

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REGARDING THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED IN THE MEMBER STATES AND AT EU LEVEL
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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Executive summary

The public consultation regarding the provision of services to long-term unemployed (LTU) in the Member States and at EU level received **159 contributions**, both from individuals and organisations at MS and EU level. The respondents were called to give their opinion on a set of questions including: the current challenges when tackling with LTU, the integration of service provision, the provision of individualised services, the mutual responsibilities, the availability of incentives to employers and the proposed actions at EU level.

Respondents overall agreed with the challenges proposed in the accompanying document to the consultation and they mentioned a series of additional ones, such as reconsideration of the definition of LTU and corresponding target group, the general economic and financial context, the importance of education and vocational training and its direct link to employability, the (in)effectiveness of the Public Employment Services (PES), etc.

Most of the respondents estimated the **integration of services provision** in supporting LTU as very important and they argued that within their countries and across the EU, the current level of integration is quite limited. Better integration of services and exchange of information between organisations and one-stop-shops were some of the missing services listed in the contributions.

In addition, the **provision of tailor-made services based on individual needs** was deemed as very relevant by most respondents to the questionnaire. They argued that each jobseeker has different background and different needs. According to the respondents, both at national and EU level individualised service provision is currently not at its full potential. Individualised services and mentoring by well-qualified PES personnel should be promoted.

The majority of respondents were of the opinion that all services provided to LTU should be subject to **mutual responsibilities** and said that in their country the services provided to LTU include the **binding commitment** from both the LTU and the organisation delivering the services. However, a minority of respondents explicitly rejected an emphasis on mutual responsibilities approach.

The majority of respondents were not aware of the existence of incentives to employers when hiring a LTU. Besides, they estimated the current **incentives and services to employers** in the MS insufficient to support the labour market integration of the LTU.

Finally, 92 respondents were in favour of the **EU defining general principles** for an effective activation framework and recommending guidelines for measures to be used in the MS. 43 respondents replied that the EU should set detailed guidance for the introduction and development of an **'individual activation offer'**. 19 respondents are of the opinion that there is no need for further action at EU level. Introducing an **individual activation offer** for the LTU and the provision of a **single point of contact/one-stop-shop** for LTU were the two favourite options for change to be introduced in the activation support for LTU.

1. Introduction

The public consultation on 'The provision of services to long-term unemployed in the Member States and at EU level' opened on 19.02.2015 and closed on 15.05.2015. The online questionnaire on the DG EMPL website was available in English, although respondents could reply in any EU official language¹.

A total of 159 contributions² were received. The feedback on this public consultation is provided by means of this summary report presenting the opinions expressed. More than half of the responses (55%) came from **organisations at MS level³**. A further 36% of the replies were from **individuals**. Among them, 82% have been unemployed for a period of 3 months or more⁴. An additional 9% came from people representing an **organisation at EU level**. Eleven respondents asked for their contributions to remain confidential⁵.

In terms of countries, more than half of the total of replies (82 replies) came from four countries: Germany (23), the United Kingdom (22 replies), Belgium (19) and Austria (18)⁶. Among them, 38 replied as belonging to a MS organisation, 32 as individuals and 12 as EU level organisation.

The reader should bear in mind the unbalanced coverage across the MS and population groups. Replies cannot be generalized to the EU level, given the number of replies and that more than half of all replies came from only four countries.

2. Challenges

In the background document accompanying the public consultation, the Commission describes a number of challenges related to the reduction of LTU⁷. A total of 82% among all respondents agreed with the abovementioned challenges. Yet, almost all the respondents to the questionnaire referred to additional ones:

The **definition⁸** of LTU was questioned by the three different groups of respondents (i.e. individuals, MS-level and EU-level organisations), including SOLIDAR⁹. First, the respondents argued that the

¹ Contributions were made in Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish.

² A total of 158 replied directly to the online questionnaire, whereas one reply was received in a form of a written document. The latter reply fed only into the replies to the open questions throughout this document.

³ The organisations identified themselves as: PES 7 replies, Other employment service provider (private or NGO) 23, Think-Tank/Consultancy 2, Central government/ministry 12, Other public authority (local, regional etc.) 9, Employers' organisation 8, Workers' organisation/trade union 4, and Other 34.

⁴ Thirteen people replied having being unemployed for up to one year (3 to 12 months), fourteen people have been unemployed for between one to three years (13 to 36 months) whereas fifteen people have been jobless for more than 3 years. Four additional people replied "yes" without mentioning the unemployment spell.

⁵ Nevertheless, their replies have been counted to the close (multiple choice) questions to present the overall picture throughout the document.

⁶ Italy ranks fifth with 17 replies.

⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=13538&langId=en>

⁸ In the context of this consultation, and in accordance to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), long-term unemployed are considered as those that have been without a job for more than one year, but are actively looking for a job and are willing to accept if they are offered a job.

definition should be reconsidered in terms of target group, by taking into account the different profiles of the unemployed and relevant consequences for their careers. Second, the unemployment spell of 'more than a year' was considered either as too long to tackle LTU or as too restricted and thus, a pre-defined duration should be dropped since the overall performance of the unemployed is not influenced over time. "One does not forget how to work with a computer, or speak foreign languages if unemployed for a long time", one commented. Third, the criterion 'actively looking for a job' can be neither proven nor representative.

When it comes to the **groups of unemployed**, all three respondent groups commented that the inclusion and equal treatment of the most vulnerable groups should be a priority. SOLIDAR, the European Youth Forum, the European Disability Forum referred to the effects of LTU to the most vulnerable groups of people. The prevention of LTU of young people, people with disabilities, low-skilled workers, single parents, migrants, older people (over 50), persons who are unemployed repeatedly, was seen as a key challenge and actions should be taken well before the first year of unemployment for these target groups. These groups are often forced into bad jobs in the low-wage sector which does not correspond to their qualification and past professional experience. A couple of respondents stressed the need for special treatment for parents returning to the labour market and, in particular self-employed, by attributing temporary rights (e.g. reduced working hours, hours of feeding, reduction of childcare costs etc.).

At a **higher policy level**, all groups referred to the economic and financial crisis that has worsened the situation on the labour market leading to lower quality of jobs and more dismissals. SOLIDAR stressed that "any measures proposed by the EC or national governments must therefore tackle the issue of LTU with a long-term perspective and not as a "quick fix" of the crisis". Individuals and MS organisations praised the introduction of a minimum guaranteed income to restore dignity among jobseekers and one talked about the establishment of a "third labour market" with suitable legal framework for enterprises and the necessary individual financial support (subsidised permanent jobs). On the contrary, a couple praised for shortening the unemployment benefit period to force unemployed to search for a job. The Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs¹⁰ also referred to the importance of optimising the balance between benefit systems (except unemployment benefits) and work income so as to optimise incentives for re-employment.

Education was also seen as one of the most important aspects to take into account when preventing LTU, which, according to some respondents, was not explored to the extent possible in the document accompanying the consultation. The European Disability Forum also mentioned the serious lack of adapted education and training for people with disabilities while EUROCITIES reiterated the skills mismatch and continued mismatch between education and the labour market. The transition from an education institution to the labour market should be improved and stronger direct links between educational institutions and the business sector should be built. Also, stronger support for all students to complete their upper secondary education will open the door to the world of work.

Individuals and MS organisations agreed on the **need for individualised services** since LTU profiles are heterogeneous. The age and gender of the LTU persons must be taken into consideration, together with their health and general wellbeing. The European Social Network commented that specialised social services try to ensure access to mainstream services such as health and housing, but also make sure that clients are getting the benefits to which they are entitled. Respondents also stressed the need for **individualised training support**, stating the need for targeted training and associated internships supporting general skills education. A couple of people interpreted the unemployment period as an opportunity for professional training and qualification improvement whereas others said that not all unemployed need and/or are interested in receiving training. Tailored measures and individualised support were deemed as essential by EUROCITIES, the European Disability Forum, as well as by a Ministry of a Member State¹¹.

Individuals and MS organisations **criticised the effectiveness of the Public Employment Services (PES)**. Among them, EUROCITIES talked about underperforming PES and not adequately tailored to

⁹ European network of NGOs.

¹⁰ On behalf of the Czech Government.

¹¹ They requested the contribution to be presented in an anonymous way.

local economy opportunities whereas a Ministry of a Member state¹² reiterated the need for sharing information between the employment services to enable the identification of employment opportunities, continuous monitoring and the evaluation of the actions undertaken. Training programmes are often under-funded with a significant lack of transparency about the funding process. Also, respondents agreed that there is a need for better training of employment counsellors responsible for assisting the integration of the LTU of different profiles, and a real understanding of the different needs and expectations on behalf of the employers and better tailored governmental guidelines for running relevant schemes. Additionally, PES should provide more personal career guidance and use additional tools for 'skills assessment' and therefore, suggest customised training for labour market reintegration. Respondents stressed the fact that because of high counsellors' caseloads PES cannot invest enough time in the contact with jobseekers.

Concerning the **engagement of other entities**, although the role of social partners is seen as very important, individuals and MS organisations considered that they are not sufficiently integrated into the national systems to be able to provide substantial help to the PES¹³.

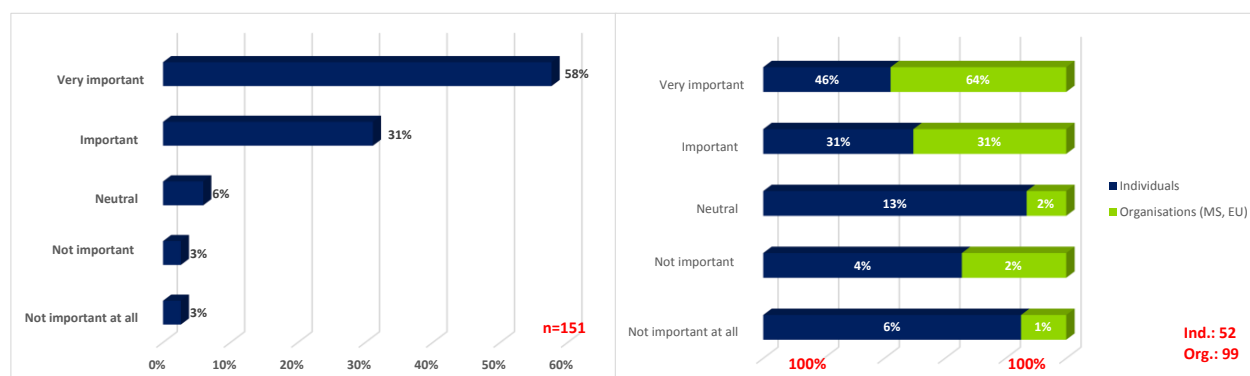
In addition, the **group of individuals** referred to additional challenges, such as the need for **transparency and dissemination of information** among employees concerning their labour and social rights. They also stated that there is a significant **failure to combine all existing instruments** (e.g. insurance, health and rehabilitation services) to face LTU at national, regional and local levels. EUROCITIES also agreed on the current poor coordination among services at local and government levels and the lack of consultation of city authorities by national governments. In terms of **engaging employers**, individuals agreed on the need to encourage enterprises to hire LTU, by providing, for example, special sponsorships. On the opposite, a couple of individuals said that incentives for employers to hire LTU often tend to be abused, since people lose their jobs after subsidies are no longer paid to the employers. One respondent suggested the EU to attract investments and employers from outside the EU by for instance, easing entrepreneurial visa, lower taxation, offering resident permits, etc.

Representatives of several **MS-level organisations** referred to an **overarching need for social integration** and stressed the importance of guarantying healthcare and social security to all LTU.

3. Integration of service provision

In the public consultation document, the Commission refers to the integration of service provision¹⁴ and asked respondents to comment. According to the majority of all respondents (58%), the **integration of service provision** in the support for LTU is 'very important'.

Figure 1: How important is the integration of service provision in the support for long-term unemployed? (Q7)



¹² They requested their contribution to be presented in an anonymous way.

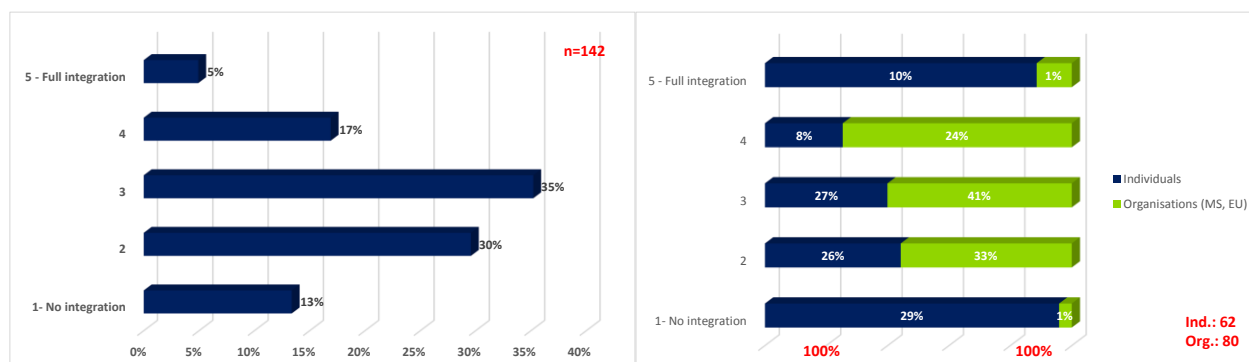
¹³ E.g. facilitate access to vocational training, facilitate reception and the professional integration of LTU.

¹⁴ It defines it as follows: 'cooperation between organisations delivering activation support, benefits and social services resulting in the one-stop-shop delivery of a coordinated service offer'. A service offer may range from activation support (e.g. training or subsidised employment), benefits (unemployment or social) to social services (e.g. care or childcare). When it comes to collaboration between public and private organisations, it may involve social partners, training providers, NGOs, voluntary organisations and social enterprises.

In your country:

Among individuals and organisations at MS level, the **level of integration of service provision** to support the LTU in their country was estimated at level '3-neutral' by 35%.

Figure 2: What is the level of integration of service provision to support the long-term unemployed in your country? (Q4)



EU level organisations:

Nine organisations estimated the level of integration of service provision to support LTU across the EU as '3-neutral' and four as '2-limited integration' and one EU-level organisation attributed the degree '4-integration'.

Services missing

The access to vocational education and training and professional counselling plays a major role in reintegrating LTU, as well as the access to other lifelong learning opportunities, and it was mentioned by all three respondent groups as a "must-have". In particular, peer support or peer counselling to assist people with disabilities and young people is currently not accessible, according to the European Disability Forum. According to individuals, the current undesirable situation is seen as due to the **incapacity of the PES** to offer counselling and guidance, in particular for highly qualified people, and more recently, **placements** (i.e. real job matching and recruitment to paid work). One respondent commented "A successful job search is exclusively related to the skills of the unemployed". According to some respondents it is often the case for the PES personnel that administrative work matters more and/or takes all available time, than pure career guidance. Data and information sharing within PES at national and regional level is also seen as inadequate by the MS organisations. Several EU level organisations argue that budgetary constraints limit the individualisation of services in the PES..

Individuals and MS organisations regretted the lack of service delivery points or one-stop shops. A respondent though argued that **one-stop-shop delivery** should only be considered if well prepared beforehand (e.g. competent staff, staff training, information flow, digitisation of services, facilities, etc.).

Individuals and MS organisations regretted the limited **recognition of the complementarity of expertise** among the different actors as well as the **lack of combination and coordination** of support instruments. There is scope to increase partnerships between the PES and training institutions, as well as with civil society organisations, universities and between employment centres and employers, as well as to extend collaboration with NGOs, voluntary organisations and social enterprises. The Czech Government and two Ministries of Member States¹⁵ agreed on the need for greater coordination between different actors and authorities, the involvement of additional partners (e.g. NGOs) into the process. The Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia stressed that only the integration of different services and the tailoring of available services to the specific needs of the client will help the shortening the unemployment spell.

Individuals referred to **insufficient public childcare structures** (e.g. lack of space in *crèches*, high cost of day care compared to parents' salary, etc.), particularly in urban areas. The Czech Government indicates that the support to LTU is integrated within the Labour Office, which covers both

¹⁵ They requested their contribution to be presented in an anonymous way.

employment issues and payment of most social benefits. However, there is no link to the provision of social services, in particular care services / childcare. Other MS organisations acknowledged this difficulty and suggested the childcare, housing, social benefit, health services to come under the responsibility of the local communities.

Within the group of individuals, a respondent spoke of the **lack of any form of aid for self-employed** people, for instance the provision of low interest loans or free support and advice. Another recommended the adoption of “**talent-oriented tests**”¹⁶ for jobseekers opting for retraining¹⁷, even if they are older than 35 or 40 years. **Subsidised employment and (re)training**¹⁸ accessible and free to every unemployed person should also be promoted, according to individuals. MS organisations agreed on the appropriateness of supporting people after having been re-employed.

Representatives from MS level organisations referred to the **limited opportunities for reintegration** for asylum seekers, immigrants and people after medical rehabilitation. A respondent lamented the lack of organisational and financial support to employers willing to engage LTU in programmes of professional activation. For EAPN Nederland, a service offer to help LTU re-boost their self-esteem and confidence is broadly missing. According to SOLIDAR, stepping up investment in the **social economy sector** can be considered, as it has proved to be resilient during the crisis and is one of the few sectors that have been creating jobs in significant numbers.

Recommendations on how to improve the integration of service provision

Coordination

- **Greater coordination** between government departments and agencies (e.g. via official protocols of coordination), including legally binding cooperation among labour market actors.
- Possible **integration of certain services**, such as the jobcentres and immigration services, as to allow the immigration services to determine whether the skills are available locally. Integrated services should be provided as closely as possible to the beneficiaries.
- **Sharing or availability of databases** among institutions in order to allow better information.
- Increase the **involvement of NGOs**, social partners, state bodies, etc.
- Promote **Public-Private Partnerships**
- Set up a **central governmental authority** for the overall supervision of active labour market policies and the active participation of different stakeholders.
- Establish **One-stop-shop systems** in the MS.
- **Transparency** on the activities performed (e.g. interactive social meetings).

Services provision

- **Better involvement of the unemployed** people in decision making and in the design of measures offered by the employment offices and job centres.
- Set up a **better ICT system** allowing job seekers' profiling and matching.
- Set up an **operational fund for innovative companies and start-ups**.
- Provide **financial support for self-employed** (e.g. low-interest loans, guarantees, exemptions from contributions and taxes).
- Free of charge **support to entrepreneurs** in the form of tax, accounting, business advisory, financing, funding from the EU funds, networking, education, etc.
- **Fairer access to training and education**
- Offer better chances of **advanced training** to the PES personnel as well as jobseekers.
- **Capacity building for PES**.
- Appoint “**personal**” **coach/counsellor** to allow interpersonal support.

¹⁶ Talent-oriented tests may be used in order to find out for which professions an individual would also qualify if opted for a retraining. If the tests show that jobseekers have certain talents and if these talents are needed on the labour market, then these people should be given the chance to go to college, university, etc. again to acquire the skills and the formation needed on the labour market.

¹⁷ i.e. Return to the university to study something different from one's first degree, since they wish to change their field of expertise and professional path up to now.

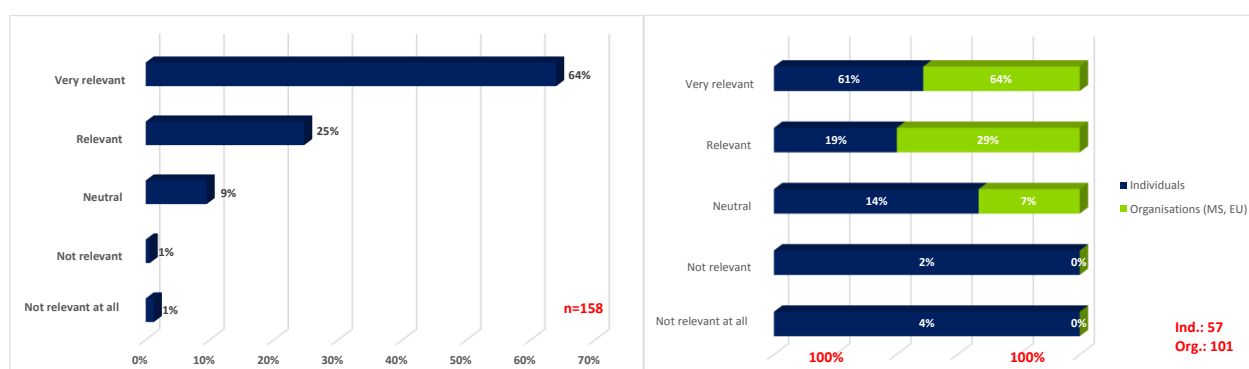
¹⁸ In Sweden, people are granted subsidies and many other social benefits up until the age of 54, should they decide to retrain.

- Greater and **proactive monitoring of internships** to ensure that they provide good quality work opportunities and not cheap or free labour.
- More funds for **direct support to employers** willing to hire LTU and increased use of **corporate social responsibility** from side of the employers.
- More accessible (financially and geographically) public services, e.g. home early childhood, transportation, etc.
- Better financial support for unemployed people who are looking for a job in another region or another EU MS and for families with children.
- The use of **European Structural and Investment Funds** plays a crucial role for investment in people, especially those who are furthest from the labour market.
- **Remove restrictive administrative eligibility criteria** for support and put in place an integrated needs' assessment of each LTU person.
- Engage LTU people in **publicly funded jobs** or second labour market or (temporary) in the voluntary work.
- Persons with disabilities should not lose their disability specific allowance when finding a job.

4. Individualised services to LTU

In the public consultation, the Commission also refers to the provision of tailor-made services based on individual needs of LTU persons. Sixty-four percent of all respondents estimated the individualised services approach as 'very relevant'. Those replying either 'not relevant' or 'not relevant at all' were exclusively individuals.

Figure 3: How relevant is it that services for the long-term unemployed are individualised? (Q8)



When asked to justify their answers, respondents from all three groups referred to the existence of different professional backgrounds and personal developments, and consequent **diverse needs of each jobseeker**. Among them, SOLIDAR, the European Youth Forum, as well as the Czech Government, the Portuguese Ministry of solidarity, labour and social security and the Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia stressed the heterogeneity of the group of LTU. Promoting an **individualised approach** due to different needs (e.g. jobseeker's social status, motivation, labour market status, employers' needs, etc.) and multi-factored unemployment among jobseekers is a priority. The practice "one-size-fits-all" should be abandoned. Services need to be adjusted to individual circumstances of the beneficiary to allow for flexibility and increase their effectiveness. General counselling might not be relevant for all, and more intensive or advanced training might be required by some. Respondents also criticised the prioritisation of certain groups of unemployed people.

Services should take into account the physical, **intellectual and social environment** of the users and should be respectful of their cultural specificities. Each jobseeker does not show the same ability to cope with stress and is not equally competitive when re-entering the labour market. EAPN Nederland referred to the importance of rebuilding self-esteem, self-trust and confidence according to people's own values and skills. Re-integration may happen slowly starting with a paid part-time occupation.

An individualised approach was considered necessary in particular for people severely disadvantaged on the labour market. The concept of engaging an "**individualised mentor**" for each jobseeker was welcomed by both individuals and organisations. This would enable progress, assessment reviews

and further action to reflect the candidate's changing needs and personal circumstances. A Ministry of a Member State¹⁹ reiterated the need for assigning individual tutoring in the process of re-integration. The European Social Network also referred to the concept of individual action plans to ensure gradual support towards employability. Nevertheless, offering individualised services implies a **considerable demand on human resources** in terms of both quality and quantity. The employment agencies and the State's labour institutions cannot fight against LTU alone, and need the support of the **business sector**, notably regarding training costs.

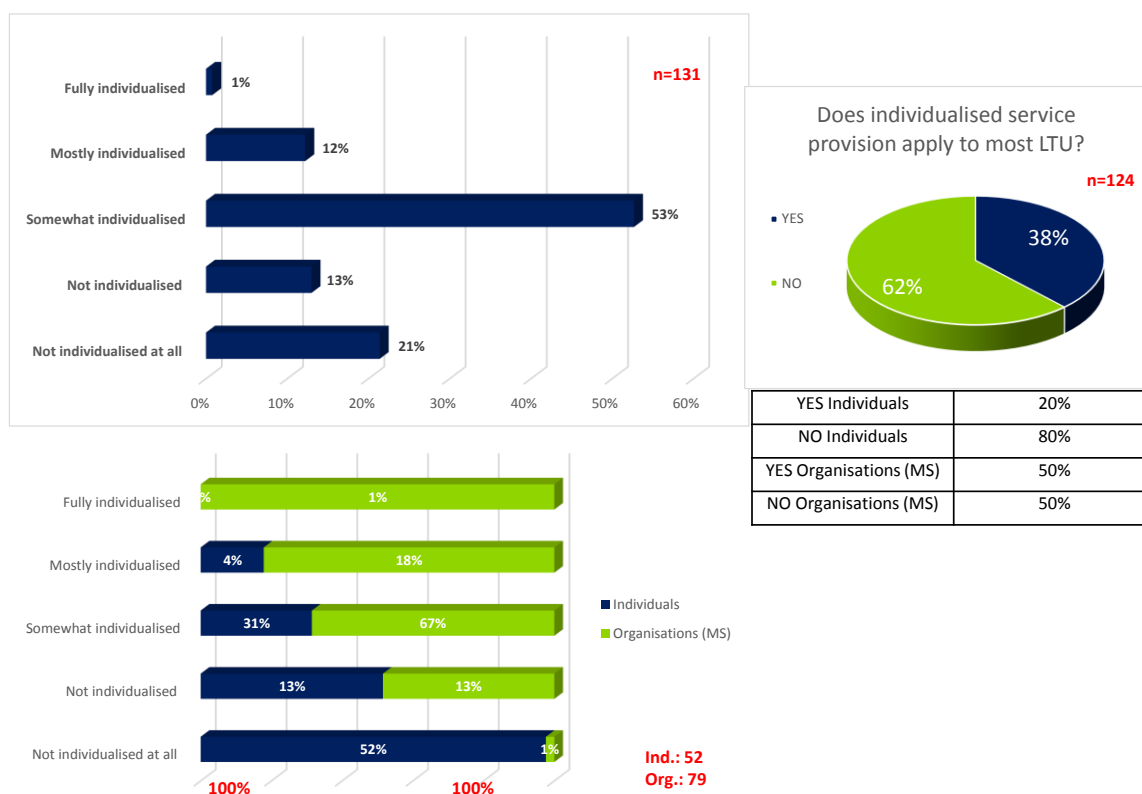
People responding on behalf of MS level organisations also mentioned that offering customised services to enhance employability would require an **expensive upgrade of the PES** in most MS. Yet, the cost of offering individualised support is not much higher, and its effectiveness is much greater.

Consistency should be ensured with other European measures such as the **Youth Guarantee**, according to the European Youth Forum.

In your country:

Slightly above half of the respondents (53%) replied that **support services adapted to the individual needs** of LTU are 'somewhat individualised' in their country. All respondents replying 'fully individualised' were organisations. A total of 62% among the respondents were of the opinion that the individualised service provision is not available to most LTU.

Figure 4: To which degree are support services to long-term unemployed adapted to individual needs? (Q9), Does individualised service provision apply to most long-term unemployed? (Q10)



EU level organisations:

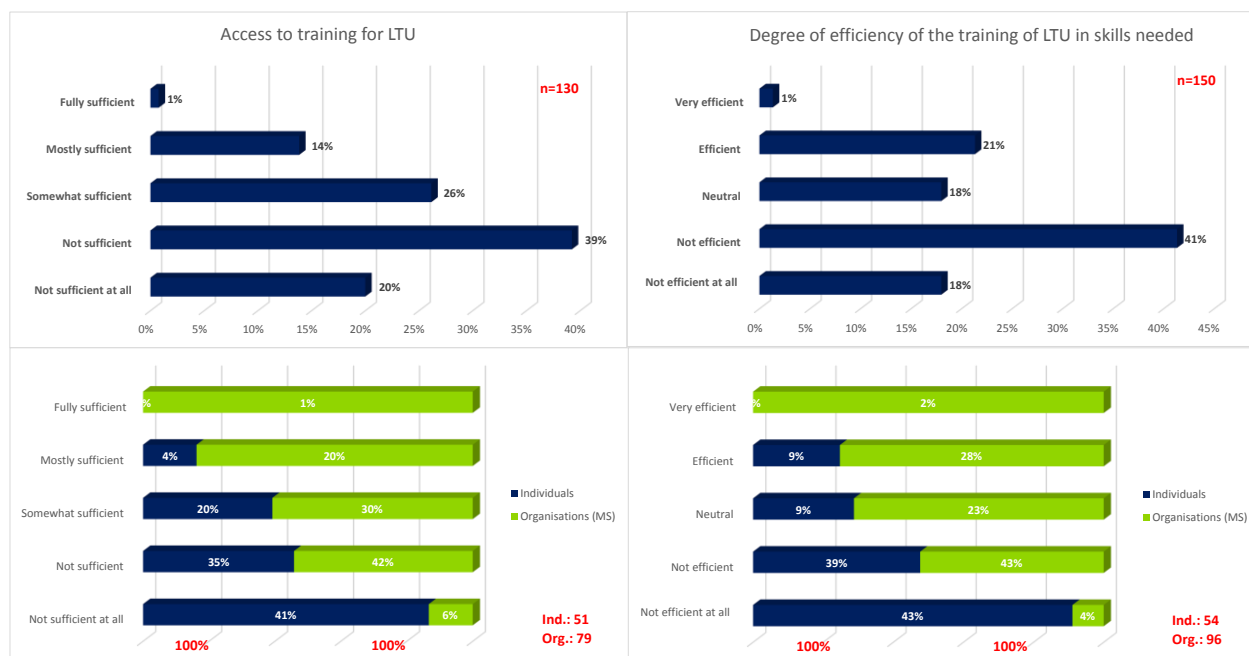
Eight organisations said that the support services to LTU adapted to individual needs across the EU is 'somewhat individualised', three replied 'not individualised', one 'mostly individualised' and one 'fully individualised'.

Analysing all replies regarding **access to training** for LTU, 39% of the respondents estimated it as 'not sufficient'. All respondents replying "fully sufficient" were organisations. When asked about **how**

¹⁹ They requested their contribution to be presented in an anonymous way.

efficient is the training in providing the skills needed to re-enter the labour market, 41% replied it is 'not efficient'. All respondents saying "very efficient" were organisations.

Figure 5: How is the access to training for long-term unemployed in your country/EU level? (Q11), How efficient is the training of long-term unemployed in providing the skills needed to re-introduce them effectively into the labour market? (Q12)

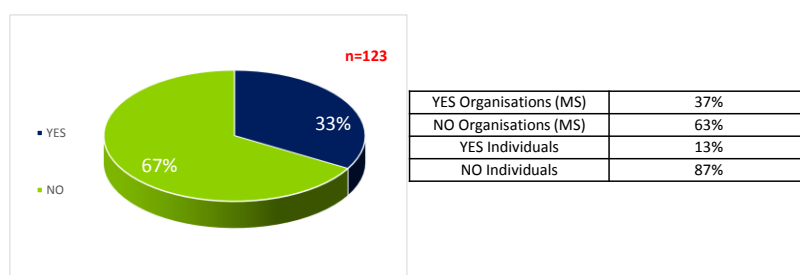


EU level organisations:

Six organisations estimated the access to training for LTU across the EU as 'not sufficient' and two as 'somewhat sufficient'.

Finally, the majority of all respondents (67%) were of the opinion that **start-up support for self-employment** to LTU is inadequate.

Figure 6: Is there adequate start-up support for self-employment to long-term unemployed in your country? (Q13)



Across the EU

Eight EU-level organisations replied that there is no adequate start-up support for self-employment to LTU across the EU whereas two replied positively.

Recommendations on how to improve individualised services to LTU

Public employment services

- **Train the PES consultants/counsellors** to increase their understanding of the social and individual situation of LTU and to develop individual plans for labour re-integration. Coaches/counsellors should also be competent in psychology.
- Engage **specialised staff/unit within PES** to be set-up, devoted to create tailored programmes.
- Guarantee **sufficient number of PES employees** and adequate supervision of the PES staff.
- Engage **advisors** with local problems and local market knowledge.

- Invest in **early intervention** towards the LTU.
- The PES and other employment agencies need to **differentiate among types of unemployed**.
- Strengthen the **link between the PES and employers**.

Provision of individualised services

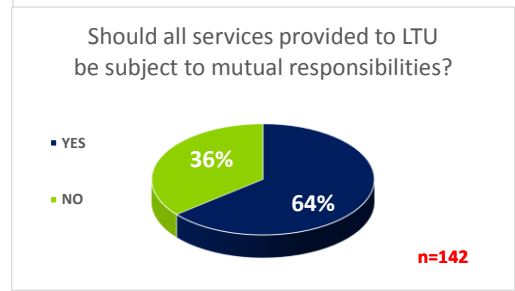
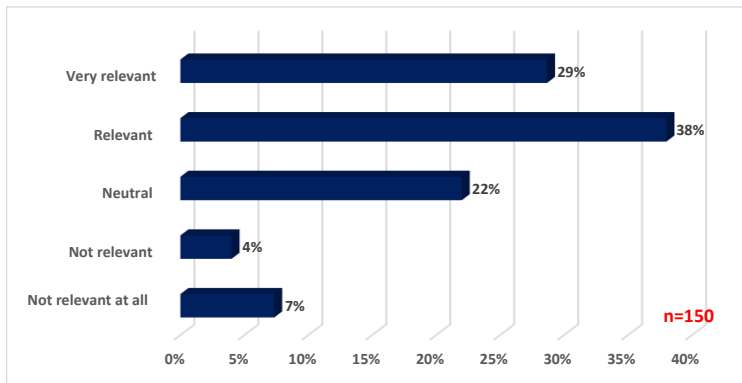
- Offer **training** appropriate to educational level of claimant. Each LTU to have individualised coaching and tutoring.
- **Thematic educational workshops and seminars**, based on interests and skills, desired areas of growth.
- Give jobseekers the opportunity to **gain new skills** and qualifications which employers look for, also using **new learning opportunities** outside the formal education systems.
- **Separate service catalogue for LTU** to be adopted, from which they can choose their own process of finding a job.
- Create a **common/standardised assessment framework** to accompany the LTU.
- **Designing of training programmes** based on employers' needs.
- Adopt **talent-oriented tests** and **skills assessment** at individual level and work with personal portfolios over a longer period of time.
- Draft **individualised action plans** allowing for vocational education and training.
- **Monitor** against agreed learning outcomes. Promote the process of **recognition and validation of learning outcomes** of non-formal and informal learning (Council Recommendation, 2012).
- **Support entrepreneurship**, particularly for young people, and provide start-up support for self-employment to LTU.
- Develop **cooperation strategies with social organisations** specialised in LTU.
- Promote **partnerships** between training organisations and local colleges.
- **Involve enterprises** through more, longer, supervised internships.
- For those who are unable to work (whether in the short or long-term) due to disability or severe ill health, to offer **alternatives to the primary labour market**, such as an extended social economy, guided volunteer work, etc.
- The EC to promote the **STAR recommendations**²⁰ which if implemented together have proven to be successful in reducing unemployment for persons with disabilities and disadvantaged groups.

5. Mutual responsibilities

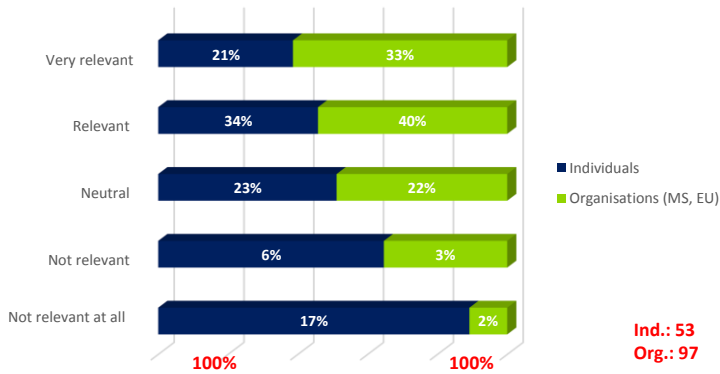
Mutual responsibilities is defined in the questionnaire as 'setting a minimum standards for the activation of persons unemployed for more than one year with mutual binding commitments (formalised through individual action plans or other forms of written agreements) from both the individual and the organisations delivering services'. Thirty-eight percent of all respondents considered the adoption of a **mutual responsibilities approach**²⁰ as 'relevant'. Additionally, a share of 64% believed that all services provided to LTU **should be subject to mutual responsibilities**.

Figure 7: How relevant is the mutual responsibilities approach for interventions for the long-term unemployed? (Q15), Should all services provided to long-term unemployed be subject to mutual responsibilities? (Q18)

²⁰ - Stakeholder cooperation, - Targeted actions, - Availability of support, - Research.



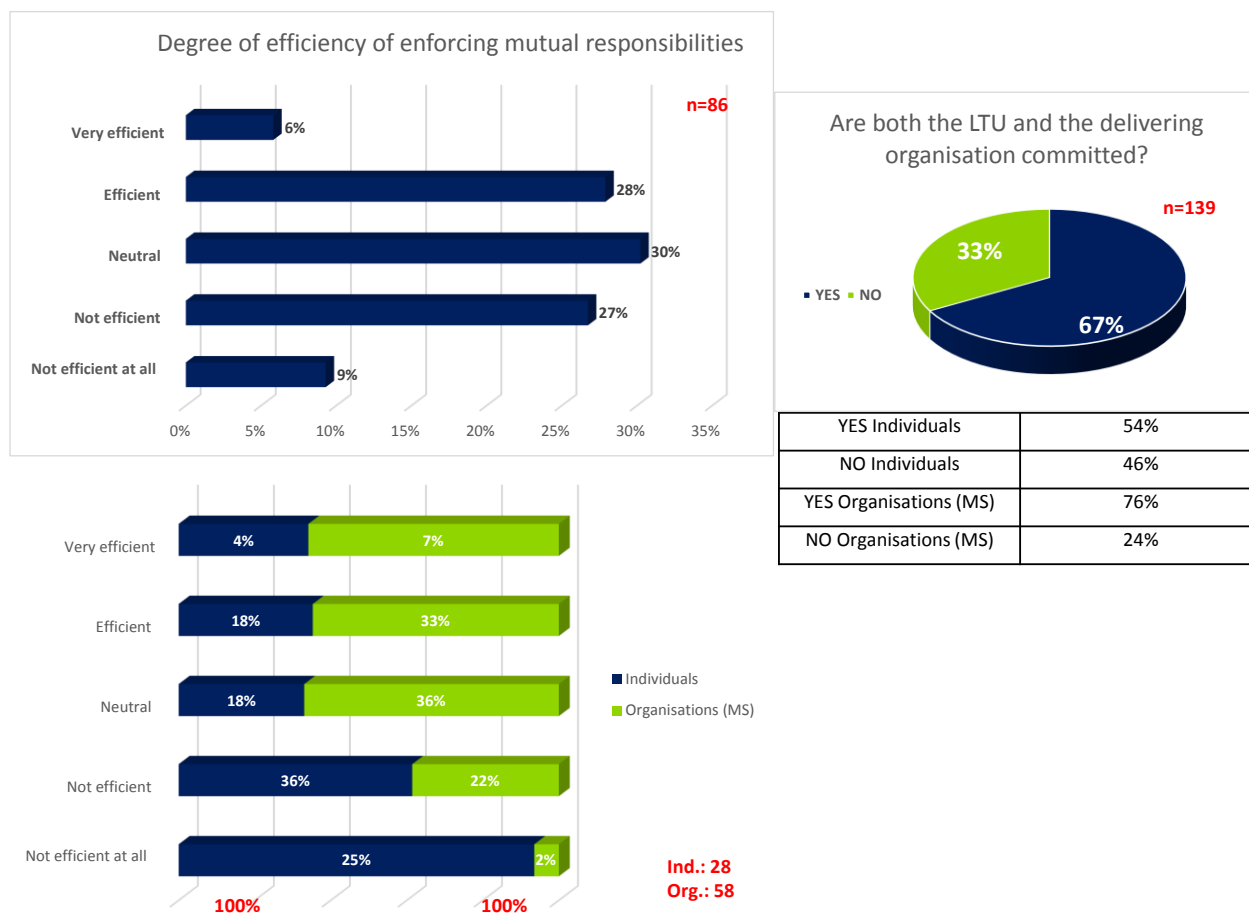
YES Individuals	64%
NO Individuals	36%
YES Organisations (MS)	64%
NO Organisations (MS)	36%



In your country:

A share of 30% among the respondents estimated the **enforcement of mutual responsibilities** in their countries as 'neutral'. More than half of the respondents (67%) replied positively that the services provided to LTU include the **binding commitment** from both the LTU and the organisation delivering the services.

Figure 8: How efficient is the enforcement of mutual responsibilities? (Q17), Do the services provided to long-term unemployed in your country include the binding commitment from both the long-term unemployed and the organisation delivering? (Q16)



EU level organisations:

Out of the four organisations estimated the enforcement of mutual responsibilities as 'neutral'. To the question whether the services provided to LTU include the binding commitment from both the LTU and the organisation delivering, ten organisations said "no" and five replied positively.

Recommendations on the application of a mutual responsibilities approach

- **Individual commitment together with an active role of the organisation** delivering services to LTU (employment office, job centre).
- **Open and informal communication** between the two parties.
- **User/client participation**, via for instance motivational conversations, and shared responsibilities for training.
- **Penalties** should be applied both to the employment services when failing to provide adequate support and to the unemployed in case they make no effort in looking for a job, a sanction may be applied.
- A written **document obliging** both parties to perform an action plan resulting in arranging the job interviews or even finding a job.
- **Unemployed people need to be actively involved** in the process of designing their reintegration process to allow for acceptance, motivation and the freedom of choice.
- The **net-replacement rate** of the unemployment benefits should be high enough to avoid precarious situations for people in unemployment. A common European approach on the net-replacement rates would be a good step as rates currently vary between 50% to almost 90% between Member States.

- When a country gives financial support to someone who opts for **re-training** or even pays the re-training, a binding commitment should exist for the employer to commit taking over the re-trainee after having finished the training.
- **Application of sanctions**, such as loss of benefits should be combined with realistic targets.
- Further **sanctions are not an adequate instrument** when the non-fulfilment of responsibilities is caused by psychological or social circumstances.
- Clearer and **sharper formulated regulations for the self-activity of LTU**.
- A **formal recognition of learning outcomes** in the form of qualification or certification.
- Importance of **distinguishing between responsibilities and conditionalities**.
- Require **employers to provide appropriate training** and relevant work experience.

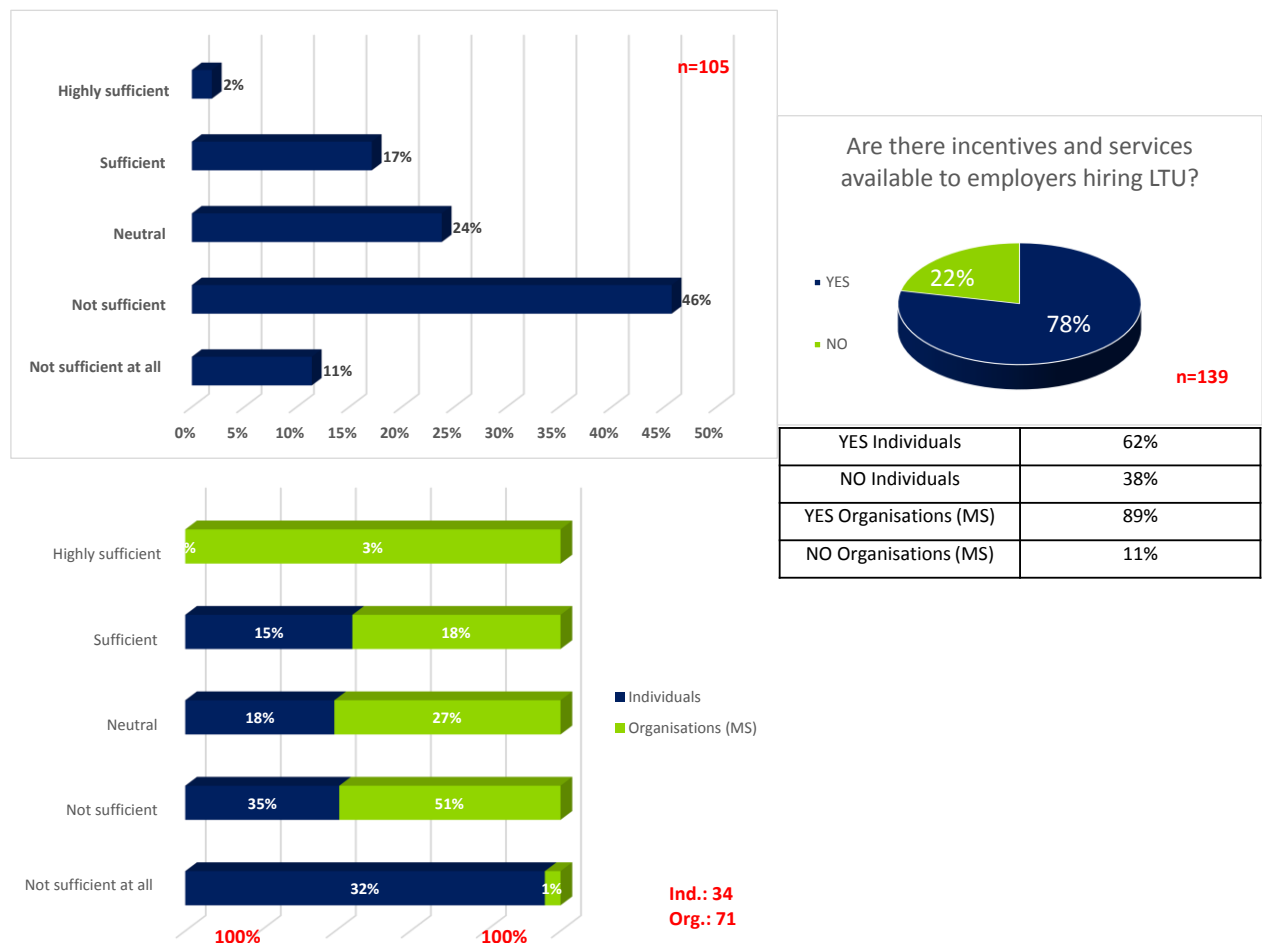
6. Incentives and services for employers

Incentives for employers, as indicated in the questionnaire, refer to direct support for recruitment, training or short-term experience to LTU and it can be translated into subsidies for employment, tax or social contribution reductions, post-placement support, support to broad groups of employers, such as for awareness building.

In your country:

The majority of the respondents (78%) were **unaware of incentives** and services that are available to employers to employ LTU. Almost half of the respondents (46%) considered the **incentives and services to employers** as 'not sufficient' to support the labour market integration of the LTU.

Figure 9: Do you know if there are incentives and services that are available to employers to employ long-term unemployed? (Q20), Are the incentives and services to employers in your country sufficient to support the labour market integration of the long-term unemployed? (Q21)



EU-level organisations:

Seven organisations were not aware of the incentives and services that are available to employers to employ LTU whereas eight they were so.

Recommendations on how to improve the efficiency of the services delivered to employers

- Employers to receive a **financial support** when employing LTU persons.
- Reward companies that **hire LTU mothers and people over 50**.
- Offer **subsidies** for social clauses in procurement, employment in social enterprises or internships.
- Implement the **public procurement directive** in a way to promote employment of people with disabilities.
- In case a re-integration, **extend the subsidy** to employers to avoid the risk of the LTU person turn jobless again after the subsidy ends.
- Financial support to employers' activities to **re-train** LTU.
- **Reduce labour costs** (taxes) for enterprises.
- Temporary **wage subsidies** for companies, adequately designed and monitored taking into account the specifics of each labour market.
- Greater **flexibility** in the design of wage subsidies to employers, reducing the density of regulations and red tape for employers and job centres.
- Support of the concept of "**penetrable employment**" (i.e. progressive transition into the labour market by partial steps).
- Provide **coaching** to employers.
- Have **sufficient number of PES counsellors for employers** and ICT able to do matching and profiling of jobseekers.
- **Removing prejudice** among employers and the society in general towards the LTU.
- **Adequate communication** towards the employers, SMEs in particular, about all services available to them.
- **Organisational support for SMEs**, and also enhance collaboration with other companies (e.g. joint training system).
- Coordination and exchange at **local level** (e.g. through an information platform).
- Create a secondary labour market or vocational training that aims to introduce LTU to working routine and skills.

7. EU-level action

7.1 Action

As stated in the public consultation document, "current EU-level action includes support to MS in addressing LTU policies through mutual learning and the European Semester process." In addition to this, the Commission uses the ESF to support investments in the MS related to LTU as well as to the reform of the labour market institutions.

Ninety-two respondents, among them the representatives of SOLIDAR, the European Social Network, EUROCITIES, as well as the Czech Republic, the Portuguese Ministry of solidarity, labour and social security, the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs and two other Ministries of Member States²¹, replied 'YES, the EU should define **general principles** for an effective activation framework and recommending guidelines for measures to be used in Member States' and their arguments were as follows. A general activation framework including standardised measures may be developed. Different perspectives from different countries should be included in this common framework to bring a common view of goals and principles, ensure minimum services offered to LTU and lead to new insights for national solutions (e.g. uniformity in the practice, well-define goals, promotion of best practices, etc.). Each MS has to justify in and outside the country what activities it undertakes to face LTU and fight against bureaucracy and ineffectiveness. An inspiring framework is considered by some respondents more helpful and effective than fixed parameters, considering the specificities of the different Member

²¹ They requested their contribution to be presented in an anonymous way.

States. Awareness raising around this framework and transnational exchange of experience should be a priority and a regular assessment of the progress within the MS should be put in place. The Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs stressed that this approach should leave member states room for flexibility when implementing additional measures and services, and create as little additional administrative burden as possible. The Czech Government highlighted that recommendations should not interfere into national policies in the area of social security, including unemployment insurance.

Forty-three respondents, among them the representatives from the European Youth Forum, the European Disability Forum, EAPN and one Ministry of a Member State²², replied 'YES, the EU should recommend a **set detailed guidance** for the introduction and development of an 'individual activation offer', bringing together the policy features described above into a coordinated package of services. The guidance would include required parameters to ensure effective outcomes, based on the general principles for an effective activation framework'. Their arguments were that such a (strategic) approach may ensure that all MS's performance in tackling LTU is assessed under a common framework. Despite the fact that each EU MS should tailor its actions to its needs, **coordinated actions** and use of these guidelines to establish concrete and measurable actions in a wider context, was highly recommended. The adoption and implementation of pre-set indicators for better regulation of the programmes was suggested, together with the activation of international comparisons. The EU should be more specific in communicating with the MS regarding the expected services to LTU, particularly as individual countries get funding from the EU.

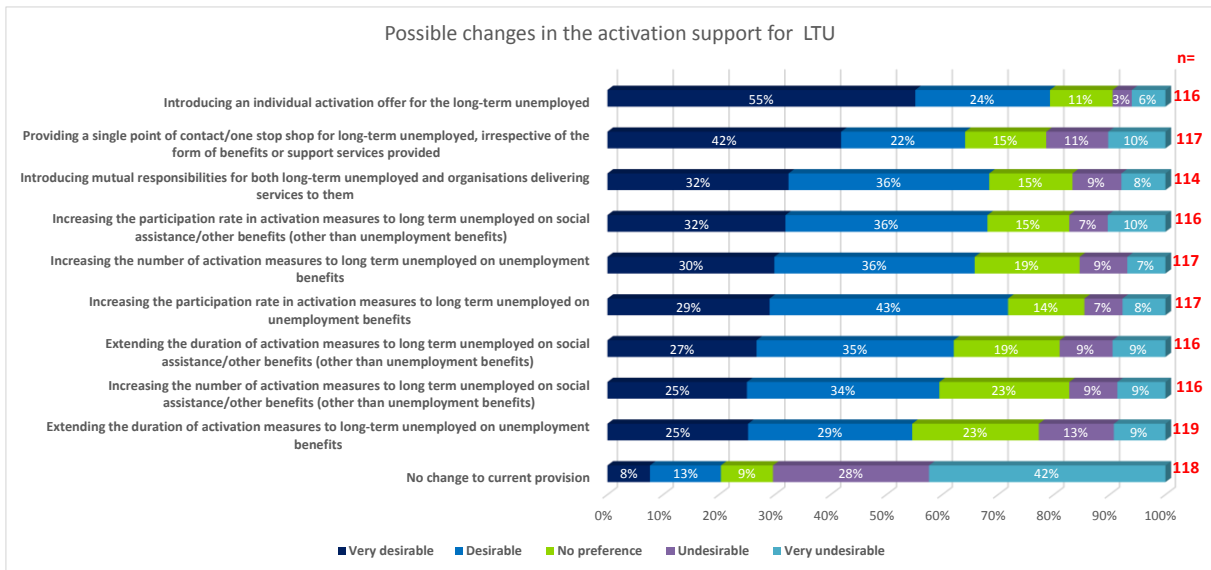
Nineteen respondents replied 'No, there is no need for further action at EU level' and their arguments were that the current legal framework is clear and sufficient for actions targeted LTU and the EU should now focus on more substantive issues, such as job creation, competitiveness in the European labour market. MS have to focus on implementation. Also, regional differences may make EU guidelines difficult to implement in some regions/countries. Individualised services at national level are a priority whereas the EU tends to generalise the situation in the MS and this contradicts individuality. The public sector in almost all MS should ensure that it efficiently uses the existing funds and the ESF supports MS in delivering targeted policies. No need for additional funding was mentioned.

The majority of respondents supports, in the order of priority, changes in support for LTU, namely **introducing an individual activation offer, a single point of contact, mutual responsibilities and increasing participation in activation measures** for social assistance and unemployment benefit recipients. EU level organisations prioritise more the need to increase participations in activation measures and the support offer to LTU

Introducing an individual activation offer for the LTU was mentioned as the most desirable option among national-level respondents (55%), followed by the provision of a **single point of contact/one stop shop for LTU**, irrespective of the form of benefits or support services provided (42%). On the opposite side, **no change to current provision** was the least desirable option among respondents (42%).

Figure 10: Please give your opinion on the following options as regards possible changes in the activation support for the long-term unemployed in your country (Q27)

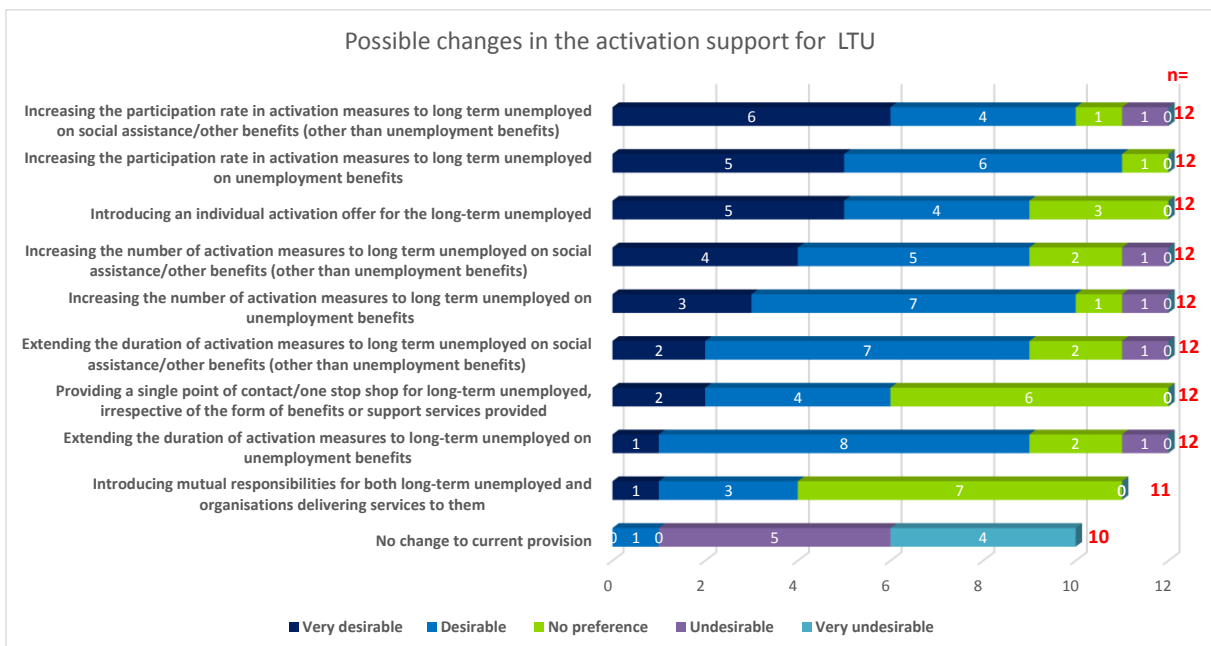
²² They requested the contribution to be presented in an anonymous way.



EU – level organisations:

EU level organisations signalled increasing the participation rate in activation measures to long term unemployed on social assistance/other benefits (other than unemployment benefits) to be the most desirable option (50%). No change to current provision was the least desirable option for this group of respondents (40%).

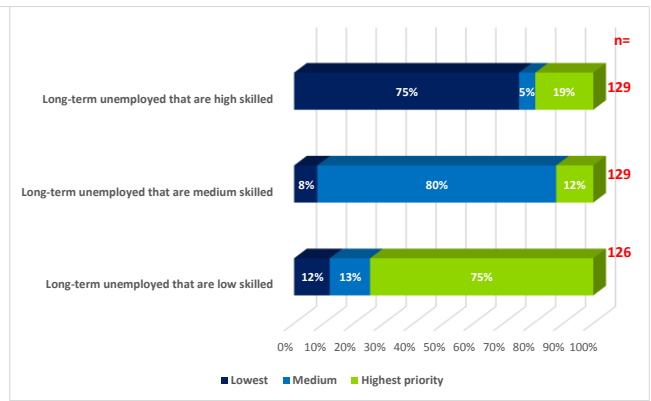
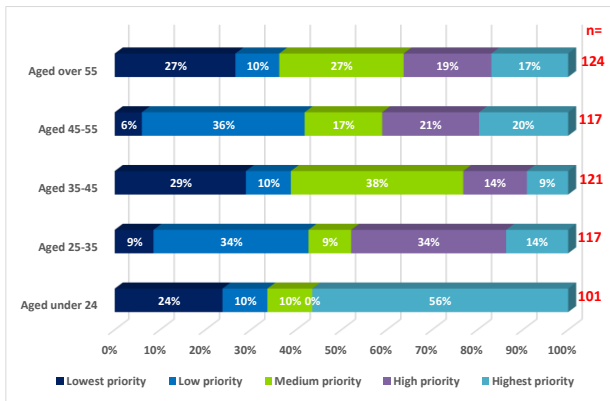
Figure 11: Please give your opinion on the following options as regards possible changes in the activation support for the long-term unemployed across the EU (Q27)



7.2 Target groups of actions

When it comes to the age categories of LTU and the importance of receiving intensive support per category, 56% of the respondents agreed that the **highest priority** age is those **'younger than 24 years old'**. As for the **level of qualification** among LTU, 75% of the respondents said **'low-skilled LTU'** should be on the priority.

Figure 12: Please rank the following categories of long-term unemployed according to how important it is that they are eligible for intensive support, e.g. through an "individual activation offer". Long-term unemployed that are...: (Q28)



Annex: Public Consultation questionnaire

Note to the questionnaire: The questions below correspond to the PDF version of the Public Consultation questionnaire. Because of the presence of interactive features, in the online version of the questionnaire in some cases respondents will see different questions depending to the answer given to previous questions. Example: if the respondent is an organisation at EU level, in some cases he/she will be asked to give an answer relative to the situation at EU level while an organisation operating at Member State will be asked about the situation at Member State level.

Identifying information

Name, address, phone number, email

Are you replying as an individual or as an organisation?

Are you based in a Member State or working at EU level?

Do you have experience of being unemployed?

For how many months have you been unemployed?

Country

Language of your contribution

Type of your organisation

Register ID number (if your organisation is registered in the Transparency Register)

Your reply...

- can be published with your personal information (I consent to publication of all information in my contribution and I declare that none of it is under copyright restrictions that prevent publication)
- can be published in an anonymous way (I consent to publication of all information in my contribution except my name/the name of my organisation and I declare that none of it is under copyright restrictions that prevent publication)
- cannot be published - keep it confidential (The contribution will not be published, but will be used internally within the Commission)

1. Challenges

Q1. Do you agree with the description of the challenges?

Q2. Are there any other challenges or aspects to address long-term unemployment that should be taken into account?

Q3. Please describe the most important challenges to address long-term unemployment.

2. Policy features

2.1. Integration of service provision

Q4. What is the level of integration of service provision to support the long-term unemployed in your country?

Q4.1 What is the level of integration of service provision to support the long-term unemployed across the EU?

Q5. What services are missing in the integrated provision in your country?

Q5.1 What services are missing in the integrated service provision across the EU?

Q6. What recommendations would you make to improve the integration of service provision in your country?

Q6.1 What recommendations would you make to improve the integration of service provision?

Q7. How important is the integration of service provision in the support for long-term unemployed?

2.2. Individualised services to long-term unemployed

Q8. How relevant is it that services for the long-term unemployed are individualised?

Please, explain why:

Q9. To which degree are support services to long-term unemployed adapted to individual needs in your country?

Q9.1 To which degree are support services to long-term unemployed adapted to individual needs across the EU?

Q10. Does individualised service provision apply to most long-term unemployed in your country?

Q10.1 Does individualised service provision apply to most long-term unemployed across the EU?

Q11. How is the access to training for long-term unemployed in your country?

Q11.1 How is the access to training for long-term unemployed across the EU?

Q12. How efficient is the training of long-term unemployed in providing the skills needed to re-introduce them effectively into the labour market?

Q13. Is there adequate start-up support for self-employment to long-term unemployed in your country?

Q13.1 Is there adequate start-up support for self-employment to long-term unemployed across the EU?

Q14. What recommendations would you make to improve individualised services to long-term unemployed?

2.3. Mutual responsibilities

Q15. How relevant is the mutual responsibilities approach for interventions for the long-term unemployed?

Q16. Do the services provided to long-term unemployed in your country include the binding commitment from both the long-term unemployed and the organisation delivering?

Q17. How efficient is the enforcement of mutual responsibilities in your country?

Q17.1 How efficient is the enforcement of mutual responsibilities across the EU?

Q18. Should all services provided to long-term unemployed be subject to mutual responsibilities?

Q19. What recommendations would you make on the application of a mutual responsibilities approach?

2.4. Adequate incentives and services for employers to employ long-term unemployed

Q20. Do you know if there are incentives and services that are available to employers to employ long-term unemployed in your country?

Q20.1 Do you know if there are incentives and services that are available to employers to employ long-term unemployed across the EU?

Q21. Are the incentives and services to employers in your country sufficient to support the labour market integration of the long-term unemployed?

Q21.1 Are the incentives and services to employers at EU-level sufficient to support the labour market integration of the long-term unemployed?

Q22. What recommendations would you make to improve the efficiency of the services delivered to employers?

3. EU-level action

Q23. In your view, is there a need for further EU level action, targeted at raising awareness and keeping political momentum for improving effectiveness and efficiency of Member States' actions when tackling long-term unemployment?

- Yes, the EU should define general principles for an effective activation framework and recommending guidelines for measures to be used in Member States
- Yes, the EU should recommend a set detailed guidance for the introduction and development of an "individual activation offer", bringing together the policy features described above into a coordinated package of services. The guidance would include required parameters to ensure effective outcomes, based on the general principles for an effective activation framework
- No, there is no need for further action at EU level

Q24. What consequences does this action have for the effectiveness and efficiency of Member States' actions when tackling long-term unemployment?

Q25. What consequences does this action have for the effectiveness and efficiency of Member States' actions when tackling long-term unemployment?

Q26. Please motivate your answer:

Q27. Please give your opinion on the following options as regards possible changes in the activation support for the long-term unemployed in your country:

	Very undesirable	Undesirable	No preference	Desirable	Very desirable
No change to current provision					
Increasing the participation rate in activation measures to long term unemployed on unemployment benefits					
Extending the duration of activation measures to long term unemployed on unemployment benefits					
Increasing the number of activation measures to long term unemployed on unemployment benefits					
Increasing the participation rate in activation measures to long term unemployed on social assistance/other benefits (other than unemployment benefits)					
Extending the duration of activation measures to long term unemployed on social assistance/other benefits (other than unemployment benefits)					
Increasing the number of activation measures to long term unemployed on social assistance/other benefits (other than unemployment benefits)					
Introducing an individual activation offer for the long term unemployed					
Introducing mutual responsibilities for					

both long-term unemployed and organisations delivering services to them					
Providing a single point of contact/one stop shop for long term unemployed, irrespective of the form of benefits or support services provided					

Q27.1 Please give your opinion on the following options as regards possible changes in the activation support for the long-term unemployed as part of common EU standards:

	Very undesirable	Undesirable	No preference	Desirable	Very desirable
No change to current provision					
Increasing the participation rate in activation measures to long term unemployed on unemployment benefits					
Extending the duration of activation measures to long term unemployed on unemployment benefits					
Increasing the number of activation measures to long term unemployed on unemployment benefits					
Increasing the participation rate in activation measures to long term unemployed on social assistance/other benefits (other than unemployment benefits)					
Extending the duration of activation measures to long term unemployed on social assistance/other benefits (other than unemployment benefits)					
Increasing the number of activation measures to long term unemployed on social assistance/other benefits (other than unemployment benefits)					
Introducing an individual activation offer for the long term unemployed					
Introducing mutual responsibilities for both long-term unemployed and organisations delivering services to them					
Providing a single point of contact/one stop shop for long term unemployed, irrespective of the form of benefits or support services provided					

Q28. Please **rank** the following categories of long-term unemployed according to how important it is that they are eligible for intensive support, e.g through an "individual activation offer"

	Lowest priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Highest priority
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Aged under 24					
Aged 25-35					
Aged 35-45					
Aged 45-55					
Aged over 55					

	Lowest priority	Medium priority	Highest priority
Low skilled			
Medium skilled			
High skilled			

Q29. Do you have any other comments?