Focus areas of the Labour Market Committee 2020

Background

The Nordic Council of Ministers for Labour (MR-A) has created a cooperation programme for the period 2018-2021, delineating the strategic focus areas of the formal intergovernmental cooperation during this period.

With this as a starting point, the Labour Market Committee has decided to concentrate its efforts on the following three areas in 2020:

1. **Mobility among job seekers bringing their benefits with them abroad.**

Providing workers with the possibility to seek employment in other regions than where they live (internal mobility) or in another country (external mobility) would give companies improved access to qualified workers and make it easier for job seekers to find employment. Therefore, the Committee wants to examine how to further both geographic and occupational mobility among beneficiaries, as well as mobility through commuting. This analysis will be divided into two parts:

**Part 1 – internal mobility**

Analyses from the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) show that the likelihood of both geographic and occupational mobility increases when the benefit period is drawing to a close. While the probability that the unemployed will move in order to get a new job is low, they show great flexibility with regards to commuting and occupational mobility in particular. Many will change to a different profession after experiencing a period of unemployment. Considering possible future automatisation/digitisation of the labour market, this may prove to be an important development. The unemployed are more mobile when unemployment is high and mobility varies greatly between different groups of unemployed people.

**Part 2 – external mobility**

Research carried out by the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR) shows that 48% of job seekers (2018) coming to Denmark to seek employment while bringing their unemployment benefits with them from their home country (EU Regulation 883/2004) are from the other Nordic countries. Despite the close interconnectedness of the Nordic labour markets, there are some conjunctural and structural differences which can result in a scarcity of a certain kind of labour in one country while there is a surplus of this labour in one of the other Nordic countries.

The Labour Market Committee wishes to create more comparable, Nordic knowledge regarding mobility among beneficiaries bringing their unemployment benefits with them when they travel between the Nordic countries as well as possibly the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

The committee therefore proposes that an analysis is carried out in order to support initiatives which can ensure that mobile Nordic job seekers staying in another region or in a different Nordic country to a greater extent will find occupation in companies that are short of manpower. This analysis should also make it possible for the national authorities of the Nordic countries to exchange experience and best practice.

Studies within this theme may relate to problems such as:

- What are the requirements for the mobility of beneficiaries in the Nordic countries?
How are the mobility requirements employed in practice?
How can we increase the geographical and occupational mobility of beneficiaries both internally and externally?
Are there any evidence-based studies/controlled experiments/effect studies pointing to effective instruments or legislation on the area? What works and what doesn’t?
What is the typical profile of job seekers looking for employment in another Nordic country whilst receiving unemployment benefits from their home country? Such as what is their average age, education, work experience etc.? (EU-Regulation 883/2004)
What obstacles do the job seekers encounter when moving to different country/region or changing profession?
What is the user experience of the job seekers travelling around the countries and how are they received in regard to registration, job search support etc.?
Which effective measures or support to ensure a higher degree of mobility are there in the Nordic countries? (For instance, regulations, financial support for moving, possibility for job interviews, initiatives, services?)
How many job seekers successfully find employment in another country while receiving unemployment benefits from their home country?

Supplementary links:
https://www.nav.no/no/NAV+og+samfunn/Kunnskap/Analyser+fra+NAV/Arbeid+og+velferd/Arbeid+og+velferd/geografisk-og-yrkesmessig-mobilitet-blant-arbeidsledige

2. Analysis of the encounter between employment services and foreign workers.

Foreign workers constitute an important supplement to the national work force in the Nordic countries, supporting growth and welfare despite current demographic trends. Therefore, national employment services should be equipped to engage with foreign workers and provide services which lead to the best possible match between job seekers and vacant national positions.

The committee proposes to make an analysis of the encounter between national employment services and foreign workers who have recently arrived or who have just become unemployed. The analysis should expose whether frontline employees and IT systems in the Nordic countries responds to foreign language speakers, persons with foreign ID, etc.. The focus of this theme is on newly arrived foreign workers.

Studies within this theme could for instance focus on the following questions:

- How does the encounter between national employment services and foreign workers take place?
- Which requirements and possibilities are there on a national level for getting registered as a job seeker for foreign workers?
- Which possibilities exist for the foreign workers in the IT-systems?
- Which services are accessible for foreigners who don’t speak the local language? Is it, for example, possible to use the IT-systems, set up CV and profiles, receive guidance, participate in vocational programmes, etc. in other languages?
- Which digital tools are used and what kind of assistance do the countries provide to job seekers who lack digital proficiency? Do foreigners without national ID or language skills have access to these?
- Which policies, guidelines or checklists do the employment services use?
- What is the division of labour between public employment services, EURES and other central actors on the area?
- Do tools exist for improving the skills of the frontline employees and their handling of encounters with foreign job seekers? For instance education regarding European legislation, anti-discrimination, etc., special initiatives to prevent language barriers?
3. **Labour market integration of women who are not participating in integration or establishment programmes.**

The Labour Market Committee wishes to put an emphasis on women who have the right to participate in integration and establishment programmes, but aren’t signed up for them. The Committee wishes to emphasise this group in particular in the study because members of this group generally are less likely to make use of the typical initiatives provided by employment services.

Studies within this theme could for instance focus on the following questions:

- How does the labour market integration for these women look like in relation to other similar groups, for instance with regards to education level, age and household composition?
- Which initiatives have been launched in the various Nordic countries to further the establishment/integration of these women on the labour market?
- How do the employment services and other relevant actors in the various countries work with outreaching activities?
- How do the employment services and other relevant actors in the various countries work to counteract stereotypes and attitudes within their own organisation towards this group?
- What is being done in respect to parental leave and daycare? (which could be relevant to the integration efforts)
- Are there any examples of non-state initiatives for this group, for instance from civil society?