

Report on interviews at level of the European Union

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The Contentious Politics of Unemployment in Europe
Political Claim-making, Policy Deliberation and Exclusion from the Labour Market

Chapter 11: Report on Interviews at level of the European Union

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1. Employment and Social Policy in the European Union

The main objective of European Union (EU) employment and social policies is to promote a decent quality of life and standard of living for its member states. At present, the four key strands of employment and social policy in the European Union are:

- The European Employment Strategy
- Improving working conditions and standards
- Social Inclusion and social protection
- Equality of men and women

These objectives are achieved by supporting and coordinating national policies and by legislation, enacted in certain areas, jointly by the European Council and the European Parliament. The Union's involvement in social policy translates into setting minimum standards and rights on the basis of which member states can adopt rules and regulations. In this sense, social policy in the European Union continues to be the core responsibility of the member states. National welfare states remain the primary institutions of European social policy, but they do so in the context of a multi-tiered polity (Pierson and Leibfried, 1995 cited in Wallace and Wallace, 2000: 268). In consonance with this, a key aspect of the EU approach to employment and social policy has been the emphasis on local and regional actions plans, which acquired special prominence after 1993.

According to Nielsen and Szyszczak (1997), there are four phases in the development of a European Social Policy, namely, Neoliberalism (1957-1972); Social Action (1972-1980); Stagnation or Crisis (1980-1986); and Optimism (1986-1993). Neoliberalism was a phase characterised by economic boom in the EU, and policies during this time were market-oriented and non-interventionist and laid emphasis on economic and political issues, instead of the social. Also, the activities of the Community in this period were limited to coordination rather than harmonisation. The second phase, Social Action, saw a more active role of the Community in social policy as a result of two developments. One was the rising unemployment, fiscal and economic crises along with imbalances between member states that called for greater intervention by the Community. The other was the questioning of the political and economic role of the Treaty of Rome in the light of the political upheavals of the 1960s. The third phase, Stagnation, was characterised by few social policy legislations as a result of the ideological conflict between the European Community and the UK. The complex policy process, involving intergovernmental negotiations and the need for unanimous decisions within the European Council, brought policy making to a virtual halt. In the fourth phase, Optimism, French President Jaques Delours elevated the role of social policy by linking it with the realisation of the single internal market. The fifth phase, which is the current phase from 1993 onwards has seen a greater involvement of the EU institutions in social and employment policy.

2. Key policies and initiatives

A chronological narrative of the history of social and employment policy in the EU begins with the **Treaty of Rome 1957**, in the phase of neoliberalism. The Treaty, which established the European Economic Community and its four main institutions, laid emphasis on economic and political issues in the Community, while social issues came to be seen as hindering the creation of a common market. Only twelve of the 248 Articles of the Treaty (Articles 117-128) had a social policy dimension and dealt with issues like

improving working conditions and standard of living for workers, close co-operation between member states on training, employment, labour law and working conditions, social security, equal pay between men and women and the free movement of labour. The most important aspect of this Treaty with respect to social policy was that it established a European Social Fund (Article 123) which would 'aim to render the employment of workers easier and to increase their geographical and occupational mobility within the Community, and to facilitate their adaptation to industrial changes and to changes in production systems, in particular through vocational training and retraining.' (HR-NET, 2003) The Fund was to be administered by the Commission and implemented by the Council.

This period was also a period of economic boom in Europe and member states introduced legal and welfare rights for workers. In 1961, the Council of Europe adopted the **European Social Charter**, which although not legally binding, set up a framework for social objectives concerning fundamental rights for workers and citizens. It was thought of as a social and economic counterpart to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In addition to this, there were also a number of regulations adopted at the European level. These related to issues like social security benefits for migrant workers who went to work in another member state and a youth exchange scheme to create European awareness and provide training for young workers.

In the second phase, Social Action, the 1972 Paris Declaration of the Heads of State or Government was an important step for social policy in the EU. In 1974, the Council of Ministers announced a **Community Social Action Programme** which concentrated on achieving full and better employment, improving living and working conditions and the increased involvement of management and labour in the economic and social decisions of the Community and of workers. The programme was legitimated on political grounds in that it was proposed as a way of co-operation between member states, especially in terms of labour policy. While only a few concrete legislative measures emerged out of this programme, the 1970s witnessed the emergence of economic and social factors like the recession, widespread unemployment and technological competition from the US and Japan, which called for greater intervention in the social field.

As mentioned earlier, the 1980s, until 1986, were known as the period of stagnation or crisis as they did not witness many legislations in the social field, mainly due to the ideological conflict between the European Union and the UK government. The fact that legislations required unanimous decisions within the Council was one of the main reasons for a stall in European social policies during this period.

A significant step for the EU during this period, which also affected social policy, was the **Single European Act 1986**. In addition to setting the objective of a single European market without internal frontiers for the free movement of capital, goods and people, it expanded the EU's scope in several areas and improved decision-making procedures. To this end, it slightly enhanced the role of the European Parliament and introduced qualified majority voting into the decision-making process as a precondition to achieving an internal market. Previously, the Council took decisions through unanimous voting.

The period of Optimism (1986-1993) witnessed a shift towards the idea that social policy is a key mechanism facilitating the achievement of the Community's economic objectives.

Thus in 1989, the Community Charter on the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, known as the **Social Charter**, was adopted by the Heads of State or Government at the Strasbourg Summit. Although it was not legally binding, the Charter established the major principles on which the European labour law model is based, and left decisions on implementation procedures to individual member states. The Charter, signed by 11 member states not including the UK (who refused to sign it), covered the following areas:

- Freedom of movement
- Employment and remuneration
- Improvement of living and working conditions
- Social protection
- Freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Vocational training
- Equal treatment
- Information, consultation and participation for workers
- Protection of health and safety at the workplace
- Protection of children, adolescents, the elderly and the disabled.

While the Charter would be implemented by individual member states, the Commission presented its action programme to ensure that a foundation of minimum provisions common to all the member states was adopted.

The next significant step in EU social policy was **the Maastricht Treaty** or the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) signed at Maastricht in 1992. The TEU amended the Treaty of Rome and the Single European Act 1986 and introduced new power and policy areas, including strengthening the European Parliament. From the point of view of employment policy, the Treaty represents the legal basis for the Community's intervention in training, pre-training, temporary employment aids and other similar activities. The TEU renamed the European Economic Community the European Community with the main aim of moulding member states into a single community embracing every sector of the economy including free movement of goods and workers, freedom of establishment, competition policy, economic and monetary policy, agricultural policy and industrial policy. The Treaty states that by establishing a common market and an economic and monetary union, and by implementing common policies and activities, the European Community shall promote-

- a) Harmonious and balanced development of economic activities
- b) Sustainable and non-inflationary growth respecting the environment
- c) A high degree of convergence of economic performance
- d) A high level of employment and social protection
- e) The raising of the standard of living and quality of life
- f) Economic and social cohesion and solidarity among member states

As a consequence of the UK's refusal to sign the Social Charter, it was attached to the treaty as an appended protocol. The Social Charter allowed the signatories to agree to directives proposed by the Commission on the basis of qualified majority voting in the areas of: health and safety at work; working conditions; the right to information and consultation of workers; equality between men and women; and long-term unemployment. The Charter also allowed the states to agree on directives on the basis of unanimous decision in relation to social security and the protection of the employed and workers made redundant; conditions of employment for third country nationals; representation and collective defence of workers' and employees' interests; and financial support for employment promotion and creation. While many of these issues had already been

identified in the Treaty of Rome, it is the Social Chapter that gave the Commission the right to propose directives in these areas and empowered the Council to adopt them.

While the Maastricht Treaty was a step towards greater coordination of policies and the debate on a European solution to structural policies, it was the White and Green Papers in 1993 and 1994 that closely examined employment at the EU level. One of the main reasons for a renewed debate on employment in the early 1990s was a result of the realisation that the economic and social problems after the oil shocks of the 1980s were a result of policy mistakes at the EU level, including technological pessimism, jobless growth and the fear of globalisation.

The **Green Paper on Social Policy 1993** invited the Social Partners in the European Commission, the government departments, non-governmental and other civil society organisations, the European Parliament and others to participate in defining the social policy agenda for the Commission.

There were two White Papers during this period, both significant with regard to the European approach to employment policy. In the **White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment 1993**, the European Commission linked social policy issues with economic issues like the capacity of EU business to compete in the globalised economy. The Commission blamed the social security systems of member states for the problems regarding employment as many of these systems tended to protect those in paid employment at cost of those engaged in unpaid work. It proposed two policy actions – improving the employability of the labour force and increasing investment opportunities in job creation.

The **White Paper on Social Policy 1994** provided a comprehensive statement of social policy directions and goals. It aimed at establishing the fundamental social rights of citizens as a constitutional element of the European Union. This paper enabled the Commission to make a clear statement about the redefined role of social policy in EU integration in its social action programme of 1995-97. The Commission covered issues like labour law, health and safety, freedom of movement, equality between men and women, social protection and equal opportunities for all. It also focussed on cooperation between member states to create jobs by promoting a labour-intensive pattern of growth, encouraging active labour-market policies and improving access to the labour market, especially for the youth.

Following these papers, the European Council held in Essen in December 1994 drew attention to the urgent need for active labour market policies and identified priorities to stimulate job creation. These included investments in education training especially for young people, improving measures concerning those affected by unemployment and improving the efficiency of unemployment policies by replace passive policies with active ones.

The **Treaty of Amsterdam** was signed in October 1997, by all 15-member states of the EU, including the UK. The Treaty was a culmination of two years of discussion and negotiation between member state government representatives. It came into force in 1999 and is said to have marked a major turning point for European employment and social policy (European Union, 2003).

One of the most significant events surrounding this treaty was that the UK agreed to the Social Chapter which led to the inclusion of the Maastricht Social Policy Protocol and Agreement in the Treaty, thereby increasing the competence of the EU in the area of social policy. This made employment and social policy truly EU-wide. The Treaty also underlined the importance of the Social Partners i.e. trade unions and employers' organisations, in employment and social policy by making them joint decision-makers in the policy process. While the Treaty does not challenge the responsibility of individual member states in their national employment policy, it entrusts the European institutions with much stronger roles, tasks and tools.

The aims of the Treaty have been described as 'to create the political and institutional conditions to enable the European Union to meet the challenges of the future such as the rapid evolution of the international situation, the globalisation of the economy and its impact on jobs, the fight against terrorism, international crime and drug trafficking, ecological problems and threats to public health.' (European Union, 2003)

As regards social and employment policy, the Treaty includes a new chapter on employment which encourages the development of common strategies for employment and the coordination of national policies. This treaty emphasises employment as an issue of common concern and defines a high level of employment as one of the common objectives of the EU. The chapter on employment, included under Title VI, defines the objective of the EU in this area as the development of a "coordinated strategy for employment and particularly for promoting a skilled, training and adaptable workforce and labour markets responsive to economic change" (eironline, 2003). Another important provision of the Treaty is its emphasis on the need to combat discrimination and strive for equality between men and women. The Treaty also deals with the need for consistent and coherent cooperation between member states on the free movement of people.

The Treaty contains the principle of mainstreaming employment policy, which requires that all policies should provide equal opportunities. This has been referred to as an EU obligation in the Treaty. It also formally empowers the European Court of Justice to ensure the respect of fundamental rights and freedoms by European institutions.

The commitment of the Amsterdam Treaty to coordinate employment policies and to promote the creation of more and better jobs was translated into the European Employment Strategy (EES) by the European Council in the **Luxembourg Jobs Summit 1997**. The EES, also known as the Luxembourg process, is designed as a tool to give direction to and ensure the co-ordination of the employment policy priorities of the member states at the EU level. Member states have agreed on a framework for action to establish a set of common objectives and targets for employment policy. The Luxembourg Summit for Employment therefore provides an institutional framework to co-ordinate member countries' efforts to develop a more active labour market policy and promote employment. This was the first time that a European Council meeting was dedicated to the issue of how to address the problem of persistent unemployment in the European Union. Below are some of the main decisions reached by the summit:

- Put into effect the employment provisions of the draft Amsterdam Treaty.

- A biannual meeting between Social Partners, the Council (past, present and future Council Presidencies) and the European Commission to review employment policy and the 1989 Social Charter.
- Set up high-level expert working groups to monitor industrial change.
- European Investment Bank funding to SMEs, new technology and trans-European networks.
- Strengthening economic policy coordination between member states.

The European Employment Strategy aims to increase the number of jobs, to improve job quality, to make it easier for people to balance the demands of work with their personal life and to ensure that everyone has an equal chance of employment. The EES has initiated a new working method at the EU level, known as the 'open method of co-ordination'. This method, based on five key principles, has been carried forward to the Lisbon Strategy in 2000. The five principles are: subsidiarity (an equilibrium between the role of the EU in setting objectives and member states' responsibility in deciding action plans), convergence (achieving commonly agreed employment goals through concerted action), management by objectives (use of quantified measurements, targets and benchmarks, to allow for a proper monitoring and evaluation of progress), country surveillance (annual reporting to evaluate and compare progress by member states and identify best practice) and an integrated approach (extending Employment Guidelines beyond active labour market policies, to include social, educational, tax and regional policies).

This open method includes the coordination of national employment policies through: National Action Plans: Member states have adopted the Employment Guidelines 1998 which require each member state to submit a National Action Plan (NAP) annually to the Commission, tailored to their specific requirements, yet within the general framework outlined by the Commission. The NAPs are to be structured around four "pillars": improving employability; developing entrepreneurship; encouraging adaptability; and strengthening equal opportunities.

Improving employability relates to active labour market measures such as tackling youth unemployment and preventing long-term unemployment. Developing entrepreneurship entails making it easier to start up and run businesses, exploiting opportunities for job creation and making the tax system more conducive to employment. Adaptability includes modernising work organisation. Reducing gender gaps and promoting the integration of the disabled into working life are a part of strengthening equal opportunities.

Employment Guidelines: Member states also put into effect the special provisions contained in the draft Article 128 of the Amsterdam Treaty on a coordinated employment strategy between member states. As per the 1998 Employment Guidelines, the Summit recommended measures relating to active employment policy, offering a fresh start to people before they reach 6-12 months of unemployment, and opportunities for job creation, among other things. It also recognised that employment policy needs to work in coordination with other policies. The Commission and the Council would jointly examine each NAP and present a Joint Employment Report.

The Luxembourg process also allowed the Council to issue, by qualified majority, country-specific recommendations upon a proposal by the Commission. The European Council also

examined ways of involving the Social Partners more closely in the future determination of a coordinated employment strategy.

Another aspect of the EES has been the strong support for local employment development by focussing on the development of a territorial dimension of employment policies. Employment Guidelines have asked member states to enhance the territorial dimension of their employment policies. An important aspect of EU policy that deserve a mention in this context are the **Territorial Employment Pacts** launched by the European Commission in 1997. The Commission selected 89 areas proposed by the Member States to be linked with the mainstream of the Structural Funds. These TEPs aimed at broadening the partnership between major actors at regional and local levels to encourage job creation. The pacts were structured around the objectives of mobilising regional actors in the fight against unemployment, strengthening structural policies for employment and working on the principles of partnership, integration, innovation and bottom-up approach.

The Lisbon Strategy, set out in the Lisbon European Council of March 2000 aims to strengthen employment, economic reform and social cohesion in the EU. The Union aims 'to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' (Lisbon European Council, 2000). It is a ten-year strategy to make the EU the world's most dynamic and competitive economy. Under this strategy, a stronger economy will drive job creation alongside social and environmental policies that ensure sustainable development and social inclusion (European Union, 2003).

In order to overcome the weaknesses of the EU economy, namely, high levels of unemployment, low labour market participation rates (especially among women), underdeveloped services sector and skills gap in the technology sector, the Council decided that the strategy would be implemented by 'an open method of co-ordination at all levels'. This method takes forward the approach followed for the employment strategy since the Luxembourg Summit and reiterates the need for an interlinked economic, employment and social policy (European Union, 2003).

The conclusions of the Lisbon Council highlight the need for action in specific areas like: information society, the business environment, economic reform, education and training, employment (focus on more and better jobs), modernising social protection and promoting social inclusion. The strategy aims to promote a knowledge-based economy and society through research and development, completing the internal market, and better policies for an information society. The Lisbon conclusions lay strong emphasis on the modernisation of the European Social Model by investing in people and developing an active welfare state. For the first time ever, importance has been given to social inclusion and the need for EU activity in this area. The strategy is designed to enable the Union to regain the conditions for full employment and to strengthen regional cohesion in the EU. The Heads of State and Government believe that if the measures retained in the Lisbon conclusions are implemented, an average economic growth rate of around 3% should be a realistic prospect for the next decade. (European Union, 2003)

As regards employment policy, the Commission and the Council aim to look at four main areas: improving employability and reducing skills gap; giving higher priority to lifelong learning; increasing employment levels in service industries and furthering all aspects of

equal opportunities. The Council has set two concrete goals, to be achieved by 2010. One is to increase the overall employment rate in the EU from an average of 61% to 70%; and the other is to increase the proportion of women in employment from an average of 51% to 60% (eironline, 2003).

In order to move towards a knowledge based economy, the Council and the Commission decided to prepare an 'eEurope Action Plan'. They also decided to give special attention to small and medium enterprises, committing member states to focus on small companies and respond to their needs. The Lisbon Strategy also pays attention to the need for an improved level and quality of employment through plans like increasing human resources investment, developing schools and training centres and drawing up a definition of basic new skills, including IT skills, foreign languages, entrepreneurship and social skills (eironline, 2003).

The Lisbon Strategy also supports the idea that the EU in 2000 should adopt a new Social Policy Agenda. The **New Social Policy Agenda** is expected to articulate how full benefits can be taken from the dynamic interaction between economic, employment and social policy. Its major mission will be to initiate a virtuous circle by better linking action on employment, social protection, social inclusion, social dialogue, equal opportunities and anti-discrimination. The actions outlined in this Agenda include:

- creating more and better jobs
- anticipating and managing change and adapting to the new working environment
- modernising and improving social protection
- promoting social inclusion
- strengthening gender equality, combating discrimination
- encouraging mobility of workers
- exploiting the potential of a knowledge-based economy

It will also articulate how the European Social Fund will underpin policy, in particular in the employment strategy (Commission of the European Communities, 2000).

The European Council Meeting at Nice, known as the **Nice Summit**, held from 7-9 December 2000 achieved a consensus on the proposals for worker involvement in the proposed European Company Statute. This summit also saw the adoption of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights by the Council, Commission and Parliament. The charter defined the role and powers of the EU in this area. This made their rights more visible to EU citizens and included the right to life, respect for private and family life, protection of personal data, the right to education, freedom to conduct a business, equality between men and women, fair and just working conditions, the right of collective bargaining and action, access to EU documents and the rights of older people to a life of dignity.

Following the decision in the Lisbon Council for annual Spring Councils to discuss the way forward for the EU to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy, the **Stockholm Council** was held in March 2001 and focussed on employment of older workers and setting intermediate targets for employment levels. The state representatives at the meeting decided to set intermediate employment targets, as a step towards achieving the goals set out in the Lisbon Council. The Stockholm Council proposed an overall employment rate of 67% and a female employment rate of 57% by January 2005. The Council also set a target of increasing the average employment rate among men and women aged 55-64 to 50% by 2010 in view of the fact that the increase in the number of retired people by 2010 would put immense pressure on the social welfare

systems. The Council also stressed the need for general basic education, lifelong learning and IT training. Attention was also paid to the quality of jobs, equal opportunities, health and safety and employees' involvement and diversity in the working environment. The Council also stated that active labour market policies should aim to promote social inclusion and that member states should give priority to combating poverty and promoting social inclusion in their NAPs.

The next annual Spring Council was the **Barcelona Council** in 2002, to evaluate progress and identify priority areas for action. Attention was paid to areas like tax system including tax cuts and reducing the tax burden on low wage earners, removing disincentives for female labour force participation and incentives for early retirement and the relationship between wage developments and labour market conditions.

In understanding social and employment policy in the EU, the **European Social Fund** (ESF) plays an important role as it is the main financial tool through which the Union translates its employment policy aims into actions. Set up by the Treaty of Rome 1957, the ESF has invested, in partnership with the member states, in programmes to develop people's skills and their potential for work. It is the main EU financial instrument underpinning the EES and provides around EUR 9 billion a year, managed in partnership with member states, for helping both young and older workers. The ESF contributes to the following:

- Active labour market policies;
- Equal opportunities for all and promoting social inclusion;
- Improving training and education and promoting lifelong learning;
- Adaptability and entrepreneurship;
- Improving the participation of women in the labour market (European Social Fund News, 2003)

The ESF provides funding for programmes for training and skills that aim at improving the employability of people. It also supports long-term programmes aimed at modernising workforce skills and encourage entrepreneurship in less developed regions so that they attract both domestic and foreign investments that help them develop further.

As can be inferred from the preceding pages, the main actors on employment and social policy in the EU are the European Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament (with its Committee on Employment and Social Affairs) along with representatives of business and labour interests. Wallace and Wallace (2000: 45) describe the EU policy process as a pendulum that swings between the national and the EU authorities depending on the policy functions, the purposes and predicaments of political actors and interests and agendas of the EU institutions.

The European Commission has been the most important and central actor in defining a minimum set of uniform standards for member states to follow when drafting national legislations, and also as a step towards constructing a European Social Model (Wallace and Wallace, 2000: 270). It encourages cooperation among member states on matters pertaining to training, social security and health and safety at work. The Commission presents its recommendations to the Council on the basis of which guidelines are issued for states to take into account while formulating their policies. The Council, along with the Parliament,

take decisions on spending money to fund pilot projects, promote the exchange of information and best practices and encourage innovative approaches (Pinder, 2001).

One of the main obstacles in the policy making process has been the need for a qualified majority for legislations to be approved. Another issue is that given the importance of social policy, national governments chose to hold on to it and as a result the welfare state still continues to be within the national domain. An appropriate example in this context is the role of the UK which did not sign the Social Charter until the Treaty of Amsterdam, thereby limiting the powers of the EU in the field of social policy.

3. Statistics on unemployment in the EU

Table 1. Unemployment rate (unit: per cent of civilian labour forces)

	France	Italy	Germany	Switzerland	UK	Sweden
1990	8.6	8.9	4.8	-	6.9	1.7
1991	9.1	8.5	4.2	1.9	8.6	3.1
1992	10	8.7	6.4	2.9	9.7	5.6
1993	11.3	10.1	7.7	3.8	9.9	9.1
1994	11.8	11	8.2	3.7	9.2	9.4
1995	11.4	11.5	8	3.3	8.5	8.8
1996	11.9	11.5	8.7	3.8	8	9.6
1997	11.8	11.6	9.7	4	6.9	9.9
1998	11.4	11.7	9.1	3.4	6.2	8.3
1999	10.7	11.3	8.4	2.9	5.9	7.1
2000	9.3	10.4	7.7	2.5	5.4	5.8
2001	8.5	9.4	7.7	-	5	4.9

Table 2. Unemployment rate, over 25 years (unit: per cent of civilian labour forces)

	France	Italy	Germany	Switzerland	UK	Sweden
1990	19.2	26.9	-	-	10.5	4.4
1991	20.9	25.5	-	3.3	13.8	7.6
1992	23	26.7	6.2	5	16.1	13.2
1993	27.1	30.1	7.7	6.6	17.4	22
1994	28.7	32	8.4	6.3	16.3	22
1995	27.1	33.3	8.4	5.7	15.3	19.1
1996	28.3	33.6	9.6	5.3	15	20.6
1997	28.4	33.5	10.4	6.2	13.7	20.6
1998	25.7	33.5	9.4	6.1	13.1	16.5
1999	23.3	32.3	8.8	5.9	12.8	13.6
2000	19.7	30.7	8.5	5.1	12.3	11.2
2001	19	28.1	8.2	-	11.9	11.1

Table 3. Unemployment rate, under 25 years (unit: per cent of civilian labour forces)

	France	Italy	Germany	Switzerland	UK	Sweden
1990	7	5.4	-	-	6	1.2
1991	7.4	5.2	-	1.7	7.3	2.3
1992	8.2	5.4	6.5	2.6	8.2	4.4
1993	9.3	6.6	7.7	3.4	8.3	7.2
1994	9.8	7.6	8.2	3.4	7.7	7.6
1995	9.6	8.1	7.9	3.1	7.2	7.4
1996	10	8.3	8.6	3.6	6.6	8.2
1997	10.1	8.5	9.6	3.9	5.6	8.6
1998	9.9	8.8	9.1	3.1	4.9	7.4
1999	9.4	8.6	8.4	2.6	4.7	6.4
2000	8.1	7.9	7.7	2.2	4.2	5.1
2001	7.3	7.4	7.7	-	3.8	4.1

Table 4. Unemployment rate, females (unit: per cent of civilian labour forces)

	France	Italy	Germany	Switzerland	UK	Sweden
1990	11.3	13.5	-	-	6.4	1.7
1991	11.6	12.9	-	2.6	7.2	2.8
1992	12.4	13	8.2	3.6	7.4	4.4
1993	13.2	14.5	9.4	4.6	7.6	7.3
1994	13.8	15.4	9.8	4.3	7.1	7.8
1995	13.6	16.1	9.4	3.9	6.8	7.9
1996	13.9	15.9	9.5	4	6.3	9
1997	13.7	16.1	10.4	4	5.8	9.5
1998	13.4	16.1	9.7	3.9	5.3	8.1
1999	12.6	15.5	8.9	3.4	5.2	7
2000	11.2	14.3	8.1	3.1	4.8	5.5
2001	10.3	12.9	7.8	-	4.4	4.6

Table 5. Unemployment rate, males (unit: per cent of civilian labour forces)

	France	Italy	Germany	Switzerland	UK	Sweden
1990	6.6	6.3	-	-	7.2	1.7
1991	7.1	6	-	1.4	9.6	3.4
1992	8.1	6.3	5.1	2.4	11.4	6.6
1993	9.7	7.5	6.5	3.3	11.7	10.7
1994	10.2	8.5	7.1	3.2	10.8	10.8
1995	9.6	8.8	7	2.9	9.9	9.7
1996	10.2	8.9	8.1	3.5	9.3	10.1
1997	10.2	8.9	9.1	4.1	7.7	10.2
1998	9.7	9	8.6	3	6.9	8.6
1999	9.1	8.6	8.1	2.5	6.5	7.2
2000	7.6	8	7.5	2	5.9	6
2001	7	7.3	7.7	-	5.5	5.2

4. Key EU Actors in the Unemployment Field

4.1 State Actors

1. Committee on Employment and Social Affairs – European Parliament

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs is responsible for matters relating to employment and social policy including protection of living and working conditions, including wages and pensions policy; social security and welfare protection; social exclusion and social cohesion etc, and for bodies like the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, the European Training Foundation and the European Agency for Health and Safety at Work. The committee also deals with all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation related to fundamental social rights and to the labour market.

2. European Commission - Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs

The European Commission plays a key role in promoting positive interaction between economic, social and employment policies to achieve the EU strategic objective of making Europe the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy. It does this by working in the areas of:

- Employment (European Employment Strategy, European Social Fund);
- Structures in the world of work (approximating national legislation regulating the labour market, developing social dialogue at European level, modernising labour relations),

- Social exclusion and social protection (co-operation between Member States, legislation and running programmes to counter discrimination, promoting fundamental rights);
- Equality between men and women (producing and overseeing legislation, programmes to improve equality)

3. European Council

The European Council brings together the Heads of State or Government of the fifteen Member States of the European Union and the President of the European Commission. Although the European Council is not legally an institution of the European Community it nevertheless plays a vital role in all European Union fields of activity whether it be by giving impetus to the Union or defining general political guidelines, or by coordinating, arbitrating or disentangling difficult questions. The Council is the Community's legislative body and for a wide range of Community issues, it exercises that legislative power in co-decision with the European Parliament. It also coordinates the general economic policies of the member states.

4. Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions was created by the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, as a representative assembly with the job of giving local and regional authorities a voice at the heart of the European Union. The Treaties oblige the Commission and Council to consult the Committee of the Regions whenever new proposals are made in areas which have repercussions at a regional or local level. The areas are: economic and social cohesion, trans-European infrastructure networks, health, education and culture, employment policy, social policy, the environment, vocational training and transport.

5. European Economic and Social Committee

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is a non-political body that gives representatives of Europe's socio-occupational interest groups, and others, a formal platform to express their points of views on EU issues. Its opinions are forwarded to the larger institutions - the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament. It thus has a key role to play in the Union's decision-making process. The 222 members of the EESC are drawn from economic and social interest groups in Europe. Members are nominated by national governments and appointed by the Council of the European Union and belong to one of three groups: employers, employees, and various interest groups.

6. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions carries out research and development projects to provide data and analysis for informing and supporting the formulation of EU policy on working and living conditions. The Foundation has a network of experts throughout Europe who conduct research on its behalf including assessing the current national situations, the preparation of case studies and national reports and the conducting of surveys. The Foundation is a European Agency, one of the first to be

established to work in specialised areas of EU policy. It was set up by the European Council.

4.2 Political Parties

7. European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party

The European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party is the liberal and centrist party of the European Union, based on the principles of liberalism. The European Liberal Democrats believe in a Europe based on the fundamental liberal principles of freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, tolerance and solidarity. Their policy work focuses on areas like environment, enlargement, human rights, the future of Europe debate, the Iraq crisis etc.

8. The Party of European Socialists

The Party of European Socialists (PES) is the social-democratic and socialist part of the EU and brings together the Socialist, Social Democratic and Labour Parties of the European Union (EU). It currently has 180 seats in the European Parliament, the second highest after the European Peoples' Party. Its aims include strengthening of the socialist and social democratic movement in the Union and throughout Europe; the development of close working relationships between the national member parties, their parliamentary groups, the Parliamentary Group of the PES and the Party; the definition of common policies for the European Union; and the adoption of a common manifesto for elections to the European Parliament.

9. European Peoples' Party

The christian-democratic and conservative party of the EU, the European Peoples' party currently has 233 seats, the highest number, in the European Parliament. It unites like-minded national parties, in EU Member States and in EU applicant countries.

4.3 Interest Groups

10. European Trade Union Confederation

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) was established in 1973 to provide a trade union counterbalance to the economic forces of European integration. At present, it has in its membership 77 National Trade Union Confederations from a total of 35 European countries, as well as 11 European industry federations, making a total of 60 million members. The ETUC seeks to influence European legislation and policies by making direct representations to the various institutions and by ensuring trade union participation with the European authorities, involving its partners in areas such as employment, social affairs and macro-economic policy. The ETUC is also coordinating trade union participation in a number of advisory bodies, including the Economic and Social Committee and the EU agencies for vocational training, living and working conditions, health and safety.

11. Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe

The *Union des Industries des pays de la Communauté européenne* was begun in 1949 by the national industrial federations from the six member states of the European Coal & Steel Community. This body then became the *Union des Industries de la Communauté européenne (UNICE)* in March 1958, to track the political consequences of the community created by the Treaty of Rome. The original aims included uniting the central industrial federations to foster solidarity between them; encouraging a Europe-wide competitive industrial policy; and acting as a spokesperson body to the European institutions. It currently focuses its actions in four major areas: encouraging entrepreneurship; creating space for business; improving labour market flexibility; and promoting a balanced sustainable development policy. It has 35 members and 4 observers.

12. European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and of Enterprises of General Economic Interest (CEEP)

CEEP, whose origins date back to 1961, is an international association consisting of enterprises and organisations with public participation or carrying out activities of general interest, whatever their legal or ownership statute. CEEP is a body responsible for analysis, information, negotiation, intervention and support, whose importance has grown with the economic and monetary developments expected as a result of the enlargement of the European Union. CEEP's main objective as a European Social Partner is to study and represent enterprises and other employers with public participation and of general economic interest vi-à-vis the European institutions. Its mission is both to defend them against proposals or decisions that would undermine them, and to promote them by taking initiatives or tabling innovative proposals.

13. EURES – The European Job Mobility Portal

EURES is a cooperation network designed to facilitate the free movement of workers within the European Economic Area; Switzerland is also involved. Partners in the network include public employment services, trade union and employers' organisations. The network is coordinated by the European Commission. The main objectives of EURES are:

- 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;
- to assist employers wishing to recruit workers from other countries; and
- to provide advice and guidance to workers and employers in cross-border regions.

4.4 NGOs

14. European Policy Centre

EPC is an independent, not-for-profit, think-tank, committed to making European integration work. The EPC aims to provide its members and the wider public with rapid, high-quality information and analysis on the EU policy agenda. The EPC aims to promote a balanced dialogue between the different constituencies of its membership, spanning all aspects of economic and social life. EPC offers an array of dialogues, policy briefings, conferences and seminars for its members and the wider public.

15. European Anti-Poverty Network

EAPN is an independent coalition of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and groups involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in the Member States of the European Union. It's main objectives are:

- to put the fight against poverty and social exclusion on the political agenda of the European Union;
- to promote and enhance the effectiveness of actions against poverty and social exclusion;
- and
- to lobby for and with people and groups facing poverty and social exclusion.

It is a network of 15 national networks of voluntary organisations and grassroots groups active in the fight against poverty within each member state of the EU as well as 26 European organisations whose main activities are related to the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

16. Social Platform – The Platform of European Social NGOs

Established in 1995, The Platform of European Social NGOs is an association of nearly 40 European non-governmental organisations, federations and networks that are working together to build an inclusive society and promote the social dimension of the European Union. The Social Platform channels the concerns of its members on issues of common interest and represents them to the EU institutions. It seeks to develop and strengthen a civil dialogue between European Social NGOs and the institutions of the European Union and ensures a wide circulation of information on EU activities and policies to its members at the national level.

17. International Council on Social Welfare

The International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), founded in Paris in 1928, is a non-governmental organisation which now represents national and local organisations in more than 50 countries throughout the world. It's member organisations collectively represent tens of thousands of community organisations which work directly at the grass-roots with people in poverty, hardship or distress. These organisations provide help for a wide range of people who are poor, ill, disabled, unemployed, frail or oppressed. ICSW gathers and distributes information to community groups, other civil society organisations, governments and intergovernmental organisations and ICSW undertakes research and organises consultations to help analyse problems and develop policies.

18. European Citizen Action Service

ECAS was created in 1990 as an international non-profit organization, independent of political parties, commercial interests and the EU Institutions. ECAS focuses on three key activities: NGO guides to EU funding, policies and enlargement and it's mission is to enable NGOs and individuals to make their voice heard with the EU. ECAS' members cover different areas of activity in the EU and applicant countries: civil liberties, culture, development, health and social welfare. It's main aims are: to strengthen the European Strategy of NGOs in member states and applicant countries of the EU; to defend free movement rights and promote a more inclusive European citizenship; and to campaign for transparency and reform of the EU Institutions

19. European Small Business Alliance

The European Small Business Alliance is a major independent free membership based organisation representing small business entrepreneurs and self-employed in Europe. Founded in 1998, it aims to unite all independent small business organisations in Europe in order influence EU officials and Member States authorities to create the right business environment for small businesses and entrepreneurship to flourish. Among its many objectives, it aims to work with European Institutions and other appropriate bodies to create a more harmonious environment for small and medium enterprises that will generate sustainable growth, greater employment opportunities and economic freedom for people.

4.5 *Unemployed Groups*

20. European Network of the Unemployed

ENU, founded initially in 1982 as the First Western European network of the Unemployed was officially launched as the European network of the Unemployed in Glasgow in 1987. ENU presently comprises national organisations or networks from following European countries: Ireland, Britain, Germany, France, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Sweden, Finland, Netherlands and Hungary. ENU also maintains contact with unemployed organisations in Denmark, Switzerland, Russia, Poland and the Czech Republic. ENU's main task is to reduce unemployment. It therefore tries to place the issue of unemployment and the relevant employment policies on the European agenda. During the years ENU has been active in organising and supporting public protests by unemployed people and their allies, especially together with European Marches against rising unemployment, poverty and insecure employment. ENU has continued to seek commitments to full employment at the European level and is active in monitoring the National Employment Action Plans emerging from the European Employment Strategy.

5. EU-level interviews

5.1 *Introduction*

This workpackage addresses the public campaigning and process of policy deliberation at the European supranational and trans-national level through interviews with key policy and civil society actors in the European Union. This part of the study aims to shed light on the multi-level governance of unemployment focusing on relationships between different levels.

Through this part of the project we aim to: 1) assess the extent to which power is located in the institutions of the European Union relative to national ones, and to establish who the important transnational policy actors are; 2) explain the action repertoire of various categories of actors at the EU-level and determine whether the emphasis at the EU-level is on working within the policy-field or influencing it from the outside; 3) show the networks of actors in the field according to three types of relations – cooperation, disagreement and influence; 4) understand the involvement of various types of actors in the development of

policy options around the specific issues of job creation and social benefits; and 5) evaluate the impact of the EU on unemployment policy across the EU and determine its importance relative to policies at the national level.

The interviews at the level of the European Union were conducted by the British team, with two contributions from the Swiss team. A total of 21 interviews has been conducted, each between 40 and 70 minutes long. Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in Brussels, while a few were conducted in London or over the telephone. The interviewees were classified into four broad groups - policy actors (9 interviews), intermediary organizations, such as political parties (3 interviews) and interest groups of employers and employees (4 interviews), and non-governmental organizations focusing on the claims made by the unemployed (5 interviews). While the selection of policy actors was fairly straightforward, the interest groups and NGOs were selected on the basis of their being mentioned on the EU website or in relevant reports, policy documents and literature on the topic. For the political parties, we managed to secure interviews with three of the five groups within the European Parliament. We managed to do 21 interviews from an original list of 25, as some organizations refused or their busy schedules did not allow them the time that we needed. To reach this number of interviews with supra- and trans-national organisations has required a considerable amount of logistical and organisational effort and travel, though we are confident of having achieved a sample which contains most of the significant actors in the field at this level. Indeed compared to the national cases, the fewer number of supra- trans-national actors means that we have a more complete sample with respect to the field.

The interview schedule used is similar to the one used for national interviews, to allow for comparisons with national-case data. A few minor alterations have been made, mainly re-wording questions, to customize the questionnaire for interviewees at the EU-level. Feedback from initial interviews was incorporated into the schedule to make it more specific to the EU level.

All interviews have been coded in a scheme that was again as close as possible to that used for national interviews, and the data are held in an SPSS database which allows for quantitative and qualitative analysis. The following pages provide a detailed and comprehensive report on the results of these interviews.

5.2 Action Forms

This section examines the action repertoire of various organizations. Respondents were asked to indicate the various techniques that they employ to influence public policy in the EU and at the national level in member states. We divided the action forms into two categories – external and internal strategies. External strategies include all actions directed at informing and mobilizing the public, including media-related strategies. Internal strategies encompass lobbying, participating in governmental consultation procedures, serving on governmental advisory commissions and boards and supplying information to policymakers.

Table 1 clearly indicates that media-related actions like interviews, writing newspaper articles, press conferences, press releases and use of the internet are extensively used by all actors at the EU level. Strategies of mobilizing the public are employed primarily by actors

in the public sphere, but they are clearly the least important in comparison to the other tactics. Policy actors were expected to focus on internal tactics, but these actions are also used sparingly by them. Other actors like NGOs, interest groups and political parties use them the most after media work.

Table 1: Action repertoire at the EU-level

Q: Which techniques would you use to influence public policy at the EU-level, and would you use them regularly and/ or occasionally?

Orgtype	inside lobbying 0=min 1=max	outside lobbying 0=min 1=max	media- related repertoire 0=min 1=max
<i>Policy</i>	.04	.12	.61
<i>NGO</i>	.67	.39	.78
<i>Interest group</i>	.89	.34	.72
<i>Party</i>	.66	.40	.90
Total	.44	.27	.71

Since most of the interviewees, especially the policy actors, operate primarily at the EU level and focus less at the national level on individual countries, the strategies are employed far less at the national level than they are at the EU level. At the national level (table 2), the use of actions forms corresponds to the pattern at the EU level with media related actions the most widely used. They are followed by internal strategies of lobbying and work with policymakers, and then external strategies of mobilising the public.

Table 2: Actions repertoire at the national level

Q: Which techniques would you use to influence public policy at the EU-level, and would you use them regularly and/ or occasionally?

Orgtype	inside lobbying 0=min 1=max	outside lobbying 0=min 1=max	media- related repertoire, 0=min 1=max
<i>Policy</i>	.03	.14	.70
<i>NGO</i>	.68	.36	.67
<i>Interest group</i>	.46	.13	.40
<i>Party</i>	.60	.44	.90
Total	.38	.26	.69

What emerges from the tables above is that all EU-level actors concentrate on media-related strategies in order to influence policy both at the European level and national level of individual member states. This is the main action form for policy actors, while other

actors in the public sphere also rely on internal strategies of lobbying, working with policymakers and serving on various governmental advisory boards and commissions, followed by actions of informing and mobilizing the public.

5.3 *Importance of media and public-related strategies*

The previous section has indicated that media-related strategies are most important for all actors trying to influence public policy at both EU and national levels. However, when the same respondents were asked to compare ‘working with policy makers’ with the use of media in influencing EU unemployment policy in particular, the trend across all groups was more towards working with policymakers than trying to influence them through the media. Over 50 per cent of respondents said that media-related strategies are less important than working directly with policy makers.

Table 3: Media strategy vs. working with policymakers

Q: How important are media-related strategies for your organisation compared to working with policy-makers?

	Frequency	Percent
much more important	1	4.8
more important	2	9.5
less important	9	42.9
much less important	3	14.3
equally important	2	9.5
missing	4	19.0
Total	21	100.0

Table 3.1: Media strategy vs. working with policymakers

Orgtype	much more important	more important	equally important	less important	much less important	missing	total
<i>State</i>	1			4	2	2	9
<i>NGO</i>		1	1	2	1		5
<i>Interest group</i>			1	3			4
<i>Party</i>		1				2	3
Total	1	2	2	9	3	4	21

For NGOs and interest groups together, 66 per cent claimed their media-related strategies were less important than their work with policy makers, with 22 per cent saying that both are equally important. Social Platform, a network of NGOs in the EU, considered their media strategy much less important than working with policy makers, since it is “more important to build long-term cooperation with decision-making people than get the media to influence externally”. The European Trade Union Congress (ETUC), however, considered them to be both equally important, since the media promote its activities, but the ETUC do not influence policymakers through the media.

Policy actors typically claimed that their work with policymakers was more important than their media-related work. Within this, some actors also acknowledged the importance of their media strategy. According to the European Commission (EC), working with other EU policy-makers and national policy actors from member states is a more important activity, but at the same time there is a need to disseminate messages, which is done through the media. Among the political parties only the Party of European Socialists (PES) chose to answer this question, saying that media strategies are more important as “we live in a media society”. The other parties chose not to answer as they felt that the two were not comparable.

As it is shown in tables 4 and 4.1 (in the following page), a similar trend is observed when respondents were asked to compare ‘informing/mobilising the public’ to ‘working with policy makers’ in trying to influence unemployment policy in the EU. Over 50 per cent of interviewees consider informing the public to be less important than working with policy makers, followed by 21 per cent who consider them to be equally important.

Table 4: Informing/ mobilizing the public vs. working with policymakers

Q: How important are strategies directly informing and mobilizing the public for your organisation compared to working with policy-makers?

	Frequenc y	Percent
more important	3	14.3
less important	8	38.1
much less important	4	19.0
equally important	4	19.0
missing	2	9.5
Total	21	100.0

Table 4.1: Informing/ mobilizing the public vs. working with policymakers

Orgtype	more important	equally important	less important	much less important	missing	
<i>Policy</i>	1		6	2		9
<i>NGO</i>	1	3		1		5
<i>Interest group</i>		1	2	1		4
<i>Party</i>	1				2	3
	3	4	8	4	2	21

Looking at NGOs alone, one sees a crucial trend towards an equal emphasis on working with policy makers and informing and mobilising the public, with 60 per cent of organisations considering them to be equally important. However, interest groups have generally emphasised that working with policy makers is more beneficial than trying to mobilise the public. As a spokesperson for the European Small Business Alliance (ESBA) says, “On such topics I don't think the general public has an impact.” As regards policy actors, 86 per cent of interviewees said that informing the public is less important than working with policy makers. According to EURES, the job mobility portal maintained by the European Commission, “We do inform the public, but it's not more important than working with policy makers. Our aim is to provide transparent public information for job seekers and employers in order to support their ability in the European market.” It is important to emphasise that the response from political parties was similar to the previous question. Only one of them considered informing/mobilising the public to be more important, while the other parties said the two strategies could not be compared.

It therefore emerges that in trying to influence unemployment policy at the European level, a large number of actors consider ‘working directly with policy makers’ to be far more beneficial than using ‘media-strategies’ or ‘informing/mobilising the public’.

5.4 Influential Actors

In this section we tried to determine the most influential organisations in European unemployment policy. Our 21 interviewees were presented with a list of 40 organisations. They had to indicate 1) which organisations they considered particularly influential (table 5.1) and then 2) name the three most influential organisations (table 5.2) and 3) the most influential amongst all of them (table 5.3).

Table 5.1: List of the ten most frequently mentioned influential organisations by actor type (multiple options)

	Policy	Interm.	NGOs	TOTAL
European Commission	8	7	4	19
Council of the European Union	8	6	5	19
European Trade Unions Confederation	8	5	5	18
German Government	6	6	5	17
French Government	6	6	5	17
UNICE	7	6	4	17
European Parliament	8	5	3	16
British Government	6	6	4	16
National Govts of other EU Member States	6	6	4	16
National trade unions (other than D, F, UK)	6	5	4	15

Table 5.2: The most influential organisations (three options given)

European Commission	15
Council of the European Union	11
National Governments of Member States	10
European Parliament	7
European Trade Unions Confederation	3
UNICE	3
Council of Europe	2
ILO	1
National Trade Unions from Member States	1
Local Authorities in Member States	1
Private Commercial Enterprises	1

Table 5.3: The most influential organisation (only one option given)

European Commission	7
National Governments of Member States	6
Council of the European Union	5
Local Authorities in Member States	1

As expected, the key EU institutions – European Commission, Council of European Union, and European Parliament - emerge as the most influential actors, alongside with the national governments from member states. These actors are followed by two intermediary organisations (see table 5.2) representing the interest of employers and employees respectively, namely, the Union of Industrial and Employers’ Confederations of Europe (UNICE) and the European Trade Unions Congress (ETUC). Non-governmental organisations and political parties seem generally to wield little influence, while the mention of local authorities in both tables 5.2 and 5.3 seems to support the focus of those scholars who emphasise the importance of the sub-national level within the European multi-level framework.

5.5 *Inter-organizational Networks*

Following the findings shown in the previous section, it is unsurprising that EU core policy-makers emerge as the most important targets of claim-making in the unemployment field. Table 6, however, shows that the order between the European Commission and the Council of the European Union has now changed.

Table 6: The ten most frequently mentioned targets by actor type

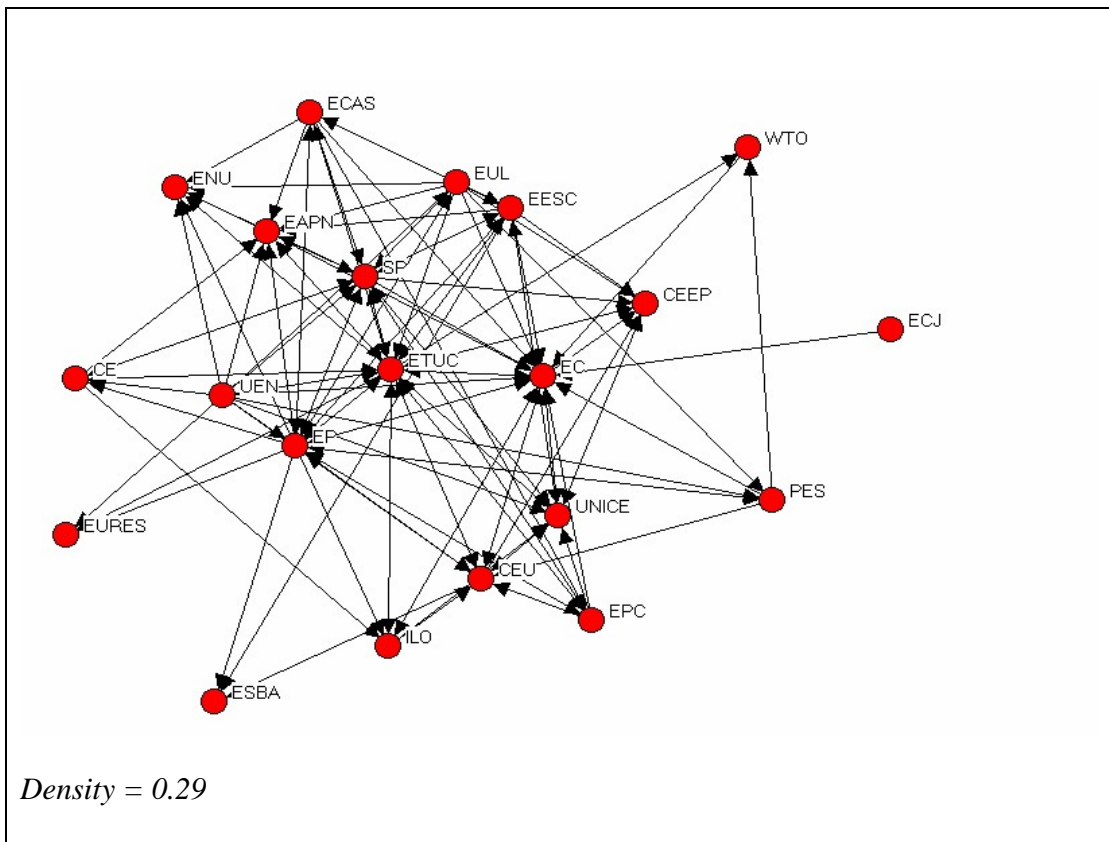
	Policy	Interm.	NGOs	TOTAL
Council of the European Union	4	7	4	15
European Commission	2	7	4	13
European Parliament	3	6	3	12
Govts of other EU Member States	5	3	4	12
German Government	4	2	5	11
French Government	4	2	4	10
British Government	3	2	4	9
UNICE	4	1	2	7
ETUC	2	1	3	6
Regional Govts of member states	2	0	3	5

It is important to emphasise that regional governments of member states emerge as a crucial target. Although they are not considered to be influential in previous tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3, these tables mention local authorities. The fact that regional governments of member states can be a crucial target (and local authorities are influential actors) within the unemployment field seems to confirm that, whatever the empirical and theoretical arguments against these of localism and ‘new regionalism’, sub-national authorities have become an established part of political and economic life in Europe, thanks to their strategic role within the multi-level EU framework. Relevant parts of our project have indeed been dedicated to regional and local actors across different member states, thus focusing on the impact of sub-national policies such as regional ‘Objectives’ and ‘Territorial Employment Pacts’.

As regards relationships of co-operation, table 7.1 in the following page includes a graphical representation of the web of co-operative ties between all the actors which have been interviewed, that is, the nodes of the figure. Each tie between two nodes indicates the existence (and the direction) of a relationship of co-operation between a pair of them. The first evident characteristic of this network is its good density, owing to the fact that a large number of actors are linked to each other. In particular, it is graphically clear that some organisations stand out for their activity of co-operation, such as the European Trade Unions Congress (ETUC), the European Commission (EC), and Social Platform (SP), while the organisations more 'isolated' interact directly at least with another central actor, and hence, they are no more than a few edges away from any other organisation within the network.

Focusing on different kinds of actors, it is noticeable the relatively broad web of ties which has been forged by political parties, thus showing that these organisations still play a crucial role for the protection of the unemployed and the representation of their interests. At the same time, it is particularly interesting to focus on the (sub)network of ties amongst non-governmental organisations, whose intervention is in favour / on behalf of the unemployed. An important number of these organisations have built crucial linkages of co-operation with policy actors, confirming our previous analysis of action forms (see tables 1 and 2). However, it is also clear that non-governmental organisations have aimed to forge an extensive web of reciprocal ties of close co-operation, while aiming to keep some basic degree of exchange with intermediary organisations such as political parties and interest groups to guarantee some basic information flow. In sum, the entire field is dominated by the development of important linkages which connect organisations across the public and policy domains.

Table 7.1: Inter-organisational Relationships of Co-Operation



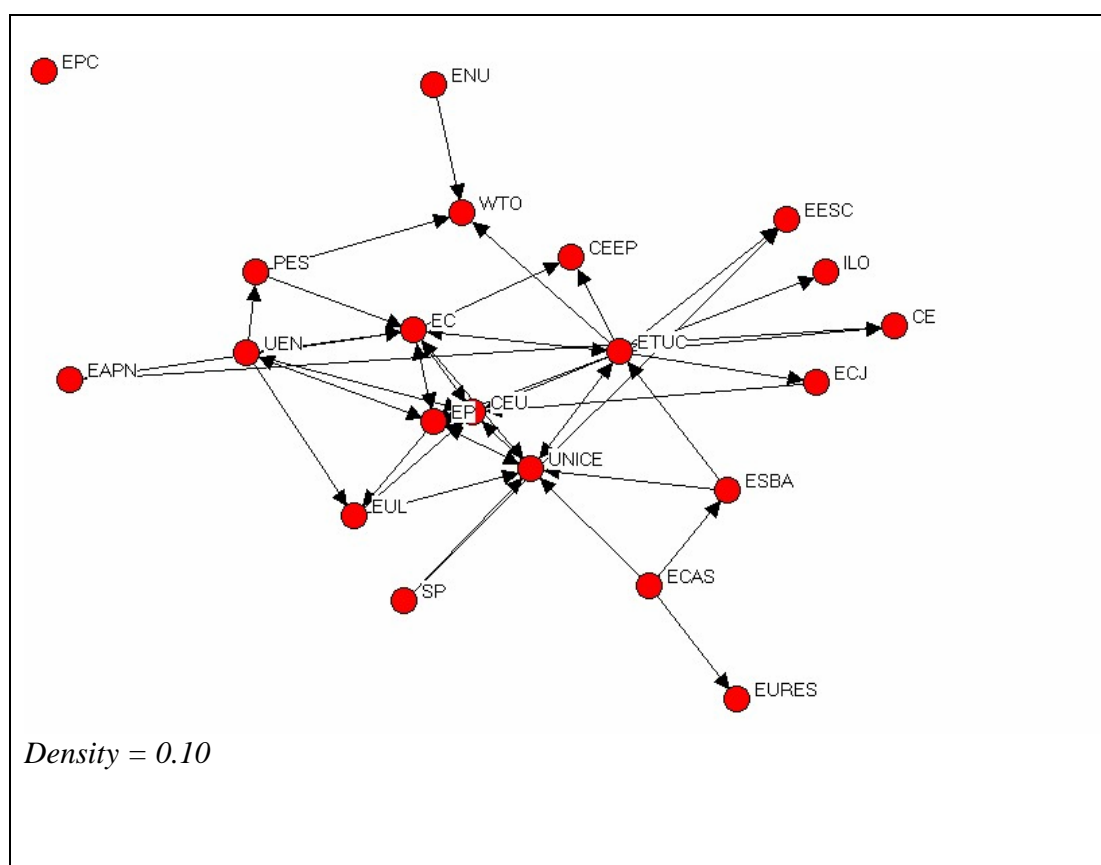
Further findings can be highlighted through examination with more sophisticated techniques of network analysis. For example, tables 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 focus on the specific analysis of cliques, that is, sub-groups within which all the components share mutual ties of co-operation. The data show a remarkable amount of co-operation between ETUC and the European Commission (which share reciprocal linkages within 16 cliques), and in particular, the configuration of two main networks. On the one hand, there is a subgroup based on the strong relationships between ETUC and Commission, which include the European Parliament, Social Platform and the European Anti-Poverty Network. On the other hand, it is possible to identify a second subgroup, within which the main employers' organisation (UNICE) is strongly linked to the Council of the European Union (CEU) and to the European Policy Centre (EPC).

Table 7.2: Cliques of Co-operation (minimum size = 3)

1:	EC EP EUL UEN ETUC SP EAPN
2:	EC EP EESC EUL ETUC SP EAPN
3:	EC EP EESC ETUC SP ECAS EAPN
4:	EC EP ETUC SP ECAS EPC
5:	CEU EC EP UEN ETUC
6:	CEU EC EP ILO ETUC
7:	CEU EC EP ETUC EPC
8:	EC WTO ETUC
9:	CEU EC UEN UNICE ETUC
10:	CEU EC ILO UNICE ETUC
11:	CEU EC UNICE CEEP ETUC
12:	CEU EC UNICE ETUC EPC
13:	EC EESC UNICE CEEP ETUC SP
14:	EC UNICE ETUC SP EPC
15:	EC UEN UNICE ETUC SP
16:	EC EESC EUL CEEP ETUC SP
17:	EP CE UEN ETUC SP EAPN
18:	EP CE ILO ETUC
19:	EP UEN ETUC EURES
20:	EP EUL UEN ETUC SP EAPN ENU
21:	EP ETUC SP ECAS EAPN ENU
22:	EC EP PES EUL UEN
23:	CEU EC EP PES UEN
24:	EC WTO PES
25:	EP EESC ESBA
26:	CEU EP ESBA

Table 7.3: Actor-by-Actor Clique Co-Membership Matrix

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21		CE	EC	EC	EP	CE	WT	IL	EE	PE	EU	UE	UN	CE	ES	ET	SP	EU	EC	EP	EA	
EN		---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
-																						
1	CEU	9	8	0	5	0	0	2	0	1	0	3	4	1	1	7	0	0	0	2	0	0
2	EC	8	19	0	9	0	2	2	4	3	4	6	7	3	0	16	8	0	2	4	3	0
3	ECJ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	EP	5	9	0	16	2	0	2	3	2	4	7	0	0	2	12	7	1	3	2	6	2
5	CE	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
6	WTO	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	ILO	2	2	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	EESC	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	1	2	1	4	4	0	1	0	2	0
9	PES	1	3	0	2	0	1	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	EUL	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	2	1	5	3	0	1	0	4	4	0	0	0	3	1
11	UEN	3	6	0	7	1	0	0	0	2	3	9	2	0	0	7	4	1	0	0	3	1
12	UNICE	4	7	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	7	2	0	7	3	0	0	2	0	0
13	CEEP	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	3	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0
14	ESBA	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	ETUC	7	16	0	12	2	1	3	4	0	4	7	7	3	0	21	11	1	3	4	6	2
16	SP	0	8	0	7	1	0	0	4	0	4	4	3	2	0	11	11	0	3	2	6	2
17	EURES	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
18	ECAS	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	1	2	1
19	EPC	2	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	2	0	1	4	0	0
20	EAPN	0	3	0	6	1	0	0	2	0	3	3	0	0	0	6	6	0	2	0	6	2
21	ENU	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	2	2



In addition, the analysis of cliques of disagreement seem to provide some valuable insights which open space for further research into the correlation between linkages of co-operation and disagreement. In particular, tables 8.2 and 8.3 and 8.4 indicate that relationships of disagreement are stronger between actors that do not share relevant ties of co-operation. Vice-versa, relationships of disagreement are weaker between actors who are linked by relationships of co-operation. Thus, ETUC and the Commission, which are linked by strong linkages of co-operation (as shown in table 7.4), occupy clearly two different subgroups in table 8.4. The same pattern of mutually exclusive co-operation and disagreement characterise the relationship between UNICE and the Council of European Union. This type of data seem to suggest that European actors in the unemployment field have forged a (sparse) web of relationships of disagreement which might still reflect ‘ideological’ and ‘functional’ cleavages dividing competing actors, rather than pragmatic inter-organisational dispute on specific issues.

Table 8.2: Cliques of Disagreement (minimum size = 3)

- 1: CEU EC EP UNICE ETUC
- 2: EC CEEP ETUC
- 3: CEU ECJ ETUC
- 4: UNICE ESBA ETUC
- 5: EC PES UEN
- 6: CEU EP EUL UNICE
- 7: CEU EP EUL UEN
- 8: CEU EC EP UEN
- 9: UNICE ESBA ECAS

Table 8.3: Actor-by-Actor Clique Co-Membership Matrix

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	2
		C	E	E	E	C	W	I	E	P	E	U	U	C	E	E	S	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	CEU	5	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2	EC	2	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3	ECJ	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4	EP	4	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
5	CE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
6	WTO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
7	ILO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
8	EESC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
9	PES	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
10	EUL	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
11	UEN	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
12	UNICE	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
13	CEEP	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
14	ESBA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
15	ETUC	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
16	SP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
17	EURES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
18	ECAS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
19	EPC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
20	EAPN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
21	ENU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Table 8.4: HIERARCHICAL CLUSTERING OF EQUIVALENCE MATRIX

		W	I	E		R	P	E		C	U	E	E	I	S	T	C	E	A	E				
		C	T	L	S	S	E	E	U	E	E	E	E	C	C	B	U	A	P	P	N			
		E	O	O	C	P	S	S	L	C	P	U	N	P	J	E	A	C	S	C	N	U		
Level		5	6	7	8	6	7	9	0	2	4	1	1	3	3	2	4	5	8	9	0	1		

About 38 per cent of the actors said that their involvement was either inadequate or none at all. The level of involvement was clearly the highest for policy actors at 57 per cent and for political parties, which indicated a 100 per cent involvement in the issue of job creation. Among the policy actors not involved enough or at all in the issue, EURES said that it was not in the business of creating jobs, since it only made jobs available to people. The Council of Europe emphasised that the member states, the European Commission and the OECD play a more important role in this area.

Only 20 per cent of non-governmental organisations said that they were involved a lot. The other 80 per cent said that they were involved, but not enough. The reasons ascribed to this varied from lack of resources for organisations like the European Network of the Unemployed (ENU) and the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS), to inadequate expertise for organisations like Social Platform. As regards actors representing the interest of employers and employees respectively, UNICE said that their involvement has been "A lot because job creation is about entrepreneurship and that is our business", while ETUC claimed that trade unionists as a group do not participate directly in negotiations.

On the issue of social benefits, the overall involvement across all actor categories seemed to be marginally higher than for job creation.

Table 10.1: Issue involvement – social benefits

Q: How involved has your organisation been in the issue of social benefits over the last five years?

	Frequency	Percent
a lot	8	38.1
somewhat (enough)	5	23.8
somewhat (but not enough)	6	28.6
not at all	1	4.8
missing	1	4.8
Total	21	100.0

Table 10.2: Issue involvement – social benefits

Orgtype	a lot	somewhat (enough)	somewhat (but not enough)	not at all	missing	
<i>Policy</i>	2	4	1	1	1	9
<i>NGO</i>	2		3			5
<i>Interest group</i>	2	1	1			4

<i>Party</i>	2		1			3
Total	8	5	6	1	1	21

Over 60 per cent of interviewees said that they were either involved a lot, or enough. These included EU institutions like the European Economic and Social Committee, European Council, European Court of Justice and European Parliament. Interestingly, the European Commission claimed that it was involved in the issue, but not enough; the reason given was that member states consider social benefits to be their own responsibility and thus the involvement of the Commission is limited to general orientation and does not cover specific details. EURES is the only organisations not involved at all. Its spokesperson stated that involvement is confined to making information about social benefits available to people.

As regards political parties, their involvement is not as high as in the case of job creation. While the European United Left (EUL) and the Union for Europe of the Nations (UEN) have indicated a high involvement, the Party of European Socialists (PES) said that their involvement is not enough as they lack the legal competencies to reform or change the welfare and benefits systems of member states. More than 50 per cent of non-governmental organisations said that they were not involved enough: the given reasons varied from lack of resources to lack of knowledge in the area. 50 per cent of interest groups said that they have been involved a lot, 25 percent felt they were involved enough, while 25 per cent of them admitted that their involvement was limited. In particular, the ETUC attributed this limited involvement to their primary role of fighting for workers' rights, which makes it difficult to negotiate with employers on issues like social benefits.

Broadly speaking, it can be said that about half of all actors interviewed said that they had been involved in the issues of job creation and social benefits, with the involvement in the latter being marginally higher. As expected, the involvement was the highest for policy actors - given their role in the policy domain - and for political parties - given their intermediary role between public and policy domains as well as the crucial position of the two issues in their agendas. The non-governmental organisations were the least involved - given their lack of resources - while interest groups were relatively more active.

Although only about 60 per cent of the actors indicated their active involvement in the issues, an examination of tables 11.1 and 11.2 in the following page reveals that when asked about participation in the development of policy options about job creation and social benefits, over 80 per cent of respondents gave a positive answer.

Table 11.1: Involvement in development of policy

Q: Was your organisation involved in the development of the policy options about job creation and/or social benefits?

	Frequency	Percent
yes	17	81.0
no	4	19.0
Total	21	100.0

Most of the policy actors indicated an involvement, with the exception of WTO and the European Council, which said that policy development was not their role. Surprisingly, most of the non-governmental organisations said that they had been involved in policy matters, despite the fact that a majority of them indicated low or no participation in the previous questions about general involvement.

Table 11.2: Involvement in development of policy

Orgtype	yes	no
<i>Policy</i>	7	2
<i>NGO</i>	4	1
<i>Interest group</i>	3	1
<i>Party</i>	3	
Total	17	4

There was more consistency in the case of interest groups and political parties, as 75 per cent of the interest groups and all the parties said that they were involved in the development of policy options, in line with their engagement with the two issues of job creation and social benefits. Most of the policy actors said that their involvement was in the way of advice, policy guidelines and recommendations. An exception was the European Court of Justice, which has contributed to the development of policy options by pushing the law forward. As regards non-governmental organisations, their involvement has been through giving suggestions, advices and expertise. The European Anti-Poverty Network said that it tries to influence policy options but it has been successful only in occasion of the revision of the European Employment Policy in 2002. Likewise, interest groups have made use of recommendations and advices for engaging within the policy arena.

To gain deeper insight, we took each issue separately and tried to determine whether actors use internal or external tactics to influence policy development. We therefore asked the respondents whether they have undertaken specific actions in the parliamentary and/or administrative arenas and/ or tried to mobilise the public in order to influence policy.

Job Creation

Table 12.1: Actions in the parliamentary/ administrative arenas

Q: Did your organisation undertake specific actions in the parliamentary or administrative arenas on the issue of job creation?

	Frequency	Percent
yes	11	52.4
no	10	47.6
Total	21	100.0

Table 12.2: Actions in the parliamentary/ administrative arenas

Orgtype	Yes	No
<i>Policy</i>	4	5
<i>NGO</i>	2	3
<i>Interest group</i>	2	2
<i>Party</i>	3	
Total	11	10

On the issue of job creation just over half the respondents said that they have undertaken actions in the parliamentary/ administrative arenas to influence policy development. All the political parties gave an affirmative answer, in contrast with only ca. 50 per cent of the interviewees in each of the other categories. The key actions mentioned by the EU institutions included amendments of legislations, policy exchange and advice, as well as technical assistance. Non-governmental organisations and interest groups cited reports and proposals to Parliament and contributions to reviews and proposals for revisions of programmes and guidelines, while the political parties mainly referred to policy papers and reports. However, when asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions, only a few interviewees answered the question. While some did not want to comment, others said they were unable to assess the effectiveness of their actions.

Table 13: Effectiveness of parliamentary and administrative actions on job creation

Q: How would you rate the effectiveness of your parliamentary and administrative actions on job creation?

Orgtype	rather ineffective	rather effective	very effective
<i>Policy</i>		3	
<i>NGO</i>		1	1
<i>Interest group</i>	1		
<i>Party</i>		3	
Total	1	7	1

In the case of job creation, eight out of the nine interviewees who responded felt that their actions had been effective. These included the three political parties and three policy actors, namely, the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament. The Commission felt that its reform of the European strategy adopted in 2003 has changed things a lot. Among the NGOs and interest groups there was the European Anti-Poverty Network and European Policy Centre. European Small Business Alliance claimed that it had been rather ineffective because “MEPs hear [small businesses], but do not listen.”

Table 14.1: Mobilised/ informed the public on job creation

Q: Did your organisation undertake specific actions for informing or mobilizing the public on this issue?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	66.7
No	7	33.3
Total	21	100.0

Table 14.2: Mobilised/ informed the public on job creation

Orgtype	Yes	No
<i>Policy</i>	6	3
<i>NGO</i>	2	3
<i>Interest group</i>	3	1
<i>Party</i>	3	
Total	14	7

The respondents were also asked whether they had informed or mobilised the public on the issue of job creation. Table 14.2 in the previous page shows that ca. 66 per cent of respondents answered in the affirmative. This included all the political parties, 65 per cent of the policy actors, 75 per cent of the interest groups, but only 40 per cent of the NGOs. Actions in this field primarily consisted of media work including use of websites and distribution of promotional material like mailers and leaflets.

Table 15: Effectiveness of informing and mobilizing the public on job creation

Q: How would you rate the effectiveness of your actions of informing and mobilizing the public on job creation?

<i>Orgtype</i>	ineffective	rather ineffective	rather effective	very effective
<i>Policy</i>			4	1
<i>NGO</i>			2	
<i>Interest group</i>	1		1	
<i>Party</i>		1	1	
Total	1	1	8	1

On the effectiveness of their actions, table 15 shows that many respondents felt that they had been effective in achieving their objectives. The European Policy Centre for instance felt that its reports are valued and looked at and their effectiveness is evident from the massive turnout at their events in Brussels. The European Commission felt that its media work through press conferences, press releases and interviews to the media was effective because of both the coverage in newspapers and the popularity of the EURES website.

On the whole, 11 out of 14 respondents felt that their actions in trying to influence policy on job creation, whether through actions in the parliamentary/ administrative arenas or by mobilising the public had been effective in achieving their objective.

Social Benefits

Tables 16.1 and 16.2 in the following page show that organizations' involvement in social benefits was greater than in job creation, especially for NGOs. As regards the question of actions in parliamentary or administrative arenas, 80 per cent of the NGOs said that they had tried to influence policy development through reports and lobbying in parliament. Only slightly over fifty per cent of the policy actors said that they had been involved with this issue in the parliamentary/ administrative arenas. The main actions included launching a process of coordination for guidelines on issues like work pay, active ageing and social protection, recommendations to Parliament and working with ministries and social partners on improving social welfare schemes. About 75 per cent of the interest groups said they had been active in the issue, mainly through lobbying and discussions with MEPs. In the case of political parties, the involvement was slightly lower than for job creation, with lobbying in Parliament and amendments to legislations as the main actions.

Table 16.1: Actions in the parliamentary/ administrative arenas

Q: Did your organisation undertake specific actions in the parliamentary or administrative arenas on the issue of social benefits?

	Frequency	Percent
yes	14	66.7
no	7	33.3
Total	21	100.0

Table 16.2: Actions in the parliamentary/ administrative arenas

Orgtype	Yes	No
<i>Policy</i>	5	4
<i>NGO</i>	4	1
<i>Interest group</i>	3	1
<i>Party</i>	2	1
Total	14	7

Table 17 on the following page shows that (as in the case of job creation) more than 50 per cent of the respondents did not choose to answer the question on the effectiveness of their actions. Eight out of ten respondents said that they consider their actions in the parliamentary/ administrative arenas to be rather effective. Most of the policy actors did not answer the question except for the European Economic and Social Committee and the Council of Europe, which said that its actions had been rather ineffective. The Commission felt that it was too early to comment. “On social protection the reason is that it’s not our own business. We have not followed it so closely.” Among the non-governmental actors, Social Platform said that its contribution to communication of the Commission on Making Work Pay by presenting a paper to MEPs had been quite effective. The European Policy Centre said that they have contributed to obtaining a better mutual understanding between players at the government level, and at the level of social partners and civil society.

Table 17: Effectiveness of parliamentary and administrative actions on social benefits

Q: How would you rate the effectiveness of your parliamentary and administrative actions on social benefits?

Orgtype	rather ineffective	rather effective
<i>Policy</i>	1	2
<i>NGO</i>		4
<i>Interest group</i>	1	
<i>Party</i>		2
Total	2	8

Table 18.1: Informing/ mobilizing the public on social benefits

Q: Did your organisation undertake specific actions for informing or mobilizing the public on this issue?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	57.1
No	9	42.9
Total	21	100.0

Table 18.2: Informing/ mobilizing the public on social benefits

Orgtype	Yes	No
<i>Policy</i>	5	4
<i>NGO</i>	4	1
<i>Interest group</i>	1	3
<i>Party</i>	2	1
	12	9

On mobilising/ informing the public on the issue of social benefits, once again the involvement was high among the NGOs with 80 per cent of them indicating their involvement through the media (especially the internet), publishing reports and organising conferences. Among the interest groups the participation was very low. UNICE, for example said that it directed its actions towards working with policy makers and the ETUC said that as a trade union its job was to protect the worker and it did not focus on areas like social benefits. The main forms of action consisted of press and media work, website and conferences. Among policy actors, just over half said that they tried to mobilise the public on the issue, mainly through the media. The political parties also used the same means.

Table 19: Effectiveness of informing and mobilizing the public on social benefits

Q: How would you rate the effectiveness of your actions of informing and mobilizing the public on social benefits?

Orgtype	rather ineffective	rather effective	very effective
<i>Policy</i>		1	2
<i>NGO</i>	1	3	
<i>Interest group</i>		1	
<i>Party</i>	1	1	
Total	2	6	2

On the effectiveness of their actions, eight out of ten respondents felt that they had been effective. Among the policy actors, EURES and the European Parliament felt that they had been very effective. For this question, most of the organisations chose not to comment with details.

In sum, of the 12 respondents who answered the question on effectiveness of their action on social benefits - whether in the parliamentary/ administrative arenas or by mobilising the public - eight felt that they had been effective and only four considered their actions to be rather ineffective. It is also clear that NGOs seem to be playing an important role in the issue of social benefit, especially when compared to the issue of job creation.

Finally, it is crucial to analyse questions asking the respondents to comment on their general perception of the two issues, and in particular, whether they think that the general public finds the issues of job creation and social benefits important or unimportant. As tables 20.1 and 20.2 in the following page demonstrate, nearly all the respondents felt that the general public finds the issue of job creation important. In the case of social benefits (tables 21.1 and 21.2), the 'verdict' on the importance of this issue was unanimous.

Table 20.1: Issue of job creation

Q: Do you think the public finds the issue of job creation very important, rather important, rather unimportant, very unimportant?

	Frequency	Percent
very important	14	73.7
rather important	4	21.1
rather unimportant	1	5.3
Total	19	100.0

Table 20.2: Issue of Job Creation

Orgtype	very important	rather important	rather unimportant	
<i>Policy</i>	8		1	9
<i>NGO</i>	3	2		5
<i>Interest group</i>	2	2		4
<i>Party</i>	3			3

Table 21.1: Issue of Social Benefits

Q: Do you think the public finds the issue of social benefits creation very important, rather important, rather unimportant, very unimportant?

	Frequency	Percent
very important	13	68.4
rather important	6	31.6
Total	19	100.0

Table 21.2: Issue of Social Benefits

Orgtype	very important	rather important	
Policy	6	3	9
NGO	4	1	5
Interest group	3	1	4
Party	1	2	3

5.7 *The Role of the European Union*

Impact of the EU on unemployment policy

In this section we examine the respondents' comments on the role and impact of the European Union on unemployment policy in general, and on the issues of job creation and social benefits in particular. More than half the respondents felt that the EU has had a positive impact on unemployment policy in member states. Among the other half only a couple of organisations criticised the EU, while many actors gave a neutral assessment of the EU's role. The European Employment Strategy, the Lisbon Strategy, the European Social Fund and the Open Method of Coordination were the most frequently mentioned aspects of the EU's impact.

As expected, the EU institutions considered the overall impact of the EU to be positive, although there were differences of opinion on the specific issues of job creation and social benefits. For example, the European Court of Justice considered the overall impact of the EU to be positive, but it expressed its concern about job creation schemes claiming that these schemes push trained and experienced people away. The European Commission was of the view that while the impact of EU job creation policies has been positive, it has also been uneven, with some member states benefiting more than others. While applauding the EU for an overall positive impact through the Open Method of Coordination, the European Council added that in the specific areas of job creation and social benefits, the EU institutions need to have more direct means of implementation at their disposal in order to be more successful.

Among the NGOs and interest groups, the opinions were mostly neutral, lined with positive appreciation in some cases. Organisations which felt that the impact of the EU has been positive pointed out achievements like increased growth that has created employment, the role of structural, regional and social funds, and the Common Agricultural Programme in job creation, especially in disadvantaged and troubled regions, as well as laying down minimum standards which encourage all member states to enhance welfare intervention. Yet, there were sceptics like the ETUC and ESBA which felt that while the EU had adopted various policies in this area, it is difficult to assess their achievements. Social Platform was of the view that the EU has not been particularly influential with regard to unemployment policy. “The Lisbon objective really tries to have an effect on job creation because they want the EU to become the most advanced region in research, innovative products etc but they don’t have the means for that. So they want to but they haven’t had an impact.”

The political parties were fairly critical of the EU’s role in this area. One group felt that economic and fiscal policies are still considered to be a matter of the member states and interference by Brussels is not welcomed, especially by national conservative governments. Another spokesperson pointed out that the positive impact on employment was a result of the EU’s economic policies, not its employment guidelines and that there is a need for specific policies to deal with unemployment.

On the whole, however, the feeling towards the role of the EU with regard to a European unemployment policy has been positive and it appears that even the sceptics feel that the EU can play a positive and important role in Europe.

EU employment policy vs. national employment policy

In addition to seeking views on the overall impact of the EU, we also asked respondents to compare unemployment policy at the EU level with the national level. In this section we examine whether actors in the EU consider policy at the EU level more or less important than the national level and understand how they perceive the relationship between the two. The data to discuss are shown in tables 22.1 and 22.2.

Table 22.1: EU vs. national employment policy

Q: Thinking about the role of the strategies for dealing with unemployment in Europe for your organisation relative to unemployment policy at the national level: is its role becoming increasingly important compared to the national level, less important compared to the national level, or does it not change at all?

	Frequenc y	Percent
increasing ly important	15	71.4
unchangi ng	4	19.0
less important	1	4.8
missing	1	4.8
Total	21	100.0

Table 22.2: EU vs. national employment policy

Orgtype	increasingly important	unchanging	less important	missing	
<i>Policy</i>	7	1		1	9
<i>NGO</i>	3	1	1		5
<i>Interest group</i>	2	2			4
<i>Party</i>	3				3

It is noticeable that over 70 per cent of respondents felt that the role of unemployment policy at the EU level was increasingly important compared to policies at the national level. This view was clearly the strongest amongst policy actors and political parties. According to the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), competence is still with the national governments, but convergence is coming about through coordination of policies and implementation of same social and market rules. EURES echoes this view stating that the EU has a central role in governing the way in which employment policies are delivered in member states. According to EUL, increasing importance of the EU is a result of economic integration. PES feels that states are particularly dependent on each other.

Opinions were more varied among non-governmental organisations and interest groups, since 60 per cent of NGOs and 50 per cent of interest groups said that the role of the EU is becoming increasingly important. The European Network of the Unemployed (ENU), for instance, was of the view that in the long run the European Employment Strategy, along with the Open Method of Coordination and the Commission recommendations, will play an important role in making nations bring about change for the better. By contrast, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) felt that the role of the EU is less important than the national level as national governments only agree on a common EU policy on matters that have already been agreed upon at the national level. Similarly, ETUC and ESBA were fairly sceptical about the importance of the EU. In particular, ETUC felt that the European strategy is important for better research, technology and education, while it is difficult to gauge the relative importance of the EU as national policies are so different across Europe.

However, as it has already been emphasised, a large majority of respondents feel that the EU is playing an increasingly important role in unemployment policy. This reiterates the results of the previous section on the positive view on the role of the EU.

The future

Looking ahead at the future, we asked interviewees to comment on the role of the EU in unemployment policy in the years to come. Most of the respondents felt that the EU will have an increasing impact on unemployment policy in the future. While only a few actors provided details comments on the two specific issues of job creation and social benefits, the general view was that the EU will become more important and that there will be increasing cooperation between member states. As a spokesperson from the European Council put it: "I can't see us even going back to a situation with no European employment policy. Problems may change but there will always be a coordinated approach." In the words of the

EAPN representative: “There is no specific EU policy on job creation. On general unemployment policy, the European employment policy will speed up the liberal structural reforms that have been chosen anyway by the national governments and perhaps will spread knowledge and increase lifelong learning.” The Lisbon agenda was specifically discussed by some of the respondents. In particular, UNICE and the Union for Europe of the Nations (UEN) stated that the objectives of the Lisbon agenda will be increasingly important in the future.

Relevant data are contained in tables 23.1 and 23.2. Table 23.1 shows that over 75 per cent of respondents were actually in favour of an increase in European influence in unemployment policy in Europe. This datum included most of the NGOs, about 60 per cent of the policy actors and 75 per cent of the interest groups (table 23.2). As regards political parties, they all were in favour of an increase in European influence.

Table 23.1: Increase in European Influence

Q: Is your organisation generally in favour of an increase in European influence in strategies for dealing with unemployment in Europe or is it against it?

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly in favor	9	42.9
Rather in favor	7	33.3
Rather against	1	4.8
Don't have a position	3	14.3

Table 23.2: Increase in European Influence, by actor type

Orgtype	Strongly in favor	Rather in favor	Rather against	Don't have a position	
<i>Policy</i>	3	3		2	8
<i>NGO</i>	3	1		1	5
<i>Interest group</i>	1	2	1		4
<i>Party</i>	2	1			3

It is also crucial to emphasise that this was one of the few questions that caused evident hesitation amongst respondents. Indeed, three policy actors (namely, the European Commission, European Parliament, and WTO) and a non-governmental organisation (namely, Social Platform) did not want to take a position at all. For example, the Commission said that the purpose of its intervention was limited to introduce policies for job creation, increase in productivity and social cohesion. “If this means more influence, I

don't know." Among the supporters of a stronger European influence, UNICE felt that the EU level can help to improve the employment situation by facilitating an informed debate, as well as exchange of experiences on solutions found in different member states. The European Council was in favour of the present approach and coordination, but did not foresee member states allowing a common employment policy backed by hard law. ESBA was the only actor explicitly against an increase in EU influence. This organisation emphasised that the EU is plagued by too much bureaucracy and needs further deregulation.

In the main, however, the role of the EU emerges in a positive light. A majority of actors within both the public and policy domains are in favour of an increase in the influence of the European Union on unemployment policy. They also believe that the EU will continue to make contributions to job creation and social benefits.

6. Appendix - list of organisations interviewed and abbreviations

1	Council of the European Union (CEU)
2	European commission: DG for Employment and Social Affairs (EC)
3	European Court of Justice (ECJ)
4	European Parliament – Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EP)
5	Council of Europe (CE)
6	World Trade Organisation (WTO)
7	International Labour Organization (ILO)
8	European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
9	The European Job Mobility Portal (EURES)
10	Party of European Socialists (PES)
11	European United Left/Nordic Green Left (EUL)
12	Union for Europe of the Nations (UEN)
13	Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE)
14	European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and of Enterprises of General Economic Interest (CEEP)
15	European Small Business Alliance (ESBA)
16	European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
17	Social Platform – Platform of European Social NGOs (SP)
18	European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)
19	European Policy Centre (EPC)
20	European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)
21	European Network of the Unemployed (ENU)

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