

Public Employment Services and Collective Redundancy Programmes in the European Union: Instruments, Models and Challenges

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Abstract

Collective redundancies have become an increasingly common feature of contemporary labour markets as a result of economic restructuring, technological change, and sectoral transformations. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the role of public employment services in designing and implementing programmes aimed at supporting workers affected by collective redundancies. The study focuses on the scope, timing, and effectiveness of support measures offered to displaced workers, as well as on the institutional capacity of public employment services to respond to large-scale job losses. The research is based on a comparative qualitative analysis of collective redundancy programmes implemented in selected European Union member states. The study draws on original empirical material collected from public employment services, complemented by an analysis of national legal and institutional frameworks governing collective redundancies. The research examines key dimensions of support, including early intervention mechanisms, cooperation with employers, labour market instruments, training and reskilling measures, and non-economic forms of assistance. The findings show that the effectiveness of collective redundancy programmes largely depends on the timing of intervention and the degree of institutional coordination. Early involvement of public employment services, combined with structured cooperation with employers, significantly improves the chances of rapid labour market reintegration for affected workers. Programmes that integrate job placement services, skills development, and individual counselling are more effective than fragmented or delayed interventions. The analysis also reveals substantial differences in programme design and institutional capacity across countries, which influence the scale and quality of support provided to displaced workers. The results of the study indicate that collective redundancy programmes should be understood not only as reactive measures addressing job loss, but as strategic labour market policy instruments supporting economic adjustment and workforce mobility. By strengthening preventive approaches and enhancing the coordinating role of public employment services, such programmes can reduce the social and economic costs of restructuring processes. The paper contributes to the field by providing an empirically grounded assessment of public employment service interventions in the context of collective redundancies and by identifying key factors that determine their effectiveness.

Keywords: collective redundancies, public employment services, labour market policies, workforce restructuring

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