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EU-Profiling-Seminar January 12-14, 2005 in Nuremberg (VP/2004/007)

„Development of profiling instruments as tools within the preventative approach to LTU“

The EU Commission (DG Empl) supports the organisation of a profiling seminar for European Public Employment Services by the Federal Employment Service Germany, Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (BA), and its Institute for Employment Research. The agenda is based on the following considerations:

“Profiling” has become a keyword in assessing the strength and weaknesses of jobseekers in order to dress up individual action plans to evaluate their employability or job readiness. PES in Europe make use of and develop different tools to improve profiling standards. As an individual approach profiling contains a “promise” of a partnership relation between jobseekers and PES staff for a tailored support in job search activities according to jobseekers’ needs and competences. Profiling should help to define the scope of job places in reach for the individual and available instruments of LMP that correspond to the identified needs.

On the other hand, profiling is an instrument that could help to gear support not only to the jobseekers in need but also to those who are likely to benefit most from the available resources. In this sense profiling may contribute to more efficient use of PES’ resources, both of time spent for counselling and of finance available for programs.

PES have to balance their activities between the needs defined by profiling and the available resources. This implies a strategy how to make use of profiles to take the relevant decisions of the kind of support, its timing and its costs. European countries have developed strategies to solve this conflict according to their legal framework, institutional culture and tradition, budgets and labour market priorities.

Therefore “profiling” takes on a different and specific meaning within each national context. Even within countries profiling may be carried out differently for different groups of people or in varying institutional setups.

The profiling seminar puts profiling in the context of the European Employment Strategy which calls for individual action plans for the integration of jobseekers and meaningful activation as instruments to prevent the inflow LTU. To cover the great variety of national strategies and experiences we propose to use “profiling” in a broad sense. It shall include all systematic strategies to define support and activation needs starting from individual assessment of jobseekers’ strengths and weaknesses related to their job search capacities and labour market chances. Systematic strategy means that there are some standards of

how to assess strengths and weaknesses and identify jobseekers at risk of LTU or some rules how to attribute resources according to jobseekers profiles.

A wide definition of profiling allows for including screening approaches that define risk of LTU according to a few simple characteristics as well as more sophisticated approaches by structured interviews, psychological tests or differentiated statistical risk scores. The inclusion of such a variety of approaches should allow to review what is nationally considered to be a risk for becoming LTU and how it can be identified.

A wide definition also allows to consider a wide range of experiences how individual profiles are related to types of individual action plans by selecting jobseekers to different groups (segmentation), to different intensity of counselling or to effective instruments.

Speakers from Australia and European PES shall present their national approaches to profiling, which have already been implemented or are at the rim of being implemented. There is occasion to discuss experiments and plans for further development in the future.

Workshops shall allow for a closer look at organisational, methodological and evaluation details of each approach.

The first workshop "Profiling and professional orientation for young people" shall focus on those issues which have to be considered when profiling has to evaluate school performance and individual interests as a base of defining professional prospects, qualification needs and assistance needed.

The second workshop "Individual assessment of strengths and weaknesses of jobseekers" shall focus on the scope of individual characteristics and job requirements that have to be addressed for meaningful profiling and the instruments used for their assessment.

The third workshop "Organisational implications of profiling and PES resources" looks into the requirements in staff qualification and number, responsibilities and follow up of jobseekers. Contributions are expected how profiling outcomes and segmentation of jobseekers can be related to LMP instruments and how available resources are balanced with the needs of jobseekers.

The fourth workshop "Statistics based profiling and evaluation studies" aims at exchanging experience from preliminary studies to develop profiling approaches and from evaluation studies of the new instruments or organisational performance. It should include statistical evidence on the importance of profiling characteristics and impacts of profiling and segmentation on prevention of unemployment.