

DRAFT EURES CHARTER

UNICE'S COMMENTS

Executive summary

UNICE strongly supports moves to facilitate labour mobility and to better match labour demand and supply in the European Union. EURES can play an important role in this respect, especially in the context of an enlarged EU. European employers therefore welcome the EURES Charter which provides for a description of activities, operational objectives and guidelines to be applied by the EURES members and partners.

UNICE strongly supports the promotion of timely, accurate and comprehensive job matching services through EURES, the creation and maintenance of a joint EU information platform on jobs and mobility, the provision of up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive information on living and working conditions and on the situation of labour markets in the EURES countries and the monitoring and assessment of obstacles to mobility.

However, due to the overlapping between various provisions of the draft Charter, it is not easy to identify clearly the responsibilities of EURES partners from that of EURES members.

To date, EURES has lacked visibility and therefore UNICE welcomes an overall communication strategy in order to promote the network vis-à-vis job seekers and employers.

The elaboration of guidelines, of activity plans and of evaluation reports can help improve the monitoring and evaluation of activities, but this should not become an unduly heavy bureaucratic process. The guidelines should allow for flexibility in operating activities and for local working methods to match local situations.

In addition UNICE wishes to make the following specific remarks.

Concerning the integration of job vacancy databases, not all notified job vacancies but only those made public by a EURES member or partner and which are intended and notified by the employer for EU-wide recruitment through EURES should be accessible to all the other members and partners. EURES should target mobility across EU and should be articulated with good quality and efficient job-matching services at national/regional/local levels.

The information on vacancies that EURES members and partners are required to transmit is unnecessarily prescriptive. Regarding salary, there should not be an obligation to indicate a precise salary since the work experience, competences, etc., of the applicant need to be taken into account.

It is also important that relevant organisations such as private employment agencies and placement organisations, including temporary work agencies, are given access to the network. Sector-based organisations and private placement agencies should also be allowed to place their vacancy notices on the EURES network.

Regarding resources, appropriate financial means for carrying out activities should be available not only for EURES members, but also for EURES partners and a balanced and efficient distribution of these resources between EURES partners should be sought.

DRAFT EURES CHARTER

UNICE'S COMMENTS

I. Introduction

1. UNICE has noted the draft EURES Charter.
2. The draft EURES Charter provides for a detailed description of activities, operational objectives and guidelines to be applied by the EURES members and partners.

II. General comments

3. UNICE strongly supports moves to facilitate labour mobility and to better match labour demand and supply in the European Union. EURES can play an important role in this respect, especially in the context of an enlarged EU. European employers therefore welcomed the draft Commission decision whose objective was to consolidate and strengthen EURES in view of a better monitoring of mobility and of supporting free movement of workers.
4. Until now the success of EURES has been rather limited and its visibility was low. UNICE hopes that following the reform of the EURES legal basis and on the basis of the new EURES Charter, EURES will in future become an efficient instrument in facilitating labour mobility throughout the EU.
5. UNICE is pleased to see that the new decision governing EURES adopted by the European Commission on 23 December 2002 takes into account its request: employers' organisations are designated among EURES partners and it is foreseen that they will be invited to participate in the High Level Strategy Group and in the EURES working party.
6. In this context, European employers welcome the EURES Charter. However, from the outset UNICE would like to stress that due to the overlapping between various provisions of the draft Charter, it is not easy to clearly identify the responsibilities and role of EURES partners from those of EURES members. This might negatively affect the transparency, coordination and monitoring of the activities within the network and therefore its efficiency.
7. UNICE strongly supports:
 - the promotion of timely, accurate and comprehensive job matching services throughout the EURES network,
 - the development of a EURES CV database, the integration of job vacancies database and the creation and maintenance of a joint EU information platform on jobs and mobility, including also the European Learning Opportunities portal,
 - the provision of up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive information on living and working conditions in the EURES countries and on the situation of labour markets,
 - the monitoring and assessment of obstacles to mobility.

8. UNICE also welcomes an overall communication strategy in order to promote the network vis-à-vis job seekers and employers. To date, EURES has lacked visibility and has only made a modest contribution. Better awareness-raising and promotion vis-à-vis both job seekers and employers are crucial if the role of EURES is to be increased.
9. Better monitoring and evaluation of activities and of the success in achieving its goals are essential in order to enhance the role of EURES. The elaboration of guidelines, of activity plans and of evaluation reports can help improve this monitoring and evaluation of activities.
10. It is however essential that this does not become an unduly heavy bureaucratic process that would damage efficiency and that the guidelines do not include prescriptive details, but allow for flexibility in operating activities by EURES members and partners. It is essential to avoid imposing strict coordination rules at EU level that would hamper flexibility in working methods of EURES members and partners. In matching labour demand and supply, it is of utmost importance to allow local working methods to be organised and developed freely to match local situations.

III. Specific comments

On integration of job vacancy databases

11. Point 2.1. of the draft Charter foresees that by 1 January 2005 all vacancies that have been made public by a EURES member or partner shall be accessible to all the other members and partners.
12. UNICE wishes to propose the following amendment to this paragraph: “By 1 January 2005 vacancies made public by a EURES member or partner *which are intended and notified by the employer for EU-wide recruitment through EURES* shall be accessible to all the other members and partners”.
13. Indeed, if the use of EURES system is made obligatory in all cases and for all notified job vacancies without consideration of employers’ preferences, employers will be discouraged from using the Public Employment Services (PES) as a recruitment channel. They use a PES if its services are efficient and competitive. Good services also include efficient and targeted distribution of vacancies notices. In order to avoid receiving too many and unsuitable applications or for other business-related reasons, employers often want to limit and target the distribution of job vacancy information.
14. Moreover, the requirement to make all the vacancies made public by the EURES member or partner, not only those intended for an EU-wide recruitment, accessible through the EURES system might imply a waste of resources in terms of personnel and others for codification, translation, handling of applications, etc.

On job-matching services

15. In point 1.1. of the draft Charter it is provided that special attention should be given to job vacancies where the employer is specifically interested in recruiting workers from other European countries.
16. UNICE agrees that, given the fact that EURES is a tool for fostering cross-border mobility, special attention should be given to those vacancies for which the employer is specifically interested in recruiting in another EU country. However, it is also important that EURES members and partners do not overlook, at the national level,

the need for assistance and information for employers which do not want to recruit abroad. An obligatory EU-wide reach-all public job exchange system would not be feasible in practice. EURES should target mobility across EU and should be articulated with good quality and efficient job-matching services at national/regional/local levels.

On exchange of information

17. Improving the exchange of information between the EURES members and partners also requires efficient coordination systems between the different regional or local public intermediate service in each Member State.

On exchange of job vacancies

18. Point 2.2.1 requires that EURES members and partners should ensure that the following details on job vacancies are transmitted:

- The job title must be as specific as possible and the 4 digit level of the ISCO code must be used. A detailed job description must always be entered.
- An accurate industry (NACE) code must always be entered.
- Salary details should be entered. If an exact salary is not available a salary range should be entered. The period and type of contract must be entered.
- The location of the vacancy must be clearly identified by including the most appropriate region code (normally NUTS Level 3).
- In cases where there is a legitimate, non-discriminatory, language requirement, this must always be entered, also where the language requested is the language of the country where the vacancy is located.
- The method of application must always be entered and clear contact details must be available.

19. UNICE wishes to point out that the wording on the required information is unnecessarily prescriptive and should be amended in the following way:

EURES members and partners should transmit the following details on job vacancies:

- *The job title (as specific as possible using the 4 digit level of the ISCO code where possible) and a detailed job description.*
- *An accurate industry (NACE) code,*
- *Salary details (where appropriate) and the period and type of contract,*
- *The location of the vacancy identified by including the most appropriate region code (normally NUTS Level 3).*
- *Language requirement for the job (if any),*
- *The method of application and clear contact details.*

20. Regarding salary, there should not be an obligation to indicate a precise salary since the work experience, competences, etc. of the applicant need to be taken into account.

On guidelines and activity plans

21. The draft Charter states in point 2.4.2 that the EURES members should every three years submit activity plans based on guidelines which should specify the main activities to be undertaken by EURES members.
22. In order to increase transparency, coordination and monitoring of all the activities of the EURES members and partners, it is necessary to clarify the way in which the EURES partners participation in the network relates to the activities and other elements described in these activity plans.

On the organisation of EURES cross-border partnership

23. The draft Charter provides for under point 2.4.3.1 that the trade unions and employer organisations which can take part in the cross-border partnerships are to be designated by EURES members.
24. UNICE would like to point out that it is not up to EURES members (i.e. specialist employment services appointed by Member States) to designate the employer organisations allowed to take part in cross-border partnerships. Moreover, UNICE regrets that the same formulation “trade unions and employer organisations designated by the EURES members” has been added in the 23 December 2002 Commission decision on EURES.
25. Moreover, in the framework of the EURES cross-border partnerships, partners should be able to decide freely on the allocation of specific projects.

On access of other relevant organisations to the EURES network

26. It is also important that relevant organisations such as private employment agencies and placement organisations, including temporary work agencies, are given access to the network. Sector-based organisations and private placement agencies should also be allowed to place their vacancy notices on the EURES network.

On monitoring EURES activities

27. Statistics and indicators should be used to measure progress and the success of activities. Proofs that EURES works are essential in convincing more employees and employers to make use of it.

On resources to be allocated to the EURES activities

28. Appropriate financial resources for carrying out the EURES activities should be available not only for EURES members, but also for EURES partners. Moreover, a balanced and efficient distribution of the financial resources between EURES partners should be sought.
29. A shift towards a greater financial responsibility for carrying EURES activities on employers’ organisations should be avoided since this would constitute an additional burden and would discourage them from participating in EURES activities.
