



Promotion of gender equality and inclusion by Public Employment Services (PES)

Role of Public Employment Services (PES) for gender equality: PES can play an important role in promoting inclusion and gender equality, because they work with both jobseekers and employers. For example, they can promote working conditions that reflect the needs of disadvantaged people and direct job-seekers to specific occupations, manage positions and sectors, particularly those industries seeking to integrate more women into their workforce.

Perception of Gender Equality among PES: A survey among PES in the 27 EU Member States conducted in Summer 2020 found out that more than 75% of PES in Europe say that gender equality is an important, very important or pivotal priority for them. PES promote the inclusion of women in the workforce by various means – e.g. through gender mainstreaming, focussing on women employability and career pathways (incl. in non-traditional sectors and occupations such as private security services), and promoting standard working contracts. PES can use “employer engagement” and “provision of guidance” to combat gender stereotyping.

Existing good practices of PES in Europe include the following:

- Belgium: Future Search targets inactive women with a migrant background. It is a regional measure in Flanders implemented by VDAB (Flanders PES). The specific objective is to detect the barriers and to create innovative measures/policies to tackle them, including liaising with potential employers. VDAB adopts the role of connector, between the stakeholders involved in this activity.
- Croatia: A similar role for PES is envisaged in a Croatian national project from 2016 addressing the mismatch between supply and demand in the labour market, and the growing number of women with a lower level of education in rural areas and from vulnerable groups.
- Portugal: PES Portugal leads a programme for the promotion of gender equality in the labour market. This national measure also encourages the hiring of unemployed people from the underrepresented gender in a profession; and encourages young unemployed people to choose a profession or job, according to their vocation and without constraints motivated by gender stereotypes.

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