

Shifting Labour Supply Groups, Changing Priorities – Gender, the European Employment Strategy and National Policy Responses*

[Draft paper please contact authors before citing]

Paper for the 40 Years of the Cambridge Journal of Economics, July 2016
(theme: gender, employment and job quality)

Mark Smith (Grenoble Ecole de Management) and Paola Villa (University of Trento)

ABSTRACT

The European Employment Strategy (EES) has provided a framework with which to shape EU member state employment policy and share ‘best practice’ and ideas for more than 15 years. While the extent of influence on actual policy formulation has been questioned, the EES provides a lens with which to observe shifts in policy discourse and priorities and a changing focus on various labour supply groups considered important. From the outset the focus on women as a key labour supply group was important and gender equality as a goal was strong. However, this focus has gradually eroded over time. Similarly, quality of jobs was a key theme at the outset with a strong focus on improving quality as part of a move to raise the performance of European labour markets. Again, this quality dimension has gradually been replaced by a greater focus on the quantity of jobs.

A key mechanism of the EES has been the annual round of Country-Specific Recommendations (CSR) from the Council to individual member states. The interaction of EES guidelines and the CSRs and responses provides a fertile research area for institutional and policy dynamics around gender and job quality. Using information on the content of the guidelines and the country specific recommendations for the period 1997-2013 we analyse the shifting focus of these policy mechanisms. Using four distinct periods of the EES we demonstrate the shifting trends in policy discourse and priority labour supply groups with respect to gender equality. Furthermore, we use a database of national policy responses (LABREF) in order to explore the scope and intensity of national responses to the EU policy mechanisms over the four periods identified in order highlight the inconsistency of European influence and the variety and national responses.

* This paper is based on research carried out within the STYLE project (EU-7FP, <http://www.style-research.eu/>). The project has received funding from the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under Grant Agreement no. 613256.

1. Introduction

The European Employment Strategy (EES) has provided a framework with which to shape EU member state employment policy and share 'best practice' and ideas since the end of the '90s. While the extent of influence on actual policy formulation has been questioned, the EES provides a lens with which to observe shifts in policy discourse and priorities and a changing focus on various labour supply groups considered important. From the outset the focus on women as a key labour supply group was important and gender equality as a goal was strong. However, this focus has been gradually eroded over time. Similarly, quality of jobs was a key theme at the outset with a strong focus on improving quality as part of a move to raise the performance of European labour markets. Again, this quality dimension has gradually been replaced by a greater focus on the quantity of jobs.

The multilateral commitment to the EES was a recognition that employment policy matters and employment (rather than unemployment) was one of the major challenges facing the EU. Indeed, employment policy matters for improving the functioning of the labour market. These policies shape the labour market's institutional settings within which employers, workers and social partners interact determining outcomes. The EES, through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), has been in place for almost two decades in order to help member states to improve the functioning of the labour market. Labour market outcomes reveal the persistence of old challenges (for example gender inequalities) and the emergence of new challenges (the crisis of youth labour markets). Although there were clearly some weaknesses in the initial formulation of the EES (for example the over emphasis on the supply side solutions) there was at the outset a vision for employment policy based around a renewed social model and more equal gender relations. Our research question considers why the EES did not have the planned impact and how the process has evolved from a strategy to a series of ex-post adjustments.

This paper explores the role of EU employment policy since its launch in 1997 up to 2013 by analysing in detail what has been preached as guidance and models of best practice. In order to understand the role of the EES it is important to analyse the content, style and clarity of the messages that have emanated through the main mechanisms of the strategy. Using information on the content of the guidelines and the CSRs for the period 1997-2013 we analyse the shifting focus of the EES policy mechanisms across four distinct phases of the EES. We demonstrate the changing style of advice within the EES, the shifting trends in policy discourse and priority labour supply groups with respect to gender equality and the flowing priorities. Furthermore, we use a database of national policy responses (LABREF) in order to explore the scope and intensity of national responses to the EU policy mechanisms in order to highlight the inconsistency of European influence and the variety and national responses.

This paper is divided into five sections. After this introduction, section 2 discusses the EES mechanism and evidence for its influence on policy making and institutional change. Section 3 discusses our empirical approach to the analysis for the CSRs and national policy making. Section 4 presents our empirical analysis which a) charts the changing styles and focus of the CSRs b) explores the changing focus on labour supply groups within EES and c) analyses the shifting priorities in EES as measured by CSRs and the policy implementation at the national level. Section 5 draws some conclusions and considers the future role of the EES as a mechanism for modernising policy for more gender equal labour markets across the EU.

2. The European Employment Strategy

This interaction of the European Employment Strategy (EES) and national policy has provided a fertile research area for institutional and policy dynamics (Heidenreich and Zeitlin 2009; Velluti 2010) with authors often focusing on the (weak) implementation at the national level (Devetzi 2008; Villa and Smith 2010), the development process (Goetschy 2002) or the changing content of the strategy (Smith et al. 2008). Indeed, the initial position of gender equality as a high profile element of the strategy was a novel subject for research (Stratigaki 2004; Rubery 2002; Rossilli 2000) as was the subsequent decline of equality (Fagan et al. 2006; Villa 2013; Pfister 2008). In spite of its weaknesses the Strategy remains an example of an innovative and unique pan-national system of employment coordination and labour market reform.

The aim of the EES has been to promote change towards broadly-defined, European-level goals in terms of labour market performance. Over time the more defined goals of the Strategy have evolved, shifting from flexibility towards flexicurity and between different priority groups. At the heart of the on-going reforms have been idealised versions of the employment relationship and good labour market performance stylised through the EES guidelines and the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSR). As the economic context, political leadership and policy buzz words have shifted so have the foci on particular labour market problems, key labour supply groups and proposed solutions. In response national governments have been required to demonstrate that their policies are promoting structural reforms and are aligned with the broad aims of the Strategy. Yet as the EU policy priorities have changed, national governments have also shifted their approaches and policy responses. Nevertheless, as far as we are aware, there has been no systematic use of the CSRs – the key mechanism for guidance – as a measure of changing priorities or policy discourse.

The employment policy coordination at the EU level has been in place since the end of the 1990s, when the EES was launched, and it has been influential in shaping policy thinking and in inducing governments to implement policy reforms in the area of labour market policies. Although the mechanism of influence and extent of reform has not necessarily been clear (Heidenreich and Zeitlin 2009), the goal of the EES has always been the promotion of high employment. To this end, a coordinated strategy has been outlined, and regularly updated, in the form of a set of recommended lines of action for member states. Initially, the strategy was set as a separate reporting mechanism based on the ‘employment guidelines’ (EGs), later it was unified with the reporting mechanism on economic policy (based on the ‘broad economic policy guidelines’ (BEPGs)) into the so called ‘integrated guidelines’.

The EES was launched in 1997 (and formally incorporated in the Amsterdam Treaty), included in the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, then replaced by the Europe 2020 strategy in 2010. For simplicity, here we use the term EES to refer to the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in employment policy, throughout the changes recorded since its first formulation. The aim has been to achieve broadly defined European-level goals in terms of labour market performance, in particular “a high level of employment”, as stated in the Amsterdam Treaty.

The extent to which the EES, based on the voluntary OMC, influences national employment policies has been a question for researchers over the life of the strategy as this innovative form of policy making has evolved (Heidenreich and Zeitlin 2009; de la Porte and Pochet 2012; Villa and Smith 2013). While direct

links between European-level analysis and prescription on employment policy, on the one hand, and national-level implementation, on the other hand, have been hard to draw, there is evidence of a number of mechanisms by which EU policy formulations have some influence on national policy making (Visser 2009; Heidenreich 2009; de la Porte and Heins 2015). Furthermore, analysis of the position of gender equality in European and national policy discourse provides evidence of a replication of both attention and non-attention to the subject at the national level in line with waning interest in the EES.

The country specific recommendations (CSR) are the key mechanism by which the Commission and Council have sought to influence member states employment policy and reforms. These CSRs have been used to identify key action areas and policy challenges in member states. They are the result of analysis of the reporting mechanisms and monitoring within the EES, but also the result of negotiation and political manoeuvre between the Commission and country representatives in the Council, so it is important to recognise that there is not necessarily a consistent treatment of member states and their challenges. For example, gender pay gaps have been highlighted a number of times in some member states with medium to high gaps while for others with very high gaps CSRs have not been issued. Similarly, the CSRs have been published for short part-time jobs in some member states but not others.

The CSRs are in fact endorsed by the Council, so that there is some room for bargaining between the Commission and Council representatives. Because the system of OMC of policies does not rely on legal mechanisms and sanctions, the toughest kind of sanction would amount to the 'naming and shaming' of the poorest performers (Zeitlin 2005). However, Council representatives have always been resistant to the use of the 'naming and shaming' strategy. Thus, CSRs tend to be rather mild, and they certainly tone down any explicit criticism (Begg 2010: 150). Performances are assessed, individual recommendations are adopted, but without any ranking of countries. Notwithstanding the drawbacks of this type of tool, the evolution in the annual CSRs can be used to shed light on the role attributed to problematic issues in member states labour markets over time. Furthermore, there is some evidence of countries responding to even these mild, yet public, rebukes in the realm of gender equality, especially in Phase I (Rubery 2002), and in promoting labour market reforms following the idealised institutional settings (EC 2012a).

The EES has been reformulated several times, since its launch. Although both the final goal (i.e. high employment) and the overall approach (i.e. supply-side) have been maintained, the internal design of the strategy has changed quite significantly, as summarised in table 1. These reformulations were induced by a combination of factors: periodic evaluations of the EES, the changing economic and institutional framework at the EU level, the process of EU enlargement. It is possible to identify four distinct phases of the EES that follow the major reformulations of the strategy, characterized by significant changes in the total number of employment guidelines, the language used for their specific formulation, the inclusion of quantitative targets, as well as the emphasis on what are considered to be problematic issues and the population subgroups deserving special attention by policy makers (Smith and Villa 2010; 2012). For example, it was in Phase I (1998-2002) that gender equality was put high on the agenda, with one 'Pillar' on equal opportunities, three guidelines on gender issues and the introduction of gender mainstreaming as a horizontal guideline, while it was in Phase IV (2011 to 2013) that the position of gender equality more or less disappeared and the plight of young people became

more visible (see tab. 1).

Table 1. The changing position of gender equality in the European Employment Strategy

| | <i>The evolving structure of EES</i> | <i>Visibility of equal opportunities and gender equality</i> | <i>EU enlargement</i> |
|------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| Phase I 1998-2002 | 4 Pillars; around 18-22 employment GLs | 1 Pillar (out of 4) on Equal Opportunities; 3 GLs on gender issues; 1 horizontal GL on Gender Mainstreaming was added in 1999 | 15 Member States |
| Phase II 2003-2005 | 3 overarching objectives: – full employment – quality and productivity at work – social cohesion and an inclusive labour market. 10 employment GLs. | 1 GL on equal opportunities, including the systematic Gender Mainstreaming of new policies | 25 Member States in 2004 |
| Phase III 2006-2009 | The employment GLs and the BEPGs are presented jointly in a single annual set of “integrated guidelines”: 24 integrated GLs, of which 8 are employment GLs. | No GL (out of the 8 employment GLs) on equal opportunities; there is a simple mention in the preamble: <i>“Equal opportunities and combating discrimination are essential for progress. Gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality should be ensured in all action taken”</i> (EC 2005: 29) | 27 Member States in 2007 |
| Phase IV 2010-2020 | 10 integrated GLs, of which 4 are employment GLs; | No GL (out of the 4 employment GLs) on equal opportunities; there is a simple sentence in the preamble stating “... <i>visible gender equality perspective, integrated into all relevant policy areas</i> ” (EC 2010f). | 28 Member States in 2013 |

Notes: GL = Guideline; BEPG = Broad economic policy guideline.

Source: Smith and Villa (2012).

The EES has had some influence in shaping policy thinking and in inducing governments to implement policy reforms in the area of labour market policies in spite of the changes to its structure. The goal of the EES has always been the promotion of high employment and women’s employment was considered to have a central role in this aim (Rossilli 2000; Rubery 2002; Villa 2013). Indeed, the notion of an *adult worker model* where employment is an expected activity for working age population was a key element of the early EES (Lewis and Giullari 2005). Yet the most significant lines of action of the EES underline the need to improve the quality of human capital through education and continuous training, in particular that of the most ‘disadvantaged’ groups (women, older workers, low-skilled, migrants); to reduce obstacles to their entry into employment (including lack of skills, inadequate childcare services, insufficient economic incentives leading to inactivity or unemployment traps); to contrast the risk of long-term unemployment through ALMPs; and to enhance the effectiveness of labour market institutions in promoting the adaptability of workers and jobs to the ongoing changes. These lines of action reflect a supply-side orientation of the strategy: attention is focused on the need for structural reforms changing the institutional set-up of the national labour markets, seen as complements to economic policy. The pursuit of employment objectives is left to the regulatory policies of the labour

market, not to macroeconomic action (Simonazzi and Villa 2016). The diagnosis was (and still is) that the high structural unemployment was symptomatic of the insufficient capacity of the labour market (i.e. workers and firms) to adapt to change. In short, the strategy has long assumed that low employment rates are related to the behaviour of the working-age population. Hence the policy prescriptions assign a key role to incentives and disincentives, combined with activation policies, aimed at stimulating entry into active life of the highest possible number of people.

Against the backdrop of EES idea generation and influences, member states have been responding to their own priorities and political constraints to the various CSRs proposed by the Commission and the Council to reform their labour market institutional settings. However, in the recent years the influence of institutions such as the Commission and European Central Bank over national employment policy has become particularly strong both for countries agreeing to financial assistance and those suffering as a result of the fall out of the crisis. Thus, the room for manoeuvre in relation to some policy measures has become more limited. In short, over the period both the strategy and the context for policy have evolved creating a complex environment for influence on member states.

3. Data and methodology

We are interested in tracking the changing style and content of guidance for employment policy within the EES over the period 2000-2013 through the lens of CSRs. Our aim is to highlight, on the one hand, the evolution key ideas and priorities, and, on the other hand, the shifting focus given to key labour market groups, in particular how gender issues (once central to the EES) have fared. Furthermore, we highlight the link between changing policy and labour supply-group priorities in the EES (as recorded in the CSRs) and the scale and focus of policy making at the national level (as recorded in LABREF). Thus, in order to chart the EES shifting policy models and the underlying implications for women and young people in Europe we analyse both the CSRs issued annually by the Commission and the Council and policy activity by member states as recorded in LABREF, a database of labour market policy (EC 2014).

The EES has gone through a number of reformulations that impact not only on the focus and emphasis of policy recommendations but also the methodology we can adopt for their analysis. In this paper the 477 CSRs issued between 2000 and 2013 have been classified in order to categorise them by the nature of their policy prescriptions. It should be noted that the changing style and content of the CSRs is both a result of our research as well as a methodological challenge for their classification. Therefore, it is not straightforward to provide a synthetic overview of the changing emphasis of labour market policy issues within the EES by means of the CSRs, given the substantial reformulations occurred since 1997. The mixture of goals, policy tools and problematic labour market outcomes in the CSRs means it is not possible to clearly map them on to conventional themes of policy areas (as captured in LABREF, in particular) thus we provide a categorisation of the CSRs' in relation to their potential influence in shaping national labour market policies. Three criteria have been used to identify a set of policy themes to be used in order to classify the CSRs: i) the main policy themes explicitly considered in the employment guidelines; ii) the recent classification of CSRs developed by the European Commission¹; and iii) our

¹ COM(2012) 299 final (tab.1, p. 20); COM(2013) 350 final (tab.1 p. 23); COM(2014) 400 final (Annex 1 p. 17); COM (2015) 250 final (Annex 1, p. 12).

textual analysis of the CSRs issued over time and the recurrent recommendations in terms of employment policy. These are the ten policy themes we identified: Labour market participation, Job creation, ALMP, Education and skills, Flexibility, Segmentation, Wage setting mechanism, Gender equality, Poverty and social exclusion and Miscellanea (i.e. regional disparities, social partners, etc.).

In this paper we also use the LABREF database which records policy measures enacted by the EU member states affecting the labour market and its institutions. The measures reported in LABREF refer to enacted legislation, as well as other public acts of general scope (such as decisions of public authorities), including measures entailing changes in the implementation framework of a previously adopted reform. It is important to note that a single measure may cover several areas of policy intervention and therefore is recorded several times. What matters is not the format of the measure itself, rather the different policy actions it involves (EC 2014). These data are available (at the time of writing) for the period 2000-13 and include information, in most cases, on countries prior to their accession to the EU. The database was developed in DG ECFIN at the European Commission along with the Economic Policy Committee of the ECOFIN Council and is publicly available (EC 2015). The database provides a rich source of data on policy developments across the EU. This is particularly useful given that among other available data sources the OECD inventory were not updated after the mid-2000s (OECD 2005) and similarly the Fondazione Rodolfo De Benedetti database later in the decade (FRDB 2015). LABREF has been used by a number of other authors to analyse the evolution of policy making over time (Turrini et al. 2014), but not for the whole period for which we have data and not in conjunction with a detailed analysis of the evolving themes of the CSRs.

The LABREF data are organised around nine broad policy areas: labour taxation, unemployment benefits, other welfare-related benefits, active labour market policies (ALMP), job protection (EPL), disability and early retirement schemes, wage bargaining, working time organisation, finally immigration and mobility. Within these domains there are further sub divisions by policy field. However, an additional methodological challenge is that the LABREF policy areas do not cover all policy themes considered by the EES. In particular, LABREF does not consider 'education and skills' and 'poverty and social exclusion' (included in 2010 by the Europe 2020 strategy²), the latter being important for gender equality. In order to develop a consistent analysis, we limit our focus to the policy areas considered both by LABREF and CSRs (i.e. we do not consider 'education and skills', 'poverty and social exclusion'). In this way we focus on the labour market, its performance and institutions, as well as women and men engaged formally on the labour market.³

Here we are focused on the intensity of policy making, rather than its impact. Indeed, the impact of a policy may be subject to considerable time lag and the influence of a wider range of institutional forces in which they are implemented. The complementarity of institutions within each national setting can equally shape change and create a diversity of outcomes across countries (Hall and Gingerich 2009). Furthermore, it is also important to note that analysis of the LABREF database relies on the 'intensity' of policy activity (measured by the counting of policies enacted in a year). This inherently assumes a

² In 2010, the new Europe 2020 strategy has extended the area for coordinating national policies through the OMC, including the goal to combat poverty and social exclusion (also through measures promoting an inclusive labour market).

³ Since education is responsibility of a separate ministry to those responsible for labour market regulations this is a coherent position with an analysis of the labour market.

level of equality of impact between policy measures. In relation to LABREF it remains important to acknowledge that some small measures may be recorded as individual policies for some national entries in the database while they would appear as part of a wider policy in others. LABREF remains one of the most complete databases of labour a market policy making and does permit the identification of policies that are part of a wider package of reform.

We are particularly interested in policy measures that impact upon women so in addition to using the overall classification of policies to highlight the shifts in the general direction of policy we also pull out polices from the 3566 that are aimed at or likely to have an important impact on female labour supply. Unlike for young people, the LABREF database does not provide a separate categorisation for policies aimed at the youth labour market but we are however able to identify a number of policy categories where the gender equality implication are significant and we complement these with a text search and categorisation of key words.⁴

Our empirical analysis is divided into three sections. First, we chart the changing styles of the CSRs as the key mechanism for policy recommendations and a barometer of the changing focus, coherence and importance of the EES. Second, we explore the changing focus on labour supply groups in EES as measured by CSRs. Finally, we look at the shifting priorities in EES as measured by CSRs and the policy implementation at the national level.

4. Analysis of the EES evolution through the CSRs

4.1 Changing style of the CSR message

The changing style and content of the CSRs provides an interesting measure of the evolution of the EES. This is important since although there has been a single “strategy” since 1997 we demonstrate that the coherence of message and guidance for member states has changed over time. Indeed, the guidance has become less clear and more reactive rather than aligned with a vision of the “ideal institutional model” implicit in the early formulation of the EES.

Issued by the Commission to the member states for corrective actions since 2000, the CSRs are a key mechanism of the EES. These recommendations suggest the most important issues to be addressed by national governments in order to move in the direction of the policy goals and targets agreed at the EU level.

In relation to the CSRs there have been a number of important shifts. First, there were several reformulations of the EES modifying the number of employment GLs and their specification. Second, the EU enlargement brought ten new Member states in 2004, two new in 2007 and another one in 2013. Third, since 2005 the employment GLs have been merged with the so called BEPGs, so that member states are asked to report all their economic and employment policies in a single document (so called National Reform Programme, NRP) on the basis of the so-called ‘integrated guidelines’. Consequently, since 2006 CSRs span policy themes from all the integrated guidelines resulting in a smaller number of recommendations on employment policy. Furthermore, in three years, characterised by significant changes in the design of the EES, there were no CSRs. This was the case in 2005 (when the

⁴ Keywords included maternity, gender, equality, childcare, gender segregation, pay gap, wage inequality, etc.

mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy was undertaken), in 2006 (the first year of the new cycle) and in 2010 (when the new Europe 2020 strategy was launched). Finally, the style used to formulate the CSRs has changed over time in terms of the total number of CSRs on employment policy, the language and form used.⁵ In short, over the period considered, the CSRs on employment policy changed in number, style and focus.

Using the classification of the four phases of the EES outlined above we can identify different styles of CSR during these phases. In Phase I, all member states received a number of CSRs on employment policy (varying from a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 6). At this time each CSR was focused on one policy theme. By contrast in 2004 (Phase II), all member states received three general recommendations (identified with the specification of three ‘titles’), but specified at the country level by a varying number of points (sort of Points-to-Watch). The unification of different reporting mechanisms in 2005 led to the merging of the employment GLs with the BEPGs (into the ‘integrated guidelines’) and a reduction in the number of CSRs on the employment policy, with each being focused on several policy themes. Equally some countries received no CSRs and only PtW, for example Finland with only 3 PtW and only one of which on EES (see table 2). Finally, in Phase IV, the number of CSRs on EES was limited (from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 3) and once again each was focused on several policy themes.

Table 2 – The changing style of CSRs through the four phases of the EES: the example of Finland

| <i>CSRs (and PtW) on employment policy through the four phases of the EES</i> |
|--|
| <p>Finland (2001)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to review existing tax and benefit schemes, in order to increase incentives to work and to recruit workers, and focus lifelong learning policies on older people, so as to retain them as active members of the workforce for longer; 2. Pursue further recent policy initiatives aimed at reducing the tax burden on labour, with due consideration for prevailing economic and employment conditions in Finland; 3. Monitor and assess, in the context of a gender mainstreaming approach, the current levels of occupational and sectoral segregation in the labour market. |
| <p>Finland (2004)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Increasing adaptability of workers and enterprises</u> – reduce non-wage labour costs on the low-paid while maintaining sound public finances. 2. <u>Attracting more people to the labour market and making work a real option for all</u> – monitor the impact of recent reforms of ALMPs on structural unemployment and regional disparities; take special measures to facilitate the activation and integration of disadvantaged young people, disabled people and immigrants; – further reform tax and benefit systems to remove unemployment traps; – follow-up the national strategy for active ageing by improving working conditions, incentives and the provision of training for the low-skilled and older workers. 3. <u>Investing more and more effectively in human capital and lifelong learning</u> – take action to reduce early school leaving and increase training for the low-skilled. |
| <p>Finland (2007). No. of CSRs (total): none, but 3 PtW (of which one on employment policy): <i>PtW on employment policy:</i> “continue reforms to address bottlenecks in the labour market, with a particular view to tackling high structural unemployment, especially unemployment of low skilled workers, including young people, and taking into account the contribution economic migration can make”</p> |
| <p>Finland (2012). No. of CSRs (total): 5; of which 1 on employment policy:</p> |

⁵ In three years (2004, 2007 and 2008) the CSRs were complemented with the so called Points-to-Watch (PtW).

“Implement the ongoing measures to improve the labour market position of young people and the long-term unemployed, with a particular focus on skills development. Take further steps to improve the employment rate of older workers, including by reducing early exit pathways. Take measures to increase the effective retirement age taking into account the improved life expectancy.”

Thus, we see over the course of the EES the main mechanism for guidance and identification of policy priorities has shifted in style from being focused on employment to covering a range of policy measures. Furthermore, the inclusion of multiple policy areas within individual CSRs has led to a dilution of the clarity of the message from the Council.

Part of the confusion relating to the use of CSRs also comes from a focus on policies, goals and problems in the guidance. Table 3 highlights examples of CSRs focusing on these three different approaches and thus potentially further confusing the message from the Council.

Table 3 – Examples of CSRs focused on goals, problems and policy tools

| |
|--|
| <p><i>Examples of CSRs focused on ‘goals’</i></p> <p>DK 2003: “Strengthen efforts to sustain the availability of labour in the long term, in particular by promoting the participation of older workers and by preventing bottlenecks in sectors with an ageing workforce”</p> <p>IT 2003: “Implement, where appropriate in consultation with the social partners, measures to increase labour market flexibility and modernise work organisation, while promoting the synergy between flexibility and security and avoiding marginalisation of disadvantaged persons”</p> <p>CZ 2004: “While standing above the EU average, raising the participation of women and older workers should be a priority. In this respect, strengthening incentives to part-time work could make an important contribution”</p> <p>BE 2007: “reinforces the policy measures to improve the performance of its labour market through a comprehensive strategy, in accordance with an integrated flexicurity approach, to enhance labour market participation, lower regional disparities, and increase participation in lifelong learning”</p> <p>MT 2007: “step up efforts to attract more people into the labour market, particularly women and older workers; maintain efforts to tackle undeclared work and take further action on the benefit system to make declared work more attractive”</p> <p>NL 2009: “develop further measures, including fostering labour market transitions within an integrated flexicurity approach, to improve the participation of women, older workers and disadvantaged groups with a view to raising overall hours worked””</p> <p>FR 2011: “Encourage access to lifelong learning in order to help maintain older workers in employment and enhance measures to support return to employment”</p> |
| <p><i>Examples of CSRs focused on ‘policy tools’</i></p> <p>ES 2003: “Complete the modernisation of the PESs so as to improve its efficiency and to increase its capability to mediate in the labour market. These efforts should include the completion of the statistical monitoring system”</p> <p>HU 2004: “The tax wedge on labour remains high and represents an obstacle to job creation and a factor likely to contribute to undeclared work. Moreover, given the slowdown in economic growth, further efforts are required to ensure, together with the social partners, more employment-friendly wage developments ...”</p> <p>UK 2004: “improve the access to and affordability of childcare and care for other dependants, increase access to training for low paid women in part-time work, and take urgent action to tackle the causes of the gender pay gap”</p> <p>CY 2007: “Enhance life-long learning, and increase employment and training opportunities for <u>young</u> people by implementing the reforms of the vocational, education, training and apprenticeship system”</p> <p>EE 2009: “Speeds up the implementation of the new labour law package and increase the efficiency of PES, in particular by well-targeted ALMPs aimed at facilitating labour market transition”</p> |

RO 2013: "Improve labour market participation, as well as employability and productivity of the labour force, by reviewing and strengthening ALMPs, to provide training and individualised services and promoting lifelong learning ..."

SE 2013: "... Complete the Youth Guarantee to better cover young people not in education or training. Complete and draw conclusions from the review of the effectiveness of the current reduced VAT rate for restaurants and catering services in support of job creation"

Examples of CSRs focused on 'problems'

EL 2003: "Take effective actions to narrow the high gender gaps in terms of employment and unemployment rate, and continue efforts to increase care facilities for children and other dependants."

IE 2003: "Take further comprehensive action to address regional imbalances in employment, unemployment and job creation, including through assistance from the Community Structural Funds."

FI 2003: "Strengthen efforts, in the context of gender mainstreaming to address the factors underlying the gender pay gap and gender segregation"

SI 2009: "Within an integrated flexicurity approach counters labour market segmentation in particular by reviewing employment protection for permanent work and conditions for so-called student work"

FR 2013: "...Take further action to combat labour-market segmentation, in particular to address the situation of interim agency workers. ..."

PL 2013: "...Combat in-work poverty and labour market segmentation through better transition from fixed-term to permanent employment and by reducing the excessive use of civil law contracts."

4.2 Changing focus on gender and other labour supply groups

Between 2000 and 2013, 477 CSRs on the EES were issued. Table 4 presents a quantitative overview of the CSRs issued throughout the four phases of the EES, including frequency (total number of CSRs on employment policy), as well as the attention paid to women and other labour supply groups (older workers and youth). In order to quantify the attention devoted to these different groups, for each year we present a count of the CSRs making an explicit reference to women (and/or gender equality issues), older workers and young people. For example, in 2000 (with 15 member states) 50 CSRs on employment policy were issued, with an average of 3.3 recommendations per country. Of these, an average of almost one (0.87) considered women, 0.67 older workers, but only 0.33 young workers.

From the beginning, two main labour supply groups were objects of attention: women and older workers. The EES considered explicitly these two groups as the largest potential in order to increase the overall employment rate at the EU level. For both groups the attention was on the quantity of employment (not on job quality) hence stressing the need for reconciliation in the case of women and the need to reform early retirement schemes and benefit systems in the case of older workers. By contrast, young people were not identified as a group in need of specific employment policies and mentions were rather rare in the documentation as well as in other mechanisms of the EES.

It should be noted that in the original formulation of the EES, 'gender equality' was placed high on the agenda, being a goal in itself to be pursued in parallel with the increase in female employment (Rubery 2002; Villa 2013). In fact, gender equality was identified as one of the four Pillars around which the EES was constructed in Phase I and one of the EGs in Phase II. However, as the EES evolved, there was a shift from 'gender equality' as a goal in itself (at least on paper), towards 'women' as a 'disadvantaged' group (i.e. characterised by low participation). Older workers have also received special attention in the EES, since its first formulations, as the strategy explicitly included promoting

active ageing in the sense of increasing labour force participation, working for more years and remaining at work longer (2006). In particular, the 2001 Stockholm European Council agreed to set an EU target for increasing the average employment rate among older women and men (55-64) of 50% by 2010”, and the 2002 Barcelona European Council concluded that “a progressive increase of about 5 years in the effective average age at which people stop working should be sought by 2010”.

Table 4 – Country Specific Recommendations in the four phases^a of the EES: an overview

| | No. of CSRs on integrated GLs | No. of CSRs on EES | No. of CSRs on empl. policy | | | No. of MSs | Average no. CSRs on empl. policy | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------|------------|----------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| | | | on gender | on older workers | on youth | | on gender | on older workers | on youth |
| Phase I | | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | - | 50 | 13 | 9 | 5 | 15 | 0.87 | 0.60 | 0.33 |
| 2001 | - | 58 | 13 | 8 | 5 | 15 | 0.87 | 0.53 | 0.33 |
| 2002 | - | 57 | 12 | 8 | 5 | 15 | 0.80 | 0.53 | 0.33 |
| Phase II | | | | | | | | | |
| 2003 | - | 55 | 11 | 7 | 1 | 15 | 0.73 | 0.47 | 0.07 |
| 2004 (CSR) | - | 74 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2004 (PtW) | | 140 | 19 | 21 | 9 | 25 | 0.79 | 0.84 | 0.36 |
| Phase III^b | | | | | | | | | |
| 2007 | 55 | 24 | 7 | 11 | 10 | 27 | 0.26 | 0.41 | 0.37 |
| 2008 | 55 | 24 | 7 | 11 | 10 | 27 | 0.26 | 0.41 | 0.37 |
| 2009 | 63 | 25 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 27 | 0.04 | 0.22 | 0.11 |
| Phase IV^c | | | | | | | | | |
| 2011 | 118 | 32 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 22 | 0.23 | 0.27 | 0.36 |
| 2012 | 134 | 41 | 7 | 6 | 15 | 23 | 0.30 | 0.26 | 0.65 |
| 2013 | 140 | 37 | 5 | 8 | 17 | 23 | 0.22 | 0.35 | 0.74 |

Legend: CSR = Country Specific Recommendation; PtW = Point to Watch.

Note: ‘average no. CSRs on gender’: it refers to the number of recommendations (per country) considering explicitly gender issues; the same applies to young people and older workers.

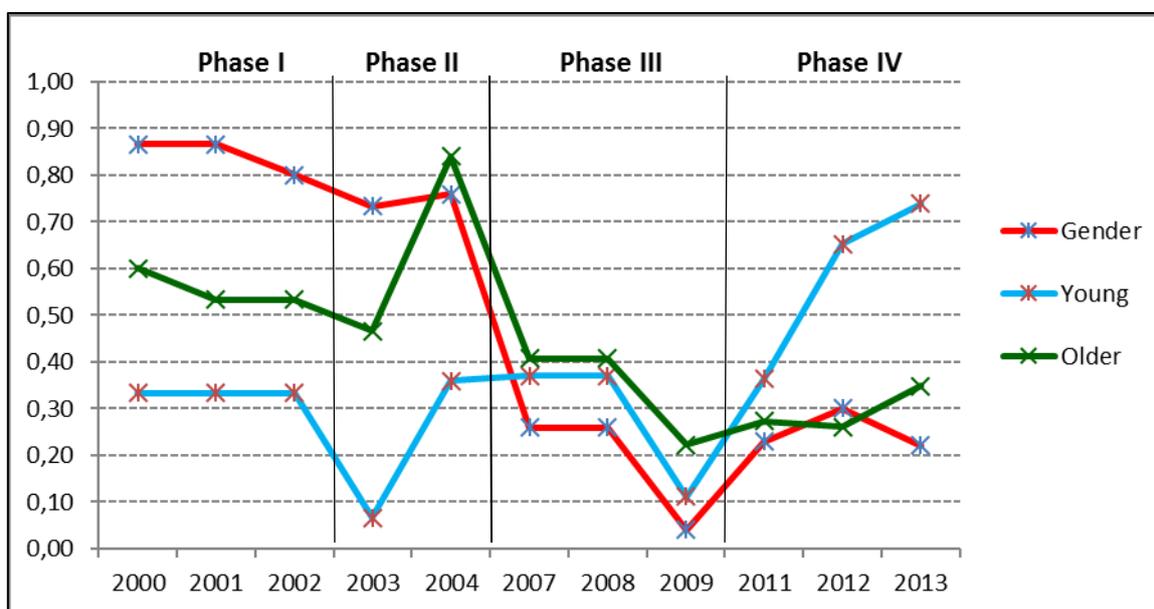
a) There were no CSRs in 2005 (the year of the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy), in 2006 (the first year of the 2005-2008 three-year cycle) and in 2010 (when the Europe 2020 strategy was launched).

b) In 2004, 2007 and 2008 the Commission decided to add “points to watch” (PtW) – that is, the listing of policy areas that warranted attention – to the CSRs.

c) Five countries in 2011, four in 2012 and four in 2013 have not been addressed specific recommendations, being in receipt of financial assistance from the EU and the IMF, which implies the fulfilment of tailored policy programmes focused on fiscal consolidation and structural economic reforms.

Source: see Annex A, tables A.4, A.5 and A.6.

Figure 1 – CSRs on employment policy considering explicitly gender issues, older workers and young people (average number of CSRs per country)



Note: In 2005, 2006 and 2010 there were no CSRs.
 Source: Authors' calculation based on CSRs (see table 4).

Across the four phases of the EES we find a changing focus on labour supply groups with gender focus falling and the focus on young people only rising as the impact of the crisis was felt on youth labour markets across the EU. Figure 1 clearly illustrates the shifting focus of CSRs on labour supply groups (women, older workers, young people) between 2000 and 2013.

The overall reduction in the CSRs on employment policy was combined with a progressive shift of attention from gender issues towards older workers (to increase labour market participation through active ageing and pension reforms), and in the more recent years from older workers towards young people in order to reduce the risk of long-term unemployment arising from the crisis (see Smith and Villa 2010 for a mirrored effect in national policy making).

4.3 Changing priorities in the CSRs and national policies

In this final empirical section we draw a link between the CSRs and the national policies. Over the period 2000-2013, our analysis identifies ten main policy themes (as discussed in Section 3). All CSRs have been classified by policy theme in order to detect the direction of policy guidance throughout the four phases of the EES. Table 5 charts the evolution of CSRs (and PtWs) across the ten policy themes.

Table 5 CSRs (and PtW) by policy theme, 2000-2013 (no. of CSRs issued per year focused on one or more policy themes)

| | <i>Phase I</i> | | | <i>Phase II</i> | | <i>Phase III</i> | | | <i>Phase IV</i> | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|------|------|-----------------|------|------------------|------|------|-----------------|------|------|
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
| No. CSRs | 52 | 58 | 57 | 55 | 74 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 32 | 41 | 37 |
| No. PtW ^a | - | - | - | - | 140 | 50 | 50 | - | - | - | - |
| 1. Labour market participation | 15 | 18 | 14 | 17 | 39 | 20 | 20 | 7 | 21 | 23 | 23 |
| 2. ALMP | 5 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 20 | - | - | - | - | 4 | - |
| 3. Education and skills | 3 | 9 | 12 | 8 | 33 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 18 | 20 |
| 4. Job creation | 8 | 3 | - | 2 | 4 | 18 | 18 | 15 | 17 | 20 | 22 |
| 5. Flexibility | 4 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| 6. Labour market segmentation | - | - | - | - | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 7. Wage setting mechanisms | - | - | - | - | 8 | - | - | 2 | 7 | 8 | 7 |
| 8. Gender equality ^b | 13 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 19 | 14 | 14 | 1 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 9. Poverty & social exclusion | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 7 | 8 |
| 10. Miscellanea | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 7 | 7 | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 54 | 58 | 58 | 56 | 145 | 85 | 85 | 47 | 74 | 99 | 100 |
| (No. MSs) ^c | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 25 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 22 | 23 | 23 |

Notes:

a In 2004 we considered PtW (instead of CSR) to classify the CSRs by policy theme; in Phase III and IV each recommendation addressed more than one policy issue. Thus, for each CSR we identified all the policy themes explicitly considered. This is the reason for the difference between "no. CSRs" and "Sum (CSR by policy theme)".

b Gender issues are usually considered in the CSRs (or PtW) addressing gender equality. However, reference to gender issues may be found in CSRs (or PtW) focused on other policy themes. This is the reason for the difference between "no. CSRs" and "Sum (CSR by policy theme)". Indirect reference to gender issues is included.

c Five countries in 2011, four in 2012 and four in 2013 have not been addressed with specific recommendations, being in receipt of financial assistance from the EU and the IMF.

Source: Authors' calculation based on CSRs

In Phase I out of a total of 170 CSRs the majority addressed policy issues related to what was specified under the pillar on *Employability*: gender equality issues, at the time addressed by the pillar on *Equal opportunities*, were addressed to a significant extent, with a total of 38 recommendations (almost one per country per year). In Phase II there was a heterogeneity of CSRs between 2003 and 2004. In 2003, the distribution of the CSRs by policy theme did not differ from the previous phase (see table 4). Gender equality was no longer an issue for a CSR - a change that marked a shift from 'gender equality' as a priority towards 'female employment' as an instrumental goal for the EES (Villa 2013).

In Phase III, a different picture emerged. With the renewed strategy, new approaches, such as flexicurity, substituted or became integrated into former approaches, whilst other early themes, such as gender mainstreaming and social dialogue, were given a lower priority, and disappeared from CSRs. At the same time, taking advantage of a cycle of relatively stable growth, the accent was placed on the number of jobs created rather than on "more and better jobs" (Smith and Villa 2010).

As the EU experienced the on-going repercussions of the economic crisis, in Phase IV the largest number of CSRs issued were directed to increase ‘labour market participation’ followed by suggestions to improve ‘education and skills’ and to strengthen ‘ALMP’. ‘Gender equality’ was addressed to some extent in all three years (9, 10, 11), though in a partial way (Villa 2013). ‘Flexibility’ remained on the scene, though significantly toned down with respect to Phase III. The bulk of CSRs in Phase IV was directed to increase ‘labour market participation’ (mainly women and older workers), combined with suggestions to strengthen ‘ALMP’, and to improve ‘education and training’ (for all).

Analysis of the LABREF policy data bases shows a rising intensity of labour market policy making across the period 2000-2013. The database, of almost 3600 policies over a period of 14 years (2000-13), demonstrates a clear rise in the intensity of policy making for the EU27 (table 6). For the whole set of countries considered, there were 190 policies per year in pre-crisis, but 313 during the crisis and 354 during austerity. Policy making across nine broad policy domains underlines the importance of active labour market policies (ALMP), followed by labour taxation and job protection (EPL) across all three sub-periods, although once again the intensity of reforms in ALMP is more pronounced in the crisis and austerity years. By contrast, the intensity of policy activity in immigration and mobility, working time, early withdrawn and unemployment benefits is more limited, with less variation between the sub-periods. Two policy areas show a marked rise in activity in the austerity sub-period, after limited activity in the pre-crisis and crisis years: wage setting and job protection (EPL).

Table 6 Average number of policies per year by policy domain in the three sub-periods, EU27

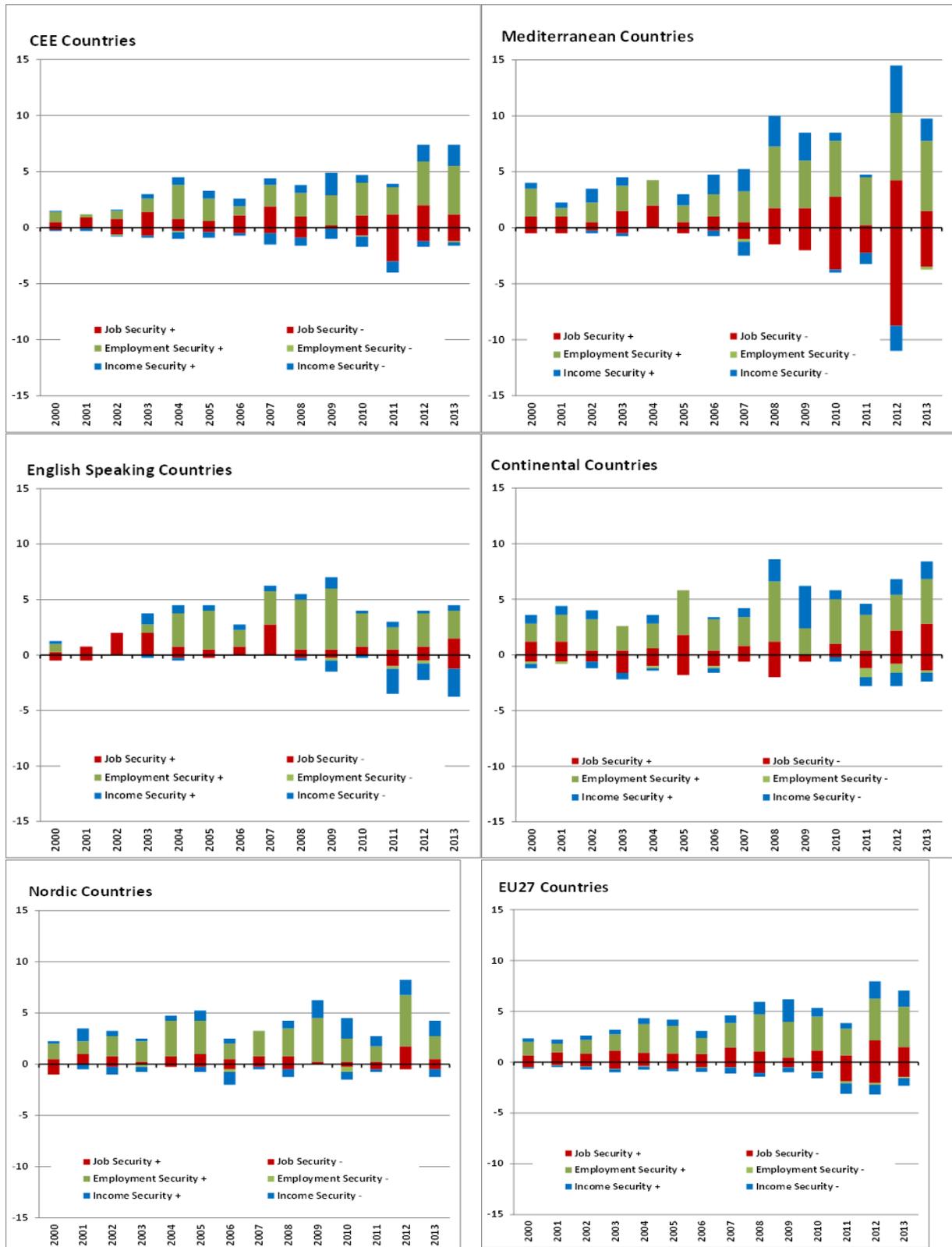
| | Pre-Crisis (2000-07) | Crisis (2008-09) | Austerity (2010-13) | Total (2000-13) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Labour taxation | 34,9 | 72,5 | 45,8 | 43,4 |
| 2. Unemployment benefits | 15,8 | 23,0 | 27,3 | 20,1 |
| 3. Other welfare-related benefits | 16,9 | 45,0 | 39,5 | 27,4 |
| 4. Active labour market policies | 51,5 | 99,0 | 103,5 | 73,1 |
| 5. Job protection (EPL) | 17,0 | 18,0 | 54,3 | 27,8 |
| 6. Early withdrawal | 9,6 | 5,0 | 8,3 | 8,6 |
| 7. Wage setting | 6,6 | 14,0 | 34,3 | 15,6 |
| 8. Working time | 22,9 | 23,0 | 29,3 | 24,7 |
| 9. Immigration & mobility | 15,1 | 13,5 | 12,0 | 14,0 |
| Total | 190,3 | 313,0 | 354,0 | 254,6 |

Note: see section 3 for details.

Source: LABREF database (authors’ analyses).

Figure 2 illustrates the intensity in policy making categorised under the three elements of the flexicurity model by direction of policy (increasing or decreasing) and by country group in 2000-2013. The majority of the policies implemented linked to ‘flexicurity were in the area of employment security (green shading, figure 2), followed closely by policies in the area of job security and, at a distance, by policies on income security. It is worth noting that while employment security measures are almost exclusively categorised as ‘increasing’ (i.e. promoting employment security through changes in ALMP), both job security measures and income security measures go in each direction (increasing and decreasing security) not only over time but also in the same year. This result holds across country groups and years.

Figure 2 Flexicurity policy activity by direction of policy (increasing/decreasing) and country group in EU27, 2000-2013 (average no. of policies enacted per country)



Notes:

a averages adjusted for the number of countries within groups and the number of years for period;

b country groups: *Continental* (AT, BE, DE, FR, LU), *Central and Eastern* (BG, CZ, EE, HU, LT, LV, PL, SI, SK, RO), *Nordic* (DK, FI, NL, SE), *Mediterranean* (EL, ES, IT, PT), *English-speaking* (IE, UK, MT, CY).

Source: LABREF database (authors' analyses).

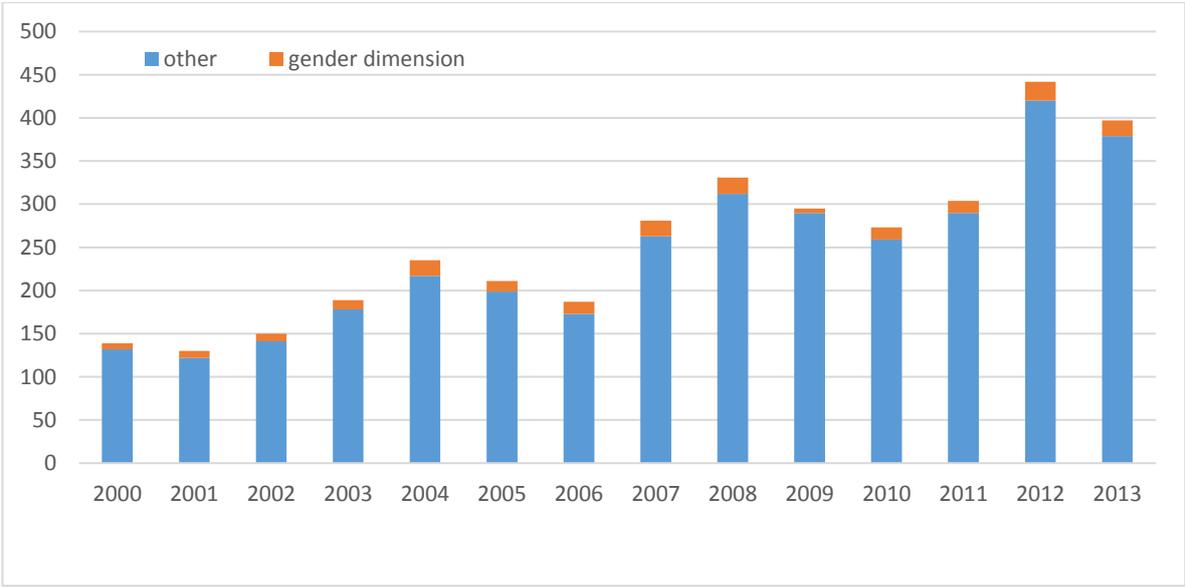
There is also some evidence of an increase in the intensity of employment security policies as part of the overall increase in policy activity during the crisis and austerity sub-periods.

At the country group level, the Mediterranean group stands out with significant policy activity reducing job security; this is particularly stark during the austerity years (red shading, figure 2). After the Mediterranean group this pattern was most notable in the CEE countries. Elsewhere there was evidence of policy activity reducing the level of job security across most country groups during the austerity years (least among the Nordic countries).

On the other hand, the English-speaking countries have marked policy activity reducing income security in the austerity period (blue shading). This is in contrast with the income security measures recording an increase in intensity in the crisis and austerity sub-periods in all the other country groups, i.e. Continental, Nordic, CEE and Mediterranean (blue shading)

We can also use the LABREF database to analyse labour market policy identified as having an explicit gender dimension. Figure 3 uses the same database to highlight the small number of labour market policies – as captured by LABREF – that include an explicit mention of gender in the policy description or objectives.

Figure 3 Labour market policies with an explicit gender dimension in EU27, 2000-13



Note: see section 3 for details.
 Source: LABREF database (authors' analyses).

Table 7 Share of policies with a Gender Focus by Policy area, 2000-13

| | % |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Active labour market policies | 3% |
| Early Withdrawal | 11% |
| Immigration/Mobility | 2% |
| Job Protection (EPL) | 5% |
| Labour Taxation | 6% |
| Other welfare-related benefits | 6% |
| Unemployment benefits | 1% |
| Wage Setting | 4% |
| Working Time | 13% |
| total | 5% |

Note: see section 3 for details.

Source: LABREF database (authors' analyses).

CONCLUSIONS

Employment policy has been a key part of the European project for almost two decades with the aim of improving the functioning of European labour markets and with the goal of raising the employment rates of EU member states towards convergence at a higher level. The EU has aimed to do this through the system of OMC within the pan-national EES using two mechanisms: employment guidelines and CSRs. The CSRs are expected to be more influential since they focus on the labour market challenges at the country level while the guidelines are set for all countries and therefore more generic. Yet the evidence of improved labour market efficiency is weak and reforms have been unevenly implemented. Moreover, the underlying assumption that flexibility improves economic performance has been disputed (Solow 1998; Esping-Andersen and Regini 2000; Freeman 2005; Kahn 2010). Labour market performance is linked to movements along the Beveridge curve (i.e. the trade-off between V and U), while labour market efficiency relates to the position of the Beveridge curve. Indeed Solow (1998) argues that policies such as ALMP, efficient PES and labour market reforms, etc., if successfully implemented, should result in a downward shift of the Beveridge curve. However, the empirical evidence seems to suggest that in the recent years there has been a loss of efficiency (the Beveridge curve for most countries moved outward), and the austerity policies have not succeeded in reducing unemployment (Simonazzi and Villa 2016). Through the analysis of almost 500 Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) we show that the message and guidance for member states has been changing and has lacked coherence. We show that the style of CSRs has shifted reflecting a declining coherence of the wider EES and the message. Second, we demonstrate how the incoherence has extended into a failure to address old challenges

previously identified such as gender inequalities and also to anticipate new challenges such as the problems facing young people. Finally, we show how policy priorities have changed over time as the vision of what European labour markets “needed” became less clear.

The changes in the structure, style and format of the EES means that it is not easy to provide an overview of the changing position and importance of gender equality issues in the strategy through the analysis of the CSRs. However, these very changes in the strategy, and the CSRs, tell part of the story of the shifting position of gender equality. Indeed, we observe a transition from a vision of gender equality as both a goal in itself and means to addressing problems of social justice in the European Union to an instrumental view of gender equality, as a tool to reach economic efficiency (Berloff et al. 2015).

Our empirical analysis demonstrates a number of key points for gender equality policy and relevance in the EES (see also Villa 2013:152-153). First, the quantitative analysis of CSRs shows that the number of Member States who received a recommendation on gender issues declined dramatically. In phase one (2000-02) nearly three-quarters of member states received an individual recommendation to reduce gender inequalities compared to around a third in phase four (2011-13).

Second, from a more qualitative perspective, the concern around gender inequality in the CSRs has been relatively narrow. We categorised the “content” of CSRs⁶ based upon the “key words” used by the Commission, and childcare and reconciliation emerge as the most critical areas, particularly in phase four. Overall, in this final phase (2011-13) twelve statesⁱ were recipients of at least one recommendation on “increasing the availability of childcare” and/or “ensuring better reconciliation of work and private life”. The issue that received the next highest frequency of mention was “female participation in employment” (eight member states)ⁱⁱ. The participation issue is implicitly linked with the relatively low female employment rates in the southern countries, but also with the very high share of part-timers in some continental countries, for example the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. More fundamental inequalities, gender segregation and gender imbalances on the labour market, were concerns identified in just two countries in 2007 (Austria and Slovakia), with the addition of Cyprus in 2008. On the other hand, the wide gender pay gap emerged as an issue in just a few member statesⁱⁱⁱ.

One element to note about the changing style of the CSRS is the emergence of the term “second earners” as used in phase four (2011-2013). This term is problematic since it is used to implicitly describe women employment position and, at the same time, reinforce the notion of women as a group with lower priority on the labour market. In addition, the term secondary

⁶ For example, gender segregation and/or gender imbalances in occupations and/or sectors; gender pay gap; childcare and/or reconciliation; female participation; raising hours worked and/or part-time/full-time; finally, second earners and/or lone parents (see also Villa 2013:160-161).

reinforces a patriarchal view of a reliance on male breadwinner wages. Moreover, it makes explicit that the main concern in relation to women's employment is the low employment rates and inequalities on the labour market in terms of quality and inequalities in the household in terms of unpaid work.

Our analysis of CRSs over time is revealing of these nuanced yet significant changes in the position of gender equality in one of the key mechanisms of the EES. We not only demonstrate the declining attention given to gender equality in the EES but also support findings elsewhere that there has been no real evidence of gender mainstreaming (see Fagan et al. 2008; Pfister 2008). The shifting styles and content of the CRSs also demonstrate how gender equality issues have increasingly been incorporated into the Strategy with a narrow "efficiency" perspective. This approach relies on policy recommendations aimed at removing obstacles for working mothers (of young children) focused on more affordable care services for children and more flexible working time (i.e. part-time). This approach to gender equality as a tool for efficiency of the economic system relies on freeing-up labour supply for higher overall employment rates, in particular higher female employment rates. Thus the key challenge to be addressed is inactivity rather than gender inequality per se and labour market policies should be reformed in order to change the behaviour of workers on the labour market and inactive women outside the labour market.

REFERENCES

- Begg I. (2010), "Europe 2020 and Employment", in: Forum "Europe 2020. A promising strategy?", *Intereconomics*, 3: 141-146.
- de la Porte C. and Eins E. (2015), "The new era of European Integration? Governance of labour market and social policy since the sovereign debt crisis", *Comparative European Politics*, 13(1), 8-28.
- de la Porte C. and Pochet D. (2012), "Why and how (still) study the OMC?", *J. of European Social Policy*, 22(2), 336-349.
- Devetzi, S. (2008) 'The European Employment Strategy', in S. Stendahl, T. Erhag and S. Devetzi (eds.), *A European Work-First Welfare State*, Stockholm: Centrum för Europaforskning, 31-48.
- EC (2006), "Flexibility and security in the EU labour markets", Chapter 2, in: *Employment in Europe 2006*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 75-117.
- EC (2012), "A decade of labour market reforms in the EU: trends, main features, outcomes", in: *European Economy*, 5/2012: 64-98.
- EC (2014), "Coverage and structure of the Labour Market Reform (LABREF) Database", November 2014. Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1143&intPageId=3193&langId=en>
- EC (2015a), "The impact of the recession on labour market institutions", in: *Employment and Social Development in Europe 2014*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 75-91
- EC (2015b) Databases and indicators - LABREF and its use". Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1143&intPageId=3193&langId=en> Accessed 9 Sept 2015
- Fagan C., D. Grimshaw, Rubery J. (2006), "The Subordination of the Gender Equality Objective: the National Reform Programmes and 'Making Work Pay' Policies", *Industrial Relations Journal*, 37(6): 571-592.

- FRDB (2015), "Data sources / International data", Fondazione Rodolfo DeBenedetti www.frdb.org/language/eng/topic/data-sources/dataset/international-data Accessed 4th January 2016
- Goetschy J. (2002), "A transition year for employment in Europe: EU governance and national diversity under scrutiny", *Industrial Relations Journal*, 33(5): 405-422
- Hall, P A., and Gingerich. D W (2009) Varieties of capitalism and institutional complementarities in the political economy. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(3): 449-482.
- Heidenreich M. (2009), 'The Open Method of Coordination. A pathway to the gradual transformation of national Employment and welfare regimes?' in: M. Heidenreich and J. Zeitlin (eds.), *Changing European Employment and Welfare Regimes*, Abington: Routledge, 10-36.
- Heidenreich M. and J. Zeitlin (eds.) (2009), *Changing European Employment and Welfare Regimes*, Abington: Routledge.
- Lewis, Jane, and Susanna Giullari. 2005. "The Adult Worker Model Family, Gender Equality and Care: The Search for New Policy Principles and the Possibilities and Problems of a Capabilities Approach." *Economy and Society*, 34 (1): 76–104.
- Lewis, Jane and Plomien, Ania (2009) Flexicurity as a policy strategy: the implications for gender equality *Economy and Society*, 38 (3). 433-459. ISSN 0308-5147
- OECD (2005), "Methodology of Quantifying Labour Market Reforms" in *Assessing the OECD Jobs Strategy: Past Developments and Reform*, Paris. Document prepared for the WP no.1 on Macroeconomic Policy and Structural Policy Analysis
- Pfister Thomas (2008), "Mainstreamed away? The European Employment Strategy and its gender equality dimension", *Policy and Politics*, 36(4): 521-538.
- Rubery J. (2002), "Gender mainstreaming and gender equality in the EU: the impact of the EU employment strategy", *Industrial Relations Journal*, 33(5): 500-522.
- Rossilli, M. (ed.). 2000. *Gender Policies in the European Union*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Scharpf F.W. (2011) "LEQS Annual Lecture Paper 2011 Monetary Union, Fiscal Crisis and the Pre-emption of Democracy" Paper presented at the LEQS Annual Lecture 'Saving the Euro – at the expense of democracy in Europe?' on 12 May 2011 at the London School of Economics Available at www.lse.ac.uk/europeanInstitute/LEQS%20Discussion%20Paper%20Series/LEQSPaper36.pdf
- Scharpf, F.W. (2010) "The Asymmetry of European Integration: Or why the EU Cannot Be a "Social Market Economy" *Socio-Economic Review* 8(2), 211–250.
- Simonazzi and Villa (2016), "Europe at a crossroads: what kind of structural reforms?", in Backer G., Lehndorff S. and Weinkops C. (eds.), *Den Arbeitsmarkt verstehen, um ihn zu gestalten*. Springer, 273-282.
- Smith, M. and Villa P (2010) "The Ever Declining Role of Gender Equality in the European Employment Strategy" *Industrial Relations Journal*, 41(6): 526-543
- Smith, M., Burchell, B., Fagan C. and O'Brien C. (2008) "Job Quality in Europe" *Industrial Relations Journal* 39(6) 586-603
- Smith M.J., Villa P. (2010), "The ever-declining role of gender equality in the European Employment Strategy", *Industrial Relations Journal*, 41(6): 526-543.
- Smith M.J., Villa P. (2012), "Gender Equality and the Evolution of the Europe 2020 Strategy", in: Blanpain R, Bromwich W., Rymkevich O., Senatori I. (eds.), *Labour Markets, Industrial Relations and Human Resources. From Recession to Recovery*, Kluwer Law International BV, The Netherlands, 3-23.
- Solow R.M. (1998), "What is labour market flexibility? What is good for?", Keynes Lecture in Economics, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 97: 189-211
- Stratigaki M. (2004), "The cooptation of Gender Concepts in EU Policies: The case of 'Reconciliation of Work and Family'", *Social Politics*, Vol. 11 (1): 30-56.
- Turrini A., Koltay G., Pierini F., Goffard C., Kiss A. (2014), "A decade of labour market reforms in the EU: Insights from the LABREF database", IZA Policy Paper 88

Velluti S. (2010), *New Governance and the European Employment Strategy*, Oxford: OUP

Villa P. (2013), "The role of the EES in the promotion of gender equality in the labour market. A critical appraisal", Chapter 8, in: F. Bettio, J. Plantenga, M. Smith (eds.), *Gender and the European Labour Market*, London and New York: Routledge, 135-167.

Villa, P. and Smith, M.J. (2013), "Policy in the time of crisis. Employment policy and gender equality in Europe", in: M. Karamessini and J. Rubery (eds.), *Women and Austerity. The Economic Crisis and the Future for Gender Equality*, Routledge, Abingdon (pp. 273-294)

Visser J. (2009) 'Neither convergence nor frozen paths' in: M. Heidenreich and J. Zeitlin (eds), *Changing European Employment and Welfare Regimes*, Abington: Routledge, 37-60

Zeitlin J. (2005), "The Open Method of Co-ordination in Action. Theoretical Promise, Empirical Realities, Reform Strategies", in: Zeitlin J, Pochet P., and Magnusson L. (eds), *The Open Method of Co-ordination in Action. The European and Social Inclusion Strategies*, Brussels: Peter Lang, 447-505

ⁱ AT, CZ, DE, ES, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, MT, PL, UK.

ⁱⁱ AT, EL, HU, IT, MT, NL, PL, SK.

ⁱⁱⁱ CZ, SK in 2007, also CY in 2008, only AT in 2011 and 2012.