



# Tackling Long-Term Unemployment through Risk Profiling and Outreach

A discussion paper from the Employment Thematic Network

*Technical Dossier no. 6*

May 2018

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This discussion paper scrutinises practices of EU Member States concerning risk profiling and outreach activities by building on an extensive literature review. Research suggests that the role of the caseworker is a key success factor throughout the different profiling approaches and outreach activities. Therefore, although scientific evidence on the effectiveness of risk profiling and targeting support is mostly absent, profiling activities used as a complementary practice to support caseworker assessment and outreach work tailored to the needs of vulnerable people are both recommended. Still, outreach and profiling activities are only the starting points: what needs to follow are comprehensive activation measures to best serve the most vulnerable throughout the entire social inclusion process.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Europe faces a key challenge regarding long-term unemployment (LTU<sup>1</sup>): despite a steady decline since 2014, almost half of unemployed people (46% or about 9.6 million people in 2016<sup>2</sup>) are currently LTU. LTU is one of the causes of persistent poverty and has implications for European societies and economies. The EU fights LTU mainly through the Europe 2020 strategy and the Social Investment Package; and more specifically by Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) and social policy measures implemented in the Member States (MSs).

Two approaches are principally applied to combat LTU: first, implementing actions that prevent people from becoming unemployed (and LTU), and; second, proactively assisting unemployed people in their (re-)integration process. In the latter approach, two main strands which tackle key dimensions of the problem have recently been discussed in the Employment Thematic Network.<sup>3</sup>

- *Risk profiling* of unemployed persons with a view to identifying those most at risk of LTU so that early preventative action can be taken; and
- *Outreach* activities to engage ‘hard to reach’ groups, who are either less likely to be registered with the Public Employment Service (PES) and thus primarily not eligible for ALMP services, or are at risk of becoming ‘inactive’ (Employment Thematic Network, 2017a).

This discussion paper *Tackling Long-Term Unemployment through Risk Profiling and Outreach* aims to provide up-to-date information to ESF Managing Authorities by presenting recent findings within these two strands, highlighting the key challenges faced when addressing LTU and discussing the pros and cons of the approaches implemented.

The discussion paper is structured as follows: following the introduction (chapter 1), chapter 2 describes recent risk profiling activities and research findings on these, while chapter 3 discusses the current state of outreach activities in the EU. Finally chapter 4 concludes by summarising the lessons learned and presents recommendations, especially for public administrations.

.....  
1 Economically active population aged 15 to 74 who are unemployed for more than 12 months

2 European Commission 2017a (Please note that data of Eurostat slightly differ: see [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa\\_upgan&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_upgan&lang=en))

3 <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/forums/employment>



## 2. RISK PROFILING

### 2.1 Why risk profiling?

Risk profiling is undertaken in several ways in MSs, mainly by Public Employment Services (PESs), to prevent LTU. Minimising the rate requires offering successful services to those most in need: *“European social and employment services have been transformed from universalistic objectives to schemes more targeted at socially disadvantaged people. This has been done in the name of ‘effectiveness’: to actively reach those in greatest need of help”* (Vanhercke et al., 2016:103). The high caseload of counsellors in many EU Member States has increased the need for risk profiling tools: *“It was found that the transition from soft to hard activation measures has prompted a stronger usage of beneficiaries’ profiling and filtering tools”* (Barnes et al., 2015:i).

Profiling can be understood as *“identifying those at most risk of becoming LTU. It compares the characteristics of individuals newly unemployed to those of the LTU to estimate their chances of getting a job, so that appropriate preventative measures through ALMP can be initiated to reduce the ‘flow’ of individuals into LTU”* (Employment Thematic Network, 2017a). It might however be desirable to broaden the definition of profiling according to Konle-Seidl (2011): profiling exceeds the mere identification and prevention of those at risk of being LTU but includes other purposes such as the matching of job advertisements with jobseekers. Profiling can thus be regarded as *a systematic (qualitative and/or quantitative) assessment of the individual employment potential to identify and implement the most appropriate services that help the client through the whole integration chain* (own definition; see also Konle-Seidl, 2011; Duell et al., 2016; Vodopivec et al., 2017). This definition encompasses various practices, ranging from solely qualitative, counsellor-based assessment to statistical profiling as well as mixed methods (see section 2.2 below).

Since profiling is a tool to categorise jobseekers according to their job-finding probability, we also need to consider that *“a numerical score, calculated on the basis of multivariate information (sometimes including variables assessed by PES staff judgement), determines the referral of a jobseeker to further employment*

*services”* (OECD, 2002). This implies that an ICT system (based on an algorithm and only occasionally accompanied by individual face-to-face assessments – see below) will decide on the “value” of a profile and, thus, on its subjects’ futures. In countries that implement statistical profiling methods, the allocation of measures depends on the profiling score; i.e. the profile determines the activation measures that follow. If people score “high” they are likely to be assigned to specific (ALMP and social policy) measures; if scores are “low”, individuals are classified as “work first” clients, and thus are not “in need” of specific measures for those most at risk. Loxha and Morgandi (2014) argue that profiling should enable PESs to segment jobseekers into groups with similar chances of work resumption, and in turn to determine their level of access to various levels of treatment. *“Indeed, most PES institutions use profiling systems that segment customers into categories based on their immediate employability, with those identified as comparatively less employable receiving additional guidance and support”* (Duell et al., 2016:57). Barnes et al., however, suggest that profiling models are still unable to deal with jobseekers with complex and multiple issues (2015:i).

Uses of profiling comprise the tackling of LTU (for jobseekers), job matching (e.g. self-service of clients, ICT-based platforms), and other uses, such as job advertisement (Konle-Seidl, 2011; Blázquez, 2014; Loxha and Morgandi, 2014). There is no single approach to implementing risk profiling in MSs. Rather, the types vary and there is inconsistency in the way they are named and categorised (Barnes et al., 2015:i; see section 2.2). However, profiling is typically used to segment jobseekers according to the level of assistance they are considered to need through 1) *diagnoses of individual strengths and weaknesses concerning personal action planning* (see Loxha and Morgandi, 2014); 2) *assessments of the risk of LTU among unemployed individuals and those about to become unemployed*; and 3) *targeting of appropriate services, measures and programmes considered most suitable to meet the requirements of their particular “profile” required to successfully achieve (re-) integration* (Blázquez, 2014; see also KPMG, 2014). Other uses of profiling comprise the following:

- Profiling tools can assist with *planning for and sequencing of interventions*. For policy-makers, they also

- serve as control instruments by making jobseeker assessment more standardised and by increasing coherence across PES and caseworker in the choice and sequencing of interventions (Loxha and Morgandi, 2014);
- The modernisation of the profiling/activation system is one way to *reduce the caseload of councilors* (Vodopivec et al., 2017). It seeks to construct a manageable set of client groups from a large heterogeneous group of jobseekers. Loxha and Morgandi (2014) note that the tool can be mainstreamed into the business process to systematise and rationalise some of the decisions that would otherwise be made by caseworkers, thus reducing the negotiation space between counsellors and jobseekers, cutting pre-interview time, and extending the most in-depth, time-consuming attention only to jobseekers at greatest risk of remaining unemployed.
- Profiling also can serve as *indicator for fiscal allocations* and as such can be used for *labour market monitoring* and *resource allocation processes* within PESs: “Although many PESs in OECD countries use the unemployment rate to decide fiscal allocations, profiling tools provide an instrument that analyses the distance from the labor market as a criterion to guide budget allocations” (Loxha and Morgandi, 2014:8);
- Finally, in Australia, profiling is used for *contracts with employment programme service providers*. Hence, profiling may also be used to *determine the rules of cooperation between the public and private labour*

*service providers*: the unemployed can receive support from such an employment market participant who is able to provide support aligned with their needs to the highest extent possible (KPMG, 2014).

An overview of the uses of jobseeker profiling in selected OECD countries is provided in table 1 below.

## 2.2 Approaches to risk profiling

EU countries have adopted risk profiling approaches at varying levels of sophistication. Three *main methodologies* can be distinguished (Campbell, 2017) although many PESs use elements of one or more of the following approaches:

1. an approach based on *individual handling of cases by caseworkers* (caseworker-based profiling);
2. the *rules-based approach* (allocation of jobseekers to ALMPs based on personal characteristics, such as age, gender, origin or the time spent on the unemployment register); and
3. profiling with the use of *administrative data/statistical data*.

The diversity of approaches applies not only to the overall set-up of *profiling systems* but also to their *purpose* and *use* (Loxha and Morgandi, 2014). Moreover, few PESs, such as those in Germany and France, follow a coherent and integrated strategy based on profiling, client segmentation

**Table 1: Uses of jobseeker profiling in selected OECD countries, 2013**

Use of profiling	Focus	Description
Diagnostics	Client segmentation	Profiling differentiates clients based on unemployment risk diagnostics
Targeting	Action plans and allocation to employment programmes	Prior diagnostic profiling results help the caseworker to define client needs and draft a mutually agreed employment action plan.
Resource allocation	Budget planning and policy controls	Profiling can help PES management plan fiscal resources based on severity of client profile, and inform PES management in aligning policy with resources based on setting and altering cut-off risk thresholds.
	ALMP contracts	Profiling can help PES caseworkers to contract out employment programmes to private sector providers.
Additional applications	Enrichment of labour market statistics and aggregate skills profiling	Profiling of jobseekers gathers information that can enrich labour market statistics which can be useful for understanding dynamic changes over time. Profiling can support efforts to conduct macro-level skills needs assessments based on aggregate skills profiling.
	Enhancement of job matching	Client profiles can support PES caseworkers to better match jobseekers with available vacancies through job crawling mechanisms.

Source: Loxha and Morgandi, 2014:8



and targeted resource allocation (Konle-Seidl, 2011). Most PESs apply administrative/statistical data-based systems and as such do not rely entirely on profiling systems: PES counsellors use “system profiles” to assist their decision-making.

Loxha and Morgandi (2014) reason that the levels of data availability and data processing on jobseekers (and the extent to which they influence assistance to a PES client) can explain the diversity in profiling systems. A review of experiences with profiling in seven countries (Australia, Germany, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States) does not show a clear trend, but rather diverging developments in relation to the intensity of using profiling and early intervention strategies (Konle-Seidl, 2011). Dynamic profiling, i.e. the regular follow-up of the labour market prospects of clients, however, is nowadays mainstream in many countries although evidence of accuracy is still missing (see below).

Loxha and Morgandi (2014) distinguish *four approaches* to profiling, which are characterised by distinct levels of caseworker discretion and the complexity of the information flow (see figure 1 below).

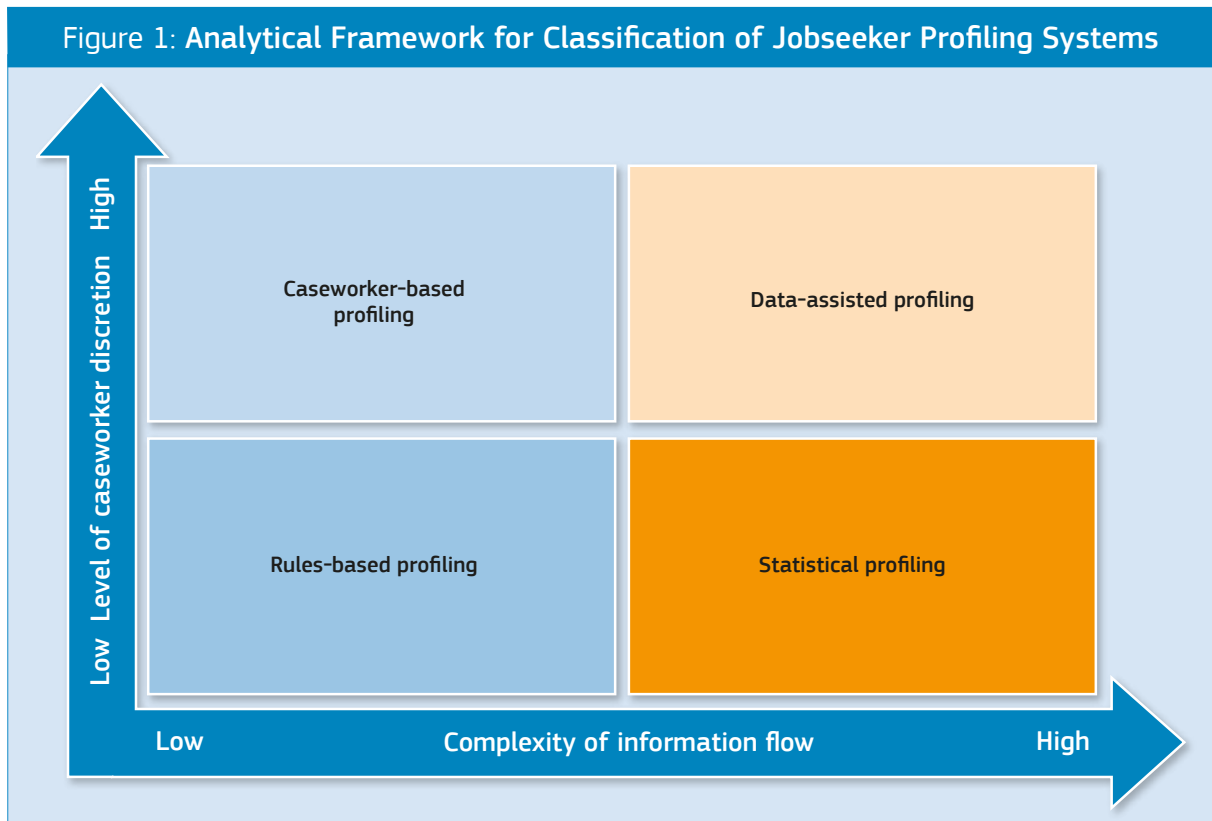
### Caseworker-based profiling

Here, caseworkers are solely responsible for the evaluation of jobseeker’s employment prospects. The chances of the unemployed finding a job and the determination of the appropriate measures is thus entirely the responsibility of the caseworker. The emphasis lies on qualitative methods (interviews). The profiling of LTU is mainly done through a questionnaire evaluating risk factors, such as personal and household characteristics, education/skills, work history, health status, locality and attitudes (see, for instance, Employment Thematic Network, 2017b).

The caseworker addresses a jobseeker’s specific needs and the approach is therefore entirely determined by their judgement. Caseworker-based profiling involves a high demand for human resources and is sometimes applied because limited availability of statistical information prevents individualised data-driven profiling. Konle-Seidl (2011), however, also argues that caseworkers are more efficient and less susceptible to discrimination when using systematic support instruments.

Denmark is an example of a country applying this approach.

Figure 1: Analytical Framework for Classification of Jobseeker Profiling Systems



Source: Loxha and Morgandi, 2014, p. 13



### Rules-based profiling

This approach can be applied with either time-based or demographic segmentation. Administrative rules determine the allocation of services in both cases: the threshold criterion in the time-based segmentation model for referral of jobseekers for services is length of unemployment spell, whereas eligibility conditions for employment programmes, such as age or gender, are used in demographic segmentation. As this approach relies on basic information it can easily be applied and is not cost-intensive. Time-based segmentation, however, does not take into account the heterogeneity of jobseekers in regard to their employment prospects and can produce considerable deadweight effects (i.e. deadweight costs by identifying clients who normally find work without or with minimal help from the PES; see, for instance, Konle-Seidl, 2011).

Countries applying rules-based profiling with time-based segmentation are, for instance, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Ireland (before its transformation into the PEX model; see section 2.6).

### Statistical profiling

This approach applies the purely statistical analysis of demographic and socio-economic data on jobseekers to predict their likelihood of finding a new post. Jobseekers are segmented based on their risks of remaining unemployed. The approach enables objective standardised assessments, which allow for an early identification of high-risk jobseekers. *“The primary uses of statistical profiling are to help PESs objectively determine (a) how long a registered unemployed person is likely to remain unemployed and (b) to differentiate the easy-to-place job seekers from the hard-to-place ones”* (Loxha and Morgandi, 2014:18). The feasibility of statistical profiling, however, depends strongly on the quality of available data. In addition, the set-up costs are high.

Statistical profiling enables PESs to deploy special interventions for high-risk cases before LTU manifests (Loxha and Morgandi, 2014). According to Barnes et al. (2015), statistical profiling is becoming more widely accepted and interest in its implementation is growing.

Countries applying this approach are the United States and Australia (see section 2.6).

### Data-assisted profiling

Here, caseworkers retain their significant role in customer segmentation but are supported by quantitative data

which they use for diagnostic purposes. The approach combines the advantages of caseworker-based and statistical profiling. The objectivity of caseworker assessment can be enhanced if used in combination with statistical profiling (Konle-Seidl 2011).

Countries applying data-assisted profiling are Sweden, Ireland (with its PEX model; see section 2.6) and Germany, which implements a four-phase PES model where caseworkers play a vital role in all phases (see section 2.6).

Research suggests that the role of the caseworker is a key success factor throughout the different profiling approaches. According to Barnes et al. (2015:ii) *“it is evident that whatever profiling methodology is implemented (statistical, soft, rules-based or a combination of methodologies) the caseworker plays a vital role; their support in developing, implementing, using, interpreting and understating the profiling methodology is key to its success.”* This is confirmed by Loxha and Morgandi (2014) who find that caseworkers are central to the functioning of many PESs in terms of both diagnostics and allocation of services.

Whilst qualitative profiling methods have predominantly been used in European countries, Loxha and Morgandi (2014:4) find that “quantitative methods that first developed in Australia and the United States are also being used extensively, with new trials being rolled out in a select number of European countries.” Konle-Seidl (2011) sees opposing developments: on the one hand, the recently established data-assisted profiling system in Ireland and a pilot in Sweden demonstrate that statistical profiling has still momentum. On the other hand, an opposing development can be observed in countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands which went back to using less refined methods of customer segmentation and service allocation after experimenting with statistical profiling tools. The Netherlands has the longest experience with profiling among European countries. In 1999, it introduced the ‘chance-meter’ as a statistical tool to determine jobseekers’ distance from the labour market. After the profiling system was evaluated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, it was replaced in 2007 by a classification of jobseekers into two groups, and in 2009, profiling per se was replaced by the WERKformule, a time-led strategy which does not segment clients but organises service delivery according to the length of the individual unemployment spell (Konle-Seidl, 2011). In all countries where profiling is in use, however, it is combined with other assessment methods, i.e.

qualitative interviews, and the final decision is usually the caseworker's (Konle-Seidl, 2011).

What can be seen in addition is that skills profiling, including soft skills assessment and appraisal, has begun to develop as part of PES profiling approaches. Bimrose and Barnes (2011) note: *"A clear consensus emerges from the literature relating to the need for more individualised, holistic approaches, especially for the most disadvantaged clients. At the heart of this type of approach are likely to be online tools that include soft skills assessments."* (Bimrose and Barnes, 2011:15). Again here, the PES practitioners, i.e. case managers, are the key factor. They thus need to be supplied with adequate knowledge and resources (training and know-how on chances and risks in applying soft skills assessments, time, caseload, etc.).

### 2.3 Benefits and challenges

Early intervention options and adapting approaches targeted to the needs of the unemployed, as well as the overall decrease in spells and periods of unemployment, are regarded as the main advantages of using profiling tools, together with cost savings and the reduction of the caseload of counsellors (Barnes et al., 2015; Vodopivec et al., 2017; see also section 2.1 above). Vodopivec et al. note that *"clearly, profiling is needed to categorise jobseekers so that scarce resources – employment services and participation in ALMPs – are allocated in the most efficient way and so that they best serve the hard-to-place jobseekers"* (2017:12). The Bertelsmann Stiftung (Duell et al., 2016), furthermore, sees advantages in improving programme quality and targeting. Similar statements are to be found in nearly all reports on profiling.

However scholars have also identified challenges concerning risk profiling: while the main aim of profiling is to assess the prospects of a jobseeker returning to the labour market, appropriate ALMPs need to be available to support the 'profiled' jobseeker. For countries with minimal ALMP measures, Barnes et al. (2015:i) conclude that the tool is not useful: *"Whilst the main aim of profiling is to assess the prospects of a jobseeker returning to the labour market, by identifying those that are most likely to benefit from early intervention, active labour market programmes and interventions need to be in place to support the 'profiled' jobseeker"*. For countries with strongly differentiated services on the other hand, profiling tools are complex, or as Loxha and Morgandi state: *"the bigger the scope of benefit*

*delivery (i.e. integrated social insurance and social assistance delivery mechanisms), the bigger the demand for more-complex profiling systems"* (2014:17).

This raises the question as to whether single institutions, such as PESs, can best provide individuals with necessary services to meet their needs at the local level unless the partner with other institutions. Indeed, comprehensive counselling and training measures, i.e. including support services in health, psychology, physiology, debt, drug addiction, probation services, etc., are often required to help those most in need. Organisations, such as some NGOs working in partnership with specifically trained staff, can also provide such services for these target groups. Thus, *partnerships between PESs and other service providers – together with enterprises and the many other actors – are helpful to best serve those most in need* (Scopetta, 2013). Step-by-step models and integration chains should therefore be developed jointly by all relevant local actors. Consequently, profiling those most at risk can only be a small first step in the overall integration process. This is confirmed by Barnes et al. who state that *"profiling needs to be part of an integrated and coordinated system to be useful"* (2015:ii). Regulations governing access to different PES services – including ALMPs – need to be sufficiently flexible to allow for profiling outcomes to influence resource allocation (Eichhorst et al., 2015). Moreover, multi-level governance mechanisms must be adapted: Loxha and Morgandi (2014) recommend that vertical integration of service delivery between local and national governance levels requires a unified profiling system. They argue that *"further vertical integration involving private providers only underscores the necessity for a non-discriminatory client view throughout the case management process"* (Loxha and Morgandi, 2014:17). The coincidence of Denmark's decision to abandon its statistical profiling system (Job Barometer) with decentralisation reforms allowing local PES offices greater autonomy supports this finding.

The reliability of information from profiling systems presents further challenges since much of this is based on the information provided by the jobseeker who may withhold or exaggerate key information, which will impact on the accuracy of profiling outcomes (Barnes et al., 2015). In addition, gender-related biases occur: Rigby and Sanchis (2006), for instance, point out that women tend to be disadvantaged when evaluating their skills and competences. This undervaluation contributes to the gender pay gap and

gender segregation in the labour market (Wuiame, 2017). Eichhorst et al. (2015), moreover, refer to transparency issues and request that lessons regarding the alignment between labour market policy design and implementation rules must be drawn and shared. Thus, data security issues need to be resolved. Some scholars even see a potential violation of the right to protect personal data and social rights (Niklas, 2017). The logic behind the profiling and the algorithm itself are considered confidential in most cases and thus are not shared with the individual. Although the sharing of information with clients may also be delicate (Employment Thematic Network, 2017b), a jobseeker does not know how certain individual features or life circumstances affect his or her chance of being assigned to a given category (Niklas, 2017). Hidden or non-communicated information may, in addition, disturb confidence between the caseworkers and the client. The relationship which should be built on mutual trust can thus be jeopardised.

Eichhorst et al. (2015), further warn that the right balance between “man and machine” in profiling and determining resulting resource allocation still needs to be found. Consequently, counsellors should be involved in the development (planning, design and piloting) of (statistical) profiling systems and decision-making concerning resource allocation. Niklas (2017) also criticises the automation of results and the very limited possibility to change the profile a computer has generated (lack of safeguards) and stresses the need for “*reasoned decisions made by humans instead of “blind” algorithms*” (2017:1). International agreements, such as the European Social Charter, establish that every human has a right to work, which includes the right to benefit from social welfare services (Council of Europe, 2015). “*Previously, the rules and criteria for granting welfare aid were always codified in law. For example, only people of certain age or in specific life situation could request a specific type of support. Profiling changed this model in a radical way. Now it is no longer a piece of legislation, but the rules of IT system – and their creators – that decide who will receive assistance and who will not*” (Niklas, 2017:3).

Consequently, profiling can lead to discrimination since it can be argued that the very categorisation of people as a method of social sorting generates the perception that some people are better or worse than others (Niklas et al., 2015). However, conversely, Konle-Seidl (2011) notes that using diagnostic tools such as statistical profiling models can objectify the assignment process. It is argued that if caseworkers rely only on their own experience,

they tend to use ad hoc criteria for their decisions, which could lead to discrimination. Lipp states that the approach applied in Australia before the establishment of a profiling system “*did not adequately discriminate between members of a target group according to their labour market disadvantage. This is because the members of any target group are not homogeneous in terms of the risk of becoming long term unemployed with other characteristics such as age, educational qualification, gender, location, motivation etc. also being important risk factors*” (2005:3). Barnes et al. (2015), furthermore, argue that the selection of variables to integrate into profiling tools raises ethical issues. “*While there is a growing trend toward the personalisation of service risks this can clash with the principle of equality of treatment in provision of public employment services*” (Barnes et al., 2015:ii). A segmentation of “market clients” and those most at risk, however, is in place in many countries such as Germany, with eligibility criteria applied to determine participation in specific programmes (see Schneider et al., 2011). Even in countries with less refined methods of customer segmentation and service allocation than in previous years such as in Denmark and in the Netherlands, segmentation takes place through “*making customers queue for services (“queuing”) according to the duration of unemployment in conjunction with mandatory activation and a clear “work-first” policy*”, as stated by Konle-Seidl (2011:16). Notwithstanding this, false attributions can occur. This raises ethical questions such as ‘what happens to those ‘wrongly’ identified?’ And ‘what about those not identified?’

In summary, while profiling has advantages as well as disadvantages, many questions remain unanswered: although there is an emerging trend to use algorithms to forecast situations, ethical and data security issues need to be solved. The role of PES counsellors and caseworkers within any profiling and follow-up action, nevertheless, is key in regard to discretion, ownership, trust, and their abilities, capacities and skills.

## 2.4 Predictive factors

What are the predictive factors identifying those most at risk? In addition to information on personal characteristics (e.g. age, gender, country of origin, first language) and household characteristics (e.g. marital status, workless households), information on education and skills is gathered for profiling purposes. Furthermore, information

is collected on a jobseeker's work history (e.g. recent unemployment spells, previous occupation), health status (e.g. disability, drug/alcohol use, mental health) and locality (e.g. transport access, local labour market conditions) as well as attitudes to job search and work.

Eichhorst et al. stress that *“approaches to profiling should progress towards more holistic profiling methods, moving away from simply gathering information about a jobseeker's work experience and formal qualification to information on his/her generic and soft skills”* (2015:18). Generally, countries heavily depend on the availability and processing of data, especially econometric data, the availability of which is considered the crucial factor in determining the profiling approach used (Loxha and Morgandi, 2014).

While few countries use soft skills as predictors, a systematic approach to including soft factors in their assessment practice can be seen (Konle-Seidl, 2011). Within the Australian system for instance, an attitudinal segmentation model is used to distribute jobseeker clients to employment support provider organisations. The intention is to allocate equal numbers of clients with specific degrees of motivation and openness in relation to job search (see section 2.6). In Germany too, a software-guided assessment of clients' potential underpinned by databases on personal and social skills is applied (see section 2.6; see Konle-Seidl, 2011). The Dutch “Work Profiler” also includes a variety of soft factors such as views on return to work, feeling too ill to work, job search behaviour (e.g. contact with employers), job search intention, external variable attribution, general work ability, physical work ability and mental work ability (Wijnhoven and Havinga, 2014).

Nonetheless, what happens to those most at risk and predicted to become LTU? Are they simply ‘parked’ as they will have difficulties in breaking the cycle of LTU? And is there any evidence that captures the possible efficiency gains of profiling and early intervention? The following section investigates these issues in more detail.

## 2.5 Added value

While in most countries caseworkers play a vital role in the profiling process, it should ultimately be of value to individuals, PESs and their partners, government and labour market operation in general. It is suggested that profiling as an early intervention measure helps to determine measures targeted to the needs of individuals to prevent further problems. The

focus on early interventions is important in terms of both employment programme cost-effectiveness and overall fiscal savings from a likely reduction in benefit payments (Loxha and Morgandi, 2014). The Employment Thematic Network cautions that profiling should be done before people become LTU, and not when they are already LTU (Employment Thematic Network, 2017b). But is there any evidence regarding the effectiveness of profiling systems?

Barnes et al. note that there is a *“significant gap in evidence concerning the effectiveness of profiling and targeting support and resources using this process and the overall effectiveness of creating sustainable employment”* (2015:vii). Konle-Seidl (2011) also states that few impact studies have tried to quantify the possible efficiency gains of profiling and early intervention so far. There is, however, some evidence that caseworkers are less effective without systematic support instruments (Lechner and Smith, 2005). Loxha and Morgandi also stress evaluation needs: *“Finally, the implementation of profiling tools engenders the need for evaluation of the effectiveness as activation programs for specific types of clients”* (2014:5). Furthermore, evidence from EU Member States raises concerns about the accuracy of profiling tools (Barnes et al., 2015).

There seems to be a general evidence gap in all countries with respect to the impact of different service delivery systems on on/off-flow rates from unemployment or benefit receipt (Konle-Seidl, 2011). Regarding evaluations of the established and well-developed international profiling tools, Barnes et al. (2015) note that cost savings and reduction in periods of unemployment have been evidenced. Still, Eichhorst et al. (2015) point out the need for longer-term testing and evaluation to determine the costs, benefits and reliability of profiling tools. Loxha and Morgandi (2014:5) conclude that while *“profiling aids PESs in the identification of customer segments, they cannot alone inform what programs are most cost-effective to maximise reemployment prospects. Leadership on this front requires discussion and evaluation of the most-effective activation strategies for each profile group.”*

While case studies suggest that with the help of profiling LTU can be predicted with an accuracy ranging between 70% (Wijnhoven et al., 2014; Employment Thematic Network, 2017b; Soukup, 2011) and 90% (Riipinen, 2011), there are still problems encountered referring to the low usage of the tools by counsellors

(Riipinen, 2011; Kureková, 2014, Duell et al., 2010). Thus, training for PES staff needs to be provided: The Employment Thematic Network (2017b) urges that capacity and resources be found to train PES staff to carry out profiling. Also, Eichhorst et al. (2015) stress the requirement for better training of PES staff to increase buy in and optimise the outcomes of profiling tools. Konle-Seidl (2011) states that although it is generally acknowledged that profiling provides a systematic framework for caseworkers, no reliable information is available as to whether caseworkers really use profiling tools adequately.

Blázquez (2014) sees a methodological challenge in measuring the impact of profiling and matching on PES efficiency and suggests the use of quantitatively based cost-benefit analysis tools. With respect to evaluation, Barnes et al. (2015) advise on the need to consider the respective aims and objectives behind the profiling tools when assessing their efficacy in different countries. Thus, a holistic approach, also including the costs of setting up the services, should be followed. The development costs for the ‘Virtual Labour Market Platform’ in Germany and its so-called ‘four phase model’ of re-integration, which includes profiling as one phase, amounted to €165 million (GHK, 2011) and involved up to 250 people in 2003-2006.

Finally, it goes without saying that statistical profiling tools do not identify the appropriate activation measure (Duell et al., 2016): *“So, while the profiling tool may help identify those most at risk of long-term unemployment, this does not equate to the same as providing jobseekers with the appropriate levels of assistance to help them into employment”* (Barnes et al., 2015:66). Thus it is up to the caseworkers to decide on the most appropriate set of measures to be taken. Subsequently, activation measures need to be included in the evaluation.

To summarise, evidence regarding the effectiveness and accuracy of profiling tools is generally absent, which highlights a need to build an evidence base with respect to the various profiling systems applied in EU countries.

## 2.6 Case descriptions

This section aims to demonstrate the key features of selected approaches applied in EU countries and beyond, and

includes examples presented by members of the Employment Thematic Network and their discussions during the 5th Employment Thematic Network meeting (19-20 April 2017, Brussels).

Profiling examples from members of the Employment Thematic Network include the following (Employment Thematic Network 2017b):

- The Autonomous Province of Trento employs a profiling system that is based on an employability questionnaire consisting of 44 questions divided into 7 sections: social and personal profile, professional background and matchability, desired qualifications, job-searching attitude, personal barriers, self-efficacy and evaluation. The result of the profiling is, first, the employability index, which rates the client’s employability on a scale of 1 (very low employment chance) to 4 (very high); and, second, a customised employment agreement;
- Another example is practised by the VDAB, the Flemish Public Employment Service, in Mechelen: VDAB is in the process of developing an online system that will provide information on how long a person will be unemployed. The objective of this model is to offer precise recommendations to counsellors on which skills a jobseeker should develop in order to raise his/her chances of employment. The model groups people into specific clusters and predicts for how long the person will be unemployed and what kind of variables are important for a person to get a job in the desired occupation.

Four distinct profiling approaches are presented in the following, which specify two of the cases outlined in section 2.2:

- the data-assisted profiling system (exemplified by the so-called PEX model in Ireland; see table 2 below);
- the “4 Phase Model” in Germany (see table 3 below); and
- the statistical profiling approach, demonstrated by the Australian “Jobseeker Classification Instrument” (see table 4 below).



Table 2: **PEX (Probability of Exit tool)**

<b>Country</b>	Ireland
<b>Type</b>	<i>Data-assisted profiling system</i>
<b>Rationale</b>	Ireland introduced the PEX system in 2012 as a reaction to the post-2008 increase in unemployment, to reduce the number of individuals incorrectly identified for intervention by the rules-based approach previously used and to save government resources. Profiling with the PEX model provides the possibility to identify jobseekers with a high likelihood of remaining LTU who can thus immediately be allocated to re-employment services (O'Connell et al., 2012).
<b>Time</b>	The PEX model has been in place since 2012.
<b>Stakeholders involved by applying the approach</b>	The stakeholders comprise the Department of Social Protection (DSP) as the authority responsible for the provision of income support, job placement and job matching and the design and supervision of ALMPs, the National Employment and Entitlement Service (Intreo) as a service provider that integrates the provision of income support, job matching and job placement, and the design and supervision of ALMPs as a one-stop shop service centres subordinated to the DSP, the jobseekers who are profiled and caseworkers.
<b>Specificities of the approach</b>	Upon registration, Intreo clients are asked to fill in a <i>mandatory</i> profiling questionnaire for their benefit claim to be processed. Based on the client's answers a PEX score is calculated. The model considers <i>gender</i> -related differences of certain variables (a male or a female model is applied to calculate the PEX score). Based on the PEX score clients are segmented into <i>three engagement paths</i> (see Barnes et al., 2015; Loxha and Morgandi, 2014) according to their risk level (low-risk LTU (who make up approximately 20% of client base), medium-risk jobseekers (60%) and high-risk jobseekers (20%)). The <i>PEX score combined with the caseworker's assessment</i> determines the outcome for clients which is either provision of immediate interventions, referral to personal development measures (i.e. vocational training) or assistance to match jobseekers with employers (Loxha and Morgandi, 2014).
<b>Impact</b>	Whilst Layte and O'Connell (2005) estimated possible yearly savings of about €60 million in a pilot study for the development of the model, the DSP reports yearly savings of €73 million through targeting newly-registered jobseekers most in need of early intervention and reinforced support (Barnes et al., 2015). No information is available on the efficiency or the impact of the profiling model.
<b>Challenges</b>	The resulting PEX score does not serve to facilitate a better match between the characteristics of the jobseeker and the services offered by the PES, but is only used to determine the client's engagement path (Barnes et al., 2015). Further on DSP and Intreo officers are currently using different IT systems which do not allow Intreo officers to access the exact PEX score of a client but only his/her engagement path (Barnes et al., 2015)

Table 3: **Profiling as a step within the 4 Phase Model**

<b>Country</b>	Germany
<b>Type</b>	<i>Data-assisted profiling system</i>
<b>Rationale</b>	As part of the so called Hartz Reforms (2003-2005), which were a reaction to high rates of unemployment, a profiling system was introduced in Germany. The results are used to diagnose a jobseeker's distance from the labour market and to identify individual support needs by segmenting customers into different support profiles that determine the allocation of resources and serve as an input for the computer-assisted matching of jobseekers to job vacancies (Arnkil et al., 2007; Barnes et al., 2015; Eichhorst et al. 2006).
<b>Time</b>	Profiling in Germany has been in place since 2005.
<b>Stakeholders involved by applying the approach</b>	The stakeholders involved are the German employment agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) as the authority responsible for the provision of unemployment benefits, job matching and the provision of ALMPs in the first year of unemployment, the Jobcenter to which jobseekers are referred after 12 months of unemployment, the caseworker responsible for a jobseeker and the jobseeker him or herself.
<b>Specificities of the approach</b>	Jobseekers are obliged to register with the PES as soon as <i>unemployment is foreseeable</i> (Eichhorst et al., 2006). During an intake interview an analysis of the jobseeker's strengths and potentials is undertaken, based on which a profile is created in the internal VerBIS software. Alongside the core personal components (qualification, capacity and motivation) and the core environmental components (circumstances and labour market conditions) jobseekers are segmented into <i>six client profiles</i> . These are market profiles (job-ready clients), activation profiles, promotion profiles, development profiles, stabilisation profiles and support profiles ("most at risk"). The software suggests several ALMP programmes for the client which are then <i>reviewed by the caseworker and the client</i> (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2013).
<b>Impact</b>	Transparency has been increased through the use of a standardised procedure. Furthermore, the introduction of the software has made it easier to share information on cases. Customer satisfaction scores have also increased since the introduction of the 4 Phase Model (European Commission, 2017c; Konle-Seidl, 2011). No information is available on the efficiency or the impact of the profiling model.
<b>Challenges</b>	While Konle-Seidl (2011) remarks that caseworkers tend to feel insecure about data protection and criticise a lack of flexibility in the model when dealing with complex cases, Tergeist and Grubb (2006) as well as Mosley (2010) criticise a tendency for hard-to-place jobseekers to be excluded from counselling and reintegration services.

Table 4: *Jobseeker Classification Instrument (JSCI)*

<b>Country</b>	Australia
<b>Type</b>	<i>Statistical profiling system</i>
<b>Rationale</b>	The JSCI was introduced to create the potential of avoiding the costs of LTU by early identification of those most at risk of becoming LTU. Profiling should also help to allocate the most expensive form of assistance to the most disadvantaged jobseekers and minimise deadweight by better targeting employment assistance to the needs of jobseekers (Lipp, 2005).
<b>Time</b>	Since its introduction in 1998, the JSCI has been subject to continuous reviews. The model described here has been in place since 2015.
<b>Stakeholders involved by applying the approach</b>	The Department of Jobs and Small Business as the authority responsible for the provision of income support and the design and implementation of activation policies, Centrelink (Department of Human Services) as an organ subordinated to the Department of Jobs and Small Business integrating the provision of income support and administering the JSCI, several employment services providers that jobseekers are referred to after their assessment, caseworkers at Centrelink and jobseekers themselves are among the stakeholders involved (OECD, 2012).
<b>Specificities of the approach</b>	The JSCI is conducted via a questionnaire that jobseekers answer upon registration with Centrelink. Based on the jobseekers' answers a JSCI score is calculated which is used to categorise jobseekers into <i>three different streams</i> (see Australian Government, 2014). These are job-ready persons (stream A), persons who receive support via case management and service provision (stream B) and persons who receive intensive support via case management and service provision (stream C). If the JSCI identifies serious barriers, clients may be further assessed through an <i>Employment Services Assessment</i> to determine whether they should be referred to stream C or to a specific <i>Disability Employment Services provider</i> . Jobseekers are also <i>reassessed</i> and may be upgraded to a higher stream of assistance if they remain unemployed after 12 months (OECD, 2012; OECD, 2016).
<b>Impact</b>	Centrelink reports that it exceeds its 95% accuracy target with the JSCI (Finn, 2011). No information is available on the efficiency or the impact of the profiling model.
<b>Challenges</b>	Since Centrelink is not only responsible for conducting the JSCI but also for administering income support payments, Caswell et al. (2010) remark that jobseekers may not disclose relevant information (e.g. drug addiction) which may result in misclassification. In addition, employability within a certain JSCI score can vary considerably (OECD, 2012) which can be explained by the non-capture of factors such as motivation, language, literacy, numeracy or the level of a jobseeker's IT or digital skills (Barnes et al., 2015; OECD, 2012). Furthermore, the OECD (2001) reveals that the JSCI scores do not provide an individual assessment of the jobseeker's needs. McDonald and Marston (2006) note that since the introduction of the JSCI many front-line workers show discontent with an increased workload and an undesired shift towards administrative casework.

Other practices that can be recommended for further investigation comprise the “Work Profiler” in the Netherlands, the “counsellor-based” profiling in Slovenia and the “SOMS – Service and Outcome Measurement System” in Canada (see Barnes et al., 2015; Wijnhoven and Havinga, 2014; Konle-Seidl, 2011; Vodopivec et al., 2017).

The discussions held by the members of the ESF Employment Thematic Network at its 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting (19–20 April 2017, Brussels) resulted in the following conclusions:

- **Value of profiling:**
  - Though profiling of employees may be useful to prevent LTU, profiling can turn out to be useless where there is a shortage of job-offers; and
  - Profiling can be useful for those who are at risk of LTU (but not for everybody) and can be

valuable if PESs are modernised and are offering tailored services.

- **ESF usage and improvement of effectiveness:**
  - Employment Thematic Network members see a need to train PES staff and build the capacity of PESs to test and pilot profiling, as well as for awareness-raising campaigns to promote the implementation and benefits of profiling;
  - Twinning projects are envisaged for those PESs with and without profiling practices within ESF transnational projects; and
  - The standardisation of profiling questionnaires could be achieved through an ESF transnational project.

To conclude, jobseekers are profiled in most countries. While EU countries use statistical profiling to facilitate qualitative assessment, there are examples of non-Eu-



ropean countries (e.g. the USA) which base the provision of ALMP solely on statistical profiling outcomes: *“the US profiling system where “hard” (statistical) profiling is compulsory for caseworkers and where the results of statistical profiling are the only factor that determines whether a client has to be transferred to further re-employment support.”* (Konle-Seidl 2011:i). As evidence on the efficiency of the profiling models is extremely limited, and given that caseworkers are central to the functioning

of many EU PESs in terms of both diagnostics and allocation of services, statistical profiling of those at risk can consequently only be recommended as a complementary practice to support caseworker assessment. Considering the existing budgetary restrictions and the remarkably high set-up costs of profiling systems, a balance needs to be found since risk profiling only constitutes a small step part of the overall employment integration process.



## 3. OUTREACH

### 3.1 Why outreach?

Outreach refers to the identification of and engagement with people who are not registered for support from a public service provider. This activity is essential since “many people do not receive the social services to which they are entitled” (Eurofound, 2015:1).<sup>4</sup> Counteracting the non-take-up of services is a critical issue for PESs since the risk that a benefit misses its purpose is particularly high if a substantial proportion of the people entitled to it are not reached. For individuals within vulnerable groups, non-take-up of benefits can largely be explained by a varying mix of the following reasons: 1) lack of awareness or misperceptions about entitlement or application procedures; 2) complexity of the application procedure or lack of resources such as time and capabilities to navigate the system; and 3) stigma, perceived lack of need, pride and lack of trust in institutions (Eurofound, 2015). A Dutch case described in a Eurofound study (2015) highlights that non-take-up was mostly explained by people not knowing about the existence of the benefit (47%), assuming they were not entitled (17%), or feeling unable to apply by themselves (16%). Similar numbers are to be expected in other countries, too.

Andersson (2013:185) notes that outreach work is aimed at “creating relations to target groups whose needs are not met and generating workable connections to support systems”. Other scholars confirm that the principal aim of outreach work is to establish contact with marginalised groups (Mikkonen et al., 2007). Often NGOs or other service providers such as municipalities and community organisations are the key players in welfare-to-work outreach service provision (mainly sub-contracted by the PES). Services differ from PES offers in various respects: they are usually provided in areas close to the core client group, and customers are not mandated to participate and thus encounter no sanctions if they opt not to do so (Dewson et al., 2006). With the scope of activities and types of services differing significantly from mainstream service provision, outreach can be used to deliver welfare-to-work services

<sup>4</sup> According to a Eurofound Study, which looked at the non-take-up of social benefits on a broad scale, the majority of even the most conservative estimates of non-take-up are above 40%, for the non-take-up of monetary social benefits in 16 Member States since 2000, suggesting that the phenomenon is far from marginal (Eurofound, 2015).

in more informal and relaxed surroundings to meet the specific needs of its customers (Dewson et al., 2006).

The target group of outreach work is characterised by its heterogeneity and can comprise ex-offenders; refugees, asylum seekers and migrants; ethnic minorities; rough sleepers and other groups of homeless people; people with mental health and substance misuse problems; people with disabilities (physical or learning); young disaffected people and people with few or no formal qualifications; as well as people in geographically isolated areas (Dewson et al., 2006). Specific attention should also be paid to the gender aspects since the inactivity rate of women is higher than for men: 49% of women with low qualifications (27% men), 26% for women with medium qualifications (15% men) and 14% of women with high qualifications (7% of men).<sup>5</sup> Reasons are varied and not differentiated by gender except for care responsibilities. In the latter respect, attention to existing affordable services is a key aspect as they can reinforce inactivity or facilitate reintegration in the labour market (Wuiame, 2017). The specific approach of outreach work should therefore vary according to the characteristics of the target group.

In general, outreach work can be defined as a “*contact-making and resource-mediating social activity, performed in surroundings and situations that the outreach worker does not control or organise, and targeted at individuals and groups who otherwise are hard to reach and who need easy accessible linkage to support*” (Andersson, 2013:68). The term ‘outreach’ within the PES context principally involves identifying and engaging unregistered customers, taking labour market integration services out of their standard settings, and then tailoring and providing them ‘closer’ to the targeted people, i.e., in local communities, schools or one-stop-shop or mobile settings (European Commission, 2015b). According to Dewson et al. (2006) ‘outreach’, however, is a term which is rarely defined. It applies to many policy fields, including social work and education and health services, and essentially entails services being taken out of their normative and mainstream institutional settings and instead provided in local community settings. In addition to the above-mentioned

<sup>5</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender, skills and precarious work in the EU*, op. cit.

characteristics, Dewson et al. suggest that “outreach services may also be defined as those that draw on partnerships and networks with other service providers to deliver and promote welfare-to-work services in local communities” (2006:2). Green and Hasluck also confirm that while no single model of successful intervention to reduce worklessness has been identified, “outreach provision embedded in the local community to facilitate initial engagement” (2009:28), plays a significant role.

### 3.2 Characteristics of outreach work

The scope and reach of PESs’ outreach work varies across countries with the specific country contexts explaining some of these differences. Effective outreach work is declared as a key area for early activation in Council Recommendation 2013 (European Commission, 2015a).

Within outreach activities practiced in the EU, young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) are an important target group (e.g. European Commission, 2015b). A study on PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs notes: “Some PES see it being a practice of identifying the most vulnerable young adults and building relationships with them while others regard it as a more detached and strategic level practice of raising the profile of mainstream PES and other youth services and informing larger numbers of young people of the provision and help that is available to them” (European Commission, 2015b:2f). In addition, the Youth Employment Thematic

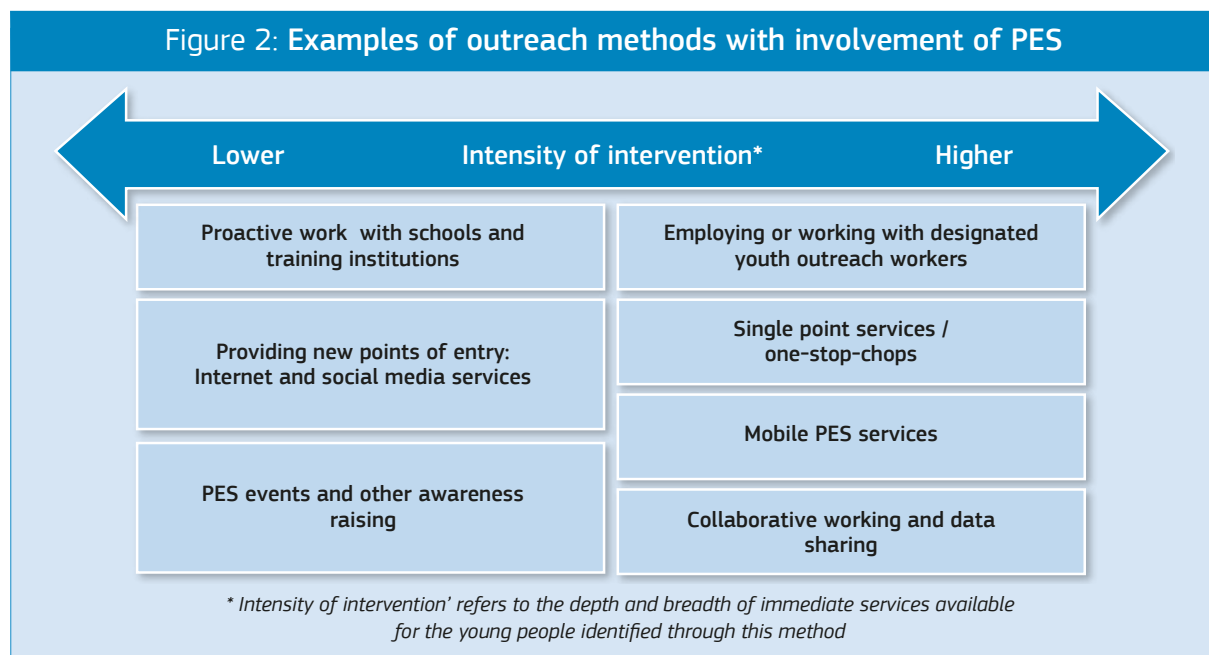
Network, a partner network in ESF transnational cooperation, is currently surveying outreach practices for youth. To avoid overlaps, we present, where possible, findings from other target groups in the following sections.

Still, although *different outreach methods* are practised in which PESs are involved either directly or indirectly (see figure 2 below) there seems to be no clear trend of PES involvement in the different models of delivery (European Commission, 2015b).

The *type of services* provided on an outreach basis include: regular one-to-one meetings with key workers or personal advisers; advice on in-work benefits and tax credits; overcoming barriers to work; referrals to other agencies; help with job search and CV preparation; helping with the costs of childcare and transport; and ongoing in-work support (Dewson et al., 2006). Andersson (2013) identifies contact making, initiating social change processes and providing social support to keep these processes going as the three main tasks of outreach work. According to Sissons et al. (2010) outreach work can include multilingual workers, door-knocking, going out to venues frequented by target groups, which may include mosques, libraries and shopping centres.<sup>6</sup> McGivney provides a *typology of outreach provision* and distinguishes between:

1. the *satellite model*: establishing standalone, separate

<sup>6</sup> Outreach activities should be organised in different settings for men and women (e.g. men are more likely to be found at football matches than women).



Source: European Commission, 2015b, p. 3

outreach centres for delivering services in community locations;

2. the *peripatetic model*: delivering services in other organisational settings such as hostels, community centres, GP surgeries, housing offices, etc.;
3. the *detached outreach model*: contacting people outside agency or organisational settings, for example, in streets, shopping centres, pubs, at school gates, etc.; and
4. the *domiciliary outreach model*: visiting people in their own homes (in: Dewson et al. 2006:22).

According to the European Commission (2015a) effective (youth) outreach is often based on the following *principles*:

- 1) Outreach work is non-judgmental – it can be used no matter what problems a person is experiencing, and outreach workers have an ‘open mind’;
- 2) Outreach work is open to all people, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity or economic background;
- and 3) Outreach work is flexible to the targeted people – it is located where they are, and takes place at times that suit them.

An outreach worker requires *specific skills* to perform successfully: since the main aim of outreach services is social inclusion and moving people into work, outreach workers need to have a knowledge of both harder-to-reach customers and issues related to the local labour market and in-work benefits (Bell and Casebourne, 2008). Outreach workers must consistently deal with contingent and open-ended situations. This calls for creative and committed solutions and contributes to the aura of engagement and artistry that encircles the method (Andersson, 2013). Andersson distinguishes at least two categories of skills required: first, outreach workers “*must have skills to initiate and maintain communication also under conditions that do not stimulate reciprocity and relational actions. The other is about spatial orientation; they must know about local meeting places, group movements, and how to bring about desired encounters*” (2013:175–176). Since linking people to other resources is common, outreach workers need an extensive network of contacts. The European Commission (2015b) confirms that working in a network arrangement with trained outreach workers and community organisations with links to the target groups appears to contribute to a successful strategy. Green and Hasluck also state that “*informal networks play a key role in initial engagement, and, more generally, social networks are important in influencing attitudes towards take up of jobs or training opportunities*” (2009:32). Mikkonen et al. (2007) emphasise the ‘often unreachable’ qualities that an outreach worker requires,

mention that depending on the client group it is important to have representatives of different ethnic groups among outreach workers, and consider gender sensitivity another critical issue in the composition of a team of outreach workers.

There is consensus amongst practitioners and scholars that outreach services should be offered in places where target groups or customers feel comfortable i.e. close to where they live and gather, close to where they spend time and in a familiar environment where people feel comfortable (see community orientation in section 3.1; Dewson et al., 2006; Mikkonen et al., 2007; Andersson, 2013). Outreach activities aiming at engaging new customers include leaflets and newsletters, billboard and bus advertising, stalls and displays in local venues (e.g. libraries, community centres, markets), marketing products and ‘goodies’ as well as open days and sponsored events. These products and events are used to maintain the profile of services and to encourage customers to take up (outreach) service provision (Dewson et al., 2006). But what are the benefits and challenges in implementing these outreach activities? The following section aims to provide some answers in this respect.

### 3.3 Benefits and challenges

Outreach, together with case management, the creation of individual action plans and mentorship, is widely recognised as a good practice for improving the effectiveness of activation measures (Duell et al., 2016). Many PESs, however, have not set up outreach services in their local communities. The European Commission (2015b) confirms that few PESs are involved in longer-term financially backed outreach services as primary providers. Such services however offer a special potential since services delivered in the community are perceived to be provided by and for the community and are thus well received by the target group (Dewson et al., 2006).

Amongst factors contributing to the lack of a widespread outreach offers are unclear responsibilities: outreach is often not seen as the specific task of the PES. Also, political priorities as well as resources and institutional arrangements related to PES registration and activation play a key role in determining the modalities of outreach work (European Commission, 2016). A further challenge for PESs is the target group’s detachment from the labour market and the mostly low level of qualifications. Outreach work thus tends to be resource intensive and require new organisational and institutional arrangements. These comprise

new delivery models and the setting up of new cooperation structures and partnerships to make best use of the strengths of each partner in a partnership, as suggested in the European Network of PESs: *“Working in a network arrangement with trained outreach workers or with youth and community organisations with links to the target groups, appears to contribute to a successful strategy”* (European Commission, 2015b:11).

The Action Teams set up in the United Kingdom PES Jobcentre Plus are reported to have been very effective in reaching their target groups and making links with partners in the community. Community engagement through outreach was seen to give added value in a number of ways: by engaging people that Jobcentre Plus might not otherwise be able to reach through mainstream services; by engaging those furthest from the labour market; by being able to serve ‘unserved communities’ and areas of ‘high worklessness’; by bringing mainstream services closer to the customer; by engaging those who did not like the jobcentre environment or who were disillusioned with Jobcentre Plus (Casebourne et al., 2006). Most Action Teams for Jobs stressed the importance of being recognised as separate from the PES offices. The majority of these were in outreach sites in target group districts (i.e. areas with high minority populations) or in mobile units that allowed them to visit locally targeted sites where they provided outreach services in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors (Casebourne et al., 2006). Outreach services were thus provided in regular sessions (with the mobile units) as well as at stationary permanent locations (at outreach sites). Especially for sessional activities, timing is found to be a crucial factor. Casebourne et al. (2006:38) suggest that offering outreach sessions early in the morning was not sensible since the members of the target group are *“not always up at that time”*.

The informal context in which outreach services are offered, together with their flexibility and the possibility of spending longer periods of time with a client offered by the considerably lower target orientation of outreach services as compared to mainstream offers, are agreed on as the key strengths of outreach work (Dewson et al., 2006; Bell and Casebourne, 2008). Scholars, however, also identify several challenges and constraints regarding the successful implementation of outreach services. Necessary IT connections, hardware and connections with the labour market system are, for instance, reported as constraints by Casebourne et al. (2006). Furthermore, in the United Kingdom

securing outreach premises was stated as the next biggest constraint. Others comprise the absence of clear goals and lack of support from mainstream organisations, insufficient capacity and/or funds to deliver, outcome-related funding pressures which encourage ‘creaming’, and difficulties in working in partnership with other (local) agencies (Dewson et al., 2006). Dewson et al. (2006) moreover argue that the effectiveness of outreach is difficult to quantify as outreach activities mostly target hard-to-reach groups which may need time to build up trust before engaging in mainstream services. Furthermore, outreach activities are often innovative and experimental and thus outcomes may not be immediately visible. Mikkonen et al. (2007) also describe difficulties in quantifying the results of outreach work in a way that can be understood by decision-makers and funding sources.

Outreach work is thus a professional activity where personal qualities are engaged in certain ways (Andersson, 2013). Since research has found that outreach services can be an effective means of engaging traditionally hard-to-reach groups, including refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and ethnic minorities (Bell and Casebourne, 2008), the Work and Pensions Select Committee (2007) report on government employment strategy highlighted the importance of community outreach in engaging ethnic minorities. It suggested that employment services are most effective when delivered locally in places which ethnic minority groups are already familiar with using. Bell and Casebourne (2008) also state that effectiveness is found in providing specialist advice, increasing benefit take-up and attracting non-traditional customers to welfare-to-work services. Nevertheless, Bell and Casebourne (2008:43) state that *“there needs to be a full and systematic review of how well outreach services work in achieving outcomes in comparison with mainstream services”*.

### 3.4 Case descriptions

This section points out key characteristics of selected approaches applied in EU countries and describes specific approaches implemented by Employment Thematic Network members.

The Young Scot Initiative presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Employment Thematic Network (19-20 April 2017, Brussels) is an example of the ‘Co-design model’ through which young people are participating in improving services and policies. Its strategy is based on three interrelated aspects – activate,

connect and empower – which is transferred to various activities and practices: website, campaigns, Digital Academy (the Digital Creative Modern Apprenticeship Programme), the Young Scots Award, e-voting initiative, transport discounts, etc. (Employment Thematic Network, 2017b).

As mentioned in section 3.1, outreach services are often provided by actors other than the PES (i.e. NGOs, municipalities or community organisations), who have often not established their own outreach offers on a local geographical level. This is illustrated by presenting one example of an outreach offer provided by an NGO in Spain. Here, outreach is considered as an important contribution to the engagement of ethnic minority groups. The *Acceder* programme, provided by the *Fundación Secretariado Gitano*, the largest pro-Roma NGO in Spain, serves as an example of ethnic minority outreach services (see table 5 below).

To provide another example, the government in Croatia has established a long-term vision and strategy for ca-

reer development and employability involving lifelong career guidance centres called CISOKs (Moore et al., 2014). These CISOKs are “based on the idea that all citizens need to develop the skills and confidence to make the most of their life choices and opportunities and to follow the career path that is most appropriate for them” (Moore et al., 2014:21), and thus are targeted at a wide range of clients. CISOKs offer three levels of service delivery: self-help and e-services such as online vacancy matching services, brief assisted services and individual case-managed services. Information on opportunities, individual and group counselling sessions and workshops are offered (Moore et al., 2014; European Commission, 2017b). CISOKs use a partnership-based model when cooperating with stakeholders in the region (NGOs, youth organisations, municipalities, social partners, training providers, schools, universities, etc.). CISOKs are established as shopfront centres with flexible opening times in easily accessible locations, operate with a unique brand and are promoted differently from the PES (Moore et al., 2014).

**Table 5: Programa Acceder**

<b>Country</b>	Spain
<b>Type</b>	<i>Satellite model</i>
<b>Rationale</b>	The programme’s aim is to provide equal opportunities to Roma communities in accessing the labour market (Euroma, 2009) as the gateway to social inclusion ( <i>Fundación Secretariado Gitano</i> , no date).
<b>Time, area of intervention</b>	Starting as a two-year pilot in Madrid in 1998, <i>Acceder</i> has been spread around the whole of Spain since 2000 (Euroma, 2009).
<b>Stakeholders involved</b>	Stakeholders comprise the <i>Fundación Secretariado Gitano</i> , companies, the ESF, local authorities, participants and caseworkers (Guy, 2009; European Commission, 2013).
<b>Specificities of the approach</b>	<i>Acceder</i> offers tailored services to unemployed Roma <i>on a voluntary basis</i> . The programme aims to channel individuals into mainstream programmes and the labour market after a transitional period of individual support (European Commission, 2013; Messing and Bereményi, 2017). The programme consists of three principal axes (see Euroma, 2009; Villarreal, 2013; Messing et al., no date): 1) <i>Counselling actions</i> (outreach to people to join the programme, i.e. interviews to assess the employability of clients, developing an individual employment path); 2) <i>Training actions</i> ; and 3) <i>Job intermediation actions</i> . <i>Acceder</i> also established four companies that offer an accompanied transition into the mainstream labour market for clients with severe barriers.
<b>Impact</b>	Since its start in 2000, 93,685 people have used the services offered (69,278 employment contracts signed, 27,059 people trained, collaborations established with 22,285 companies by the end of 2016; <i>Fundación Secretariado Gitano</i> , 2017). According to an evaluation, the chance of getting a job depend on individuals’ intensity of participation in the services offered (Villarreal, 2013). The Euroma Network (2009) states that the programme has managed to create individual working methods, permanent networks and structures of cooperation as well as systems of data collection and monitoring.
<b>Challenges</b>	Despite the positive impact, the Euroma Network make the criticism that Roma are mainly gaining access to low-quality jobs. Messing et al. (no date) complain about transparent data other than that provided by the <i>Fundación Secretariado Gitano</i> to identify distinctive outcomes of the programme. They furthermore state that <i>Acceder</i> is “creaming” (favouring better-educated persons) and thus running the risk of buttressing prevalent structural inequalities instead of assuring equal opportunities for less-prepared Roma clients (Messing and Bereményi, 2017).





## 4. CONCLUSION

Long-term unemployment is one of the causes of persistent poverty and has implications for European societies and economies. Europe faces a key challenge in this regard: despite a steady decline since 2014, almost half of unemployed people are currently long-term unemployed. Two issues have recently been discussed in the Employment Thematic Network as helping tackle key dimensions of the problem through implementing practices funded by the European Social Fund. Contributing to reducing the number of long-term unemployed and assisting vulnerable groups in their social inclusion are: 1) *Risk profiling* of unemployed people with a view to identifying those most at risk of long-term unemployed so that early preventative action can be taken; and 2) *Outreach* activities to engage 'hard-to-reach' groups. This discussion paper was drafted to present recent findings related to these two issues.

The literature review concerning profiling revealed that while four approaches to profiling can be distinguished, i.e. caseworker-based profiling, rules-based profiling, statistical profiling and data-assisted profiling, no clear trend emerged. On the contrary, diverging developments in relation to the intensity of using profiling and early intervention strategies can be observed in EU countries (Konle-Seidl, 2011). However, whatever profiling methodology is implemented, research suggests that the role of the caseworker is a key success factor (e.g. Barnes et al., 2015). Thus, while jobseekers are profiled in most countries, EU countries use statistical profiling to facilitate qualitative assessment. Problems are still observed regarding the low usage of the tools by counsellors. Training for PES staff is thus urgently needed.

Early intervention options and adapting approaches targeted to the needs of the unemployed as well as the overall decrease of periods of unemployment are regarded as the main advantages of profiling tools, together with cost savings and the reduction of the caseload of counsellors. Risk profiling, however, only represents a small part of the overall integration process. Moreover, few studies are available that have attempted to quantify the possible efficiency gains from profiling and early intervention. An evidence gap also exists with respect to the impact of different service delivery systems on on/off-flow rates from unemployment or benefit receipt (Konle-Seidl, 2011). Furthermore, evidence from EU Member States raises concerns about

the accuracy of profiling tools (Barnes et al., 2015). In addition, many questions remain to be answered regarding ethical and data security issues. Consequently, statistical profiling of those at risk can only be recommended as a complementary practice to support caseworker assessment. Due to missing evidence, the advantages of reduced costs and smaller counsellor caseloads seem not to compensate for the disadvantages of the approach; i.e. the challenges, concerns and risks that go hand-in-hand especially with the promotion of purely statistic-profiling. Instead of providing adequate resources, i.e. more highly skilled and trained counsellors to reduce the caseload and assist the unemployed and LTU, profiling is generally promoted to enhance the effectiveness of the system without an evidence base.

With regard to outreach work, the literature review brought to light that the scope and reach of PES outreach work varies across countries with the specific country contexts explaining some of these differences. Whilst PESs are key players in profiling, outreach activities for marginalised groups in society are often outsourced and conducted by NGOs or other service providers such as municipalities or community organisations. The services differ from PES offers in various aspects: they are usually provided in areas close to the core client group and customers are not mandated to participate and thus encounter no sanctions if they opt not to do so.

Moreover, many outreach practices implemented in EU Member States target young people. Only in a few countries can information be found on activities targeting (non-registered) LTU. Research still suggests that outreach services are an effective means of engaging traditionally hard-to-reach groups, including refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and ethnic minorities. Furthermore, outreach must be regarded as a professional activity where personal qualities are engaged in certain ways (Andersson, 2013). Nevertheless, scholars also warn against 'creaming', i.e. favouring the easier-to-integrate individuals, and report on difficulties in quantifying the results of outreach work: outreach activities are often innovative and experimental and thus outcomes may not be immediately visible. Still, outreach, together with case management, the creation of individual action



plans and mentorship, is widely recognised as a good practice for improving the effectiveness of activation measures.

Key recommendations of the literature review and the results of the 5<sup>th</sup> Employment Thematic Network thus comprise the following:

- **Profiling:** The advantages, in reduced costs and counsellors' caseloads, do not appear to compensate for the disadvantages of the risk profiling approach; i.e. the challenges, concerns and risks that go hand in hand with the promotion of (especially purely statistically based) profiling. Thus, instead of profiling to enhance the effectiveness of the system in the absence of an evidence base, adequate resources need to be made available, i.e. more highly-skilled and trained counsellors to reduce the caseload and assist the unemployed and LTU;
- **Outreach:** Outreach services are an effective mean of engaging hard-to-reach groups, including refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and ethnic minorities, as well as young people. These services seem to be most effective when delivered locally in partnership

with service providers familiar with the diverse settings, i.e. in places which these groups are already familiar with using; and

- **Overall:** We also suggest that EU Member States can contribute to minimising the risks of people becoming LTU by using the European Social Fund to support profiling activities that build on the expertise of case managers and by supporting outreach work tailored to the needs of vulnerable people.

Finally, outreach and profiling activities are only the starting points. What needs to follow are comprehensive activation measures to best serve the most vulnerable with all available labour market resources and well-designed social policy approaches. Indeed, these activities are of utmost importance in strengthening the social dimension of Europe as suggested by the European Pillar of Social Rights. A general reorientation of EU policy where solidarity and cohesion are placed as the highest goal of a "Social Europe" is needed. Conversely, emphasis placed upon austerity policies and structural reforms seems not to help the most vulnerable (see, for instance, European Trade Union Institute, 2016; Scoppetta et al., 2017).



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