

# **Agenda for New Skills and Jobs Survey**

**This file note was written by Ecologic Institute GmbH (Tanja Srebotnjak) and Policy Studies Institute (Elisabetta Mocca, Kathryn Ray, Rosemary Davidson).  
It does not represent the official views of the Committee of the Regions.**

More information on the European Union and the Committee of the Regions is available on the internet through <http://www.europa.eu> and <http://www.cor.europa.eu> respectively.

Catalogue number: QG-02-13-206-EN-N  
ISBN: 978-92-895-0729-5  
DOI: 10.2863/31819

© European Union, February 2013  
Partial reproduction is allowed, provided that the source is explicitly mentioned.

# Contents

- 1 Basic Information..... 1**
- 2 Policy challenges and responses at regional and local level..... 5**
  - 2.1 General Findings..... 5
  - 2.2 Specific Findings ..... 6
- 3 The relevance of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs to cities and regions 11**
  - 3.1 General Findings..... 11
  - 3.2 Specific Findings ..... 11
- 4 Are your country’s policies relevant to your city or region?..... 21**
  - 4.1 General Findings..... 21
  - 4.2 Specific Findings ..... 22
- 5 Managing and funding the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs ..... 25**
  - 5.1 General Findings..... 25
  - 5.2 Specific Findings ..... 26
- 6 Conclusions..... 31**
- 7 Annex I – Supplementary Information for Question 6 ..... 39**
- 8 Annex II – Supplementary Information for Question 7 ..... 41**
- 9 Annex III – List of Respondents ..... 45**
- 10 Annex IV – List of Local/Regional Initiatives reported in Contributions ..... 49**



# 1. Basic Information

The Committee of the Regions (CoR), through its Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform, conducted a survey to assess the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 Strategy between 26 November 2012 and 21 January 2013.<sup>1</sup>

In the face of the continuing economic and financial hardships experienced in many European countries, unemployment has risen steadily over the past few years and is threatening to limit prospects for Europe's citizens for decades to come. In this context, it is critical to respond to changing labour market needs and dynamics with a coordinated effort in the areas of education, job training and life-long learning as well as domestic and international mobility. The Europe 2020 Strategy has therefore set specific headline targets including the employment rate, the share of people who have completed tertiary education, and the share of young people dropping out of school before sitting their secondary school leaving exams. In addition, specific short-term policies have been enacted to face the impact of the current crisis.

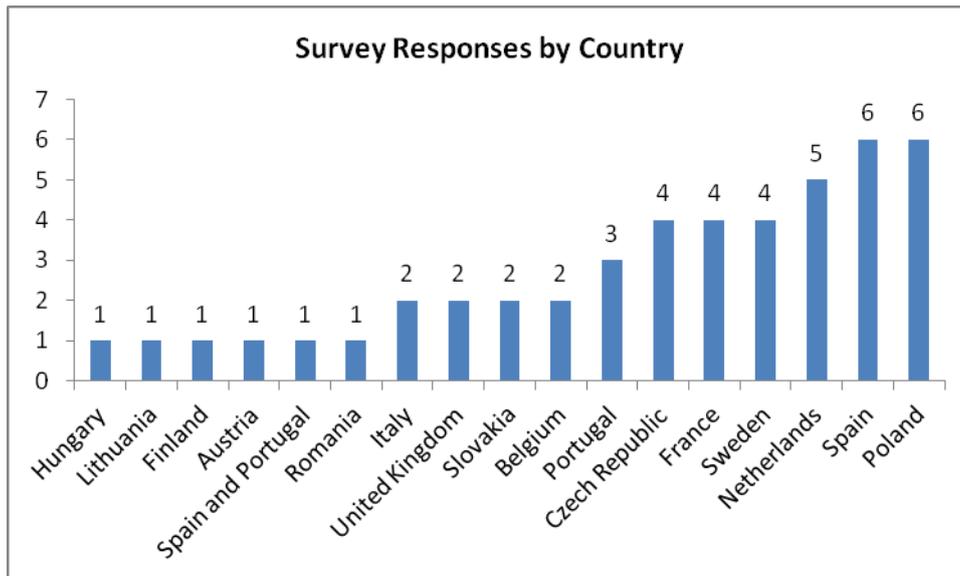
With its Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, the EU and the Member States are stepping up labour market reforms, join forces to equip people with the right skills, attempt to improve working conditions and encourage the creation of new jobs.

The survey summarised in this report assesses to what extent the Europe 2020 flagship initiative Agenda for New Skills and Jobs has provided these intended benefits to communities and regions<sup>2</sup>. The survey is also part of a broader monitoring and assessment exercise of all seven Europe 2020 flagship initiatives, which the CoR launched on 8 October 2012. The results of these individual assessments will provide the backdrop for seven conferences – one for each flagship initiative assessment – that will subsequently feed into the contribution of the Committee of the Regions to the EU Commission's mid-term review of the strategy due in 2014. The present survey report is based on 46 responses from 17 EU Member States (Figure 1). The findings of this analysis will be presented at the CoR conference on the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs on 28 February – 1 March 2013 in Dublin, Ireland.

---

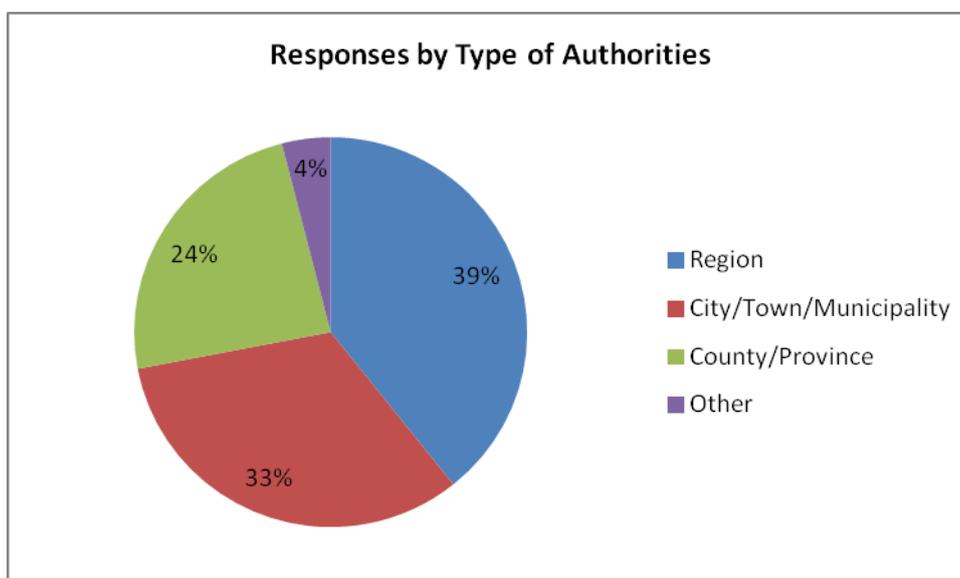
<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire and basic background information can be found at <http://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/MonitoringFlagships/Pages/Agenda-for-new-skills-and-jobs.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> More information about the flagship initiative available on the CoR website: <http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/europe2020/Pages/agenda-new-skills-jobs.aspx>



**Figure 1: The number of responses received by EU Member State**

The majority of responses came from or on behalf of regions (39%), followed by cities, towns and municipalities (33%) and counties/provinces (24%). Other responses include one from an association of local and regional authorities and another from an association of organisations promoting socio-economic initiatives and activities in 7 EU countries. Just under half of all 46 responses received (46%) state that they are members of the Committee of the Regions' Monitoring Platform for the Europe 2020 Strategy.



**Figure 2: Survey responses by type of authority. Note: Other includes associations of local and regional authorities and the European P'ACTS Network, an association of organisations promoting socio-economic initiatives and activities in 7 EU countries**

The survey report is organised into four main blocks (sections 2 to 5) in accordance with the blocks of questions included in the survey questionnaire. These blocks are:

- **What are the policy challenges and responses at regional and local levels?** These questions address the main challenges facing the respondents' administrations; consistency between EU and national aims and targets as well as the respondents; the type of actions implemented and the use of additional indicators/targets.
- **How is the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs relevant to your city or region?** This block of questions aims to identify whether the flagship's lines of action encouraged the respondents' administrations to set more ambitious policy goals at regional or local level; what the strengths and weaknesses of the flagship are and whether it should be revised following the Europe 2020 mid-term review in 2014.
- **Are your country's policies relevant to your city or region?** Here, it is of interest to gauge whether the NRP adequately respond to the needs of the respondents' territories, whether they had an opportunity to contribute to the NRP's drafting and what changes they would suggest to be made in the next NRP.
- **Governance and funding of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs.** This block of questions addresses the implementation of the flagship initiative, if respondents' authorities acted in partnership with other levels of government (multi-level governance) and what the role of the forthcoming Common Strategic Framework and Partnership Agreements for the Structural Funds 2014-2020 should be. Any additional comments could also be provided here.

Each section summarises both the main trends emerging from the responses as well as particular perspectives and unique comments. They are further supplemented by examples of good practices that were reported or drawn from the Committee of the Regions' Europe 2020 monitoring database.



# 2. Policy challenges and responses at regional and local level

This section of the survey includes the following questions:

1) What are the main challenges currently facing your region/city in terms of (i) functioning of the labour markets, (ii) skills of the workforce, and (iii) quality of jobs and working conditions?
2) To help meet these objectives, your country has set its own targets, which you can find at <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets_en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets_en.pdf</a> . To what extent are the targets set by your country appropriate to your local situation? Please explain.
3) Please briefly describe what kind of policy programmes/actions are being implemented in your city/region to tackle the challenges addressed by the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs.

**Table 1: List of questions included in the first thematic block of the survey**

## 2.1 General Findings

The overwhelming majority of the respondents identified various challenges that their **region/city is facing** in terms of labour market functioning, skills of the workforce and/or quality of jobs.

The majority of respondents have experienced a general **increase of the unemployment rate**, and some of the respondents have also witnessed a **rise of youth unemployment**. Most of the respondents state that it is necessary to better match employers' requirements to the **skills of the workforce** in light of the changing dynamics of the labour market.

One challenge identified by some respondents is the diffusion of atypical contracts that create more precarious work conditions. A few respondents also alluded to the challenges presented by (i) an **ageing workforce**, (ii) the lack of jobs in **rural locations** and (iii) the remoteness of the **outer periphery of the European territory**.

The general opinion expressed by respondents was that their **country-specific targets are adequate to their city/region**, although a few stated that it will be difficult to impossible to achieve the targeted employment rate (especially when confronted with one or more of the above-cited challenges (i)-(iii)). In order to tackle the challenges expressed in the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, **the respondents stated that their city/region has implemented various programmes**, for example to upgrade skills, support unemployed people,

support entrepreneurial activities and to facilitate the transition from school to the labour market. Detailed examples are given in the following section.

## 2.2 Specific Findings

Q1: *What are the main challenges currently facing your region/city in terms of*

*(i) functioning of the labour markets, (ii) skills of the workforce, and (iii) quality of jobs and working conditions?*

All but one respondent answered this question. Although the respondents identified several and diverse challenges, some issues dominated.

*(i) Functioning of the labour markets.*

The most frequently identified challenges are listed below in descending order of frequency:

1. Mismatch between labour demand and supply;
2. Rise of unemployment;
3. Rise of youth unemployment;
4. Need to create new job opportunities;
5. Fixed term/temporary work contracts;
6. Ageing/retiring population;
7. Integrating handicapped into labour market
8. Integration of migrant workers into the labour market;
9. Poor mobility of workers;
10. Emigration.

Nearly all respondents (37 out of 46) stated that there is a mismatch between the skill set of the available workforce and the skills sought by businesses. In the majority of cases, there is a lack of advanced technical skills, mostly advanced-level tertiary knowledge but also at secondary and vocational levels. The educational system is generally seen as requiring further reform and adaptation to better prepare young people for the new economy and to retrain older workers to find jobs in new industries.

Over half of the respondents (28 out of 46) pointed to the increase in unemployment levels as the main issue they are facing, with a few respondents highlighting the problem of older unemployed (Hengelo Town Council, Pardubice Municipality, Prešov Autonomous Region, Flemish Government). Similarly, thirteen respondents cited the rise of youth unemployment, due to the lack of employment opportunities for young people to get access to the labour market. Twelve respondents identified the need to create new job opportunities. In this respect, Delft Municipality indicated the Municipality's commitment of

attracting knowledge-based businesses and Pardubice Region identified the need to create jobs with higher added value. Additionally, nine respondents said that they have observed a rise in less secure, fixed term or temporary contracts (often without benefits) and eight respondents cited the ageing population as a problem impacting on the labour market of their area.

Five respondents reported the integration of migrant workers into the labour market, and five the poor mobility of workers. Finally, three respondents pointed the problem of emigration (City of Strzelce Opolskie, Panevėžys Regional Development Council, Tolna County Council).

*(ii) Skills of the workforce*

The overwhelming majority of the respondents pointed to the inadequacy of skills or the educational background of the workforce to match the requirements sought in the labour market. Four respondents reported the need to promote life-long learning, and two (Harghita County Council and the Department for Employment and Training of the Murcia Region) suggested an overhaul of the vocational education system.

*(iii) Quality of jobs and working*

The rise in atypical employment contracts (mainly part-time or short-term) was cited by some respondents (European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation Galicia-Portugal, Alentejo Municipality, Regional Labour Office of Kielce, Hengelo Town Council, Province of Reggio Emilia, Auvergne Region, City of Solna, Szatomuly County, Government of the Canary Islands) as a challenge to the quality of working conditions. In this regard, Alentejo Regional Delegation expressed the need to find a balance between job flexibility and security, while the Government of Catalonia indicated that the rate of temporary working must be reduced.

*Q2: To help meet these objectives, your country has set its own targets, which you can find at [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets_en.pdf). To what extent are the targets set by your country appropriate to your local situation? Please explain.*

The country-specific targets were considered to be adequate by the majority of the respondents. One respondent (the Autonomous Region of Madeira) generally criticised the targets as not reflective of their region's overall situation and geographical location, which is facing financial constraints that limit convergence towards the Europe 2020 objectives. Nine respondents felt that at least one target was too ambitious (e.g. Prešov Autonomous Region, Olomouc Region, Tolna County Council, Government of Catalonia). As an example, Prešov Autonomous Region stated that, while their employment and poverty

targets will not be achievable, the reduction of the school dropout rate and the share of 30-34 years old with tertiary degrees are achievable.

It was also reported by UK respondents that the UK Government has not set any targets.

*Q3: Please briefly describe what kind of policy programmes/actions are being implemented in your city/region to tackle the challenges addressed by the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs.*

In order to tackle the challenges identifies in the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, regions and cities have implemented specific policies and programmes. Although varying considerably, some programmes have received greater attention by local and regional authorities. These actions are listed below in descending order of frequency:

1. Implementation of skill development programmes;
2. Support for the unemployed;
3. Increasing youth employment;
4. Support for entrepreneurship;
5. Support for the employment of vulnerable groups (i.e., people with disabilities, migration background, low-skilled, the long-term unemployed);
6. Programmes to ease the transition from school to work;
7. Job creation;
8. Development of vocational training programmes;
9. Mobility;
10. Life-long learning;
11. Self-employment and entrepreneurship;
12. Social enterprises.

Among these, the implementation of skill development programmes was cited by just over half of the respondents. Eighteen respondents indicated the implementation of programmes to provide support for unemployed. Fifteen respondents stated that they have implemented programmes to increase and support youth employment, and the same number reported initiatives to support entrepreneurship. Programmes to support the employment of vulnerable groups were cited by fourteen respondents, while twelve indicated the implementation of initiatives to help the transition from school to work.

In addition, eleven respondents indicated initiatives to promote job creation in their city/region, for example the Olomouc Region. The development of vocational training programmes was cited by ten respondents, such as Lombardy Region and Trenčín Self-governing Region. Six authorities indicated that they

had implemented programmes to enhance workers' mobility (e.g., Auvergne Region and Autonomous Region of Madeira). Finally, a few respondents (five) reported initiatives to promote self-employment (e.g., Marshal's Office of the Mazowsze region in Warsaw and Province of Reggio Emilia), and four cited programmes to promote social enterprises (Scarborough Borough Council, Panevežys Regional Development Council and European P'ACTS Network, Łódź City Council).

Annex II lists the innovative and successful programmes put in place by the local or regional authorities.



### 3. The relevance of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs to cities and regions

This section of the survey includes responses to the following questions:

4) Which of the aims and specific objectives of the <b>Agenda for New Skills and Jobs</b> (listed in Box 1 and Box 2) are most relevant in view of the challenges currently facing your region/city?
5) Which of the lines of action shown in Box 2 are most relevant to you, in the sense that they have encouraged you to set more ambitious policy goals at regional/local level? Please explain your answers.
6) Overall, what are the <b>strong</b> and <b>weak</b> points of the <b>Agenda for New Skills and Jobs</b> , as seen from your regional/local standpoint?
7) Would you recommend <b>any specific changes</b> to the <b>Agenda for New Skills and Jobs</b> flagship initiative, following Europe 2020's mid-term review in 2014?

**Table 2: List of questions included in the second thematic block**

#### 3.1 General Findings

The general aims of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs were considered relevant by all the respondents. Particularly, the objective of **increasing the level of employment** was cited by the majority of the respondents.

The targets were perceived as well-designed, addressing the issues affecting the labour market and training. Nonetheless, the Agenda has been criticised as being very theoretical and general in scope, failing to take into account the diversity of different countries', regions' and local areas' situations (e.g., the Government of the Canary Islands). In order to overcome these weaknesses, the respondents suggested various possible measures that reflect their particular circumstances.

#### 3.2 Specific Findings

*Q4: Which of the aims and specific objectives of the **Agenda for New Skills and Jobs** (listed in Box 1 and Box 2) are most relevant in view of the challenges currently facing your region/city?*

The aim of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs is:

*to create conditions for modernising labour markets with a view to raising employment levels, ensuring the sustainability of our social models. This means empowering people through the acquisition of new*

*skills to enable our current and future workforce to adapt to new conditions and potential career shifts, reduce unemployment and raise labour productivity.*

This overarching aim was seen as relevant by all respondents to the survey. The aim of raising employment levels, in particular, resonated with most respondents. Of the four Europe 2020 headline targets, those of raising the employment rate of the working age population to 75% and reducing the school drop-out rate to below 10% were the targets cited as most relevant by respondents. Smaller numbers of respondents cited the targets to increase the number of 30-34 year olds having completed tertiary education and to lift 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion as targets with relevance for them.

The four specific objectives of the Agenda for Skills and Jobs are to create:

- more efficient labour markets, mainly through flexicurity, to be ensured by changing the legal framework at the national and regional levels;
- a more skilled workforce, through skills upgrading and matching of skills and jobs;
- better job quality and working conditions; and
- stronger policies to promote job creation and demand for labour.

These objectives had broad appeal across the respondents to the survey. Those which were seen as having most relevance for the largest number of respondents were to create a more skilled workforce, through skills upgrading and matching of skills and jobs, and to strengthen policies to promote job creation and demand for labour. These two objectives had near universal support among respondents. Reducing the early-school leaver rate was also seen as important by several respondents. The Picardie Region, for example, declared it the flagship's most relevant objective and is investing heavily in identifying drop-outs and bringing them back into the education system.

#### *A more skilled workforce*

In terms of the objective to create a more skilled workforce, respondents who cited this as highly relevant to them often said that their focus was specifically on the matching of skills to jobs, since skills mismatch was a current problem for them. Promoting lifelong learning and the reorganisation or reform of vocational education and training were also cited by some respondents as being of particular importance to meet the objective of creating a more skilled workforce.

### *Job creation and labour demand*

The objective of strengthening policies to promote job creation and demand for labour was also overwhelmingly seen as high priority by respondents. However, respondents tended to cite more specific goals that they were pursuing, which were quite varied according to specific local needs. For example, some respondents said their objective was to promote job growth in skilled (Pardubice Region) or knowledge intensive (City of Delft) industries, whereas others favoured promoting stable jobs (Trenčín self-governing region) or jobs in labour intensive sectors (Tolna County Council). Some were focusing on promoting entrepreneurship, self-employment or social enterprise (e.g. Uusimaa Regional Council; Hengelo Town Council), and some on innovation and development among SMEs (German-Speaking Community in Belgium; European P'ACTS Network). Thus there was broad support for the general objective of promoting job creation and labour demand, but the specific goals varied for different local areas.

### *Job quality and working conditions*

The objective of promoting better job quality and improving working conditions was cited as relevant by a sizeable minority of the respondents, although there was less widespread support for this objective compared to those favouring increasing skills and promoting labour demand. Respondents from a range of countries cited this as an important objective, with northern and Western European countries constituting the largest group (e.g., the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and France). Specific objectives cited here included improving policies to balance work and caring responsibilities (City of Vienna); tailoring jobs to the needs of employees (Barneveld Town Council); and improving the working environment and raising pay levels (Tolna County Council).

### *More efficient labour markets*

Finally, promoting more efficient labour markets through flexicurity was also cited as relevant by a sizeable minority of the sample. Respondents citing this objective were from a range of countries, with eastern European countries predominating (e.g., Romania, Albania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia). Respondents tended to cite the more general objective of improving labour market efficiency or flexibility as their goal; while a small minority of respondents cited flexicurity or activation policies as a specific objective. A few cited other specific goals such as increasing labour mobility (Region Västra Götaland) or facilitating young peoples' access to the labour market (Uusimaa Regional Council) as most relevant to them.

*Q5: Which of the lines of action shown in Box 2 are most relevant to you, in the sense that they have encouraged you to set more ambitious policy goals at regional/local level? Please explain your answers.*

A small number of respondents said that the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs objectives had encouraged them to set more ambitious policy goals or targets at a regional or local level. For example:

- setting more ambitious goals for improving the skill base (Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland; TS-LKD Panevezio Miesto Skyriaus, Lithuania);
- setting more ambitious goals for tackling youth unemployment (Purmerend Town Council), or
- pursuing a more ambitious agenda for technological development (City of Delft).

Other respondents said that they had already set ambitious policy goals in these areas. Specific initiatives and tools at the EU level to promote the Agenda for New Skills and Job objectives include:

- European Social Fund (ESF) to support:
  - Skills upgrading
  - Matching skills and jobs
  - Improvements in work quality and working conditions
  - Job creation; and
- the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals to support the integration of the immigrants into the labour market.

All of these funding instruments had broad support among respondents in terms of their relevance for tackling the problems faced. The ESF streams of funding, in particular, were widely supported and examples were given of their use, for interventions such as:

- skills upgrading for young people (Autonomous Government of Catalonia);
- measures to support work-life balance (City of Vienna)
- initiatives to facilitate young people's access to the labour market (Uusimaa Regional Council)
- initiatives to develop employer alliances (European P'ACTS Network).

Examples of some of these projects are detailed in Boxes 1 and 2, below. The European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals had support among a smaller group of respondents, where integration of persons with a

migration background was experienced as a challenge, including local/regional authorities in Austria, Finland and Spain/Portugal. For example, a respondent in Uusimaa Regional Council in Finland, noted that “Uusimaa is by far the most important destination in Finland for immigrants, which makes the assimilation of third country nationals and their integration into the labour market an important objective”.

Other EU funding instruments cited by respondents as important in tackling this Agenda included the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Examples of this fund’s usage included projects to support job brokerage (Scarborough Borough Council) and to improve business infrastructure to encourage inward investment (Barneveld Town Council). Finally, the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) was also cited by a number of respondents as relevant to tackling this Agenda.

**Box 1: Initiatives to facilitate young people’s access to the labour market, Uusimaa Regional Council, Finland**

Creating jobs and facilitating young people's access to the labour market were at the forefront of Uusimaa's EER 2012 thematic year and in the planning of Uusimaa Regional Council's 2013 Summer Jobs campaign.

Uusimaa is trying to adopt a work-based approach in various projects and initiatives. Examples of these initiatives include:

- The young people's employment project, Stara, which is run by the Luksia adult education institute in Western Uusimaa and financed by the European Social Fund.
- Deaconess Institute's Vamos project, which provides a package of services for 16 to 29-year-olds in Helsinki. The aim of the project is to consolidate young people's own resources and strengths, and to help them to settle on a career path that is valued and planned by them individually.
- The Petra ESF-funded project in Vantaa, which provides young people with a one-stop shop for employment services, helping them to find work.

**Box 2: Initiatives to support employer alliances, European P'ACTS  
Network, France**

Employer alliances are real tools for employment development in this region. Their benefits range from business economics to career security, to social cohesion of the territory, which thus becomes more attractive.

One example is an employer alliance of artisans of Deux-Sèvres: ADEQUAT. In 2012, its 5,500 artisans completed 140,000 work hours; it helped companies to adapt the number of employees to their business needs; facilitated their development by limiting additional costs arising from hiring new employees; and resulted in better management of jobs and skills in the area.

The European P'ACTS Network current approach is to promote employer alliances and job sharing, through:

- implementing employer alliances in the region;
- promoting employer alliances with social partners;
- encouraging SOHO/SME groupings to develop skills for time-sharing; and
- Raising awareness among local authorities on job sharing.

This promotion of employer alliances can rely on solid foundations. Work already achieved or underway includes:

- A regional tool where the social partners are all present as well as officials, by sector, of groups of regional employers;
- A strong governance of public authorities and local governments for two “contrats de plan”;
- A work in progress on national development based on territory and branches;
- European recognition: the employment package of the Commission (18 April 2012) explicitly incorporates the development of employer alliances.

Among the specific initiatives and instruments across the EU, the Poitou Charentes Region has promoted two ESF projects:

- The first, with the European Centre of employer alliances, is to disseminate employer alliances in Europe as a response to the reconciliation of social / professional life.
- The second is to develop a payroll service and social management for employer alliances that find it difficult to hire due to management problems. Many are among the smallest enterprises (TPE).

With P'actes Europeans, employer groups are part of the Grundtvig project PACTS that is promoting awareness of employer alliances among six European countries.

*Q6. Overall, what are the strong and weak points of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, as seen from your regional/local standpoint?*

### **Strengths**

In terms of strengths, respondents tended to talk in very general terms about the positive aspects of the Agenda. They expressed their support for the Agenda's global vision, particularly the direction and objectives for the EU. Issues were seen to be systematically tackled with a holistic approach which encompasses education, employment, public administration, the legal context, and social aspects. The targets were perceived as well-designed, addressing the issues affecting the labour market and training. There is support for both the jobless and businesses struggling with the effects of the economic slowdown at the same time as the Agenda encourages a more highly qualified workforce and boosting policies aimed at generating jobs and demand for labour. The Agenda was also praised for its focus on vocational education and the functioning of the labour market, thereby putting work into a social context. Educational subjects are matched to the needs of the labour market, early school leaving is prevented and 'flexicurity' policies are pursued, which is consistent with current labour market challenges.

The Agenda was seen as of regional interest, reflecting the needs of citizens, and tackling the issues facing regional authorities. One respondent, for example, described how the Agenda deals with 'current' problems, not only in their specific region, but also in Lithuania and other EU countries.

### *Tailoring skills to jobs*

In terms of specific praise, respondents tended to focus on Agenda's potential to match skills to jobs. The Agenda was perceived to tackle the mismatch between skills and jobs by focusing on tailoring skills more closely to jobs and on (further) training. Programs are being created to create existing jobs and retain new ones, promote lifelong professional training; programs for skilled immigrants; increasing access to information technology. Scarborough Council in the UK provides an example of a current exercise to provide additional support for the workforce through the ESF. Their Local Enterprise Partnership is forging new, relevant partnerships which provide potential for innovation and forward thinking in design and delivery of skills for people in work and those looking for work.

There is the willingness from organisations active in the local market to achieve the set targets and to cooperate with one another, and pressure on public bodies to address problems in the job market.

## Weaknesses

To counter the general praise for the Agenda summarised above, a number of respondents criticised the initiative as too theoretical and broad in scope, failing to take into account the diversity of different national and sub-national situations. This has in some cases led to local needs being neglected. As a consequence, the strategy was perceived to encounter difficulties addressing the different challenges facing different parts of Europe. Specifically, an ageing population, youth unemployment, problems with increasing tertiary education levels in rural or smaller urban areas, and a general mismatch between supply and demand of skills. In addition, the implementation of measures was perceived to be even more difficult due to the current economic recession. Other criticisms were more specific and are listed in two tables in Annex I.

*Q7) Would you recommend any specific changes to the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs flagship initiative, following Europe 2020's mid-term review in 2014?*

This question yielded concrete suggestions from 41 of the 46 respondents. In general, these recommendations can be categorised into three types:

- Greater attention to specific issues and/or inclusion of additional issues such as innovation and entrepreneurship or inclusion of social issues;
- Increased flexibility in the Agenda's scope and funding of actions under the Agenda;
- Strengthened and more clearly specified role of local and regional authorities in implementing the Agenda.

Especially the view that regions and cities have their own characteristics, which need to be considered in target-setting, funding allocation, monitoring and the planning and implementation of actions is shared among the respondents. This is illustrated by the response from the GNP-AECT of Galicia-Northern Portugal:

*“Each region has its own characteristics and situation. Each region could accordingly lay down its own objectives and strategies to achieve them, taking account of the regional context and local situations. In addition, adequate funds to implement the agenda would be a very positive step.”*

In addition, rather than following the developments on the ground passively, the goals set should be reassessed if it becomes clear they cannot realistically be reached and targets may need to be adjusted.

An individual but important comment was provided by the Flemish Government, namely that they “would welcome it if the agenda were to clarify

the importance of partnerships as a policy capable of responding in a flexible way to changing skills and thus able to fill gaps in the labour market.”

Since valuable specific information would be lost by trying to further generalise the comments, they are compiled in Annex II. Only one respondent (City of Solna, Sweden) did not suggest any specific recommendations, highlighting the difficulties in predicting the economic situation.



# 4. Are your country’s policies relevant to your city or region?

This section contains the following three questions.

8) Does your country's <b>2012 National Reform Programme (NRP) for Europe 2020 adequately respond to your regional/local needs</b> in the areas covered by the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs (see Box 1)?
9) Did you have an opportunity to <b>contribute to the drafting of your NRP</b> in the policy field covered by the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs or your National Job Plan, even if only indirectly by way of the organisations representing cities and regions in your country? If so, please state briefly how.
10) Would you suggest <b>any changes in your country's NRP for 2013</b> with respect to the areas covered by the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs (see Box 1)? If so, please state briefly which changes.

**Table 3: List of questions included in the third thematic block**

## 4.1 General Findings

It is observed that approximately half of the respondents think that the provisions in the current NRP reflect regional/local needs regarding the Agenda’s goals from partially to fully. At the same time, the respondents’ authorities or organisations generally desire a greater role in developing the actions and policies relating to the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs contained in the National Reform Programmes. Approximately one third of them (16 out of 46) have had an opportunity to contribute to the development or drafting of the NRP, albeit to a varying extent. Another area where the respondents see room for improvement and which is closely linked to their participation in the drafting of the NRP is the adequate reflection of local and regional contexts in both policies and targets.

Of the 46 responses received, 24 advocate changes to be made in the areas relating to the Agenda for new skills and jobs. The most frequently cited requests are (i) greater say for local and regional authorities, (ii) greater consideration of local and regional contexts in the measures and actions and (iii) strengthened and more clearly defined role of LRAs in the implementation process. Other – but not frequently mentioned – aspects that relate to the specific objectives of the Agenda include the extension of the target for tertiary education to those older than 34 years (Tolna County Council).

## 4.2 Specific Findings

*Q8: Does your country's 2012 (current) National Reform Programme (NRP) for Europe 2020 adequately respond to your regional/local needs in the areas covered by the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs (see Box 1)?*

This question was answered by 41 of the 46 respondents.

Twenty-nine respondents said that the 2012 NRP partially, adequately or fully reflects the regional and local needs in the areas addressed by the New Skills and Jobs initiative. The Parliament of Extremadura, for example, said that the NRP is very complete and reflects Extremadura's main needs in the areas covered and the Department of Work and the Social Economy of the Flemish Government stated that the regions have the opportunity to have their priorities included in the NRP.

In contrast, the Madeira Autonomous Region criticised the fact that the NRP does not take account of the region's specific situation, and was drawn up without consulting the regional authorities.

Further examples of the range of answers given to this question are given in the next box.

**Picardie Region, France:**

The NRP of France meets the needs of the Picardie Region. To illustrate, we can cite the example of access to learning: all schemes adopted and actions arising from this action are started by the Region.

**German-Speaking Community in Belgium:**

The German-Speaking Community in Belgium contributes to the drafting of the NRP and also bears responsibility for the corresponding measures to be entered into the document.

**Purmerend Municipality, Netherlands:**

Overall, yes. But it is still important to translate the NRP into more concrete action.

**Barneveld Town Council, Netherlands:**

The priority sector policy is drawn up by the sectors concerned. This makes it difficult for contributions to be made at local level. This is also a major pitfall for the success of the priority sector policy in the field of human capital.

**Malmö Municipality, Sweden:**

The NRP does not take sufficient account of regional/local conditions and the fact that we are a cross-border municipality.

Among those who answered that their national NRP is not adequate in addressing local and regional needs (Scarborough Borough Council, Barneveld Town Council, Region Västra Götaland, Malmö Municipality, Szamotuły County, Prešov Autonomous Region, Madeira Autonomous Region, Kobylnica, Pardubice Region, Västerbotten County, Łódź City Council and the Government of Catalonia), the main reasons that emerge from the responses is a general lack of consultation and cooperation coupled with inadequate consideration of local contexts, specific needs and characteristics. Some NRPs do not have a strong local component at all or the measures prescribed refer solely to national powers and responsibilities that cannot be implemented at local or regional level.

*Q9: Did you have an opportunity to contribute to the drafting of your NRP in the policy field covered by the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs or your National Job Plan, even if only indirectly by way of the organisations representing cities and regions in your country? If so, please state briefly how.*

This question was answered by 42 of the 46 respondents. Sixteen respondents said that their authority or organisation contributed to the development/drafting of the NRP, although the degree of participation rates vary from marginal consultation (Prešov Autonomous Region), indirect contribution via associations of local or regional authorities (Picardie Region) to formalised membership in the process leading to the development of the NRP (City of Vienna). In contrast, 22 respondents said they were not consulted or did not contribute to the drafting of the NRP.

A selection of responses is given in the next box.

**City of Vienna, Austria:**

Yes, the Austrian Länder participated in the development of the NRP. The representation is through joint Länder representatives. The Austrian Association of Cities and Communities (Österreichischer Städtebund and Gemeindebund) are members of the respective forums that draft the NRP.

**Picardie Region, France:**

Until now, the Regional Council contributed indirectly to the NRP via the ARF (Association of Regions of France). Currently, the latter did not have the opportunity to participate directly in the negotiations, making it impossible to substantially modify the NRP.

**Prešov Autonomous Region, Slovakia:**

Partially; the regions have only been able to submit comments on the draft 2011 and 2012 National Reform Programmes. Only very few of their fundamental reservations were accepted.

**Malmö Municipality, Sweden:**

No, but it is supposed to take place through Sweden's local and regional authorities.

**Delft Municipality, Netherlands:**

No, Delft did not have this option because the organisation that was able to influence the process was not at the time part of the Delft network.

**Auvergne Region, France:**

No, the French regions have only been invited to submit their comments on the NRP, via the ARF (Association of Regions of France).

*Q10: Would you suggest any changes in your country's NRP for 2013 with respect to the areas covered by the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs (see Box 1)? If so, please state briefly which changes.*

This question was answered by 37 of the 46 respondents. Eleven respondents said that they have no suggestions for changes at this time. Among the remaining 26 respondents, the proposed changes vary widely and are categorised into content-related and governance-related changes (see next table).

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Suggestions for content changes</b>
Scarborough Borough Council, Tolna Town Council, Murcia region	Change targets to reflect local contexts
German-Speaking Community in Belgium	Focus NRP on specific issue each year as opposed to all issues
Malmö Municipality, Flemish Government	More focus on education and vocational training, life-long learning
Delft Municipality	Change poverty target to reflect economic crisis
Czech Republic Labour Office	Focus on better matching skills with labour demand
Prešov Autonomous Region	Include rural development
Mazowsze region in Warsaw	Include specific proposals to create jobs
Urban Community of Dunkirk	facilitate true territorialisation of employment
Olomouc Region	Include support for local partnerships between entities that have an impact on the labour market, especially businesses
Harghita County Council, Barneveld Town Council, Province of Groningen, Autonomous Region of Madeira, Auvergne Region, European P'ACTS Network	More scope for local considerations and solutions that reflect local needs. Clearer role for LRAs. Bottom-up approach for drafting the NRP

# 5. Managing and funding the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs

This section contains the following seven questions:

11) <b>How are your actions</b> regarding the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs (stated under question 3) <b>funded</b> ? In particular: <b>what is the role of the EU Structural Funds</b> in funding actions related to the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs? If the Structural Funds were involved in funding these actions, have they been coordinated with other policy instruments available in your country?
12) <b>Have any of the goals</b> you pursued to raise employment levels through the acquisition of new skills <b>been jeopardised</b> due to <b>fiscal consolidation policies</b> and subsequent financial difficulties?
13) With respect to the actions you have undertaken to implement the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs (as stated in your answer to question 3), <b>are any of them being carried out in partnership by different tiers of government</b> ? If so, please state (a) which administrative levels were involved and (b) which practical arrangements they took to manage those actions jointly.
14) <b>How should employment issues be addressed in the forthcoming Partnership Agreement</b> to be signed between your national government and the European Commission for the management of the Structural Funds under a Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020?
15) Please add <b>any further comments</b> you might wish to make on the matters dealt with in this questionnaire.

**Table 4: List of questions included in the second thematic block**

## 5.1 General Findings

Overall, it can be said for this thematic block that both cooperation across different levels of government (as well as horizontally) and accessing a variety of funding sources to put policies and projects into place are of vital importance to the respondents’ cities and regions. Ten of the 46 respondents stated that they are not engaged in partnerships with other tiers of government as well as a variety of organisations and businesses (an additional nine did not answer the question). In contrast, Scarborough Borough Council stated that the crisis has led to the emergence of **new partnerships** that offer some comfort that local priorities can be addressed.

The economic crisis and resulting shortage of public funds in many of the countries represented by the respondents have – in the majority of cases – led to concern about or actual financial cut-backs regarding existing or start planned, new programmes and actions. In two cases, it has led to the opposite effect: The

Parliament of Extremadura states that, because the measures being implemented to achieve the goals of one initiative – Plan 3E – are so compatible with fiscal adjustment measures and the difficult financial climate, they have not experienced funding problems. And the Alentejo Regional Delegation said that due to the importance of the actions in light of the crisis, they are being prioritised.

While many respondents (38 out of 46 answered this question) said that they use a variety of funding sources, including their own, the role of the European Structural Funds (ESF and ERDF) has been highlighted as important by the majority of respondents and as critical by some, especially the new EU Member States.

For the forthcoming Partnership Agreement, 35 respondents provided recommendations on how employment issues should be addressed. All respondents see the objectives of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs as critically important to boost economic recovery, address structural labour market issues, improve the match between available skills with labour market demands, and to promote continued improvement in job availability and quality. At the same time, the recommendations made vary widely, ranging from suggestions on how to distribute funds and coordinate activities vertically to how to specify regional boundaries and combining economic and social aspects.

## **5.2 Specific Findings**

*Q11: How are your actions regarding the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs (stated under question 3) funded? In particular: what is the role of the EU Structural Funds in funding actions related to the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs? If the Structural Funds were involved in funding these actions, have they been coordinated with other policy instruments available in your country?*

All but six respondents answered this question. The majority of responses to this question explained that actions relating to the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs are funded through a combination of local and/or regional, EU and in some cases private funds, but with varying levels of dependence. For example, for the Autonomous Region of Madeira the European Social Fund has been the main financial instrument for measures related to the Agenda. And Scarborough Borough Council explained that structural funds have supported enterprise activity in the form of Scarborough Enterprise Match and that the Scarborough Job Match programme was supported with an ERDF grant until June 2012. At the same time, fiscal consolidation has resulted in a reduction in scale of interventions supporting employment and skills in the borough, which has led to the formation of new partnerships to keep projects going. In contrast, Barneveld

Town Council has so far relied on local and provincial resources but plans to consider the ESF in the future.

**Harghita County Council, Hungary:**

We use our own budget, no ESF.

**Vysočina Region, Czech Republic:**

The activities are funded via the national budget. Education is also supported from regional funding and the structural funds also play an important role – especially the human resources and employment operational programme and the education for competitiveness operational programme.

**Hengelo Town Council, Netherlands:**

Actions taken at (sub)regional level are partly funded from additional national resources (Youth Unemployment Action Plan), provincial resources (Action for vulnerable youth), regional resources (Agenda for Twente) and municipal or re-integration resources (municipalities' "participation budget" or the UWV's re-integration funds). Structural Funds (ERDF, ESF) are always used where there is enough co-financing, but the rules should be made clearer and more flexible to allow for innovative new approaches.

**Government of Catalonia, Spain:**

EU Structural Funds play an important part in funding action under the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs carried out by the Catalan Employment Agency.

**Picardie Region, France:**

Actions in the Region are financed by EU structural funds, national but also regional. Coordination between these funds is made by the Programme Committee inter-programmes (CPIP).

**Dunkirk Community, France:**

The 3XL initiative benefits from an annual grant of € 2 million from the ESF. To maximise the contribution of European funds, a coalition has been established comprising the State services, the Region, the Northern Department and the Urban Community of Dunkirk.

**Province of Reggio Emilia, Italy:**

The actions regarding the “Agenda for New Skills and Jobs” have been funded mainly by the ESF, although coordinated with other national and regional policy instruments, i.e.,

- National funds for training leave (L.53/2000);
- National funds for workers’ health and safety (Art. 11 c.1, lett.B - D.Lgs 81/2008);
- National funds for retraining and re-entry of term-contract worker (L. 296/2006);
- Funds for compulsory education (L. 144/1999);
- Funds for interventions for professional training (L.236/93).

Additionally, the Province's funds for the achievement of the objectives and implementation of the actions, and funds of the Region of Emilia Romagna were used.

*Q12: With respect to the actions you have undertaken to implement the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs (as stated in your answer to question 3), are any of them being carried out in partnership by different tiers of government? If so, please state (a) which administrative levels were involved and (b) which practical arrangements they took to manage those actions jointly.*

This question captures the extent to which the respondents' organisations **engage with other levels of government** to combat the problems at the heart of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs. Nine respondents did not answer the question. Of the remaining, ten said that they are not carrying out any relevant actions in partnerships with other tiers of governments. They are Harghita County Council in Hungary, the Regional Labour Office in Kielce, Poland, the Panevėžys region in Lithuania, Delft Municipality in the Netherlands, the Autonomous Government of Catalonia in Spain, the Strzelce Opolskie District in Poland, the Autonomous Region of Madeira in Portugal, Kobylnica Town Council in Poland, the Trenčín Self-governing Region in the Slovak Republic and the City of Łódź in Poland.

All others work together with other tiers of government, typically on a range of projects. In some cases, the cooperation includes horizontal tiers of government, e.g., several counties or regional authorities. The City of Vienna, for example, has a Territorial Employment Pact Vienna, which is a partnership between the City of Vienna, the WAFF (Viennese Employees Support Fund), the Employment Service Vienna, the Federal Agency for Social Affairs, local office for Vienna and interest groups of employees. In Szamotuły, Poland, the Marshal's Office, the Starosta and the County Employment Office work together to monitor and prepare reports on the labour market actions taken.

*Q14: How should employment issues be addressed in the forthcoming Partnership Agreement to be signed between your national government and the European Commission for the management of the Structural Funds under a Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020?*

This question was answered by 36 of the 46 respondents. Among the responses received, the majority agrees that employment issues should be retained as priorities and strengthened by improving cooperation and coordination across different tiers of government and by giving regional and local authorities a greater role and flexibility in terms of programme design, implementation and funding decisions. The City of Solna in Sweden, for example, stated that

smooth cooperation between the European Structural Funds must be guaranteed and that employment for unemployed people depends on growth in SME's, which means that the ESF and ERDF are “two sides of the same coin”.

Continued learning and improving educational opportunities, e.g., certification of vocational training and informal forms of learning, are also seen as beneficial regarding future employment.

Scarborough Borough Council in the UK and the Hengelo Town Council, Netherlands, argue in favour of alternative approach to the definition of regions to make these geographies more relevant in terms of functional economies and labour markets.

Employment is also not only seen as a quantitative goal but also through a social and qualitative lens by some respondents. The City of Malmö in Sweden and the Province of Groningen in the Netherlands, for example, both said that both the social and the economic Agenda must be addressed. Delft Municipality in the Netherlands requests that a specific focus be placed on boosting the knowledge economy. And the Canary Islands, Spain, highlight the special challenges faced by the outermost regions of the EU and that employment issues should therefore be addressed with greater sensitivity, e.g., through the launch of a Pilot Project within the ESF.

With respect to the ESF, the respondents feel a need to clarify its role, simplify the rules, to make it more flexible, and to increase its size.

*Q15: Please add any further comments you might wish to make on the matters dealt with in this questionnaire.*

Eight respondents provided additional comments, which are shown in the following table.

<b>Regional/local Authority</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Scarborough Borough Council	We can identify with the aims and objectives of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs because we have already implemented 2 ERDF funded projects.
Hengelo Town Council	It is important for European policy not to further add to that burden with mutually exclusive or contradictory legislation or cumbersome administrative accounting and procedures. Social innovation needed to address problem of too few jobs for too many people, can new job approaches be developed and how to serve industry and business needs for new types of skills.
Pardubice Municipality	Improve the flow of information on a given project to regional level (kraj).
Prešov Autonomous Region	1. We recommend increasing awareness of the initiative and its measures in the EU Member States. It should be evident which institutions in the country are responsible for the implementation of measures in any particular initiative.
Tolna County Council	Simplifying the bureaucracy and system from applying for grants, as well as accounting procedures.
Autonomous Region of Madeira	The region will require significant EU support in the 2014-2020 financial period to meet Europe 2020 objectives.
Uusimaa Regional Council	The questionnaire is quite broad in scope and requires a detailed knowledge of EU programmes and processes. This might compromise the comparability of replies.
Auvergne Region	Lifelong exclusion from EU education and training programmes will be detrimental to job seekers and European mobility projects. If the European institutions want the public to switch to the 'FSE', funding rules and management must be simplified.

## 6. Conclusions

The Committee of the Regions conducted this survey to provide information regarding the ability of the Europe 2020 flagship initiative Agenda for New Skills and Jobs to deliver the intended added value to communities and regions throughout Europe. The questionnaire contains 15 questions and focuses on four themes:

- The policy challenges facing regions and cities in the context of the objectives of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs (questions 1 to 3);
- The relevance of the Agenda to address these policy challenges (questions 4 to 7);
- The relevance of the policies enacted by the country in which the region or city is located (questions 8 to 10) and
- The experiences made with regard to managing and funding the actions related to the Agenda (questions 11 to 15).

The survey received a total of 46 responses from 17 countries. The majority of responses came from or on behalf of regions (39%) followed by cities, towns and municipalities (33%) and counties/provinces (24%). Two responses representing 4% of total replies were submitted by an association of local and regional authorities and an association of organisations promoting socio-economic initiatives and activities in 7 EU countries (European P'ACTS Network).

The presentation of the findings in sections 2-5 can be used to draw a number of conclusions concerning

- the **strengths** of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs;
- the **weaknesses** of the Agenda; and
- **potential changes** that could be implemented following the mid-term review in 2014.

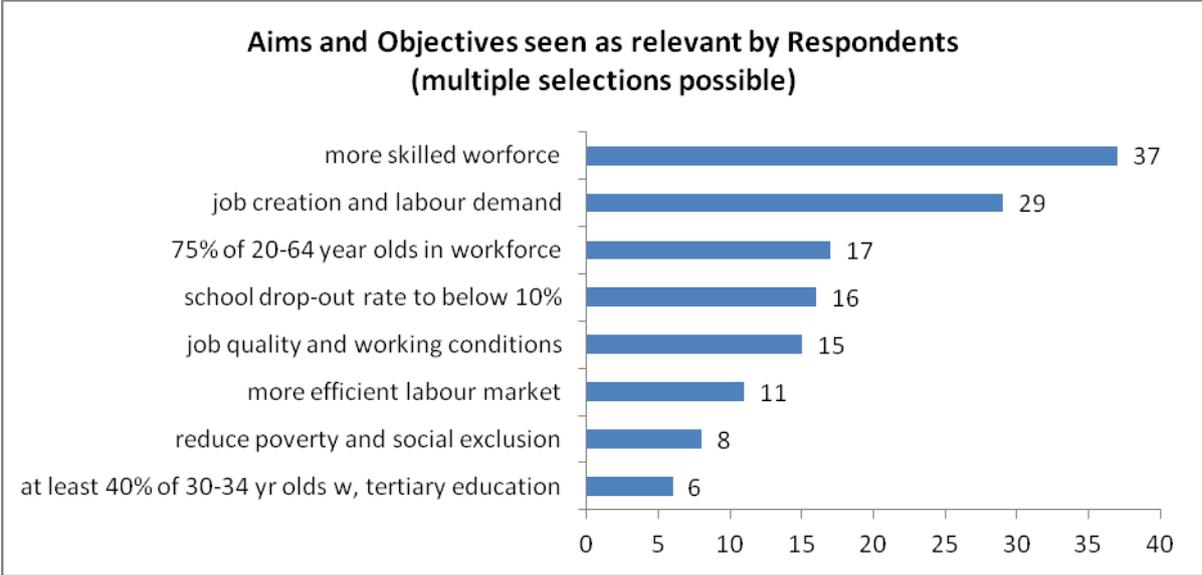
### *Conclusions regarding the strengths of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs flagship initiative*

With respect to the perceived **strengths of the flagship initiative**, the survey provides evidence that the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs reflects the key concerns of nearly all respondents (45 out of 46 or 98%)<sup>3</sup> to systematically and holistically tackle the problem of modernising labour markets with a view to raising employment levels and ensuring the sustainability of prevailing social

---

<sup>3</sup> One respondent did not answer the question correctly.

models. The more detailed break-down of aims and objectives is shown in the next chart.

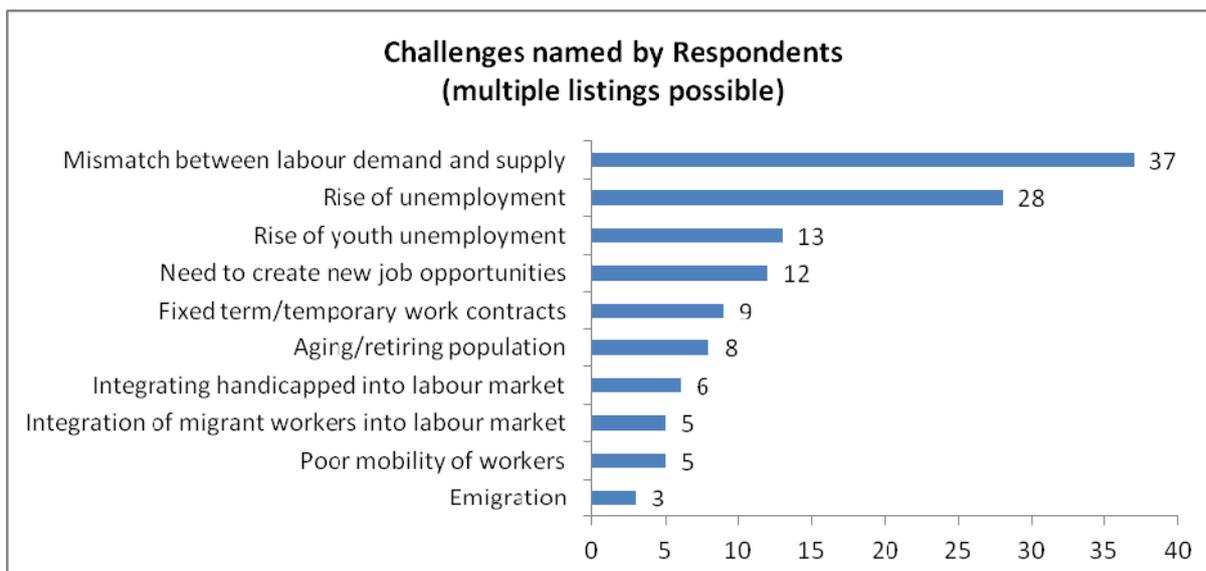


**Figure 3: Mentioning of the aims and objectives of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs by the respondents (question 4)**

The Agenda for New Skills and Jobs flagship initiative is seen by respondents to successfully address key socio-economic issues in the European Union, namely that the economic crisis has accelerated and deepened deep structural changes in the labour market and brought the growth in unemployment (28 respondents, 61%) and has led to a growing mismatch between the skills available and those demanded by employers to the forefront (37 respondents, 80%).

The Agenda was also found to be helpful to address important social and equity-related challenges, e.g., for persons with disabilities (6 respondents, 13%) and immigrants (5 respondents, 11%). Several respondents highlighted the fact that it is not only about creating more jobs but also about the quality of these jobs with the right balance between flexibility and job security, especially with respect to the growing number of temporary or fixed-term contracts (9 respondents, 20%).

The following chart provides a summary of the respondents’ concerns.



**Figure 4: Challenges named by respondents (question 1)**

While some labour market reforms and related issues (such as education) may be tackled at national level, the respondents acknowledged that the Agenda was reflecting regional interests to some extent.

Especially positively received was the Agenda's comprehensive approach to reducing unemployment and creating new jobs (29 respondents, 63%), which closely relates to increasing overall employment levels (target on the economically active population named by 17 respondents, 37%), improving education and school completion (target for early school-leaving of at most 10% named by 16 respondents, 35%), advanced training and skill building (target for share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary degrees named by six respondents, 13%), and a social agenda aimed at reducing poverty and social exclusion through employment (target for reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion named by eight respondents, 17%). Respondents recognised in particular the value of the educational goals that concentrate on actions to better meet the needs of the labour market and to reduce early school-leaving. In addition, a smaller number of respondents reflected positively on 'flexicurity' policies pursued under the Agenda (11 respondents, 24%), which is consistent with current labour market challenges.

The targets were also seen as helpful in monitoring and addressing the issues affecting the labour market and skill building. Although they also met with some criticism by the responding local and regional authorities due to their general nature (even in cases where the Member State has set its own targets), the respondents appear to understand the difficulty of designing a EU-wide agenda and associated actions that are specific and flexible enough to take local contexts into account.

The Agenda was also praised for its focus on vocational training and the general functioning of the labour market as a tool to address social issues in tandem with economic ones.

With respect to the policies being implemented by Member States, all of the respondents provided examples of actions they have taken or are taking to address employment and labour market issues. It is evident that in almost all cases (44 out of 46, 96%) the regional or local authority plays an important role in shaping and carrying out the actions. Their descriptions also reflect the in-depth knowledge that the respondents' organisations have of the employment and job challenges facing their regions, counties, cities and municipalities.

### *Conclusions regarding the weaknesses of the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs flagship initiative*

The **weaknesses and criticisms** voiced about the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs are to some extent direct consequences of the features that it was praised for: the EU-wide and all-encompassing scope of the Agenda means that it was also viewed as too theoretical and broad in scope, failing to take into account the diversity of different national and sub-national situations.

As a result, some respondents felt that their particular challenges and needs were being neglected (18 respondents, 39%). This includes, in particular, the outermost regions of the EU (i.e., Canary Islands) as well as localities that were hit particularly hard by the economic crisis or that face local circumstances that make it impossible to meet the national targets (e.g., an ageing population, lack of institutions of higher learning, a large influx of immigrants, or a job market that requires more vocational skills than tertiary schooling emphasised by the flagship initiative).

As a consequence, the strategy was perceived to encounter difficulties addressing the different challenges facing different parts of Europe. In addition, the implementation and funding of measures was perceived to be even more difficult due to the current economic recession (17 respondents, 37%).

Another type of criticism voiced relates to the **administrative procedures for obtaining funding from the EU structural funds** (EU Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund) for actions under the Agenda. On the one hand, the European structural funds were nearly unanimously seen as important by the respondents and many have used them to support a programme or action (23 respondents, 50%). The response by the Marshal's Office of the Mazowsze region in Warsaw that without these funds there would be a drastic

reduction in actions related to the flagship initiative is representative of at least a quarter of respondents' opinions.

At the same time, some respondents (5 respondents, 11%) feel that “more use could be made of the structural funds if there was less red tape involved in application, follow-up, reporting and disbursement.”<sup>4</sup> The most frequently made suggestion was to create a more flexible system that would allow authorities and programme operators to access different structural funds within a single bid if they address both infrastructure and delivery issues. It is in the same vein that another respondent (City of Solna) called for better cooperation between the funds because employment depends on growth in SMEs and hence the ESF and ERDF are “two sides of the same coin”.

Additional weaknesses mentioned in the context of funding for Agenda actions include that the structural funds should retain their major focus on skills and employment. The Twente region recommended that ERDF funds be managed by the provinces themselves.

These last comments are also represented in the treatment of employment issues in the **forthcoming Partnership Agreement** to be signed by national governments and the EU Commission for the management of the structural funds under a Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020. Many respondents believe that they should be made a priority – in conjunction with economic development – and have the necessary funding allocated to them such that true and measurable investments into job creation can be made (22 respondents, 48%, gave recommendations regarding employment and related funding). The coordination of national to local strategies is an important element as is the cross-sectoral coordination of activities in employment related areas such as education, skills development and innovation. It is concluded, however, that different points of view exist with respect to the level of government – national or regional – that is ultimately going to lead and take responsibility for the coordination of actions (six respondents, 13%, favour a greater role for the regions, in contrast, the Marshal's Office of the Mazowsze region in Warsaw said that the “Partnership Agreements should include mechanisms for coordinating employment policy at national level and take account of the opportunities provided by EU funding in this area.”)

This leads to a series of potential changes that should be considered following the Europe 2020's mid-term review in 2014.

---

<sup>4</sup> City of Malmö in response to question 11 in the questionnaire.

## *Proposed changes following the mid-term review*

### *Content:*

- Maintain the holistic approach for addressing labour market reforms to raising employment levels while also improving the concreteness of goals and actions in order to give clearer guidance not only to national governments but also the authorities at regional and local level that are often tasked with their implementation.
- Strengthen the social element in labour market reform and employment. There is a growing interest in social innovation and how it can help address the problem of too few jobs for too many people. Can new job approaches be developed and how can they also help to serve the needs of industry and businesses for new types of skills.
- Consider reviewing the goals and targets and their definition in light of regional and local differences. For example, not only 30-34 year olds should be considered in the share of people with tertiary degrees and in rural or smaller urban settings the employment and tertiary degree target might be simply impossible to meet.
- Maintain and make clearer the cross-linkages with the other Europe 2020 flagship initiatives, for example, the Youth on the Move initiative so that actions with multiple benefits across several initiatives can be developed and implemented.

### *Management and Funding:*

- It is important for European policy not to add further to the administrative burden faced by different levels of government in the Member States by passing mutually exclusive or contradictory legislation or cumbersome administrative accounting and procedures.
- Improve the flow of information about current and past projects across different levels of government and possibly across national borders, so that a learning process can take place.
- Increase awareness of the initiative and its measures in the EU Member States. It should be evident which institutions in the country are responsible for the implementation of measures in any particular initiative.
- Simplify the bureaucracy and system from applying for grants, as well as accounting procedures.
- Simplify and align the funding mechanisms for the EU Structural Funds and allow multiple sources of funding to be applied for simultaneously. They are critical sources of financial support for actions under the initiative, but respondents have also requested to make their structure,

administration and disbursement policies more flexible and involving less “red tape”.

- Be more sensitive towards the special situation and location of the outermost regions and make corresponding provisions in the Agenda and funding streams.



## 7. Annex I – Supplementary Information for Question 6

<i>Governance</i>	<i>Authorities</i>
Insufficient knowledge of the initiative and its measures, inadequate communication between the national level and regional and local levels in implementing the initiative's measures	Prešov Autonomous Region
The regions are not given enough room to manoeuvre, with little flexibility in the implementation of projects supported by the EU to adapt to changing labour market situations	Panevežys Regional Development Council
It is unclear how the Agenda fits into the governance framework of the Europe 2020 strategy. How will the results in the Member States be reported? And in what way does the flagship tie in with other monitoring instruments (e.g. JAF/scoreboards)?	Flemish Government
Difficult to meet national targets in rural areas, it is impossible to take account of specific regional conditions. The proposed actions concern problems identified at European level, which are not always present to the same extent at regional or national level	Marshal's Office of the Mazowsze region in Warsaw
At national level the funding methodology for further education does not encourage thinking about future labour market needs, focusing more on immediate and supply-side demand	Scarborough Borough Council
The strengths of the open method of coordination (OMC) has been used to help create standards at European level without jeopardising the independence of Member States on national policies. However, this relative independence lacking enforcement character also means that Member States are not obliged to carry out ambitious reforms at national level.	Picardie Region

<b><i>Content</i></b>	<b><i>Authority</i></b>
<p><u>Flexicurity</u></p> <p>There is the risk that flexicurity could create social problems, such as a drain of skilled workers from poor regions.</p> <p>The term flexicurity is still new and difficult to convey at regional and local levels</p> <p>No flexicurity in Sweden</p> <p>Local and regional governments play a very minor role in the fields of flexicurity and working conditions, even though there would be scope here for experimentation</p>	<p>Olomouc Region</p> <p>Ministry of the German-Speaking Community in Belgium</p> <p>City of Malmö</p> <p>Province of Groningen</p>
<p>Programmes have a strong tendency to focus on innovation. Attractive innovative projects are not generally implemented by the average SME. The programmes have therefore failed to reach a large part of the target group</p>	<p>Barneveld Town Council</p>
<p>Lack of sufficient funds which could have an impact on reducing unemployment; financial limitations due to the functioning of public employment services (insufficient number of job centres and careers advisers for the number of job-seekers)</p>	<p>Szamotuły County</p>

## 8. Annex II – Supplementary Information for Question 7

<i>Governance</i>	<i>Authority</i>
The role of these frameworks should be further highlighted by both the Commission and the Member States to ensure a solid implementation	Region Västra Götaland
In view of the continuing economic crisis, it would be worth rethinking economic policies and their labour market impact	Tolna County Council
Credible analysis be carried out of the feasibility of the Agenda's objectives in the light of the serious economic and social crisis and the fact that the resources allocated are clearly insufficient	Government of Canary Islands
Long-term strategy should be developed to make effective use of the human resources available within the EU to support innovation and research and development projects, with a view to the acquisition of new skills and knowledge in that area	Trenčín Self-governing Region
We expect greater account to be taken of the link between innovation, economic transition and the skills. This calls for a strategic approach which cuts across policies, sectors and in many cases businesses too. We thus expect policy consistency to be promoted on a lasting basis, including beyond the boundaries of the policy domains of work and education	Flemish Government
It is clear that neither the Member States nor the EU as a whole are going to meet the 2020 targets. A realistic review of these targets will be needed in 2014	Government of Catalonia
Structural, qualitative indicators should be defined in addition to quantitative targets	Harghita County Council
Clarification how the joint agreements set by EU, MS and regional authorities influence reaching of the joint targets	German-Speaking Community in Belgium
Reassessing the specified goals if it becomes clear they cannot realistically be reached. Concentrating more on preliminary preparation of measures, including the assessment and continuous monitoring of costs and benefits.	Vysočina Region
It may be necessary to fine-tune some of the measures as time goes on, in the light of their results	Parliament of Extremadura

<b><i>Governance</i></b>	<b><i>Authority</i></b>
A bigger emphasis on the role of validation and the European Qualification Framework (EQF) as a tool for increased labour mobility within Europe as well as a tool for strengthening the lifelong learning	Region Västra Götaland
To improve the employment situation and create new jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises and young entrepreneurs should be supported by changing the tax system so that newly founded SMEs pay less tax	Panevežys Regional Development Council
Implement regional funding policy to support companies and their needs, within the remit of SMEs Agency and the future Public Bank for investment and its regional variation. And allow easy access to financing tools for businesses	European P'ACTS Network
Locally/regionally managed aid and subsidies within each Member State	Alentejo Municipality
A more flexible approach to awarding structural funds and the potential for projects to draw down support from the different funds when they address infrastructure and delivery issues	Scarborough Borough Council
Concentrating far more on evaluating the efficacy of the resources invested and the price we are paying for reaching goals	Vysočina Region
Adequate funds to implement the Agenda would be a very positive step. Considering each region's own characteristics	Galicia – Norte Portugal European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation's (GNP-AECT)
It is by definition difficult to introduce flexicurity because of current laws, regulations and agreements/pacts relating to the labour market. -	City of Malmö
Integration of flexicurity and restructuring in NS4NJs (more comprehensive strategy)	Flemish Government
Greater emphasis on identifying the labour market needs of local/regional economies	Harghita County Council
Greater role for regional and local authorities in implementing the Agenda	Barneveld Town Council
Focus on smaller regions or on natural catchment areas	Pardubice Region

<b><i>Content</i></b>	<b><i>Authority</i></b>
Include policy programmes and specific action for young people. Include more tools (as funds and grants and funds) for developing actions at regional level regarding the achievement of the challenges and aims that affects especially young people.	Autonomous Government of Catalonia
Scope for experiments facilitating the transfer from education to the labour market (affecting both the education system and the business world). For example, working and training in companies, vocational schools, on-the-job training with individual career support to combat early school-leaving.	Hengelo Town Council
More attention for the 45+ yrs age group as unemployment in this age group is expected to grow further	Purmerend Municipality
Oversee specific measures for job seekers 45+ yrs	Director General for Employment at the Extremadura Public Employment Service
We would welcome it if the Agenda were to clarify the importance of partnerships as a policy capable of responding in a flexible way to changing skills and thus able to fill gaps in the labour market. Place the subject of labour migration higher up the Agenda, and to take account of the specific training needs of migrants. Greater consideration of (inter-European) mobility/training needs for migrants	Flemish Government
More specific details on how to help the outermost regions of the EU	Government of Canary Islands
More attention to social innovation, linking jobs and decent working conditions (e.g. job carving, job pools, mobility projects, social enterprises)	Hengelo Town Council
Greater focus on social innovation, taking as its starting point the question of how jobs and job-seekers can be matched under decent working conditions (e.g. job carving, labour pools, mobility projects, social enterprise). That would stimulate the operation of the job market	Province of Groningen
Strengthening of public intervention dedicated to support community employment is essential	European P'ACTS Network
Teleworking should be more strongly supported as a form of atypical employment	Tolna County Council

<b><i>Content</i></b>	<b><i>Authority</i></b>
Scope for experimenting with facilitating the connection between education and the job market (with impacts on both education and industry). Examples include: learning and working in industry; technical schools; on the job training with individual career counselling. These measures could counteract early school leaving	Province of Groningen
Introduction of incentives and direct engagement of trade unions and business to co-decide specific actions and enhance their effectiveness	Province of Reggio Emilia
More attention to self-employment and entrepreneurship as a response to the demand for greater flexibility	Hengelo Town Council
More focus on self-employment as an answer to the demand for more flexibility	Province of Groningen
No requirements should be imposed on, or guarantees required of, employers in order to receive financial support from the Employment Office to create jobs	Panevežys Regional Development Council
Encourage the development of devices and tools for ethical finance (guarantee bank loans, equity loan, repayable advance...) to support investment and working capital needs of social enterprises	European P'ACTS Network

## **9. Annex III – List of Respondents**

<b>No</b>	<b>Name of the LRA</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Member of Monitoring Platform</b>
1	Harghita County Council	Romania	County/Province	No
2	Ferreira do Alentejo Municipality	Portugal	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
3	TS-LKD Panevezio miesto skyrius	Lithuania	City/Town/Municipality and Region	No
4	City of Malmö	Sweden	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
5	Scarborough Borough Council	United Kingdom	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
6	Regional Labour Office, Kielce	Poland	Region	No
7	Hengelo Town Council	Netherlands	City/Town/Municipality	No
8	Purmerend Town Council	Netherlands	City/Town/Municipality	No
9	Barneveld Town Council	Netherlands	City/Town/Municipality	No
10	Ministry of the German-Speaking Community in Belgium	Belgium	Region	Yes
11	Province of Reggio Emilia	Italy	County/Province	No
12	European P'ACTS Network	France	Association of organisations	No
13	City of Vienna	Austria	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
14	Alentejo Regional Delegation	Portugal	Region	Yes
15	Olomouc Region	Czech Republic	County/Province	Yes
16	Szamotoły County	Poland	County/Province	No
17	Province of Groningen	Netherlands	County/Province	Yes
18	City of Strzelce Opolskie	Poland	City/Town/Municipality	No
19	Parliament of Extremadura	Spain	Region	No
20	Region Västra Götaland	Sweden	Region	Yes

<b>No</b>	<b>Name of the LRA</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Member of Monitoring Platform</b>
21	City of Delft	Netherlands	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
22	Urban Community of Dunkirk	France	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
23	Tolna County Council	Hungary	County/Province	No
24	Pardubice Municipality	Czech Republic	City/Town/Municipality	No
25	Employment and Learning Department of Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	Region	No
26	Lombardy Region	Italy	Region	Yes
27	Auvergne Region	France	Region	No
28	City of Solna	Sweden	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
29	European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation – Galicia-Northern Portugal (GNP-AECT)	Spain and Portugal	Association of LRAs	No
30	Prešov Self-Governing Region	Slovakia	Region	Yes
31	Regional Office of Extremadura in Brussels	Spain	Region	No
32	Madeira Autonomous Region	Portugal	Region	Yes
33	Government of the Canary Islands	Spain	Region	No
34	Kobylnica Town Council	Poland	City/Town/Municipality	No
35	Autonomous Government of Catalonia	Spain	Region	No
36	Pardubice Region	Czech Republic	County/Province	No
37	Marshal's Office of the Mazowsze region in Warsaw	Poland	County/Province	No
38	Trenčín Self-governing Region	Slovakia	Region	Yes

<b>No</b>	<b>Name of the LRA</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Member of Monitoring Platform</b>
39	Vysočina Region	Czech Republic	County/Province	No
40	Västerbotten county	Sweden	County/Province	No
41	Uusimaa Regional Council	Finland	County/Province	Yes
42	Flemish Government	Belgium	Region	Yes
43	Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia	Spain	Region	Yes
44	Łódź City Council	Poland	City/Town/Municipality	Yes
45	Government of Catalonia	Spain	Region	Yes
46	Council of the Picardie Region	France	Council of the Picardie Region	No

## **10. Annex IV – List of Local/Regional Initiatives reported in Contributions**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Authority</b>	<b>Initiative</b>
Hungary	Harghita County Council	County launched a <b>programme in 2012 to help young people find jobs and to pass on the technical skills</b> needed to find jobs to future generations. <b>Several thematic forums were organised</b> as part of this programme, during which young people could learn about jobs in the food industry, the arts, business start-ups and marketing areas.
Portugal	Alentejo Town Council	Support for entrepreneurship and job creation by means of <b>business incubators</b> .
UK	Scarborough Borough Council	Develop an <b>Employability Charter</b> that will both improve relationships between businesses and educational institutions and smooth transition from school to work Re-energise <b>Scarborough Job Match</b> , a job brokerage service that links local businesses looking for staff with local people looking for work. Will focus on SMEs
Poland	Regional Labour Office, Kielce	<b>Human Capital Operational Programme</b> The Regional Labour Office is responsible for implementing <b>priorities VI "The Labour market open for all" and VIII "Staff for the regional economy"</b> , both of which are aimed at making regional businesses more competitive.
Netherlands	Purmerend Town Council	A <b>strategic agenda for the labour market and education/the economy</b> is being drawn up in cooperation with business and educational establishments.
Netherlands	Barneveld Town Council	We are in the process of setting up a <b>new training centre in the poultry sector</b> at the Higher Vocational Education ("HBO") or Intermediate Vocational Training ("MBO") levels.
Belgium	German-Speaking Community	As part of the REK 1 of 16 projects is modelled according to the Agenda for New skills and Jobs, i.e., the <b>"Pact for Work and Economy"</b> . Another project <b>"Pathways to professional competency"</b> deals with the quality of the educational sector and the permeability of the different educational systems.

Country	Authority	Initiative
Austria	City of Vienna	Labour market and employment policy is responsibility of the federal government but Vienna supports these efforts through the " <b>Wiener ArbeitnehmerInnen Förderungsfonds</b> " (Viennese Employees Support Fund).
Sweden	Region of Västra Götaland	In December 2009 the national government commissioned our region to establish a <b>regional platform for competences and skills</b> . The purpose of this platform is to gain a better overview and knowledge concerning supply of education and the demand for skills and competences in coming years.
UK	Department for Employment and Learning (Northern Ireland)	<p>The <b>‘Success through Skills – Transforming Futures’</b> strategy articulates the overarching vision for the development of skills in Northern Ireland. Its aim is in line with the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs as it seeks to enable people to access and progress up the skills ladder, in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise the skills level of the workforce</li> <li>• Raise productivity</li> <li>• Increase levels of social inclusion by enhancing the employability of those currently excluded from the labour market ; and</li> <li>• Secure Northern Ireland’s future in a global marketplace</li> </ul>
Italy	Lombardy Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Development of educational and vocational training (ITS – Istruzione Tecnica Superiore)</li> <li>•Activation of higher technical education</li> <li>•Realisation of European projects of non-formal education (YiA)</li> <li>•Start up for young entrepreneurs and tutoring training</li> <li>•Initiatives to broaden the opportunities of access to working life (YiA)</li> <li>•Initiatives to set up a Youth Guarantee scheme in Lombardy Region (VP/2012/012/0135)</li> </ul>

<b>Country</b>	<b>Authority</b>	<b>Initiative</b>
Sweden	City of Solna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Solna model</b></li> <li>• <b>Regional cooperation in adult education</b></li> <li>• <b>The young business idea of the year</b></li> </ul>
Lithuania	Panevėžys District	Region has <b>programmes for local employment initiatives, job creation subsidies and support for self-employment</b>
Sweden	City of Malmö	Municipality develops <b>annual action plan</b> , including measures to improve skills, matching of skills to labour market needs, new measures for disabled people, various business start-up incubators <b>Malmö works with Copenhagen</b> to attract businesses and investors to the region
Poland	Szamotuły	Wielkopolska <b>System of Monitoring and Forecasting for Vocational Training. Partnership for the Development of the Wielkopolska labour market;</b> 2004-2014 <b>Local Development Plan</b> for Szamotuły county for the promotion of entrepreneurship and reduction of unemployment; <b>Education and Job fairs</b> bringing together employers and jobseekers and enabling young people to choose the right school.
Spain	Parliament of Extremadura	The Extremadura Government has adopted an ambitious plan to boost the region's production system, <b>PLAN 3E (Employment, Enterprise and Entrepreneurs)</b> . The plan focuses on entrepreneurs, innovative projects, exports, training as a mechanism for creating high-skill jobs, and changes in the regional labour market to foster a shift from public employment to private initiative.

Country	Authority	Initiative
Netherlands	City of Delft	<p>An <b>agenda for action</b> has been launched by the Haaglanden regional platform for labour market policy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reaching out to employers</li> <li>• developing the social sphere</li> <li>• addressing youth unemployment</li> <li>• addressing unemployment in the over-45 age group</li> <li>• cooperation with the UWV (Employee Insurance Agency)</li> </ul> <p><b>Other measures:</b> Youth Unemployment Action Plan set up at regional level; Taskforce Jobs/Sheltered Employment Act: targeted measures to reduce dependence on benefits and sheltered employment by limiting access, combating fraud and getting people back into the workforce; The UWV Werkbedrijf (Public Employment Service of the Employee Insurance Agency) system combines the Sheltered Employment Act and the Work and Social Assistance Act to create a more effective approach.</p>
Spain/Portugal	Regional Government of Galicia and the Regional Coordination and Development Commission of Northern Portugal (CCDR-N)	<p>The Regional Government of Galicia and the Regional Coordination and Development Commission of Northern Portugal (CCDR-N) are cooperating in this sector through <b>joint initiatives</b>, with a view to boosting the Euroregion's labour market.</p>

Country	Authority	Initiative
Slovak Republic	Prešov Autonomous Region	<p><b>Active labour market measures</b> – a package of programmes to improve access of the jobless to the labour market and jobs and to make that market effective</p> <p><b>Passive labour market measures</b> – a package of programmes geared to maintaining the income levels of the unemployed</p> <p>(Active and passive labour market measures are provided by the state)</p> <p><b>Prešov Self-governing Region Plan for Economic and Social Development (PHSR PSK)</b>, Unemployment and education are covered in Priority 9 (Improving secondary vocational education) and Priority 10 (Averting long-term unemployment)</p>
Netherlands	Province of Groningen	<b>Groningen Economic Action Programme 2012-2015</b>
Poland	City of Strzelce Opolskie	The main programme aimed at meeting the above-mentioned objectives is the <b>Human Capital Operational Programme</b> . Priority VI, VII and VIII.
Spain	Government of the Canary Islands	<p>The Canary Isles Jobs and Training Strategy (2012-2014) includes three annual employment plans: <b>Plan 2012, Plan 2013 and the Youth Employment Plan</b>:</p> <p>Main measures are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regionalising Active Employment Policies</li> <li>2. Training and Retraining Schemes for the Unemployed</li> <li>3. Some Special Employment Projects: Young People</li> <li>4. Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment</li> </ol>
Sweden	Region of Västerbotten	The region of Västerbotten has been tasked by the government with setting up a <b>regional skills platform</b> . This work is being done in cooperation with stakeholders in the county, including employer associations, trade unions, job centres, the county authorities and education providers from secondary school to university level.

Country	Authority	Initiative
Finland	Uusimaa Regional Council	Efforts to prevent the exclusion of young people through the <b>Youth Guarantee scheme</b> , which local authorities are responsible for implementing. The Youth Guarantee is offered to young people aged under 25 or young graduates aged 25-29 who have been seeking work for three months, and entails drawing up an employment plan together with the young person under which they benefit from services to help them get into work.
Belgium	Flemish Government	Flanders has developed the <b>concept of partnerships of excellence</b> in order to provide an answer to the bottleneck problem of the Flemish labour market. Partnerships take the form of cooperation initiatives between education, training and learning stakeholders which pool efforts to provide a training pathway based on a specific need/bottleneck in industry.
Italy	Province of Reggio Emilia	In January 2009, the Province of Reggio Emilia set up the “ <b>Unitá provinciale anti-crisi</b> ” (province anti-crisis unit), which groups municipalities, business associations, trade unions, charitable foundations and chambers of commerce to analyse the local situation and develop strategies on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social shock absorbers;</li> <li>• Professional training;</li> <li>• Support to enterprises;</li> <li>• “Osservatorio economico, legalitá e sicurezza” (organisation for monitoring of economic activities, legality and security);</li> <li>• Poverty reduction and family aids.</li> </ul>

Country	Authority	Initiative
France	Region Auvergne	<p>In 2011 Auvergne launched the "<b>Job Seeds</b>" initiative with three objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•to find out how employment will change in the traditional sectors, allowing us to safeguard existing jobs and adapt to future needs,</li> <li>•to identify the new skills that will be needed in these areas in the future in order to create local know-how required for these new jobs,</li> <li>•to define what promising types of new innovative activities will emerge and develop in the future, and what jobs they will create, in order to generate the necessary skills.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>AUDACE (audacity) project</b> aims to help less-skilled job-seekers improve their personal and professional skills. Under the project, the Region, with the support of the European programme 'Leonardo', offers 8-week business traineeships in Europe. These courses aim to provide a professional experience but also to empower job-seekers and their ability to geographical mobility. At the end of their training, a Europass Mobility certificate is awarded to participants so that they can demonstrate their enhanced experience on their CV.</p>
Portugal	Alentejo Regional Delegation	<p><b>National Strategic Reference Framework</b> (which constitutes the framework for applying Community economic and social cohesion policy in Portugal in 2007-2013)</p> <p><b>National Reform Plan</b> (highlighting the re-launch of public service employment and the vocational training system targeting employability, amongst other specific initiatives which are being devised as part of the objective entitled 'Boosting Employment', as well as other measures and changes envisaged in cross-cutting, complementary areas outlined by the Portuguese Government to achieve the objectives defined for the five major Europe 2020 strategy objectives)</p>

Country	Authority	Initiative
Poland	City of Łódź	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Łódź Integrated Development Strategy 2020</b></li> <li>• <b>Strategy for resolving social problems in Łódź 2011-2015</b></li> <li>• <b>The City of Łódź Educational Development Policy 2020+</b></li> <li>• <b>The 2007-2013 County Programme to promote employment and activate the local labour market in the City of Łódź</b></li> <li>• <b>Young People in Łódź</b></li> </ul>
France	Picardie Region	<p>Since 2010, the Picardie region leads the <b>Plan of Educational Success</b>, an action against school dropout, which is a major challenge for the region.</p> <p>Regarding the goal of having at least 40% of 30 to 34 years with tertiary degrees the Region has adopted the <b>scheme of higher education and research</b> to promote and facilitate access to higher education.</p>