

# 'Active Labour Market Policies for Europe 2020 – Finding ways to move forward'

Antwerp, Belgium, 28-29 October 2010

The Flemish government, the [Flemish Department of Work and Social Economy](#), the Catholic University of Leuven (K.U. Leuven) and the city of Antwerp, in active cooperation with the European Commission, organised the policy seminar '*Active labour market policies for the Europe 2020 strategy: ways to move forward*'.

Active labour market policies (ALMPs) remain key policies in promoting changes and increasing employment. Nevertheless, they are at a crossroads. An ageing population, current and future job shortages and harsh financial conditions all call for new ways to move forward. The methods we choose today will be decisive for labour market dynamics in 2020 and beyond.

On October 28th and 29th over 250 specialists in ALMPs from the entire EU member states discussed these issues and shared their knowledge. Based on the results of recent evaluations (from different European countries), they explored new ways to advance with effective, evidence-based and future-oriented labour market policies.

Without claiming to be exhaustive, the following **ways to move forward** with regard to ALMPs could strengthen the European Employment Strategy (EES) in the framework of Europe 2020:

1. Member states should do more to evaluate **the effectiveness of their ALMPs**. When deciding on the composition and the magnitude of the ALMPs basket, we need evidence based policies.
2. In order to have more impact, **the new European Employment strategy needs a strong 'evaluation' dimension**. Both the greater responsibility taken by the member states and the European institutions with regard to the shaping of a governance structure (the Joint Assessment Framework) are calling for **a more systematic evaluation of ALMPs**.
3. Member states should **better target ALMPs** in line with labour market needs and dynamics, while safeguarding capacity for the most vulnerable groups. This also means targeting capacity towards those with the largest distance from the labour market, such as the low-skilled, the elderly, the disabled, unqualified school-leavers, persons with care related problems, ...
4. **Job search assistance services** provided by Member States should be smart' and 'multi-channeling'. This means 'coaching' rather than 'accompanying' jobseekers intensively, especially concerning the so-called 'self-reliant'.
5. Member states should design **well-targeted training programmes** in function of new labour market opportunities (green jobs, white jobs, bottlenecks ...) and they should be combined with on the job training or apprenticeships. Certain groups should be given priority access to (vocational) training programmes, like (dismissed) temporary workers, unqualified school leavers ...
6. Member states should better coach dismissed workers throughout restructuring processes and giving them new career perspectives. Within the framework of employment cells, outplacement providers and public employment services, all should be done to **guarantee a successful transition through reorientation**. Especially for the elderly, strong and specific A(R)LMPs have to be shaped to prevent them from turning to inactivity.

7. Member states should implement **well-targeted employment incentives** towards vulnerable groups, such as low wage earners, the long term unemployed, young people, low skilled and older workers. Such incentives could have positive effects on hiring and retaining these groups without excessively burdening public finances.
8. Member states should lean upon a various range of instruments and working methods (including social and sheltered workshops, insertion companies, local services economy, ..) with regard to **the social insertion economy**. Such an economy should offer tailor-made employment and insertion chances while taking outflow opportunities (towards the regular economy) into account. For vulnerable groups the social insertion economy might reveal a significant employment potential.
9. Member states should implement ALMPs in **responsible partnerships** between all labour market stakeholders including public and private employment services, social security services, education and training providers and social partners. Public employment services are in a central position to develop these partnerships. In times of tight public budgets, cooperation and capacity should be sought between public and private providers, companies, societal actors, local authorities, ...
10. Member states should give impetus to local initiatives and dynamics within a more **decentralized, custom-made ALMPs approach**. Depending on local needs, this would allow for concrete synergies, across policy boundaries and in partnership with the various stakeholders in the field, while not avoiding accountability.

As mentioned above, these concluding recommendations with regard to ALMPs aim to contribute to the reinforcement of the European Employment Strategy in the framework of Europe 2020.