social Insurance Agency data in Latvia on the unemployment, employment and

earnings history of all individuals both before and after training (enabling a rigorous counterfactual methodology) to examine the effectiveness of all the main types of programme over the period 2008-2011, including occupational training and non-formal education, as well as competitiveness-promoting short courses. The main conclusion of the study was that all types of professional training and non-formal education programmes for unemployed people significantly improved the employment rates of participants — both soon after completing training and in the medium term. However, participation in competitiveness-promoting measures was found to have only a small, but statistically significant, positive employment impact. The impact of training programmes on the wages of participants (as compared with similar non-participants) was found to be either insignificant or negative, and for participants of employer-provided training it was found that the wages of participants were lower than for non-participants or for similar participants in other programmes.

According to the BMASK (2014, 2013), one year after completion the highest re-employment rate from provision in Austria can be found for qualification measures ⁽¹⁷⁾. The measures that achieve the highest re-employment were employer-based interventions — Labour Foundations (75%) and the specific training programme FIT (81%). For general measures, the re-employment rate is moderate. Results from Italy confirm the relatively higher success of interventions which are delivered in a combination of training with other active labour market measures (mainly work experience and incentives).

Other studies also suggest that rates of employment for unemployed adults in occupational training tend to be above the rate for competitiveness-promoting measures, although these results could just reflect the nature of the participant (distance from the labour market, rather than the effectiveness of the intervention).

⁽¹⁶⁾ The matching is based on demographics (though many selection issues remain open, including previous history of ALMP participation).

⁽¹⁷⁾ However, no detailed data is published.

Table 4.4 Counterfactual evaluations on training interventions for unemployed adults

Country	Evaluation method	Key findings
Croatia: ALMP programmes implemented by CES in the period 2009-2010	Used matching techniques and compared the outcomes of participants with control group comprising unemployed persons with similar observable characteristics (ALMP programmes implemented by CES in the period 2009-2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education programmes on average resulted in a negative effect on the probability of employment compared with control groups - Employment outcomes were positive for persons without upper-secondary education, persons who entered unemployment from inactivity (rather than education) and among persons who had not spent a very long period in unemployment prior to participation (Matković, Babić and Vuga, 2012)
Sweden: Vocational labour market training	<p>Participants who entered the programme 2002-2004</p> <p>Participants who entered the programme 2005</p>	<p>Significant positive effects on participants, and the unemployment spell: time taken to get a job was shortened by over 20%, irrespective of the type of participants and the course orientation (De Luna et al., 2008)</p> <p>One year after the completion of training, a significantly higher share of participants in 2005 secured unsubsidised employment than did non-participants. However, the positive effect decreased significantly over time and was close to zero in 2009 and 2010. This outcome could also partly be ascribed to the variation in the number and composition of participants in the training (increasing share of long-term unemployed) (Gartell et al., 2013)</p>
Ireland: Specific skills training	Used a longitudinal dataset to assess the differential impact of various types of what used to be FÁS training programmes before FÁS was disbanded, relative to a control group of non-participants (categorised FÁS training programmes according to skill content) ⁽¹⁸⁾	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The analysis detects strong positive impacts on exits from unemployment for job-search training and both high and medium-level specific skills training (McGuinness et al., 2014a) - There was little consistent evidence to support the view that low-skills or general training significantly improved the short-term labour market prospects of participants - Shorter-duration training programmes were more effective for unemployed people, with the exception of high-level skills training, where there appears to be good results for more extended training durations
Slovakia: Main training programme for jobseekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counterfactual impact evaluation of 2011 data throughout a 15-month reference period - Calculation of net effect on public finances based on a cost-benefit analysis (gross returns of participants minus returns of the state flowing in from the control group) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Placement in the labour market is negative (jobseekers who participated in a PES training programme were less likely to find a job in the following year than those who did not). The negative effect is observable across all age and education groups (but tends to increase along with educational attainment), both for men and women - There are significant regional variations, but the results are strongly influenced by negative effects of the measure in Bratislava, which had the highest number of participants in 2011 (55%) - The calculation of net effects on public finances arrives at negative figures even in a short-term horizon (Stefanik, 2014)
Spain (Madrid Region)		Women and older people were less likely to find a job after completing a training programme. Unemployed receiving the unemployment benefit and those who enrolled in VET studies were more likely to find a job after a training course (University Carlos III, 2005)

⁽¹⁸⁾ The study found that over two-thirds of specific skills training was general or low skilled in nature, with medium to high-skilled training accounting for just 20 % of total training. General training programmes were those that had no specific link to the labour market, and included courses such as the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). Courses such as the Introduction to Warehousing and Distribution were typical of medium-skills provision, while high-skilled training included courses such as Computer Aided Design.

Country	Evaluation method	Key findings
Finland: Vocational training		Vocational upskilling has been observed to correlate with good employment results (MEE, 2015c)
FYROM: Active labour market measure — Training for deficient occupations	Measured change in employment probability and wages of the participants compared to non-participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No significant effect was found either on employment or wages - There might be several reasons why the programme did not bring expected benefits: deficient information on skills; low training quality; and the curricula for the training as developed by the VET Centre and the CAE may not match the exact skills required by employers (ILO, forthcoming)
Sweden: Vocational training (jobseekers with disabilities)	Used a propensity score matching, where participants in training were matched with a control group with similar individual characteristics, but not participating in the training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regnér (2014) found that jobseekers with disabilities who participated in vocational training obtained a job sooner, had higher income, and a higher employment rate than jobseekers in the control group. During the period 1999–2006, jobseekers with employment training had on average 8% shorter unemployment duration 2 years after the start of labour market training. After 4 years, their annual income was 31% higher and their employment rate 10% higher than individuals in the control group. The outcome is dependent on the timing of training measures and the phase in the business cycle, the good economic conditions in 2003–2006 resulting in more favourable outcomes - Compared to participants enrolled in the training programme, more jobseekers in the control group got subsidised employment

4.2.2.3. Review of counterfactual evaluations relating to individualised models of provision

A study for Belgium (ONEM, 2013) concluded that individualised measures achieve the highest employment share compared to the control. The group given the right to pursue individual vocational training were least likely to return to unemployment after training (2.3 times more unemployed people in the control group were unemployed after 12 months compared to those receiving individual vocational training). The next most effective measure was the right to return to education, leading to occupations in which there is a shortage of labour (1.58), and the right to pursue self-employment training (1.58) ⁽¹⁹⁾. The effects of the right to return to full-time education, the right to pursue group vocational training and the right to return to other education or training were positive but less than the individualised measure (around 1.3 more unemployed without the training).

Evaluation results in relation to the ‘training voucher’ scheme introduced in Estonia in

⁽¹⁹⁾ With regard to individual vocational training, this finding is, however, tempered by the fact that the result is heavily influenced by the employer's obligation to employ the trainee after the training, for a period corresponding to at least the period of the vocational training.

2009 have been very positive in terms of the extra benefits of participation in individualised training over and above procured training. A study by the Unemployment Insurance Fund analysis department (Lauringson et al., 2011) focuses on two distinct time periods: first from May to September 2009, and secondly from April to October 2010. The study is based on merged data from the UIF and the Tax and Customs Board. Propensity score matching is used to analyse the impact of training. The results indicate that participation in voucher-based training has a stronger impact on the future employment and income of participants than has procured training. Six months after finishing training, employment among the participants in voucher training was almost 12% higher than in the control group, compared to 6% higher in the group that participated in procured training. In case of the 2009 sample, the employment rate of participants a year after completing the training was 10 percentage points higher than in the comparison group, and in the case of the 2010 sample it was almost 13 percentage points higher. The greater impact in 2010 can be explained by the change in the principles of training provision (a move from wish-based service provision to needs-based provision). The cost-benefit analysis conducted on the basis of the 2010 estimations suggests that training has been a cost-effective measure (Lauringson et al., 2011). Anspal et al. (2012) analyse the impact of

training from January to September 2010 using coarsened exact matching as a tool for analysis. The results of this study were in line with the UIF study: it was found that participation increases the probability of employment by 6 percentage points both 6 and 12 months after completion of the course. Also, the cost-benefit analyses confirm that training was cost-effective.

In Finland, the voucher approach has helped to even out the regional availability of provision and to engage a wider range of target groups (including immigrants). Only qualitative studies exist on the scheme but it appears to be effective. Immigrants and unemployed people have identified positive health effects, social and

learning-related experiences, and effects on their information-search and problem-solving skills.

4.2.2.4. Evaluation results related to content of training

Examples of the outcomes from different types of targeted content and country examples are given in the table below. Some programmes focus on developing basic skills, a sub-category being language skills for migrants, while other programmes aim to develop certain key competences. Some programmes allow a degree of individualisation to meet specific needs, such as the key competences programme in France, described below.

CASE STUDY

Key competences programme, France (Aquitaine)

Short description and aims of the training programme: The programme must be in line with the careers of trainees, and content of training is personalised and adapted to each person's professional ambitions. The programme can also tackle literacy issues. In Aquitaine, the programme is designed as follows: identifying training needs; measuring gaps between skills and the objective to be attained; designing an individual training programme; individual and collective workshops and evaluations. The programme is particularly directed towards persons far from employment opportunities. The programme allows beneficiaries to continue their job search, since there is a maximum of 18 hours of training per week. It can be slowed down or suspended for professional reasons. The objective is then to reach an apprenticeship or undertake skills training (like a 'professionalisation contract' or Pôle Emploi measures).

Target group: Unemployed people and especially the low-skilled unemployed.

Types of skills delivered: The 'key competences' developed include: understanding a text and improving one's written expression, initiation to a foreign language, mathematics and basic skills in technology, mastering desktop tools and using the internet, and ability to learn and develop one's skills. At the inter-professional level, a decree defining a Skills Base has just been published. Three training actions have been added to the training actions eligible for the 'key competences' measure: ability to work in a team, ability to work independently, and mastering gestures and behaviours for respecting hygiene, security and environmental rules.

Summary of evaluation findings: Results in Aquitaine in 2010 were very encouraging: of the 79 beneficiaries, 27 found a job after the programme and 50 continued with training.

In other examples, different types of provision are offered in combination and involving several actors. The experience in Sweden suggests that by combining training in the Swedish language with vocational training, and by involving several stakeholders, the efficiency of labour market training and the integration of immigrants

into the labour market appear to be enhanced (see Sweden country article for further details).

In some EEPO countries, language training has been combined with additional skills development, as in the German example included in the table below.

Table 4.5 Some evaluation results in relation to target-specific content

Focus of the provision	Target groups	Results
Language courses	Migrant background unemployed people (Austria, Sweden, Germany)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A follow-up study in Sweden in relation to the 'Swedish for immigrants' measure for non-native jobseekers who are in need of training in Swedish (plus vocational skills in cleaning and servicing buildings, welding, personal assistant, retail, and kitchen and food service) reported that around 50% of participants 2010-2012 had obtained employment one year after completing training. By combining training in Swedish with vocational training, and by involving several stakeholders, the efficiency of labour market training and the integration of immigrants into the labour market appear to be enhanced. This model could also be applied for low skilled people, combining basic skills/key competences and VET. - The ESF-BAMF-Programm initiative (berufsbezogenen Sprachförderung für Personen mit Migrationshintergrund im Bereich des Bundes), launched in 2008, aims to link German language courses to further vocational training, and thus to offer professional or vocation-related German language skills. In addition to language skills, job-related skills are taught, such as communication in the workplace, mathematics, IT skills, job-search training. Courses last a maximum of six months. The programme is targeted at jobseekers (Social Code III and Social Code II). The labour market integration rate is 40% — higher than initially planned (20%) (BMAS, 2013)
Basic skills	Jobseekers tested for poor literacy and numeracy in Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An evaluation by Deloitte (2012) of the use of basic adult education by job centres showed that there is a great need for basic literacy, writing and numeracy teaching and for dyslexia education among unemployed people, but that very few will get a course and yet fewer complete it

4.2.2.5. Evaluation results for employer-based models of provision

Evaluation results tend to be most positive when the training is well tailored to the job-seeker's potential and to employers' skills needs (and when it leads to the acquisition of formal qualifications).

Comparative studies of on- and off-the-job training (What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth, 2014) suggest that in-firm, on-the-job training is much more effective in achieving employment outcomes than classroom, off-the-job training. Indeed, on-the-job training programmes appear to be among the best used and most successful programmes in several countries. Moreover, a trend towards work-based schemes can be observed in some of the recent programmes identified in the country reports (such as on-the-job training, placements, and internships with training), and it appears that these have been introduced with a view to trying to solve a fundamental problem of vocational training: namely the weak link between companies (demand) and vocational programmes (supply).

The evaluation evidence is variable, but there do appear to be benefits to the approach in terms of securing positions for unemployed people in companies. While few counterfactual estimates are available, the descriptive results appear positive. For example, statistics published by the

Employment Service of Slovenia suggest that on-the-job training gained impressive employment outcomes in the last 5 years (2010-2014): nearly 70% of participants found employment within one year of completing the training ⁽²⁰⁾. In Ireland, the Jobseekers Support Programme (JSSP) upskills jobseekers in an enterprise-based environment, in order to increase their chances of finding employment: an evaluation of the JSSP revealed that just under 50% of 2013 participants were employed by 2014, with approximately 16% gaining employment directly as a consequence of the programme's work place-ment (Indecon, 2014).

It is difficult to compare schemes, since they may involve very different target groups of unemployed workers. Schemes which are more preparatory in nature are unlikely to get such good results as those for higher-skilled unemployed. In Estonia, the aim of participating in Competences for Working Life (CfWL) is not directly to find employment, but rather to move a step closer to the labour market. No employment contract may be concluded in the period of CfWL and labour legislation does not apply (Protseduurireegel, Tööhajutus, 2014). Within a year of participation, roughly a third of participants were continuing

⁽²⁰⁾ Some 22 669 unemployed participants went through the on-the-job training programme. Internet: <http://www.ess.gov.si>

in some other type of labour market measure; roughly a fifth were employed; half were still unemployed; and around 11 % were receiving disability pension (Villsaar et al., 2012a).

Forthcoming results from France indicate that a mix-and-match approach to training and employment may pay dividends. The 'professionalisation contract' is a work contract based on being part time in a company and part time in a training centre (at least 150 hours). Evaluation suggests that 75 % of unemployed people return to jobs 6 months after the training, and this measure has the best result in terms of insertion into the labour market (*Fonds paritaire de sécurisation des parcours professionnels* — FPSPP, forthcoming).

Although the measures mainly apply to young people rather than adults, the proportion of adult participants has increased steadily). The associated POE Collective measure mixes academic training and immersion in companies that have difficulty in recruiting for specific jobs. It is managed by a non-profit organisation for collective training. The results are promising and the measure is not as costly as the 'professionalisation contract'. Some 51 % of beneficiaries find a job at the end of the programme (mostly as an employee or as a qualified or unqualified worker). This might seem low, but it is explained by the initial profile of beneficiaries, who are mostly far from employment opportunities when they enter the programme.

Table 4.6 Review of evidence in relation to on-the-job training approaches

Scheme	Evaluation results and key issues
Estonia: Work practice Form of workplace training meaning that most of the training time is spent in the workplace ⁽²¹⁾ . Work practice can last up to 4 months. One supervisor may have as many as four supervisees.	Evaluation shows a significant positive effect on the employment status and income levels of participants (increasing the employment rate within one year from the commencement of practice by 8-15 percentage points) (Villsaar et al., 2012b) Cost-benefit analysis confirms that work practice has been a cost-effective measure for society (Villsaar et al., 2012b) The employment effect is negative in the first few months of practice, which is probably the result of the so-called 'locking-in effect'
France: AFPR An allowance paid to companies that train one or several unemployed persons and then hire them on temporary contracts of 6-12 months ⁽²²⁾	There are better return-to-work rates for beneficiaries on these training programmes: 54 % of trained unemployed persons found a job 6 months after their training (Pôle Emploi, 2014) Concerns relatively few people: 34 000 beneficiaries in 2012 for the AFPR
France: Professionalisation contract A working contract based on being part time in a company and part time in a training centre (6-12 months or more for long-term unemployed or beneficiaries of active solidarity revenue: maximum 24 months)	Evaluation suggests 75 % of unemployed return to jobs 6 months after the training, and this measure has the best result in terms of insertion into the labour market (<i>Fonds paritaire de sécurisation des parcours professionnels</i> — FPSPP, forthcoming) Mainly applies to young people rather than adults: 25 % are adults — over 26 years of age (the proportion of adults has progressively increased)
France: 'POE Collective' Collective operational preparation for employment ⁽²³⁾ . It mixes academic training and immersion in companies that have difficulty in recruiting to specific jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 51 % of beneficiaries find a job at the end of their programme; for 64 % of them, it fits the sector in which they have been trained - 46 % found a sustainable job (permanent contract or fixed-term contract of over 6 months)

⁽²¹⁾ According to the data from UIF, 91 % of the work practices took place in the private sector, 5 % in non-profit organisations and 4 % in public sector in 2014.

⁽²²⁾ The individual operational preparation for employment (POE Individuel) is the same measure as the AFPR, except that it is dedicated to longer hiring contracts: permanent contracts, non-permanent contracts or 'professionalisation contracts' longer than 12 months.

⁽²³⁾ The 'POE Collectives' are financed by the Joint Agency Licensed Collector (Organisme paritaire collecteur agréé — OPCA); at branch level it is OPCALIA. The OPCA identify companies which may be interested in the measure and design the programme by contracting with a training agency. The OPCA select candidates with the help of a Pôle Emploi local agency. They then arrange alternate training sessions and working time in a company.

Scheme	Evaluation results and key issues
Slovenia: On-the-job training Training by mentors provided by the employers (up to 3 months depending on type of job and age of participant)	Some 70% of participants found employment within one year of training. The inclusion in training and employment of people from disadvantaged groups requires prolonged and systematic mediation, training in key competences that are of low complexity, inclusion in employment even if for a fixed period, but under the personal guidance of a mentor. Those far from the labour market quite easily accept and remain in employment after training at the workplace and the personal attention of a mentor (Annual Implementation Report OP HRD, 2013)
Ireland: JobBridge National Internship Scheme Participants in the scheme are offered an internship of either 6 or 9 months with a host organisation	Some 52% of participants were in employment a few months after the internship; the rates are substantially higher than comparison groups of claimants with similar age and unemployment duration profiles. However, this finding is based on descriptive comparisons, not on counterfactual with a properly constructed control group (Indecon, 2014)
Luxembourg: CIE (contrat d'initiation à l'emploi) Employment support contract offering a first professional experience to young jobseekers under 30 and registered at PES (12-month contract with possibility to prolong for a further 6 months)	Available data (2012) show that of 772 young jobseekers, 370 were recruited by companies — without the measure they would have remained in unemployment. For CAE, of 618 young jobseekers, 235 could be recruited in 2012 (Brosius and Zanardelli, 2012) The tutor in a company or public actor plays a vital role, as does practical training (Brosius and Zanardelli, 2012)

4.3. Effective design features

The most effective measures appear to be higher value-added specific skills training and short-duration programmes aimed at enhancing claimants' job search skills. It is hard to generalise, however,

since the structure and design of the programmes will naturally depend on the aims of the schemes, the actors involved and the needs of the target group(s). At the same time, there are some generic features which are generally identified as being part of an effective approach, as discussed here.

Key policy messages

Regarding effective design features of training programmes, the review has found evidence that:

- Member States are increasingly linking training for unemployed adults to current and future employment opportunities, through customized schemes involving employers or using labour market forecasts.
- The 'matching approach' places the unemployed person in a real vacancy but does not necessarily lead to the person's sustainable return to employment over time.
- A key issue in the design process is affording sufficient flexibility for adapting programmes to local needs/trends, reflecting local labour market intelligence.
- Having training as part of an individual action plan (IAP) enhances tailoring of provision, allows the application of sanctions for non-participation and gives opportunities for follow-up of the beneficiary after the end of training.
- Having mechanisms in place for recognizing prior learning and validating learning outcomes (including non-formal and informal learning) is important, but drawing conclusions on how this makes a difference is difficult.

4.3.1. Integrated ALMP

Adding value to other measures: EU/EC recommendations and Members States' experiences suggest that training for unemployed people is more effective when it is integrated (or at least combined) with other active labour market instruments (such as information, guidance, counselling, work experience) and financial supports

that act on the supply as well as on the demand side (benefits, incentives, allowances). Anti-crisis schemes have combined active and passive labour market instruments. They tend to stress the employment outcomes and therefore give priority to instruments other than training, especially to work experience and to hiring incentives. The country articles clearly show that some training targeted at disadvantaged groups has supported

other ALMP direct job creation measures. In some countries there appears to have been a specific approach of combining measures. For example in Bulgaria, funds for training of unemployed people were allocated mainly to programmes that also contain subsidised employment (with the purpose of achieving efficiency of the resources). Indeed, there is an argument to be made that job-creation measures need to be well designed and need to incorporate training in order to show some effectiveness (Duell, 2012).

Some schemes suggest that locally based partnerships offer a good way of achieving integration of measures:

For example, evaluations of EU co-financed programmes in Hungary (Scharle et al., 2013) for two complex programmes, SROP 1.1.1 and SROP 1.1.3, targeted at disabled jobseekers and the LTU respectively, which contained training as an element to be optionally mixed with others, found that they had a significant positive effect on re-employment chances, measured at different distances from the time of leaving the programme.

Integration of training with work experience:

Evaluations (including in Italy and Sweden) suggest that there are benefits to an approach whereby training for unemployed people is combined particularly with work experience (sometimes with the provision of income integration benefits). In Sweden it is considered that the use of labour market training should be balanced with job practice (or at least job-search assistance) (see Swedish Public Employment Service, 2014b).

4.3.2. Profiling

Formal profiling of unemployed people appears to be increasingly common (in some cases mandated by law). Profiling starts with assessing a person's readiness for integration into the labour market and aims to identify the measures that need to be taken in order to achieve labour market integration. The approach to profiling and matching unemployed people to courses appears to vary in terms of the degree of sophistication/type of profiling undertaken and who is involved.

Profiling usually leads to the categorisation of unemployed adults into different groups (the groups vary depending on the systems in place).

In Serbia, the client is profiled into one of the four categories available. The first category is clients who are easily employable on the open labour market and are offered basic mediation services, such as information and job matching and job fairs. The second category is comprised of unemployed

people who are employable on the open labour market, but who need to be supported with active job-search services, such as information and job matching, CV preparation and interview techniques, and job clubs. The third category needs intensive support, including self-efficiency training, pre job-club workshops, job subsidies, public works, and programmes of additional education and training. Finally, for the fourth category, short-term mediation is not possible without intensive support, including intensive individual counselling, assessment of working ability, and social and professional rehabilitation. Unemployed people who are closest to the labour market are less likely to get an offer of training.

Profiling has implications in terms of expertise and resource for the PES

since it is done mainly through individual interview, undertaken by PES staff, although this could be supported by the use of tools, such as online self-assessment/job interest profiling. Such assessments are part of professional counselling services ⁽²⁴⁾ or IAPs.

Some country reports make calls for more investment in resources and tools that assist the employment advisers to shed light on the interests, personality and other characteristics of their clients. In Malta, for example, such tools would improve the matching of the training programmes to unemployed people individuals, thus increasing their effectiveness. Such tools might be integrated within the existing IT system used by employment advisers.

4.3.3. Individual action planning and follow-up

Individual action planning (IAP) is increasingly important.

In many Member States training is generally part of an IAP in which, after a profiling by PES or accredited operators, several ALMP services are combined together with the provision of income integration benefits. Effective action planning is helpful to ensure services are provided based on the individual needs of unemployed people, especially where there is opportunity for matching to other provision (i.e. taking into account the specific hindrances that individuals face). In some cases an IAP is a requirement by law (e.g. in Serbia in accordance with the law, jobseekers are entitled to an interview to define an individual action plan within 90 days of registering with the PES).

⁽²⁴⁾ Special diagnostic services (skill audits) may be offered to jobseekers as part of professional counselling; however, their use is limited (European Commission, 2014).

An individual action plan provides a framework for several ALMP services to be combined together, including with the provision of income integration benefits.

The use of training interventions within the broader framework of individual action plans has several important advantages:

- It is an opportunity for tailoring of provision: in Italy, for example, the content and duration of training depend on the initial individual profiling carried out by PES or equivalent operators;
- Furthermore, as a tool for supporting participation in training measures the approach can be linked to sanctions: failure to comply with the Individual Action Plan including participation in ALMP measures such as training as agreed may lead to the termination of the payment of unemployment benefits. In Spain for example, if the jobseeker refuses to participate in a training course without a justified reason, the unemployment benefit may be temporarily or definitely suspended;
- It provides a framework for matching different schemes/supports: integrated approaches are increasingly common within the framework of individual action plans. In Austria, the most successful training programmes are those that follow an integrated approach by combining several steps — from vocational orientation, through vocational training and education, to active job search and continuous support during all phases of the programme (an example of such an integrated approach is the system of Labour Foundations);
- It provides an opportunity for follow-up: the last step is to follow up beneficiaries after the end of their training programme and build a link between new skills acquired and the labour market. This is possibly a key point of intervention to be addressed (at that stage, unemployed people appear to be mostly left alone, even though it is the key step conditioning access to work). Research in Belgium by De Rick and De Cuyper (2014) concluded that support for job search (information on the benefits of employment, information on possible positions and jobs, help in applying and contacting employers) must necessarily complete the training for those who need it.

The drawing-up of individual action plans is designed to speed up the activation process and to better focus measures, and the evidence suggests that early intervention helps measures to be more effective in preventing unemployed people from becoming long-term unemployed by improving referral to the ‘right’ ALMP.

4.3.4. Maximising the benefits of self-selection by workers/individuals

A comprehensive overview of ALMPs in Hungary (Frey, 2011) indicates the importance of self-selection and an interesting outcome of it: re-employment rates are higher in the case of ‘accepted’ programmes that were picked by the client.

In some countries **there seems to be a trend towards an increased focus on self-selection of provision that supports individual choices, and this has implications for the individualisation and flexibility of the provision on offer.** Recent developments in this area were noted in AT, DK, SK and RS:

- *Austria:* Since 2014 the process for the selection of training courses has been undergoing a fundamental change, whereby it is considered a success when an appropriate training measure is selected collaboratively between the PES counsellor and unemployed people person, instead of through PES unilateral recommendation.
- *Denmark:* Reform to both the content and the organisation of ALMP targeted at the insured unemployed has focused on allowing more flexible assistance to the individual unemployed, based on dialogue with the job centre.
- *Slovakia:* A new PES training project based on the use of training vouchers (RE-PAS) was launched in October 2014. The project offers financial support to jobseekers who may choose the training course and provider they want and apply for the selected requalification at the labour office. It is expected that 10 000 jobseekers will be re-trained by the project, while initial performance data will be available in mid-2015.

Self-selection of courses by participants needs to be underpinned by good information on provision, and usually the provision would need to be licensed or certified in some way to be covered by PES intervention. Procedures are probably influenced by eligibility factors. For example, self-chosen approaches tend to apply where there is more of a general right to training.

4.3.5. Validation of prior learning

As already expressed in the existing literature (Cedefop, 2013), ensuring recognition of prior learning and validation of learning outcomes is particularly relevant for low-qualified adults, because learning often happens outside formal

education. The European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (Cedefop, 2009a and forthcoming update) and the Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (Council of the EU, 2012) could serve as a basis for developments.

Recognition of prior learning is seen as a priority in assisting low-skilled unemployed people in Portugal, Romania, Finland and Spain, while a new system for the validation of non-formal and informal learning is under development in FYROM. In Romania, a crisis measure in 2013 saw a new form of upskilling in the form of certification of non-formal and informal skills and qualifications. These may be certified freely for any individual registering with the PES, following a process of assessment done by the local employment services (fully funded by the UIF). In Finland, adult vocational education is mainly organised around a competence-based qualifications system, which does not include any obligatory courses (in principle) but is rather based on recognising prior learning. Also in Spain, courses usually relate to the acquisition of a diploma which accredits a certain level of qualification included in the common national catalogue of professional qualifications. The courses are articulated through competence units that are in turn integrated by different training modules with the aim of facilitating the partial accreditation of the training received.

4.3.6. Certification of training

Training which leads to certification, if not formal qualifications, is generally considered a good thing to show participants' achievements in a way that has some lasting benefit. There appears to be a trend towards certification of training: for example in Romania, recently provisions have expanded and diversified as they also include the certification of skills acquired informally or non-formally.

Recent debates in France suggest that achieving qualifications from training could help with sustainable return to employment, maintaining and developing employability and security for career paths. Each of the 22 regional councils in mainland France has designed its own training actions, with pre-skills training and skills training. In the case of the biggest French region, Ile de France, 90% of beneficiaries obtain their certificate at the end of the training courses — a very good result, considering the fact that more than 55% followed the first-level certificate of vocational training. Furthermore, 50% of beneficiaries involved in the Ile de France regional programme were in a job 6 months after the training (average results for

2008 to 2012), nearly the same proportion as is observed for unemployed people receiving benefit allowances in a Pôle Emploi survey. According to the Ile de France regional council survey, following a certificated training course and obtaining a diploma is a factor that influences return to work.

Use of certified training is also a means of tackling issues of training quality. In Denmark, for example, there appears to be increasing awareness that many of the programmes for unemployed adults which were labelled education and training lacked quality and did not equip participants with the skills that were relevant in regaining a foothold in the labour market. The aim of reforms of the provision is to improve access to regular education and training for unemployed people, and to provide them with formal competences that are accepted by employers.

The issue of certification is likely to link to broader debates on qualifications and life-long learning, and the qualifications frameworks that are in place. Provision of training for unemployed people in the UK is underpinned by the broader objective of raising skills to at least Level 2 on the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) framework. The sector-based work academies measure in the UK is a new initiative that is designed to attract employers to unemployed jobseekers. The training element is agreed with the employer: for example, it might be to develop health and safety or IT skills, or something more specific to the needs of the employer. These will be short periods of training, delivered by a range of providers (though similar in range to those delivering other programmes). However, the training undertaken will normally be in units on the Qualification and Credit Framework, and so will have some currency in the wider labour market. In view of the frameworks in place, opportunities exist for fairly easy insertion of certification of a wide range of types of new provision within the NVQ framework, although these advantages may not be realised in other countries. In the Czech Republic, regional DLO reports imply that almost all participants conclude the programmes successfully (i.e. get a certificate, as required by the Employment Act), often linked to the skills/position types listed in the National Register of Vocational Qualifications. However, retraining courses do not lead to a vocational or other education degree, although unemployed people can participate in a series of courses and then apply for a degree from an education institution using the series of certificates.

The changes are occurring in the context of increasing concern about structural unemployment and adoption of a more global approach to training unemployed people, with a shift from

orienting the provision simply around the return to employment as quickly as possible in non-occupied jobs. This reflects a concern to take account of other key issues: tackling structural skills shortages; raising the general skills levels; sustainable return to employment; maintaining and developing employability; and security for career paths.

4.3.7. Sectorally oriented provision

Evaluations show **that employment rates from training vary depending on the sector focus of the provision, although it is hard to generalise, given that the results will depend on local labour market factors.** As might be expected, the sectors chosen as a focus for training for unemployed people tend to be those considered important to future economic development. For example, in Italy, courses delivered by ITS cover six technology areas that are strategic for the development of the country (energy, sustainable mobility, new-life technologies, new technology for Made in Italy, technology for cultural heritage activities, ICT). However, although the initiative is on a relatively large scale, no evaluation results are yet forthcoming.

Results from evaluations show the **benefits of training for occupations with the most vacancies:** for example, in Latvia the top performing occupational programmes in terms of finding a job within 6 months of completing training in 2013 were welder and logistic worker, with employment rates in excess of 50%. In terms of non-formal education, programmes that lead to the award of a licence to drive commercial and industrial vehicles have the highest employment rates — typically in excess of 40%. In Germany, within the vocational further training of unemployed people scheme, a few subject areas clearly dominate in terms of job outcomes: professions related to elderly care, clerks in management and business organisation, body care and related occupations, traffic systems and logistics, vehicle drivers, computer sciences and ICT professions education and social occupations (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2014c).

At the same time, **schemes which provide generic skills that are relevant to many**

sectors have attracted recent attention, where there is an employer-based aspect.

Examples include the Momentum Programme in Ireland, launched in December 2012 as an initiative designed to provide labour market-relevant training to 6 500 LTU claimants ⁽²⁵⁾. Such programmes include on-the-job training in the form of work experience modules, as well as the development of the workplace skills to obtain and retain employment. The courses focus on growth areas such as ICT, digital media, health care and social services, the green economy, food processing and sales and marketing. However evaluations of such schemes are still awaited.

Evidence from Austria, Ireland and the Netherlands suggests that schemes which are targeted at specific disadvantaged groups and occupations tend to perform better in evaluations than large-scale general schemes. In Cyprus, training as carers for patients and older individuals may provide good employment outcomes for unemployed individuals in the hospitality industry and if training in these areas is promoted, it would support economic objectives. Similarly, in Malta, the VET award in childcare comes at a time when the government has announced a major expansion of childcare facilities (mainly attracting mature unemployed/inactive women).

Having a sector focus has proved to be particularly useful in relation to boosting outcomes for certain disadvantaged groups, such as older workers and disabled people (Regnér, 2014). Jobseekers with disabilities who participated in vocational training obtained a job sooner, had higher incomes, and a higher employment rate than jobseekers in the control group. Vocational training had the most significant positive effects for jobseekers with disabilities and a low level of educational attainment. However, the result depends on the business cycle and the level of unemployment.

The active labour market policy interventions for re-employment and requalification of unemployed people (2011) in Italy's Veneto region is highlighted below because it shows the benefits of integrating a range of measures for unemployed people.

⁽²⁵⁾ The courses are offered free to study part-time or full-time and are aligned to the National Framework of Qualification (NFQ) at levels 3-6 or to another industry-required certification within the sector. The duration of the projects varies from 11 to 45 weeks. Education and training providers from both the private and the public sectors are offering Momentum programmes in over 80 locations nationwide.

CASE STUDY

Active Labour Market Policy Interventions for re-employment and re-qualification of unemployed ⁽²⁶⁾ (2011), Italy (Veneto region)

Short description and aims of the training programme: Several instruments of active labour market policy have been implemented in an integrated manner throughout this programme (mainly training, income integration benefits schemes for unemployed and employment incentives, but also guidance and counselling). Training consisted of short (40-50 hours on average) and specific professionalising courses, aimed at supporting recipients to reskill in their own occupation/sector or in a different one (with real possibility of employment).

Target group: Registered unemployed 25-64 year olds, 50% of whom had ISCED level 1-2 qualifications. Almost 22 000 participants in 2011

Duration of programme: From 40-50 to 150-200 hours, depending on the number of courses attended and on the overall combination of services individually delivered

Funding source and total budget (share of EU funding, if applicable): European Social Fund, Veneto Region Operational Programme 2007-2013, Employability Priority, almost EUR 28 million allocated (2011)

Types of skills delivered: Different technical and professional skills depending on sector/branch or occupation involved; skills are developed at various levels (from basic to excellent) depending on recipients' profile and occupational destination

Actors involved in the provision of training and their role: Accredited private and public vocational training organisations selected through a regional call and on the basis of projects coherent with ESF programming indications and priorities

Summary of evaluation findings: Employment rate after 12 months following conclusion of recipients' training is about 68%, without significant differences for gender and citizenship, but with a 10 percentage point increase compared to the situation at the end of 6 months.

Policy lessons: The combination of training and other active labour market instruments results in better support for unemployed people looking for a new occupation; coherence between training content and the real employment opportunities in a company or sector, although not easy to achieve, helps to produce positive employment outcomes; short and specific training, if based on sound analysis of needs, results in better individual employment chances for beneficiaries.

⁽²⁶⁾ For further details, see www.venetolavoro.it, www.regione.veneto.it/web/Formazione/attivita-fse

4.4. The role of the ESF

Key policy messages from the EEPO country articles, related to the role of ESF in supporting unemployed adults include:

ESF has bolstered and extended training during the crisis and has helped build capacity to work with low-skilled unemployed adults

- The ESF has bolstered the availability of training provision, particularly in countries where allocated national funds were limited.
- During the economic downturn, the ESF has also played a role in extending or re-orientating some types of provision to include preventative approaches.
- ESF could be used to fill gaps in provision, e.g. supporting training activities in micro and small enterprises, where training needs are significant and training can have a real impact on labour productivity.
- ESF funding is associated with diversifying training participation and, related to this, the type and nature of the available provision.
- Regarding disadvantaged groups, there is country-specific evidence that the ESF has contributed to capacity building by increasing PES capacity, reinforcing conditions for national certification of qualification courses, and setting up new bodies and systems.
- The ESF is helping the development of evaluation frameworks for training measures in several countries.
- Related to the role of the ESF is the issue of the sustainability of training provision if/when ESF funds run out.

Existing research (Ecorys, 2011) finds that initial skills assessment for low-skilled jobseekers engaging in ESF provision appears common, the intention being to ensure that individuals can be referred to provision that matches their individual skills development needs. Development of 'life skills', including those relating to confidence or communication skills, was also found to be an important aspect to tailoring provision alongside the development of basic skills or sector specific qualifications. The evaluation found that the most direct and largest impact that ESF has had on low skilled people is in providing them with better qualifications and improved 'work related skills'. ESF has funded an array of projects which this target group have taken up to enhance participants' skills and qualifications, with the overall goal of either helping them to enter into employment or progress in their current job.

In terms of ESF helping this group to gain a qualification, the UK Cohort Survey shows that 67% of those participants with no prior qualifications (the closest proxy for the low skilled) achieved a qualification through their participation. As well as providing participants with formal qualifications, ESF has also impacted on this group by raising their skills levels in general.

This section considers the ESF's role(s) in training for unemployed adults, as highlighted in the EEPO country articles. **4.5.1 ESF has bolstered availability of provision.**

Funding through the ESF has supported the training of adults in the period of economic crisis in countries where national funds allocated to such training were limited.

In Bulgaria, for example, the ESF has largely exceeded state funding, although resourcing issues have meant that there was still only a partial implementation of the range of training interventions envisaged in the legislation and the annual employment plans. Similarly in Greece, the role of the ESF in co-financing training activities is important and should not be underestimated. This is particularly evident in areas such as training for unemployed people, where an impressive expansion has occurred in the last few years, based on ESF assistance. It was clear from the country reports that the ESF accounts for a large share of resources for some key programmes across Member States (e.g. in Slovenia the 'on-the-job training' measure is 85% funded by the ESF). In Italy, ESF-funded training interventions (mainly under the Employability Priority of the ESF Operational Programme) constitute the bulk of the training targeted at the low-skilled unemployed ⁽²⁷⁾.

⁽²⁷⁾ In the period 2009-2014, more than 975 000 unemployed people benefited from ESF-funded training, accounting for more than 55% of Employability Priority recipients. Low-qualified recipients (ISCED 1-2, but not only unemployed) accounted for 55% of total recipients.

Elsewhere the ESF is also seen as a key feature in the expansion of training provision options.

For example, in the UK the ESF has meant that some funding is available for provision outside the mainstream programmes (i.e. Work Programme and Youth Contract). The Skills Support for unemployed people is an example of this, financed through the Skills Funding Agency (using ESF) (although still restricted to registered unemployed claiming benefits, which account for less than half the total unemployed, and with a relatively small budget). Clients are routed through Job Centre Plus to a network of providers across England, many of which are public sector colleges of further education or consortia of providers. In Germany, the Federal Ministry of Labour has announced plans to use ESF funding to increase ALMPs for the long-term unemployed.

It was also noted in some of the country articles that through the contribution of the ESF, unemployed people receive access not only to training, but also to participation in innovative training forms (for each country context). For example, in Bulgaria, vouchers for training were first used with ESF support. The free choice of a training provider to be paid with the voucher appears to have stimulated the quality of training services.

During the economic downturn, the ESF also played a role in extending or reorienting the focus of some types of provision to include preventive approaches to address the unemployment situation. Examples exist of where the ESF has enabled the expansion of schemes to new groups of at risk workers, as in the case below.

CASE STUDY

Training in the context of short-term allowance (Kurzarbeitergeld), Germany

Short description: The Bundesagentur für Arbeit's short-time working allowance in qualification measure was expanded, in the context of the economic crisis, to recipients of business cycle and seasonal short-time working allowance, assisting recipients to participate in a training measure during slack periods. The ESF contributed subsidies of EUR 125 million for 2007-2013.

Summary of evaluation findings: This measure was widely used in the context of the economic crisis, and an evaluation shows that between 2008 and 2012 about 172 000 short-term workers took part in an ESF-financed training measure (31 000 received transfer short-term work allowances and 172 000 received business cycle-related short-term work allowance) (ISG, 2013). Training courses included, for example, vocational training (e.g. training in specific technical areas), IT skills, social skills such as team work, skills in work organisation and business administration, language training. About 80% of participants in 2009 were still employed by the same company in 2010 (ISG, 2013). In 2011, about 90% of them were employed in the regular (non-subsidised) labour market. The success of the measure is linked to the effectiveness of short-term working in stabilising employment relationships during the crisis.

The ESF is likely to continue to be a key source for future expansions of national training provision. In Lithuania, for example, given the more generous ESF funding in 2015-2016, the participation of unemployed persons in vocational training programmes is likely to double or triple (up to 15 000 persons and more) due to the increasing shortage of skilled labour faced by the growing economy.

There is some suggestion that the benefits of the ESF could be further improved by placing greater emphasis on meeting emerging priorities and filling gaps in provision. For example, in countries like Greece that are facing the challenges of economic recovery, there is an opportunity to put more resources into the areas that are lagging behind. Three such areas, for example, may be: mechanisms for early identification of skill needs; quality management; and guidance and counselling services for adults. The ESF could also have a role to

play in supporting training activities in micro and small enterprises, where, according to the evidence, training needs are significant and training can have a real impact on labour productivity.

4.4.1. The ESF has greatly increased the diversity of target groups, the range of provision and of training providers

ESF funding is also associated with diversification in the range of target groups included in training and, related to this, the type and nature of the available provision. In France, for example, training actions for other targeted groups such as disabled persons, prisoners or migrant workers are mainly financed by the state and regions, but mainly with the help of ESF funds.

The ESF has allowed for the development and implementation of packages of support. In Romania,

ESF programmes have greatly increased the diversity of target groups; moreover the range of provisions has been broadened, as they have also included information and counselling programmes, job placement, exchanges and other measures. Linking provision to employer-led elements has also been a feature in some ESF schemes.

Related to the above point is the role of ESF funding in providing opportunities for linking different types of interventions and putting in place more complex systems of support around unemployed adults — systems that meet their circumstances. In the case of Lithuania already mentioned, expansion of training is particularly envisaged for long-term unemployed persons, 50+ and rural unemployed persons. Better attractiveness of vocational training programmes will be sought by offering complex ALMP measures to specific groups of unemployed people (e.g. application of supported employment measures after training programmes; earlier, in Lithuania it was possible to apply only one measure to one unemployed person per year) and paying more attention to vocational/career guidance and counselling of unemployed people.

The focus on disadvantaged groups also implies a degree of capacity building impact, where the ESF has helped:

- increase PES capacity (e.g. Bulgaria);
- reinforce national certification for qualification courses (e.g. Romania, Malta);
- set up new bodies and systems: where the systems of provision for adult education and training were somewhat underdeveloped, the ESF has played a key role in the establishment and organisation of new quality assurance bodies or quality procedures (Hungary, Malta, FYROM);
- channel funding to locally based delivery providers, and increasing the range of providers (e.g. Romania).

The ESF is helping to develop an evaluation culture and evaluation frameworks (e.g. HR,

HU). In many Member States, the main obstacle to successful upskilling of unemployed people is the lack of evaluation procedures. The ESF has supported the development of new evaluation projects, including large-scale and sophisticated studies. For example, in Croatia comprehensive external evaluation of all ALMPs was initiated in February 2015, within the project co-funded by the EU funds. The evaluation is expected to last for 12 months, and it will be focused on measures implemented in the period 2010–2013. Results of the project should serve as a basis for further development of all ALMPs in Croatia, and increase their quality in future.

At the same time, there is a sense that more should be done to ensure the collection of good evaluation data in the case of training programmes, both for the interventions and direct outcomes, and the performance of the participants. The requirement of a thorough evaluation for every ESF-funded training programme would warrant consideration. The cost of doing so is known to be low, but the gain can be substantial.

Sustainability of provision needs to be considered. In light of the importance of European funding for enabling the development and implementation of much provision, sustainability of the provision becomes a key issue. For example, over the years, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) in Malta has made considerable use of European funds to upgrade and organise its training courses, and while this system has been beneficial in training unemployed persons, it has also meant that some schemes have not been reoffered once the funds have run out. This suggests that the national authorities need to be very careful to plan ahead and find alternative sources of revenue to replace finite EU funds. The issue is a general one if the co-financed schemes are to become embedded in the framework of provision (rather than a nice thing to have or a way of meeting a specific need at a given point in time). It is particularly the case in countries like Malta, where the ESF has underpinned the development of the whole national approach to a large extent.

5. Challenges

Regardless of what each country is doing and how they are doing it, there are some generic challenges or key issues that include:

- **Resources and funding:** there is some suggestion that cost issues may affect the nature and duration of schemes and makes prioritisation necessary.
- **The lack of coordination between policy areas:** national policies still appear fragmented, with insufficient crossover and joint policy thinking between the relevant ministries and national institutions.
- **Imperfect matching of unemployed people to training:** notable barriers to effective matching include high caseloads, creaming and supply-led approaches and the challenge remains how to get the role of the PES right, in order to recognise the existing learning, skills and competences that unemployed people have, how to profile unemployed people and the resources required for that.
- **Low uptake of training by low-skilled, unemployed people,** with the participation of older workers particularly poor: low uptake aggravated by lack of awareness of training provision, lack of incentives for participation in training, cultural issues and logistical factors (e.g. programmes not available continuously).
- **Lack of motivation and engagement of low-skilled, unemployed adults in training:** possibly influenced by poor experiences of schooling.
- **Challenges related to procurement:** lengthy tendering processes or decisions based on criteria that do not support quality provision.
- **Barriers related to evaluation:** poor monitoring information, difficulties in setting up samples for carrying out counterfactual evaluations, schemes based on IAPs being difficult to evaluate due to difficulties in isolating the training effects and the effectiveness of programmes being influenced by exogenous factors, such as the business cycle.
- **Uneven geographical coverage of training provision** — influenced by rurality, transport and accessibility — constrain the potential linkages into the general education and training provision (as opposed to PES-led provision).
- **Barriers related to the lack of effective mechanisms for skills forecasting** that complement policies promoting vocational training in general.

5.1. Coordination between policy areas

Existing literature (Cedefop, 2013) has already highlighted that ensuring greater cooperation and coordination at policy level remains crucial. National policies still appear fragmented, with insufficient crossover and joint policy thinking between the relevant ministries and national institutions responsible for education and training and employment policy.

As already discussed in Section 2.2 on governance, the current review has highlighted a small number of examples of governance (e.g. see Austria's Labour Foundations example, described earlier) with integrated policy approaches encompassing employment policy, education and training and economic development policy; but in most countries, there is room for improvement in this respect.

5.2. Matching unemployed people to training

In general, the process of the selection of unemployed persons for inclusion in education and matching to provision is performed in the employment services in local/regional offices. The sense emerged from the review that in most cases the main reason for this is to facilitate selection on the basis of a number of factors related to the employability of individual persons, and to direct those people to the type of education that is necessary for their rapid integration into the labour market, particularly if there is a range of provision on offer (e.g. educational programmes, upskilling measures such as vocational training, retraining and professional development programmes). Evaluations show that, as with other ALMPs, in the case of training programmes selection is non-negligible. Because of the performance pressure on the PES, often the caseworkers themselves select the more suitable candidates. Employers who offer jobs with training requirements and the *ex-ante* subsidisation of only those who actually take a specific job offer can further amplify this effect.

A supply-led approach is a barrier to effective matching.

A notable barrier to the effective matching of participants to courses that was identified in some country reports was a tendency to a supply-led approach in some national contexts. For example, as part of the access to training programmes in Austria, the caseworkers in the regional employment offices are charged with making decisions on training in conjunction with unemployed participants; studies on the counselling process show that in about a third of cases, the assignments to vocational training courses were taken solely by the PES counsellor (see Riesenfelder and Wetzell, 2009). This is mainly the case when there are training course places available that have to be filled. At the same time, although not a feature identified in the national reports, undersupply of courses could also be a possible barrier to taking up places on PES procured courses.

The constraints and opportunities present in terms of matching unemployed people with courses may depend on labour market conditions. In Iceland, for example, the Directorate of Labour was severely overloaded immediately after the crisis of 2008, with counsellors unable to cope properly with the number of those registering as unemployed. At first, the agency followed a policy of buying whole courses for their clients from education providers. As unemployment declined, this mass approach gave way to a more individually based procedure, with counsellors better able to take account of the specific needs of each unemployed individual. The decline in unemployment has also led to a more favourable counsellor–client ratio. Indeed, it has now become possible for the agency to assign a specific counsellor to each unemployed individual, which should increase the efficiency and quality of the service provided by the agency.

5.3. Resourcing

ALMP measures account for a small proportion of the national budget in many cases (with training measures being a small proportion of ALMPs in some countries), and in some Member States their share may have fallen in times of austerity. Provision of training courses has been constrained in recent years as a consequence of severe cuts in the total budget for active labour market programmes.

The reports of a number of Member States highlight variations in provision year on year related to resourcing issues, and there is some suggestion that cost issues may affect the nature/duration of the schemes. Particular variability was noted in Bulgaria in relation to initiatives financed from the state budget: this meant that the number of

unemployed in the age group 25+ enrolled in training financed from the state budget decreased in the years of crisis because of the overall reduced financing within the strongly restrictive state financial policy in that period (and indeed this policy resulted in an overall reduction in the number of participants in active policies).

Resource issues also affects profiling and the action planning process. For example, in Slovakia according to the law, the decision about a relevant training programme should be based on an assessment of the jobseeker's abilities, work experience, vocational skills and educational attainment, subject to a mutual agreement between the jobseeker and the counsellor. Nevertheless, given the shortage of PES staff and the resultant high caseload, it is questionable whether assessments can be done properly and can lead to well-founded decisions ⁽²⁸⁾. In the Czech Republic, according to a 2013 RILSA study ⁽²⁹⁾, the practice of ALMP at the DLOs, including that of retraining programmes, is focused on filling out the requested forms and procedures, and there is little time left for individual client consulting. Although staff numbers began increasing in 2014, about half of DLO officials deal with more than 20 clients per day, and some with more than 50 per day. There may also be little of an analytical background behind decisions on provider choice, at least not in any formalized way. DLO staff numbers started increasing only in 2014 and staff/client ratios across DLOs remain highly uneven according to anecdotal evidence.

5.4. Low uptake of training by low-skilled unemployed

According to Eurostat, the general levels of adult participation in training in the Member States varies, including in terms of the uptake of training among unemployed people aged 25–64. Unemployed people participation rate in education and training in 2013 was 10% for the EU-27: 8.6% for men and 11.7% for women. Between 2004 and 2013, the total participation rate constantly increased in the EU-27 (from 7.4%), although this was not the case across the EU. In Italy, for example, participation decreased (from 7.6% to 5.1%). Within Member States, the participation varies between regions. Italy is a case in point: according to a report presented

⁽²⁸⁾ The preparation of individual action plans (IAP) is optional. Until 1 May 2013, certain categories of disadvantaged jobseekers (e.g. long-term unemployed, elderly jobseekers) had to be offered an IAP by the labour office within 4 months of registration as a jobseeker and/or when 24 months of unemployment (LTU) had elapsed. According to Duell and Kurekova (2013), the preparation of IAPs is rather formal and typically lacks stronger training elements.

⁽²⁹⁾ http://praha.vupsv.cz/Fulltext/vz_353.pdf

in 2014 by the Ministry of Labour, in 2012 the percentage of unemployed people attending education/training courses was highest in the central (8.6%), north-east (6.6%) and north-west (5.7%) regions, and lowest in the southern regions (5.4%). In general terms, participation in further training tends to decrease with age and skills level (OECD, 2014).

The participation of older workers in further training is particularly low, according to OECD estimates on the basis of LFS data. Data from Spain suggest that participation by older workers is increasing, but those with low skills are least likely to take part in training. In 2013, older workers (aged 45 or over) represented 27% of the total adult unemployed participants in Spain (4 percentage points above the 2011 level) (Ministry of Employment Statistical Yearbook, 2013). However only 2% of the participants were low skilled – half the proportion of low skilled in the total number of unemployed in 2011. This figure is surprisingly low, given that one unemployed worker in six has low skills, according to the Labour Force Survey.

In Greece, the participation of adults in training for unemployed people is low in comparison with the other Member States. Furthermore, most of the adults taking part in continuous vocational training activities are young and better educated, and more likely to be male than female. In addition, certain subsections of the population, such as the low skilled, older people and those living in rural areas, are unlikely to participate in training.

5.4.1. Low propensity of low skilled to participate in training

The lack of engagement of the low-skilled unemployed in training is a key factor, possibly influenced by poor experience of schooling. Other issues include lack of awareness of training provisions. Where the provision links to the national systems of education and training above and beyond PES-led options, awareness of courses becomes a particular issue. The country reports suggest that increasing use of IT may be helping to address this issue (for example, in Austria for the self-selection of appropriate training courses, PES customers find the continuous training database on the PES website).

An issue that emerges from the Danish case is the weak motivation of the unskilled unemployed to undertake formal education, as they will often have negative experiences of the formal education system, and therefore need special support in preparing for participation.

Whatever the reason, in general people with higher levels of skills are much more likely to participate in training than are the lowest skilled unemployed. Uptake in Slovakia has been linked to common barriers to education for the low educated, categorised as: cost (education too expensive for people to afford it); access to training (a mismatch of training schedules with the schedule of work, for those who want to continue training after returning to work); and personal barriers (age or health reasons). Experience in the Member States suggests that this group needs appropriate interventions.

5.4.2. Incentives to train or sanctions for non-participation

In some countries, such as Austria, participation in training courses is mandatory and non-compliance brings benefit sanctions. The policy aim is that every new entrant into unemployment should be enrolled on a course before the end of the first 4 months of unemployment. In Romania, unemployed people either follow a training programme that is selected for them by a specialised counsellor in the employment office, or when they register with the PES they can enrol on a training course that is individually selected, provided that it leads to employment; unless they have good justification, unemployed workers cannot refuse enrolment on a training programme that has been selected for them by a specialised counsellor of the local employment offices without having their unemployment benefit suspended.

However, in many Member States participation in training by the low-skilled unemployed is not particularly incentivised. In most cases there are no special economic incentives to participate in training. For example in Sweden, participants in labour market training, as well as other ALMP measures, are entitled to a benefit equivalent to the standard unemployment benefit that is paid for only 300 days. Participation in training is also voluntary in the sense that income support is not strictly conditional on participation in training.

5.4.3. Cultural factors

Cultural issues may also play a part in people's preference for different types of training, such as a lower preference for vocational qualifications and a higher preference for academic qualifications (e.g. the negative image of vocational training has still not changed in Greece, despite the crisis, which demonstrated that medium-level

skills and vocational qualifications will be in greater demand in future).

Participation in training in some cases seems to reflect a desire by beneficiaries to extend the benefit period (e.g. Cyprus, Greece, Romania). Individuals no longer entitled to unemployment benefit may remain eligible for other associated stipends and other types of support, including income that may have been offered by a particular training programme. The effect depends on the availability of benefits and any income criteria for receipt of these. For example, in Romania, groups of disadvantaged workers may benefit from the provision of training financed from the unemployment insurance fund, as well as from other associated benefits, provided their income is less than the value of the social reference indicator. The indicator was fixed by law in Romania as of 2010 and has not been modified since then: given the low value of the social reference indicator, only the poorest of the poor qualify.

5.4.4. Logistical factors

Some logistical issues with regard to uptake were also mentioned, depending on the nature of the provision. One difficulty worth noting is that programmes are not continuously open, making it difficult for a person who becomes unemployed at a given point in time to proceed seamlessly into training. In this context, current attention of flexible learning pathways in VET and adult learning policies are relevant and should take up this issue.

5.5. Issues related to public procurement rules

In the context of the need to work within the established public procurement processes, another obstacle to efficient implementation of training might be restrictions on procurement, especially if the regulations mean lengthy tendering processes or decisions based on criteria that do not support quality provision. The challenge is to ensure that the procurement process provides the best quality training, is flexible enough to respond to labour market conditions, and is appropriate to needs (including allowing for tailoring, if required). In the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Labour requires the regional DLOs to use the practice of public procurement to contract multi-year packages of retraining services. The requirement results in contracts being awarded on the basis of the lowest cost (with little regard to quality or other criteria), and this has been criticised by the OECD and local practitioners. Public

procurement processes in the Czech Republic often take a long time (because of legal uncertainties and frequent appeals and reruns of competitions). A recent report (RILSA, 2013) argues that these legal/administrative obstacles have curbed efforts to provide up-to-date retraining programmes for the large inflow of unemployed who entered unemployment during the recent crisis. From this perspective, the 2012 introduction of self-organised retraining, which is not governed by procurement procedures, was considered a fortunate development.

In Slovakia, according to the OECD, provision of training programmes is hindered mainly by burdensome procurement rules and the low administrative capacity of PES. The COLSAF confirms that lengthy procurement processes and frequent changes to legislation have resulted in the cancellation of several procurement procedures. In all, 19 out of the 46 territorial labour offices, many of which are located in regions with high unemployment rates, did not provide training to a single jobseeker in 2013.

5.6. Evaluation challenges

A relatively large number of the country reports note a dearth of detailed evaluation of these types of measures. Poor monitoring is a barrier to evaluation. The main reason, however, is probably the complexity of putting in place rigorous evaluation which includes an assessment of dead-weight effects.

5.6.1. Problems of establishing the counterfactual

Even where there is relatively good monitoring, it is difficult to isolate the performance of any particular aspect of provision. The focus of evaluations tends to be more on aspects such as student experiences and exit patterns. Information about dead weight and displacement effects, to what extent the courses did have an influence on the insertion rates, as well as the use of control and experimental groups, is relatively rare.

5.6.2. Difficulty in separating out the effects of different measures

Schemes based on customising support for the individual are often difficult to evaluate, due to difficulties in isolating the training elements. This has been an issue, for example, in relation to the Work Programme in the UK. In this example, the problem of extracting information is also complicated by the fact that the programme is in

the hands of contractors and the emphasis is on output-related funding.

5.6.3. Effectiveness influenced by exogenous factors

Economic factors may have a part to play in the success of training interventions, although the relative importance is contested in the research and some authors have suggested that the design of courses is a more important factor.

Some evaluations suggest that the timing of training in relation to the business cycle has proved to be essential for the effectiveness of training measures. Training effectiveness might be affected by the business cycle for a number of reasons. It is easier to find occupations with a shortage of personnel in times of low unemployment; a large increase in training volumes during a recession can reduce the quality of the educational programmes; when there is high unemployment, participants may be less motivated to acquire new skills through VET. Evidence from Sweden, for example, (Forslund et al., 2011) found that traditional labour market training was more effective than on-the-job training during periods of recession; this is explained by the fact that labour market training creates lock-in effects and is more effective when the cost of forgoing search time is lower in recessions. Interpretation of the results is complex: for example, employment outcomes also need to take account of the variation in the number and composition of participants in the training, such as the higher (and increasing) share of the long-term unemployed during periods of recession, which could explain reductions over time in the efficiency of vocational and educational training.

Gartell et al. (2013) looked at changes in the efficiency of training over time in Sweden, and found a reduction over time in the benefits of training since 2005 (1 year after the completion of training, a significantly higher share of participants than non-participants in 2005 had secured unsubsidised employment; but the positive effect decreased significantly over time and was close to zero in 2009 and 2010). The author concluded that the efficiency of training is affected by economic conditions, although this outcome could also partly be ascribed to the variation in the number and composition of participants in the training programme. A higher and increasing share of LTU during recession periods would largely explain the reduction in the efficiency of vocational and educational training over time. However, efficiency of training would also depend on how extensive the training was and how tailored it was to the person's needs.

A recent report on a systematic assessment of 71 impact evaluations of employment training internationally (*What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth, 2014*) came up with some interesting conclusions: it indicated that the state of the economy was not a major factor in the performance of training programmes — more important were the structure and design of the programmes.

5.6.4. Need for longitudinal element due to timescales involved

Overall, there is a lack of evaluation of the long-term effectiveness of training, even though studies have shown that the beneficial impact of training can become more evident in the medium to the longer term, rather than in the short term. It has been widely acknowledged in the international literature that measuring the effectiveness of training measures after 6 months is too short a time period. One issue is that evaluations tend to be conducted in the context of specific time-constrained programmes, as well as in the context of ESF programmes.

The main problem is in getting precise information about the individual professional paths of unemployed persons. Yet it is the first condition in fully understanding the impact of measures, in identifying obstacles and their causes, and in designing adapted solutions. In some countries it is routine to merge data from different registers to create databases for micro-econometric research. For example, in Estonia UIF has developed a sound monitoring system and has built up databases on registered unemployed that can be used to conduct impact evaluations; it has prepared one impact evaluation a year since 2010. In other cases, data linking provides a precedent, but impact evaluations are relatively rare (e.g. in Latvia, Hazans and Dmitrijeva 2013 is the exception rather than the rule). An evaluation gap remains in many countries which have not overcome the issues of data linking.

5.7. Uneven geographical coverage

In some cases, there is uneven coverage of training provision throughout a country. Issues of rural isolation, transport and accessibility play a part in this and location of provision becomes a key concern. Geographical issues of coverage could be most pertinent in relation to constraining the potential linkages to the general education and training provision (as opposed to PES-led provision). For example in France, the individual training support (AIF) intervention finances educational

expenses for specific training projects which do not belong within the scope of collective training programmes usually financed by Pôle Emploi (which agrees to finance part of the programme if the training programme is coherent with the careers of beneficiaries). Importantly, AIF allows personalised training solutions, adapted to the needs and constraints of the beneficiaries and to their professional project. This scheme has been increasingly important, and between 2011 and 2012, the number of beneficiaries almost tripled, going from 10 600 to 29 800. However, in some regions, access to AIF is not clear and stop and go practices sometimes occur during the process, due to administrative and financial issues. This creates insecurity and inequity for unemployed people.

5.8. Skills forecasting

The extent to which predictive approaches to anticipate the growth of future labour market jobs underpin the PES provision of training for unemployed people appears to vary, and this emerged in the country reports as a challenging aspect (i.e. problems associated with both accurately predicting where vacancies will appear in future, and the issue of how this knowledge is translated into effective curricula which will meet the skills needs on the ground). Skills forecasting initiatives to discover future skills demand are increasing. Different approaches have included the use of committees or working groups of experts, and establishing labour market forecasting responsibilities within the key labour market bodies such as the PES or training institutes. The results of such initiatives, however, are not always used in a systematic manner.

5.8.1. Need to establish effective mechanisms for skills forecasting

Putting in place mechanisms for forecasting and the translation of skills needs into curricula requires dedicated focus and mechanisms. For example, in 2009 the management board of Austria's PES established a standing committee on new skills, which consists of PES representatives, social partners, training institutions and VET experts. Working groups in specific sectors (e.g. construction, tourism, electronics, energy and environment technologies, etc.) were tasked with drawing up curricula for target-oriented training programmes. Those are based on the committee's knowledge of short- and medium-term skill

requirements, taking into account underlying trends in the labour market, such as greening, globalisation and new technologies, and incorporating inputs from EU-level analysis of emerging competences and economic activities in selected sectors. In Estonia, the UIF has defined so-called priority training areas in cooperation with experts. In these priority areas, special study programmes are being worked out in close cooperation with employers, trainers and professional associations, which are thereafter regularly offered (Protseduurireegel Tööturukoolitus, 2014).

The challenges are seen in the case of Greece: not much progress has been achieved over the past few years with respect to identification of labour market and training needs, although Greece has a dedicated agency (the National Labour and Human Resources Institute, EIEAD) for this purpose. Recently, the Foundation for Industrial and Economic Research conducted a business survey exploring the issue of changes in local labour markets which yielded important information on skills in demand and human resources needs (IOBE, 2011). The Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV) has also developed a mechanism for identifying needs in relation to occupations and skills in eight sectors of economic activity that are of particular importance for the Greek economy: food, ICT, energy, construction products, supply chain, environment, metals and health. In this frame, SEV has identified 87 key occupations as likely to require significantly different knowledge, skills and abilities in the future. Many of the remaining social partners have also conducted their own surveys of (sectoral) training needs, but the picture remains fragmented, as among other things, each survey relies on different employment growth scenarios and on different research methodology and definitions, and the way in which the results of studies are taken into account in the design of training curricula still needs to be improved.

The skills profiles required to underpin training curricula are becoming increasingly high and niche-oriented as a recent Business Federation Luxembourg study (FEDIL, 2014) illustrates. This is adding to the challenge facing the national framework to address mismatches in the labour market by training schemes: in effect, information on the specific skills needed now and in the future continues to be a challenge for policy designers.

Equally, matching training participants to what best fits their skills profile by developing individualised training solutions remains a challenge for most PES.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

Training measures can support labour market efficiency and are an appropriate response to conditions of structural unemployment. However, training measures for unemployed adults are essentially compensatory interventions and the general education and lifelong learning systems have a greater role to play in underpinning efficient labour markets.

In some countries, the context for the system of training for unemployed adults is fundamentally different from that of the recent past. Demands on the system tend to have increased amidst a climate of rising unemployment, and delivery may need additional resources and will need to become more effective than in the past. In this context training courses need to contain an appropriate mix of generic and vocational skills, and should better target the low skilled and the long-term unemployed, who are hardest hit by the economic crisis. Such courses are likely to be longer than the average labour market training measures.

Training measures are particularly relevant to address structural unemployment conditions where skills mismatch is a key issue, and where skills shortages exist alongside high long-term unemployment. Furthermore, a learn/train first approach has been recommended for people who have difficulty in finding a job in an economic downturn, since the opportunity cost of time in training/education is lower during poor labour market conditions (OECD, 2010). Indeed, the economic crisis, which has made it more difficult to return rapidly to employment when one becomes unemployed, seems to have been behind increased emphasis in training and education interventions for low-skilled persons as part of ALMP in countries such as Denmark. Other drivers are the high share of unskilled people in unemployment and the forecasts of future imbalances on the labour market (i.e. growing surplus of unskilled workers and lack of people with higher skill levels).

Some design features have been shown to be beneficial in terms of increasing the effectiveness of training interventions in combating unemployment, and some features may be especially important in preventing people from becoming long-term unemployed. Training measures with more positive evaluation results tend

to be those which: are **tailored** to the jobseeker's potential; meet (local) **employers' skills needs**; lead to **formal vocational qualifications**; are **smaller in scale** and targeted at **specific disadvantaged groups**, and on particular occupations.

Vocational training has significant positive effects for jobseekers with low levels of educational attainment (although the results depend on the business cycle and the level of unemployment).

An individualised approach is a factor in effectiveness. Self-selection approaches also appear to work better than where the decisions are made solely by the PES caseworker.

A decentralisation of training provision from the national level to a wide range of education providers, including non-profit organisations, enhances opportunities for tailored provision and practical training in the labour market.

Integrated approaches and institutional cooperation are important for those groups that face multiple employment barriers, with guidance playing a central component. Schemes which provide experience close to working life tend to be more effective. As indicated in the literature (Cedefop, 2013), work-based learning can provide close links between learning in different settings and scaffolding approaches to aid transition from training to work over time.

Employer involvement is also important, and the most successful schemes combine institutional training with practical training, mirroring a real job and workplace environment as much as possible.

Training providers not only help learners to develop knowledge, skills and competences and to gain working experience, but also work at the interface between learners and employers, and often function as labour market intermediaries, so this intermediary function of training providers should be supported.

The system of individual action plans provides a useful mechanism for focusing the interventions most effectively and speeding up the activation process. Guidance and follow-up of leavers from training — especially those at a distance from the labour market and facing multiple employment barriers — is also needed.

6.2. Policy lessons

From the practices reviewed in this work, the following policy lessons can be drawn:

Maintain a stable national policy to support training, with stable funding, notwithstanding the significance of ESF funding. Use of the ESF is important for the flexibility of provision and the development of specialised provision and is associated with the widening of the groups covered. However, stable national policies are necessary, and regular financing of vocational qualifications on the labour market needs to be ensured, so that adequate training opportunities become available for disadvantaged groups, leading to vocational qualifications.

In terms of governance, **ensuring greater cooperation and coordination at policy level remains crucial**, since national policies still appear fragmented, with inadequate links between the relevant ministries and national institutions responsible for employment policy and education and training. There is perhaps a role here for the national coordinators for adult learning, as part of implementing the European Agenda for Adult Learning.

Individualised measures achieve the highest impact so individualised approaches and self-selection need to continue to be emphasised. Self-employment training should also be included in the options where appropriate.

Training for unemployed people should aim to maximise the use of employer-based provision. This increases practical experience, reinforces profession-specific skills and increases the chances of being permanently recruited by a company. Involving more employers may require new reimbursement mechanisms to provide incentives for employer involvement.

Emphasis on training measures should continue to be directed at occupations with shortages on the labour market, especially for those farthest from the labour market who have most to gain from practical employment-related skills.

Skills-need forecasting is crucial in improving training effectiveness and further work is needed to identify the most effective forecasting approaches and the practical mechanisms necessary to translate forecasts into detailed skills profiles and curricula that can be used in training of unemployed people.

Ensuring validation of non-formal and informal prior learning and certification of learning outcomes is very relevant for low qualified adults, because learning often happens outside formal education.

Training measures have rarely been evaluated in a rigorous way that includes longitudinal research over a reasonable timescale and analysis of the net effects for different types of measures and for the different groups often targeted within the same measure. Efforts should be made to improve the evidence base on the outcomes of the measures, especially for new measures, in order to ensure that there is scope to learn from the lessons of past actions.

There should be increased focus in monitoring and evaluations on the effects for different target groups. More systematic monitoring and evaluation of the effects of policies and measures on the employment and income of different target groups (low skilled, long-term unemployed, elderly, etc.) is needed to inform the adaptation of the type, content and format of training programmes and increase training effectiveness.

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