

# Peer Review Kosovo Report

The integrated policy approach applied for vulnerable groups of society with the Active Inclusion Integration Platform (AIIP) of the Republic of Kosovo

**Kosovo, 21-22 June 2022 (Online)**

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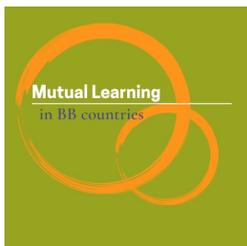


The Peer Review Kosovo Report on “The integrated policy approach applied for vulnerable groups of society with the Active Inclusion Integration Platform (AIIP) of the Republic of Kosovo” was drafted based on the host and peer country information provided and discussions held during the peer review which took place 21-22 June 2022 (online). The report was developed within the project “Bridge Building Peer Reviews and Trainings - Mutual Learning Activities in BB countries” (06/2021 – 11/2022; see: <https://www.euro.centre.org/projects/detail/4098>).

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## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	3
2	Background and purpose .....	5
3	Host country practice.....	6
4	The Peer Review: Issues discussed .....	9
4.1	Summary of peer reflections on integrated approaches in case management ..	9
4.2	Challenges faced by participating countries .....	10
5	Key messages .....	13
6	Lessons learnt .....	15
7	Conclusions .....	16
	ANNEX – Details on the impact of the integrated system between EAs and the CSW in Kosovo.....	17

# 1 Introduction

The Bridge Building (BB) Peer Review hosted by the Republic of Kosovo was the first peer review in a series of six mutual learning events (four peer reviews and two trainings) that are offered to BB countries of the European Centre between December 2021 and March 2023.<sup>1</sup> These peer reviews, organised and facilitated by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (European Centre), are targeting countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions and follow the methodology applied and widely used within the European Union Member States in employment, social and inclusion policies. By implementing mutual learning activities in the BB countries, the European Centre provides an answer to countries' needs related to better coping with the health and social consequences of COVID-19 and to fighting poverty, especially for vulnerable groups.

Peer reviews promote mutual exchange of experience and knowledge transfer about the situation on a selected topic in the host country, which shares details about their approach and system in place and in the respective peer countries, which provide reflection. The peer review on “The integrated policy approach applied for vulnerable groups of society with the Active Inclusion Integration Platform (AIIP) of the Republic of Kosovo” took place online on 21-22 June 2022 and was hosted by the Ministry of Finance, Labour, and Transfers of the Republic of Kosovo. The following countries were acting as peer countries: Armenia, Albania, Moldova and North Macedonia. There were in total 94 registered participants for the two-days event, with the largest delegation coming from Kosovo. Delegations consisted of representatives of the relevant Ministries, Public Employment Services, as well as Centres for Social Work, which shared their experiences about ongoing reforms linked to integrated case management to support vulnerable groups. Further participants included stakeholders from international organisations such as UNDP and ILO as well as stakeholders from Montenegro. Day 1 of the peer review included the following agenda items:

- Opening address by the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers of the Republic of Kosovo and the European Centre, followed by a Tour de Table to introduce all delegations;
- Two presentations by the host country on the rationale and status quo of the Active Inclusion Integration Platform (AIIP) and on national policy level processes that link with the AIIP such as the Youth Guarantee;

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<sup>1</sup> The BB countries are: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine. More information about the European Centre's Bridge Building activities:

<https://www.euro.centre.org/domains/bridging-building>

- A keynote by a representative of UNDP on the history of integrated case management in the Western Balkans, building on the experiences of the [“Promoting Inclusive Labour Market Solutions in the Western Balkans”](#) project (ILMS project);
- Peer reflections from Albania, Armenia, Moldova, and North Macedonia; and
- Working groups to exchange on current systems and practices in the countries.

Day 2 of the peer review continued with:

- A second working group session to exchange on learnings at the policy level;
- A keynote from a representative of the Lithuanian Public Employment Service on defining tracking systems and definitions of sustainable employment in Lithuania, presented as a good practice from the EU;
- A roundtable discussion on summarizing the different take aways by participating countries and key messages of the peer review; and
- A closing session by the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers of the Republic of Kosovo and the European Centre.

The peer review facilitated exchange among participating countries and was actively seeking answers for the following guiding questions:

- What challenges and policy solutions of integrated approaches to employment and social services exist?
- What promising practices of integrated approaches to employment and social services are applied?
- What role does partnership play at all governance levels (from the municipal to the central level)?

The peer review contributed to a fruitful and constructive discussion about common challenges and promising policy solutions. 73% of the respondents who filled out the evaluation survey had an excellent overall impression of the peer review and over 90% considered that the peer review increased their knowledge about the topic and helped them to develop new policy perspectives and useful approaches for their work.

The report in hand gathers important insights gained during the peer review and aims at further sharing these insights and lessons learnt of the participating delegations of

the BB countries to a wider audience. It is structured as follows: After the introduction, an overview on the background and the purpose of the peer review is provided. The host country example (the Active Inclusion Integration Platform/ AIIP) is presented in chapter 3. This is followed by important issues discussed during the event including a summary of peer reflections as well as challenges faced by peer countries. Chapter 5 describes the key messages of the peer review while chapter 6 summarizes the lessons shared and learnt by participants. The report closes with the conclusions (chapter 7).

## 2 Background and purpose

This peer review discussed Kosovo's approach towards integrated case management for vulnerable groups of society at the interface of labour market and social policy. The aim was to better understand the integrated policy approach applied with the Active Inclusion Integration Platform (AIIP) of the Republic of Kosovo and share practical information about the integration between the information systems of the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers (MFLT) and the Employment Agency (EA). During the peer review, other countries had the opportunity to present their experience, share good practices and lessons learned, be informed on EU good practices, and jointly formulate policy solutions embedded in partnership structures at all governance levels (from the municipal to the central level) by ensuring eye-level peer learning among public authorities of the participating countries.

Over the past decade, the MFLT has succeeded in establishing a basic legislative and policy framework in the field of social policy, labour and employment and is currently working to increase its human capacity and internal restructuring in order to provide the best services to citizens. This restructuring became necessary especially after the merger of two ministries, Finance and Labour, into one ministry.

Kosovo's labour market suffers from low employment rates (25.4%) and low activity rates (35.9%), as well as high unemployment rates (29.2%) and lengthy spells of unemployment. High levels of youth (ages 15-24) unemployment (54.9%), low labour force participation rates (especially among women and vulnerable groups) and extensive informality and de-skilling of labour force due to long periods without formal employment, are prevailing challenges for Kosovo. In Kosovo, only one-fifth of the working age women have a job or are looking for one, and almost a third of young people are "NEET" (Not in Education, Employment or Training). The services offered by the Public Employment Service during the 2021 reached over 9,000

jobseekers (6,000 were offered job mediation and active labour market measures and over 3,000 vocational training).<sup>2</sup>

To support the MFLT and the EA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has introduced programmes, systems, and tools for tailored and responsive services to jobseekers that provide them with the opportunity to gain new skills, find employment or launch small businesses. UNDP also supports research to better inform the design of policies and programmes of public institutions, as well as to invest in outreach to provide information about the available services. The aim is to help people move from economic inactivity to being active jobseekers.

### 3 Host country practice

The institutions in charge of employment and social protection within the MFLT are key players when it comes to reforming current regulations, administrative instructions, and policy rules. In this context, there is a need to build capacity to use an integrated approach to employment and social services. The integrated policy approach applied for vulnerable groups of society with the AIIP of the Republic of Kosovo aims at engaging the beneficiaries from the second category of the social assistance scheme in employment. This way, the employment offices treat these individuals with full responsibility.

The MFLT has the overall responsibility for monitoring labour market developments, developing and implementing employment and labour market policies, social protection, pensions, and industrial relations. The MFLT is also responsible for drafting and adopting legal acts concerning employment and social policies. The EA is an independent body under the roof of the MFLT and has taken over the operational tasks related to employment policy. The EA is also responsible for implementing some important programmes, such as the Youth Guarantee Scheme, which is a priority programme in the Government agenda.

The policy response to complex labour market challenges in Kosovo focuses on the active inclusion of those who are excluded or marginally attached to formal labour markets and served by both the EA and the Centres for Social Work (CSW). The concept of inclusive employment tackles employment barriers (educational attainment, job-specific and behaviour skills), participation constraints (care-taking duties, discouragement, physical distance from labour markets), and insufficient information or incentives faced by individuals in Kosovo's labour market. It

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<sup>2</sup> Employment and Vocational Training, annual report 2021.EARK

contributes to the UN Agenda 2030 through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 10 and, therefore, entails the following:

- personalized support throughout welfare-to-work transition,
- access to quality services such as housing, training, health, and care-service, and
- subsistence support (monetary and non-monetary social benefits).

The aim of the current reform process is to reduce the number of families who are dependent on the social assistance scheme and to empower them through employment. Through the new administrative instruction, the idea is to compare data on the income of each family and other information for each applicant, before starting to make the assessment of the family and complete the file. The comparison of data from EA and CSW will mean that unemployment certificates for applicants who reject the offered job will not be issued. The process, however, encountered difficulties due to many reasons. One of the reasons is that the administrative instruction, which excludes families refusing to accept jobs offered by the EA within the period, was not fully implemented. However, there are also legal shortcomings in terms of the deadline that will be addressed soon. With the new changes, the deadlines and procedures will be determined correctly by analysing all legal gaps. The CSW will see what kind of job was offered to the beneficiary and what was the reason for rejection. If there is no strong reason, the CSW will take other measures to exclude these beneficiaries from receiving the payment from the Social Assistance System (SAS) based on law and administrative instruction.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic had a direct impact on the full implementation of the AIP, due to the restriction of field visits, field assessment of SAS beneficiaries, restriction of communication with companies, hesitation of companies to hire new workers, lack of interest of SAS beneficiaries in the work position offered by the agency, etc. Some restrictions such as limited family visits from government to SAS families are still valid mid-2022.

The following activities still need to be completed:

- Finalizing administrative instructions during this year in order to complete the legal infrastructure for full implementation;
- Creating a draft workbook with annexed forms for the proxy means test (PMT) and means test (MT), which will be tested in the field;
- A continued training of all CSW and EA users;
- Restructuring of the EA;
- Redesigning Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) measures and digitalizing processes within the Agency;

- Creating the necessary resources for the EA to be able to coordinate and implement the Youth Guarantee Scheme.

There have been changes in the system through data completion, data reading, and spreadsheet. However, the employment and participation in ALMP measures of SAS beneficiaries is not as good as it was expected initially. There is a small number of people who received a job, through EA and the above-mentioned barriers had an impact to achieve the initially expected results.

Despite efforts and various offers from the private sector, it is noticed that SAS beneficiaries are still not ready to work, for various reasons, such as duration of work, job security, aggravated health condition of family members, lack of adequate professional preparation for the respective job, lack of interest to attend courses and trainings by Vocational Training Centres, dependence of living on SAS and using of free public services utilities, etc.

The main challenge that remains is the lack of human resources within public employment service and social services to provide integrated services through extensive experience for the management of each case individually. Inclusion in skills development and employment opportunities would require:

- Increasing human resources capacities, preparation of current staff in both institutions (EAs and Social Services) for communication and counselling;
- Implementation of applicable legislation and development of procedures and standards; and
- Creation of guidelines for active inclusion and case management of social assistance beneficiaries in ALMP measures toward sustainable employment.

Furthermore, it is required to develop specific programmes, which will enable provision of services and full implementation of AIP platform.

## 4 The Peer Review: Issues discussed

The integrated approaches presented, shared, and applied in the countries included the automatic data exchange between Public Employment Service (PES) and CSW in *Montenegro*, the “real type exchange” practiced between PES/CSW in *North Macedonia*, model partnership agreement between PES/CSW (jointly implemented activation plan) in *Montenegro*, the *Albanian* “Coaching model”, which is based on social service cooperation with the Ministry and PES as drivers, and the *Armenian* integrated social services approach. Throughout the peer review participating countries shared information about their existing systems and reforms, including challenges and solutions they are trying to implement to improve the situation.

### 4.1 Summary of peer reflections on integrated approaches in case management

**Albania** has a broad range of social protection schemes for vulnerable groups (including unemployment benefit, cash assistance for poor families, active labour market measures, etc.) and is taking an integrated approach to enhance the social reintegration of beneficiaries of social assistance. The Joint Order of the Minister of Health and Social Protection and the Minister of Finance and Economy outlines a referral mechanism for the employment and social integration of people at working age with identified processes, clear roles and responsibilities of the actors involved in the process. The electronic register of social assistance and employment have been improved to provide more detailed information on the profile of each individual and reconcile data between the two registers. 12 Regional Working Groups are established composed of representatives of Employment Offices, State Social Services and Local Government to facilitate the process.

**Armenia** has been implementing a complex reform for the last 10 years to integrate social services (social assistance, employment services, pensions and benefits, and medical-social expertise in the disability sector).<sup>3</sup> As part of the reform, the structural and functional integration of the state social services, particularly social assistance and employment services already took place with the creation of 49 territorial

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<sup>3</sup> The International Labour Organization together with the European Centre have been implementing the project Improving coordination of social protection and employment service delivery in Armenia and Tajikistan (<https://www.euro.centre.org/projects/detail/4261>)

Integrated Social Support Services Centres. *Armenia* is now trying to set up an employment and social assistance scheme to stimulate welfare recipients to enter the job market without losing their benefits.

**Moldova** also makes steps to implement an enhanced integrated approach between the employment and social services. Their social assistance programme (Ajutor Social) consists of a Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) and a seasonal heating allowance with mechanisms in place to empower and activate beneficiaries. In 2022, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Moldova is working on a reform to strengthen the social assistance programme, with special regard to targeting better families with children and including day labourers in the agriculture sector as potential beneficiaries.

**North Macedonia** has established active labour market policies for the unemployed and jobseekers (such as profiling, job search assistance, skill trainings, subsidized employment, self-employment programmes, etc.), but the degree to which these policies target people in vulnerable situations is still limited. Therefore, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in coordination with other relevant institutions is constantly making additional efforts to design new instruments, tools and approaches for better targeting. As part of the 2019 reform, activation strategies were introduced for social assistance beneficiaries, to be delivered jointly by the Social Work Centres (SWC) and the ESA's Employment Service Centres (ESC). It brings together employment services and social care services through established pathways for activation of the social welfare beneficiaries, regulated with the rulebook for cooperation and the development of Individual Activation Plans, referring to both institutions.

## 4.2 Challenges faced by participating countries

Regarding challenges the countries face in implementing the integrated approaches, the participants informed about the need for a coherent policy framework. Like *Kosovo*, *North Macedonia* applies different laws in implementing integrated approaches. It was discussed for *Kosovo* whether one law would ease cooperation. In *North Macedonia*, social service is regulated in a law (individuals and institutional) at local level, which, however, does not include employment service (and the hard-to-employ people). Also, the employment services are supported by law including mentoring support, etc. *North Macedonia*, however, informed on their single registry point under one law. Integrated approaches applied in *North Macedonia* in addition go far beyond the testing phase. Hence, system solutions are required which is a challenge ahead in the country. The lack of legal and normative documents to support cooperation of state and non-state social welfare agencies, local authorities and private sector players, especially in promotion of labour market was also highlighted by *Armenia* as a challenge.

Other challenges faced include the lack of active participation of local governments in the implementation of the reforms, as well as scarce civil society involvement. The discussion dealt with the question whether subcontracting or “real” partnership is to be favoured. At present, there is a lack of staff in *Kosovo* for the provision of employment services and social services, especially considering the increased workload of counsellors who need to treat each case individually. Finding qualified and committed workforce can be a barrier before the country can finalise the social assistance reform.

Additional challenges include the motivation to work if social benefits are provided (*Kosovo*). As a potential solution, the increase of information was envisaged. *Armenia* also mentioned the lack of analytical data on welfare beneficiary behaviour that can help to design tailored welfare and employment programmes. They also lack IT solutions for data integration and integrated case management. Moreover, the possibility of a client to refuse offers (up to 3 times) within a certain timeframe was discussed: *North Macedonia* referred to the necessity of a protocol for PES/CSW for the activation process. More capacity building and trainings for service delivery model on integrated case management systems would be needed in *Kosovo*.

An important issue discussed in length during the peer review was how partnership between employment and social policy agents can be built and/or fostered in the participating countries:

- *Montenegrin* experts informed on the strong will for cooperation from both sides, the awareness about the importance of that cooperation, and adopted procedures of cooperation which are really used at work (and hence not exist only on paper). Improved work organisation in the social and employment institutions is regarded as a key to have enough time to deal with common issues. Strong support is needed from the state, regular meetings are envisaged and capacities still need to be raised for CSW.
- In *North Macedonia*, an electronic data exchange is established enabling the exchange of information in real time. Moreover, regular meetings of case managers from both institutions are practiced for coordination of work and periodical trainings for capacity building are implemented. Activities are also monitored on a regular basis.
- In *Kosovo*, there exists a law for the provision of employment services for unemployed jobseekers and employers and by-laws for the follow-up of procedures for the implementation of mediation in active labour market measures. Moreover, the whole process is monitored so that good practices for positive change can be gathered.

The tools jointly used by the different stakeholders encompass the Individual Action plans between PES/CSW in *Montenegro* and the Action plans for hard to employ people between PES/CSW in *North Macedonia*. Also, it is worth mentioning that there are standard operating procedures (SOPs) for integrated case management in *Armenia* to enhance cooperation between employment service workers and local

support networks (e.g. NGOs) and local governments. The (additional) tools and measures that should be implemented to enable for advanced integrated policy systems comprise the following:

- In *North Macedonia* training and checklists for social workers and improvements of the by-laws regulating procedures for cooperation and data exchange would assist implementation of integrated approaches. Moreover, regular supervision of all activities and procedures as well as supervision on the case managers' scope of work (from both institutions) would be supportive.
- Also in *North Macedonia*, finally, options for statistical profiling should be checked. The Lithuanian expert informed on their experiences with their recently implemented activity in this regard and stressed the need that statistical profiling should only be used as a tool for specialists to check job possibilities since PC's should not decide on the social life of people. This is also confirmed in a recent study on risk profiling conducted by the European Centre.<sup>4</sup>
- In *Kosovo*, there is the need for the integration of labour inspections into the work. Only 40 Labour Inspectors are working in the entire country, and thus, their capacities also need to be strengthened. Moreover, job professions need to be updated (including the adaptation of curricula).

Further actions that are regarded as essential by participants to achieve integrated policy approaches in the countries include the development of additional ALMP measures such as social entrepreneurship programmes in *North Macedonia* and the introduction of performance monitoring. Adjusting the categories (here, for family with child aged 5) so that only one department in PES is responsible would be envisaged in *Kosovo* next to working with the people directly so that their talents can be utilized, as is practiced with the Job Carving and Job Crafting approaches.<sup>5</sup>

In *Moldova*, stimulating employment of beneficiaries of social cash benefits and support for families with children is regarded key. In detail, the actions should include 1) stimulating the employment of beneficiaries of social assistance, able to work, by gradually reducing the amount of social assistance and limiting the duration of their stay in the programme; 2) Increasing the income eligibility ceiling for employees with children; and 3) Including day laborers in the programme and encouraging them to work legally, by offering the right to social assistance and ignoring their income when establishing the right to social assistance.

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<sup>4</sup> Scoppetta, A. & Buckenleib, A. (2018). [Tackling long-term unemployment through risk profiling and outreach](#). A Discussion Paper from the Employment Thematic Network. European Commission – ESF Transnational Cooperation. Technical Dossier no. 6, May 2018. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

<sup>5</sup> Scoppetta, A., Davern, E. & Geyer, L. (2019), [Job carving and job crafting](#). European Commission. ESF Transnational Platform. Brussels: European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion.

## 5 Key messages

The key messages of the peer review comprise the following:

- **Key message 1:** There is no one-size-fits-all approach (to be) adopted in developing/strengthening the integrated policy approaches applied in the Bridge Building (BB) countries

Entry points for improved policy delivery for vulnerable groups in BB countries are manifold and next to the Active Inclusion Integrated Platform of the host country Kosovo, include, for instance, the Integrated Social Service Centres in Armenia, the automatic data exchange in Montenegro, the Coaching model in Albania, the activation of guaranteed minimum income beneficiaries in Moldova. The AIIP from Kosovo was regarded by participants as a helpful collaboratively developed tool between PES and CSW assisting vulnerable groups more holistically in their integration pathway than previous systems.

- **Key message 2:** Partnerships are key for integrated policy approaches applied and need to be fostered top down

Model partnership agreements between PES/CSW (or equal intuitions) as practiced in Montenegro are seen as an important step forward in developing an integrated approach for vulnerable groups of society. Many countries, however, still need to move away from “paper cooperation” to de-facto cooperation at both state level and with the non-for-profit sector. Here, a key challenge is faced by various BB countries regarding the involvement of civil society actors as equal partners for the integrated approach applied both in employment and social policy (subcontracting vs. partnership approach).

- **Key message 3:** Develop a coherent regulatory framework

Developing a coherent regulatory framework is regarded as a key challenge in many countries such as in Kosovo. In some countries policies are already as far developed that system solutions are required exchanging the piloting phase for integrated case management systems applied. Here, combining both bottom-up and top-down approaches is regarded key for the further development of the approaches.

■ **Key message 4: Make information exchange a reality – improve, expand and use data**

Integrated reform processes are still ongoing across the regions and need to mature before their impact could be evaluated and adjustments made. The performance of the integrated approach, however, must be monitored: this concerns both policy monitoring and monitoring of the individual support.

■ **Key message 5: Case managers are central to an integrated approach**

Professionals need to be taught at central and local levels to work in an integrated way, to enhance effective cooperation, both inside the public sectors and outside (cooperation between the public and non-for-profit sector). Moreover, monitoring, encouraging, and providing incentives for case managers is regarded key by participants of the peer review.

■ **Key message 6: Develop/improve activation measures**

A challenge faced in the many BB countries encompass motivation to work and activation measures for social beneficiaries. Measures for transiting people from benefits dependency to independent income generation need to be developed. Moreover, eligibility criteria should be adjusted to the special situation of the vulnerable groups as well as needs assessment and matching improved. Understanding the situation of each client is key.

## 6 Lessons learnt

The following take aways have been gathered during the closing and reflection round of the peer review on Day 2:

- *Experiences from other countries such as the Lithuanian approach should be utilized for our countries so that we can jointly work towards a one-stop-shop solution.*
- *The integrated approach is a crucial method when working with vulnerable groups. If we really want to achieve better results, we need to improve our policy delivery in this regard.*
- *We need to strengthen institutional capacity to enable for an integrated approach.*

The importance of cooperation between the actors involved, establishing links between information systems and capacity building through continuous training are key lessons learnt during this peer review.

Participants also exchanged their next steps towards achieving better policy results. These are:

- *Get in touch with the Armenian colleagues and continue bi-lateral exchanges on ongoing reforms*
- *Use this approach in everyday work with vulnerable groups and be involved in the creation of these kind of policies in the future*
- *Learn more and apply the case management approach from Lithuania*
- *One jointly (PES/CSW) developed individual plan for individuals*
- *Case management and the link between the authorities involved – based on the example of Lithuania*
- *Learning more on statistical profiling*
- *Individual approach is very important and needs to be continuously promoted: Strengthening the case management teams and the tools they use, including continuous exchange*
- *Establishing integrated social care services and implementing a case management, also strengthening the local capacities*
- *Employment and social assistance services regulated by the practices of regional countries*
- *Steps towards the Integrated Management Information System from Kosovo and local territorial services from Armenia.*

## 7 Conclusions

The peer review (online, 21-22 June 2022) discussed in detail Kosovo's approach towards integrated case management for vulnerable groups of society with the Active Inclusion Integration Platform (AIIP). Four peer countries (Albania, Armenia, Moldova and North Macedonia) shared their experiences of reforming their social assistance system and using an integrated approach to foster better cooperation between employment and social services. National delegations consisted of representatives of the relevant Ministries, Employment Agencies, as well as Centres for Social Work, which created an open and reflective environment to discuss what works well and which remaining challenges need further attention by policy makers.

Experts agreed that a holistic approach is required to implement successful activation programmes which entail a person-centred approach, collaborative employment and social services, as well as financial assistance and motivation for jobseekers. Experiences from EU Member States also showed that transformational changes can only be generated if Active Labour Market Policies are integrated into wider employment, economic growth, and social protection policies. Adopting an integrated approach and case management are crucial when working with vulnerable groups of society. While shifting towards integrated employment and social measures and services, participating countries recognised several challenges, including the lack of a coherent regulatory framework, the lack of skilled staff and internal capacities in these services at local level, that could support vulnerable jobseekers, or missing technical solutions to maintain complex, merged data basis.

Delegations of the participating countries also exchanged on the next steps needed to further improve cooperation between the actors involved, establishing links between information systems and capacity building through continuous training for relevant actors.

## ANNEX – Details on the impact of the integrated system between EAs and the CSW in Kosovo

<b>Name of the practice</b>	Impact of the integrated system between EAs and the CSW
<b>Years of implementation</b>	2020-2021
<b>Coordinating authorities</b>	MFLT, UNDP, EA, and CSW
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To foster institutionalized models of integrated and user-centred provision of services for marginalized groups through the EAs and CSWs;</li> <li>To enhance capacities and resources to develop and implement inclusive employment initiatives of local multi stakeholder partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>Main activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address the above issues at central, local and grassroots levels to impact policies and programmes pursued by the Ministry of Finance Labour and Transfers (MFLT);</li> <li>Consider the working modalities of national and local level branches of EA and CSW, but also of social partners, private sector, and civil society, with an ultimate objective of activation and improved social mobility of vulnerable people.</li> <li>Databases have been operational both in the EA and in the CSW. Nevertheless, the data completed in the Social Assistance System (SAS) at the CSW were not accessible to the EA. Through the newly developed tools, an integration of the two systems was achieved. This integration allows the employment officers to read and use the data registered in the CSW. There is a special field in the database system, which filters respective families as categories with the highest risk. For the best functioning of the systems, necessary trainings are to be provided for all users of the systems.</li> <li>Some of the instruments developed that serve the two systems are: 1. Modified unemployment certificate; 2. Reasons for rejection of the job by the beneficiary; and 3. Expanding Customer History with additional data.</li> </ul>
<b>Results achieved so far</b>	<p>Since 2012, all public employment service offices and vocational training centres use the Employment Management Information System (EMIS) which is the database used for the registration of jobseekers and for provision of employment services. This system enables to manage employment services such as the registration of clients (jobseekers and employers), job vacancy registration, and performing job-matching functions, and many other functions. Up to 200 users, mainly EA advisors and administrative staff, use the existing system.</p> <p>EMIS consists of the following modules: Jobseekers, Employers, Contracts/Agreements regarding Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) measures, ALMP payment monitoring, Employment mediation (Regular Employment &amp; ALMP employment measures), Social</p>

assistance (Cat II) beneficiaries, Foreigners (work permits), Vocational Training Centre (VTC), Performance Framework, Monitoring & Evaluation, Administrative Reports, Statistical Reports, System Administration.

EMIS currently communicates with the following systems by web services:

- TAK (Kosovo Tax Administration) – automatic check if jobseeker is active in the TAK databases by receiving the information about the pay checks, which signals the active employment contract of the jobseeker and consequently termination of the jobseeker status in the EMIS; and
- MFLT Social Assistance – web service checks if the jobseeker who received the unemployment certificate is at the same time beneficiary of the Category II social benefit; the MFLT social assistance system gets the information that the beneficiary of the category II social assistance is the active jobseeker.

EMIS is used in the head office of all public EAs including 38 municipal EAs, 38 CSW and 8 VTCs with more than 180 users, mainly EA advisors and administrative staff. Through EMIS the following services are provided: 1) Registration of the jobseekers (personal data, education, trainings, languages known, work experience and profession; and 2) Profiling or segmentation of the jobseekers as per vulnerability to become Long Term Unemployed (LTU) in the labour market. During the interviewing process, the unemployed person registered into EMIS is segmented or profiled into one of the following sub-groups:

- a. The group with low risk of becoming LTU
- b. The group with average risk of becoming LTU
- c. The group with high risk of becoming LTU

Ad a) The registered unemployed with low risk of becoming LTU are advised to use self-service instruments and, if necessary, they will be provided with assistance in the following ways: explanation on using self-service instruments, assistance in activating social networks and assistance on how to contact the employer directly to find a job.

Ad b) On the other side, if the registered unemployed persons are considered to have an average risk of becoming LTU, they are provided employment-counselling services such as employment mediation, assistance in job search, and provision of information on the labour market and trainings.

Ad c) Finally, if the registered unemployed are categorized as with high risk of becoming LTU, the employment advisor provides support through intensive counselling, which combines job searching skills, career guidance, assistance in motivating the client during the job searching period, and development of an individual employment plan.

All ALMP measures are available for both the public and private sectors, although the greatest focus is on the private sector with the aim of stimulating young people and jobseekers to focus on the private sector to help and provide direct support to both employers and jobseekers.

Furthermore, through EMIS, all registration of counselling services and advice offered is completed including:

- Registration of employers (general information such as company type, registration number, economic activity, contact person, etc.)
- Registration of vacancies or trainings (vacancy/training type, visit to employers, etc.)
- Proposing job vacancies to jobseekers
- Proposing training vacancies to jobseekers
- Sending a list with proposed jobseekers' profile to employers
- Matching vacancies (between jobseekers and employers)
- Matching training (proposed jobseekers to start training)

The current Social Assistance System (SAS) is implemented at the former Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), now MFLT, and is managed by the Department of Social Policy and Family – Division of Social Assistance (DSA). The system was developed in 2013, and then an upgrade was done in 2015. The SAS after development of AIP consists of the following modules:

- Application/Personal module (applicant and family data, addresses, contact information);
- Categorization module (family categorization and family member criteria data);
- Medical commission module (data on medical commission for all members of category I);
- Proxy Means Test module (a test performed to determine the eligibility/inclusion of the family into the SAS);
- Means Test module (a test performed by exchanging data with different institutions in order to determine the income of the family);
- Decision module (manages the decision issuing and creation process);
- Appeal module (manages the decision appeal process both at CSW level and central level for second degree appeal);
- Payment module (manages budget calculation, payment re-imburement and all other payment/transfer requirements);
- Transaction module (manages the bank account opening, central bank transaction settlement, transaction return/cancelling, etc.);
- Reporting module (provides various reports both aggregated/statistical and lists).

The endpoint provides the following services:

- Beneficiary information for all schemes administered by the former Ministry which currently stand at 28
- Tax Administration information on taxpayers, both individuals and businesses, and both with income and without income depending on the needs and permissions assigned to the web service consumer
- Business registry information provided by the Kosovo Business Register
- Individual Personal Data provided by the Civil Registration Agency including information on parents, spouses, addresses, last address changes places of living, etc. There is also a major upcoming web service which provides Family Union Certificate data and family tree data
- Information on vehicles owned by an individual is provided by the Department of Vehicle Registration and is searchable by Personal ID of the Republic of Kosovo.

**The AIP module has been developed in both EMIS and SAS** as agreed with EA and the Ministry. In the social assistance module, all social assistance beneficiaries are shown in green grid. EMIS communicates with SAS database and retrieves information on beneficiaries, including payment history. When the social assistance beneficiaries are offered a job opportunity and they refuse, EMIS will automatically update beneficiaries' records in SAS database, while in EMIS this will be shown in an orange grid. After the first refusal, the system will set beneficiary in the end of the list while giving opportunity to offer job vacancies to other beneficiaries. If a beneficiary is offered a job opportunity the second time, and they end up refusing, based on refusal comment (which is selected upon refusal), EMIS will again update the SAS database with the second refusal and depending on the refusal reason, the beneficiary will be suspended from social assistance.

Job proposals and placement in ALMP measures have been added as features for job offer refusals. Upon refusing a job offer, the beneficiaries' history is automatically updated, and they are shown in module grids (depending on refusals). Refusal information is also included in a web service developed for communication of EMIS & SAS.

For all existing (and new) jobseekers, the SAS form is developed for transfer/registration from EMIS of jobseekers' education level, employment/unemployment statuses, ALMP measures history and job refusals.

With this module in place and communication with the SAS database, jobseekers no longer need to get a physical copy of the unemployment document from the EA and deliver it to CSW, as CSW officials will be able to retrieve the unemployment document from the EMIS.