

mutual learning programme of the european employment strategy

European Commission-DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

November 2008

Newsletter 5

Increasing labour supply

by focusing on people at the margins of the labour market, linked with the development of flexicurity policies

During the past years, flexicurity has become one of the most widely discussed topics. Now flexicurity, an integrated strategy to simultaneously enhance flexibility and security in the labour market is a key priority for the implementation of the new Integrated Guidelines for 2008-2010. The Common Principles of Flexicurity endorsed by the European Council in December 2007 constitute the common framework for the implementation of integrated flexicurity strategies in the Member States. The European Union and its Member States have acknowledged the potential of the concept in view of meeting the challenges of globalisation, technological innovation and an ageing population. The current crisis has not changed the core long-term challenges of the Union and its labour markets. An integrated flexicurity approach can provide a unique policy framework: to balance short-term actions to address the current needs, with long-term reforms responding to the overall challenges. Against this background, "Increasing labour supply by focusing on people at the margins of the labour market and youth, linked with the development of flexicurity policies" was chosen as the 2008 priority theme for the Mutual Learning Programme of the European Employment Strategy. Thus, this year's activities within the programme all focus on at least one of the four components of flexicurity: flexible and reliable contractual arrangements; comprehensive lifelong learning strategies; effective active labour market policies; and modern social security systems.

Although these components provide a basic policy framework for the flexicurity concept, there is of course no "one size fits all" approach or national model that could or should be completely copied to other Member States. Thus, the Thematic Review seminar in September 2008 was wholly dedicated to the discussion of different national flexicurity practices and involving more countries and other stakeholders in the work of the so-called "Mission for Flexicurity", a public initiative launched by the European Commission this year¹. Comprehensive lifelong learning strategies to ensure the continual adaptability and employability of workers were discussed in the Irish and Italian Peer Reviews in the context of the Mutual Learning Programme. The Bulgarian and Norwegian Peer Reviews focused on effective active labour market policies that help people cope with rapid change, reduce unemployment spells and ease transitions to new jobs. This will also be subject of the forthcoming Belgian Peer Review. The spring Thematic Review seminar and the Peer Review in the Czech Republic primarily focused on a particularly disadvantaged group, migrants.

¹ For more information on the Mission, see:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/flex_mission_en.htm

www.mutual-learning-employment.net

mutual learning programme of the european employment strategy

European Commission-DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

As could be seen from the Mutual Learning activities of this year, flexicurity policies can be helpful when addressing challenges faced by people at the margins of the labour market. The Mutual Learning Programme provides an excellent opportunity to exchange experiences. The aim of the programme is to address and discuss common challenges. It is not a question of simple "copy and paste"; the goal of the programme and the guarantee for its success, is not imitation but inspiration.

- **Thematic Review seminar: 'Improving access to the labour market for people at its margins with a special focus on people with a migrant or minorities background'**, 29 April 2008, Brussels

The Thematic Review seminar focused on the labour market situation of immigrants (including second generation immigrants) in the European Union, with a special focus on women and youth. Norway and France presented good practice approaches. The seminar also benefited from contributions from the OECD, ILO and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). For more information (available in English, French and German), please visit:

[http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/stories/storyReader\\$244](http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/stories/storyReader$244)

- **Peer Review Bulgaria: "Job Opportunities through Business Support (JOBS) Project "**, 10-11 April 2008

The focus of this Peer Review, held in Sofia, was the promotion of entrepreneurship as an approach for the integration of people at the margins of the labour market. The JOBS project is supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the aim of addressing development problems and structural unemployment. Fostering entrepreneurship on the basis of local resources is seen as a possible solution for ameliorating the economic and social polarisation of depressed small areas. For more information (in English) please visit:

[http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/stories/storyReader\\$241](http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/stories/storyReader$241)

- **Peer Review Ireland: "Vocational training for people at the margin of the labour market: The Individual Learner Plan"**, 08-09 May 2008

The Individual Learner Plan (ILP) is a new model of planning, recording and certifying the training received by participants in government training and employment programmes for disadvantaged and unemployed groups. It is an approach which "puts the learner at the centre". All participants engage with their supervisors in drawing up an individual training plan, which is wide-ranging, incorporating project-related skills, personal and social skills, work skills and work experience.

For more information (in English) please visit:

<http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/Vocationaltrainingforpeopleatthemarginofthelabourmarket>

www.mutual-learning-employment.net



mutual learning programme of the european employment strategy

European Commission-DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

- **Peer Review Czech Republic: “The assistance system for employment of Ukrainians in the Czech Republic”**, 19-20 June 2008

The assistance system was designed as a pilot programme to prevent illegal work immigration into the Czech Republic. Thus, the main aim of the project was to provide potential labour migrants with adequate information about legal employment and the risks of illegal employment. The assistance system consists of a network of consulting and assistant centres in the Czech Republic as well as in the Ukraine. For more information (in English) please visit:

[http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/stories/storyReader\\$248](http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/stories/storyReader$248)

- **Thematic Review seminar: ‘The development of national flexicurity policies in response to labour market challenges’**, 24 September 2008, Brussels

The seminar was dedicated to the discussion of different national flexicurity practices in order to involve more countries and stakeholders in the work of the "Mission for Flexicurity", a public initiative launched by the European Commission aiming to help Member States in adopting the Common Principles of Flexicurity. Nine country examples were presented to exemplify how flexicurity principles can be implemented in different national contexts. For more information (available in English, French and German) please visit:

<http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/Thedevelopmentofnationalflexicuritypoliciesinresponsetolabourmarketchallenges>

- **Peer Review Norway: “Vocational rehabilitation and income security for people with work incapacities within the framework of integrated flexicurity approaches”**, 15-16 September 2008

The rehabilitation system in Norway is based on three main approaches: inclusive workplaces, vocational rehabilitation for job seekers and medical rehabilitation for persons with long term sickness and disabilities. Current reforms include the merging of the Public Employment Services and the National Insurance Administration as well as a new, merged income security benefit, strong focus on work assessment, active participation in individual rehabilitation plans, early intervention, better following-up and better-coordinated and more flexible use of the wide available range of activation and rehabilitation measures. For more information (in English) please visit: <http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/Vocationalrehabilitationandincomesecurity>

- **Peer Review Italy: “The higher apprenticeship: a part of effective lifelong learning and a flexicurity strategy”**, 30-31 October 2008

The “higher apprenticeship” is a new approach in Italy where, for the first time, it becomes possible to get a general diploma of the education system through the combination of work experience and participation in school or university courses. It is a measure to improve the education level of young people and at the same time aiming to start collaboration between schools/universities and

www.mutual-learning-employment.net

mutual learning programme of the european employment strategy

European Commission-DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

enterprises, which can be fruitful for boosting research and transferring innovation into the productive system. For further information see:

<http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/HigherApprenticeships>

- **Forthcoming: Peer Review Belgium: “Flexicurity approach: effective labour market policies, respecting the balance between rights and responsibilities – The new system to follow up the unemployed ”**, 08-09 December 2008

In July 2004 the plan for accompanying and monitoring the unemployed came into force, intensifying the guidance activities of the regional Public Employment Services. After the intensified counselling that starts from the earliest months of unemployment, all adult unemployed receive a warning letter about the follow-up procedure after being in unemployment for 13 months (7 months for the unemployed under 25), and a first interview takes place after 21 months (15 months for those under 25). More information on this Peer Review will be available on the Mutual Learning Programme website soon after the Peer Review has taken place.

We hope that you find this newsletter of interest and that you will wish to subscribe or remain on the contact list to receive future information on developments and results from the Mutual Learning Programme. To subscribe, please fill in the form under contact on the Mutual Learning website. If you do not wish to receive future information, please send an email to mlp@oesb.at with the word ‘unsubscribe’ in the subject heading. This newsletter is also available online at <http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/news> .

The MLP team
ÖSB Consulting (Austria)
Institute for Employment Studies (UK),
Baltic International Centre for Economic Policy Studies (Latvia)

On behalf of European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

Disclaimer: This newsletter does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission. Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged, save where otherwise stated.

www.mutual-learning-employment.net

