EU ALMPO
EU Active Labor Market Policies Observatory

EU-ALMPO Policy Brief

Understanding Skills Matching in Practice: *Insights from 10 European Case Studies*

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WHY IT MATTERS

Skills mismatches remain a structural challenge across European labour markets. Despite ongoing policy efforts, many interventions struggle to:

- respond to local and sectoral needs
- adapt to complex governance systems
- effectively use available data

Understanding what works in practice —and under which conditions— is essential for improving the effectiveness of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs).

WHAT EU-ALMPO ANALYSED

The EU-ALMPO project examined **10 case studies across 5 countries** (Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain), covering a wide range of skills matching interventions.

These include:

- national reforms (e.g. Italy's GOL programme)
- data systems (e.g. Greece's Labour Market Diagnosis Mechanism)
- governance platforms (e.g. Germany's Alliance for Training)
- local and inclusive initiatives (e.g. ReDI School, Barcelona Activa)

The analysis focuses on:

what works, for whom, and under which conditions

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KEY OUTPUTS

The comparative analysis identifies:

- common patterns across policy contexts
- mechanisms driving policy effectiveness
- enabling conditions and structural constraints
- transferable insights for policy design

Moving beyond "best practices" to **context-sensitive learning**

HOW CHANGE HAPPENS

Using a Context–Mechanism–Outcome (CMO) approach, five key mechanisms were identified:

System level

- Coordination and alignment between institutions
- Use of data and skills intelligence to support decisions

Actor level

- Professionalisation of services and staff
- Personalised engagement and behavioural change
- Strategic incentives shaping participation and outcomes

Policy effectiveness depends on how these mechanisms interact with context.

WHAT INTERVENTIONS ACHIEVE

Across all case studies, four consistent outcomes emerge:

- stronger coordination and governance coherence
- better alignment between training and labour market needs
- increased visibility and relevance of skills policies
- improved employability and inclusion of target groups

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POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policymakers and Public Employment Services may consider:

- strengthening coordination across institutions and levels
- embedding data and evidence into decision-making
- supporting professional capacity in service delivery
- designing flexible and inclusive policy interventions
- aligning incentives with policy objectives

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- governance complexity and fragmentation
- variation in institutional capacity
- data interoperability and accessibility
- funding stability and sustainability
- barriers affecting participation (social, economic, digital)

LOOKING AHEAD

The findings from the case studies will:

- inform the development of AI-supported tools within EU-ALMPO
- support Communities of Practice discussions and validation
- contribute to more effective and transferable policy solutions
- feed into pilot testing in real policy environments

RESOURCES & LINKS

- EU-ALMPO website
- Deliverable 2.1 (Case Studies Report)
- Related tools: ALMP Design Wizard

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