



Cross-border Impact Assessment 2016

Dossier 8: Cross-border Employment Services: UWV



The Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross border cooperation and Mobility / ITEM is the pivot of research, counselling, knowledge exchange and training activities with regard to cross border mobility and cooperation.

Maastricht University

Cross-border Impact Assessment 2016

Dossier 8: Cross-border Employment Services: Effects of Mandate and Capacities of the Dutch National Employment Service UWV

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The *Institute for transnational and Euregional cross border cooperation and Mobility / ITEM* is the pivot of research, counselling, knowledge exchange and training activities with regard to cross-border cooperation and mobility.

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Introduction

Euregions and other Euregional cross-border organizations have been pointing out for years that a functioning cross-border labour market is an important prerequisite for the economic strength and the HR policy of border regions. An important factor in this context, discussed as a problem on the EU, national and Euregional level in recent years, is the lack of cooperation between national services in the field of employment services. The Euregio Meuse-Rhine, for example, finds in its 2020 strategy document that, when it comes to national employment services, the cross-border labour market is still hampered by the fragmentation of the available information on vacancies and available purchasing potential, as well as, among other things, by the lack of integrated employment services.¹ Similar findings led to the establishment of the European network EURES within the EU more than two decades ago, but not until recently did the desire for intensive cross-border cooperation become legally anchored too.² As a consequence, cross-border employment services for job seekers, for instance, and cross-border services for employers are not voluntary options for national public employment services³ but a mandatory task. To enforce this, a special EURES Regulation has been in place since 2016 (2016/589 Regulation (EU)). This Regulation explicitly states that the growing interdependence of the labour markets requires reinforced cooperation⁴ between public employment services, including those in the border regions. This study investigates the impact of the approach of the Dutch National Employment Service UWV on cooperation regarding cross-border employment service provision. Chapter 1 provides the research questions and definitions, as well as the method utilised. Chapter 2 describes the special research topic, namely two ongoing projects regarding the structural reinforcement of cross-border employment service provision on the border of the Dutch province of Limburg. Chapter 3 uses these concrete projects to assess the impact of the current staffing capacities and current mediation practices at UWV on cross-border service provision and cooperation. Chapter 4 discusses the effects of the current implementation of the EURES network by UWV in order to meet the requirements of reinforced cross-border employment services. Chapter 5 asks the question to which extent UWV has created the technical conditions for recording the data of foreign job seekers and the job offerings of foreign employers. Chapter 6 investigates whether UWV has adequate means for the further training of job seekers with a view to the special requirements made of frontier workers and to the role of other financial instruments, such as a new sectoral plan, in this process. Chapter 7 summarizes the results and conclusions.

¹ See: EMR 2020: A future strategy for the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, March 2013, p. 25.

² European Employment Service, Europees netwerk van de diensten voor arbeidsvoorziening. (European Employment Service, European network of employment services.)

³ This text uses the term 'public employment service' for organizations such as the Dutch UWV, the German Bundesagentur für Arbeit or the Flemish VDAB. The term originated in the new EURES 2016/589 Regulation (EU)

⁴ See preamble, recital 5, Regulation (EU) 2016/589 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2016 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, and amending Regulations (EU) No 492/2011 and (EU) no 1296/2013.

1. Research Questions, Definitions, Method

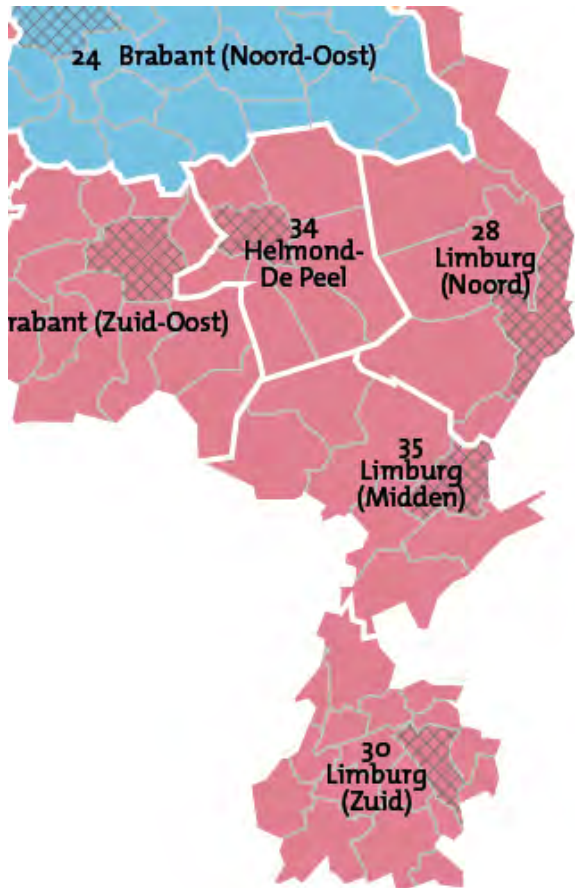
1.1 Research questions and the border region examined

This impact assessment examines the effects of the task and the resources of the Dutch employment service UWV⁵. To what extent is the UWV currently able to cooperate more closely with the German and Belgian partners of the public employment services, in accordance with the requirement of the new EURES Regulation? This is not an ex-post investigation into the effects of a piece of legislation, but an inquiry into the existing and future effects of the institutional approach of a body on its defined task immediately after the entry into force of a new EU regulation. To what extent have current services already been adapted to service provision to job seekers and employers in the neighbouring countries, and which institutional barriers exist to cross-border employment service provision and cooperation with such service providers in the neighbouring countries? In that sense, this research topic differs from the other topics of this cross-border impact assessment. This topic investigates the extent to which a national body has been given the appropriate task and the appropriate means to achieve the aim of the new EURES regulation, namely 'closer cooperation' between cross-border employment services. The backdrop to the research question is a debate that mainly takes place at the level of the Dutch border provinces and municipalities. To what extent can the UWV, in its current form, deliver on enhanced collaboration in its association with the national partners, i.e. the municipalities and their employment services, and its cooperation with the German and Belgian partners? To which extent, moreover, does the current organisation of the EURES activities as separate from the UWV's regular work fit the new challenges?

Two pilot projects between UWV, Bundesagentur and other actors in Limburg and NRW were examined and coached in order to achieve a more precise limitation of the research area. These projects are aimed at structurally strengthening cross-border cooperation according to the new EURES Regulation. In the first place, the analysis of these projects produces statements on the possibilities of the UWV vis-a-vis the actors involved in the relevant labour market regions. The projects are also discussed from the point of view of the entire UWV. The physical research area of the cross-border projects extends to the labour market regions in the province of Limburg in the Netherlands, i.e. North Limburg, Central Limburg and South Limburg. In the German Land of North Rhine-Westphalia, the area includes the German National Employment Service districts of Aachen-Düren, Mönchengladbach and Krefeld.

⁵ The abbreviation UWV stands for 'Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen' (Institute for Employee Benefit Schemes.) According to its own description, the UWV is responsible for the effective implementation of the national employee insurance scheme, and it offers services concerning the labour market and labour market data (see www.uwv.nl).

Table 1: the labour market regions in the Dutch province of Limburg (Classification since 2013)



Source: Samenvoordeklant.nl

The Netherlands distinguishes 35 labour market regions, in which municipalities and the UWV provide services to job seekers and employers. The task division depends on the agreements between municipalities and the UWV.⁶ The current classification dates back to the year 2012 and was laid down in the framework of the so-called SUWI Act on the structure of the Implementation Organisation for Work and Income (Structuur van de Uitvoeringsorganisatie Werk en Inkomen (SUWI)).⁷ The actors of the UWV in Limburg collaborate across the border with their colleagues from the national employment services of Krefeld, Mönchengladbach and Aachen-Düren. As a result, the physical research area comprises parts of two Euregions: one part in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine and another in the Euregion Rhine-Meuse-North.

⁶ A complete map can be found on the UWV website under <http://www.uwv.nl/zakelijk/Images/35arbeidsmarktregios.pdf>.

⁷ The Dutch law on the 'Structure of the Implementation Organisation for Work and Income' (SUWI Act), effective as per 2 October,) <http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0013060/2016-08-01>.

1.2 Definitions

The key term 'employment services', as used in this study, is meant to signify the provision of services, in the sense of active mediation between job seekers and employers with the aim to fill in vacancies. In the new EURES Regulation, however, the term 'employment services' is meant to refer to the service provider as well, namely 'a legal entity acting lawfully in a Member State, which delivers performance for workers seeking employment and for employers seeking to recruit employees'. In this sense, employment services could include commercial providers, in addition to public institutions. Since this study disregards commercial providers, the concept 'public employment services' is used here to narrow down 'employment services'. This category includes, for example, the Dutch UWV, the German Bundesagentur für Arbeit and the Belgian VDAB. In accordance with the Regulation, Public Employment Services are 'establishments of the Member States, which, as part of competent Ministries, public bodies or bodies governed by public law, are charged with implementing active policies on the labour market and offer high-quality employment services in the general interest'.⁸

1.3 Methods

The study is based on the analysis of the legal background of especially the new EURES Regulation and official documents of the UWV (e.g. the SUWI Act), EURES and other sources. The main sources, however, are the qualitative interviews with employees of the public employment services, EURES advisers and many informal discussions in the course of 2015 and 2016. These are mainly insights obtained from participatory observation during two projects on the border between Dutch Limburg and the German Land of North Rhine-Westphalia. The ITEM employee responsible for this study was actively involved in the discussions between UWV South Limburg, municipalities, the German National Employment Service (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) Aachen-Düren and Jobcenter Urban Region on the establishment of cross-border public employment services in Kerkrade/Herzogenrath. In addition, he has often taken part in discussions about closer cooperation between UWV North Limburg, the Arbeitsagentur Krefeld (employment service) and the municipalities of Venlo and Roermond. Figures on the total number of relevant cross-border service provisions by UWV or the separate services are not included. This problem was also identified by the national 'actieteam grensoverschrijdend werk en economie' (action team cross-border work and economy) during its activities in the year 2016.⁹ On the one hand, there are almost no comparative figures of the last few years, and, in addition, they cannot be compared with the number of employment services provided by the partners in the neighbouring country. The issue of comparative employment-service figures is currently being discussed among the EURES partners in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine.¹⁰ This means that currently no analysis is possible

⁸ The definitions are provided in Article 3 of the EURES 2016/589 Regulation (EU).

⁹ This difficulty was identified during work meetings with practitioners in employment services in the year 2016.

¹⁰ As shown by the results of an ongoing ITEM study into the definitions and processes of EURES cooperation in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine.

that connects the quality of cross-border employment services with Euregional economic development. Although individual job placement results with additional capacities can be explained, for example in North Limburg, no general statements about economic development or the development of the unemployment figures can be derived from them.

1.4 Principles, benchmarks and indicators

What are the effects of the UWV approach on the border regions? ITEM generally makes a distinction between consequences or effects

- that directly affect citizens in their Union citizenship, aimed at non-discrimination and European integration in general;
- between the consequences for Euregional economic and sustainable development;
- and the consequences for Euregional coherence, the cooperation between cross-border actors.

The UWV study puts emphasis on the first and third aspect of cross-border effects. Since the new EURES Regulation expressly constitutes a decree on closer cross-border cooperation, it makes sense to study the impact of the implementation and approach of UWV on the cooperation with German and Belgian actors. Since fundamental rights of EU citizens in the area of freedom of movement and the use of employment services are at stake, their perspective also plays an essential role, as do the implications for European integration. As stated earlier, it is not possible to draw direct conclusions about the positive or negative effects of cross-border services on Euregional economic development. This is in part due to a lack of data that would allow for cross-border comparisons in the field of employment services. Nevertheless, an attempt is made hereinafter to develop the appropriate principles, benchmarks and indicators for this field, so that they may be used for a more in-depth discussion about EURES and better statistical registration of cross-border placement services.

Table 3: Principles, benchmarks, Indicators

Principles	Benchmarks	Indicators
<p><u>European integration/freedoms/non-discrimination</u></p> <p>The free movement of labour is a basic human right and one of the pillars of the internal market of the Union, anchored in Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).</p> <p>Article 5 of the Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 - non-discrimination</p> <p>A national of a Member State who seeks employment in the territory of another Member State shall receive the same assistance there as that offered by the employment offices in that State to their own nationals seeking employment.</p>	<p>Job seekers who may be able to find work in the neighbouring country will get personal coaching that is tailored to meet the job requirements in the neighbouring country.</p> <p>Job seekers and employers from the neighbouring countries will receive the same support as Dutch actors, and their data will be recorded by the UWV.</p> <p>Employment services will have adequate financial means to provide adequate further training to potential frontier workers.</p>	<p>Does the UWV have the staffing necessary to offer personal guidance beyond regular domestic mediation to job seekers?</p> <p>Which services can job seekers and employers from neighbouring countries expect from the UWV?</p> <p>Are the data of foreign job seekers and employers being entered in the UWV's system according to the information of national actors?</p> <p>Which financial resources does UWV have for the further training of potential frontier workers?</p>
<p><u>Euregional economic and sustainable development</u></p> <p>Core objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy regarding employment, research and development and a sustainable energy sector, development and poverty</p> <p>Labour-market policy objectives for the Euregions (example: EMR):</p> <p>Improvement of the relationship between supply and demand of labour, as well as improved use of training and development capabilities.</p>	<p>A benchmark for employment (in accordance with Europe 2020)</p> <p>75% of the 20- to 64-year-olds will be employed</p> <p>Benchmark Euregion (EMR):</p> <p>Clear expansion of cross-border job supply and demand.</p> <p>Improved use of Euregional training and development capabilities</p>	<p>Euregional economic growth</p> <p>Cross-border figures on unemployment and vacancies for Euregional economic areas</p> <p>Labour-force participation of different age groups for Euregional economic areas</p> <p>Number of frontier commuters and cross-border business activities</p> <p>Figures for the cross-border use of Euregional training and development capabilities</p>

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<p><u>Euregional cohesion/cross-border cooperation</u></p> <p>'The increasing mutual dependence of the labour markets requires a closer cooperation between employment services, including those in the border regions...'</p> <p>Regulation (EU) 2016/589</p> <p>'... in border regions the territorially competent authorities of two or more Member States regularly exchange information on the jobs and work requests available in their districts and directly perform the combination and evaluation of that information in a similar manner as they do with the other bodies of their own national employment agencies.'</p> <p>Regulation (EU) No 492/2011, Article 15 (b)</p>	<p>The national employment services shall structurally make staff available for closer cooperation.</p> <p>Cross-border employment services shall be implemented structurally differently from national services on the basis of the special requirements, with a prominent role for the personal guidance of job seekers and employers.</p> <p>Adequate equipment and financing of EURES advisers is an important building block of active cross-border employment services.</p> <p>More cross-border placements: 800 placements of Dutch in Germany the in the year 2016, 200 of whom from Limburg</p>	<p>Does the UWV have the staffing capacity for more cross-border services and cooperation?</p> <p>EURES facilities in The Netherlands:</p> <p>Does the UWV use the opportunities that EURES offers regarding cross-border employment services?</p> <p>What are the UWV's financial resources for further training of potential frontier workers? What have been the effects of the Grenzenloos Werken sectoral plan (Working Without Borders) so far?</p>
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Own interpretation

Over the past decades, the EU has actively supported the cooperation of the national public employment services by rebuilding the EURES networks. Recently, the foundations, i.e. the fundamental legal principles and objectives, have been reinforced by the new EURES Regulation. The preamble to this document points to the principal rights of EU citizens regarding free movement. In particular, clear rights are described that apply to the search for work in another EU Member State. Under this Regulation, public employment support services are open to 'all citizens of the Union, who, according to Article 45, TFEU, have a right to commence employment and to their family members.'¹¹

The underlying aim is to ensure the free movement of all workers by voluntary mobility of labour in accordance with Union law and national laws and practices, as set out in Article 46 (a), TFEU. This article of the Treaty stipulates that the Council and the European Parliament shall take measures towards the establishment of free movement, among others 'by ensuring close cooperation between the employment services of the individual countries'. EU citizens seeking

¹¹ See preamble, recital 4, Regulation (EU) 2016/589.

employment in another EU Member State are therefore legally entitled to the same support that the employment agencies of this country guarantee their own nationals. This is also laid down in Article 5 of the Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 on the free movement of workers within the Union, dated 5 April 2011. This obligation and the requirement of closer cooperation between the employment services constitute the essential legal background to this inquiry, from which the principles of cross-border placement can be derived. They affect the areas of free movement of workers and non-discrimination, as well as the requirements of territorial cohesion, in the sense of closer cooperation between the public employment services. Since the beginning of 2016, the Dutch Grenzenloos Werken (Working Without Borders) sectoral plan has provided statements on cross-border employment services. The objective is to create 800 jobs in Germany from the Netherlands, as part of additional funding from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The assessment of the feasibility of the transposition so far is also an indicator for the approach of UWV and the coordination of cross-border cooperation.

Subsequent studies are advised to also incorporate indicators of economic development, so as to make the connection between intensified cross-border employment services and, for example, labour-force participation rates. As mentioned before, however, this requires both improvements in the comparability of cross-border placement successes and in customised Euregional economic data.

2. Research theme: two projects for structural reinforcement of the cross-border employment services

This study is based on the active participatory observation by ITEM of two projects for the structural reinforcement of the cross-border employment service collaboration between UWV and the Bundesagentur für Arbeit at the border of the Dutch province of Limburg and North Rhine-Westphalia. The first project was initiated by the province of Limburg and the municipality of Kerkrade in South Limburg in 2015. The outcomes of this study are based on the participatory observation of numerous project-group meetings at the technical and political level. The ITEM employee concerned had an active advisory function in these meetings and thus the opportunity to carry out many interviews with the project participants during the development phase. The interviewees were practitioners in the field of employment services of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit Aachen Düren, UWV South Limburg, WSP Parkstad, Podium 24 (Maastricht-Heuvelland) and Jobcenter city district of Aachen. It was also possible to take part in the meetings of the steering group, the political committee of the project with the political leaders of the Dutch municipalities, the province of Limburg and the responsible managers of the UWV and the Bundesagentur für Arbeit. September 2016 marked the opening of the first common 'cross-border employment service' of the UWV, Dutch municipalities and the Agentur für Arbeit Aachen-Düren in the Eurode Business Center on the border of Kerkrade (NL) and Herzogenrath (D). The format is based on the common branch of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit Offenburg and its French partner Pôle emploi in Strasbourg-Kehl on the French-German border. This attempt to achieve closer

structural cooperation of cross-border employment services is used to study the role of the UWV approach and its equipment in the realisation of this common branch.

Key insights were also obtained from the participation in ongoing discussions in the network of UWV North and Central Limburg and the Bundesagentur für Arbeit Krefeld, districts of Viersen and Mönchengladbach respectively. In this case, an agreement had already been in place since April 2014 on the strengthening of cross-border cooperation and the exchange of vacancies. In the course of 2015 and 2016 talks were held on the strengthening and extension of the cooperation by including Dutch municipalities. The progress of this project also provides indications as to the capabilities the UWV had or has on the basis of the existing approach.

Another important role is reserved for the insights that ITEM obtained from its participatory observation of the creation of the Dutch sectoral plan Grenzenloos Werken (Working Without Borders) in the year 2015/2016. In this context, it was possible to attend several advisory meetings in South Limburg. The sectoral plan, which was funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, was intended to serve as an additional source of funding for the UWV and other parties, allowing them to invest more time and financial resources in achieving cross-border employment in Germany and Belgium as of 2016.

This impact assessment also bundles the insights obtained as part of an ongoing research project into the work of the EURES network in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine. In addition, qualitative interviews were conducted at the five participating public employment services on, inter alia, the relationship of the EURES activities and the regular placement work of the partner organizations.

3. How do current staffing capacity and placement practice address the challenges of cross-border service provision and the obligation to reinforce cross-border cooperation?

In 2015 the Netherlands saw a public debate on the approach of the UWV. The central question was whether and to what extent the UWV had gone too far in digitizing its employment services, thus neglecting the personal coaching of job seekers, all to the backdrop of a significant reduction in UWV resources. EUR 401 million was economized on task implementation between 2012 and 2015, and another cut of EUR 88 million will have to take place before 2018.¹² The competent Minister, Lodewijk Asscher, stated in the autumn of 2015 that coaching had to become more personal.¹³ In June 2016, Tof Thissen, director of the UWV Werkbedrijf (UWV Employment Services) announced in an interview in national newspaper De Volkskrant that extra funding would become available for personal advice to job seekers as per 1 October 2016, thus reinforcing

¹² UWV Board of Directors (2015): UWV Jaarplan 2016 (UWV 2016 Annual Plan.)

¹³ Troost, Nanda: 'Topman UWV: weer persoonlijk contact met werkloze nodig', de Volkskrant, Online-Version, 5. September 2015, last visited 27 September 2016, <http://www.volkskrant.nl/economie/-goed-gesprek-biedt-werkloze-kans~a4329506/> ('Top executive UWV: need to re-establish personal contact with the unemployed').

this service. At this occasion, it was also mentioned that this would apply particularly to young adults, 55-year-olds and frontier workers.¹⁴

This was the recognition of a problem that had longer been identified as an obstacle by practitioners in cross-border employment service provision. During the pilot projects for closer cross-border cooperation, practitioners from both the Dutch UWV and the German Arbeitsagentur repeatedly emphasized that personal coaching was one of the key factors in successful cross-border placement. In the South Limburg/Aachen-Düren cooperation, this received particular focus in the business plan for the common service.¹⁵ Job seekers must therefore receive active coaching from initial contact to job interview. The Netherlands focused on 'unburdening' job seekers. The practitioners have established the higher advisory fees, also bearing in mind employers in the case of cross-border vacancies. The UWV estimates that the employment services in cross-border areas are around 30% more expensive than similar services at national level.¹⁶ Practitioners in both countries agree that digital information offers only limited advantages. This is explained by the fact that the general need for advice on employers, job interviews, professional qualifications, etc. is significantly higher. From this it can be concluded that the public employment services should have adequate staffing resources for monitoring potential frontier workers, which can also be found in the employee objectives. No additional staff consultancy had been planned until the summer of 2016, in accordance with the UWV's approach of the regular, i.e. non-EURES, placement of potential frontier workers. Staff consultancy remained reserved to job seekers with a large distance to the labour market, e.g. older employees.¹⁷ This also meant that the objectives of the labour brokers were not specifically defined for cross-border placement. That is why expensive, target-oriented cross-border placement hinders rather than promotes the achievement of the objectives set with the national situation in mind. Particularly regional managers, faced with the difficulty of achieving their targets despite considerable additional costs, confirmed this. For this reason, it is surprising that the leading principle of the UWV to date has been that cross-border placement has to be carried out as part of the regular activities. It was a higher strategic objective within the UWV to integrate, at least until the summer of 2016, the cross-border dimension into the regular activities of the labour brokers, and thus not to free up any staff for this task nor to specify separate objectives or instruments. As a result, in principle no additional funds were made available for the more expensive activity at least until summer 2016. In conversations with the UWVs of South, North and Central Limburg, this situation was repeatedly identified as a structural problem to the projects for closer cooperation with the Bundesagentur für Arbeit. This restriction also became

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ In the course of the year 2015 a Business Plan was drawn up for the future of 'cross-border employment services', on the basis of which the partners signed a declaration of intent at the beginning of the year 2016.

¹⁶ This is, for example, an estimate of the UWV North and Central Limburg based on experiences of closer cooperation with the Arbeitsagentur Krefeld-District of Viersen.)

¹⁷ The wording is as follows: 'onze dienstverlening is indien mogelijk digital' (our services are digital whenever possible). This can, for example, be found in the brochure 'UWV op weg naar 2017 een uitgestoken hand' ('UWV toward 2017: an outstretched hand'). UWV, 2014, recalled on 2 October 2016 via <http://www.uwv.nl/overuwv/Images/uwv%20op%20weg%20naar%202017.pdf>.

apparent in the organisation of the common service in Kerkrade/Herzogenrath, leaving the UWV unable to contribute its own resources to co-finance the secretariat of the common branch in the starting phase in 2016. Likewise, it was not easy for the UWV to allocate one half-time employee to the service in the beginning. One reason might be that, on the basis of the above principle, there was no one within the UWV who was exclusively involved in personal coaching as part of cross-border placement at the time. As such, the central activity of the common team was merely a fringe activity within the UWV and not covered by internal staffing as a consequence. Added to this was the difficulty that the intensive coaching of potential frontier workers as agreed upon in the common service and described above did not suit the UWV's principles of digital service provision. The principle of active coaching was actually more in keeping with the practice of the German Bundesagentur für Arbeit and the Belgian VDAB, where personal advice already plays a much more important role in the national context than at the UWV. For example, there was no structurally organised personal advice for German or Belgian job seekers from the UWV up to the establishment of the common services. The Bundesagentur für Arbeit Aachen-Düren, on the other hand, has for years been offering detailed personal advice to Dutch job seekers, tailored to the needs of frontier workers. This includes, for example, the special requirements with regard to the professional qualification, the written application, the CV and the job interview. This principle of coaching also served as a mould for the work of the common branch, apparently making the personal supervision of German job seekers in the Netherlands new to UWV.

In recent years, additional staffing capacity had already been necessary to attend the regular meetings as part of the collaboration between the UWV North and Central Limburg and the Arbeitsagentur Krefeld and Mönchengladbach, also under the title 'cross-border employment services'. This collaboration comprises the construction of a structural network with weekly joint meetings to exchange vacancies and coordinate joint projects for employers.¹⁸ The increase in staff was, however, not structurally covered either until the summer of 2016 due to the UWV's principle of integration into the regular service activities and regular job descriptions. In that sense, it was entirely thanks to the conviction and commitment of the employees and managers on site. This was also made possible by the dynamism of the cooperation, which was accelerated with great interest, also from the side of the Arbeitsagentur, and seen as a mutual obligation on both sides. In that sense both projects have had a positive effect. The cooperation in the north of Limburg was further reinvigorated in the spring of 2016, when the Bundesagentur managed to free up additional staffing capacity, so that, according to the latest data, five employees can mainly devote themselves to cross-border tasks. This led to yet more staffing capacity becoming available at the UWV. According to the latest state of affairs, the UWV has three employees available for the cooperation. This is particularly thanks to the dynamics of the cooperation and the larger projects for large potential German employers with an immediate shortage of employees, not to an adjustment of the internal guidelines regarding cross-border activities, however. Particularly successful are the massive inflow projects with large information events for

¹⁸ The services are described by UWV and the Bundesagentur für Arbeit Krefeld in a common brochure entitled, 'Service grensoverschrijdende arbeidsbemiddeling' (Cross-border Employment Services), (without mentioning a date).

job seekers that were organised for employers such as Zalando, Reuterbad, BEWA,-security, Förstwald Krefeld and Jago, in cooperation with commercial employment agencies. Only thanks to successful direct placements and prospects of successful placements are and were the responsible managers able to justify the additional deployment of staff, given the organisation's own objectives. The strengthening of the cooperation since 2014 and the additional deployment of staff have actually led to more placements. While, before 2014, the announcement of German vacancies and successful placements were only ad-hoc and limited phenomena in the working area of the UWV North and Central Limburg, both have shown an increase since the strengthening of the network. In this case, internal figures are available over the last years.¹⁹

Table 4: announced German vacancies and successful placements by UWV North and Central Limburg in North Rhine-Westphalia.

Year	Announced German vacancies	Successful placements
2014	29	10
2015	51	72
2016	26	62 (September) forecasting 75-100

Own image with figures of UWV North and Central Limburg

Additional use of resources can thus be justified with increased placement figures; however, the potentially higher costs per job seeker have still not been structurally anchored. Based on the first successes, the responsible Area Manager for North and Central Limburg thinks that a much larger number of cross-border placements in Germany could be realistic, provided there is adequate staffing capacity with a long-term guarantee.

In part, the difficulties in South Limburg regarding the deployment of additional staff at the UWV can be explained by the fact that this great need of individual employers does not exist today on the German side. This actually makes cross-border placement much more expensive, while contacts with many different employers and potential Dutch job seekers should first be permanently extended.

In summary, various factors have hindered the structured use of staff in cross-border placement in the past: on the one hand, the personal advice and coaching of frontier workers has not become part of the regular work of the UWV so far, supported by corresponding internal objectives and resources. This has made it quite difficult to provide additional staff for the

¹⁹ This study integrally refrains from citing cross-border job placement figures: due to the different calculation methods they are not actually significant, nor can they be compared with the figures from the partners in Germany or Belgium, again due to different calculation methods. This was established in a still ongoing ITEM study of the EURES network in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, entitled 'Definities en processen van de grensoverschrijdende arbeidsbemiddeling van de EURES Partners in de Euregio Maas-Rijn', november 2016 ('Definitions and processes of the cross-border employment services of the EURES partners in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine', November 2016).

cooperation in South Limburg, for example. This was due to the fact that it was not clear from the structure of the cross-border labour market that considerable placement figures could be achieved in a short amount of time. Rather, it was clear that the advice and coaching costs per placement would be much higher, which corresponded with the experience of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit Aachen-Düren. The projects of the UWV North Limburg aimed at large employers, on the other hand, allow for faster placement successes, which permits the deployment of additional staff under the internal guidelines. In both projects of intensified cooperation, the responsible UWV employees achieve cross-border placement, not based on the objectives set and resources allocated, but rather and only by making significant personal commitments and using unorthodox means. While this may have functioned at project level, there has not been a solid basis so far for a long-term guarantee of closer cooperation with the Arbeitsagentur in the sense aimed at by the new EURES regulation.

4. What are the effects of the current implementation of the EURES network by UWV on the challenges of reinforced cross-border employment services?

A second important indicator in the present study is whether the UWV, given the restrictions on its regular services, is using the opportunities that EURES (European Employment Services) offers regarding cross-border employment services. The public employment services have been working together under the concept of EURES since 1993, with special advisers for cross-border and transnational issues. This cooperation is supported through EU funds, and the EURES services are coordinated in regional, cross-border networks. The partnership of the public employment services in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine, for example, was first officially confirmed in 1993 by the signing of a cooperation agreement, which has been regularly renewed since. The relevant partners are: the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (D), UWV (NL), VDAB (B), the Arbeitsamt der deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft (B) and Le FOREM (B). The network also incorporates trade unions and other actors. In 2016 the network was extended geographically to include EURES services in the Euregions Rhine-Waal and Rhine Meuse-North.²⁰ The current legal framework is Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 of the European Parliament and the Council, which describes, for example, the information-exchange mechanisms for national jobs. The EURES program itself has been laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council dated 11 December 2013 and is part of the EU's EaSI programme for employment and social innovation. In addition, a special EURES Regulation has been in place since 2016: Regulation (EU) 2016/589. As mentioned previously, it states that the increasing mutual dependence of the labour markets requires closer cooperation between public employment services, including those in the border regions.

²⁰ This cooperation is captured in work plans, for example for the year 2016: 'EURES in the border regions Rhine-Waal, Rhine-Meuse-North, Meuse-Rhine'. Work plan 1 January 2016 - 31 December 2016 (action area 1: cross-border partnerships.)

In 2016 the UWV employed 19 EURES advisers, according to the official contact list for the Netherlands²¹. According to UWV's²² own description, these services are embedded in its second-line services. EURES advisers are therefore tied to the services of the employer service points and provide customized advice. They work on projects that are tailored to different industries and organise meetings online and offline. In addition, EURES advisers match vacancies with the profiles of job seekers and mediate between them, according to UWV's own description. They mainly serve their colleagues in an advisory role concerning cross-border issues as part of their daily regular employment services. Until 2016, the UWV's EURES advisers were responsible for both cross-border and transnational services. For the area under investigation, i.e. the German Dutch labour-market regions on the border with the province of Limburg and North Rhine-Westphalia, a list was officially compiled for 2016, consisting of three EURES advisers, whose geographical working area had been substantially larger until then, including labour-market regions in the Dutch province of North-Brabant. They were responsible for the employer service points in the South East Netherlands area and its border regions with Germany and Belgium. Until the summer of 2016, there was no Dutch EURES adviser in the area under investigation who was solely responsible for cross-border employment services. Capacity had been very limited until then, especially since transnational tasks played a vital role. Several conversations with EURES practitioners at the UWV, Agentur für Arbeit and Forem revealed that the staffing capacity of the Dutch EURES advisers for specific cross-border employment services was substantially smaller than that of the partner organizations. It was also established that, on the Dutch side, staffing capacity would be a problem regarding the requirements of continuous cross-border cooperation. It was not until the summer of 2016 that, after internal discussions, the UWV appointed a EURES adviser who could focus on cross-border cooperation in the South East Netherlands area and who was stationed in the area under investigation. By comparison: the Arbeitsagentur Aachen-Düren alone employs two EURES advisers solely responsible for cross-border employment services, while another EURES adviser works in the Arbeitsagentur Mönchengladbach and a fourth one in the Arbeitsagentur Krefeld-Viersen.²³ Since the EURES program does not fund staffing, but only the cost of a closer cooperation within a EURES network, these are own investments on the part of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit, which are not being made on the Dutch side. This also had consequences for the two projects under investigation regarding closer cooperation between the UWV and the Arbeitsagentur. During the talks about the organisation of the common service in Kerkrade/Herzogenrath, it soon became clear that the Arbeitsagentur Aachen-Düren was able to incorporate the activities of its two EURES advisers in the common service, which was indeed the case at the opening in September 2016. This was made possible by the fact that their job descriptions were very easy to align with the planned joint service. The two EURES advisers

²¹ See: 'Contact List EURES advisers', recalled on 4 October 2016 via <https://www.werk.nl/xpsimage/wdo214882>. During the conversation with EURES advisers in the summer of 2016, it was reported, however, that in practice there were fewer.)

²² See: UWV, 'EURES – Samen kansen creëren uit een breed blikveld'. Jaarboek EURES, 2015 (EURES - Creating opportunities together from a broad scope. EURES Annual Report, 2015).

²³ This information was also available from the pages of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit Aachen-Düren, Mönchengladbach and Krefeld-Viersen (figures of October 2016). These pages are accessible via the main website www.arbeitsagentur.de.

already advise Dutch employers and place Dutch job seekers through personal advice sessions. Their work area is matched to the Euregion Meuse-Rhine and they take a central position in the German-Dutch labour market. EURES experience and its corresponding networks were thus incorporated into the common cross-border employment services. This was impossible, in this way, on the side of the UWV. The causes for this are related, as described above, to the approach of EURES by the UWV and the corresponding staffing capacity. The UWV lacked EURES advisers who fit the profile and the geographical approach. For that reason, it was long uncertain who exactly would occupy the joint office on behalf of the UWV during the concrete implementation of the common services. In the end it proved impossible to deploy someone with a EURES profile, but an employee was found who had cross-border experience, which until then was part of the regular work of the UWV. EURES thus plays no role in terms of staffing in the cooperation on the Dutch side.

The enhanced network cooperation between UWV North and Central Limburg and the Arbeitsagentur Krefeld-Viersen was also achieved from the side of the Arbeitsagentur through the ongoing efforts of a EURES employee who is embedded in the EURES network. Here too, the UWV failed to provide opportunities for deploying EURES consultants for this cooperation with a focus on cross-border employment services in this region. As already demonstrated with regard to staffing capacity for personal employment services, the persons in charge were forced to link additional staffing for the cooperation much more closely to immediate placement results than to a long-term strategy of closer cooperation or joint services. Although this was possible on the basis of the favourable circumstances, i.e. the then current demand among large German employers, it also meant that there was continuous uncertainty during the process about whether the network and the common service would be realised. While the German side clearly formulated the requirement that EURES staffing capacity play an essential role in effective border cooperation through common cross-border teams, this was not the case for UWV.

It is thus due to the way in which the UWV has organised and funded its own EURES services in the cross-border area under investigation that they have not played a major role in current projects so far. Rather, UWV's current implementation of EURES has a restrictive effect on the desired closer structural cooperation with employment services on the border.

5. Has the UWV created the technical conditions for recording the data of foreign job seekers and the vacancies of foreign employers?

A third indicator investigated was how the UWV processes the data of foreign job seekers and employers in its own systems. Article 21 of the new EURES Resolution (EU) 2016/589 stipulates in the basic principles that the Member States ensure 'that employees and employers can obtain access to support benefits on national level, online or offline, without undue delay.' This includes

various benefits. It would seem obvious that this extends beyond the EURES databases and raises the question whether it is possible for foreign employees and employers to respectively register as a job seeker in the UWV's systems or add one's own vacancies there as an employer. These services are available to national job seekers as well as employers.

Since digital information and impersonal advice are a substantial part of the UWV principles, as already shown, it must be assumed that these services are extremely relevant for foreign customers. UWV distinguishes between special services for job seekers who are entitled to benefits from the unemployment insurance (Dutch: WV) and general services that are open to all job seekers and should therefore include foreign job seekers too. These include the option of registering online, making one's own employment portfolio, CV storage and access to a vacancy database.²⁴ The many conversations with UWV practitioners until the summer of 2016 confirmed that the use of services and the data-entry functionality were not equally accessible to foreign job seekers as to Dutch nationals. Initially, this was blamed on technical problems: job seekers need a Dutch DigiD to register autonomously. This can only be obtained, however, with a Dutch citizen service number, which is provided upon registration in a place of residence in the Netherlands. Since foreign potential job seekers do not have a place of residence in the Netherlands, however, they cannot register autonomously on the relevant website werk.nl on initial contact. The interviews with UWV staff also made clear that even they could not register foreign job seekers from the neighbouring countries, i.e. without citizen service numbers, in the simple, regular manner. Difficulties with foreign postal codes were identified, among others. The figures of UWV North-Central Limburg show that significantly more (600) Dutch job seekers were entered in the Arbeitsagentur's system between 2014 and 2016 than German job seekers in the UWV system (240).²⁵ It must be assumed that technical problems might have played a role. According to UWV internal data, however, these should be resolved in the course of 2016.

Foreign employers in the border region also faced technical problems with tax numbers and postal codes until the summer of 2016. In the spring of 2016, for instance, entrepreneurs from the Belgian province of Limburg complained publicly about not being able to add their vacancies to the UWV system.²⁶ The UWV responded through a statement of position, clarifying that German and Belgian employers from the border region had been able to add their vacancies to werk.nl through a special method as early as 2013.²⁷ The relevant information, however, had been absent from the website, according to the UWV. Only employers with a relevant account can normally add vacancies to werk.nl. To create such an account, a Dutch tax number is required, which foreign companies do not have. Nevertheless, a workaround has been in place since 2013,

²⁴ See the description 'Diensten and hulpverlening op werk.nl' on the website

https://www.werk.nl/werk_nl/werknemer/uitkering-aanvragen/uwv-dienstverlening, visited on 5 October 2016.

²⁵ The figures were taken from the 'Trendrapport Samenwerking UWV Noord- en Midden Limburg en Agentur für Arbeit' ('Trend Report on the Cooperation between UWV North-and-Central Limburg and the Agentur für Arbeit'), compiled by UWV North-Central Limburg, 2016.

²⁶ See: <http://www.1limburg.nl/ook-belgische-en-duitse-banen-bak-bij-uwv>, visited on 5 October 2016.

²⁷ See: NRC Handelsblad, 'Werk UWV: buitenlandse vacatures op werk.nl', 16 July 2016, visited on 5 October 2016, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/07/15/werkuwv-buitenlandse-vacatures-op-werknl-3265803-a1511959>.

according to UWV statements. According to this procedure, any registration requests from foreign employers are carefully screened by UWV before they are granted.²⁸ Moreover, only businesses from the border region qualify, so not businesses from Hamburg or Berlin, for example. So far, UWV has thus failed to provide all employers from neighbouring countries access to werk.nl. Internal data show that around 30 employers from Belgium and 10 from Germany were registered on werk.nl in the summer of 2016.²⁹ UWV admitted, however, that even these employers were still facing problems as the postal codes of the places of employment were not recognised by the matching system. For this reason, their vacancies might still not be taken into account fully.³⁰

According to statements from practitioners of the German Agentur für Arbeit and the Belgian VDABs, their systems are more open to cross-border data processing. Both entering Dutch job seekers and foreign vacancies is possible without any limitations. It must therefore be maintained in this study that the UWV's internal data systems and the online platform werk.nl have not facilitated structural cross-border cooperation and that substantial improvements are necessary. Especially the common service of the UWV and the Arbeitsagentur in Kerkrade/Herzogenrath aims to achieve practical improvements in the exchange of data.

6. Does the UWV have adequate means for additional training of job seekers, given the special requirements made of frontier workers?

During the development of the common cross-border employment service in South Limburg (Kerkrade/Herzogenrath) in 2015/2016, repeatedly discussions took place of questions about the funding of the additional training of job seekers in order to enable their integration into the labour market in the neighbouring country. Common pilot projects of the UWV and the Agentur für Arbeit for Dutch child day care employees seeking a job at day-care centres in North Rhine-Westphalia led to the following, for instance: in order to increase the chance of placement, a preparatory course was developed for Dutch day care employees, containing both cultural, legal and linguistic elements. This caused funding needs to rise. In 2014/2015 these courses could not be financed from regular UWV means, also because the UWV did not consider child day care employees a target group with a large distance to the labour market at that time. As already established, no regular means for intensive coaching are available to job seekers who do not fall into this category, and the same was true for the need for means for the additional training of childcare employees. The additional training of childcare employees and their coaching could be provided after all thanks to additional funding from the Dutch province of Limburg, which had allocated a sum of EUR 2.5 million out of a training fund to training vouchers, valid from 15 March

²⁸ Employers are currently being informed again about this option through: https://www.werk.nl/werk_nl/werkgever/account/aanvragen, visited on 05 October 2016.

²⁹ The figure was taken from a UWV internal description of the situation in July 2016, entitled 'Uitleg over indienen vacatures uit het buitenland terug op werk.nl' (Explanation on how to submit foreign vacancies back on werk.nl).

³⁰ Ibidem.

2014 to 31 July 2016.³¹ The aim of the funding was to integrate job seekers who were unemployed at that time, with an available budget of EUR 2500 per person. In the case of the childcare employees, these vouchers could be used in the additional training project, which provided further training that was not yet aimed at the needs of one specific employer.

In 2016, the issue of who should bear the costs of further training in combination with specific commitments of employers became more prominent, for example in the case of a German security firm looking for security staff for refugee centres. This concerned special further training for the security of refugee centres, with its legal basis in Germany. The UWV had no means to provide this further training, and the training vouchers from the province could not be used either, partly due to the existence in the Netherlands of rules for self-funding for such targeted further training. These regulations constituted no impediment to Dutch employers as this was national practice, applicable to all. The different funding practices of the Agentur für Arbeit for the further training of German job seekers did, however, prove to be a potential problem for both German and Belgian employers, who did not have to contribute at all to further training on their own respective national levels but would have to do so for Dutch job seekers, obviously making them less attractive candidates. From these practical cases, it must be concluded that, between 2014 and 2016, the UWV did not have the financial means to meet the need for further training that concrete projects in Limburg revealed.

In principle, the need for additional means for further training of potential Dutch frontier workers was recognized at Dutch government level in 2014/2015. In January 2016, Minister of Social Affairs and Employment Lodewijk Asscher announced that his Ministry would reserve EUR 4.9 million for the Grenzenloos Werken (Working without Borders) sectoral plan.³² In total, the plan should finance the placement of 800 Dutch nationals in Belgium or Germany.

Table 5: objectives of the Grenzenloos Werken (Working without Borders) sectoral plan

Number of participants	From work to work (15%)	From WW benefits to work	Other to work (20%)
800	120	520	160

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment

The sectoral plan focuses on further training and additional training. Three categories for further training are identified that qualify for funding: first, the target group that still has work experience

³¹ See: 'Provincie stimuleert scholing werkzoekenden' (Province stimulates training of job seekers), press release, February 2014, visited on 7 October on http://www.limburg.nl/Actueel/Nieuws_en_persberichten/2014/Februari_2014/Provincie_stimuleert_scholing_werkzoekenden.

³² See: Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment: 'Sectorplan biedt baankansen voor 800 werkzoekenden in grensstreek' (Sectoral plan offers job opportunities for 800 job seekers in the border region), press release, 24/01/2016, visited on 31 September 2016 on <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2016/01/25/sectorplan-biedt-baankansen-voor-800-werkzoekenden-in-grensstreek>.

in a profession and needs further training for a new job or the transition into a new field (duration: 4 weeks to 3 months). This category could, for example, include employees with a partial recognition of their professional qualification abroad, who require an additional internship or additional schooling. The second category includes applicants with relevant professional experience who require significant further training (duration: 3-4 months). Here too applicants might qualify with partial recognition of their qualification, who still require several additional mandatory courses. The third category comprises applicants with a large distance to the labour market but with a special interest in a certain field (duration: 6 months).³³ In that sense, the sectoral plan follows a clear analysis of the funding possibilities so far. Exactly for the above target groups, it had previously been almost impossible to use the UWV's regular means to finance further training in a cross-border context.

The following activities that might offer support are explicitly listed in detail:

- Language and cultural courses
- International recognition of professional qualifications
- Cross-border employment services
- Travel expenses and further training of participants
- On-the-job coaching as part of further training

For this reason, in the spring of 2016, the practitioners in cross-border employment services in Limburg and NRW expected that the additional resources might also become an essential building block of the enhanced cooperation. From conversations, for example, it had become clear that, although Provincial vouchers could facilitate projects on the Dutch side on the short term and to a modest extent, they could not be a structural solution. The concrete funding for further training also raised hopes among practitioners that staffing at UWV could be improved through resources from the sectoral plan, since the general information also refers to placement work as beneficial.³⁴

At the conclusion of this study in September/October 2016, the UWV and Arbeitsagentur in Limburg/NRW still had not announced any project that could be financed with funds from the sectoral plan. Informal talks made it clear that there had been a need since January for clarification on the issue of the practical implementation of the promotion directives as well as on promotion capacity. This includes, for example, the question to which extent the UWV and municipal services would be able to finance additional cross-border employment staff in the context of the sectoral plan and refers to the issue of the limited human resources, as already established in this study. In fact, the deficits overlap in the areas of staff and other instruments deployed, such as the budgets for further training. In the spring, other open questions of the sectoral plan were also discussed. In discussions with VDAB and Arbeit Agentur, reference was made to a special difficulty, due to the demands of financial own contributions of employers. The general descriptions of the sectoral plan state that applicants, e.g., employers, or implementing

³³ See the information site: visited on 26 September 2016 at <https://www.grenzenloos-werken.eu/Info>.

³⁴ Ibidem.

organizations, e.g., the UWV or commercial mediation services, would have to pay an own contribution of at least 55% of the value of the measure. Practitioners from the Arbeitsagentur and VDAB subsequently pointed out that these conditions might be very unattractive for German and Belgian employers, particularly when compared to the funding options for training offered by the Arbeitsagentur or VDAB, who would not require an own contribution from employers in comparable cases. The requirement of an own contribution, though standard in the Dutch national context, would thus constitute a fundamental impediment to the successful use of the funds of the Grenzenloos Werken (Working Without Borders) sectoral plan.

In principle, the following can be concluded, based on the approach of the current difficulties of the sectoral plan: the sectoral plan was actually a response to the difficulties in funding further training in the cross-border context through the own resources of the UWV or municipalities. The plan describes a list of eligible further trainings, the smooth funding of which would be important to placing more Dutch applicants in NRW, in particular in the context of two Limburg-based projects. In principle, the plan included the prospect of financial resources, which might be intended for the necessary extension of staff in the field of personal guidance of job seekers. Due to the delay in the implementation and the ongoing discussions, however, it can also be concluded that the prior coordination of the plan between the Ministry and the participating actors³⁵ apparently was not optimal and essential questions, such as detailed questions about support capacity, were not clarified. Especially the public employment services in Germany and Belgium also pointed out that several aspects, such as the issue of the own contribution by German and Belgian employers, were insufficiently discussed with the colleagues from the neighbouring countries. This is an indication that the Grenzenloos Werken (Working Without Borders) sectoral plan was unable to improve the funding of the further training of Dutch potential frontier workers until the summer of 2016. The structural funding problems, which were only confirmed by the development and approach of the sectoral plan, still require resolution because they are also a fundamental impediment to enhanced cooperation in the field of cross-border employment services.

7. Summary and Conclusion

The first important indicator of this study was whether the UWV had sufficient staffing capacity for the personal coaching of job seekers on the other side of the border. Presently, the UWV mainly offers support to job seekers through online channels. Potential frontier workers do not qualify as job seekers that require additional staff support. Both the placement specialists of the UWV and those of the Arbeitsagentur with ample experience in cross-border employment services observe that cross-border job placement requires more personal coaching.

Based on the statements of experienced placement specialists, it is concluded that cross-border funding is still difficult to integrate into the UWV's regular services. UWV staff are subject to

³⁵ Those were the FNV (trade union), CNV (trade union), VNO-NCW (employers), MKB Nederland (the Dutch branch organisation of SMEs), KMU, UWV, VNG (Dutch Municipalities) and the Dutch border provinces.

targets, which might even be jeopardised by overly focusing on cross-border employment services. In spite of this, the current principles of the UWV dictate that this task be integrated into regular funding.

Although regional efforts, especially in the North Limburg area, have resulted in the deployment of additional staff to reinforce the cooperation projects between the UWV and the Arbeitsagentur, this additional capacity is only temporarily available and not structurally anchored. It also still has to be justified through the immediate placement successes of large projects. While this is currently possible thanks to the demand of smaller German employers, the focus of local employees on cross-border employment services has not been institutionalised beyond these large projects so far. Strictly speaking, these are exceptions. The example of South Limburg demonstrates, contrary to the North Limburg region, how extremely difficult it is for the UWV to deploy additional manpower for the new cross-border service when large applications from employers are lacking. The current capacity of the UWV thus hinders the extension and reinforcement of its cross-border employment services.

A second important indicator in the present study is whether the UWV, given the restrictions imposed on its regular services, is using the opportunities that EURES (European Employment Services) offers regarding cross-border employment services. For the staffing of the new cross-border service in Kerkrade/Herzogenrath, which was set up together with the partners in the South Limburg area, the Arbeitsagentur was able to deploy its own EURES advisers since they were already working across the border, placing, for instance, Dutch job seekers with German employers. It was impossible for the UWV to do this in this manner because EURES advisers in the Netherlands are more focused on the provision of information and advice rather than on the concrete placement of job seekers. In addition, the total staffing capacity of EURES in the Netherlands is clearly more limited than that of the Arbeitsagentur. Furthermore, the few advisers active in the Netherlands have so far not only performed cross-border tasks but mainly transnational tasks. The manner in which the UWV falls back on EURES and finances EURES thus limits closer structural collaboration with other employment services on the border.

A third indicator investigated was how the UWV processes the data of foreign job seekers and employers in its own systems. Until the summer of 2016, German and Belgian job seekers could not immediately be registered in the UWV system.

Impediments arose due to the absence of a DigiD or a suitable postal code. Foreign employers also faced technical problems with tax numbers and postal codes until the summer of 2016. The systems of the Arbeitsagentur and VDAB, on the other hand, seem more open to cross-border data transfers. This implies that the UWV's IT systems have not been able to sufficiently support the structural cross-border cooperation so far.

This impact assessment has also demonstrated that the UWV currently has insufficient financial means for the targeted further training, i.e. language courses, etc., of job seekers in preparation of activities on the other side of the border. The ad-hoc funding through provincial means or with the help of a sectoral plan has not proven a satisfactory solution so far.

The intensive monitoring and the analysis of the concrete cross-border projects in Limburg have enabled ITEM to establish that the current approach as well as the current staffing and funding capacity of the UWV insufficiently support the objective of more closely linked cross-border employment services. Rather, the regional services in Limburg so far have been trying to circumvent the institutional impediments through individual, ad-hoc solutions and much personal effort on the part of the responsible staff.

Source List:

EU Legislation

Regulation (EU) 2016/589 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2016 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, and amending Regulations (EU) No 492/2011 and (EU) No 1296/2013.

Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on freedom of movement for workers within the Union (OJ L 141, dated 27/05/2011).

Regulation (EU) 1296/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") and amending Decision No 283/2010/EU establishing a European Progress Microfinance Facility for employment and social inclusion (OJ L 347, dated 20/12/2013).

Decision No 573/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on enhanced cooperation between Public Employment Services (PES) (OJ L 159, dated 28/5/2014).

UWV Documents

UWV Board of Directors (2015): UWV Jaarplan 2016 (UWV Annual Plan 2016).

UWV Noord-Midden-Limburg (2016): Trendrapport Samenwerking UWV Noord- en Midden Limburg en Agentur für Arbeit' (internal document). (Trend report on the Cooperation between the UWV North and Central Limburg and the Agentur für Arbeit).

UWV (2016): 'Contactlijst EURES adviseurs', last visited on 4 October 2016 at <https://www.werk.nl/xpsimage/wdo214882>

UWV (2014): 'UWV op weg naar 2017 een uitgestoken hand' (UWV on its way to 2017, an extended hand), brochure, last visited on 2 October 2016 at <http://www.uwv.nl/overuwv/Images/uwv%20op%20weg%20naar%202017.pdf>

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Troost, Nanda: 'Topman UWV: weer persoonlijk contact met werkloze nodig', de Volkskrant (Top executive UWV: need to re-establish personal contact with the unemployed), Online-Version, 5 September 2015, last visited on 27 September 2016, <http://www.volkskrant.nl/economie/-goed-gesprek-biedt-werkloze-kans~a4329506/>

UWV Noord-Midden-Limburg en Agentur für Arbeit Krefeld-district Viersen: 'Service grensoverschrijdende arbeidsbemiddeling' (Cross-border employment service), brochure, no date.

UWV (zonder datum): 'Diensten en Hulpverlening op werk.nl' (Services and Support on werk.nl), https://www.werk.nl/werk_nl/werknemer/uitkering-aanvragen/uwv-dienstverlening last visited on 5 October 2016.

Sectorplan Grenzenloos Werken (The Working without borders sectoral plan)

Official homepage: www.grenzenloos-werken.eu

Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (2016): 'Sectorplan biedt baankansen voor 800 werkzoekenden in grensstreek', (Sectoral plan offers job opportunities for 800 job seekers in the border region), press release, 24/01/2016, last visited on 31 September 2016 on

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2016/01/25/sectorplan-biedt-baankansen-voor-800-werkzoekenden-in-grensstreek>

Provincie Limburg (2014): 'Provincie stimuleert scholing werkzoekenden', (Province stimulates training of job seekers), press release, February 2014, last visited on 7 October on

http://www.limburg.nl/Actueel/Nieuws_en_persberichten/2014/Februari_2014/Provincie_stimuleert_scholing_werkzoekenden

EURES

EURES Information pages of the European Commission:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/de/homepage>

Contact details and number of German EURES advisers in the area under investigation through

<http://www.arbeitsagentur.de>

General information about the EURES network in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine through

<http://www.eures-emr.org/nl/contacten-eures-adviseurs>

Contact details and number of Dutch EURES advisers in the area under investigation:

UWV (2016): 'Contactlijst EURES Adviseurs' (Contact list EURES advisers), last visited on 4 October 2016 on <https://www.werk.nl/xpsimage/wdo214882>

Informal conversations and interviews:

Informal conversations with those responsible from the UWV, the Bundesagentur für Arbeit Aachen-Düren, social services (Social Affairs) Maastricht-Heuvelland (Podium 24), WSP Parkstad and Jobcenter city district Aachen regarding the development of the common cross-border employment service in Kerkrade/Herzogenrath in 2015 and 2016.

Participation in official meetings of the steering group of the common cross-border employment service Kerkrade/Herzogenrath in 2015 and 2016.

Participation in official meetings of the technical group of the common cross-border employment service Kerkrade/Herzogenrath in 2015 and 2016.

Concluding interview with the responsible EURES advisers about the situation in Limburg, conducted in Kerkrade on 6 September.

Participation in informal meetings with those responsible from the UWV, the city of Venlo, the city of Roermond and the Bundesagentur für Arbeit Krefeld-Viersen district on the further development of the cooperation in 2015 and 2016.

Concluding interview with the responsible managers from the UWV North-Central Limburg on 23 September about the situation in North-Central Limburg, specifically in Roermond.

Participation in discussions with practitioners involved in public employment services

Debates on the approach of the EURES network Euregion Meuse-Rhine with EURES advisers and practitioners from the border information points (GIPs) 'GIP Together' on 16 September 2016 in Eupen.

Debate on the approach of the labour-market activities in the Euregion Scheldemond, 15 September, The Hague.

Participation in various workshops and informal conversations with practitioners involved in cross-border employment services, organised by the 'action team cross-border employment and economy' on the theme cross-border employment services and border information points (Dutch: grensinformatiepunten or GIPs).



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