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for Jobseekers
International Comparisons: Sweden,
the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

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**CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR JOBSEEKERS
INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS: SWEDEN, THE NETHERLANDS
AND THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Nathalie Georges, Nicolas Grivel, Dominique Méda

ABSTRACT

In most European countries, there are reforms in progress aimed at individualising the journey to return to work so as to guide each person in function to their needs. However, the definition of the nature and degree of this case management has not been stabilised. This study's main goal is to clarify the content of case management: in function to the specificities of each system, how are the case management processes organised? Who are the service providers and beneficiaries? And what services are proposed to the latter? The study examines the case management in three countries: Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, all presented as models consecutive to employment policies and structural reforms carried out since the 1990s having encouraging results in terms of unemployment rates. This diversity of institutional organisations enables to test the hypothesis of a progressive convergence of approaches touching upon the notion of individualised case management and the recourse to comparable services in function to the jobseekers' profiles. The three countries visited have comparable evolutions concerning their approach to employment policies, although each of them conserves some of their specificities linked to their history and their social and political preferences. The study underlines the common trends which are related to institutional reforms, guidance and individualised tracks and short services aiming for a rapid return to employment.

Keywords : case management, jobseekers, public employment service, employment policies, international comparisons.

Les prestations et services d'accompagnement des demandeurs d'emploi Comparaisons internationales Suède, Pays-Bas, Royaume-Uni

Résumé

Dans la plupart des pays européens, des réformes sont en cours pour individualiser les parcours de retour à l'emploi, afin d'accompagner chacun en fonction de ses besoins. Cependant, la définition de la nature et du degré de cet accompagnement est encore peu stabilisée. L'objectif central de cette recherche est d'éclairer le contenu de l'accompagnement : en fonction des spécificités des différents systèmes, comment s'organise le processus d'accompagnement ? Qui sont les prestataires et les bénéficiaires ? Et quelles prestations ces derniers se voient-ils proposer ? L'étude analyse l'accompagnement proposé aux demandeurs d'emploi dans trois pays : Suède, Pays-Bas et Royaume-Uni, qui sont tous présentés comme des « modèles » consécutivement aux politiques de l'emploi et aux réformes structurelles qu'ils ont menées depuis les années 1990, avec des résultats encourageants en termes de taux de chômage. Cette diversité des organisations institutionnelles permet de tester l'hypothèse d'une convergence progressive des approches autour de la notion d'accompagnement individualisé, et du recours à des prestations comparables en fonction du profil des chômeurs. Les trois pays visités présentent des évolutions comparables concernant leur approche des politiques de l'emploi, même si chacun d'entre eux conserve un part de spécificités, liées à son histoire et à ses préférences sociales et politiques. La recherche souligne les évolutions communes concernant les réformes institutionnelles, l'accompagnement et les parcours individualisés et les prestations courtes visant un retour rapide à l'emploi.

Mots-clés: *accompagnement, chômeurs, service public de l'emploi, politique de l'emploi, comparaisons internationales.*

This report was written within the framework of a study begun in March 2007 by the General Inspectorate for Social Affairs (Igas) and the Centre for Employment Studies (CEE) with the intention of shedding light upon counselling services available to jobseekers in different European countries, with particular focus on the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Sweden. The scientific supervision was ensured by Marianne Berthod-Wumser and François Brun (Igas), Bernard Gazier (Matisse, Paris 1-CNRS) and Dominique Méda (CEE).

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report, which was written as part of a partnership between The Centre for Employment Studies and The General Inspectorate for Social Affairs, is to shed light upon the content of case management services for jobseekers in other European countries. Three countries were particularly studied: the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Sweden.

It was supervised by a “scientific committee” composed of Marianne Berthod-Wumser and François Brun (Igas) on one hand and Bernard Gazier (Paris I - CNRS) and Dominique Méda (CEE) on the other.

The study of these three countries was notably carried out through interviews conducted in each country with the key national and local guidance players. There are specific reports on each country presenting the modalities of case management available to jobseekers by situating them in the national context in corporate, legal and financial terms.

This summary report aims to propose, in this introduction, a frame for the theoretical analysis of the principals and methods available for guiding jobseekers. It then extricates the broad strokes of convergence and divergence in the different systems and their recent reforms.

1. Objectives and methodology

1.1. A central objective: to open the black box of case management

Being that the reforms of employment organisations and policies implemented in European countries are relatively well known in France due to the numerous comparative studies describing the structural mutations of the different systems¹, the choice of this mission’s subject revolves around a less-frequently analysed angle: that of services and benefits offered to jobseekers within the framework of these new methods of organisation. In fact, the content of the services available and the way in which they are distributed over time, in function to the jobseekers’ different profiles and the length of their unemployment periods remain dimensions that have been described little in the public employment services’ (PES) activities, although comparative works on the subject have been started, notably under the impetus of the International Social Security Association² and within the framework of exchanges between unemployment insurance managers³.

In most European countries, there are reforms in progress aimed at individualising the journey to return to work so as to guide each person in function to their needs. However, the definition of the nature and degree of this case management has not been stabilised and there is little comparison between European countries (see below). Furthermore, the benefits that officially recognise the different steps in each jobseeker’s path are not very well known. This mission’s main goal was, therefore, to clarify the content of case management: in function to

¹ Notably through the CERC report #6 (2005) *Aider au retour à l’emploi*.

² The ISSA notably sent its member organisations responsible for unemployment insurance a questionnaire on case management, a generic term describing the follow-up and guidance of jobseekers. This work was to undergo a first review in Moscow in September 2007.

³ Unedic (2007), *Zoom 2007 Evolution et amélioration du marché du travail - Résultats, Pratiques et Expériences européennes*.

the specificities of each system, how are the case management processes organised? Who are the service providers and beneficiaries? And what services are proposed to the latter?

1.2. The choice of fields of investigation

Two criteria presided over the choice of three countries retained for the study, which were Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom:

- they are all presented, either concomitantly or alternatively, as models consecutive to employment policies and structural reforms carried out since the 1990s having encouraging results in terms of unemployment rates;

- their institutional organisations are relatively different from both the French system and from each other, as were the choices made during the systems' reforms: sharing responsibilities with other municipalities and PES in Sweden, the massive externalisation of guiding jobseekers, entrusted to private providers in the Netherlands and a one-stop-shop for compensation and orientation in the United Kingdom.

This diversity of institutional organisations enables us to test the hypothesis of a progressive convergence of approaches touching upon the notion of individualised case management and the recourse to comparable services in function to the jobseekers' profiles.

1.3. Methodology and data

Three documentary sources were mobilised for bringing this project to fruition:

- a review of the theoretical literature on case management and reading studies and evaluations concerning the selected countries, completed by official documents from the national PES;

- travelling to the three countries so as to meet the key players in employment policies. A questionnaire (see annexe) was drafted to this effect and sent beforehand to our interlocutors;

- the Eurostat database *Labour market policy*, which classifies employment policy expenditures in function to the policy measures to which they correspond⁴, and retraces the progression and number of beneficiaries of the different programs. National statistical data was also mobilised.

Two major difficulties emerged from the last two sources mobilised:

- concerning the field interviews, the language barrier (English) limited the amount of details in the data gathered (see below). Furthermore, the fact that the mission mostly interviewed the directors of services leads to biased interpretation of data: they are limited to theoretical guidelines, but the practical implementation could only be imperfectly directly observed;

- the advantage of the Eurostat data is that it is well known and used in all the countries visited, but there still exist numerous methodological debates on the adequacy of the categories for concrete existing measures. It is therefore probable that certain data is not perfectly comparable. This is notably the case in the United Kingdom, which classifies its

⁴ Category 1: services relative to the job market, 2: Vocational training, 3: employment rotation and job sharing, 4: Employment incentives, 5: Protected employment and readaptation, 6: Direct job creation, 7: Aid for creating companies, 8: Maintaining and supporting income in case of employment, 9: Early retirement.

main policies on the labour market in category 1. As for the national statistical data, it possesses a default in comparability and does not always have the same degree of accessibility.

2. Guiding jobseekers: a concept under construction

The paradigm of employment *activation* policies is frequently mobilised to analyse the reforms in process in most European countries. *Passive* (remuneration) policies are thus undergoing a “silent revolution”⁵ via the toughening of access conditions due to a growing conditionality on their payment. This is linked to reinforcing incentives to actively seek employment. At the same time, there exists a general tendency to have more recourse to short-term *active* employment policies aiming to reconcile the unemployed with the labour market and develop their employability to help them find work as quickly as possible (coaching, on-the-job training, subsidized jobs, etc.).

Case management programmes for jobseekers are at the crossroads of two sections of activation (new active professionalizing policies and reinforcing monitoring of the beneficiaries of passive policies). The development of case management programmes is actually seeking a double objective: making a service more efficient for the jobseeker by helping them find employment in function to their individual needs and also to give the jobseeker a sense of responsibility vis-à-vis how much they cost the taxpayers, particularly focusing on a philosophy of rights and obligations, and to sanction them if their job searching is judged to be insufficient⁶. Case management must thus enable both accelerating the return to work (efficacy) and limiting the deficits of unemployment insurance (efficiency).

In Europe, there seems to be a consensus on the virtues of case management policies for jobseekers. Their characteristics (personalisation of the counsellor-jobseeker relationship, focus on short training courses, sanctions, etc.) are globally considered to be desirable evolutions. Bolstered by the recommendations of the European Commission and the OECD, European countries are therefore developing employment policies in keeping with the philosophy of case management programmes. However, these programmes remain largely dependant upon the context within which they are implemented, sometimes making them difficult to compare. Benefits and services relatively different in nature and intensity are grouped together under the same designation, without having developed a clear, unequivocal and mutually agreed upon definition.

2.1. A context of reforms facilitating the implementation of case management programmes

In the past decade, the field of employment policies has undergone major upheavals in many countries: reforming the institutional organisation, renewing the proposed benefits, new rights and also new obligations for jobseekers... The list of innovations is long, and not everything on it is a direct result of jobseeker guidance policies, although they all had a role, in the context of case management, in creating a new practice of employment policies and in redefining the PES missions. Organisation in a one-stop-shop, externalisation to private providers, evolution of the guidance counsellor job and new orientation tools such as

⁵ Daniel, C. (1998) “Les politiques d’emploi : une révolution silencieuse”, *Droit Social* #1, January.

⁶ AISS (2006) *Le Case management : vers un emploi durable ?*

profiling and Individual Action Plans (IAP) thus substantially modify the landscape of assisted return to work programmes⁷.

Reflection in terms of case management and the *track* to employment, which echo the individualisation of handling unemployment, does implicate that certain reforms be carried out within the PES: it is interesting, for example, to train counsellors in personalised follow-up and guidance, to lighten the number of jobseekers in their portfolio, or even giving them segmentation and orientation tools allowing them to constitute homogenous target groups that will profit from comparable benefits, etc. The diversity of proficiencies available to jobseekers is also key in enabling case management programs to result in an effective and durable return to employment, which justifies the PES' growing recourse to external service providers. Finally, being that the PES is attempting to guarantee the highest quality services for jobseekers, it expects the latter to become more involved in the employment seeking process. This *quid pro quo* leads to the development of a contractualisation specifying "suitable employment for everyone" and the multiplication of sanctions. Case management programmes are thus part of a halo of reforms in handling unemployment that must be kept in mind so as to grasp the system's global philosophy, even if the reforms themselves cannot be considered to directly participate in the development of case management programmes' philosophy. The recent evolutions within the PES can thus be summarized by three key words: managerialisation, commercialisation and externalisation⁸.

Case management, strictly speaking, is limited to two major dimensions: personalised follow-up all along the track to employment and the guidance services delivered by the ensemble of players who are involved therein. The modalities retained by the different countries to implement these two key points thus characterise the structural differences between the countries as well as the particularities of their labour markets. This double dimension that circumscribes the modalities of case management programmes allows us to debate its classic definition, the one most often used by the international organisations that promote it, notably on the European level.

2.2. Case management, a concept with shifting borders

In the broad sense of the term, case management corresponds to all personalised measures aiming to improve a jobseeker's chances of finding employment. In this sense, case management draws upon two types of interventions: personalised counselling for jobseekers (individualised plans, definition of a professional project, focusing on personal skills and barriers to employment, etc.), and the large range of measures to accelerate a return to employment (from help seminars to writing a curriculum vitae to long-term vocational training to being placed in subsidized job, etc.).

In other terms, the case management philosophy views the individual under two distinct angles: that of the person as being a unique client who has specific needs and that of this person as they belong to pre-defined categories of the employment policies (measures designed for the young, for long-term unemployed, handicapped workers, etc.). That is why case management programmes can correspond to both an individualisation of taking on jobseekers and to a policy of increased targeting (see 2.1). Yet these two sections are not

⁷ CERC (2005), *op.cit.*

⁸ Kopac, A., Ignjatovi, M. et Darmon, I. (2006) *In-depth analysis of guidance and counselling services*, Guidance in Europe Project Comparative Report, October.

necessarily easily compatible, and they highlight the paradoxes specific to using the concept of case management.

The temporal dimension of case management is equally debatable: personalising the jobseeker's relationship to the PES (through their counsellor's follow-up) implicates committing to this relationship for the duration, and therefore recognising the dynamic factor in the analysis. Yet, it is common to present case management as a linear and sequential process that can be seen as a *journey*: for each jobseeker a "road to employment" will be defined, which they must follow through its different steps, established by the counsellor during the follow-up interviews and which will guarantee them a job at the end of the "road". But this apparent linearity does not seem to take into account the way in which the jobseeker's situation evolves over time, nor the intermediary results of the services received nor, above all, (as it can be argued that the two previous points could be included in the counsellor's diagnosis during the follow-up interviews) the state of the labour market and the demand, nor the phenomena of recurrent unemployment. The slick, theoretical discourse characterising guidance risks, is, in practice, colliding with much more shifting realities in the labour markets.

The ideal-typical definition of case management, which could correspond to the "*personalisation of the jobseeker/counsellor relationship having the vocation of encouraging the individualisation of services offered by the definition of an adapted return to employment track*" is, thus, questioned, on one hand because the individualisation is limited by the *preconceived* definition of employment policies and on the other hand, because it conceals the complexity of the return to employment process, on which a multitude of players participate (such as companies) and whose philosophy is rarely linear.

Within a comparative framework, these definition difficulties are reinforced by the necessity to translate the concept into English and ensure that our interlocutors adopt the same definition of case management as the one we propose⁹. In international comparisons, there are many terms to designate guidance: case management¹⁰, guidance and counselling services, or even career/vocational guidance. Depending upon the term used, the accent is not placed upon the same guidance characteristic: personalised follow-up in one case, professional orientation in the other, these distinctions are not trivial. By choosing to speak of *case management*, we oriented the discussion towards the personalisation of follow-up¹¹, to perhaps the detriment of the en vogue discourse on employability or life-long training¹². The concept of case management, which is resurgent in the domain of guiding jobseekers, is traditionally used in other domains, such as social work or healthcare¹³. In both cases, it entails a reinforced and personalised guidance.

However, if we refer to the content of these different terms, they seem in practice to come back to the same services offered: work placement, information and counselling, personalised

⁹ Barbier, J.C. and Letablier, M.T. (2005) *Politiques sociales, enjeux méthodologiques et épistémologiques des comparaisons internationales*, Peter Lang, Brussels.

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that this term has long been used in the medical and legal domains to designate the case-by-case management of patients in function to their personal characteristics, and of litigation taking into account contextual factors.

¹¹ Definition given for case management: "targeted and individualised management of jobseekers", Unedic, *Zoom 2007*.

¹² Definition given for guidance and counselling services: "mediating services aimed at increasing the employability and the mobility of out of work and in-work individuals", Kopac, A., Ignjatovi, M. and Darmon, I. (2006), *op.cit.*

¹³ The concept of disease management is also employed in this domain.

interviews and training are examples that characterise case management as much as career guidance¹⁴. The major problem posed by translation is thus not so much the choice of terminology as it is having a common definition. Hence the reservations expressed earlier on the use of the case management concept, if they are to be taken into consideration for our study, it was difficult to make it explicit during the interviews as the definition used in practice is closer to the “classical” definition.

The example of the Eurostat nomenclature for classifying the services of the labour market policies cited in this report uses the same logic: despite ongoing discussions about category 1.1, “provisions of service”, including “information services” and “guidance services”, we chose to use it as is, in spite of the fact that it is unclear whether all of the statistical services in the different countries interpret it in the same way and use comparable measures. Our comparison is, therefore, only valid within the limits of the simplified definitions we were forced to use. A result of this weakness was, for instance, the difficulty of precisely delineating a border between social case management and case management for finding employment. In fact, depending upon the country, both do or do not come under the responsibility of common players and are or are not subject to specific measures, etc.

The case management procedures are thus finally presented as a process susceptible of evolving over time, regulated by having interviews with the jobseeker and delivering benefits and services. A limitation in the analysis of this process is, of course, the potential difference between the official and institutional standpoint on the national level and the concrete actions of the players on the local level. In addition to this, the fact that the process can sometimes be quite standardised (in the United Kingdom, for instance) or, on the contrary, not very formalised so as to leave the local agencies (Sweden) room to manoeuvre.

As these problems presented themselves, the concept of case management had to be redefined so as to adapt it to the empirical realities observed.

2.3. Personalised follow-up and service: the two main axes of case management

Four key points were retained to characterise the realities of the guidance process:

- A personalised relationship must be established between a jobseeker and a counsellor (not necessarily the same person throughout the process, although there is a tendency to have a single agent);
- Jobseeker and counsellor must meet regularly for orientation interviews and follow-up;
- A type of contractualisation governs the relationship between the two players, stipulating that former must actively seek employment and that the latter is there to guide the jobseeker¹⁵. A more or less formal contract can be signed, giving general guidelines for the individual action plan determined jointly;
- Individualised services (corresponding to the jobseeker’s diagnosed needs) are provided subject to the counsellor’s instruction and monitoring.

¹⁴ Sultana, R.G. and Watts, A.G. (2005) *Career Guidance in Europe’s Public Employment Services: Trends and Challenges*, Report for DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, October.

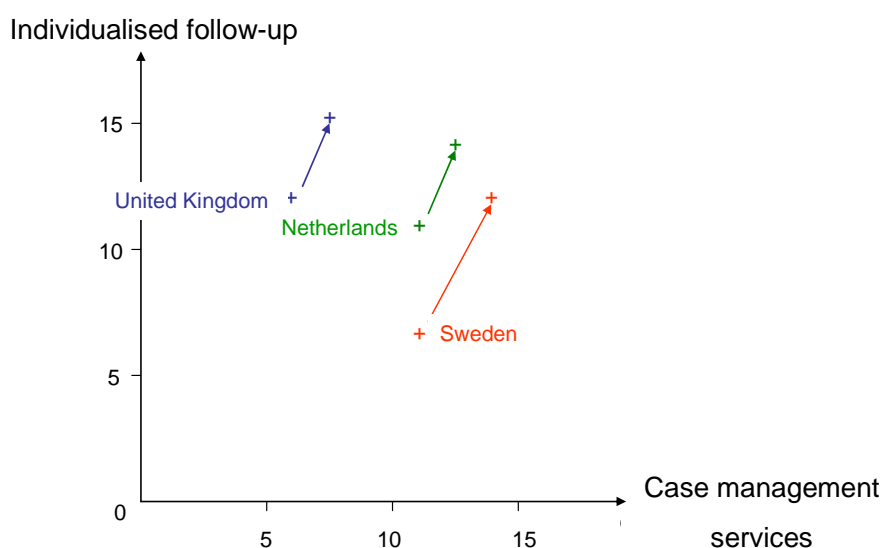
¹⁵ “Proposer ce qui est acceptable pour les [conseillers], accepter ce qui est proposé pour les [chômeurs]”, Cunthig, P., Perez, C. and Personnaz, E. (2006) “L’orientation professionnelle des chômeurs en Europe”, *Brief #232*, Cereq, July-August.

The ensemble of these characteristics entails relatively important mutations for the PES, notably as concerns the counsellor's skills, which in turn entails a professionalisation of the guidance counsellor "profession". Added to the multiplicity of players involved in the process, the diversity of the counsellors' skills leads to a relatively important segmentation of the case management sector.

In order to build a table of analysis pertinent to the comparison, we retained two main axes onto which the four key characteristics of case management are affixed:

- **personalised follow-up**: who are the players, who are the counsellors, how many interviews are there, what is the nature of the individualised follow-up, etc.?
- **guidance services**: what is the balance struck between coaching, training, subsidized jobs, aid for business start-up creation, etc.?

Graph 1. Position of countries on the two axes of case management and the probable evolution in function to the reforms in progress



Construction: a score was established for each axis in function to 8 criterion for follow-up and 7 for services (tables in annexe). In function to the reforms currently in the planning stage and those under consideration, bonuses and penalties either increased or decreased this score, which enabled anticipating the probable trajectory each country will follow.

Interpretation: the United Kingdom is the country that has the most intensive individualised follow-up, but the differential with the two other countries is in the process of decreasing, notably following a predicted strengthening of the individualisation of follow-up in Sweden. On the other hand, the United Kingdom is the country in which people resort the least to case management services, contrarily to Sweden and the Netherlands, where numerous services are offered, a tendency that will continue to strengthen, notable due to the development of coaching services.

Depending upon the degree to which the different case management characteristics are used, the countries can be classified and compared to one another on a double axis graph (see graph 1). Each country could, if fact, opt for different balances between these two dimensions, one country could go to the extreme of only ensuring an intensive personalised follow-up without offering guidance services, while another could only offer moderately intensive semi-personalised while also offering services such as training or placement in assisted employment. In that regard, although the exercise was not conducted with France in mind, the French system has long been characterised by a greater development of the second axis than the first.

Through this graph (see annexe) the structural differences between the countries are emphasized, as are the shifts over time as the reforms progress, and, from there, the systemic

differences (how the labour markets function, definition of employability, compensation criterion, economic situation, etc.).

So as to base our comparative analysis on the specific situation of the selected countries, we will first present the main characteristics of the three systems and their recent evolutions (1), before examining the way in which follow-up functions (2) and the content of the services rendered (3).

Partie 1. SYSTEMS THAT ARE TRADITIONALLY RATHER DIFFERENT IN INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL TERMS, BUT THAT PRESENT CONVERGENT EVOLUTIONS

On the organisational and institutional levels, the three countries investigated are relatively incomparable:

- Sweden draws attention to itself by the predominant role the National Labour Market Board (AMS), which shares responsibilities with the communes. The training policies are traditionally particularly developed, completed by a relatively generous remuneration. But the new government elected in the fall of 2006 began an ambitious battery of reforms, which tend to question, at least partially, the traditional priorities;

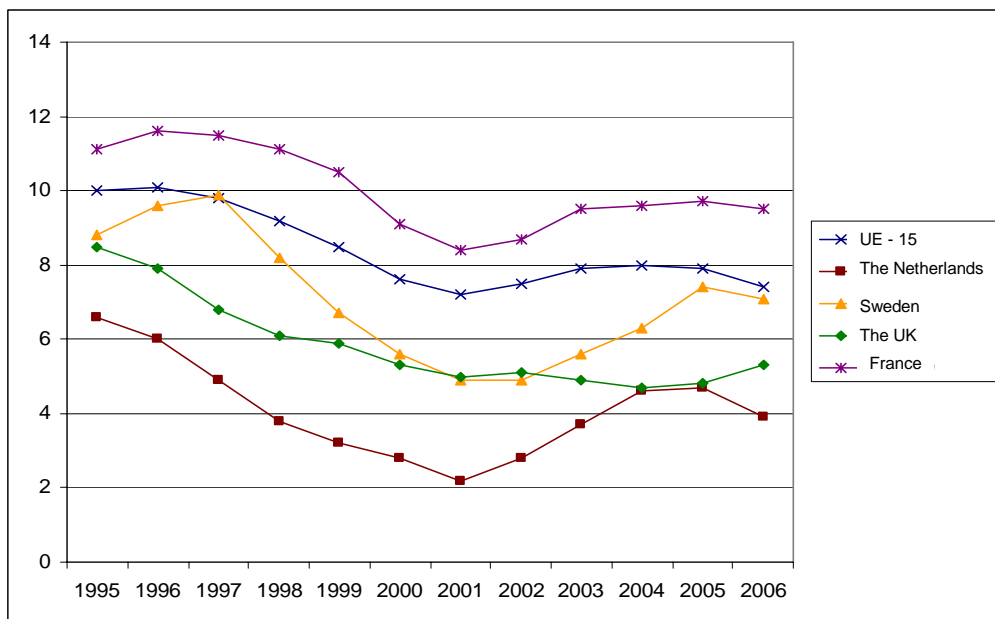
- the Netherlands implemented large-scale at the turn of the century (2000) and adopted an integrated system promoting voluntary employment activation reforms with great recourse to assisted employment contracts. Guiding jobseekers was largely externalised by Unemployment Insurance (UWV), which, together with the Public Employment Service (CWI) operator and the municipalities, shared the responsibility for placement. The priority is now reducing the number of beneficiaries of the handicapped workers' benefits;

- the United Kingdom based its employment policy on a one-stop-shop called Jobcentre Plus created in 2001, which is in charge of the intensive activation of jobseekers. The advertised priority is a rapid return to employment, guaranteed by low compensation and the reduced number of active job market programmes.

1. Three “successes” in terms of unemployment rates, built upon differentiated employment expenditure strategies

The three countries all have unemployment rates inferior to the average in the European Union - 15 countries (graph 2). Throughout the 1990s, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom were able to lower an unemployment rate comparable to the rates recorded in France and Germany in the 1980s (> 10%). Sweden, whose rates had remained low in the 1980s, experienced a great increase of unemployment in the beginning of the 1990s, but the activation policies implemented were relatively efficient. These three countries currently belong to the “reference models” for the European employment strategy.

Graph 2. Unemployment rates in Sweden, in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom, 1995-2006, in %, as compared to unemployment in the European Union



Source: Eurostat

However, these impressive performances in terms of unemployment rates can be explained by different strategies, incorporated into the expenditure structure for employment policies:

- Sweden bet on a high usage of the active labour market programmes (between 40 and 60% of jobseekers benefit from them each year), and notably training programmes;

- the Netherlands implemented a strong activation strategy based on the principle of “employment before income” (*workfirst*), which puts them in second place in Europe for active expenditures (1.33% of the GDP in 2005¹⁶), behind Denmark (1.74%) and right ahead of Sweden (1.32%);

- the United Kingdom has little recourse to active policies (0.49% of the GDP), but concentrates its expenditures on the intensive follow-up of jobseekers by the Jobcentre Plus.

These characteristics can also be seen in the European Eurostat data, which distinguishes three expenditure categories:

- services: expenditures pertaining to services responsible for jobseeker guidance, category in which the United Kingdom classifies almost half of its expenditures;

- LMP (Labour Market Policies) measures: training programmes, subsidised employment, aid for business start-up creation, etc., traditionally a substantial category for Sweden and the Netherlands;

- and LMP support: so-called passive compensation and early retirement expenditures, “passive” employment policy category that is traditionally more significant in countries having implemented relatively generous unemployment insurance.

Thus, the three countries have structures that are deformed by their expenditures in relation to the European average, the exception being France, which is very close.

¹⁶ OECD figures (2007) *Employment Outlook*

Table 1. Expenditures in accordance with labour market policies

| Category | Sweden (2005) | Netherlands (2005) | United Kingdom (2004) | France (2004) | EU 15 Average (2004) |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Services relative to the labour market | 7.4% | 10.7% | 44.4% | 9.1% | 9.50% |
| LMP measures (training, subsidised employment, aid for business start-up creation, etc.) | 44.3% | 56.1% | 20% | 27% | 27.7% |
| LMP assistance (unemployment compensation, early retirement) | 48.3% | 33.2% | 35.6% | 63.9% | 62.9% |

Source: Eurostat.

2. The organisation of PES: working towards integrating services into a one-stop-shop

The three countries have relatively different institutional organisations, legacies from the construction of systems (separation of PES and unemployment insurance, the social partners' roles, the degree of decentralisation, etc.) and the structure of the labour market (importance of the different sectors, needs in terms of the workforce, rate of feminisation, recourse to part-time work, etc.).

However, the recent reforms in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, as well as considerations underway in Sweden, tend to bring these organisations closer to a comparable model in which a one-stop-shop greets and orients jobseekers, while also taking charge of questions pertaining to compensation and a return to employment, as well as defining the jobseekers' individual needs and mobilising players who are competent to ensure guidance throughout the process.

2.1. In Sweden: A centralised administration PES in partnership with the communes

The mainstay of the Swedish system is the National Labour Market Board (AMS), which is in charge of jobseekers' enrolment, guidance and placement. The municipalities assist the AMS with jobseekers who are not remunerated and whose employability is judged to be too low by the AMS counsellors. The institutional segmentation for guidance programmes is, therefore, relatively blurred, with the communes essentially developing programmes for the young and for immigrants. Such sharing of responsibilities is currently being debated, the new government wishes to limit the communes' role to guidance for people very far removed from employment.

Moreover, a PES reform is currently being studied, following criticism addressed to the AMS concerning the efficacy of its actions. There is notably talk of simplifying the institutions through an increased decentralisation of decision makers through the creation of 70 local authorities responsible for running the 300 local employment agencies. The objectives are integrating more services and increasing the local autonomy for implementation.

2.2. In the Netherlands: A residual PES whose guidance jurisdiction was transferred to unemployment insurance and to the communes

The Netherlands radically transformed their jobseeker placement system in 2002 by reducing the old National Employment Agency to a one-stop-shop for enrolling and orienting jobseekers, the CWI, which is only responsible for guiding jobseekers judged to be autonomous who have free access to the services. Those among them who have not found work after 6 months as well as the jobseekers who needed extra help from the beginning are transferred to the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UWV) to be remunerated, and beneficiaries of social welfare are sent to the municipalities. They are responsible for their follow-up, and eventually guiding them to private service providers (practically 100% for the UWV, the choice is left to the communes). Guidance players susceptible of participating along the way are thus numerous and diverse, and one of the major challenges is to guarantee good coordination between them so as to avoid costly overlapping.

Considerations are underway to perfect this new system:

- the efficacy of segmenting guidance into several successive stages, brought about by the institutional separation of the players, is brought into question: integrated guidance measures with the possibility for jobseekers to go back and forth between several services are being experimented with, so as to optimise the track to employment;

- the practically systematic recourse to the competitive placement market is being criticized due to its elevated cost and a disappointing efficiency with regard to the objectives.

2.3. In the United Kingdom: an integrated organisation at the heart of guidance measures

By creating Jobcentre Plus in 2001, the United Kingdom strengthened the integration of its employment services. A central organism now manages the payment of benefits and guidance for the ensemble of social allowance beneficiaries, with the common objective of a rapid return to employment for those who can work. A unique guidance model prevails over the entire territory, and the Jobcentre Plus management is in charge of contracts with private service providers to deliver certain services.

However, vocational training is still managed by private organisations, the Learning and Skills Councils, with which Jobcentre Plus engages partnerships. Moreover, the latter are supposed to be developed in the next few years being that education was raised to the rank of a political priority following the publication of the white paper on training published in 2003, *National Skills Strategy*. Eventually, a total integration of services is desired, in the form of a single front office for clients.

3. Relatively different compensation systems, yet they are all evolving towards a greater conditionality with more supervision

3.1. Moving towards a greater conditionality for remuneration

Linked to institutional organisation, remuneration measures are also relatively different from one country to another, as much concerning their method of functioning (eligibility conditions) as their generosity (duration and amount). Both Sweden and the Netherlands offer two kinds of compensation: unemployment benefits for jobseekers who contributed, managed by the unemployment insurance fund, and a measure for social aid for all those who

are not eligible, for which the municipalities are responsible. In both countries, the benefits are relatively generous, notably because there is no time limit for the social aid. In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, unemployment insurance (JSA, Jobseeker's Allowance) is fixed, limited to 6 months and the amount is relatively low. Beyond 6 months, maintaining benefits is subject to highly restrictive family income conditions. Moreover, the United Kingdom only spent 0.19% of its GDP on "passive" measures in 2005, as compared to 1.2% in Sweden and 2.02% in the Netherlands¹⁷.

However, despite these significant discrepancies, the three countries have had comparable evolutions. A consensus is being reached for toughening the eligibility conditions for these measures and, above all, to make them conditional to actively seeking employment and/or participation in active labour market programmes (ALMP). Thus, in the Netherlands and in Sweden, the possibility of prolonging remuneration beyond the initial threshold was suppressed (300 days in Sweden, which could be renewed through participation in a programme, 36 months in the Netherlands, as compared to 5 years prior to 2005). In the United Kingdom, to collect the JSA, the jobseeker must sign a contract (the Jobseeker's Agreement), in which they promise to actively seek employment.

3.2. The development of sanctions in the case of not actively seeking employment or refusing "suitable employment"

Increasing jobseekers' responsibilities in exchange for remuneration is done through increased monitoring of their job seeking activities and by multiplying the sanctions in the case that they shirk these responsibilities. In the United Kingdom, for example, jobseekers must prove they have applied for at least ten jobs every two weeks, in the Netherlands, this obligation is limited to four every month¹⁸.

This monitoring is based on the more or less formal definition of "suitable employment" for each jobseeker, that is, a job for which the refusal thereof could result in financial sanctions (temporary or definitive reduction or suppression of benefits). In Sweden, this definition is written in law and is based on qualification criterion, remuneration rates and geographic proximity: in function to the characteristics of their previous job, a jobseeker can refuse a job for the first 100 days of unemployment but must accept any job offer thereafter. In the Netherlands, the definition is blurrier, but it also allows for a restriction in the search field for the first six months of unemployment. However, social welfare recipients are, in practice, obliged to accept any offer of employment. Finally, in the United Kingdom, where there is no formal definition, the jobseeker is generally allowed to narrow their search for the first 13 weeks, with the agreement of the Jobcentre Plus counsellor, in terms of professional sectors and level of remuneration notably, but beyond this period, they are supposed to look for and accept any offer of employment.

If these responsibilities are not met, or if an offer judged suitable is rejected, the jobseeker can be sanctioned on the recommendation of their counsellor and then an administrative decision. The rate of sanction and the amount and the duration of benefit suspension are extremely variable from one country to another. In practice, Sweden has little recourse to these sanctions, while the Netherlands have one of the highest rates of all OECD countries

¹⁷ OECD figures (2007) *op.cit.*

¹⁸ OECD (2007) *op.cit.* Chapter 5 "L'activation telle que la pratiquent les pays".

(33.6% of all jobseekers remunerated in 2003¹⁹). Incentive tools for active job seeking are thus used more or less frequently from one country to the next, but the development of the idea of increasing jobseekers' responsibilities in exchange for remuneration rights has been observed everywhere.

4. Profiling jobseekers and externalising guidance programmes incites debate everywhere

4.1. Questioning profiling tools

The modalities for guiding jobseekers could be modified through implementing measures for segmenting the public, if need be, by having recourse to a profiling measure. The United Kingdom tested a statistical profiling model from 1994, then rejected it because the results it gave were less pertinent than the expert analysis of the Jobcentre Plus counsellors in a fluid labour market where it is difficult to predict the individual risk of long-term unemployment in function to the personal characteristics of the jobseekers.

In this domain, the Netherlands were long the model for other European countries following the establishment of the *Kansmeter* ("chance meter") in 1999, which enabled the classification of jobseekers at the time of their enrolment into four categories of distance from the labour market. But it was abandoned in the fall of 2006 for a simpler system, *A-B Routing*, orienting jobseekers onto two distinct tracks in function to their autonomy in seeking employment and which was no longer based on a statistical model.

Sweden, on the contrary, is currently experimenting with a profiling system that the AMS constructed with a research institute, the IFAU, using the Danish *JobBarometer* as a model. It hopes to thereby improve its system's performances with an orientation adapted to the personal situation of each jobseeker.

These three examples show to what extent the recourse to profiling is both a contemporary debate and a tool whose efficacy is contested. In fact, the countries that experimented with it practically all later abandoned it, but that does not keep those that have not yet used it to from running. The debate is therefore far from over, even more so as it is sometimes still used in the countries that decided not to implement it. Thus, in 2003, in the United Kingdom, a report²⁰ brought the question back into fashion by proposing to use profiling for those categories most in difficulty on the labour market (single parents, handicapped workers, immigrants, etc.).

4.2. More and more frequent recourse to private providers

Another movement brings European countries closer: that of the liberalisation of the jobseeker placement market. Most countries have, in effect, removed the PES legal monopoly in the sector, thus allowing other players to guide jobseekers. However, this liberalisation is in varying degrees depending on the country. The United Kingdom, has long had recourse to private operators, notably due to the large number of private recruitment

¹⁹ Tergeist, P. and Grubb, D. (2006) "Activation strategies and performance of employment services in the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom", *OECD Social, employment and migration working paper #42*, December.

²⁰ Bryson, A. and Kasparova, D. (2003) *Profiling benefit claimants in Britain: A feasibility study*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report 196, November.

firms. On the contrary, in Sweden, the strong tradition of public service led them to conserve de facto the AMS' monopoly, despite the fact that it was removed in 1993. The Netherlands, for their part, decided to massively develop their placement market starting in 2002, by almost systematically using private operators beyond 6 months of unemployment.

Everywhere it exists, structural characteristics of the placement market are found: public invitations to tender for selecting service providers, and paying operators on results to avoid the *creaming effect* for those candidates furthest removed from employment. On the other hand, the average cost of guidance programmes, the size and concentration of the market, the type of operators and the number of jobseekers concerned varies greatly from one country to another. In the Netherlands, which, with Australia, has the most experience in the matter, private providers are responsible for 75% of the jobseekers. Jobseekers are distributed between 600 operators, of which the ten largest have 75% of the market share, for an average cost per jobseeker of 4,000 to 5,000 euros. The United Kingdom, which only externalises certain targeted services, notably in *Employment Zones*, the market is more limited, with approximately 30,000 beneficiaries per year and forty operators. Despite criticism regularly addressed to the Dutch system, whose performances were disappointing with respect to the objectives fixed in 2002²¹, the Netherlands remain a model for countries wishing to conduct their own experiments in private guidance programmes, such as Sweden.

Allowing the jobseeker to choose their operator is also becoming more and more common. In the Netherlands, the Individual Reintegration Agreement (IRO) gives the jobseeker a budget for choosing their service provider, and this practice is developing. Such experiments also exist in Germany and in Australia. In the United Kingdom, in the *Employment Zones*, the private service provider disposes of a personal job account for each jobseeker, allowing them to buy, with the jobseeker's agreement, different services, notably training programmes. This trend is part of a general movement towards individualising guidance programmes, which is mostly achieved through a greater personalised follow-up for each jobseeker.

**Box 1. Experiments and evaluations:
Pragmatic approaches to employment policies**

These three countries share an interesting predisposition to pragmatic approaches to employment policies. They generally experiment with them first before putting them into widespread use, if and only if the first evaluations of the policy elicit interest. Then, they are subsequently re-evaluated for efficiency and adjusted, or abandoned if they do not meet their objectives.

Sweden has thus equipped itself with an independent organisation institutionally connected to the Institute for Labour Market Policy Evaluation (*Institutet för arbetsmarknadspolitisk utvärdering*, IFAU), which coordinates experimentation and evaluation activities. The IFAU participates in the first stage to make propositions and prepare the reforms and then again in the final stage to evaluate the implemented policies. They, in partnership with the AMS, are responsible for creating the statistical profiling tool for jobseekers and then for testing it in a county's employment agencies. Two models are currently being studied (one is national, the other regional), and one purpose of the experimentation will be to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each model. If the experiment concludes that the tool is efficient, it will then be implemented throughout the country and then be re-evaluated by the IFAU after a test period. The IFAU has, moreover, evaluated the ensemble of active policies, notably those developed since the 1990s, and its evaluations of different measures have a strong impact on the choices made, notably for giving priority to assisted employment in the private sector and reducing the volume of long-term training.

In the United Kingdom, employment policies are systematically subject to experimentation on a test cross-section, then the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) evaluates their efficacy, and the National Audit Office (NAO) evaluates the financial aspects. These evaluations have a real political impact being that they fuel the debates on reforms under consideration. If a measure endures, it will be regularly evaluated to ensure it still corresponds to the needs in a changing social and economic context. That is the case for the *New Deals*, for example, which have all been the subject of

²¹ RWI (2006) *La recherche de resultats*.

numerous studies and which are going to be revamped in the near future, after having been in place for almost ten years, to take into account reform proposals and new needs that have emerged due to the other reforms implemented on the labour market. The recourse to preliminary experimentation beforehand generating evaluations before widespread implementation is also found in many aspects of the British system: setting up Jobcentre Plus was thus preceded by a pilot project, the current extension of guiding handicapped workers to employment is the national extension of the *Pathways to Work* project, a stronger guidance experiment after access to employment is in process (the *Employment Retention and Advancement* project), etc. In some cases, experimentation leads to no changes: thus, the intensive follow-up carried out during the first weeks of unemployment was the subject of many experiments aiming to find alternative modalities, but they turned out to be less efficient and were not retained.

In the Netherlands, although experimentation is traditionally less systematic, it has been greatly developed these past few years. The *Toonkamers* measure, an attempt at one-stop-shops (grouping the CWI, UWV and municipal social services) is, for example, currently undergoing experimentation in eight regions so as to judge its performance. Evaluations of employment policies greatly impact political debate and are generally scheduled at the time the measure is implemented. It was thus planned, for example, that the 2002 SUWI law be evaluated in 2006. When the decision was made to develop a private placement market, an organisation was created to follow it as it built momentum, evaluate its performances and promote good practices: the Council for Work and Income (*Raad voor werk en inkomen*, RWI), which funds the beneficiary satisfaction surveys and evaluates the efficacy of services offered by private operators.

It is interesting to note that in all three countries, the entire schedule is generally planned at the time a new measure is implemented: experimentation, deployment and evaluation are programmed from the beginning and integrated as indispensable steps in judging the quality of the reform. A bad evaluation then carries enough political weight to withdraw or reform a measure.

Partie 2. MOVING TOWARDS INDIVIDUALISED FOLLOW-UP FOR JOBSEEKERS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A MORE OR LESS FORMALISED CASE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

A common trend to individualising follow-up and increasing the contact between the jobseeker and the PES, intensifying as does the duration of unemployment, seems to be occurring in the three countries studied. To varying degrees and according to different modalities, they are all implementing case management programmes, the intensity of which are dependant upon the needs of each jobseeker.

1. Targeting or individualisation: choosing priorities for employment policies

The case management process can be expressed by two distinct choices that are both coherent and incompatible, targeting and individualisation:

- the first depends upon the definition of the employment policy's priority groups, and a jobseeker belonging to one of these categories can benefit from increased follow-up or special services (certain groups are often found in these three countries that have particular difficulties or are discriminated against in the job market, such as women, the young, elderly workers, immigrants, handicapped workers, the long-term unemployed, etc.). Targeting defines the degree of guidance needed in function to a main characteristic that is, in itself, "positive discrimination" for the ensemble of individuals belonging to that category, without taking into account of any major differences between them. The risk inherent to this choice is imposing services ill adapted to the individuals' personal situations due to the discrepancies that exist within the group. This risk could be reduced by creating smaller groups (such as young people who have been unemployed for at least six months), but it will persist as long as individuals are put into categories created *ex ante*;

- thus, pushed to the extreme, targeting tends towards an individualisation of services, that is, taking each (or as many as possible) characteristic of each individual into account so

as to propose guidance services adapted to their personal situation. There are then no longer any “dominant” criterion defined *ex ante* that preside over the guidance strategy. It is tailored in function to the jobseekers’ individual evaluations, which, despite everything, are not immune to criterion for selection independent of their situation, being that the evaluation is carried out in function to one or several criterion considered to be determinant in returning to employment (generally measuring the people’s employability or evaluating distance from employment, criterion that exclude others, like selection criterion for workers used by employers). Profiling is part of the individualisation philosophy, it attempts to evaluate everyone’s individual criterion to determine their position on the job market. The risk associated with it is focusing the analysis of unemployment causes on the personal characteristics of the jobseekers, occulting notably the socio-economic causes and discriminatory practices that exist on the labour market.

Targeting and individualisation thus respond to a common desire to aid jobseekers in a different way depending upon whether or not they have such and such a characteristic, but a political choice must be made to organise them into a hierarchy as priorities for the employment policy: should individuals be helped more because they belong to certain groups even though they have a high probability of finding employment on their own; or because they individually have a greater chance of becoming long-term unemployed, even though they do not belong to any of these priority groups?

In practice, the countries mix the two criteria, and there are both programmes reserved for certain target groups (language courses for immigrants, training programmes for handicapped workers, etc.) and a follow-up becoming more individualised to propose services to each jobseeker according to their needs. It is interesting to note that in Sweden and the Netherlands, where PES and municipalities intervene together to implement guidance, the jurisdiction is divided as follows: individualised follow-up of everyone by the PES, and services for target groups (notably the young and immigrants) by the municipalities (see box 2).

Box 2. What specific services for which target groups?

From one country to another, belonging to a target group gives the jobseeker the right to benefit from diverse services in function to two different factors: a spatial differentiation (at a precise moment in time in the case management process, the services delivered are different depending upon the group to which one belongs), and a temporal differentiation (depending upon the duration of unemployment, access to certain services is open or closed). The first differentiation concerns target groups to which membership is linked to an unchangeable characteristic and known *ex ante*, such as being young, a woman, an immigrant, etc.; the second concerns *a priori* the ensemble of jobseekers and *a posteriori* those who become the long-term unemployed and the very long-term unemployed, etc.

In the Netherlands and in Sweden, two target groups benefit from a specific intervention, from the first days of unemployment, and then integrate programmes reserved for them: the young and immigrants. In the two countries, most of these programmes are run by the municipalities, which propose a relatively comparable range of services. Two kinds of interventions are judged to be adequate for these categories: short-term intensive vocational training courses to acquire basic skills (reading, the country’s language, etc.) then learn a career in an unpopular field and assisted employment to get the jobseeker into the job market, such as internships, hiring subsidies, reserved public jobs, etc. The double particularity of these services compared to those which available to other jobseekers who do not belong to the target groups is that they are generally accessible very early on in the unemployment period (early and preventative intervention), and that the beneficiaries are followed by specialised counsellors. For instance, the municipality of Stockholm implemented a programme allowing newly arrived immigrants (having arrived under three years ago) to learn Swedish while developing their professional skills; the city of the Hague signed agreements with certain businesses to allow the young to do internships as soon as they register for unemployment.

In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, there is no *ex ante* distinction between jobseekers enabling them to benefit from differentiated programmes. Differentiation is not sectional but rather time-related, in function to the individual unemployment period. A jobseeker who has not found employment after 3, 6, 12 or 18 months enters into a different phase in guidance with increased follow-up and a more abundant range of accessible services. The *New Deal*

programmes are the flagship example of this intervention that strengthens with the duration of unemployment, which therefore concerns the “target group” of the long-term unemployed.

Most countries combine the two approaches to durably and efficiently accompany the beneficiaries of their target groups. Thus, Sweden pairs programmes specifically reserved for certain jobseekers with a measure open to all of the long-term unemployed (the “activity guarantee”, see below) This is justified by the fact that although the beneficiaries of these groups are more discriminated against on the job market and thus have a higher risk of long-term unemployment than other jobseekers, all jobseekers could have problems finding work and should be able to benefit from stronger case management, regardless of their original characteristics. This institutional organisation enables reconciling targeting with the individualisation of follow-up.

However, the degree of individualisation varies greatly not only from country to country (barely developed in Sweden, relatively well developed in the Netherlands where they evaluate jobseekers’ employability so as to place them on different tracks accompanied by players offering varied services), but also from one time period to another (in the United Kingdom, individualisation increases as does the duration of unemployment), and even locally from one agency to another (in Sweden, each local agency chooses the case management programmes it implements for its clients, and although the AMS stipulates that each jobseeker must have a specific agent from the beginning of their unemployment, this was only put into effect after 300 days in the agency visited by this mission). In the end, programs range from formalised tracks (the same services for everyone at the same time, for example, guidance from a private operator after six months unemployment in the Netherlands for those compensated) to “tailored” programmes implemented in the United Kingdom for those in need of special help to find employment.

2. Case management programmes constructed like a career track on which individualised follow-up and available services increase as does the duration of unemployment

Each PES constructs its own typical guidance track in function to its own constraints (and notably the kind of clients they will take on and the number of counsellors that can be mobilised), but we can, nevertheless, note certain regularities that seem to characterise the case management process in the three countries studied:

- a more or less formalised division of the different phases in function to the duration of unemployment that give beneficiaries new rights (additional services, more regular interviews, etc.), but that also involve new responsibilities (more frequent monitoring, the obligation to accept any offer of employment, etc.);

- within the framework of these different phases, sequencing the follow-up interviews to accompany the jobseeker into their professional project and the job search process (with more or less high and standardised regularity, variable lengths, a unique case manager or not, etc.);

- establishing an individual action plan (IAP) that takes the place of a formal or tacit contract between the PES and the jobseeker and which summarises the rights and responsibilities of each party as well as the steps to take to find employment.

2.1. Case management in each of the countries

In Sweden, each local agency is free to build their own guidance schema in function to the public it caters to and the skills of its counsellors. However, it is globally possible to extricate

the broad outlines of the case management programmes. Three main phases succeed one another:

- the first three months, the jobseeker is generally left to seek employment autonomously and the follow-up is ensured through regular telephone calls with the Call Centre;

- between three months and 600 days, a new IAP is established, the follow-up is increased with regular meetings at the agency, most often with a single agent. The jobseeker then can benefit from heavier services such as training;

- at the end of 600 days, if the jobseeker has still not found employment, they enter into the "activity guarantee" measure, the beacon program that groups services, benefits and a personalised follow-up by a single agent. This was replaced by a new programme in July 2007, the "Job and Development Guarantee", which takes effect on the 300th day of unemployment to help the beneficiaries exit the programme more quickly. It is structured into three phases: an intensive follow-up in the form of personalised advising, professional insertion through internships and training programmes and assisted employment if necessary.

In the Netherlands, the typical guidance track is undergoing reform since the *Kansmeter* profiling measure was abandoned and the *A-B Routing* system was implemented. The latter is much less formal than the former as concerns the case management process, which will no longer exist *ex ante* but will be adapted to each personal situation. For the moment, it is still possible to distinguish three phases corresponding to each of the different players responsible for guidance:

- a first phase of autonomous job searching falling under the CWI's responsibility which lasts from three to nine months, in function the jobseeker's profile. The number of interviews is left to the discretion of the CWI with a compulsory minimum of one in-person interview every six months;

- when a CWI counsellor deems it useful, the jobseeker is transferred to unemployment insurance if they are remunerated or to the municipality if they are not for a more intensive follow-up. A new IAP is then established and heavier services (notably training programmes or assisted employment) are proposed;

- compensated jobseekers and, if the municipality so decides, certain beneficiaries of social welfare then benefit from guidance from a private operator. This usually lasts nine months. Guidance by a private operator is often very individualised with an intensive and regular follow-up and in-depth work on the jobseeker's personal project. After nine months, if the jobseeker has not found employment, the contract can be prolonged or the jobseeker can be reintegrated into the UWV or municipality's case management process.

In the United Kingdom, the guidance process is very formalised and is defined nationally by the Jobcentre Plus management. It is applied in an identical manner in all of the local agencies. It is divided into three successive phases:

- the first 13 weeks, the jobseeker benefits from intensive follow-up (interviews monitoring the job search every 15 days), paired with access to tools for autonomous searching so as to incite the jobseeker to quickly find employment;

- after these 13 weeks, and up to six months for the young and 18 months for other jobseekers, the Restart phase begins. It is similar to the previous phase as regards its organisation and content and includes increased responsibilities for the jobseeker (notably in terms of the perimeter of the job search);

- after 18 months (six for the young), the jobseeker enters into the *New Deal* programme, which includes intensive and personalised follow-up and the access to certain services.

2.2. The first interviews: timing, objectives and content

In all three countries, the first interviews are decisive in determining the jobseekers ulterior progression within the case management programme. This initial phase of registration and orientation must be completed as quickly as possible (in less than one week in the United Kingdom to five weeks maximum in Sweden) so as to incite the jobseeker to actively seek employment as soon as they are registered. The objective is to evaluate the needs of each jobseeker so as to elaborate with them the reintegration plan best suited to their situation.

The first contact with the PES is done remotely (via the Internet in Sweden and the Netherlands and by phone in the United Kingdom), so as to give information on the administrative data, inform the jobseeker about the procedures to follow and steps to take and to set up a meeting with a counsellor at an agency. In general, the jobseeker has two distinct interviews for compensation and the professional project. The longest interview is the one whose objective it is to evaluate the jobseeker's professional and personal situation and make the first decisions regarding the steps they must take to efficiently seek employment. This interview lasts 30 to 45 minutes on average depending on the country, sometimes an hour for certain target groups in the United Kingdom. An IAP structuring the jobseeker's track is established at the end of the professional interview. In Sweden, the jobseeker must go to collective informational and job-seeking workshops before the interview so as to be better prepared for meeting their counsellor.

2.3. Individual action plans are established everywhere to guarantee the jobseeker follows the programme

The contractualisation of case management procedures begins with establishing a document (formal or tacit) stipulating the rights and responsibilities of both the jobseeker and the PES. The IAP recapitulates the diagnosis established by the counsellor during the professional interview and all of the suggestions they made to make the job-seeking process efficient. The jobseeker is then bound to abide by these suggestions and implement the agreed upon actions. The IAP is revised or even completely rewritten as often as necessary during future interviews so as to take any evolutions in the jobseeker's situation into account. This is the case in the Netherlands where each new agent on the guidance track writes their own IAP when they take charge of the jobseeker.

In practice, the IAP is often criticised as being too standard a document, which is therefore hardly individualised, and thus is not very useful to the jobseeker. Moreover, in Sweden, the AMS estimates that 30% of jobseekers do not know that they have an IAP. The quality and personalisation of IAPs (and thus their operability) is equally dependant upon the counsellor who wrote it.

2.4. The subsequent follow-up and frequency of the interviews are extremely variable

The modalities for following up on the jobseekers after the establishment of their IAP vary greatly from one country to the next, one service provider to the next and one unemployment

time period to the next. As a general rule, the follow-up intensifies as the duration of unemployment increases. For example, in Sweden, after 300 days of unemployment, the jobseeker benefits from at least one in-person interview with a counsellor (most often a unique case manager), while before this, most of the contact went through the Call Centre. In the Netherlands, each jobseeker has a time budget of three hours for the first six months while in the CWI case management programmes, after which guidance by private operators is often more intensive (*Fourstar*, for example, features face-to-face interviews every two weeks). In the United Kingdom, compensated jobseekers have follow-up interviews every two weeks, the length of which (less than 10 minutes) and the aim (to monitor the effectiveness of the job search) do not allow modifications to the initial professional orientation. At the same time, there are periodic (after 3/6/12/18 months) intensive interviews (lasting 40 minutes to an hour) to re-evaluate the jobseeker's situation and their needs if they have not found employment on their own.

The individualised follow-up interviews have two main objectives: on one hand, following up and monitoring the job seeking activities with respect to the IAP, and on the other hand, updating the diagnosis and determining what new actions to take to complete the project. To do this, counsellors sometimes have relatively sophisticated tools at their disposal, as is the case in the Netherlands where they can have jobseekers take a battery of tests gauging proficiency and motivation. In the United Kingdom, counsellors have access to a computerised simulation of the evolution of the entirety of the jobseeker's income if they agree to return to work.

The desire for individualised follow-up to adapt the methods implemented specifically to the jobseekers' needs shows up in the numerous projects guaranteeing a unique case manager from the first days of unemployment. But although this idea is present everywhere, it has only rarely been put into practice thus far, notably due to the organisational difficulties it presents. In Sweden, it emerges that certain counsellors are against it, seeing in it an additional workload linked to the fact that they must then be available to the jobseekers in their portfolios at any time. In the United Kingdom, the concept of a unique case manager only comes fully into play after a certain degree of unemployment, such as during the "restart period" if need be and more assuredly in the *New Deal* programme.

Follow-up is sometimes extended beyond the employment-seeking period. Once the person has found employment, they can remain in contact with a counsellor to speak of any problems encountered on their new job. This follow-up is part of the making the return to work durable by taking an interest in the quality of the job (duration, quality of the pairing, satisfaction of the employer and the employee, etc.). Although it is not yet a rule, follow-up in employment is in the process of being developed, notably in programmes in which durably leaving unemployment is an objective (such as Sweden's "activity guarantee" where the jobseeker is followed for the first six months of employment or the *New Deal* in the United Kingdom), so as to address the problem of recurrent unemployment. It comes in many forms and lengths and the choice is sometimes left up to the counsellor or the jobseeker: telephone calls, workplace visits, and more or less regularly meeting for periods generally varying from one to six months, etc. The United Kingdom is currently experimenting on a programme (ERA) that follows the *New Deal* beneficiaries in their new employment for two years. Its goal is to test the effect of follow-up on the durability of return to employment. The preliminary results are promising.

2.5. The evaluation of portfolio size proves to be delicate

The question of the average size of portfolios, in terms of the number of jobseekers, is often debated. A Dutch study²² shows that a reduction thereof could have a positive effect on the exit rates, which encourages the PES to try to limit them. However, it is difficult to obtain reliable numbers in this domain for two reasons: firstly, there is sometimes great variability from one agency to another and it is senseless to make a national average and secondly, certain counsellors specialise in certain types of interviews (in the United Kingdom, the teams are specialised in interviews for registration, compensation, follow-up or different target groups), which makes any comparison unfounded. Recourse to the concept of portfolios really takes on meaning when there is a system with a unique case manager who is responsible for all of their well-identified “client” jobseekers.

As long as these precautions are taken, it is possible to evaluate the average ratio in the Netherlands to one counsellor for 60 jobseekers, 1 for 50 to 70 in Sweden and in the United Kingdom, for the Restart and *New Deal* counsellors to one for 40. The three countries are thus close if not above the objective normally set at one for 60.

Partie 3. PERSONALISED SUPPORT FOR JOBSEEKERS AND SUBSIDIZED JOBS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR ARE CONSIDERED TO BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE SERVICES

The United Kingdom strongly contrasts with the two other countries concerning the recourse to active labour market programmes (ALMP), since services other than individualised follow-up are practically absent from their guidance tracks. Sweden and the Netherlands do not usually favour the same tools: training for Sweden, subsidized jobs for the Netherlands. But they tend to unite around two key ideas: hiring incentive measures and personalised coaching, both oriented towards the “standard” labour market. These are the two most efficient measures, therefore their development must be ensured.

1. Differentiated traditions regarding the recourse to certain services, however, there is a trend towards convergence

Alongside their primary mission of placement and intermediation and so as to better accomplish this mission, the public employment services have mobilised a range of services for jobseekers that are generally comprised of four types of services²³:

- autonomous job searching tools left freely accessible in the local agencies (a job offer bulletin board, Internet access, informational brochures, etc.);
- job seeking support services, whether they are collective (collective workshops to define a professional project, *curriculum vitae* writing classes, informational sessions on

²² Koning, P. (2006) “Measuring the Effectiveness of Public Employment Service (PES) Workers”, *CPB Discussion Paper #73*, December.

²³ See box 3 below for a discussion on the construction of these categories.

professional sectors) or individual (individualised coaching, interview preparation and debriefing, skills assessment, etc.);

- training programmes, whose duration and content operability can greatly vary between a 3-day on-site internship to a university-like 6-month training programme;

- placement in assisted employment through hiring incentives or public protected employment creation, as well as aid for business start-up creation (advice, financial aid).

As access to the first type of service is not conditional on a counsellor's decision, it is not part of the effort to adapt the case management process to the jobseekers' individual needs. By definition, it is, above all, part of the jobseekers' autonomous searching and does not therefore constitute guidance. It is consequently not analysed here.

The frequency and evolution of the recourse to the three other types of services can be understood thanks to Eurostat's data:

- support in the search for employment falls into category 1.1 "provisions of service" and sometimes in category 2 "training" when the measures are directed towards counselling orientation or coaching;

- category 2 encompasses "traditional" training measures;

- subsidized jobs corresponds to the merging of categories 4 "employment incentives", 5 "protected employment and re-adaptation", 6 "direct job creation", to which categories 3 "employment rotation and job sharing" and 7 "aid for business start-up creation" can be added.

The three countries studied have extremely different recourse to the three types of services:

- Sweden traditionally bases its employment policies on training, generally proposing short-term (four months on average), professionalizing services to jobseekers and also to employees. Recourse to training is, nonetheless, on the decrease since the end of the 1990s, ceding the way to increased individualised follow-up and expenditures promoting assisted employment;

- in the Netherlands, efforts are concentrated on direct job creation, notably for handicapped workers who make up the largest group receiving unemployment compensation. Coaching has recently been focused on, while the training programmes proposed are generally few in number and reserved to target groups composed of the unemployed who have already been unemployed for a certain amount of time;

- the United Kingdom concentrates its expenditures on category 1, essentially delivering intensive follow-up services to their jobseekers. Few resources are dedicated to training and even less to assisted employment. "Heavy" services are reserved to a minority of the long-term unemployed far removed from employment.

In addition to the different policy choices and budgetary priorities, the countries also diverge on whether or not to make the ensemble of the range of services available through a single operator. In Sweden, the AMS manages all service budgets, notably those for training, which can facilitate the counsellors' choice to have recourse to these programmes, within the limits of the budget available. On the other hand, in the United Kingdom, Jobcentre Plus does not manage training programmes which means making partnerships with the Learning and Skills Councils. Likewise, in the Netherlands, while the UWV has control over the training budget, the service providers can suggest having recourse to a training programme, although it must then be authorised by the UWV. Furthermore, the municipalities have a monopoly on resorting to assisted employment, which *de facto* divides recourse to this service.

However, certain common evolutions can be observed, which leads to the hypothesis of a convergence in diagnostics and practices:

- training services are declining, notably due to similar evaluations in all countries highlighting the beneficiaries' disappointing return to employment rates;

- having recourse to "lighter" and more individualised services such as coaching or collective workshops as well as short-term and very operational training programmes, whose costs are notably less prohibitive than are those of traditional training programmes;

- the idea that subsidized jobs in the private sector are the most efficient measure is progressively spreading, notably in Sweden and the Netherlands, due to their proximity to "standard" jobs, which facilitates later transitions on the labour market;

- the emergence of global case management programmes that include different services that can be mobilised in function to the jobseeker's needs and the duration of their unemployment has been observed in the different countries. The purpose of these programmes is to rationalise the practices by ensuring a coherent follow-up and linking active employment seeking and training programmes to guarantee insertion onto the labour market. The main idea behind this is that the services are relatively expensive and, in consequence, they must only be used for jobseekers who would really benefit from them, and only after a period of having unsuccessfully searched on their own. They also aim to give the counsellor who is responsible for these jobseekers flexibility with range of tools available. Sweden's *Activity Guarantee*, the Netherlands' *Work First* (see below) and the United Kingdom's *New Deal* are notably built upon this logic.

Box 3. The question of classifying services

In order to compare the range of services available in different countries, several types of classification were considered. First of all, Eurostat's 9-point classification but also that of the OECD using four items per type of measure:

- direct aid for seeking employment through putting the jobseeker in touch with offers likely to correspond with their profile, skills assessment, ongoing aid in writing a curriculum vitae or preparing for an interview, etc.;

- long-term programmes having an objective of validating skills or reorienting the jobseeker towards a sector for which they have more of the requires skills: essentially long training programmes, but also the ensemble of programmes targeted to specific populations (the young, handicapped workers, etc.);

- services specifically designed for jobseekers creating or taking over a company.

It is also possible to classify services in function to the service providers who provide them:

- services provided internally by the PES;

- services externalised to other operators, but over which the PES retains a decision-making capacity and which they could potentially provide if need be;

- services provided by specialised players compensating for a lack of skills within the PES, who thus loses all latitude for direct control over the efficacy of the delivery of the services provided.

This "organic" typology proved to be delicate to use being that, first of all, the systems are very different from one another and, secondly, some services are provided by both the PES and other operators, in function to the context, which sometimes makes the distinction between these two types of services difficult to establish. This approach did, nonetheless, emphasize that the differences that exist between services provided by the public sector and by the private sector are, for the most part, minimal.

A third typology considered aimed at distinguishing between the services according to their specificity in function to the jobseekers likely to benefit from them:

- "universal" services that concern all jobseekers, provided that their counsellor judges them useful;

- "targeted" services concerning particular populations judged to be having difficulty due to their situation on the job market.

This typology enabled differentiating between targeting and individualisation.

For the sake of simplicity and data comparability, the solution chosen was to use both Eurostat and OCDE classifications, adapting them to four major categories observed in the field: autonomous job-seeking tools, job-seeking support, training programmes and subsidized jobs. The two other typologies considered contributed to theoretical reflection on the externalisation and targeting of employment policies.

2. Training progressively loses ground to lighter services, but it retains an important role in ensuring the fluidity of the job market

2.1. A recourse that is traditionally different from one country to another with a common concern to encourage short-term, professionalizing training programmes

While training traditionally holds a predominant place in Sweden, it is not a priority in the Netherlands where completing the institutional requirements to gain access is complex and it is even less of a priority in the United Kingdom where it only concerns a small minority of jobseekers. Despite these structural differences, the three countries agree on the form and content of the training programmes: they must be relatively short so to not durably distance the jobseekers from actively searching for employment, and must be of professional vocation, so as to be immediately transferable in terms of skills, and if possible, in high-tension jobs. This evolution of fewer training programmes is coherent with a favourable labour market situation and, as a consequence, the desire to favour fast returns to employment.

In Sweden, the main objective of active policies is ensuring jobseekers a structural aid to professional mobility, which justifies a continued traditional recourse to training programmes. These latter were the most used to cope with the high increase in unemployment in the 1990s. The sectoral shocks sustained by Sweden's economy had to be dealt with while maintaining employability and developing the workforce's adaptability. The recourse to training programmes has nevertheless been greatly declining since 1999, as much in terms of expenditures (the labour market's highest expenditure until 1998: almost 2.5 billion euros spent in 1997, as compared to barely 1 billion in 2005), as in the number of participants (approximately 2.3 billion jobseekers in training programmes in 1997 and 600,000 in 2005). This evolution, more rapid than the parallel decline in the number of jobseekers, should be corroborated in the coming years, being that the new government announced its intention to favour the funding of hiring incentives at the expense of training programmes. The latter remain nevertheless a positive effect on maintaining employment and could allow access to vacant positions in unpopular career fields. This justifies the fact that most training programmes are relatively short (6 months maximum, 4 months on average) and have an operational content. The economic projections assigned to training are, moreover, quite ambitious: a 70% return to employment rate in the three months following the training, an objective that is regularly attained. Despite its recent erosion, the range of training programmes offered remains very diversified, notably thanks to the numerous institutional partnerships between the AMS, the communes, universities, private vocational training centres, etc.

In the Netherlands, recourse to training programmes was never traditionally very high, but it has become particularly low (compared to other measures, notably subsidized jobs) over the past 10 years (750 million euros in expenditures in 2005). Having such little recourse to training can notably be explained by the difficulties linked to the institutional organisation for training measures: the majority of the players offering services are private, one must, therefore, enter into partnerships to offer an interesting range of services. The development

of externalisation accentuated the coordination flaws: private placement operators have little recourse to training programmes, which burdens the available budget for the individual reintegration of jobseekers, since private operators must buy training from sub-contractors. They therefore prefer to settle for less expensive measures delivered internally, such as coaching. This explains why the UWV recently created incentive contracts so private operators offer training to certain jobseekers: a portion of the compensation is reserved for training and it will not be paid until the service is delivered. In both the Netherlands and in Sweden, most training programmes are short and oriented towards high-tension jobs, often through partnerships between the PES and companies in the sector concerned.

The United Kingdom only slightly developed training programmes for jobseekers. In fact, in 2005, the training budget was only 12% of the ensemble of labour market expenditures. Additionally, a slight decrease has been observed over the past few years. Existing training programmes are generally reserved for *New Deal* beneficiaries, after a long unemployment period. The debate was, however, recently revived concerning the *skill gap* question (a growing gap between the skills of the qualified and non-qualified), on the necessity of relaunching training programmes for the less qualified.

2.2. A common trend: a decline in long training programmes

Training programmes have thus been declining in all three countries since the beginning of the 2000s. This observation can notably be explained by an ensemble of microeconomic evaluations²⁴ carried out these past few years that conclude training has a mediocre or even a null effect on the return to employment rates, and this for a relatively high cost. Thus, in the Netherlands, it seems that training programmes only have significant positive effects on the unqualified young. This explains why the country is turning more to “light”, less expensive services such as short training programmes or coaching, more focussed on employment.

In fact, the PES currently prefers short-term, very operational training programmes on the border between guidance services, follow-up and short-term training programmes. It is difficult to classify, for example, a workshop on job-seeking techniques: is this really training or is it a basic service delivered by employment agencies? The border remains in place between “guidance services” and “training programmes”, which made it difficult to use the Eurostat data as certain services can be classified in either of the two categories. The fact that coaching is directly oriented towards seeking employment and has does not have the objective of developing new skills makes its classification as training questionable.

The three countries recently strengthened their range of coaching programmes. In Sweden, “counselling, orientation and placement activities” have sharply increased since 2000, the portion of their expenditures pertaining to training went from 15% in 2001 to 39% in 2005. The same holds true for the number of beneficiaries: in 2006, 17.5% of jobseekers who had recourse to the ensemble of services benefited from coaching and 6.9% of the ensemble of jobseekers. These measures are notably designed for the long-term unemployed who benefit from the “Activity guarantee”. Training preparation programmes, whose vocation it is to maximise the effects of future programmes from the beginning, are also greatly developing, they accounted for 30% of training expenditures in 2005 as compared to 12% in 2001. On the other hand, the number of traditional vocational training programmes is decreasing.

²⁴ For Sweden, see Calmfors, F., Forslund, A. and Hemström, M. (2002) “Does active labour market policy work? Lessons from the Swedish experiences”, *Working Paper # 2002-4*, IFAU, Uppsala ; for the Netherlands, see De Graaf-Zijl, M., Groot, I. and Hop, J.P. (2006) *De weg naar werk*, RWI report, July.

In the Netherlands, coaching programmes have had positive evaluations from the so-called “light” programmes that accelerate leaving unemployment, notably because they incite actively searching for employment²⁵. Coaching’s success is therefore related to strengthening the follow-up and monitoring, with possible sanctions in the case of non-active job searching. American researchers²⁶ recently examined the impact of the threat of sanctions on the return to employment rate and showed that they were sometimes more efficient for inciting jobseekers to find employment than the programmes themselves.

Finally, in the United Kingdom, in parallel to individualised follow-up, which characterises the entire case management process, certain supplementary programmes (grouped under the appellation “programme centres”) reinforce jobseekers’ skills in terms of finding employment. They are theoretically accessible after 13 weeks of unemployment, but are, in practice, reserved for the long-term unemployed. The budget dedicated to these types of measures is, however, very low. The British example does, however, highlight the inherent risk to systematically replacing training programmes by coaching services: by favouring a rapid return to employment at the expense of acquiring new skills and knowledge, not only is the risk of recurrent unemployment heightened, but the potential mobility for the employed, notably those whose initial qualification is low, strongly decreases. This point was particularly highlighted in a recent report Lord Leitch submitted to the government²⁷.

Coaching services are generally those delivered internally by the service providers responsible for guidance (SPES, municipalities, private operators). The ensemble of participants who are responsible for the track to employment propose a comparable range of services, with counsellors who ensure personalised follow-up and instructors who run collective job seeking aid workshops whose content varies only slightly (learn to look up classified ads in newspapers and on the internet, to write a curriculum vitae and a letter of candidature, preparing job interviews, better defining professional projects, etc.). It seems, therefore, that whatever the nature of the case management organisation, there is a clear dominant schema: whoever is responsible for supervising the jobseeker’s track to employment ensures the coaching services internally and periodically buys “heavier” services from other service providers (sub-contractors), notably training programmes.

3. Subsidized jobs remains the greatest expenditure in Sweden and in the Netherlands, but is practically absent from the United Kingdom’s range of services

In Sweden and the Netherlands there is a common tendency to consider assisted employment measures, especially in the private sector, to be the most efficient way to guarantee a return to employment, because they are the what brings the beneficiaries closest to the “standard” job market, and for a relatively moderate cost. Measures lightening the social charges for low-paying jobs have notably received positive evaluations concerning their impact on

²⁵ Van Den Berg, G., Van Der Klaauw, B. and Van Ours, J. (2004) “Punitive Sanctions and the Transition Rate from Welfare to Work”, *Journal of Labor Economics*, vol. 22, # 1.

²⁶ Berger, M., Black, D., Noel, B. and Smith, J. (2003) “Is the Threat of Reemployment Services More Effective than the Services Themselves? Evidence from Random Assignment in the UI System, Experimental Evidence from the UI System”, *American Economic Review* 94(4): 1317–1327.

²⁷ Leitch Review of Skills (2006), “Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills”, Final Report, December.

exiting unemployment. This is the case in Sweden²⁸, where subsidized jobs have, since 1999, occupied the first place in expenditures, before that for training, with a budget of approximately 2 billion euros per year. These measures are supported by the new government, which wishes to intensify the focus on “ordinary” jobs (in the private sector). In the Netherlands, where the municipalities have the monopoly on managing and using measures for assisted employment, recourse to this is also massive, since more than half the total budget is dedicated to them (over 3.5 billion euros in 2005 for the ensemble of assisted employment measures). On the other hand, in the United Kingdom, subsidized jobs are traditionally seldom used and only represent 1% of employment policy expenditures. They are exclusively reserved for handicapped workers and certain *New Deal* beneficiaries who cannot find employment otherwise.

We can distinguish different measures of employment aid by referring to Eurostat categories 3 to 7:

- measures from category 3, “employment rotation” have the objective of replacing employees who are on leaves of absence or on sick leave by jobseekers, who would thus benefit from professional experience. These measures are not implemented very often, only Sweden had recourse to them before eliminating the possibility in 2006.

- measures from category 4 “employment incentives” group together hiring incentives for jobseekers who are not very productive aiming to cut down on the costs of low qualified labour. In both Sweden and the Netherlands, this is the category with the most expenditures (approximately 1.2 and 2.7 billion euros per year respectively). These incentives are often designed for target groups who experienced problems on the job market. In Sweden, certain measures are currently undergoing a significant increase, notably encouraged by the new government that just created *Nystartsjobb* jobs, which consist of lightening employer’s social charges by approximately 30% if they hire the long-term unemployed, the young, a handicapped worker or an immigrant;

- measures from category 5, “protected employment” include public employment and, more rarely, employment in the private sector specially developed for handicapped workers. In Sweden, expenditures dedicated to protected employment are stable over time, around 700,000 euros per year; in the Netherlands, their cost is slightly superior due to the high number of handicapped workers (approximately one billion per year). They are considered to be “last resort” solutions, if no favourable outcome can be found on the “standard” job market;

- measures from category 6 “direct employment creation” have the objective of creating supplementary jobs in the public, private or voluntary sectors, for example, by taking charge of part of the salary paid to the beneficiary. In Sweden, the communes often use these measures for target groups for which they are responsible, but their budget is relatively low. In the Netherlands, the municipalities implemented the *Work First* programme in 2004, which consists of placing certain beneficiaries of social aid into assisted employment from the first days of unemployment so as to guarantee immediate activation. This type of measure has also been used for the young within the framework of “taskforce *jeugdwerkloosheid*”;

- measures from category 7, “business start-up creation aids” often take the form of loans to guarantee an initial capital to the jobseeker who wishes to start their own company.

²⁸ Fo²⁸ Leitch Review of Skills (2006), “Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills”, Final Report, December IFAU, Uppsala.

In the Netherlands, these measures often concern the immigrant target group, so as to bypass discriminatory selection procedures on the job market. The portion of expenditures allocated to business start-up creation aids is relatively low: approximately 200,000 euros per year in the Netherlands and 100,000 euros in Sweden.

CONCLUSION

1. Common trends and ongoing reforms

The three countries visited have comparable evolutions concerning their approach to employment policies, although each of them conserves some of their specificities linked to their history and their social and political preferences. These common trends, which have been the object of recent, as yet unfinished reforms, can be summarised in three points:

- **Institutional reforms:** public employment services have undergone profound reforms to confront the demands for efficiency for services rendered and efficiency of public expenditures. In order to confront these challenges, new management techniques have been implemented, notably managing through objectives concerning more and more limited entities (local agencies, teams, even counsellors on an individual basis). At the same time, the system's general organisation is more streamlined through decentralisation reforms and setting up a one-stop-shop for the "consumers". The PES use external service providers more and more often to complete their competencies and enlarge their range of services. The "new PES" are thus seeking to furnish quality services at a lower cost in a context of budgetary rarefaction. These reforms are not carried out, however, without clashes and contradictions, and numerous coordination problems remain in the heart of the systems. The three countries are, nevertheless, all systematically attempting to submit the policies implemented to experimentation and then to evaluate them so as to judge their pertinence in view of the set objectives.

- **Guidance and individualised tracks:** searching for the best budgetary balance leads all the countries to "activate" their labour market expenditures. This approach has two major consequences for jobseekers: the first is that their compensation is subjected to a greater conditionality, notably in terms of actively seeking employment; and the second is that they are obliged to participate in programmes or to accept employment judged to be "suitable" to continue receiving their benefits. Personalised follow-up and monitoring has intensified, if need be with the help of punitive financial sanctions. This trend towards a contractualisation of the relationship between the PES and the jobseeker results in a quasi-systematic implementation of Individual Action Plans. The *quid pro quo* for the jobseekers is access to services that better correspond to their needs, thanks to an evaluation of their personal situation on the job market. They will thus benefit from a process that tends to be "tailored" as their unemployment continues. The desire to give everyone a unique case manager for follow-up, sometimes lasting into their new employment, is seen everywhere, together with an attempt to educe the size of the counsellors' portfolios. But the implementation individualising follow-up is complex and it is rarely applied in all of its dimensions. The system still needs to be adapted to make these reforms effective, notably training the counsellors in this new work culture and its new missions.

- **Short services aiming for a rapid return to employment:** the range of services mobilised to accompany those who cannot reinsert themselves on their own is also in the process of evolving. Training programmes with a structural aim (learning a new career,

transferable qualifications, etc.) are decreasing in favour of coaching services focusing on occasional shortcomings in skills allowing the jobseeker to find a specific job. As a general rule, services bringing the jobseeker closer to the job market and a “standard” job (full time in the private sector) are preferred. This is why subsidized jobs are mobilised as professional trampolines for those the furthest removed from employment. Cost concerns are also at work behind these mutations, being that these services are relatively easy to implement. But this short-term vision, which sidesteps the question of the quality of employment found, risks running up against an increase in recurrent unemployment. Yet if the system is coherent for a first-time jobseeker, their very formalised sequencing runs the risk of not suiting a jobseeker who has already run the entire “track” several times without finding a durable solution. A certain flexibility thus needs to be introduced, notably one that allows, in some cases, mobilising tools such as long-term training, which is doubtlessly more expensive in the short-term, but more efficient in the long-term.

The most successfully competed examples of these reforms take the form of complete programmes, which include individualised follow-up for the jobseekers and payment of compensation. The *Employment zones* experiment in the United Kingdom draws its inspiration from the ensemble of evolutions in progress: case management is ensured by private operators who propose follow-up by a unique case manager to every jobseeker. The former elaborates an IAP containing the ensemble of measures to implement for finding employment with their “client”. A precise sequencing divides case management into different phases with well-defined objectives. If the jobseeker needs supplementary training or another occasional service, the service provider disposes of a credit with which to buy it. Strong individualisation thus works in conjunction with formalisation of the programme so as to ensure a coherent, adapted follow-up. Programme evaluations have, moreover, confirmed the positive results obtained.

2. What are the convergences with the French experience?

The recent reforms implemented in France are, for the most part, heading in the same direction as those observed in the three neighbouring countries. Typical guidance for jobseekers has, in effect, been reorganised into three tracks, on which the jobseekers are placed in function to their evaluated distance from the job market (T1: Accelerated search track, T2: Active search track, T3: Accompanied search track). The services rendered on the three tracks are different in intensity and in nature: aimed at the rapid reinsertion into the job market for the T1s, who should, theoretically, exit unemployment after three months, working on personal projects for T3s, who are at great risk of becoming long-term unemployed.

After the first interview at the ANPE, a Personalised Project for Access to Employment (PPAE) is defined for each jobseeker, which summarises the actions to implement, and is later revised if need be. Starting in the fourth month of unemployment, jobseekers benefit from a personalised monthly follow-up (SMP), which consists of a monthly interview with a unique caseworker. For those furthest from the job market (T3), experiments are underway for judging the pertinence of case management by private providers, this reference modality (experimentation with protocols and evaluation) brings France closer to the practices in other countries.

Organisational convergences with other European experiments are thus underway, but these reforms are too recent and it is too soon to judge the implementation and efficacy of

individualised case management. Institutional reforms are, moreover, undergoing numerous developments in France, and the British experience was evoked as a model for a potential ANPE-Unedic merger, even though Jobcentre Plus actually constitutes a larger integration, including services that come under the auspices of Social Security in France.

ANNEXES

Annexe 1. List of people met

Annexe 2. Questionnaires

Annexe 3. Country classification tables

Annexe 4. Acronyms used

Annexe 1: List of people met

OECD

Raymond Torres: Head of the Employment Analysis and Policy Division

Peter Tergeist: Employment Analysis and Policy Division

David Grubb: Employment Analysis and Policy Division

France

Ministry of Employment

DARES (Department of Research Studies, Evaluation and Statistics)

Céline Gratadour

Brigitte Roguet

DGEFP (General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training)

Véronique Delarue: Synthesis department

Arnaud Sylvain: Synthesis department

ANPE (National Agency for Employment)

General Management

Annie Gauvin: Director of Studies, Statistics and International Affairs

Regional Management Ile-de-France

Thomas Audigé: Assistant Regional Director

Brigitte Zypres: Managing Director

Abdelhak Nachit: Internal Audit

Local Philippe-Auguste Agency Paris

Fabrice Marie-Rose (director) and his team

Unedic

Alain Cazeuneuve: Assistant Network Director

Stéphane Ducatez: Director of the Studies and Statistics Department

Frédéric-Paul Martin: Delegation for International Affairs

CERC

Pierre Boisard: Reporting counsellor

CREST-INSEE

Bruno Crépon

Adecco

Jean-Luc Ficarelli: Operational Director for Employment Services

Altédia

Bernard Krynen: Associate Director

Jean Choukroun: Director

Alexandre Guyot: Project Director

Sweden

French Embassy

Monika Biese, Assistant Social Counsellor

Ministry of Labour

Per Nyström, Assistant Director of the Labour Market Policy division

Jenny Oretun, Unemployment Insurance Expert

Swedish National Labour Market Board (AMS)

Fredrik Jansson, Director of the Labour Market Unit

Richard Birnik, Researcher in the Placement Unit

Gun Sahin, Researcher in the Labour Market Unit

Norrmalm Local Employment Agency

Eva Vigant, Employment Counsellor

Institute for Labour Market Policy Evaluation (IFAU)

Erik Mellander, Managing Director

Anders Forslund, Assistant Director and Expert in Employment Policies

Stockholm Municipality

Magnus Axell, Director of Stockholm's "Recruitment Programme"

Knut Joensen, Employment Counsellor at the Stockholm City Jobcentre

The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Svenskt Näringsliv

Karin Ekenger, Expert on Labour Market Policies

Netherlands

French Embassy

Lucien Verhoeven: Economic Mission

Vanessa Miler: ENA intern

Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW)

Gita Griffioen: Taskforce jeugdwerkloosheid

Miriam Nijhof: Sub-Directorate of the Labour Market

Centre for Work and Income (CWI)

Theo Keulen: Labour Market Counsellor in charge of International Affairs

Dutch Social Security Agency (UWV)

Guus Van Den Heuvel: Managing Director for buying return to employment programmes

Revenue Watch Institute (RWI)

Margaretha Buurman, Policy Counsellor

City of Maarssen Social Services

J. W. Van Der Sluijs, Mayor of Maarssen

Loes Egbers, Counsellor

Robert Kleipool, Head of the Social Department

City of the Hague Social Services

Martin Andriessen, Director of the Employment Department

Randstad Private Operator, The Hague

Katrien Malcontent, Counsellor

Marlies Van Venrooij, Counsellor

Fourstar Private Operator, The Hague

Ronald Benschop, Counsellor specialising in Business Start-up Creation Aid Programmes

Jacqueline Houthoff, Counsellor

Sylvia Kleijn, Counsellor

United Kingdom

French Embassy

Vincent Chevrier: Social counsellor

Jobcentre Plus

At the national level:

Nick Owen, Jobcentre Plus Director of Transformation and Products

In Central London:

Michael Morley and Chris Whittaker, Jobcentre Plus Business Managers

Workinglinks

Chris Hodson, Director of Future Business

Annexe 2: Questionnaires

1. Intensive interview and individual action plans

► Intensive interview

- Is the individual action plan elaborated during the first intensive interview? If not, when does it take place?
- How long does the intensive interview take?
- Does the nature of the interview change depending on whether or not the jobseeker gets benefits?

► Counsellors (case managers)

- Is the counsellor a specialist of some specific services, or of some targeted jobseekers?
- On average, how many jobseekers is a counsellor responsible for? Does this number change depending on target groups?
- Will the counsellor who manages this first intensive interview remain the personal contact of the jobseeker for further case management process?
- What are the minimum qualifications of the counsellors?

► The stakes of the interview and the segmentation of jobseekers

- What are the different points which usually structure the interview?
- Does the counsellor use a standardized dialogue guide?
- Can the counsellor use some instruments, such as profiling, in order to help him/her advise the jobseeker?
- What kind of other instruments can he/she use?
- What are the most important criteria the counsellor has to resort to during the interview to advise the jobseeker?
- Does the counsellor have to classify the jobseeker in a predetermined category?
- Will this category determine the services the jobseeker will be able to get?

► Individual action plans

- Do the counsellor and the jobseeker draw up an individual action plan together? If so, what is its content? (specific labour market programmes? Advisers who deliver these services? Commitment between the jobseeker and the PES? Sanctions that the PES could take against the jobseeker if he/she does not actively look for a job?)
- Is this individual action plan written according to a standardized model?
- Is the signature of the plan compulsory for the jobseeker?
- Is the action plan considered as a contract between the jobseeker and the PES?

► *The end of the interview*

- Which labour market programmes can be offered to the jobseeker at the end of the interview?
- Which ones are the most frequently used?
- What is the percentage of jobseekers who get them?
- Once the interview is over, does the counsellor schedule a new appointment with the jobseeker?
- Does the jobseeker know what he/she has to do until the next interview, in order to implement his/her action plan?

2. Case management process

► *Monitoring by the counsellor*

- Is there a unique case manager for each jobseeker? Do they meet each time at the same institution?
- How often is the jobseeker required to attend intensive interviews?
- Is the frequency of interviews different for each target-group? depending on the unemployment spell?
- Are they face-to-face interviews or phone calls?
- During the interviews, is the case management process re-examined? Modified? If it is, what are the new criteria taken into account? What are consequences of these changes on the services the jobseeker can get?
- Can the jobseeker call his/her counsellor whenever he/she wants to? If not, what is the procedure he/she has to follow to keep in touch with him/her?
- Does the jobseeker have to explain to his/her case manager how he/she has been looking for a job between two interviews?
- Which sanctions are expected if the jobseeker does not respect his/her action plan?
- When does the case management stop? Is there a follow-up of the jobseeker in his/her new job? If so, how long does it last?

► *Case management services*

We consider as case management services every programme whose aim is to improve the effectiveness of job search and jobseekers' skills such as: active help in job search (resume writing, offers reading, etc.), individual coaching (interview training), collective coaching (workshops on job search), direct offer selection, short training (development of competences), long training (learning of new competences), protected job, assistance in the creation of new firms.

- After how many days/weeks/months of unemployment does the intensive case management begin?
- Does it depend on the category the jobseeker belongs to?
- What are the different kinds of case management services?
- Which ones are opened to every jobseeker, and which ones are reserved to specific target-groups? Which are these groups and how are they selected (young jobseekers, long-term unemployed, women, ethnic minorities, rural jobseekers, old workers, etc.)?

- Is the delivering of some services linked with the fact that the jobseeker gets benefits or not?
- How and when is decided to propose a jobseeker for training?
- What are the different training programmes existing?
- Is the taking part in of the jobseeker compulsory?

► ***Service providers***

- Who are the different providers who deliver the services to jobseekers?
- Who has the power to choose the provider who will be able to deliver the services?
- Is the jobseeker able to have this power?
- When the provider is not the PES, can this external provider determine the services the jobseeker needs?
- Is another provider (other than the PES) able to provide all the case management process?
- When the jobseeker gets services from other providers, does he/she still have interviews at the PES office?
- How often is the jobseeker required to attend interviews with his/her provider?
- Who pay for the case management services?
- Are the services delivered by other providers monitored by the PES?

3. Description of services

► ***Description of the labour market programme***

- Name, date of creation, precise content, duration, beneficiaries, providers?
- Is the jobseeker compelled to take part in the programme?

► ***Classification***

- Choose the category which describes the programme best:
 - Active help in job search (resume writing, offers reading, cover letters, etc.)
 - Individual coaching (for instance interview training)
 - Group coaching (for instance workshops on job search)
 - Direct offer selection
 - Short training: development of skills
 - long training: learning of new skills
 - protected job
 - Assistance in the creation of new firms
- Choose the category which describes the programme best:
 - Programme delivered by the PES
 - Outsourced programme
 - Programme selected and delivered by another provider

► *Programme's public*

- Annual number of beneficiaries?
- Total percentage of jobseekers who have followed this programme?
- What are the admission criteria (age, gender, ethnic background, geographical background, etc.)? Are these criteria compulsory?
- Is this programme linked with benefits?
- Is there a minimum unemployment duration required?
- What percentage of beneficiaries finishes the programme?
- Can a jobseeker get the service more than once?
- When the jobseeker follows the programme, does he/she still meet with his/her case manager?
- Does he/she establish mid-course assessments?
- Does the jobseeker keep actively looking for a job?
- Is he/she still counted as a jobseeker?

► *Cost and evaluation*

- What is the annual cost of this programme?
- What is the average individual cost?
- Who pays for this programme?
- Has this programme already been evaluated? If it has, what are its results (efficiency, effectiveness, beneficiaries' opinion)?
- Has this programme already been reformed?

Annexe 3: Country Classification Tables

| | Netherlands | | Sweden | | United Kingdom | |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | Current Situation | Planned Reforms | Current Situation | Planned Reforms | Current Situation | Planned Reforms |
| Unique case manager Immediately: 2 After x months: 1 No: 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Centralised administration Total: 2 Partial: 1 Non: 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | x | 2 | x |
| Externalisation High: 2 Low: 1 No: 0 | 2 | x | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Frequency of Interviews Several times a month: 3 > 1 month: 2 < 1 month: 1 | 1 | x | 2 | x | 3 | x |
| Portfolio size: > 60: 3 Between 60 and 80: 2 < 80: 1 | 2 | x | 2 | x | 3 | x |
| Rate of Sanctions High: 2 Average: 1 Low: 0 | 2 | x | 0 | 1 | 2 | x |
| Profiling Yes: 1 No: 0 | 1 | x | 0 | 1 | 0 | x |
| IAP = contract Yes: 1 No: 0 | 1 | x | 1 | x | 1 | x |
| Total | 11 | + 2 | 7 | + 5 | 12 | + 2 |

| | Netherlands | | Sweden | | United Kingdom | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | Current Situation | Planned Reforms | Current Situation | Planned Reforms | Current Situation | Planned Reforms |
| Jobclubs – Job hunting help | 1 | x | 1 | 2 | 1 | x |
| Individual Coaching | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | x |
| Short-term training | 2 | x | 1 | 2 | 1 | x |
| Long-term training | 1 | x | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Hiring Incentives | 2 | x | 2 | 3 | 0 | x |
| Protected Employment | 3 | x | 2 | x | 1 | x |
| Aid for Business Start-up Creation | 1 | x | 1 | x | 0 | x |
| Total | 11 | + 1 | 11 | + 2 | 6 | + 1 |

Chart: on a scale from 0 to 3 in function to the frequency of recourse to the different measures (from very low to very frequently).

Annexe 4: Acronyms used

| | |
|-------|---|
| AMS: | National Labour Market Board |
| CWI: | Centre for Work and Income |
| DWP: | Department for Work and Pensions |
| IFAU: | Institute for Labour Market Policy Evaluation |
| OECD: | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| NAO: | National Audit Office |
| IAP: | Individual Action Plan |
| ALMP: | Active Labour Market Programmes |
| LMP: | Labour Market Policies |
| RWI: | Revenue Watch Institute |
| EES: | European Employment Strategy |
| PES: | Public Employment Service |
| UWV: | Dutch Social Security Agency |

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