



## Press Release

Luxembourg, 27 February 2018

### Free movement of workers: better targeting of funds needed, say EU Auditors

**The European Commission has tools in place to ensure the free movement of workers but incomplete information on what is happening in practice, and there are weaknesses in the design and monitoring of EU-funded activities, according to a new report from the European Court of Auditors. The auditors say that better targeting of EU funds would aid worker mobility.**

They assessed how the Commission ensures the freedom of movement of workers, and the effectiveness of EU action on labour mobility. They visited the five Member States with either the largest inflows of non-national workers or the largest outflows of workers to other countries, i.e. Germany, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania and the United Kingdom.

They found that the Commission provides useful information on workers' rights through several channels, but awareness could be improved. While the Commission and Member States have addressed long-standing issues, such as the recognition of professional diplomas, obstacles persist. The level of the data on skills and labour imbalances held by Member States varies, so the Commission is working with them to rectify this.

*"This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the free movement of workers," said George Pufan, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the report, "but the tools in place for facilitating labour mobility can be improved, while EU funding is difficult to identify and inadequately monitored."*

Under the European Social Fund, managed jointly by the European Commission and the Member States, up to €27.5 billion is available to Member States to address labour mobility over the 2014-2020 period. However, the amounts actually used for this purpose are unknown, say the auditors. The Commission manages the Employment and Social Innovation programme, under which EURES (European Network of Employment Services) promotes voluntary geographical mobility with its funding package of €165 million for the same period.

The EURES job mobility portal is the main EU tool for facilitating labour mobility but faces significant challenges, not least because many public employment services do not use it to publish all of their

*The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors' special report. The full report is available at [www.eca.europa.eu](http://www.eca.europa.eu).*

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vacancies. Furthermore, an analysis of vacancies posted via the portal frequently revealed that information needed by jobseekers had been omitted. For example, 39 of 50 vacancies had no deadline for applications, and 44 had no start date.

A review of 23 EURES cross-border projects revealed that few had defined results, while weaknesses in monitoring meant that outputs and results could not be aggregated. According to Commission figures, only 3.7% of jobseekers' contacts with EURES advisers in 2016 lead to job placements. Moreover, the auditors add, most of the public employment services surveyed stated that they were unable to quantify actual job placements.

The auditors recommend that the Commission:

- measure awareness of the information available on the free movement of workers and on discrimination
- make better use of available information to identify types of discrimination
- work with Member States to improve the collection of data on labour mobility and labour market imbalances
- improve the design and monitoring of EU funding for labour mobility

Member States should:

- improve their monitoring of EURES's effectiveness
- address the limitations of the EURES job mobility portal in order to make it a true European placement tool

## Note to Editors

The free movement of workers is one of the four fundamental freedoms of the European Union. It entails the abolition across Member States of any discrimination based on nationality as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment. In 2015, 11.3 million EU-28 movers of working age were living in an EU Member State other than their country of citizenship. This equates to 3.7% of the total working-age population across the EU.

Special Report No 6/2018 "Free Movement of Workers – the fundamental freedom ensured but better targeting of EU funds would aid worker mobility" is available on the ECA website ([eca.europa.eu](http://eca.europa.eu)) in 23 EU languages.