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**Developing a European service  
in favour of mobility and employment**

**Report on EURES activities 1996-97**

**in accordance with Regulation (EEC) no. 1612/68, Article 19(3)**

(presented by the Commission)

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## **Executive summary**

The EURES network provides the European citizen interested in working in, or recruiting from, another EEA-country with a unique range of services. 1996 and 1997 has been a period of consolidation and expansion of the EURES network and its services. By giving more workers and employers information and advice on mobility, exchanging more vacancies that are meant for the European labour market, and giving increasing aid to placements, EURES has facilitated and promoted mobility.

The EURES services have reached around 1 million European citizens over the past two years, which is more than twice the number reached in the initial period in 1994-95. The increase in the number of placements or aid given to placements has been significant, particularly in specific sectors such as health, IT and tourism. Great efforts have been made to improve the quality of the information and guidance given, while increasing the number of vacancies exchanged between the partners of the network. The databases used by all partners in the 17 Member States of the network have undergone significant improvements, allowing more and better jobs and practical information to be accessible by the European citizens.

The expansion of the network of Euroadvisers has been considerable. The network now covers a wider geographical area, and special partnerships have been set up in cross-border areas where there is a high level of mobility or a strong potential for mobility. In the cross-border partnerships - now covering borders in 13 Member States - the extensive network of Euroadvisers from the Public Employment Services, the trade unions or employers' organisations have acquired unique expertise in how to help frontier workers deal with the remaining obstacles to mobility.

In the context of the emerging European employment strategy, mobility has to be seen not only as a right of the individual worker, but also as a mechanism for labour market adjustments. EURES plays an increasing role in identifying sectoral surpluses and deficits and in solving particular bottlenecks. It also plays a part in raising people's employability, especially of young people, by helping them gain work experience abroad. In cross-border areas, EURES helps promote a common regional labour market with the exchange of all or many vacancies, and cooperation between the various actors on the local labour market.

Thus, despite high unemployment, insufficient economic growth, and scarce public resources across much of Europe - the EURES network has succeeded in giving more and better services to an increasing number of people. With its broad range of services and know-how, this comprehensive network is a unique "all in one shop" service for the European citizen interested in mobility.

EURES, however, has not reached its full potential yet. There are still discrepancies between the contributions made by different partners, and EURES needs to be more fully integrated especially in the Public Employment Services where it should become part of the normal range of services. EURES also needs to reach a "critical mass" in terms of market share, in order to be in a position to provide an optimal service to all users. And it will have to continually adapt to the challenges and opportunities offered by new technologies.

The present report is established in conformity with Article 19(3) of Council Regulation 1612/68<sup>1</sup> calling for a report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee every two years on the implementation of the second part of the Regulation, which concerns the clearance of vacancies and applications for employment. The central focus of the report is on the EURES network which has developed as the main instrument for implementation of this part of the Regulation. The report describes and assesses major developments and achievements during 1996-97, but also aims to look at some of the challenges EURES will face in the years ahead.

## **1. Purpose and characteristics of EURES**

### **1.1 EURES: an instrument to promote the free movement of workers in the context of the emerging European employment strategy**

#### *EURES as an instrument for mobility*

The free movement of workers is one of the basic rights for the European citizen, and the *raison d'être* for the creation of EURES (EUROpean Employment Services). EURES is a network designed to facilitate and promote the free movement of workers in the EU and the EEA. This objective is achieved by cooperation between the Member States and the Commission, the main elements of which are laid down in Council Regulation 1612/68 and in the Commission Decision of 22 October 1993. EURES helps workers interested in moving to another country or employers wanting to recruit from abroad to make their decision. As such, EURES reaches out to a large number of workers and employers, particularly in cross-border areas, as well as jobseekers, students and apprentices - all of whom for different reasons want to work in, or employ someone, from another country.

#### *EURES as a labour market instrument*

The free movement of workers is not only a right. Increasingly, it is regarded as a mechanism for labour market adjustments at the European level. At the European Council in Amsterdam the Heads of States and Governments agreed a new treaty making employment policy a matter of common concern, and calling for a co-ordinated strategy to promote a skilled, trained, and adaptable workforce and labour markets responsive to economic change. EURES can contribute to realise a common European labour market, especially in cross-border areas. International labour mobility is also one of the means by which bottlenecks, in supply and demand, can be avoided. In this context, EURES plays, and will play, an increasingly important role as part of the European employment strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 of the Council of 15 October 1968 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community

## *EURES as a service for European citizens*

First and foremost, EURES was created to inform, advise and assist the European citizen who works abroad or who wishes to do so. A human and technical network helps locate a job in another country, facilitates the decision to move and to make the transition period smoother. EURES has then little purpose unless it is known and appreciated by employers and workers. In times with an ever growing number of labour market related services, including private ones, EURES must provide a quality service in every respect. This comprises the quality of the information and advice given, as well as the number and nature of vacancies exchanged by the partners of the network.

## *EURES as an instrument for decision makers*

EURES' partners have during the past period gathered considerable expertise in the identification of obstacles to mobility and the functioning of the labour market. There is a role for EURES channelling this knowledge to decision makers at the appropriate level, and thus to contribute to the dismantling of obstacles and the better functioning of the European labour market.

### **1.2 EURES : A comprehensive network**

EURES was officially launched in November 1994 and is a partnership between the Commission, the public employment services of the Member States, Norway and Iceland, and in some border areas, organisations representing the social and economic partners and local authorities. This comprehensive network involves numerous partners. The front-line staff delivering the EURES services are the Euroadvisers.

#### *Euroadvisers*

At the end of 1997, a total of 477 Euroadvisers are providing three basic services - information, guidance and placement - to workers and employers interested in international mobility. They are located throughout the network. 387 Euroadvisers are employed by the public employment services, 57 by trade unions, 12 by employers' organisations, 4 by regional authorities and 17 by universities. Their task is to inform and advise mobile workers as well as employers intending to recruit at European level, and to undertake or support crossborder- or transnational placement operations.

Adequate information is of great importance to potentially mobile workers, and the Euroadvisers facilitate the decision to move by providing information on a wide range of issues such as social security, tax-arrangements, education, writing a good CV and different working cultures, just to mention a few. In cross-border areas where mobility is the greatest - with people living in one country while working in the neighbouring country - many practical problems or obstacles occur. Cross-border Euroadvisers help to find solutions to these practical problems, and customise their services to the needs of regional clients.

#### *Partners at national level*

The public employment services (PES) are the key elements of the network. In France and Germany, additional partners operating under national legal provisions in the field of

employment, are also part of the network. Every partner has appointed one representative - a EURES-manager - who acts as the liaison between the Commission and the staff involved in delivering EURES-services at the national level. 387 Euroadvisers, specialists in giving information, counselling and aid to placements on a European level, are employed by the national PES.

*Table 1 Partners at national level and number of Euroadvisers*

A-Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich - 18	F-Office des migrations - 7
B-Formation Emploi - 11	GR-Office de l'emploi et de la main d'oeuvre - 22
B-Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsvoorziening - 8	IRL-Foras Aseanna Saothair - 29
B-Office Régional Bruxellois de l'Emploi - 2	ISL-Directorate of Labour - 1
D-Bundesanstalt für Arbeit - 42	I-Ministero del Lavoro - 36
D-Bundesverwaltungsamt - 14	L-Administration de l'Emploi - 5
DK-Arbejdsmarkedsstyrelsen - 21	NL-Arbeidsvoorziening - 21
E-Instituto Nacional de Empleo - 35	N-Arbejdsdirektoratet - 8
SF- Ministry of Labour - 17	P-Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional -18
F-Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi - 32	S-Arbejdsmarknadsstyrelsen - 19
F- Association pour l'Emploi des Cadres - 6	UK-Employment Service - 14

*Partners at cross-border level*

Cross-border EURES (abbreviated EURES-T) consists of a number of co-operation structures which, within the framework of the EURES network, aim at meeting the need for information and collaboration linked with mobility specific to frontier regions.

In 18 frontier regions where there is a high level of cross-border mobility or which intend to develop their crossborder mobility, special partnerships have been set up between the Commission, the regional offices of the public employment services, the social and economic partners, and other regional or local institutions dealing with the subjects of labour market and vocational training. Trade union organisations play an active part through ETUC and cross-border trade union associations, and employers organisations on both side of the border participate in nearly all partnerships. Every cross-border partnership has appointed a cross-border co-ordinator, who is responsible for organising the co-operation of the regional partners and who acts as well as the liaison between the Commission and the partners at regional level.

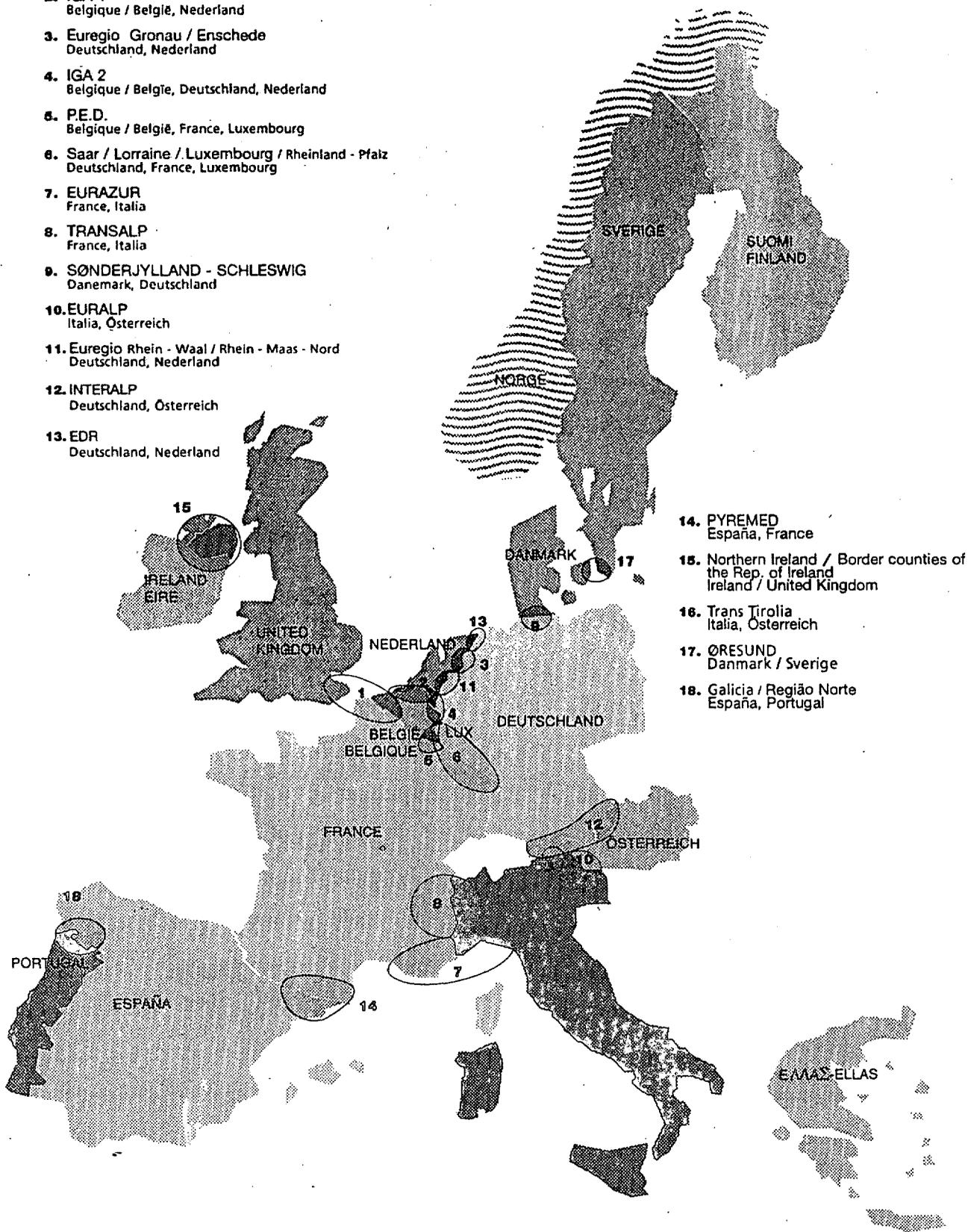
In addition to distributing job vacancies and applications and giving information on living and working conditions, the cross-border partners exchange information on vocational training, stimulate co-operation on labour market issues and help form transnational local labour markets thanks to the links between the various partners on both sides of the border.

150 (of the total of 477) Euroadvisers from public employment services, trade unions, employers' organisations and regional authorities are delivering EURES services within the 18 partnerships.

The following map includes all cross-border partnerships and illustrates their geographical distribution.

# Map 1 Cross-border EURES partnerships

1. H.N.F.K Hainaut / Nord-Pas de Calais / West-Vlaanderen / Kent  
Belgique / België, France, United-Kingdom
2. IGA 1  
Belgique / België, Nederland
3. Euregio Gronau / Enschede  
Deutschland, Nederland
4. IGA 2  
Belgique / België, Deutschland, Nederland
5. P.E.D.  
Belgique / België, France, Luxembourg
6. Saar / Lorraine / Luxembourg / Rheinland - Pfalz  
Deutschland, France, Luxembourg
7. EURAZUR  
France, Italia
8. TRANSALP  
France, Italia
9. SØNDERJYLLAND - SCHLESWIG  
Danemark, Deutschland
10. EURALP  
Italia, Österreich
11. Euregio Rhein - Waal / Rhein - Maas - Nord  
Deutschland, Nederland
12. INTERALP  
Deutschland, Österreich
13. EDR  
Deutschland, Nederland



14. PYREMED  
España, France
15. Northern Ireland / Border counties of  
the Rep. of Ireland  
Ireland / United Kingdom
16. Trans Tirolia  
Italia, Österreich
17. ØRESUND  
Danmark / Sverige
18. Galicia / Região Norte  
España, Portugal

## *Universities*

The 17 Euroadvisers from universities in 6 countries (B, FIN, F, IRL, NL, UK), who began working in 1995 provide advice and guidance to students on jobs and on living and working conditions, with access to the two EURES data bases. They do not undertake placement but have contacts with employers and provide job vacancies for EURES, although in some countries the input in the database is done by the local PES Euroadviser. They are also a source of expert information on the graduate labour market in their countries.

## *The databases*

To exchange job vacancies and applications at Community level and to ensure the exchange of information on working and living conditions between Member States, two databases were created in 1994.

The Job vacancy database contains vacancies more likely to be filled when advertised at Community level and jobs where employers have expressed the wish for other than domestic labour. The vacancy database is fed by vacancies from the member countries of the EEA. All jobs are then accessible in the 17 countries and to all Euroadvisers. The database is interactive in the sense that Euroadvisers can add and modify vacancies and address them to colleagues. In some cross-border regions, all regional vacancies are exchanged on each side of the border. The number of EURES-vacancies at the end of 1997 was 30000.

The second EURES database contains general information on living and working conditions and the labour market of the EEA Member States. It enables Euroadvisers to give precise and practical information to any person seeking a job in another EEA-country, while providing essential information to the job seekers' family, which helps facilitate their integration into the host country.

## *The role of the Commission*

The Commission itself is a member of EURES through the European Coordination Office (based in DG V). Its mission is generally to ensure the proper functioning of the network, by coordinating the activities of the partners and by providing the necessary common services.

The Commission chairs joint quarterly meetings of all representatives of the national partners ("EURES-managers") and of the crossborder partners ("EURES coordinators"), as well as the regular cross-border partnerships' steering groups at local level, and a number of ad hoc working groups.

The Commission is responsible for the development and maintenance of the two EURES databases. It also organises - in collaboration with the partners - basic and continuing training for the Euroadvisers and other relevant actors in the network.

Finally, the Coordination Office allocates annual subsidies to the partners out of the EURES budget.

### *The EURES budget*

The EURES budget is voted every year by the budget authority. The annual allocation for 1996 and 1997 was 10.5 MECU. The European Parliament requested that, out of this total, 5 MECU in 1996 and 6 MECU in 1997 be allocated to the EURES crossborder partnerships.

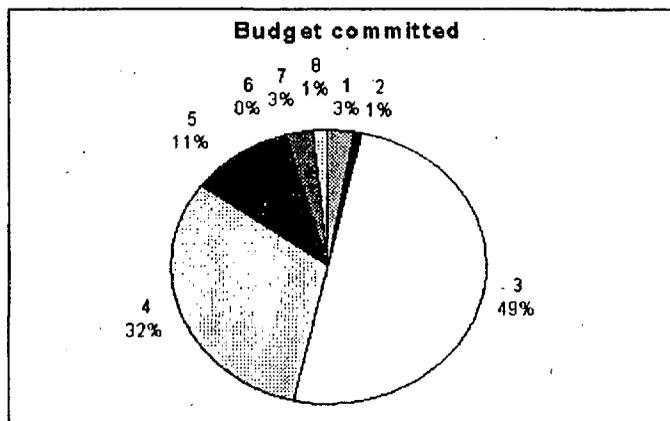
In addition to the above amounts, EURES receives a contribution from EFTA (165.200 ECU in 1996 and 186.900 ECU in 1997), due to the participation of Norway and Iceland in the network.

For 1996 and 1997, most of the budget was used for annual subsidies to the partners - both at national and crossborder levels - based on their "activity plans". These plans cover essentially the "support" activities of the partners for the network - such as information, promotion and animation activities, computer equipment, coordination at crossborder level - while the core services to the users (information, counselling and placement) should be financed by the partners themselves.

Apart from subsidies for the partners' "activity plans", the EURES budget supports a number of services for the benefit of all partners: training, animation and promotion activities, development and maintenance of the databases and supply of the necessary computer equipment to the Euroadvisers.

The graph below illustrates the allocation of the EURES budget for the year 1997.

*Graph 1 Allocation of the EURES budget 1997*



Explanation: 1 - various, 2 - promotion, information to the public, 3 - activity plans EURES-T, 4 - activity plans PES, 5 - training, 6 - animation, internal promotion, 7 - IT systems, 8 - databases

## 2. Major developments in 1996-97

While the initial period 1994-95 was devoted to establishing the basic network and services, 1996-97 has been a period of consolidation and expansion.

### 2.1 Expansion of the network

The network has expanded considerably in the past two years, particularly in terms of new cross-border partnerships and new Euroadvisers.

#### *New Euroadvisers*

The PES and other partners in crossborder areas select new Euroadvisers as part of the human and geographical expansion or renewal of the network. In 1996-97 a further 80 new Euroadvisers followed the basic EURES training programme. The increased number of Euroadvisers from 400 at the end of 1995 to 477 at the end of 1997 means that EURES-services are accessible in wider geographical areas, with Euroadvisers now located outside the capital and the biggest cities. Euroadvisers outside the capital, are in general working in local employment offices, generating greater awareness of EURES among other staff of the EURES partners as an important side effect.

#### *New cross-border partnerships*

During 1996-97 the number of cross-border partnerships has increased from 11 to 18. The partnerships are created on regional initiatives in areas where mobility is significant or in which there is a potential for mobility due to, for example, new infrastructure. The greatest mobility is seen in the PED partnership (B, L, F) with an estimated 60 000 frontier workers. New partnerships set up outside the traditionally high mobility area in the heart of Europe represent an incentive to increased mobility, as well as a broader geographical spread of the cross-border EURES services. Countries like Sweden, Spain, Portugal and Ireland are now engaged in cross-border partnerships, recognizing the need to assist mobile workers and to promote a regional labour market. Accordingly, around 30 new cross-border Euroadvisers have been trained for this purpose.

#### *Pilot project with universities*

The graduate sector with young, well-educated, multi-lingual, and thus, potentially mobile workers, is of special interest to EURES. The EURES University Pilot Project, set up to examine whether the EURES system could be usefully extended by developing partnerships with the universities, completed its third year of operation in 1996.

An evaluation of the project took place during 1996. This concluded that university Euroadvisers were doing a useful job which complemented the work of the PES in dealing with the specific needs of a growing number of highly-qualified young job-seekers. On this basis it was agreed that the project should continue and develop along the lines of the different models of cooperation identified in the participating countries. Countries not yet involved in the project were invited to join.

## 2.2 Improvements to the Job vacancies Database

The computerised system operated by EURES to exchange job vacancies in the European Economic Area was developed very rapidly in 1993-1994 providing a valuable channel for employers to advertise their vacancies throughout Europe and it allowed jobseekers to apply quickly for jobs in other countries. It was also instrumental in bringing Euroadvisers together in an operational setting. There were, however, disadvantages in the early system which required it to be further developed and improved.

### *Better input*

One of these was that the software application which was used to create a job vacancy on the Euroadviser PC did not contain the detailed information which is increasingly required for an international job vacancy. During 1996 a new software application, EURES for Windows, was therefore, developed which provided Euroadvisers with the facility to give much more detailed information on the job vacancies. Most Euroadvisers now have the new software installed and the response from the network has been very positive. Usage of the job vacancy system has increased as a result. A second version of EURES for Windows, building upon comments made by users, was developed during 1997 and released to the network in December.

### *Easier input*

Another disadvantage of the original system was that it required Euroadvisers to manually identify and extract vacancies from their national system and input them into their EURES PC. Clearly, this operation was not the best use of Euroadviser time and affected their main role, that of giving advice to jobseekers. During 1995 the EURES Technical team, therefore, agreed with a number of national administrations to develop a solution which would allow vacancies from a national system to be identified as being of European interest. These vacancies would be automatically transferred to the EURES database in Brussels. In effect this means that any employment office in the countries concerned is able, as part of their routine decision on where to circulate an employer's vacancy, to notify a vacancy to other countries in the EURES network.

Such "integration" of national job vacancy systems and the EURES database has now taken place in Germany, France, Austria, Belgium and Finland. Further integration is being planned by the Netherlands, Norway and Ireland.

### *Cross-border integration*

At crossborder level there was a demand, from employers and jobseekers alike, that all vacancies in a crossborder region be transferred between administrations. In October 1996 therefore, full crossborder integration was established between Northern Austria and Southern Germany. Every employment office, on either side of the border, can now receive vacancies from their counterparts. At any given time there are up to 40.000 such vacancies available. This contributes to one of the principal aims of EURES, the creation of transparent labour markets at a crossborder level. Following the success of this initiative the same service is being developed in the France/Germany and the Netherlands/Germany crossborder regions.

## *IDA support*

All of these developments have been supported by the funding EURES has received from the Commission's IDA (Interchange of Data between Administrations) programme. It has resulted in rapid progress being made which may not otherwise have been possible.

## *Job coding*

Finally, in order to further improve the quality of information exchange a review of the job coding system used by EURES has been instigated which aims to provide a new job classification system by October 1998.

## **2.3 Improvements to the database on working and living conditions**

The EURES database on living and working conditions and regional labour markets, has been considerably improved during the two last years.

In order to meet more quickly and more directly the specific needs of the Euroadvisers in particular, and of the network as a whole, the European Coordination Office developed its own management and distribution tool of living and working conditions and regional labour markets - the EuresInfo database - replacing the Info 92 database on the internal market previously used. After more than one year of development, the new database is ready to be installed on the PC of the various Euroadvisers in the network.

An improved information policy comprising harmonised tools and procedures for collecting data and exchanging labour market information was developed in cross-border areas in order to match the one already existing at the transnational level.

The content of the database, designed to meet first the needs of the Euroadvisers and through them the demands of the general public has become richer with the addition of new topics. Particularly, during the last two years, the database was developed to include a new domain, presenting a profile of the regional employment markets of the Member States of the network: based on a common model, a profile of unemployment, a profile of qualifications requested on the part of the employers, a profile of the population at work and of new graduates arriving on the labour markets is provided, allowing a regional diagnosis of the shortages and surpluses as regards manpower to be built up. This model will be refined in the months to come.

The Internet site of the EURES network also includes a section on "Living and working conditions and regional labour markets".

## **2.4 Strengthened cooperation between Public Employment Services**

EURES has helped the employment services of the participating countries to engage in closer cooperation, be it on recruitment in the framework of bilateral agreements or more generally on wider issues of common concern.

Cooperation between the PES on transnational recruitment has been intensified. The PES, facilitated by the EURES-managers and Euroadvisers, may set up bilateral agreements in which the countries involved work actively to fill vacancies in a country in need of labour in specific sectors. Several successful cooperations have been achieved, notably with the massive recruitment to Disneyland in France, to the IT-sector in Ireland, between Austria and Greece in tourism, and in the recruiting of medical staff in Norway. In these, and other similar cases, the EURES network is the door-opener that makes it easier for national PES-staff usually not involved in the European labour market, to work on European mobility.

*EURES - an incentive to wider cooperation between the PES*

The creation of EURES brought the PES of the EEA countries together in a comprehensive network in which the exchange of vacancies and cooperation on international recruitment and mobility are the main elements. Partly thanks to the network, a stronger cooperation on a wider range of issues is being developed. In Killarney (October 1996) the Heads of PES attended for the first time, together with about 50 managers at intermediate level from all the countries of the EEA, a conference designed to involve them more deeply in the EURES network. Since then the Heads of the PES have begun to meet on a regular basis to discuss matters that go beyond the exchange of vacancies and the EURES services. EURES can be seen as the instrument which brought together PES on a broader range of issues and matters of common concern.

### **3. Evaluation of EURES' achievements**

EURES services have reached around 1 million citizens in 1996-97, more than twice the numbers reached in 1994-95. As such the efforts made to expand and improve the network have paid off. At the same time efforts have also been made to improve the quality of the information and guidance given and the way in which the services are delivered, while increasing the exchange of vacancies.

#### **3.1 EURES as an information and counselling service**

Moving to another country is, for most people, a big step. EEA citizens need to be well informed about the potential of the European labour market in terms of employment possibilities, enhancement of qualifications and development of an international career. Employers need information about the availability of a multicultural, multilingual labour force which can represent an important competitive advantage. The Euroadvisers have developed a unique expertise in all practical, legal or administrative matters related to mobility. In cross-border regions, where mobility is at its highest, information on issues like social security, benefits, pension issues, recognition of qualifications or tax law, is of crucial interest to workers. Being trained for this purpose, the Euroadvisers using the database on living and working conditions, can inform jobseekers on a wide range of issues. Through their human network they can easily clarify any question by contacting a colleague in another Member State.

The information given and contacts with the public have risen significantly during the last two years, both at transnational and cross-border level. Contacts within all categories have

been doubled since 1995. These data suggest that there is a clear need for information on mobility, that people are becoming more aware of the possibility of moving to or recruiting from another country and that EURES has been recognized at the national level as a key provider of information on mobility.

*Table 2 Contacts with EURES clients in 1996 and 1997 (Jan. to Nov.)*

Period	jobseekers	Contacts with employers	others	Total
1996	363752	28971	46929	441648
1997 (11 mth)	402016	34815	48619	485450
Total	765768	63786	95548	927098

Information and counselling services provided by EURES constitute an essential facet of the network's activities. They may be related to placement activities although they also frequently concern people who already have a job (eg. in cross-border regions) or who found a job not advertised through EURES.

### **3.2 EURES as a recruitment and placement tool**

#### *A steady increase in vacancy numbers*

The number of vacancies exchanged via the Job vacancy database has increased nearly every month since the launch of EURES, going from 4700 in October 1995 to 30 000 at the end of 1997 (stock of vacancies at a given moment in time). Vacancies are deleted automatically after three months, so the annual input of vacancies into the system is in fact a multiple of stock figures.

The latter figure includes cross-border vacancies accessible to the whole network, although of particular interest to some countries, mostly Germany and Austria. Cross-border vacancies were not exchanged until October 1996. More are now being exchanged due to the national systems of some countries being integrated with the EURES jobs database. In addition, towards the end of 1997, Germany and Austria decided to exchange all jobs requiring an academic qualification.

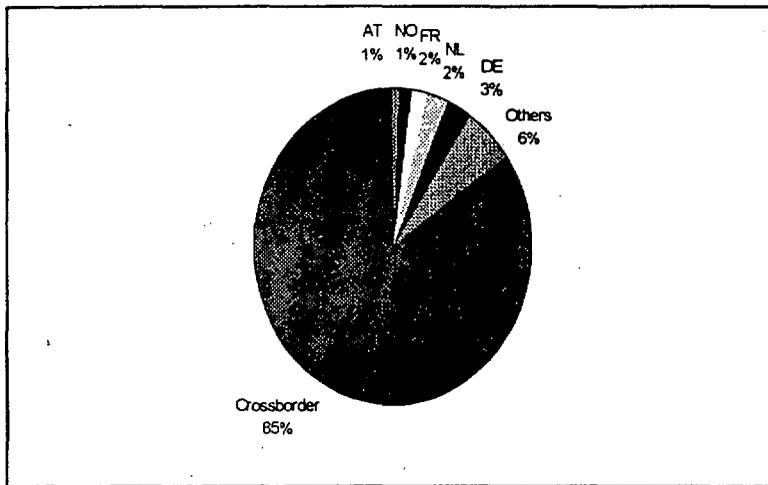
The number of international jobs excluding crossborder vacancies and German and Austrian academic vacancies varies between 5000 and 10000.

The above mentioned overall increase reflects the commitment of EURES partners and efforts made to promote EURES to workers and employers. It also suggests that, even with the emergence of the Internet and other technological innovations, the EURES database is recognized as an important tool. This is due in particular to the fact that with the EURES database, job vacancies are sifted and meant for the European labour market. This is an advantage for the jobseeker whose application will be treated with interest, increasing the chances for success. Employers, on the other hand, can benefit from the specific services of the Euroadvisers in order to successfully recruit from abroad. Advertising via EURES is therefore a quality guarantee both from the employer's and jobseeker's points of view.

### National differences

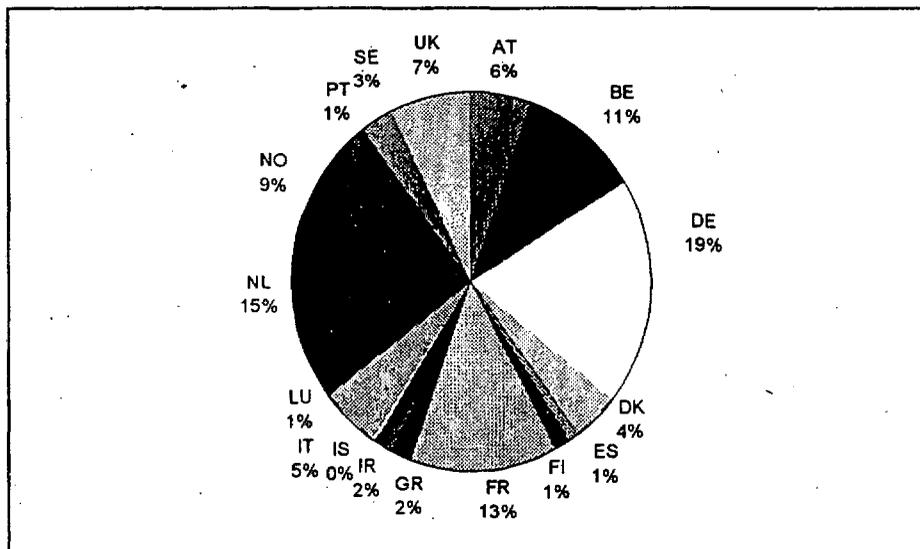
The contributions participating organisations make to the vacancy database varies widely as seen in the graphs below.

Graph 2 Share of jobs input from PES and cross-border structures 31.12.1997



Total : 30387 (4702 international and 25685 crossborder)

Graph 3 Share of jobs input by country (excluding cross-border jobs), as at 31.12.1997



One explanation for the differences between Member States is the fact that they select themselves which vacancies should be transferred to the EURES database, and rely on more or less automatic procedures to transfer vacancies from their own internal vacancy database to the EURES system.

Differences may also be attributed to different degrees of commitment to EURES and to the reluctance from some Member States to attract unemployed from other countries in a difficult labour market situation.

An important objective for the years to come is clearly to reduce such imbalances between participating countries, while recognizing that inputs will always reflect different labour market situations.

#### *Improving record on placement*

The last two years have seen a sharp increase in the number of placements achieved with the aid of the EURES network, with a total of 9505 recorded in 1996, compared to 5700 recorded in 1995. In 1997 the number is considerably higher at 22729 placements.

The figures are estimates as reported by the partners themselves. It is difficult to determine the exact figure for placements in Europe, as jobseekers very seldom report back to EURES when they in fact get a job through EURES.

International placements are often complicated and time consuming, often more so than at the national level. EURES can assist in this process by facilitating language training for applicants, working with the professional organisations on selecting candidates etc. Because of this, there is more work, time and effort involved than the bare figures suggest.

In addition, placement estimates only reflect placements achieved with direct intervention of EURES. Many other placements are indirectly supported by EURES through its information and counselling services.

#### *The nature of the jobs advertised through EURES*

The vacancies advertised via EURES require increasingly higher education. At the beginning of 1997, 20% of the vacancies required an academic qualification, where as at the end of the year this share had increased to 40% of all EURES vacancies. The jobs available through EURES are of a wide variety, although a few sectors account for between 30 and 40% of the jobs - namely in the IT, health care, tourism and hotel -and restaurant sectors. A large share of the jobs in the latter category is seasonal work.

### **3.3 EURES-T and the promotion of regional labour markets**

#### *Open regional labour markets*

Transparent regional labour markets are being created with the use of EURES technology and the service of Euroadvisers from both the PES and the social partners' organisations. Cooperation and close contacts with local actors (public authorities, employers and their organisations, unions) in the region are part of the cross-border partners' diversified

working day. Some partnerships work closely with other regional networks and try to create synergies with other Community programmes (see 3.5 below).

Some cross-border regions have successfully created a common and open labour market with exchange of all vacancies within the region, as opposed to just a limited number of selected vacancies. This has already happened between Bavaria and the Austrian Bundesländer of Vorarlberg Tyrol, Salzburg and Upper Austria (with the exchange of 25000 to 40000 vacancies at any given time). A further exchange is under development between the French frontier districts Alsace and Lorraine and the neighbouring German Bundesländer Baden-Württemberg, Rheinland-Pfalz and Saarland. Further arrangements of this type are in preparation between Northern Ireland (UK) and the northern regions of the Republic of Ireland as well as between the Dutch frontier districts and the neighbouring German regions.

#### *Information on local labour markets*

Another field of cooperation between partner organisations is the regular survey and analysis of the cross-border labour market. Some of the existing partnerships have already set up a system to collect relevant data on employment in the concerned frontier regions (such as unemployment by gender, age, level of qualification and type of job; employment by sector and by level of qualification; skills shortages and surpluses; flows of commuters). Other partnerships are considering doing so as experience has shown that the information provided is extremely useful for Euroadvisers, the partner organisations, other organisations, political authorities as well as for the ordinary citizen. This information also provides a basis for dialogue and consultation between partners that is useful for the management and the development of coordinated actions concerning the cross-border labour market. An example of these coordinated actions is the cooperation of some PES at cross-border level to treat collective dismissals or recruitments of workers. In different regions PES are also preparing joint cross-border employment "clubs" or joint information sessions for job seekers.

Studies or surveys on specific labour market issues that are being carried out by almost all the partnerships cover, for example provisional working needs of the companies in terms of qualifications, the situation of female cross-border workers and the profile of the commuter workers.

#### *Social dialogue*

In some partnerships, the cooperation developed in the framework of EURES has allowed the emergence of cross-border social dialogue projects with some additional support from the Commission (DG V). These social dialogue projects were launched in three cross-border regions, one of them aiming to identify the possibility of bilateral regulations and agreements concerning working conditions (e.g. for detached workers). Another project serves to identify the different obstacles to cross-border mobility, and a third one is aiming to analyse the feasibility of a regional survey on the "jobs of the future".

#### *Identifying obstacles to mobility*

Cross-border Euroadvisers identify obstacles to mobility on a daily basis. This information is passed on to relevant authorities or local politicians with a view to removing these obstacles. In some cross-border partnerships, the EURES partners themselves are prepared to take actions within their own field of responsibility to help reduce obstacles

(eg the chambers of industry and commerce with respect to vocational training). Regular working groups of the EURES partners contribute to efforts to dismantle obstacles and propose amendments of the legislation, or undertake practical measures concerning vocational training. The Euroadvisers from all crossborder partnerships have started to report regularly and in a structured way on obstacles to mobility. This should in the future allow a regularly updated overview by EURES on this topic; for dissemination in relevant administrative and political circles.

### **3.4 Quality of the network and its services**

#### *A continuous review of EURES services*

During the past two years, special attention has been given to the development of the role and activities of EURES by the partners in four seminars, in which steps were taken to define the framework, content, organisation and quality of EURES services. The 1996 London strategy seminar defined 16 operating principles to be followed if EURES is to meet its legal requirements and to fulfil its role as a labour market instrument. The following Rome seminar identified a number of key issues and obstacles to EURES. In Killarney the entire EURES network met for the first time, including the Heads of Public Employment Services. A number of working groups stemming from the seminars have resulted in a strategy for promoting EURES, a better training approach, a strategy for transnational cooperation, the elaboration and implementation of quality standards for EURES services. All partners agreed on a series of measures and a commitment to provide services of the highest quality to the EURES customers.

#### *Training*

As part of the commitment to provide quality services, a high priority in 1996-97 was given to increasing the number of Euroadvisers and providing professional training for them. In addition to the continuation of advanced language training and technical training in the use of the new EURES IT systems, organised at national level, a full programme of transnational continuing training was organised by the Commission and carried out by different partner organisations. All Euroadvisers participated in at least one seminar. The subjects of these seminars, responding to requests from the network, covered for example the transfer of social security rights, community programmes and their synergy with EURES and transnational placement.

#### *Quality standards*

Providing a high quality of service is essential if EURES is to develop a substantial share in European transnational placements, and to attract large numbers of employers and workers to use its services. Because EURES provides a pan-European service while at the same time having a large number of partners with different organisational structures and practices, it has been essential to agree on common quality standards, and ensure their implementation by Euroadvisers and other staff involved in the delivery of EURES services and to maintain the same standards throughout the network.

A number of basic standards have been agreed by the partners, and will be fully implemented next year. The standards cover how to deal with vacancies, how to deal with applications, how to select new Euroadvisers, and how to deal with the information flow.

New standards, and control mechanisms, will need to be developed to respond to changing needs and strategies. Some of the standards - those which directly involve the clients- will be published so that EURES clients know what to expect. The control mechanisms should serve two purposes: verify the degree of implementation and capture the need for new or revised standards. EURES aims at a regular updating of the standards, in accordance with clients' needs and expectations.

### **3.5 Synergies with other Community programmes**

Since its inception, the Commission has been concerned to ensure that EURES should situate itself clearly within the overall context of Community programmes, in particular those designed to promote European employment, education and training and regional development. Partners in the network have been encouraged to adopt active policies in this respect both as a way in which the expertise of the network can be made available to those involved in other Community activities and to make use of opportunities provided by such programmes.

The training for Euroadvisers includes several seminars on Community programmes and their synergy with EURES. In addition, a section of the EURES Information data base on the relevant programmes has been developed to help them to respond to information requests. Close contact is encouraged at the local level between Euroadvisers and EURO-INFO Centres; in some areas, particularly in crossborder structures, the offices of both are located in the same building which facilitates cooperation and access for clients, especially employers.

Among the examples of concrete cooperation which has been developed over the last two years, the EURALP partnership supported a programme by the EU under the TEN programme to improve transport in the region. The EURES partners had earlier identified transport as one of the main obstacles to mobility between Italy and Austria. Other initiatives using funding from INTERREG have also been developed by Crossborder structures notably in vocational training, following an analysis by the partners of the needs of the region. At national level an ADAPT programme has been launched by the ANPE, following discussions with a number of EURES partners in 1995, in which Euroadvisers from these partners assist in the programme which helps people made redundant in France to find new employment through training or setting up a business after an analysis of market openings, in another country.

Following the identification of the specific obstacles to mobility faced by certain groups of young people (students, trainees, researchers and volunteers) in the Commission's Green Paper on *Education, Training, Research: the obstacles to transnational mobility*, discussions have begun with the relevant Commission services on ways in which the network can be made more accessible to these groups to provide them with better information about how to overcome these difficulties.

During 1996 the partners agreed to include offers of short-term work placements ("stages") in the job vacancy data base. Developing the network as a European data base to carry offers of "stages" will create opportunities for closer cooperation with a number of Community programmes in education and training, providing a more accessible and complete service to the young people concerned and avoid the duplication of scarce resources.

The EURES service has been usefully complemented by the European Union's Citizens First initiative, which aims to inform European Citizens on their rights and opportunities in the single European market. There is a prominent reference to EURES in the guide "Working in another EU-country", and individuals looking for work are signposted to EURES by the Citizens First "Signpost Service".

#### **4. Challenges for EURES**

With the emergence of the European Employment Strategy, EURES – as a service in favour of mobility and employment - will be an increasingly important tool in correcting labour market imbalances, and in raising workers employability. As a provider of information of the rights and opportunities which employees and employers have in the Single Market, EURES also needs to be seen in conjunction with the Commission's endeavour to improve the Dialogue with Citizens, in line with the 1997 Single Market Action Plan.

However, EURES has not reached its full potential yet. There are still discrepancies between the contributions made by different partners. EURES needs fuller integration especially in the Public Employment Services where it should become part of the normal range of services. EURES also needs to reach a "critical mass" in terms of market share, in order to be in a position to provide an optimal service to all users. And it will have to continually adapt to the challenges and opportunities offered by new technologies.

##### **4.1 Full integration of EURES in Public Employment Services and other partner organisations**

The success of EURES depends on the commitment of all partners. Selecting Euroadvisers, setting up support systems, overcome technical challenges, promoting EURES within the services and towards workers and employers all require efforts from the PES and other EURES partners. After four years of existence, it is clear that some partners have to increase their efforts, especially as regards the integration of EURES in the daily activities of the employment services.

Priority will thus be given in the coming years to help EURES become more strongly rooted within the different national PES, while enlarging its range of services and enhancing the quality of its services to the clients. The integration of EURES in the normal activities of the PES calls for measures to sensitize line managers and strengthen their communication with Euroadvisers, and to devolve EURES services down to the local level. Ideally, all staff of the organisations should have knowledge of EURES and be able to inform a wider public about EURES services. Furthermore, the Heads of PES should be clear about the priorities and activities of EURES. The newly established network of Heads of PES supported by the Commission should help in this respect, and it is expected to undertake a thorough review of EURES objectives, priorities and conditions for success in the course of 1998.

The development of a coordinated European employment strategy and the introduction of economic and monetary union, both lead to and draw on further integration of labour

markets. In this context, EURES should not be an isolated service within the partner organisations, but should become part of their normal range of services.

#### **4.2 Increasing EURES' share of EEA vacancies**

In order to be regarded by employers as well as jobseekers as a valuable service for information, recruitment and placement on the European labour market, EURES has to reach a "critical mass" in terms of the number of vacancies it handles. The job vacancy data base has not yet reached a stage of development making it a full-fledged European instrument for recruitment and placement.

Such a development is desirable to accompany the achievement of the Internal Market and increasing integration of crossborder regional economic areas. Enlargement to Eastern Europe will also increase demand for information on jobs opportunities.

Geographical mobility should be encouraged in the context of the implementation of the European employment strategy. New generations entering the labour market include a large number of highly qualified and multilingual young people who will see mobility as a means to enhance their qualifications and their "employability". Readiness to move to other countries should also be seen as a mechanism for reducing labour market imbalance where particular labour supply shortages appear in one country.

Achieving such critical mass will depend on intensified efforts to inform employers about the EURES services. EURES partners agreed to concentrate their efforts in 1998/99 on the health, IT and tourism sectors, as well as on graduate jobseekers. Constant improvement in the quality of the services will be essential to maintain employers' fidelity.

However, the number of job vacancies in the EURES database should not be increased to the detriment of the quality of such vacancies. Standards will be developed to ensure that EURES vacancies offer a genuine chance to non-nationals to be recruited. The consultation of the database will be facilitated through better distribution patterns, making it easier to find and select vacancies targeted towards specific countries or regions.

EURES will endeavour to respond better to the specific needs of young people and students. During 1997 discussions began with the public employment services in a number of countries about ways of developing EURES services for young graduates in cooperation with universities and other higher education institutions. The increase in student mobility, with some 10% now following part of their studies in another Member State each year, the increase in difficulties being experienced by graduate job seekers to find jobs, and the growing interest of both PES and universities in providing additional help for young graduates indicate that there is considerable potential for such partnerships.

Because young people are more mobile than older generations, and with youth unemployment being high, getting a short term work placement (stage) in another country could be of great significance. Exchanging stages or apprenticeships via the EURES Job vacancy database is a new challenge for EURES. It is now foreseen, and could help young people to obtain a first work experience, and thereby make them more inclined to move to another country at a later stage in life.

### 4.3 EURES and the Internet

During 1996 there was increasing discussion in the EURES network on the use of the Internet by public employment services to advertise their vacancies, training opportunities and their services in general. An agreement was reached that EURES should offer as much of its services as possible to European citizens via Internet.

It was decided, as a first stage, to create a section on EURES in the Europa Internet server of the Commission. General information on EURES itself, its objectives, the role of Euroadvisers and crossborder information was initially made available. The next stage was to include specific information on living and working in each of the 17 countries represented in the EURES network. The information includes guidance on finding work, entry and registration, healthcare, social security, education, accommodation and taxation. The section on each country follows the same format and the information itself is provided by information experts in each country.

As a second stage, agreement was reached on a way to advertise EURES job vacancies on the Internet homepage, providing for a number of options which balance the employers' needs for confidentiality and the jobseekers' desire to see the vacancies on offer. Contact for application and further information is thus either the relevant Euroadviser or the employer. Employers have to give their agreement if their address is to be published on the Internet.

Finally a feasibility study has been launched regarding the setting-up of a jobseekers' data bank. This would allow jobseekers to place their CVs in the EURES Homepage so that employers can view them and contact them if they have a suitable vacancy. Recommendations on this project are due in 1998.

The EURES Homepage now has links to the respective homepages of the national employment services, thereby allowing jobseekers and employers a gateway into the services and vacancies offered at a national level<sup>2</sup>.

Combined with EURES, the Internet can, therefore, be seen as an extremely valuable additional strategic tool to ensure that the facilitation of free movement is achieved and that a transparent labour market can be developed in Europe.

*In order to enable EURES to respond to the needs of European citizens in the years to come, meeting these challenges will be a priority. Success in such an enterprise will depend on the continuing support of all parties concerned, at European, national and local level as well as at social partners' level, including adequate human and financial resources.*

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<sup>2</sup> The EURES homepage address is <http://europa.eu.int/jobs/eures>

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