

European Network of Regional Labour Market Monitoring

Regional factors are crucial for the position of enterprises in highly competitive and turbulent markets. A major precondition for the functioning of regional labour markets is adequate information for all actors involved. Respective data have to be current, future-related, fitting the needs of both actors and decision-makers. **Regional Labour Market Monitoring** as an on-going practice can be seen as an approach to meet these requirements.

A variety of projects in this area have been set up in several European countries. Their purpose is to develop and implement sets of indicators for current and prospective regional employment, methods of data gathering and validation, and instruments of reporting and dissemination. Although some of these approaches seem to be well-developed, there is obviously a lack of interconnection and cooperation between them. **There is no systematic exchange of concepts and experiences.**

Through a systematic and a continuous cooperation of actors from different projects considerable synergies among the approaches could be created. The dissemination of methods, concepts and knowhow can be improved tremendously which would support the further establishment of Regional Labour Market Monitoring in European countries. **A continuous cooperation can be best achieved by a Regional Labour Market Monitoring network of involved and interested actors.**

The kick-off for building such a network was on 8th and 9th of March 2006 at the workshop 'Monitoring of Regional Labour Markets in Europe' at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University in Frankfurt a.M. in Germany. Around 80 participants from 16 different European countries discussed specific approaches of Regional Labour Market Monitoring in individual countries. Some basic features could be already identified as a starting point for the development of a European (meta) concept. **Many of the participants expressed their interest in a permanent network.** The general framework for the network was set in Frankfurt.

The network fulfils **three major functions**: Firstly, it supports the further development of methods and concepts by bringing scientists from different countries together. Secondly, it provides a space for the exchange of experiences from actors with different backgrounds, leading to transnational cooperation with a special focus on labour force migration within Europe. And thirdly, European standards in theory, methods, data generation and processing and the spread of information can be developed. This would ease transnational comparisons and benchmarking on one hand and set on the other hand the framework of a common European concept for conducting Regional Labour Market Monitoring.

These objectives would be achieved through various activities like **subject-specific small working groups, larger annual conferences and an internet-based platform.** There are different degrees of involvement possible. The working groups help to deepen the knowledge on specific topics, whereas the annual conferences provide an overview on the activities in the field. The forum is the knowledge base of the network - it contains information on the regional monitoring activities in each European country, obtains contacts and allows short term and selective exchange.

The Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University and the Institute for Economics, Labour and Culture (IWAK) both in Frankfurt a.M. (Germany) will take responsibility for the organisational tasks in the foundation phase of the network.

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