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Abstract

Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP) are a group of labour market policies that help unemployed and inactive people to find employment opportunities, and is a part of Cohesion policy and interventions defined by European Union.

During an economic crisis, such as the crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, ALMPs are particularly important elements of countries' recovery strategies, supporting a successful reallocation of displaced workers and helping minimise the risk of (long-term) unemployment.

Although the individual circumstances and combinations of labour market challenges are often unique, some employment obstacles affect certain groups more than others and for this reasons is important give ad individualised support combining different ALMPs. In addition, the labour market inclusion pathway often requires a step-by-step approach which relies on the co-operation between institutions and policy domains, as other types of services (social, health, education, childcare, housing and beyond).

A model of intervention is borrowed from the socio-health sector, identifying case management in the context of public employment as the basis of preventive strategies to reduce unemployment, through the identification of appropriate customized intervention measures and the definition of the individual assistance needs of each client.

In defining a strategy, the blueprint is one of the key elements of programme management and identifies the skills / competences that the entity aims to achieve, and contains indications on the future organizational structure, processes, functions and performance levels and which technologies and information can be used to support them. It is therefore necessary to understand the organizational and regulatory setup of ALMP systems in order to assess what actions may be possible to activate a process of change in the organization, aimed at defining effective policies, in particular for vulnerable individuals. Taking into account the systems of IN SITU involved country it emerged that the two most important characteristics of a country's regulatory set-up of ALMP provision are its regulatory flexibility and the complexity of the regulatory framework. Both jointly influence how responsive an ALMP system to changing labour market needs can be.

Successful factors and approaches for the effective integration of the long-term unemployed into the labor market should take into account three dimensions: the level of policy (macro), that is, of reforms and governance; the organizational level (meso); the level of the beneficiary (micro) focused on how to use the service.

Given the complex and often multiple employment obstacles faced by the most vulnerable groups, it is important to provide them with comprehensive individualised support combining different ALMPs, with the model of case management, combined with a step-by-step approach which relies on the cooperation between institutions and policy domains, in addition to other types of services (social, health, education, childcare, housing and beyond).

A new era is coming, also in terms of public resources – Structural Funds, Next Generation Eu – and never before, an intergenerational pact has been necessary.



1. Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP) Definition

Labour market policies comprise a range of financial and practical policy interventions that can help people when they face difficulties in the labour market. They aim to bring the unemployed and the inactive into employment and help people in low-quality or threatened jobs find better employment opportunities.

Labour market policies are varied and include job searching mechanisms, training, start-up incentives and income support (unemployment benefits). A set of these policies are grouped together as "active measures" or activation policies and include training, employment incentives, supported employment, rehabilitation, and direct job creation

(<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=2389&langId=en>).

During an economic crisis, such as the crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, ALMPs are particularly important elements of countries' recovery strategies, supporting a successful reallocation of displaced workers and helping minimise the risk of (long-term) unemployment (OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers).

Generally, these policies require:

- Enhancing motivation and incentives to seek employment.
- Improving job readiness and help in finding suitable employment.
- Expanding employment opportunities.

The implementation of these key elements needs to be managed by effective and well-coordinated labour market and social institutions and policies..

(<https://www.oecd.org/employment/activation.htm>)

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the impact of policies and programmes are necessary to strengthen policy effectiveness and efficiency in responding to the needs of different groups

A framework for promoting people-centred employment policies

A range of barriers may hold people back from fully engaging in the labour market and policies seeking to address them should be tailored accordingly. Out-of-work benefits may lessen the **motivation** to look for or take up employment if they do not require recipients to be actively looking for work or to participate in measures to improve their job readiness. Work incentives can also be weak if the net increase in income from taking up a job is small.



For some, **job readiness** rather than motivation may be the key barrier and they may require support in navigating the jobs market through intensive case management and placement services. They may also require help to boost or update their skills or work experience, or to help them overcome or manage health problems or care-related responsibilities.

Bringing more people into employment also involves addressing demand-side barriers and expanding employment **opportunities**. This may involve increasing the share of job vacancies registered with employment services, actively engaging and assisting employers in hiring and retaining workers (e.g. hiring subsidies and short-time work) or promoting jobseekers' mobility.

The implementation of these key elements needs to be managed by effective and well-coordinated labour market and social **institutions and policies**. This requires good **information** on the characteristics of jobseekers and other groups on the margins of the labour market and the employment barriers they face. It also calls for close and continuous **monitoring and evaluation** of the effectiveness of policies and programmes.



2. EU Framework – labor market and social inclusion policies

2.1. Policies and pillars

The concept of "social inclusion" which has established itself at community level has a broad definition and concerns not only the accompaniment to the escape from conditions of need and hardship, but also the support and activation process aimed at guaranteeing full participation in economic life, social and cultural, the possibility of enjoying a standard of living and well-being considered normal in the society in which one lives, access to fundamental rights.

For people able to work, employment represents the main objective towards an autonomy of income and an improvement in the living conditions of the individual, understood in the multiple dimensions of life (e.g. education, safety, health, housing, environment, self-respect, participation). The specific target of active inclusion - disadvantaged people, at risk of social exclusion and poverty; often bearers of multiple disadvantages - it requires labor policies to coordinate and integrate with the institutions of social policy, through an often new collaboration between different skills, which sometimes touches different institutional levels, and interventions on the territory that facilitate access, use of services and their management through organization models of the one-stop shop offer. Furthermore, with this type of target, the provision of the service requires a different approach by the institutions, of a holistic type, with a strong personalization of the interventions, the use of the philosophy of empowerment, support tools in the development of the so-called "soft skills", such as trust, reliability, respect for deadlines and teamwork; it therefore requires the flexibility and adaptation of traditional methods of intervention and specialist skills that can be organized through multidisciplinary teams.

The issue is the subject of Commission Recommendation 867/2008 / EC on "Active inclusion of people excluded from the labor market" which commits the Member States to adopt a global and integrated strategy in favor of the active inclusion of people excluded from the labor market. work, based on the combination of adequate income support, the development of inclusive labor markets and access to quality services, or on the combination of passive income support and active socio-work integration / reintegration measures that only to address the problems linked to situations of poverty and the relative lack or inadequacy of disposable income, but also to counteract those phenomena that more generally can determine the social exclusion of individuals.

More in particular we'll focus on income support, inclusive labor markets and access to services.

Income support.

The European Union recognizes the right to "sufficient, stable and predictable" resources for disadvantaged or excluded people from the labor market, specifying that the implementation of a guarantee of resources and benefits falls within the scope of social protection that belongs to the Member States qualify, through the development of measures suited to people's needs, capable of guaranteeing a dignified life and supporting active participation in social and working life.

Among the income support schemes, minimum income schemes, aimed at ensuring adequate means of subsistence, represent fundamental tools for the EU in the fight against social exclusion and poverty. National minimum income schemes offer protection of last resort to those who do not have access to insurance-type social benefits, as they have exhausted or have not acquired the right



to benefit from them. In this regard, the component of income supplementation for low-wage or low-wage workers (in-work benefit) is also growing, as in-work poverty is on the rise.

In European welfare systems, minimum income schemes have a residual character, as the social protection function for those able to work is mainly performed by unemployment benefits.

The first pillar of insurance-contributory unemployment benefits, more or less extensive from the point of view of social coverage, is in fact often flanked by a second pillar of the welfare type, based on proof of means, mainly aimed at the long-term unemployed. . Conceptually, unemployment benefits and minimum income schemes perform distinct functions: the former aim to contain the reduction in the standard of living following the loss of work, alongside support measures for returning to work; the minimum income is instead a tool to fight poverty and social inclusion theoretically aimed at a public of beneficiaries other than the unemployed.

For the purposes of combating poverty and social exclusion, the extent of coverage of income support is relevant, also in the perspective of a flexicurity working dimension (e.g. greater labor mobility) and in consideration of growing poverty phenomena linked to job insecurity and intermittent careers. Equally relevant is their adequacy in order to support the escape from the condition of poverty, without however creating disincentives for the beneficiary's integration into the world of work. In this regard, the European Parliament in its resolution of 20 October 2010 on the role of minimum income in the fight against poverty and in promoting an inclusive society, declared itself in favor of a minimum income equal to at least 60% of the median income of the Member State. and a minimum wage set at a decent level (i.e. above the poverty line), while the European Commission funded the development of a common methodology for measuring the adequacy of income support (reference budgets).

In many European countries, the recent trend towards a reduction in duration, coverage (eg restrictions in the requirements for access to benefits) and the amount of unemployment benefits has placed increasing pressure on minimum income schemes. The most recent national welfare reforms have produced an adjustment in the structure of social protection systems, towards a tendential unification of the two pillars of unemployment benefits and minimum income, traditionally separate, in a single device, in a system of benefits. and fully integrated services.

Over time, the EU has intervened several times to urge member states to adopt minimum income instruments aimed at promoting income support for people in conditions of poverty and social and work exclusion. The 2013 Social Investment Package relaunched the elements of the integrated active inclusion strategy, with a view to flexicurity and in an economic context profoundly marked by years of crisis, by sensitive budget restrictions for social policies and by the emergence of new social risks.

The objective of the fight against poverty and social exclusion then assumed concrete relevance in the Regulation of the European Social Fund 2014-2020 with the decision to mandatorily allocate 20% of the amount of resources to social inclusion policies and in particular to people at risk of relative poverty, in conditions of severe material deprivation, as well as families with low work intensity. Lastly, in chronological order, the European Pillar of Social Rights, approved in September 2017, establishes in point 14 a right to minimum income benefits adequate to guarantee a dignified life for anyone who does not have sufficient resources.

The current debate on the introduction of a minimum income at European level stems from the awareness of the ineffectiveness of the policy to combat poverty followed up to now, based on the



principle of subsidiarity and entrusted to the soft law instruments of the Open Method of Coordination and the Semester European. The Europe 2020 Strategy, adopted in June 2010 and aimed at reducing by 25% the number of people at risk of poverty and exclusion (20 million people) did not in fact produce the expected results. However, there is no unity of views in the EU regarding the proposal for a European Directive on a decent minimum income, which introduces a binding framework for member states, with the aim of generalizing, supporting and making national systems adequate. The question of the introduction of a European legislative act

binding in this matter seems to have an eminently political character, while the debate continues as to whether or not there is a legal basis for a European legislation on minimum income, even after the 2017 Gothenburg Summit, which approved the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Inclusive labor markets.

In relation to the phenomenon of poverty and the fight against social exclusion, the recommendation to adopt active labor policy measures concerns people whose situation allows them to carry out work activities, so that they receive effective help to find, find or keep a job responding to their professional skills. The active policy measures on disadvantaged targets can be of different types: protection (e.g. work experience programs, public work), investment (e.g. training) or facilitated relocation to the market (e.g. tax credit, job subsidies, incentivized employment). The connection between income support and active labor policies must be ensured by the presence of employment services and social services capable of activating and "enabling" the subject, through personalized interventions and integrated services capable of dealing with situations of multiple disadvantage. The key concepts of the theory and practice of labor (and social) policies of recent years, activation and conditionality, as a whole, shift the axis of social intervention from protection to individual responsibility. In fact, activation means an assumption of responsibility of the subject in seeking solutions as autonomous as possible on the labor market, in response to the risks and conditions of poverty and exclusion, which is formalized in the signing of an individual service agreement between the subject and the employment service. With regard to conditionality, a clear tendency has prevailed to subordinate welfare benefits to strict conditions of effective availability for work, to the acceptance of a program of active inclusion, and / or reintegration into the labor market, possibly in line with the own skills and competences (adequate offer), which presupposes, as an essential element, the existence of a rigorous sanctioning system, with periodic checks and verifications, well-defined and monitored integration programs and network actions in the territory between the different services involved in case management. The penalties envisaged for non-compliance with the Service Agreement generally consist in the progressive reduction of subsidies for each subsequent violation, up to the suspension or revocation of the monetary service.

At least theoretically, the Service Pact imposes obligations on social and employment services, in a logic of mutual conditionality between user and public administration. In international experience, if the beneficiary is required to comply with the Service Agreement for (social and / or employment) integration, under penalty of the introduction of sanctions, in the same way the public administration is required to provide services in a timely manner, effective, and in compliance with quality standards. In addition to being a subject with duties, the beneficiary is therefore also the owner of rights at the same time. Therefore, if the user has to make every effort to improve his situation, at the same time, the administration must ensure him the tools and opportunities in this direction. The development of case management systems within the PES responds to this need to make the service provider more



responsible for the job outcome. The bilateral nature of the Service Agreement represents in turn a condition for the effective functioning of the work inclusion programs.

OECD documents (2021) generally show, with reference to some countries, that activation works better in the case of relatively "job ready" unemployed and that the success rates differ by type of target (eg high in case of single parents, provided they are supported in dealing with problems related to childcare; low in the case of beneficiaries of permanent sickness / disability benefits, also due to less public support for work activation policies aimed at people with problems of health). Keeping in mind the distinction between beneficiaries of income support in the event of unemployment and minimum income schemes aimed at combating social exclusion and poverty, the empirical evidence shows for the recipients of the latter rather results in terms of job inclusion. content, even in advanced institutional contexts, characterized by relatively low levels of unemployment and in which employment services have the resources and capabilities to deal with disadvantaged targets. In other words, only a limited percentage of subjects considered to be activated by the public services are actually involved, with different results depending on the characteristics of the activation programs, the reference context, the situation of the labor market. It also appears that the job placement programs that work best for those at risk of exclusion and poverty are subsidized training and work schemes in the private sector, and incentives for self-employment, while programs for direct job creation in the public sector give less positive results, even if in the evaluation of the effects of job placement policies it is necessary to adopt a medium-term and not a short-term perspective.

In the recent European debate, the issue of activation and conditionality in the context of workfare schemes is particularly evident. If, on the one hand, all national systems have in common a strengthening of the conditionality constraint, providing for a counter-performance to the granting of the subsidy, in differentiated forms, with a mix of elements that impose constraints (demanding, e.g. paid or low-paid jobs; low-skilled jobs and the penalties for not complying with the requirements) and elements of capacity-building (enabling, e.g. offering support services), an adaptation of the activation requirements and conditionality in the case of disadvantaged people in conditions of poverty.

Furthermore, the constraints imposed by cross compliance can, for example, concern, rather than job placement, behaviors considered to be encouraged with a view to promoting the person (e.g. hygiene and care), or human development, also with the involvement of the entire family unit (e.g. commitment to subject minors vaccinations and periodic medical checks, the fulfillment of school obligations), or a mix of different objectives; or provide longer times for returning to work, a gradual and assisted reintegration, a greater investment in the acquisition and adaptation of skills.

Access to services.

The third pillar of the active inclusion strategy concerns access to qualitatively valid and enabling services, for the purpose of social and work integration. The expression "enabling" refers to different types of services, essential for active, social and economic inclusion policies, which include social assistance services, those for employment and training, housing assistance and social housing, childcare, long-term care and health services, which can do a lot to help reduce hardship, exclusion and poverty in various groups. The regulatory interventions of the European Commission have recommended the provision of integrated services on the territory through a one-stop shop model



that simplifies administrative procedures, reduces management costs, favors information flows, increases the effectiveness of interventions and facilitates access to services. for people at a disadvantage.

The approach to active inclusion found wider application in the Council Recommendation of 15 February 2016 (2016 / C 67/01) "Inclusion of the long-term unemployed in the labor market", with which the EU provides policy guidelines more concrete for Member States focused on improving labor market governance and specific activation policies for their reintegration.

The Recommendation recognizes the high risk of inactivity of the long-term unemployed, the importance of a preventive approach, the integration of services and benefits and the need to develop partnerships between employers, social partners, employment services, authorities which in various capacities intervene in the provision of active political services. It also proposes to incentivize registrations and promote active support for the long-term unemployed, to strengthen continuity and coordination between relevant services and, in general, to increase the effectiveness of interventions targeting both the long-term unemployed period both to employers.

In particular, Member States are recommended to:

- Encourage the registration of the long-term unemployed with an employment service, in particular through a better offer of information on the types of support available such as: mentoring, job search help, continuing education and training courses as well as contributions for the " accommodation and services in the field of transport, children and health care;
- provide individual assessment and personalized guidance before reaching 18 months of unemployment;
- offer the unemployed a job placement agreement before 18 months of unemployment have elapsed.

The agreement should on the one hand provide for the worker objectives, obligations and the relative timing for their achievement, on the other hand, detail the services, not only working, offered by the single point of contact: assistance in looking for work, certification of non-formal and informal learning, counseling and guidance, vocational education and training; social support, early childhood care, health and long-term care services, debt counseling, housing assistance, mobility services etc.

The Recommendation also calls for closer links with employers through the following actions:

- develop partnerships with social partners, employment services, public authorities, social services and education and training institutions;
- promote services for employers such as job vacancy control, placement support, mentoring and on-the-job training as well as post-placement support;
- focus financial incentives on schemes that support integration into the labor market, such as hiring subsidies and the reduction of social security contributions.

Finally, the Council provides that the implementation of the Recommendation be monitored within the EU Employment Committee. The Commission, on the other hand, has the task of evaluating the initiatives undertaken by the Member States following the Recommendation with a report to the Council.

Italy has also approved its own strategy to combat long-term unemployment which starts from a personalized and multi-dimensional approach on which to converge the different tools and resources



deployed by institutional actors, ensuring an adequate degree of flexibility in " implementation of interventions in the territories, in line with the plans and priorities identified at the regional level.

The Italian Strategy, shared and approved in the State-Regions Conference, underlines the importance of a preventive approach to long-term unemployment, in a logic of activating and empowering people as a determining factor for the success of active policy actions, both in terms of integration into the labor market and in terms of combating social exclusion; highlights the need, in this perspective, for a multidisciplinary and targeted care of the long-term unemployed, aimed at their relocation with a composite process of active policy actions which, through the construction of an integrated chain of multisectoral interventions, including interventions on the social and health side, attack the problem of unemployment on several fronts, avoiding that the most vulnerable people fall into situations of poverty and marginalization and, at the same time, conditioning the perception of assistance instruments to registration with a service for employment and participation in active policy paths.

2.2. ALMP for most vulnerable groups

This paragraph focuses on the most vulnerable groups who are only marginally attached to the labour market because of significant employment obstacles, but who could find employment if given appropriate active labour market policy (ALMP) support co ordinated with other services. Many of these people face multiple employment obstacles, such as a combination of low skills, care obligations, health limitations, addictions or geographic mobility challenges.

Although the individual circumstances and combinations of labour market challenges are often unique, some employment obstacles affect certain groups more than others, underlining the need for careful targeting and monitoring of ALMPs and other interventions to achieve an inclusive labour market. For example, care obligations concern a significantly higher share of women than men, a lack of language skills is a greater challenge among jobseekers with a migrant background, health limitations become more prominent with age, and young people can be in worse labour market position due to their limited work experience.

PES need to provide targeted comprehensive support to the most vulnerable groups throughout the labour market integration pathway: It is crucial that PES continue supporting the most vulnerable groups during the COVID 19 crisis, because preparing them for labour market integration takes time. Improving the employability of the most vulnerable groups now would increase their chances of being integrated into the labour market as economies recover and employers' needs for labour increase.

As the most vulnerable groups face often very specific or even multiple obstacles, it is important to provide them with individualised support, and at times even tailor-made support, to meet their complex needs. From the PES side, this requires a combination of different ALMPs, such as training to increase digital skills to improve employability, followed by job-search assistance, and potentially employment subsidies. In addition, the inclusion pathway often requires a step-by-step approach which relies on the co operation between institutions, as other types of services (social, health, education, childcare, housing and beyond) as well as social protection measures and benefits might be needed before as well as during ALMP provision to tackle social integration obstacles more generally.

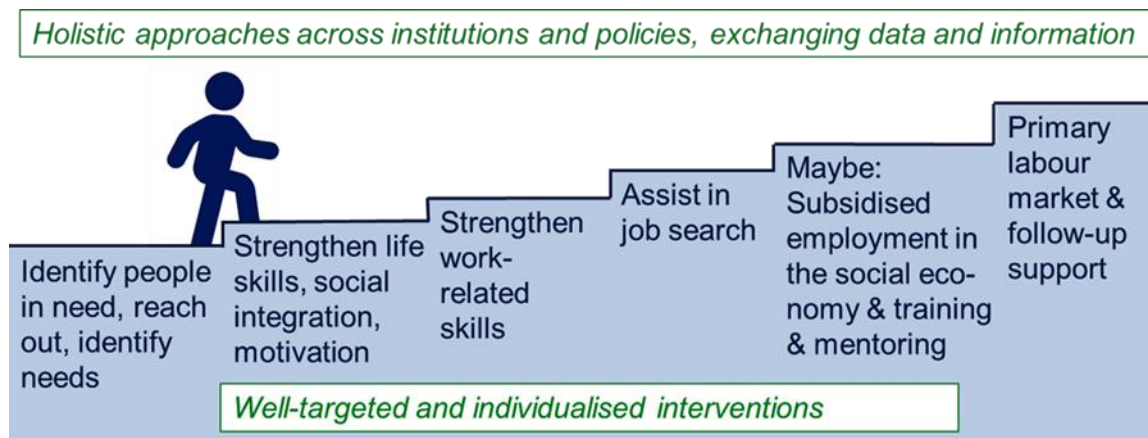


Figure 1 - Key features of successful programmes for the most vulnerable groups

Source: OECD (Building inclusive labour markets: Active labour market policies for the most vulnerable groups – 2021)

The first step in the labour market integration pathway is identifying the people in need of special support and their challenges:

- which groups needing support are not utilising PES (or other relevant institutions) and why, the labour market obstacles they face and how well the ALMPs provided to these groups match with their needs. It is crucial to identify people who are only marginally attached to the labour market and whose labour market situation could be improved by ALMPs, as well as those who should be supported with social, health or education services first;
- it is important that PES make more efforts to proactively reach out to these groups. Nevertheless, the channels to personally reach out to the most vulnerable groups tend to be limited for most PES, and thus co operating with other providers of public services and NGOs can be effective;
- Among the clients that PES establish contact with, it is necessary to identify the most vulnerable groups and their needs early. Quantitative profiling tools using administrative (and survey) data can be effective and efficient tools to identify the clients needing additional support as well as target the ALMPs more effectively, which is particularly important in times of high inflows of clients and limited staff numbers.

Once a vulnerable person has successfully entered the primary labour market, they might need continued support from PES (involving contracted private providers, social services and other types of service providers if needed) to stay in employment.

Capacity to network with other service providers and assess clients' needs holistically is important throughout the pathway to labour market integration – from proactive out-reach to post-placement support. In addition to ALMPs, the most vulnerable groups need often comprehensive integrated approaches involving social, health, education measures and beyond. Networking, co operation and data exchange between different institutions are important to avoid gaps and overlaps in the service provision.

When the institutions providing employment services or those providing social services are well-developed and have high capacity, platforms for co operation practices and (virtual) one stop-shops could be envisaged without changing the overall institutional set-up.



As more efforts are generally needed to reach out to the most vulnerable groups and accompany them in their pathway to employment, their successful integration into labour market requires more attention by employment counsellors. Furthermore, while many processes in PES can be automated and digitalised to increase efficiency, counselling vulnerable groups is one field that still requires more interaction and face to-face meetings with PES consultants, also due to the often lower digital skills and/or more limited access to the Internet and devices among the vulnerable groups.

Innovative approaches involving the social economy can bridge the transition to the primary labour market. For some of the most vulnerable groups, one step on the pathway to labour market integration can be subsidised employment or some other type of support involving the social economy, although the effectiveness of these programmes is highly dependent on their exact design. To be effective, subsidised employment in the social economy should only be provided simultaneously with training and mentoring with the aim of integration of vulnerable workers into the primary labour market in the longer run.

Integration into the primary labour market could be facilitated via “job carving” services, particularly for those jobseekers whose labour market obstacles include health limitations (Scoppetta, Davern and Geyer, 2019[30]). Job carving aims to rearrange tasks in a company to tailor a job opportunity for a person that has constraints to fulfil certain tasks, while keeping in mind the employer’s needs.

2.3. Case management in Public Employment Services

Case management is a collaborative process of evaluating, planning, implementing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the options and services needed to meet the health, social care, education / training and work needs of an individual, using the communication and the resources available to promote quality and efficiency results.

From the point of view of the target audience, case management is an approach to the provision of social services aimed at ensuring that people with complex and multiple problems receive all the services they need in a timely and appropriate manner, through the organization and the coordination of a network of formal and informal activities, services and supports designed to optimize the well-being of the person.

The different definitions of case management have in common the idea of an integrated approach to the provision of complex and fragmented services between institutions / service providers, including methods and strategies for linking and coordinating the various aspects of the care delivered by the different systems / institutional and non-institutional actors; focusing on the specific needs of the individual; the application of cost-effectiveness logic, that is the quality and effectiveness of the offer of assistance services and efficiency with respect to cost control.

The concept of case management is borrowed from the socio-health sector; in the context of public employment services, case management is the basis of preventive strategies to reduce unemployment, through the identification of appropriate customized intervention measures and the definition of the individual assistance needs of each client.



The main feature of adopting the case management approach in employment services has been to focus on the residual resources / abilities of the individual, rather than on the deficits that hinder their job placement, even for people traditionally considered difficult. to be achieved using the "conventional" tools of labor integration.

Bringing back to work people traditionally excluded from the labor market, economically inactive marginal groups of the population considered impossible to integrate, with the aim of increasing the proportion of the population actively employed, has meant extending the integration efforts by the PES, and has represented a politically ambitious and economically demanding policy approach.

Today, after some time, case management in European PES is more properly framed within the "Active inclusion" approach, which proposes a case management model based on an individualized, integrated and holistic support of the person seeking of work with difficulties of insertion due to the presence of disadvantage factors / conditions that require a multi-disciplinary intervention, as well as organizational solutions to support the offer of services.

In the context of national public employment services in EU countries, the case manager is not a professional figure mapped by profile and skills. Also in the terminology reference is often made to various more or less corresponding / synonymous denominations, in particular to that of counsellors (employment consultants, work consultants, job consultants), of work coach, of caseworker, depending on the national contexts, which, in general, summarize in themselves, in addition to counselling skills, also those administrative and managerial skills more typical of case management (e.g. ability to monitor the individual Action Plan, coordination of the partner / supplier network, budget responsibility and quality). Similarly, the term case manager is sometimes used interchangeably to identify both operators engaged in offering services for job seekers and those specializing in on-demand services.

A first contribution on professional profiles, skills requirements and training programs for job counsellors was developed as part of a study promoted by the European Commission "Job profiles and training for employment counsellors" which highlighted some key tasks. They include, in addition to a significant part of placement-related tasks, guidance-related tasks, elements of social assistance and administrative tasks. The key administrative tasks concern monitoring and information provision (for example regarding sanctions legislation, reciprocal obligations, procedures for applying for subsidies for jobseekers and incentives for employers). The activities related to orientation require strong consulting skills, including the ability to conduct interviews, evaluation (profiling) of jobseekers and the preparation and follow-up of the Individual Action Plan. Therefore, the mix of counsellors' tasks requires adequate soft and hard skills.

Changes in the organization and offer of services by PES that are observed in many countries, pose new challenges to the activity of consultants, who are required to pay particular attention to those groups of clients who need more support, so how attention is growing towards the need to develop structured relationships with employers. Based on the change in the counselors' duties, in general the competence requirements also change, especially with regard to soft skills (flexibility, teamwork, resistance to stress, sales skills when working with employers) that become increasingly important due to the intensification of external contacts of counselors. The skills in networking and coordination are also necessary in relation to the increasingly close collaboration with private and non-profit providers (temporary employment agencies, providers of external career guidance or training



services) as well as other relevant actors (schools, universities, NGOs, etc.) for the integration of the clients' labor market. The work carried out by the consultants is also influenced by the change in the channels / methods of contact with users in recent years (digitization).

Is possible to trace and define the key tasks of employment service operators, distinguishing the professional profiles according to two main groups of clients: counselors for job seekers and those for employers.

Tab. 1 Key tasks of job counselors specializing in services to job seekers

Tasks focused on placement	They require communication skills and conducting interviews, as well as client orientation (e.g. initial individual interviews, job search assistance)
Tasks focused on counseling activities	They require counseling skills, matching skills, ability to motivate clients, resistance to stress, patience, understanding and the ability to listen without judgment (e.g. assessment / profiling of the jobseeker's strengths / weaknesses and adequate support, preparation of a Plan Individual Action, group sessions, referral to an appropriate measure, specialist advice or training)
Tasks focused on providing information	Require knowledge of the current labor market situation and trends, communication skills and client orientation (e.g. submit job vacancies or available LAP measures)
Tasks focused on administrative and monitoring activities	They require communication and cooperation skills and specific knowledge of the service (e.g. monitoring the implementation of the Individual Action Plan, maintaining contacts with registered jobseekers)

Source: European Commission (2013) PES to PES Dialogue, Core competences in PES

Tab. 2 Key tasks of job counselors specializing in business services

Tasks focused on placement	They require a mix of HR assessment and management knowledge and administrative skills - both in terms of covering vacancies and apprenticeships / traineeships, and monitoring (follow-up of the placement)
Tasks focused on networking and marketing activities	They require strong communication skills and collaborative skills, as well as specific knowledge of services - with a more active approach to finding new job offers from employers and informing them about active policies and other forms of support for companies
Tasks focused on the organization	They require a high level of organizational knowledge and skills - with a particular emphasis on organizing group sessions for employers, as well as speed dating / job fairs

Source: European Commission (2013) PES to PES Dialogue, Core competences in PES

The culmination of the PES to PES Dialogue activity on the subject of professional profiles and competence of PES is the "European reference competence profile for PES and EURES counselors" which outlines a description of the core competencies from an operational point of view, contained in a 2014 study.



The added value of the instrumentation lies not only in the formalization of the figure of the operator at European level, thus promoting a process of convergence of the national PES towards high quality standards of professional figures and customer services, but also in the operational use of this tool to better define professional and training needs, hiring, training and career development policies for PES personnel, aiming at the professionalization of the counselor profile.

3. Overview on organisational and regulatory setup of ALMP systems (A, IT, D, HR, PL, SLO)

3.1. OECD Overview and focus on INSITU involved countries

In all OECD and EU countries, the high-level responsibility for labour market policies lies within the relevant ministry or government department, typically the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Department of Labour, or similar. Along with other central labour market responsibilities, these ministries are in charge of defining the general framework of ALMP provision. Whether and to what extent additional stakeholders are involved in defining the general framework, and how ALMP implementation is organised, differs strongly across OECD and EU countries.

Set-up of public institutions responsible for ALMP implementation and the role of PrES

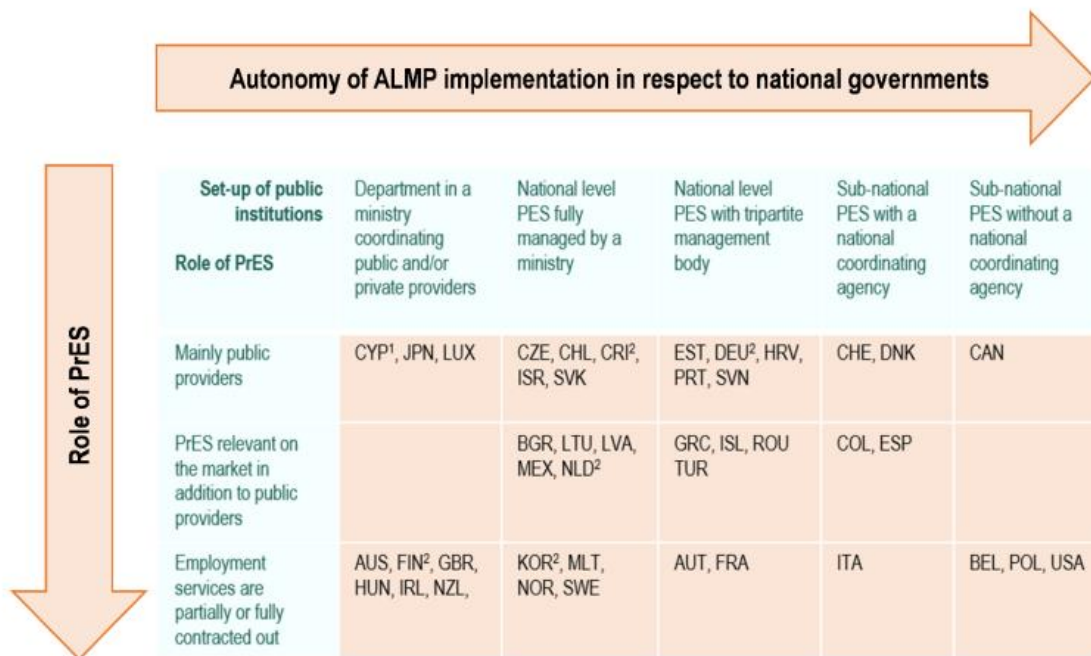


Figure 2 Key characteristics of the organisational set-up of ALMP implementation

Source: OECD (2021)

The autonomy of the PES in respect to national governments can heavily influence the agility of the ALMP system. On the one hand, a greater autonomy of the PES can facilitate fast changes in operating models for example it is likely to be able to adapt quickly to the changing needs of the



clients. On the other hand, a system where the PES is autonomous from the national government and can also influence ALMP design and budget, it might be less agile to align the ALMP provision with national strategies.

The dashboard indicator in Figure 2 (horizontal axis) combines information on the legal status of the PES and its management model, and the degree of centralisation of the ALMP system to indicate the level of PES autonomy. The dashboard classifies countries into five groups defined according to PES autonomy:

- National PES that are part of a ministry (very low degree of autonomy);
- National PES that are not directly part of a ministry, but are fully managed by a ministry (low degree of autonomy);
- National PES that have a tripartite management body (medium degree of autonomy);
- Sub-national PES with a national coordinating agency (high degree of autonomy);
- Sub-national PES with no national coordinating agency (very high degree of autonomy).

In about one-fifth (21%) of countries in this study, the national PES is entirely integrated into the ministry, e.g. it is a department or division of the relevant ministry (first column of figure 2). Furthermore, in one third of countries, the PES is organised at a national level as a state agency or an executive agency, and fully managed by a ministry. This set-up leaves a low degree of autonomy for the agency implementing ALMPs. In close to half of the OECD and EU countries, the PES has at least a medium degree of autonomy. This is the case in countries with a national PES that is managed by a tripartite management body (26%), but also in countries which have sub-national PES (such as employment offices managed by a local or regional government) with a national coordinating agency (12%) or subnational PES without a national coordinating agency (9%).

For example:

- *Autonomy of PES in respect to national governments:* in **Germany**, the national PES has a very high degree of autonomy for ALMPs provided to unemployment benefit recipients as it has a high degree of freedom to decide on its operating model, details of ALMP design, as well as ALMP budget. The national PES, which is organised as a self-governing public body, relies on its so-called “self-governing organs” to supervise administrative processes, not only at the central, but also at the regional and local levels.
- *Sub-national governments:* in **Italy**, the responsibilities for ALMPs have been traditionally decentralised, but setting up appropriate accountability and coordination mechanisms has been slow, affecting negatively also the effectiveness and efficiency of the ALMP system. Over the past years, Italy has managed to decrease the fragmentation of its system to some degree by shifting the responsibilities for ALMPs from over 100 provinces to 21 regions and autonomous provinces in 2014, and creating a national PES (National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies, ANPAL) to coordinate the system in 2015.

Ministries and PES cooperate with a number of different types of providers to implement ALMPs, including companies specialising in employment services, training providers, temporary work agencies and not-for-profit organisations providing ALMPs. In more than a third of countries (37%), employment services are (almost) exclusively delivered by PES, while PrES play a significant role in the remaining two-thirds (Figure 2, vertical axis). Specifically: in 37% of countries, employment services are partially or even fully contracted out, which means that the respective ministry or PES has contracts with PrES to provide specific segments of employment services or cater to specific



target groups; In another 26% of countries, both private providers and public providers operate on the market and deliver employment services, even though employment services are not contracted out by the public sector.

For example:

- the **Austrian** PES works with a wide set of Social Economic Enterprises to provide sheltered and supported employment for vulnerable groups (OECD, Forthcoming);
- in **Italy**, PrES provide employment services in addition to public providers, but their importance is not uniform across the country. In several regions, employment services are predominantly delivered by public providers and private providers are almost absent from the system. In others, both public and private providers are important. In these regions, two types of co-operation and co-existence of public and private providers have developed, a complementary approach and a competitive approach. In regions with a complementary approach, some types of services are exclusively provided by the public employment office while others are entirely contracted out. In regions with a competitive approach, public and private providers can deliver the same services.

Division of responsibilities between the ministry and the PES

This section provides a detailed overview of the division of responsibilities between the two core public institutions responsible for ALMP provision, the relevant ministry and the PES. While the ministries are more often leading the processes to develop the budgets and policy design, the PES are more often autonomous to take the decisions related to ALMP implementation. Figure 3 presents a summary of the division of responsibilities across countries.

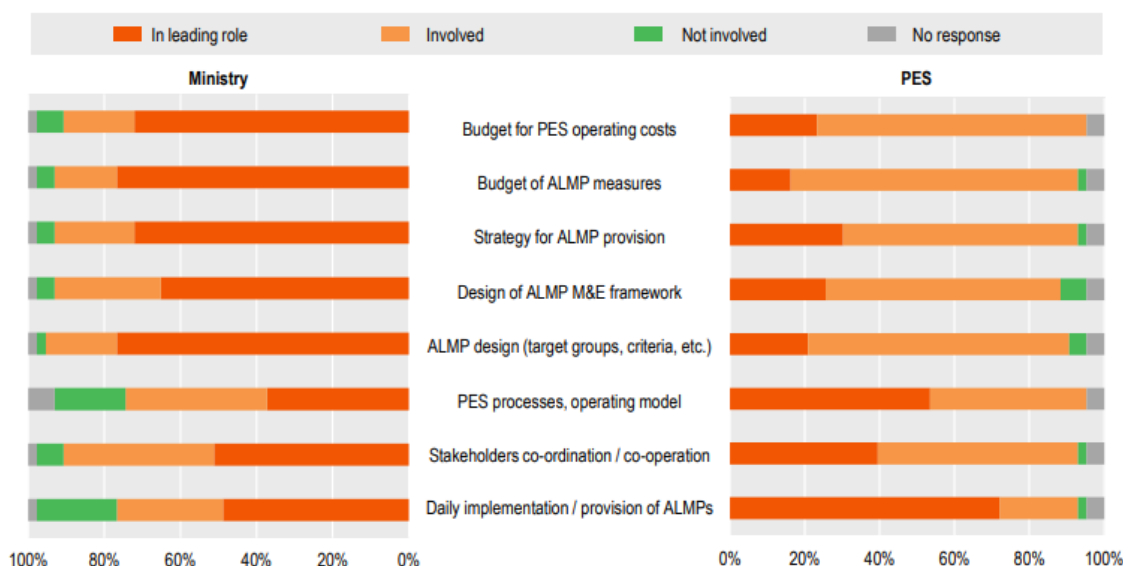


Figure 3

In about two-thirds of the OECD and EU countries, the ministry leads the process to develop the budget for ALMPs (employment services and ALMP measures). The PES have a higher decision-making role regarding the budgets for their operating costs (budgets for employment services, in 26% of countries PES lead this budgeting process) than the budgets for ALMP measures (16% of PES are leading this process).



In countries where the national PES is not a separate organisation, all responsibilities lie on the ministry. Similarly, in countries in which the PES has a low degree of autonomy, the PES tends to be responsible for fewer tasks or only take on a smaller role in the tasks. In all countries with a very autonomous PES it is heavily involved in ALMP strategy development and ALMP design, either leading these processes or cooperating with the ministry.

Tab. 3 Responsibilities of ministries in charge of labour market policies:

Nation	Daily implementation / provision of ALMPs	Co-operation and co-ordination with other stakeholders of the ALMP system	PES processes, operating model	ALMP design (target groups, criteria, duration, etc.)	Design of ALMP monitoring and evaluation framework, accountability framework	Strategy for ALMP provision	Budget of ALMP measures	Budget for PES operating costs
Austria	3	1	2	1	2	1	1	1
Croatia	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Germany	1	2	2	1	2	1	1,2	1,2
Italy	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Poland	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Slovenia	2	2	2	1,2	2	1	1	1

Note: 1. Ministry in leading role 2. Ministry provides some input 3. Ministry not involved. ALMP: Active Labour Market Policy. Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire "Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long-term) unemployment".

Tab. 4 Responsibilities of public employment services:

Nation	Daily implementation / provision of ALMPs	Co-operation and co-ordination with other stakeholders of the ALMP system	PES processes, operating model	ALMP design (target groups, criteria, duration, etc.)	Design of ALMP monitoring and evaluation framework, accountability framework	Strategy for ALMP provision	Budget of ALMP measures	Budget for PES operating costs
Austria	1	2	1	3	2	2	2	3
Croatia	1	2	1	1	2	3	3	3
Germany	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Italy	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Poland	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2
Slovenia	1	1	1	2	1,2	2	2	2



Note: 1. Fully decided by PES 2. Partly decided by PES 3. Not decided by PES, but PES consulted with 4. Not decided by PES and PES not involved. Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire “Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long-term) unemployment”.

The social partners

Involving the social partners in the ALMP system can bring in valuable expertise on the needs of jobseekers, employees and employers.

In the majority of ALMP systems (76% of countries responding to the OECD-EC questionnaire), the social partners have an official or quasi-official role in the organisational set-up of ALMP provision, through their participation in either advisory or supervisory bodies. In 33% of countries, the social partners supervise the PES, e.g. in countries where they are part of the tripartite supervisory board of the PES. The social partners advise the PES in 40% of countries, sometimes in addition to their supervisory role (e.g. supervisory role on the national level and advisory role on the sub-national level). The share of countries in which the social partners advise the ministry (sometimes in addition to advising the PES) amounts to 45%. In some countries (Portugal, Slovenia), they fulfil all three tasks.

Tab. 5 Role of the social partners in the organisational set-up of ALMP provision:

Nation	Social partners advise Ministry	Social partners supervise PES	Social partners advise PES	Social partners only involved ad-hoc
Austria		X		
Croatia	X	X		
Germany		X		
Italy				X
Poland	X			
Slovenia	X	X	X	

Note: The social partners supervise PES” refers to cases where the social partners are involved in the strategic management of the beyond and have at least some decision-making role, i.e. beyond advising the PES executive management. The table summarises the roles of the social partners across national and sub-national levels. Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire “Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long-term) unemployment”.

Regulatory set-up

The two most important characteristics of a country’s regulatory set-up of ALMP provision are its regulatory flexibility and the complexity of the regulatory framework. Both jointly influence how responsive an ALMP system to changing labour market needs can be.

A system in which many details of ALMP provision are defined in high-level regulation is likely to be less flexible than a system in which ALMP details are set at a lower level regulation, and changes are likely to take longer. Besides the flexibility of the regulatory set-up, its complexity also affects the agility of the system.

The key characteristics influencing the agility of the regulatory set-up of ALMP provision differ across OECD and EU countries (Figure 3).



The horizontal axis of Figure 3 indicates the complexity of regulatory systems by presenting the number of different types of regulations setting the conditions of ALMPs. Theoretically, the number of types of regulations could be up to eight (regulations adopted by the parliament, government, minister, ministry, PES supervisory body, PES executive management, regional or local authorities or other bodies). However, in practice, only eight OECD and EU countries use more than three types of regulations to set ALMP conditions. The countries with the highest number of regulation types to set ALMP conditions are Australia and France (six types of regulations), Germany, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Spain (four types of regulations for ALMP conditions). The indicator for the flexibility of the ALMP regulation (vertical axis of Figure 3) is defined in two groups – whether at least one regulation for ALMP conditions is an act passed by the parliament or not.

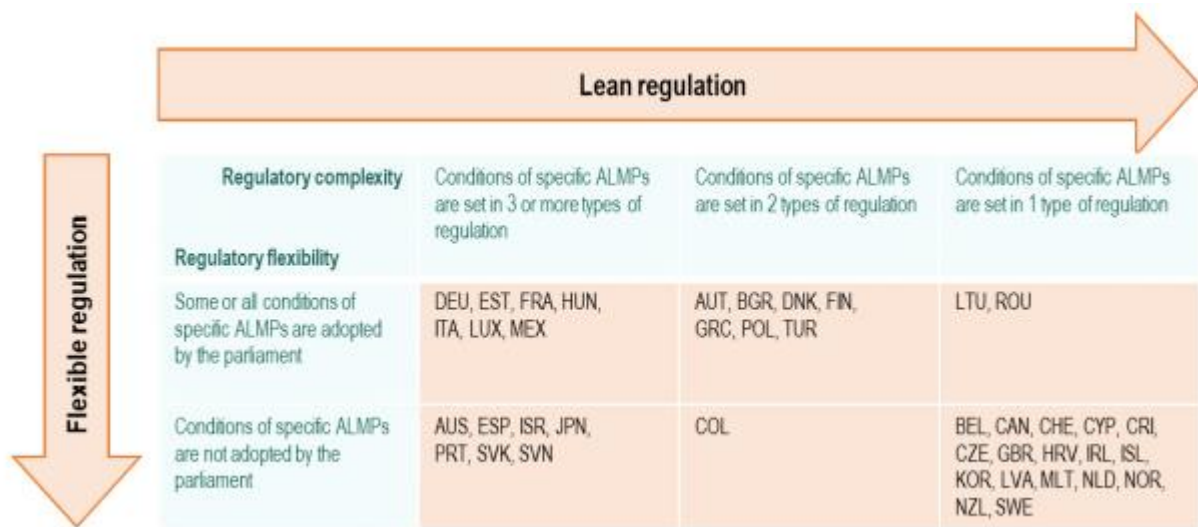


Figure 3 – Regulatory set up
Source: OECD (2021)

Among the countries replying to the OECD-EC questionnaire, 40% have regulatory set-ups that strongly favour the agility of the ALMP system, i.e. regulation is lean (only one type of regulation is used to set the conditions of ALMPs) and flexible (conditions of specific ALMPs are not adopted by the parliament).

Nation	General groups eligible for ALMPs	List of specific ALMPs	Conditions of specific ALMPs	Target groups of specific ALMPs
Austria	1, 5	5	1,5	1,5
Croatia	5	5	5	5
Germany	1, 3, 7, 8	1, 3, 7, 8	1, 3, 7, 8	3,7
Italy	1, 2, 3	4, 7	1, 2, 3, 5	2, 3, 7
Poland	1	1	1,3	1,3
Slovenia	2, 8	1, 2, 8	2, 3, 4, 8	3,8

1. Act passed by the Parliament 2. Decree/order by Government 3. Decree/order by Minister 4. Decision by Ministry 5. Decision by PES supervisory body 6. Decision by PES executive management 7. Decision by regional/local authorities 8.



Other. Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire “Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long-term) unemployment”.

In the majority of countries, the overall (annual) budget for ALMPs is regulated at a high level, such as an act for the state budget. In almost two-thirds (63%) of countries, the ALMP budget is entirely or at least partially set in an act that is passed by the parliament (Figure 5). Furthermore, the overall ALMP budget can be additionally or partially regulated by decrees (or orders) by the government and by the minister in 33% and 30% of countries, respectively. It is quite common that the overall budget for ALMPs is regulated in more than one regulation, often in an act passed by parliament and a decree/order by the minister.

Tab. 6 Regulation of overall ALMP budgets (OB) and of budgets for each specific ALMP (SB):

Nation	Act passed by parliament	Decree/order by government	Decree/order by minister	Decision by ministry	Decision by PES supervisory body	Decision by PES executive management	Decision by regional/local authorities
Austria	OB				SB		
Croatia	OB, SB						
Germany*	OB (SGB II)	OB (SGB III)	OB, SB			OB (SGB III) SB (SGB III)	OB, SB
Italy	OB	SB	OB, SB				
Poland	OB		OB, SB				
Slovenia	OB, SB	OB, SB					

**Germany: SGB II refers to the tax-financed ALMP system while SGB III refers to the contribution-based ALMP system. Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire “Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long-term) unemployment”.*

Determining the (annual) budget for each ALMP at a low level of regulation can increase the agility of the ALMP system, allowing to allocate financial resources flexibly to the ALMPs that are most needed, as long as a well-performing accountability framework is in place. The budgets for individual ALMPs are set at a lower level of regulation than the overall ALMP budget in most countries. Only in 28% of countries, budgets for specific ALMPs are (partially) determined in an act that is passed by the parliament, while a larger number of countries set them in a decree/order by the minister (35%) or directly by the PES (35%), either in the PES supervisory body or by PES executive management.



3.2. Focus: ALMP measures taken in response to the COVID-19 crisis

Tight co-operation and co-ordination between the stakeholders in ALMP systems has been key to enabling quick and well-designed responses to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. Virtually all countries have involved all key stakeholders of their ALMP systems in developing their strategies on mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the labour market, taking advantage of the wider set of expertise this offers (Figure 4), and going beyond the key institutions (the ministry and the PES).

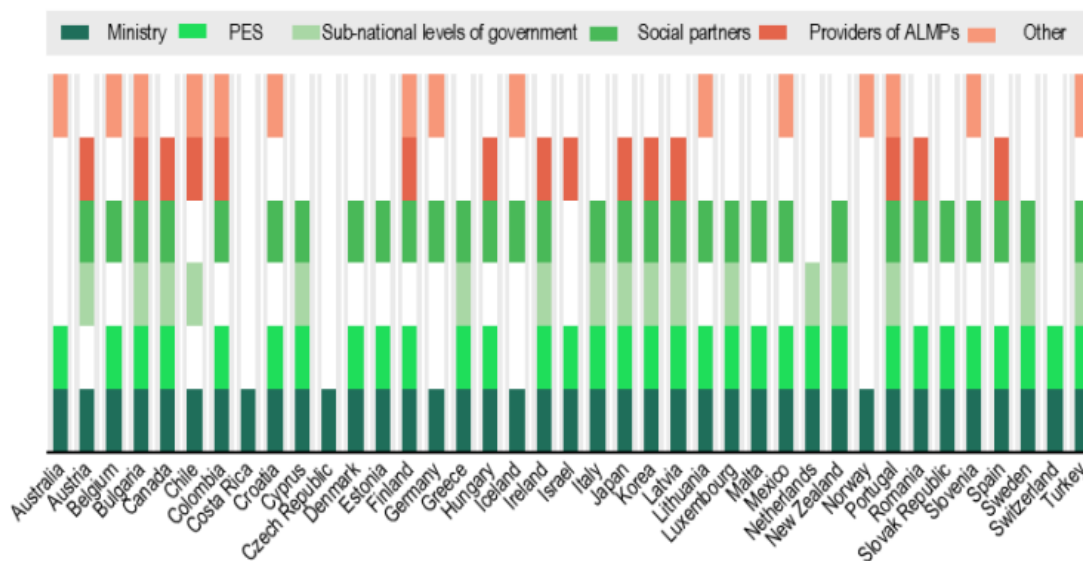


Figure 4 – Involved stakeholders

Note: Responses to the question: “Which stakeholders are involved in developing a strategy on mitigating the effects of the crisis on the labour market going forward?”, referring to the COVID-19 crisis started in 2020. Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire “Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long-term) unemployment”.

Countries that have a national level organisation for PES, have overwhelmingly involved the PES in strategy development to address the COVID-19 challenges, in addition to the ministry responsible for labour market policies. Other key partners in the development process have been employers’ associations and trade unions, sub-national levels of government and ALMP providers (such as organisations representing local PrES and training providers). Strategy development has often involved other ministries and public sector institutions more closely than before to ensure co-ordinated responses to the crisis across policy fields.

In September 2020, the OECD and the European Commission (EC) sent a questionnaire entitled “Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long-term) unemployment” to all member countries of both institutions. In order to obtain a comprehensive overview of the discretionary active labour market policy (ALMP) measures taken in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the questionnaire asked countries to provide information on policies and programmes in place or planned over the course of 2021



Tab 7 Adjusting budgets for active labour market programmes in response to the COVID-19 crisis:

Nation	2020 Budget adjustments in comparison to pre-COVID-19 plans for 2020		2021 Budget allocation in comparison to 2020		Changes to Public Employment Service staffing levels in response to the COVID-19 crisis		
	Labour market services ¹	Active labour market measures ²	Labour market services ¹	Active labour market measures ²	Additional PES staff hired in 2020	PES staff reallocated during 2020	Staff increases planned in 2021
Austria	Increase	Increase	Increase	Increase	Yes	Yes	Yes
Croatia	Increase	Not yet known	Under discussion	Under discussion		Yes	
Germany	Increase	Increase	Under discussion	Under discussion	Yes	Yes	
Italy	No change	Increase	No change	Increase			
Poland	Increase	Increase	Increase	Decrease			
Slovenia	Increase	No change	Increase	Increase	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. Labour market services includes public (or private, with public financing) provision of employment services and administration including counselling, financial assistance with the costs of job search, job brokerage and related services for employers, and administration of benefits. 2. Active labour market measures including training, employment incentives, sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation, direct job creation, and start-up incentives, targeted on the unemployed, and closely-related groups such as inactive who would like to work, or employed who are at known risk of involuntary job loss. Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire “Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long-term) unemployment”.

Tab 8 Labour market services available online or remotely:

Nation	Processing of short-time work or other job retention schemes	Claiming unemployment benefits	Registration as unemployed with PES	Job-search assistance	Counselling	Career guidance	Group sessions, job clubs	Job matching	Job fairs
Austria	Post	Post	Both	Both	Post	Post	-	Both	Post
Croatia	Post	Post	Post	Pre	-	Pre	-	Pre	-
Germany	Pre	Pre	Post	Pre	Pre	Pre	Pre	Pre	Pre
Italy	Both	Pre	Pre	Pre	Pre	Pre	-	Pre	-
Poland	Pre	Pre	Both	Post	Pre	Both	-	Both	Both
Slovenia	Post	Pre	Pre	Pre	Pre	Pre	Post	Pre	Pre

Note: “Pre” refers to introduction before the COVID crisis, “Post” to the introduction or change since the start of the COVID crisis, “Both” to were available both pre- and post COVID, “..” to No response and “n/a” to Not applicable. Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire “Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long term) unemployment”.



Tab 9 Changes to active labour market measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis:

Nation	Adjustments to classroom-based training		Adjustments to on-the-job training		Employment incentives added or adjusted	Reductions in non-wage labour costs ¹		Public sector direct job creation/public works	Start-up incentives	Other active labour market programmes
	Classroom training delivered online	Additional online training solutions offered	Additional places on training made available	Suspensions or postponement of on-the-job training		Additional places on training programmes made available	for new and continuing workers			
Austria		✓	✓							✓
Croatia				✓					✓	
Germany	✓	✓		✓						
Italy	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓			
Poland				✓		✓				
Slovenia	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		

Note: 1. Includes both universal measures available for all employers, as well as measures targeting some employers only (e.g. sectors, small and medium enterprises). Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire "Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long term) unemployment".



Tab 10 Changes to labour market training programmes:

Nation	New or expanded institutional training programmes	Adjustments to workplace training programmes
Austria	Please see Table 9 and details on “Other active labour market programmes”.	n/a
Croatia	Temporarily suspended but re-started later.	[Changed, but no details provided]
Germany	[Changed, but no details provided]	More than 2/3 of training supported by PES were delivered in alternative format (digital/remote). Federal Secure apprenticeships programme introduced to protect apprenticeships.
Italy	Planned national call for training tenders, co-financed by the ESF, for the implementation of active policies aimed at digital skills (reskilling and upskilling) among workers affected by the economic and social effects of the pandemic.	Internships carried out remotely where possible
Poland	Initially the majority of training was suspended or postponed. Online delivery where possible. Local labour offices deal with each training programme case by case. After the initial suspension, the unemployed were sent back to internships /training. The number of unemployed referred to internships or training in 2020 was lower by 30% year-on-year.	Initially work experience programmes were suspended/postponed. Traineeships decreased in the period Jan-July 2020 by 39% compared to the same period in 2019. Local labour offices deal with each work experience programmes case by case.
Slovenia	Ministry of Education issued instructions how to conduct classroom education, including the possibility to combine it with online delivery. Formal education in ALMP in 2020 (January to August) only fell by 5.9% in comparison to same period in 2019.	Training was postponed for those that had already started, prior to restrictions and re-started afterwards. Due to fewer new places available offered, there was a drop of approx. 26% against participation in 2019 (in period January to August).

Note: “n/a” refers to Not applicable. Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire “Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long term) unemployment”.



Tab 11 Changes to employment incentives and reductions in non-wage labour costs:

Nation	Employment incentives	Reductions in non-wage labour costs ¹	
		for new and continuing workers	targeted at new hires
Austria	n/a	n/a	n/a
Croatia	Higher employment subsidies for persons with no work experience are being considered.	n/a	n/a
Germany	n/a	n/a	n/a
Italy	n/a	In the August Decree a total exemption from social security contributions paid by employers for four months for those companies that restore their full activity after having benefitted from short-time work schemes.	In the “August Decree” a total exemption from social security contributions paid by employers for companies hiring new workers on a permanent basis, provided they increase their overall workforce; for three months for those companies hiring fixed-term and seasonal workers in the tourism sector; up to EUR 6 000 per year
Poland	n/a	Employers could get exemptions of payment of social contributions for three months	n/a
Slovenia	Subvention scheme Employ.me was amended to include also those unemployed over 30 years old that lost the job due to epidemic.	COVID-19 measures increased coverage of costs for reduced social security contributions in areas of high unemployment.	n/a

Note: “n/a” refers to Not applicable. 1. Includes both universal measures available for all employers, as well as measures targeting some employers only (e.g. sectors, small and medium enterprises). The country descriptions provide details. Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire “Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long term) unemployment”.



Tab 12 Changes to public sector job creation schemes, start-up incentives and other active labour market programmes:

Nation	Public sector job creation schemes	Start-up incentives	Other active labour market programmes
Austria	n/a	n/a	The Corona Job Offensive aims at using the Corona crisis as an opportunity to train further during the crisis, to complete an education and to find a way back into the world of work. The programme focuses on electronics/digitalisation, care/social services/care, sustainable jobs/environmental technology and metal professions. Instruments: qualification, employment promotion, support and education bonus. Target groups: Unemployed persons or persons at risk of unemployment, employees (also in short-time work), young people, women, people with disabilities
Croatia	n/a	There were some smaller changes regarding start-up incentives. Plans for 2021 are under discussion.	n/a
Germany	n/a	n/a	n/a
Italy	n/a	n/a	n/a
Poland	n/a	n/a	n/a
Slovenia	As of early October 2020, the public works programme was not adjusted, but there is a possibility that the scheme could be updated because of COVID-19 crisis. For 2020 implementation, the inclusions were stopped in April, but the programme later received additional funding of EUR 6 million, allowing for new inclusions.	n/a	n/a

Source: Responses to OECD/EC questionnaire “Active labour market policy measures to mitigate the rise in (long term) unemployment”.

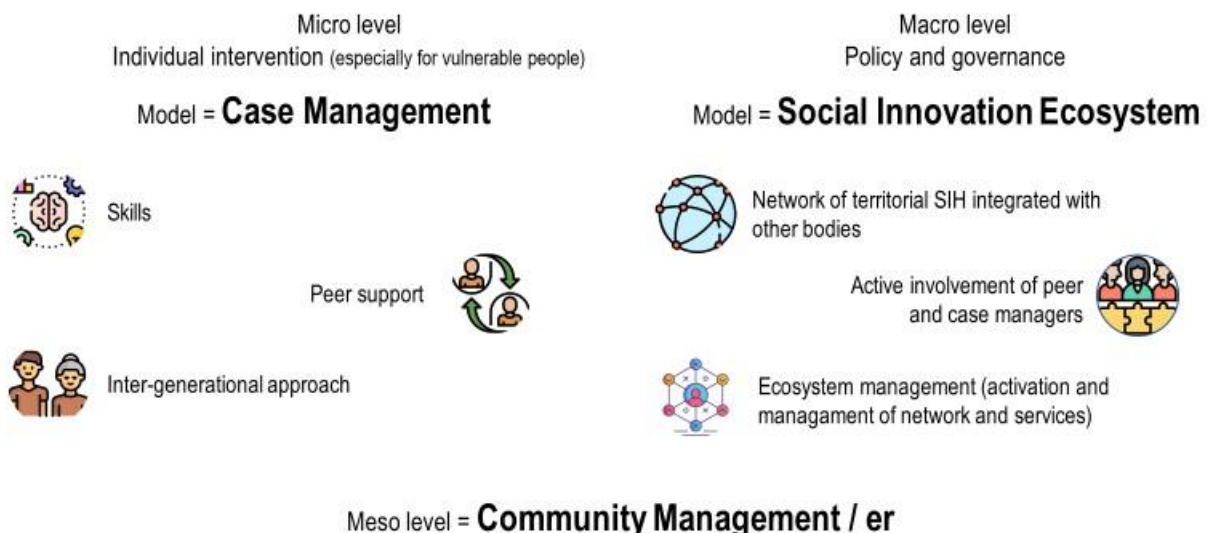


4. Conclusions and recommendations

From the analysis carried out so far on policies and practices, some useful reflections emerge to identify successful factors and approaches for the effective integration of the long-term unemployed into the labor market. These reflections take into account three dimensions: the level of policy (macro), that is, of reforms and governance; the organizational level (meso), in which main options concern the one-stop shop model or, alternatively, formalized collaboration agreements among involved actors and partnerships with other subjects, including social services eg. NGOs and businesses; the level of the beneficiary (micro) focused on how to use the service.

Furthermore, given the complex and often multiple employment obstacles faced by the most vulnerable groups, it is important to provide them with comprehensive individualised support combining different ALMPs, combined with a step-by-step approach which relies on the co operation between institutions and policy domains, as other types of services (social, health, education, childcare, housing and beyond) as well as social protection measures and benefits might be needed along with ALMPs to tackle their social integration obstacles more generally.

INSITU STRATEGY FOR ALMP AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

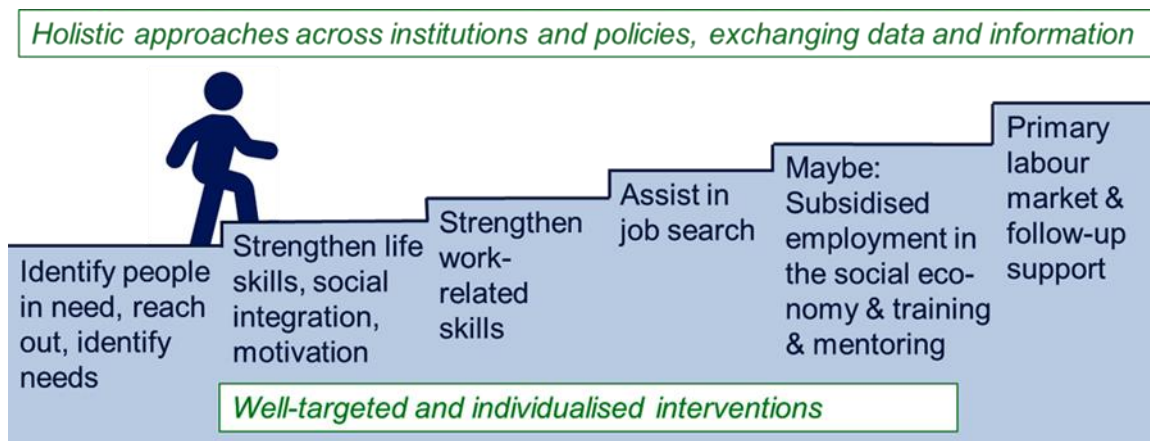




Recommendations are developed on three pillars:

- **motivation to work**, in the sense of "making work pay", or the removal of disincentives, through the construction of a system of benefits / subsidies, for those for whom it is possible, conditional on availability to work;
- **employability**, for cases in which a quick return to work is unlikely, and it is therefore necessary to offer additional support (eg counseling or training);
- the **extension of opportunities**, both through a greater commitment on the part of policies and services on the demand side, assisting companies in hiring and retaining workers in the company, and through the removal of barriers to entry into the labor market (e.g. childcare, health care or other social problems) of persons able to work.

Following the scheme provided by OECD and referred to below, is possible to provide some recommendations for the implementation of an effective ALMP policy.



Source: OECD (*Building inclusive labour markets: Active labour market policies for the most vulnerable groups – 2021*)

A first element to keep in mind when defining a successful policy is the **personalization of services** to respond to the multiplicity of needs of the subjects. Practice shows that the higher the caseload (ie the numerical ratio of operators / assisted unemployed) and therefore the possibility of providing intense and high quality advice, the higher the chances of reintegration into the labor market. It is therefore essential to strengthen public employment services by providing them with a greater number of operators, for example to offer the long-term unemployed assistance services that are differentiated from those aimed at other groups of unemployed in terms of frequency and nature of contact.

A second aspect that appears strategic concerns the opportunity to **define a profiling system** that allows the early identification of people at high risk of long-term unemployment and, therefore, allows to intervene quickly with targeted and intensive support, so that case managers are in a position to deliver specific services and provide personalized support. For those at low risk of long-term unemployment this translates into assistance and provision of online services, while for the most disadvantaged and at high risk of long-term unemployment, it translates into face-to-face assistance.

A further goal is to work towards the establishment of **integrated case management systems** in larger partnership structures, which involve other relevant partners, including eg. Municipalities and NGOs, to increase the inclusiveness of labor markets through the contribution of know-how and



specific resources. The presence in the partnerships of relevant local players allows in particular the implementation of integrated case management actions that are differentiated and adapted to the local level, based on the priorities / needs of the most vulnerable groups in the area.

Another indication is the need to introduce **new targeted and integrated services**, based on **interinstitutional collaboration** and which facilitate access to services in a single point of contact in a one-stop shop logic, for example with a new joint service model. multi-sectoral for the promotion of employability: a permanent network made up of consultants from the public employment services, social workers, other specialists in employment policies of the municipality, as well as a specialist from the social insurance institution. This model - tested in Finland - makes it possible to organize and provide users with an effective combination of public employment services, social, health and rehabilitation services and to design individual interventions that remove obstacles to employability.

As a corollary, **flexibility and adaptation of conditionality** and the sanctioning system connected to **benefits / subsidies** is recommended, also on the basis of the actual opportunities offered by the labor market, providing for example, in the case of scarce opportunities, a different dosage in the use of policy instruments. active, giving priority to training rather than work, or a decrease in conditionality, or, furthermore – in the evaluation of different criteria, as greater degree of independence and autonomy.

To reduce the barriers to entry into the world of work, it is necessary to **strengthen the welfare network**, through the provision of conciliation services and contributions, to be activated through the territorial network of suppliers, as well as act on the management of social problems, such as for example financial education or access to services.

With a view to the job placement of long-term unemployed, a policy indication consists in the investment in education and training courses both for **retraining** and for the **development of transversal skills** - soft and life skills. Case managers who work with the long-term unemployed will also need to receive ad hoc training to effectively manage the transition into work of those who have been long-term excluded.

A further policy investment should be aimed at **improving and strengthening collaboration with employers and representative associations**. A stronger link with the employers would allow the operators of the employment services to intercept the needs for support and assistance, to become aware of vacant positions in a timely manner and to propose to companies the professional profiles best suited to their personnel needs. On the other hand, the provision of specialized assistance contributes to making employers more likely to offer internships / traineeships within their companies.

Another aspect is the continuation of the initiatives aimed at **promoting self-employment and business creation**, with mentoring and accompaniment paths by entrepreneur tutors or "ambassadors" - subjects who have participated in active policy courses and who have undertaken an independent profession, in addition to an integrated use of funds (ERDF), with grants for business creation and technical and management support.

From the point of view of **governance**, it is necessary to take into account the different peculiarities of the territory, putting the pilot experience of the **Social Innovation Hubs** to value, as interlocutors for planning with the Region, to be identified or established in each province or district, and then



extend and expand the **network** of interlocutors, organizing an **ecosystem of social innovation** that contributes to regional policy objectives.

The framework of the strategy has to be defined with the drafting of an **intergenerational pact**, in order to activate an alliance between young people, over 50, vulnerable people, universities, business and public institutions to help overcome the difficulties of this period in order to undertake a path towards autonomy and the definition of new development paradigms.

Finally, in line with what is indicated by the programming tools, it would be useful to introduce a system for **monitoring and evaluating** the **impact**, including social, of the policies adopted in terms of active policies, especially for the long-term and fragile unemployed, in terms of inclusion and social integration.



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