



PES to PES Dialogue

The European Commission Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

European reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors

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Foreword

This paper was developed in line with the European network of Heads of PES (HoPES) annual work programme 2014, which called for the production of a *European reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors*.

The content was developed and agreed with public employment services (PES) and reflects comments from the EURES working group on training. The Authors wish to thank everyone who offered their input and comments for the production of this paper.

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Executive summary

Analyses under PES to PES Dialogue programme identified a significant gap in relation to the professionalisation of employment counsellors' function in European Public Employment Services (PES). The aim of this paper is to describe and concretise core competences in an operational way to serve as a mix of manual and reference tool for the European PES in their recruitment and training activities for employment counsellors. This task is undertaken with the aim of professionalising the employment counsellors function in PES, in order to increase the quality of services delivered for sustainable activation outcomes for jobseekers and higher customer satisfaction for employers.

New challenges imposed on PES attributed to their changing role in the successful implementation of EU 2020 strategy influence the job requirements of employment counsellors.

On this basis, the *European reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors* has been developed. This profile has been divided into **three corresponding competence areas**:

- I. Foundational competences (general practitioners values and skills)
- II. Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
- III. Supporting competences (systems and technical)

Foundational competences represent general practitioners' characteristics and skills that are relevant to a number of different tasks and situations. Thus, they should be required from all employment counsellors, disregarding possible differences in corresponding roles or performed tasks (for example the specific groups of clients a given counsellors usually deals with, such as young unemployed or long-term unemployed).

Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers) represent the broadest area of competences, clearly linked to the major tasks performed by the employment counsellors on a daily basis.

The last area of competences embraced by the profile includes **supportive competences (systems and technical)**. They represent both competences to deal with technological aspects of the work (ICT) as well as service and country-specific competences.

These three major areas represent the scope and diversity of tasks which employment counsellors deal with. These tasks require a comprehensive set of competences to help PES achieve the PES 2020 mission and to transform them into activation- and client-oriented transition agencies working closely with employers and playing a leading role in partnerships.

The summary table of competences is outlined overleaf and further described in detail in section 2 of this paper.

Table 1. European reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors

I. Foundational competences (general practitioner values and skills)		
1. Professional conduct	F1	Ethical practice
	F2	Continuous development and improvement
	F3	Responsibility and reflected use of discretion
	F4	Teamwork / cooperation
2. Client orientation	F5	Communication skills
	F6	Ability to recognise and respond to clients' diverse needs
3. Dealing with pressure/change	F7	Stress resistance / ability to work under pressure
	F8	Planning and organising skills
	F9	Flexibility / ability to adapt
II. Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)		
Part 1: PES counsellors		
1. Counselling and individual action planning	C1	Practical knowledge of individual action planning including promotion of career management skills / employability
	C2	Counselling: patience, understanding and the ability to listen non-judgmentally
	C3	Ability to motivate clients
	C4	Ability to conduct resource-oriented assessment
	C5	Problem solving skills
	C6	Ability to make justified referrals to appropriate measure/provider
2. Management and monitoring of integration / activation processes	C7	Ability to combine administrative & monitoring role with counselling
	C8	Ability to monitor individual action plans and activation processes
	C9	Management of complex integration strategies/processes (case management)
3. Facilitating placement of jobseekers	C10	Assessment and matching skills for job placement
	C11	Information finding and analysis skills

	C12	Human resources management knowledge
	C13	Basics of intra-European EURES placement services
4. Facilitating recruitment services for employers	C14	Sales and negotiation skills
	C15	Working with employer associations / representatives
	C16	Building long-term relationship (customer binding)
	C17	Basics of intra-European EURES recruitment services
Part 2: EURES counsellors		
5. Client interaction in provision of EURES services	C18	Knowledge of counselling, placement and recruitment services of EURES counsellors
	C19	Ability to work in partnership with other EURES partners
	C20	Knowledge of living and working conditions as preconditions for mobility
	C21	Knowledge of EU labour market
	C22	Knowledge of health and social insurance regulations in EU countries
	C23	Advanced intercultural/diversity skills
	C24	Linguistic skills
	C25	Knowledge of EU and national structures and programmes supporting mobility
III. Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)		
1. System competences	S1	Corporate identity and commitment to service
	S2	Ability to represent a public authority in communication with clients and other actors
	S3	Networking and partnerships
	S4	Knowledge of employment services systems
2. Service/country specific knowledge	S5	Knowledge of labour market situation/education and VET/ occupations
	S6	Knowledge of disadvantaged groups in the labour market
	S7	Knowledge of labour market policy, ALMP measures/concepts for activation

	S8	Performance management, monitoring and evaluation
3. Technical skills	S9	ICT skills and ability to work in a context of blended service delivery
	S10	Information management skills

1. Introduction

'PES to PES Dialogue' is the European Commission's mutual learning support programme for public employment services (PES) in the European Union. It aims to contribute to the implementation of the priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy and the Employment Guidelines by helping to increase the capacity and effectiveness of PES. The Commission launched 'PES to PES Dialogue' to help PES to anticipate new trends and needs which require adjustment of their service offer and business models.

The PES 2020 Strategy Output Paper calls for an 'aligning [of] labour market actors with labour market policy' and refers to the 'importance of PES ability to operate with agility in order to ensure maximal labour market policy impact'. In doing so, the PES are required to transform into client-oriented, pro-active transition management agencies.

The PES 2020 strategy describes the changes in the role and function of Public Employment Services that are necessary in view of the implementation of the EU 2020 strategy:

- Pursuing an activation policy with sustainable outcomes facing the challenges generated by transitional labour markets, through facilitating transitions.
- Increasing the role of PES in career development and empowering jobseekers.
- Providing targeted counselling services in the context of an ageing and shrinking workforce.
- Focusing more on the demand side of the labour market in view to help employers deal with growing recruitment difficulties.
- Closer cooperation between European Public Employment Services, and working in close partnerships with other supporting institutions at the country level.

This imposes new challenges on PES in general, but especially on employment counsellors whose work contributes greatly to the successful provision of employment services. One of the key challenges in that respect is to "*empower Public Employment Services' own staff by offering adequate training facilities and sufficient career management tools*". Thus, the task of employment counsellors requires a comprehensive set of competences to help PES achieve the PES 2020 mission and to transform them into activation- and client-oriented transition agencies working closely with employers and playing a leading role in partnerships.

As observed in previous analysis performed under the PES to PES Dialogue programme, both in the field of employment counsellors' competences (2012 and 2013 analytical papers) and broader analysis (on guidance for jobseekers, profiling, individual action planning), a **significant gap in relation to the professionalisation of the employment counsellors function has been identified**. This implies a number of possible risks resulting from support not being focused on needs, leading to client dissatisfaction, ineffective use of resources and low effectiveness of activation measures and recruitment services for employers.

Knowledge gathered on identified gaps has been further discussed at PES to PES dissemination conferences and internal meetings. These indicated a need for further actions in this field, which has also been acknowledged by Heads of PES (HoPES). Thus, we have been given mandate by HoPES to produce a *European reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors*. This profile would **serve as a mix of manual and reference tool** to support the quality of personalised employment services, leading to better outcomes in terms of labour market integration of clients and higher customer satisfaction.

The aim of this paper is to describe and concretise core competences in an operational way so that PES human resources (HR) managers can immediately see the

relation to PES core tasks. This should help to avoid certain misunderstandings, such as seeing counselling and assessment competences as a personality trait as opposed to a competence that is professionalised and counsellors are trained for. Thus the European reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors presented in this paper should be treated as **a key component for quality assurance** in the organisation of PES.

The reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors has been divided into **three competence areas**:

1. Foundational competences (general practitioners values and skills)
2. Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
3. Supporting competences (systems and technical)

These three major areas represent the scope and diversity of tasks that employment counsellors deal with, as highlighted in previous analyses (2012, 2013).

The list can be used as a menu to inform the shape of a country/ service specific PES recruitment and training concept, which will depend on a PES' business model, recruitment concept and supply of staff. Competences in the list have been presented and described in an operational way, which can be related to different training concepts, including personal development plans.

2. European reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors

2.1 Competence fields

The reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors has been divided into three competence areas:

- I. Foundational competences (general practitioners values and skills)
- II. Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
- III. Supporting competences (systems and technical)

These three major areas represent the scope and diversity of tasks that employment counsellors deal with, as highlighted in previous analyses (2012, 2013). For sake of clarity and comparability, the profile follows the structure proposed by the CEDEFOP paper on *Professionalising career guidance* from 2009.

Foundational competences represent general practitioners' characteristics and skills that are relevant to a number of different tasks and situations. Thus, they should be required from all employment counsellors, disregarding possible differences in corresponding roles or performed tasks (for example, specific groups of clients a given counsellors usually deals with, such as young unemployed or long-term unemployed).

This competence area is further broken down into three competence groups:

1. Professional conduct
2. Client orientation
3. Dealing with pressure / change

Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers) represent the broadest area of competences, clearly linked to tasks performed by employment counsellors on a daily basis.

This competence area is further divided into five competence groups (in 2 parts):

PART 1: PES COUNSELLORS

1. Counselling and individual action planning
2. Management and monitoring of integration / activation processes
3. Facilitating placement of jobseekers
4. Facilitating recruitment services for employers

PART 2: EURES COUNSELLORS

5. Client interaction in provision of EURES services.

The last area of competences embraced by the profile includes **supportive competences (systems and technical)**. These represent both competences to deal with technological aspects of the work (ICT) as well as service and country-specific competences.

This competence area is divided into three distinctive groups:

1. System competences
2. Service/country specific knowledge
3. Technical skills

Table 1. European reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors

I. Foundational competences (general practitioner values and skills)		
1. Professional conduct	F1	Ethical practice
	F2	Continuous development and improvement
	F3	Responsibility and reflected use of discretion
	F4	Teamwork / cooperation
2. Client orientation	F5	Communication skills
	F6	Ability to recognise and respond to clients' diverse needs
3. Dealing with pressure/change	F7	Stress resistance / ability to work under pressure
	F8	Planning and organising skills
	F9	Flexibility / ability to adapt
II. Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)		
Part 1: PES counsellors		
1. Counselling and individual action planning	C1	Practical knowledge of individual action planning including promotion of career management skills / employability
	C2	Counselling: patience, understanding and the ability to listen non-judgmentally
	C3	Ability to motivate clients
	C4	Ability to conduct resource-oriented assessment
	C5	Problem solving skills
	C6	Ability to make justified referrals to appropriate measure/provider
2. Management and monitoring of integration / activation processes	C7	Ability to combine administrative & monitoring role with counselling
	C8	Ability to monitor individual action plans and activation processes
	C9	Management of complex integration strategies/processes (case management)
3. Facilitating placement of jobseekers	C10	Assessment and matching skills for job placement
	C11	Information finding and analysis skills
	C12	Human resources management knowledge

	C13	Basics of intra-European EURES placement services
4. Facilitating recruitment services for employers	C14	Sales and negotiation skills
	C15	Working with employer associations / representatives
	C16	Building long-term relationship (customer binding)
	C17	Basics of intra-European EURES recruitment services
Part 2: EURES counsellors		
5. Client interaction in provision of EURES services	C18	Knowledge of counselling, placement and recruitment services of EURES counsellors
	C19	Ability to work in partnership with other EURES partners
	C20	Knowledge of living and working conditions as preconditions for mobility
	C21	Knowledge of EU labour market
	C22	Knowledge of health and social insurance regulations in EU countries
	C23	Advanced intercultural/diversity skills
	C24	Linguistic skills
	C25	Knowledge of EU and national structures and programmes supporting mobility
III. Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)		
1. System competences	S1	Corporate identity and commitment to service
	S2	Ability to represent a public authority in communication with clients and other actors
	S3	Networking and partnerships
	S4	Knowledge of employment services systems
2. Service/country specific knowledge	S5	Knowledge of labour market situation/education and VET/ occupations
	S6	Knowledge of disadvantaged groups in the labour market
	S7	Knowledge of labour market policy, ALMP measures/concepts for activation
	S8	Performance management, monitoring and evaluation

3. Technical skills	S9	ICT skills and ability to work in a context of blended service delivery
	S10	Information management skills

2.2 Competence descriptions

I. Foundational competences (general practitioner values and skills)

This group of competences encompasses general practitioners' knowledge, skills and attitudes that are relevant in different professional situations. These represent preconditions for effective performance in the roles and tasks performed by employment counsellors. Therefore, they should be required from all employment counsellors, disregarding possible differences in roles or tasks (for example specific groups of clients that a given counsellor usually deals with, such as young unemployed or long-term unemployed).

This field of competences is divided into:

1. **Professional conduct**, comprising competences in: ethical practice, continuous development and improvement, responsibility and reflected use of discretion and teamwork / cooperation.
2. **Client orientation**, comprising competences in: communication skills and the ability to recognise and respond to clients' diverse needs.
3. **Dealing with pressure/change**, comprising competences in: stress resistance/ability to work under pressure, planning and organising skills and flexibility/ability to adapt.

Competences in professional conduct allow counsellors to follow professional practice while retaining ethical standards, constant development and effective cooperation. Competences in client orientation help counsellors to develop and maintain trustful relationships as a basis for effective cooperation and good results. Competences in dealing with pressure/change allow counsellors to function under changing circumstances and working environments.

A number of competences included in this group relate to personal characteristics and values, which are developed in different contexts throughout education and working life. As they are usually developed over the lifecycle, it is difficult to design and implement one-off training sessions to support them. Therefore, in the recruitment process for employment counsellor positions, these characteristics should be treated as priority. Training to develop these professional qualities should be delivered on a long-term basis, and necessary values and attitudes should be incorporated into various developmental activities (including on-the-job and off-the-job training sessions, mentoring/coaching and self-development of employment counsellors). They should also be implemented as a vital element of performance appraisals of counsellors in order to provide them with feedback and support in the development of these qualities by supervisors/ managers.

1. Professional conduct

1.1 Ethical practice		
General information:	Competence area:	Foundational competences (General practitioner values and skills)
	Competence group:	Professional conduct
	Competence ID:	F1
Competence description:	Ability to understand, adopt and demonstrate ethical standards in all employment counsellors activities.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>adhere to the relevant ethical codes (standards) adapted by the organisation and other professional bodies in the area of employment counselling,</i> ▪ <i>retain ethical standards in all roles of professional practice,</i> ▪ <i>acknowledge clients with their rights and treat them with respect,</i> ▪ <i>reflect on the use of ethical principles in their professional practice and make improvements.</i> 	

1.2 Continuous development and improvement		
General information:	Competence area:	Foundational competences (General practitioner values and skills)
	Competence group:	Professional conduct
	Competence ID:	F2
Competence description:	A positive attitude towards new professional challenges combined with a constant development of individual knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as improvement of the quality of service.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>treat professional challenges as a source of inspiration towards individual and organisational development,</i> ▪ <i>seek possibilities to constantly update and develop own knowledge, skills and other competences,</i> ▪ <i>reflect regularly on their level of service, their strengths and weaknesses to define areas for further personal development,</i> ▪ <i>participate in planning, implementation and evaluation of quality development activities within the service,</i> ▪ <i>take initiative in proposing better organisation of work and on-the-job improvements.</i> 	

1.3 Responsibility and reflected use of discretion		
General information:	Competence area:	Foundational competences (General practitioner values and skills)
	Competence group:	Professional conduct
	Competence ID:	F3
Competence description:	Ability to deliver client services responsibly, in compliance with confidentiality principles and reflected use of discretion (scope of autonomy).	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>take responsibility for their own actions in the course of the counselling process,</i> ▪ <i>make informed and reflected use of their power (room for discretion) with regards to support and sanctioning,</i> ▪ <i>take decisions within their scope of responsibility balancing the needs of the clients, service principles and legal regulations,</i> ▪ <i>adhere to the confidentiality principles, codes and practices of the service, both in relation to the clients as well as internal organisational information and data.</i> 	

1.4 Teamwork / Cooperation		
General information:	Competence area:	Foundational competences (General practitioner values and skills)
	Competence group:	Professional conduct
	Competence ID:	F4
Competence description:	Ability to effectively cooperate with colleagues, supervisors and other professionals inside and outside of the organisation in order to assure an adequate level of service.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>show a general supportive attitude to others inside and outside the organisation,</i> • <i>regularly share information, knowledge and experience with colleagues and, when necessary and rational for the interest of their clients, seek advice and support from other professionals within the service,</i> • <i>work collaboratively and actively contribute to high quality of interpersonal relations, team spirit and team results,</i> • <i>develop and maintain relationships with other professionals, also through active participation in communities of practice.</i> 	

2. Client orientation

1.5 Communication skills		
General information:	Competence area:	Foundational competences (General practitioner values and skills)
	Competence group:	Client orientation
	Competence ID:	F5
Competence description:	Ability to establish and maintain effective contact with others through proper, evocative and correct expression of thought and consistency in verbal and non-verbal messages.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>express themselves precisely in order to effectively transfer the thoughts and ideas to others, both orally and in writing and receive messages from others,</i> ▪ <i>clarify information when needed, rephrase ideas for clarity and adapt the language adequately to the situation,</i> ▪ <i>show respect for the opinions of others, provide constructive feedback and accept criticism from others.</i> 	

1.6 Ability to recognise and respond to clients' diverse needs		
General information:	Competence area:	Foundational competences (General practitioner values and skills)
	Competence group:	Client orientation
	Competence ID:	F6
Competence description:	Ability to demonstrate awareness and appreciation of clients' diverse needs and to interact appropriately with persons of different social, cultural and professional backgrounds.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>demonstrate awareness and knowledge of diversity,</i> ▪ <i>take into account available resources, current social status and restrictions that result from the context in which clients' live,</i> ▪ <i>understand diverse client needs and demonstrate social and cross-cultural sensitiveness in order to offer adequate support,</i> ▪ <i>make quick transitions from one client to another, even between highly diverse cases.</i> 	

3. Dealing with pressure/change

1.7 Stress resistance / ability to work under pressure		
General information:	Competence area:	Foundational competences (General practitioner values and skills)
	Competence group:	Dealing with pressure/change
	Competence ID:	F7
Competence description:	Ability to effectively deal with pressure situations, while maintaining professional integrity and high quality of counselling services.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>control emotions and behaviours in difficult and critical situations,</i> ▪ <i>maintain effectiveness and quality of services under time constraints and while under pressure,</i> ▪ <i>deal with criticism, while retaining control over professional judgement,</i> ▪ <i>apply techniques to deal with difficult and abusive clients.</i> 	

1.8 Planning and organising skills		
General information:	Competence area:	Foundational competences (General practitioner values and skills)
	Competence group:	Dealing with pressure/change
	Competence ID:	F8
Competence description:	Ability to plan, organise and control own work, through prioritising tasks, defining objectives and setting and meeting deadlines.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>plan their work on an on-going (daily) basis, as well as prepare long-term plans,</i> ▪ <i>prioritise different task and projects, define the objectives and set deadlines,</i> ▪ <i>act according to the plans (priorities, objectives and deadlines) in order to use the working time efficiently,</i> ▪ <i>make sure that time and other resources are available for the activities planned, reviewing work schedules if necessary,</i> ▪ <i>show project management skills in order to develop, implement and evaluate targeted projects / activities for jobseekers and employers.</i> 	

1.9 Flexibility / ability to adapt	
General information:	Competence area: Foundational competences (General practitioner values and skills)
	Competence group: Dealing with pressure/change
	Competence ID: F9
Competence description:	Ability to initiate and adapt to change, and to respond quickly to changing conditions and demands, while maintaining a high level of performance in the course of change.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>react positively to change, within their relevant field of activity in organisation,</i> ▪ <i>initiate change in organisation,</i> ▪ <i>quickly adapt to change, including application of innovation in relation to their own work.</i>

II. Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)

Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers) represent the broadest area of competences, clearly linked to the major tasks performed by employment counsellors on a daily basis. They include a number of competences relating to professional and service-specific knowledge and skills, as well as characteristics required in successful activation of jobseekers and support for employers.

This field of competences has been divided into a number of distinctive areas:

PART 1: PES COUNSELLORS

1. Counselling and individual action planning
2. Management and monitoring of integration / activation processes
3. Facilitating placement of jobseekers
4. Facilitating recruitment services for employer

PART 2: EURES COUNSELLORS (PES counsellors plus EURES specific competences)

5. Client interaction in provision of EURES services

These areas of competences have been designed to align with a process-oriented approach to providing employment counselling services in different operational contexts of PES in Europe.

The associated counselling activities and tasks relate to competences in individual action planning and career management, patience and ability to motivate clients, problem recognition and solving skills, as well as skills related to conducting resource-oriented assessment, making justified referrals to appropriate measure/providers and managing complex integration strategies/processes (case management). These competences reflect the changing roles of employment counsellors, where several counselling elements come in addition to more traditional job brokerage/placement roles.

As facilitating placement for jobseekers remains an important part of employment counsellors' tasks, a number of competences have been included in the profile to represent this. Apart from information finding, analysis skills and practical knowledge of assessment and matching techniques, more emphasis should be placed on human resources management knowledge. Furthermore, basic aspects of intra-European placement services in the context of EURES have been integrated. This aligns with the policy to enhance mainstreaming of services for intra-European employment mobility into PES universal service delivery.

Management and monitoring of integration / activation processes has also been included as a separate and important area of employment counsellors' competences. Here, the ability to combine administrative & monitoring roles with counselling seems to be a crucial competence, as the work of employment counsellors requires such flexibility and a complementary approach.

As working with employers is often the key influencing factor in effective placement and integration processes, it has been included as a distinctive group of competences. These comprise sales and negotiation skills, working with employer associations/representatives as well as building long-term relationships. Basic knowledge of intra-European placement / recruitment services and related information and guidance service offered within the EURES network has also been integrated to represent the growing need to perceive PES services not only from a national, but also international perspective.

EURES¹ (**EUR**opean **E**mployment **S**ervices) is a cooperation network designed to facilitate the free movement of workers within the European Economic Area. Partners in the network include public employment services, trade union and employers' organisations.

The main objectives of EURES are:

1. to inform, guide and provide advice to potentially mobile workers on job opportunities as well as living and working conditions in the European Economic Area,
2. to assist employers wishing to recruit workers from other countries,
3. to provide advice and guidance to workers and employers in cross-border regions.

EURES services (information, guidance and placement) are provided to both jobseekers and employers by the network of EURES counsellors (advisers). These are trained specialists, that have developed specialized expertise in the practical, legal and administrative matters relating to mobility at national and cross-border levels.

EURES network is supported by a special e-portal of the European Commission – European Job Mobility Portal (www.eures.europa.eu), which is the source of knowledge on the issues related to activities taken within the European labour market and facilitates placement and recruitment services.

EURES counsellors, while performing the same job as PES counsellors – work in the area of intra-EU labour mobility, so they require specific set of competences - advanced language skills, project management with international dimension skills, and ability to work in multicultural environment. Therefore, the last group of competences relates to specialised knowledge of client interaction in provision of EURES services. It represents the competences required from EURES counsellors in performing their services described above and corresponding tasks. This includes counselling, placement and recruitment services under EURES, but also covers advising jobseekers on mobility issues such as: living and working conditions in another EU countries, labour market situation and trends, health and social insurance regulations, etc. Advanced skills for dealing with diversity and functioning in intercultural environments are also crucial, as are linguistic skills. Finally, skills relating to working in partnerships with other EURES services and knowledge of the EU and national mobility structures and programmes are required.

These competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) should constitute a major focus for internal developmental programmes and training sessions in PES. The majority of these competences can hardly be acquired outside of PES – especially those that relate to service-specific knowledge. In terms of recruiting employment counsellors, skills in counselling, job placement and services for employers should be the focus of attention, as some of these skills can already be acquired externally through education and work experience.

¹ Information on EURES network is based on the European Job Mobility Portal: <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/page/homepage?lang=en>

Part 1: PES counsellors

1. Counselling and individual action planning

2.1 Practical knowledge of individual action planning including promotion of career management skills / employability	
General information:	Competence area: Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group: Counselling and individual action planning
	Competence ID: C1
Competence description:	Ability to set up and monitor implementation of an Individual Action Plan (IAP) with a view to enhancing career management skills.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>set up an IAP in cooperation with the jobseeker / counselee, based upon thorough assessment of the personal situation, availability of resources and service rules,</i> ▪ <i>apply techniques and tools to strengthen career management skills (e.g. job search, planning including group sessions, etc.),</i> ▪ <i>know and practically use new forms of online communication / coaching,</i> ▪ <i>ensure understanding of the implications of the individual action plan including the principle of mutual obligation,</i> ▪ <i>provide monitoring depending on individual needs (and organisational or legal regulations).</i>

2.2 Counselling: patience, understanding and the ability to listen non-judgmentally		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Counselling and individual action planning
	Competence ID:	C2
Competence description:	Ability to retain emphatic and supportive attitude towards clients, patience and understanding, even when faced with complex problems or resistance.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>treat clients with respect, refrain from prejudice and stereotyping, show patience and appreciation to ensure the safe environment of the counselling process,</i> ▪ <i>ensure emphatic and supportive attitude, understanding of the importance and complexity of counselee problems,</i> ▪ <i>focus on positive aspects of the advisory process by responding attentively to clients needs and concerns,</i> ▪ <i>ensure two-way understanding by listening carefully and non-judgementally (active listening), including appropriate body language (e.g. smiling, nodding, making eye contact) while having a conversation.</i> 	

2.3 Ability to motivate clients		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Counselling and individual action planning
	Competence ID:	C3
Competence description:	Ability to motivate, inspire and support clients by developing productive interactions.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>use effective counselling approaches and techniques (resource orientation, problem-solving, reframing) to activate clients,</i> ▪ <i>understand motivations, interests and initial resources of clients, and support them in setting realistic but ambitious goals and designing best strategies to reach them,</i> ▪ <i>foster clients' self-confidence, self-reliance and self-management by demonstrating advocacy and clarifying personal concerns,</i> ▪ <i>provide clients with feedback they can understand and ensure that this communication was effective.</i> 	

2.4 Ability to conduct resource-oriented assessment		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Counselling and individual action planning
	Competence ID:	C4
Competence description:	Ability to analyse the characteristics and needs of the jobseeker / client who is the subject of the counselling ,with the use of adequate assessment tools and techniques.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>practically use their knowledge of performance appraisal/evaluation to assess jobseekers' educational and work biography, occupational skills and competences and skills acquired through informal learning in a resource-oriented perspective,</i> ▪ <i>identify, analyse and structure information on individual characteristics of the clients (including personality traits and attitudes, motivations, interests, willingness to learn, independency in making decisions, etc.) with the use of interviewing techniques and other diagnostic methods,</i> ▪ <i>use the findings from assessment appropriately and according to the situation,</i> ▪ <i>explain to client the results of an assessment and their implications including an Individual Action Plan.</i> 	

2.5 Problem solving skills		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Counselling and individual action planning
	Competence ID:	C5
Competence description:	Ability to analyse and structure the problem, identify and consider possible options, make decisions and resolve difficulties.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>apply a problem-solving approach in the counselling process,</i> ▪ <i>consider preconditions of clients stemming from the social, cultural, gender and other contexts as important in design of the support throughout the counselling process,</i> ▪ <i>analyse and structure main success and limiting factors for the support process in relation to each individual case,</i> ▪ <i>address client concerns and treat them as an integral part of the problem solving process.</i> 	

2.6 Ability to make justified referrals to appropriate measure/provider	
General information:	Competence area: Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group: Counselling and individual action planning
	Competence ID: C6
Competence description:	Ability to make effective referrals to an appropriate measure or provider on the basis of individual client assessment, availability of support and effectiveness criteria.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>identify major organisations, partners and service providers for career development, education and social support and assess the availability,</i> ▪ <i>demonstrate knowledge of current availability of referral services/providers of support at the local level (for job-related, social and personal problems),</i> ▪ <i>consider personal characteristics, considerations and proposals expressed by the jobseeker when making referral decisions,</i> ▪ <i>estimate if referral arrangements will lead to placements / progress in employability,</i> ▪ <i>consider a wide range of criteria (cost, time, effectiveness, limitations, etc.) in the referral process.</i>

2. Management and monitoring of integration / activation processes

2.7 Ability to combine administrative & monitoring role with counselling		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Management and monitoring of integration / activation processes
	Competence ID:	C7
Competence description:	Ability to combine administrative and monitoring role with counselling, while retaining professional integrity and high efficiency and quality of counselling process.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>are aware of dual role and ability to deal with it in a concrete interview / counselling process,</i> ▪ <i>have knowledge of basic monitoring and evaluation techniques/methods,</i> ▪ <i>ensure transparency of roles in the counselling process,</i> ▪ <i>know how to prioritise tasks related to administrative and monitoring role in relation to counselling-related tasks.</i> 	

2.8 Ability to monitor individual action plans and activation processes		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Management and monitoring of integration / activation processes
	Competence ID:	C8
Competence description:	Ability to monitor the implementation of individual action plans and other activation processes.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>systematically monitor progress of individual action plans for clients under their supervision including regular update / review</i> ▪ <i>assess the need for support and operate review / update of the adequacy of support and fulfilment of jobseekers' obligations (in line with the principle of mutual obligation),</i> ▪ <i>apply knowledge of basic monitoring and evaluation techniques/methods,</i> ▪ <i>demonstrate knowledge in and consequently apply regulations for enforcement taking into account individual situation (sanctioning).</i> 	

2.9 Management of complex integration strategies/processes (case management)	
General information:	Competence area: Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group: Counselling and individual action planning
	Competence ID: C9
Competence description:	Ability to coordinate a complex integration pathway to provide effective and targeted support.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>identify specific influencing factors (family, educational, social) and attitudes (stereotyping, beliefs, motivations) that can limit or support career development of their clients,</i> ▪ <i>demonstrate knowledge of available specialised supporting services and measures inside of the organisation (service) as well as through external providers (complex measures),</i> ▪ <i>plan and facilitate supporting services to meet individual, holistic needs with available resources, retaining high quality and cost effectiveness of such actions,</i> ▪ <i>use a case management approach effectively, by coordinating and sequencing actions in partnership with other services (social, health, educational, NGOs).</i>

3. Facilitating placement of jobseekers

2.10 Assessment and matching skills for job placement	
General information:	Competence area: Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group: Facilitating placement of jobseekers
	Competence ID: C10
Competence description:	Ability to sequence a job placement process by matching job requirements with the outcome of individual assessments.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>analyse and translate employer demands, as reflected in a vacancy advertisement, into a language that is understandable for the individual client, present work opportunities to clients and facilitate appropriate job selection,</i> ▪ <i>match job requirements with individual characteristics and expectations of individuals,</i> ▪ <i>support individual clients in job placements by increasing job search skills, coaching clients in job search process and advising clients on how to work with self-help and other preparatory (online) tools,</i> ▪ <i>monitor the effectiveness of the placement process by following-up with both clients and employers.</i>

2.11 Information finding and analysis skills		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Facilitating placement of jobseekers
	Competence ID:	C11
Competence description:	Ability to identify, find, analyse, combine and interpret information which is important in facilitating the placement process.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>demonstrate knowledge of relevant information sources on job placement and job requirements, career planning materials, computer-based and online information systems, knowledge repositories and tools,</i> ▪ <i>collect, analyse and use the information properly, in order to facilitate the process of job placement / labour market integration / career development, including online tools,</i> ▪ <i>use the Internet in the process of job search for the clients,</i> ▪ <i>understand and explain to clients the components of labour market information, occupational and job requirements,</i> ▪ <i>prioritise information sources depending on individual needs.</i> 	

2.12 Human resources management knowledge		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Facilitating placement of jobseekers
	Competence ID:	C12
Competence description:	Application of human resources management concepts for quality placement processes.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>apply basic knowledge of recruitment and selection techniques and tools in relation to placement of jobseekers,</i> • <i>apply knowledge of training and development practices in relation to individual action planning and career management of jobseekers,</i> • <i>follow recent trends in human resources management practices both in public and private sectors including temporary work agencies,</i> • <i>serve as partners and advisors to both jobseekers and employers in the field of human resources management.</i> 	

2.13 Basics of Intra-European EURES placement services (mainstreaming Intra-European employment mobility into PES business)	
General information:	Competence area: Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group: Facilitating placement of jobseekers
	Competence ID: C13
Competence description:	Ability to use information, tools and knowledge about international mobility in provision of EURES services.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>demonstrate awareness of the key role of labour mobility for European and national employment strategies targets,</i> ▪ <i>knowledge of EURES events (awareness raising, information and recruitment) and mobility projects (job fairs, speed-dating, etc.),</i> ▪ <i>demonstrate a basic understanding of the reality of working in another country, barriers to labour mobility and strategies to overcome them, and apply them in relation to individual jobseekers,</i> ▪ <i>demonstrate a basic understanding in recognition of qualification and validation of competences in EU Member States,</i> ▪ <i>demonstrate knowledge in how to use EURES tools and resources to support matching processes for placement into jobs, apprenticeships and internships in Europe for international mobility.</i>

4. Facilitating recruitment services for employers

2.14 Sales and negotiation skills		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Facilitating recruitment services for employers
	Competence ID:	C14
Competence description:	Ability to build good relationships with employers to enhance cooperation in recruitment, including disadvantaged jobseekers, through the effective use of sales techniques.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>communicate using the language of business, and actively look for job placement opportunities from employers,</i> ▪ <i>use sales techniques to enhance employer cooperation with PES, to focus on strengths of disadvantaged jobseekers,</i> ▪ <i>build satisfaction of business partners through careful identification of their needs and being able to create "win-win" situations (e.g. tailor-made recruitment in combination with placement of disadvantaged jobseekers),</i> ▪ <i>inform employers about ALMPs and other options for support (e.g. subsidies, support to integrate disabled jobseekers),</i> ▪ <i>offer employers help in relation to other issues they may face (age management, human resources, gender issues, etc.) including online service offer.</i> 	

2.15 Working with employer associations / representatives	
General information:	Competence area: Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group: Facilitating recruitment services for employers
	Competence ID: C15
Competence description:	Ability to act as a link between employers and clients through networking and engagement with employers and employer associations.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>liaise with employers and employers' associations to obtain information on jobs, apprenticeships, traineeships, and other opportunities they offer,</i> ▪ <i>liaise with employers to understand, design and describe job requirements for the available job positions to prepare high quality vacancy descriptions, in order to ensure a good match in the recruitment process,</i> ▪ <i>organise job fairs, group sessions and speed dating with employer representatives,</i> ▪ <i>inform employers about the full range of PES services and support,</i> ▪ <i>use network contacts to monitor changes in the labour market (new opportunities and threats, e.g. forthcoming lay-offs),</i> ▪ <i>facilitate group sessions for employers using group animation skills.</i>

2.16 Building long-term relationship (customer binding)		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Facilitating recruitment services for employers
	Competence ID:	C16
Competence description:	Ability to build long-term relationships with employers through the provision of high quality and tailored services.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>comply with service standards, take personal responsibility for helping customers to solve their problems,</i> ▪ <i>build relationships of trust through the provision of high-quality and tailored services,</i> ▪ <i>continually strive to improve relationships, by regularly following-up and monitoring employer satisfaction with the service,</i> ▪ <i>show interest in changing customer needs and actively build that knowledge.</i> 	

2.17 Basics of Intra-European EURES recruitment services (mainstreaming Intra-European employment mobility into PES business)		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Facilitating recruitment services for employers
	Competence ID:	C17
Competence description:	Ability to engage, maintain and provide services to employers in provision of EURES services.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>identify employers who could benefit from EURES services,</i> ▪ <i>explore capacities and potential needs for international recruitment as an integral part of recruitment in order to deliver tailored services,</i> ▪ <i>inform, advise and offer support on relevant aspects of integration,</i> ▪ <i>provide information on EURES awareness raising, information and recruitment events,</i> ▪ <i>provide information on EURES mobility projects for certain occupations or target groups (job fairs, speed dating, etc.) and EURES events (awareness raising, information and recruitment).</i> 	

Part 2: EURES Counsellors

5. Client interaction in provision of EURES services

Presuming that EURES counsellors have all the basic competences of a national employment counsellors (points 1-4 above), EURES counsellors are also expected to have and use knowledge, skills and abilities required to provide EURES services. These competences extend beyond mainstreaming basic EURES services, which all PES employment counsellors will be implementing.

2.18 Knowledge of counselling, placement and recruitment services of EURES counsellors		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Client interaction in provision of EURES services
	Competence ID:	C18
Competence description:	Ability to understand and use knowledge of specific counselling, placement and recruitment services of EURES counsellors.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>demonstrate knowledge of how to use the EURES portal for placement into jobs, apprenticeships and internships in order to facilitate international mobility,</i> ▪ <i>demonstrate knowledge of how to use other online resources to increase efficiency in delivering EURES services,</i> ▪ <i>show advanced understanding of the reality of working in another country, barriers to labour mobility and strategies to overcome them, and apply them in relation to individual jobseeker,</i> ▪ <i>show advanced understanding in the recognition of qualification and validation of competences in EU Member States,</i> ▪ <i>organise national projects and events on awareness raising, information, recruitment and other mobility EURES projects.</i> 	

2.19 Ability to work in partnership with other EURES partners		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Client interaction in provision of EURES services
	Competence ID:	C19
Competence description:	Ability to work in partnerships with other EURES partners.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>organise meetings and events in coordination with other EURES partners, and initiate and manage projects with a transnational dimension,</i> ▪ <i>provide information on the national/regional labour market to EURES partners,</i> ▪ <i>monitor EURES service delivery and strive for improvement in the exchange with other EURES partners,</i> ▪ <i>act as a gateway and resource person to other EU/EEA colleagues in the network.</i> 	

2.20 Knowledge of living and working conditions as preconditions for mobility		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Client interaction in provision of EURES services
	Competence ID:	C20
Competence description:	Ability to use knowledge of living and working conditions in EU countries, as a precondition of mobility.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>show good knowledge of living conditions in a number of EU countries and advanced knowledge of information sources and support available,</i> ▪ <i>show at least basic knowledge of labour law regulations, social protection systems and portability regulations in their country,</i> ▪ <i>show understanding of international and national taxation rules,</i> ▪ <i>prepare and update online country-specific information on living and working conditions in their countries,</i> ▪ <i>inform clients on important issues such as finding accommodation, finding a school, taxes, cost of living, health, social legislation, comparability of qualifications, etc.</i> 	

2.21 Knowledge of EU labour market		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Client interaction in provision of EURES services
	Competence ID:	C21
Competence description:	Ability to acquire and use up-to-date knowledge of the EU labour market.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>show knowledge and inform jobseekers of EU trends in sectoral and occupational labour demand,</i> ▪ <i>show knowledge and inform jobseekers of shortage occupations and their distribution across the EU,</i> ▪ <i>inform jobseekers about labour regulations and wages in priority countries,</i> ▪ <i>inform clients on schemes for the recognition of their qualifications and schemes for validation of their competences in priority countries.</i> 	

2.22 Knowledge of health and social insurance regulations in EU countries		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Client interaction in provision of EURES services
	Competence ID:	C22
Competence description:	Ability to develop and use knowledge of health and social insurance regulations in EU countries, as a precondition of mobility.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>acquire general knowledge of health insurance and social security schemes in EU,</i> ▪ <i>understand basic differences in schemes (portability, contributions, regulations for entitlement, levels of transfer, etc.)</i> ▪ <i>understand the contribution rules for health and social security schemes in EU,</i> ▪ <i>show knowledge of non-contributory benefits and contribution exemptions (e.g. self-employed, etc.).</i> 	

2.23 Advanced intercultural/diversity skills		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Client interaction in provision of EURES services
	Competence ID:	C23
Competence description:	Ability to take into account the views of a range of people from different cultures and backgrounds and treat them with consideration and respect, therewith functioning in multicultural environments.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>work in multicultural teams and contexts (inside the EURES and with other partnerships),</i> ▪ <i>effectively communicate with clients from multicultural environments to overcome relational obstacles and identify leverages and behaviours that work more effectively with different nationalities,</i> ▪ <i>produce suitable and prompt replies to correspondence from a variety of sources (managers, employers, jobseekers, etc.) of different cultural and national backgrounds,</i> ▪ <i>create working environments in which diversity might be expressed and turned into a resource for both the organisation and individuals, based upon up-to-date knowledge of advanced intercultural/diversity issues.</i> 	

2.24 Linguistic skills		
General information:	Competence area:	Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group:	Client interaction in provision of EURES services
	Competence ID:	C25
Competence description:	Ability to use foreign language orally and in writing, to convey messages clearly and understandably for the recipient.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>show and apply good oral and written knowledge of one of the following three languages: English, French or German, in addition to their mother tongue</i> ▪ <i>develop and show good knowledge of all languages used in the region for EURES counsellors in cross-border areas.</i> 	

2.25 Knowledge of EU and national structures and programmes supporting mobility	
General information:	Competence area: Client interaction competences (working with jobseekers and employers)
	Competence group: Client interaction in provision of EURES services
	Competence ID: C25
Competence description:	Ability to understand the possibilities created by international programmes and the tools supporting mobility, and to explain these to clients.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>inform clients about portals (PLOTEUS, EURES, etc.)</i> ▪ <i>explain how to use European tools and resources enhancing mobility (e.g. EUROPASS),</i> ▪ <i>understand functioning of European mobility programmes (Your First EURES Job, ERASMUS for all, etc.),</i> ▪ <i>show knowledge of other European networks (Euroguidance, European university network, Enterprise Europe Network, etc.).</i>

III. Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)

The last area of competences embraced by the profile comprises **supportive competences (systems and technical)**.

System competences include not only knowledge of employment services systems but, more importantly, the ability to represent a public authority in communication with clients and other actors and skills in networking and functioning under partnerships, as well as corporate identity and commitment to service.

Service/country specific knowledge covers competences focused on knowledge of the labour market (including education/VET/ occupations), disadvantaged groups in the labour market and basic knowledge of performance management, monitoring and evaluation processes.

Technical skills represent competences to handle technological aspect of the work (ICT), which is of growing importance to PES around Europe due to changes increasingly introducing online matching and online service delivery. The use of more complex databases and datasets requires higher skills in relation to information management; this is reflected in the profile below.

While technical skills and a certain degree of labour market knowledge can be acquired externally (outside of PES), country/service-specific skills have to be embedded in developmental programmes and training sessions which are offered internally by PES.

1. System competences

3.1 Corporate identity and commitment to service	
General information:	Competence area: Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)
	Competence group: System competences
	Competence ID: S1
Competence description:	Ability to identify with the values and mission of the service and to contribute to the development and implementation of the corporate culture.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>identify with values and mission of the service and treat them as their own,</i> ▪ <i>respect confidentiality of internal information and refrain from discussing it in public,</i> ▪ <i>represent the service respectfully, both in professional and private situations,</i> ▪ <i>contribute to organisational culture through their professional and positive behaviours.</i>

3.2 Ability to represent a public authority in communication with clients and other actors		
General information:	Competence area:	Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)
	Competence group:	System competences
	Competence ID:	S2
Competence description:	Ability to respectfully represent a public authority in communication with clients and other actors.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>demonstrate willingness to represent the service (public authority) in a credible way at meetings, public events, working groups and projects, both of national and international character,</i> ▪ <i>refrain from public discussion about internal organisational issues,</i> ▪ <i>demonstrate willingness to communicate with a large audience,</i> ▪ <i>provide high quality public-oriented service, by understanding and integrating social goal and public values in their actions,</i> ▪ <i>remain accessible to users of the service (internal and external) and are responsive to their requests and needs.</i> 	

3.3 Networking and partnerships		
General information:	Competence area:	Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)
	Competence group:	System competences
	Competence ID:	S3
Competence description:	Ability to function within the network of providers/supporting institutions to deliver coordinated services for the clients.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>show knowledge of the main actors at local / regional level to tackle certain obstacles to labour market integration,</i> ▪ <i>maintain good working relationships and apply effective working procedures in correspondence with PES rules (e.g. case conferences),</i> ▪ <i>understand rules and procedures for procurement (in particular result-oriented procurement),</i> ▪ <i>adequately represent the organisation in partnership-based working / project groups.</i> 	

3.4 Knowledge of employment services systems	
General information:	Competence area: Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)
	Competence group: System competences
	Competence ID: S4
Competence description:	Ability to understand, use and keep up-to-date with employment services systems at their disposal in the organisation.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>use their knowledge of developments and functioning of the national employment system including governance, organisational and management principles,</i> • <i>apply their knowledge of different types of employment services systems in a European / international perspective,</i> • <i>apply their knowledge of relevant European networks (PES networks, EURES networks),</i> • <i>apply their knowledge of relevant European information sources (benchmarking and mutual learning).</i>

2. Service/country specific knowledge

3.5 Knowledge of labour market situation/education and vet/ occupations	
General information:	Competence area: Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)
	Competence group: Service/country specific knowledge
	Competence id: S5
Competence description:	Ability to acquire and apply current knowledge of the labour market situation, general and vocational education possibilities as well as occupational qualifications.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regularly acquire and update their knowledge of education, training, employment trends, labour market, and social issues, including the specifics of local/regional/national labour market conditions, in order to convey relevant information to the clients, ▪ Acquire and apply current knowledge of developmental opportunities for occupational/ professional groups in order to partner with such groups and relevant institutions, ▪ Acquire, apply and update their knowledge of national and international occupational requirements, including occupational classifications and occupational qualification/competence standards, ▪ Structure and appropriately apply this knowledge to individual cases.

3.6 Knowledge of disadvantaged groups in the labour market	
General information:	Competence area: Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)
	Competence group: Service/country specific knowledge
	Competence ID: S6
Competence description:	Ability to acquire and use current knowledge of disadvantaged groups in the labour market.
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>regularly acquire and update their knowledge of disadvantaged groups in the labour market including (but not limited to): disabled people, parents returning to work, long-term unemployed, young unemployed, older unemployed, people with specific health-related problems, unemployed with low qualifications, ethnic minorities / migrants, etc.</i> ▪ <i>acquire and apply their current knowledge of local/regional/national labour market conditions for these groups, in order to convey relevant information to the clients,</i> ▪ <i>demonstrate knowledge of relevant actors, partners and programmes to support disadvantaged groups in the labour market,</i> ▪ <i>structure and appropriately apply this knowledge to individual cases.</i>

3.7 Knowledge of labour market policy, ALMP measures/concepts for activation		
General information:	Competence area:	Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)
	Competence group:	Service/country specific knowledge
	Competence ID:	S7
Competence description:	Ability to acquire and use current knowledge of labour market policy, ALMP measures / concepts for activation.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>regularly acquire and update their knowledge of labour market policy including (but not limited to): employment protection legislation, job creation policies, social security systems, work-life balance and equality issues, education and training systems, labour taxation and wage setting mechanism, etc.,</i> ▪ <i>regularly acquire and update knowledge of ALMPs/ concepts for activation including (but not limited to): direct job creation schemes, hiring subsidies, business start-up support, internships, trainings and skills formation measures, etc.,</i> ▪ <i>acquire and apply current knowledge of local/regional/national labour market conditions in relation to effectiveness of labour market policies, in order to convey relevant information to the clients,</i> ▪ <i>structure and appropriately apply this knowledge to individual cases.</i> 	

3.8 Performance management, monitoring and evaluation		
General information:	Competence area:	Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)
	Competence group:	Service/country specific knowledge
	Competence ID:	S8
Competence description:	Ability to understand performance management, monitoring and evaluation techniques for effective interventions.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>use target setting and performance dialogue systems in the organisation (management by objectives),</i> ▪ <i>acquire basic knowledge of tools to monitor achievement of objectives and implications at organisational / team / individual level,</i> ▪ <i>reflect on their own achievements and draw lessons,</i> ▪ <i>acquire basic knowledge of monitoring and evaluation of ALMP measures.</i> 	

3. Technical skills

3.9 ICT skills and ability to work in a context of blended service delivery		
General information:	Competence area:	Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)
	Competence group:	Technical skills
	Competence ID:	S9
Competence description:	Ability to apply ICT skills and to work in a context of blended service delivery.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>acquire knowledge of and use basic ICT equipment and software, as well as service- and organisation-specific ICT equipment and software,</i> ▪ <i>use Internet and online resources for the management of job placement offers and job search processes for their clients,</i> ▪ <i>acquire knowledge and skills to provide blended services both to employees and job applicants, and effectively use internal recruitment systems and online recruitment tools and regularly acquire new skills in this area,</i> ▪ <i>maintain contact with registered jobseekers and employers, and provide telephone/online job information and assistance.</i> 	

3.10 Information management skills		
General information:	Competence area:	Supporting competences (systems and technical competences)
	Competence group:	Technical skills
	Competence ID:	S10
Competence description:	Ability to collect, organise, maintain and disseminate information on employment and support opportunities.	
Behavioural indicators:	<p>Counsellors who demonstrate this competence are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>collect, organise, disseminate up-to-date information on training, placement and job opportunities,</i> ▪ <i>provide and maintain on-site and online information on available job openings, internships, etc.,</i> ▪ <i>use information technologies to organise and disseminate this information,</i> ▪ <i>assist clients to access and use this information.</i> 	

3. The way to a European reference competence profile: methodology and review of research

3.1 Analysis of key definitions, vital for the development of the process- and results-oriented approach to reference competence profiling for PES and EURES counsellors

Modelling (frameworking) of competences is an alternative to traditional job analysis. It consists of a set of actions aimed at creating the *ideal* profile, portfolio or standard of competence, focusing on a set of characteristics that an employee *should have* for effective performance of their tasks². A competency framework is a document containing a set (list and descriptions) of all the competences which the organisation considers necessary to implement its strategy, achieve its business goals and succeed in its operations. The key role of the competence framework is not only to list competences required of all employees, but also to define more precisely those individual competences in relation to individual characteristics and behaviours that will have the greatest impact on achieving the results set for a given role. Thus, the modelling of competence forms a basis for assessing the quality of the human capital from the viewpoint of the organisation and its own needs. The competency framework therefore contains the set of all competencies required of all staff in the organisation, grouped in profiles of individual positions or organisational roles. One of the steps in the process of creating a model of competence for an organisation is to develop *competency profiles*.

Competency profile is the set of all competencies to describe specific jobs or organisational roles. A competence profile can also be described as the set of behaviours required from employees in their organisational roles.

There are two main approaches to competence frameworking and profiling. These arise from looking at the phenomenon of competences in two different ways:

- Competence as a concept relating to individuals and the underlying behaviour for a competent action (so called "employee-oriented approach").
- Competence as a concept relating to work and to the areas of work in which the person is competent (so called "work-oriented approach").

Employee-oriented approaches focus on the characteristics of an individual (intrinsic and relatively stable over time), which allow her/him to obtain results within the specific areas of vocational and non-vocational activities. Historically, the person-oriented approach to competence modelling has been more widely used³.

Work-oriented approaches focus on the areas of competence which are closely related to specific jobs, roles or tasks. Therefore, unlike the person-oriented approach, this approach starts with the requirements of the work. More specifically, it firstly looks at the actions necessary to perform a particular job, which are analysed based on the tasks. These actions then determine the behaviours and personal characteristics required of the employee. Competency models developed on this basis include a list of tasks and activities so that the work to be performed is decomposed into elements and behaviours that are required from an employee to be performant. Thus, the **behavioural descriptions** are an integral part of such competency profiles.

This approach to competency modelling and profiling implies not only to relate the tasks performed to a given role or job, but also to **focus on the results of the work**. The idea

² Steward G.L., Brown K.G., *Human Resource Management. Linking Strategy to Practice*, John Wiley and Sons, USA, 2009, p. 134.

³ McClelland D.C., *Testing for competence rather than for "intelligence"*, *American Psychologist*, No 1, 1973; Armstrong M., *A handbook of personnel management practice*, Kogan Page, London, 1991; Woodruffe C., *Assessment centers: Identifying and developing competence*, Institute of Personnel Management, London, 1990.

is that the demonstration of described behaviours by the employee will lead to intended outcomes. This perspective has been applied in preparing the process- and results-oriented competency profile for PES and EURES counsellors.

3.2 Review of available sources provides examples of competency profiles for counsellors, which form the starting point for this paper

The findings from previous studies constitute the backbone of this analytical paper.

In 2012, the PES to PES analytical paper on **Job profiles and training for employment counsellors**⁴ gave an overview of the specifics of job profiles, competences requirements and training programmes available for employment counsellors in public employment services (PES) in Europe. It was revealed that the skills and competences of employment counsellors are critical to achieving successful placement outcomes and it highlighted the need for a more in-depth and structured approach. Analysis of available sources as well as questionnaires among PES in Europe indicated that a number of key commonalities and differences existed in job and competence profiles, as well as in the training of employment counsellors. Various approaches to entry requirements were also identified, in relation to level of education, educational disciplines and additional qualifications of new recruits. However, the analysis proved that it is possible to create a basic common profile for the key tasks and competences required of employment counsellors. The *core* tasks relate to employer services (tasks focused on placement, networking and sales, organising) and relate to jobseekers services (tasks focused on placement, counselling, information provision and administration and monitoring); both require specific sets of skills. It was also revealed that *soft* skills are increasingly important to facilitate contact with clients and other stakeholders in employment service delivery. Thus, adequate selection as well as coordination of training content was found to be crucial to providing the expertise needed to deliver high quality services.

The PES to PES discussion paper on **Core competences in PES, entrance requirements and ongoing professional development**⁵ crystallised comparable core competences which are common to most Member States in relation to the work of employment counsellors. It was revealed that, due to major shifts in the roles of PES (towards services focused on activation and facilitation of transitions), the counselling and guidance elements in the work of employment counsellors were prioritised, leading to a job profile that combines the roles of a broker, a counsellor, a social worker and further includes administrative tasks. This broad approach requires counsellors to have interdisciplinary knowledge comprising hard and soft skills in order to find a balance between administrative and customer service competences. It was concluded that a standardised, enumerative list of common competences for PES counsellors would be hard to prepare, taking into consideration the different starting points and operational structures of employment services in EU countries. However, a certain set of key competences could and has been developed in relation to minimum standard of employment service delivery, working around country differences. The outcome of this analysis is of common job and competency profile for employment counsellors, which is presented in table 1 below.

⁴ Sienkiewicz Ł., *Job profiles and training of employment counsellors*, PES to PES Dialogue Analytical Paper, European Commission, DG EMPL, October 2012.

⁵ Sienkiewicz Ł., *Core competences in PES, entrance requirements and on-going professional development: the current position*, PES to PES Dialogue Discussion Paper, European Commission, DG EMPL, June 2013.

Table 2. Common job and competency profile for employment counsellors

TASKS			
AREA	CORE	ADDITIONAL	
Services for jobseekers	Tasks focused on placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial interviewing of individual jobseekers ▪ Job search assistance ▪ Networking with other stakeholders, providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Registering unemployed (formal registration process)
	Tasks focused on counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment (profiling) of the jobseeker's strengths/weaknesses and the adequate need for support ▪ Preparation of an individual action plan ▪ Referral to appropriate ALMP measure/provider (e.g. specialist assessment, training) ▪ Group sessions for jobseekers ▪ Guidance on career planning/development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of specialised IT and other tools for assessment ▪ Planning of ALMPs
	Tasks focused on information provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing information on available job offers ▪ Information about ALMP measures ▪ Providing telephone/online job information and assistance ▪ Providing and maintaining on-site and online information on available job openings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision and up-keep of on-site and on-line information on available training/ALMPs
	Tasks focused on administration and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring of implementation of IAP ▪ Maintaining direct, in-person contact with registered jobseekers ▪ Maintaining contact with registered jobseekers through telephone/e-mail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring in case of referral to another provider/ training
Services for employers	Tasks focused on placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Filling of vacancies/ selection of candidates ▪ Filling of place for apprenticeship or work placement ▪ Follow-up of placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vacancy intake/registration

	Tasks focused on networking and sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actively searching for new job offers at employers (networking with employers) ▪ Informing employers about ALMP/ support (e.g. subsidies, support to integrate disabled) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consulting on age management, human resources, gender issues, etc.
	Tasks focused on organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group sessions for employers ▪ Organisation of speed dating/ job fairs 	
COMPETENCES			
CORE		ADDITIONAL	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of current labour market situation and trends ▪ Knowledge of ALMP measures/concepts ▪ Assessment and matching skills ▪ Communication and interviewing/counselling skills ▪ Ability to motivate and inspire clients ▪ Teamwork/cooperation ▪ Client orientation ▪ Stress resistance ▪ Patience, understanding and the ability to listen non-judgmentally ▪ Flexibility ▪ Knowledge of service-specific tools/ activation practice ▪ Knowledge of disadvantaged groups in the labour market ▪ IT skills ▪ Planning and organising skills ▪ Problem recognition and solving skills ▪ Negotiation skills ▪ Trust building ability/reliability ▪ Information finding and analysis skills 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of vocational structure and vocational classifications ▪ Knowledge of labour law ▪ Knowledge of human resources management ▪ Knowledge of performance measurement/controlling ▪ Knowledge of the gender aspects ▪ Knowledge of hard and soft skills assessment tools ▪ Knowledge of social case management problems ▪ Assessment of psychological and social profiles ▪ Skills relating to employer services ▪ Group facilitation skills ▪ Ability to work independently ▪ Innovativeness/creativity 	

Source: Sienkiewicz Ł., *Core competences in PES, entrance requirements and on-going professional development: the current position*, PES to PES Dialogue Discussion Paper, European Commission, DG EMPL, June 2013.

A number of existing research projects and professional initiatives have been reviewed to provide further insight into the competences of employment counsellors.

In-depth analyses included:

1. **NICE Handbook for the Academic Training of Career Guidance and Counselling Professionals**, from the NICE project (Network for Innovation in Career Guidance & Counselling in Europe), where details on core competences for career guidance and counselling professionals are provided.
2. **Kompetenzprofil für Beratende** from Nationales Forum Beratung in Bildung, Beruf und Beschäftigung (**nfb**) and Forschungsgruppe Beratungsqualität am Institut für Bildungswissenschaft der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, which provides detailed description of competences required from guidance counsellors in Germany.
3. **Professionalising Career Guidance. Practitioner Competences and Qualification Routes in Europe**, from CEDEFOP, providing competency framework for career guidance professionals.
4. **International Competencies for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners** from International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAVEG/AIOSP) where the Competency Framework for this role is described in detail.
5. **Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development** (document: *Core Competencies 2012*).
6. **MEVOC - Quality Manual for Educational and Vocational Counselling**.
7. **Guide on the Accreditation of Careers Guidance Practitioners: Putting EAS into Practice**, from EAS - European Accreditation Scheme for careers guidance practitioners.
8. **Professionalisation of Career Guidance in Europe: Training, Guidance Research, Service Organisation and Mobility**, by Kraatz S., Ertelt B.J. (eds.), which provides results of several Leonardo da Vinci projects and EURES with regards to mobility counselling.
9. **EURES** training materials.

These projects and their respective competency frameworks and profiles for counsellors have been analysed in two main ways:

1. Analysis of the lists of competences required from employment counsellors and their groupings.
2. Content analysis of competency descriptions (where available) in order to identify behavioural indicators.

4. Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to describe and concretise core competences in an operational way so that they could easily relate to PES core tasks and serve both as reference tool and a manual for the design of recruitment and training & development processes for employment counsellors. This was achieved through:

1. preparing a comprehensive competence framework for PES and EURES counsellors;
2. dividing competences in the framework into three distinctive areas, grouping competences around major tasks performed by employment counsellors; and
3. describing competences in an operational way, by providing general competence description as well as detailed behavioural indicators.

This approach enabled to prepare a reference tool that is useful at the PES and EURES levels. It can serve as an important element of a **competency-based perspective and a 'life-cycle' approach for employment counsellors**, which previous discussion papers called for.

For example, the reference profile can be used at PES level to design effective strategies for the recruitment of employment counsellors, as these can be more competence- than education-focused. By providing behavioural indicators, the design of recruitment and selection criteria, tools and processes could be professionalised and made more effective. The catalogue presented also allows to direct the development of specific in-house competency profiles for employment counsellors at the service level.

In addition, the design of the reference competence profile provides important support in undertaking training needs analysis and implementing training for employment counsellors. By providing general descriptions and behavioural indicators it serves as a useful tool for the development of training programmes. Different competences included in the profile and their associated knowledge, skills and abilities will help when choosing training approaches– for example by informing whether to choose on-the-job or off-the-job training, active learning or mentoring/coaching techniques depending on the competence in question and the learning outcome sought by participants. PES can also draw from examples of competent behaviours in order to assess the effectiveness of the training and development activities.

Thus, the European reference competence profile presented in this paper can support the professionalisation of services provided by employment counsellors. All competences included in the profile can be taught and professionalised and their improvement could lead to an increase in the quality of services provided by PES and EURES. Finally, the professionalisation of the services delivered by employment counsellors would help the recognition of its distinctive features, leading to the recognition of employment counselling as an important occupation in its own right.

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